

The Policy Forum on Development Charter

1. Background

The European Union has consistently promoted the comprehensive and inclusive participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and of associations of Local Authorities (LAs) in countries' development processes and in broader political, social and economic dialogues at all levels.¹ Enhancing regular dialogue and consultations with Civil Society (CS) is one of the principles stated in the Lisbon Treaty, with a view to ensuring consistency and transparency of EU policies. In the more recent international policy frameworks, namely the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the European Consensus on Development, the need for and strengths of working in partnership are promoted, and civil society and associations of local authorities are recognized as the essential development actors and equal partners they must be in order to achieve our shared development aims. The Policy Forum on Development (PFD) is one such partnership amongst civil society, local authorities and their associations, EU institutions and EU Members States.²

The PFD has been meeting regularly since 2014 and evolved within the larger policy framework, becoming even more relevant with the focus on partnership and the role of civil society in promoting democracy and increased citizenship that are enshrined in the European Consensus on Development. The original PFD Charter was established in 2013; this updated charter takes into account the more recent policy framework, the lessons learned to date and the expanded membership base following the principles of actor-based approach and differentiation, as well as the representativeness of those networks. Moving forward, the EU aims to support civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, recognizing the need to promote an enabling environment; maintain support for permanent dialogue; and strengthen existing partnerships such as those in the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs).

2. Goal, objectives and scope of the PFD

¹ Two relevant examples, influenced by the Structured Dialogue that led to the formation of the PFD, include "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations" (COM 2012/492), and "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" (COM 2013/280). The final Structured Dialogue Budapest Declaration recognizes the diversity of civil society actors and their specific role in development processes

² The PFD is an outcome of the Structured Dialogue (SD) for an efficient partnership in development (2010-11), which brought together more than 700 CSOs and LAs from all over the world, as well as participants from the EU Member States, the European Parliament and the European Commission. During regional seminars and meetings in Brussels, participants reflected upon ways to improve the effectiveness of all actors involved in EU development cooperation. The Final Statement of the SD, known as the Budapest Declaration, recommended that the EC enhance dialogue at all levels and establish a regular space for dialogue with Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities.

2.1. Goal

The overarching goal of the PFD is to offer CSOs and LAs from the EU and partner countries, as well as European institutions, an inclusive multi-stakeholder space³ for dialogue on development issues at global and regional levels. Based on these discussions, the PFD aims to provide input, advice and best practices to the European Commission and other EU partners in order to develop and implement effective development policies.

2.2. Objectives

More specifically, the PFD aims at achieving the following objectives:

- . (i) Facilitate dialogue on cross-cutting issues directly related to the role of CSOs and LAs as key development actors; committed with development effectiveness and human rights based approach that gives insight into results, actions and work to promote sustainable change that addresses the structural causes of poverty and inequality.
- . (ii) Promote policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on EU main policies and initiatives in the development field. Priority will be given to topics relating to DEVCO's mandate, aligned to its Work Programme, including discussions in the preparation of high-level events;
- . (iii) Support inclusive multi-stakeholder debate and interactions based on an actor-based approach at global and regional levels, with the aim of enhancing the impact of development cooperation, reflecting local, country level issues and its significance for people's lives.

2.3. Scope

Since its inception the PFD has been a confidence and trust-building mechanism, functioning as a consultation forum rather than a space for direct negotiation. It serves to promote communication and increased understanding among all stakeholders that play a key role in development cooperation in all levels (global, regional, national and local).

The PFD primarily focuses on European development policies, as well as global development agendas, building on the momentum gained by current debates and discussions on the global architecture for international aid. Because of its central position as a dialogue mechanism at headquarters level, the PFD is one of the important "entry points" for CSOs and LAs to meet with the EU institutions. The PFD's added value is the combined complementarities of its different members. By engaging in continuous, closed dialogue with regular partners, the members of the PFD are able to:

1. Capitalise on a continuous process of collective learning;

³ See Shared Position Paper by the members of the PFD on Inclusive Multi-Stakeholder Approach

2. Form closer linkages and influence policy outcomes by contributing direct knowledge and experience
3. Share solutions and best practices on the topics proposed
4. Reach out to their constituencies with new knowledge, information and contacts (policy, research, practice, etc.)
5. Develop common solutions and tools for further cooperation among PFD members (also beyond the PFD).

3. Membership: general principles & allocation of seats

3.1. Principles

The Policy Forum gathers representatives of CSOs and LAs from global, European and regional levels together with representatives of European Institutions and other bodies on the basis of an actor-based approach. All four (4) regions where EU cooperation is implemented are represented: Neighbourhood Region, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

A balanced representation of actors is ensured: building on the outcomes of current international debates, which recognize CSOs and LAs explicitly as independent development actors, the PFD integrates different categories of legitimate and representative platforms of CSOs and LAs on the basis of their distinctive added value.

Other key strategic partners for the EU, including European Platforms, Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) signatories, foundations and diaspora groups, are involved as part of a strategy to strengthen inclusion, build resilience, and fights inequalities.

3.2. Allocation of seats

In order to foster true dialogue and guarantee quality of debates and effective participation of all stakeholders, seats are distributed amongst the different categories of CSOs and LAs and assigned according to the following criteria:

- (i) The level of representation of the actors (regional/sub-regional levels, European and global)
- (ii) The typology of the actors involved: CSOs (including trade unions, cooperatives, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), women's organisations, professional and business associations and diaspora groups), foundations, associations of Local Authorities and EU institutions.

3.2.2. Membership breakdown

	Asia	Africa	Latin America	Neighbourhood	Europe	Global	
NGOs	7	6	6	4	8	10	41
Trade unions	1	2	2	1	1	1	8
Cooperatives	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Professional and business associations	1	2	1	1	1	2	8
Foundations					2	1	3
Diaspora					2		2
LAs	5	4	4	3	1	3	20
Totals	15	15	14	10	16	18	88

Each civil society and local authority member organisation of the PFD can send one qualified representative to a PFD meeting. In addition, other members include:

- European Commission (EC)
- European Parliament (EP)
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- European Committee of the Regions (CoR)
- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- European Union Member States

3.3. Selection process and membership criteria

The Forum ensures a balanced representation of all regions and categories of actors and the selection of members will be inclusive, transparent and flexible.

CSO and LA organisations are required to:

- . Be registered in the Transparency Register and maintain that registration up to date;
- . Be accountable to their own constituencies and the development partners, and demonstrate a sustained organizational commitment to transparency;
- . Be a network in the region or at global level that works in and has a history of working in the area of international cooperation and development;
- . Have adequate regional contacts to reach a wide membership; presence via members in the majority of the countries of a given region;
- . Have the proven capacity to disseminate information/communications on PFD issues, via an existing database or dissemination tool and feedback mechanisms already in place;
- . Have relevant competence and experience, including at European and/or international level, in areas relevant to the PFD. Specifically, have knowledge and experience working with current EU policy implementation.

Representatives proposed by the CSO and LA organisations are required to:

- Have extensive experience in the development field (with the exception of youth representatives);
- Have the proven capacity to represent and express the views of their constituencies, including past representational experience and specifically experience gathering and synthesizing multiple inputs in order to facilitate dialogue on cross-cutting issues and to support inclusive multi-stakeholder debate and interactions at global and regional levels;
- Have the time and skills to gather the views of their constituents in order to facilitate dialogue on cross-cutting issues;
- Have sufficient knowledge of the EU and its development policy in order to promote policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on EU main policies and initiatives in the development field;
- Have the ability to communicate effectively in one of the PFD working languages (English, French or Spanish);
- Have strong interpersonal skills and an ability to collaborate well with a diverse group of people from different cultures from around the world to support inclusive multi-stakeholder debate and interactions at global and regional levels ; and
- Have the facility to work strategically in a group, including experience with consensual decision making.

Representatives proposed by the CSO and LA organisations shall commit to:

- Take part in the PFD in the short and medium terms, and have the availability to fulfil this commitment;
- Undertake outreach and gather feedback on PFD issues before and after PFD events to maintain a continual flow of information;
- Share information with constituents regularly to feed into PFD discussions and decisions;
- Represent the views of their constituencies to the best of their capacity in PFD meetings and events; and
- Participate in PFD-related activities and communications (including emails, phone calls, requests for interviews, etc.) during and in between PFD events.

Mandates are assigned to Organisations (Networks/Platforms), for an initial period of minimum 2 years⁴, which can be prolonged. Appointed organisations (the "Members of the PFD") are responsible for selecting their own representatives on the basis of commonly agreed criteria.⁵

Failure from members (appointed organisations) to participate in two (2) consecutive global PFD

⁴ To ensure time to understand how the PFD works and develop relationships to ensure open dialogue, a minimum of two years of commitment is required.

⁵ Appointed organisations have the choice to send the best positioned participant who can bring added value, according to his or her technical background, to the Policy Forum.

sessions will lead to the discontinuation of membership from the process.

4. Working modalities

4.1. Coordination by Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), European Commission and active commitment and participation of all stakeholders

DEVCO is in charge of the overall organisation of the Forum and ensuring the smooth undertaking of activities, in close cooperation with all parties involved, through adequate joint agenda-setting and co-chairing mechanisms. Participation of relevant Directorates and Units is also ensured, depending on the topics addressed.

Active participation and commitment of all members is a key element for the relevance and effectiveness of the Forum and contributes to ensuring the collective ownership of the process.

The PFD is co-chaired by the Directorate General of DEVCO, one CSO co-chair and one LA co-chair.⁶

4.2. Establishment of the PFD Task Team

A PFD Task Team is set up to maintain communication between PFD meetings and undertake preparatory work. This group monitors and advises the functioning and performance of the PFD.

The Task Team is composed of a maximum of 15 participants: two representatives (CSO and LA) per region, five representatives (CSO and LA) from the global networks (NGOs, Trade Unions Cooperatives, Professional and business associations, LAs) who meet regularly with staff from the relevant DEVCO units. The two co-chairs of the PFD are selected by consensus by the Task Team amongst PFD members. The choice is endorsed by the PFD. Task Team members have a minimum two-year mandate.⁷

4.3. Transparent and inclusive agenda setting

The agenda is defined in a participatory, transparent and inclusive way.

Yearly work plans are agreed upon during the PFD sessions, based on the DEVCO Work Plan and on the calendar of international events. Additionally, Members have the opportunity to propose specific themes to be addressed at the PFD. To ensure that the PFD meets the interests of all stakeholders, the Task Team prepares the PFD sessions.

4.4. Promoting a continuous flow of information and debates

⁶ See annex for working modalities of the task team and co-chairs

⁷ See annex for working modalities of the task team

At least one global and one regional meeting of the PFD are organised each year.

As a general rule, meetings of the PFD take place in Brussels and participation is by invitation. Ad-hoc working groups may be set up with the task of preparing specific discussions and ensuring that there is active participation from all members.

Finally the PFD develops and/or supports information sharing around and in between events via its group pages on capacity4dev⁸, PFD research and other information gathering initiatives, as well as other knowledge sharing mechanisms.

4.5. Flexibility and adaptation over time

After an initial phase of two-years, an external review of the PFD took place, whose recommendations influenced the refinement and continuation of the forum. On the basis of feedback received from stakeholders and the follow-up and monitoring work by the Task Team, revision and improvements of the working modalities shall be considered, as well as the composition and membership of the PFD.

⁸ Capacity4dev (<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/>) allows to continue the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices, as well as to keep stakeholders regularly informed and to foster communication amongst the actors involved. The use of other online tools and/or social media are also used as needed.

Annex: Working modalities of the Task Team

Membership

The PFD Task Team is composed of a maximum of 15 non-EU participants: two representatives (CSO and LA per region, two representatives (CSO and LA) of European Platform, five representatives (CSO and LA) from the global level. Members are appointed for a two-year mandate.

Mandate

The Task Team is a process-oriented group, which serves the overall purpose of the PFD. To this end, the Task Team will:

- Set the agenda of the PFD meetings;
- Help to maintain communication amongst PFD members between PFD meetings;
- Select the co-chairs of the PFD;
- Engage in preparatory work for the PFD; and
- Monitor the function and performance of the PFD

Tasks

To fulfil this mandate, members of the Task Team undertake to:

- Mobilise and brief PFD members;
- Gather input and engage with constituents in the lead up, follow up and in between PFD meetings;
- Deliberate and agree upon an agenda for each PFD meeting that contributes to the 3 objectives of the PFD. Agenda setting will be guided by engagement with constituencies and will include discussion about global and regional meetings. Task Team members will determine:
 - the calendar of PFD meetings in a given year;
 - the agenda items to be discussed at each meeting;
 - and the concrete outputs of the PFD meetings.
- Propose inputs, speakers and methodologies of PFD sessions;
- Ensure timely availability of information and documentation;
- Ensure follow up between meetings as needed; and
- Elaborate a monitoring plan, including a set of process and outcome indicators, with a view to monitor the work of the PFD at individual (i.e. meeting) and overall level.

Ways of working and decision-making

The Task Team will meet at least twice per year, normally in conjunction with a global or regional PFD meeting. English is the working language. Communication will take place via email, phone, and potentially a web-based group platform. The task team will work to capitalise on the experience of its members. Group decisions are made by consensus.

Accountability

The Task Team endeavours to be accountable to PFD members by sharing information and ensuring the widespread participation of constituencies in all its work. Accountability and transparency towards PFD constituencies will constitute an element of the monitoring plan.

Role of the Co-Chairs

The two co-chairs besides the Director General of DEVCO are representing local authorities and civil society). They are selected for a two year mandate amongst PFD members by the Task Team by consensus, then endorsed by the PFD.

Mandate:

- To represent their respective constituencies in the opening and closing of PFD meetings
- To undertake a representative role for the PFD as requested
- To take an active role in leading task team and PFD meetings and organizing respective constituencies as needed to provide timely input
- To consult and network amongst constituents in order to be able to represent their views and help constituents come to needed agreements around PFD work