

EU DELEGATIONS UNWRAPPED

A PRACTICAL GUIDE
FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT
WITH EUDs

CONCORD
European NGO confederation for relief and development

ABOUT CONCORD

CONCORD is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development.

Our members are:

28

National Platforms

24

Networks

03

Associate Members

which represent over 2,600 NGOs supported by millions of citizens all around Europe. Our confederation brings development NGOs together to strengthen their political impact at the European and global levels. United, we advocate for Europe-wide policies to promote sustainable economic, environmental and social development based on human rights, justice and gender equality. We also work with regional and global civil society allies to ensure that EU policies are coherent in promoting sustainable development in partner countries. More at: www.concordeurope.org

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

In the recent years, European Union Delegations (EUDs) – more than 140 worldwide and run by the European External Action Service – play a key role in designing, programming and implementing EU development cooperation programmes. They also take a leading role by coordinating with member states on the implementation of all EU assistance, both multilateral and bilateral, to boost synergy and increase the visibility of the EU. With the adoption of the European Commission (EC) Communication “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations” (2012), EUDs have also been requested to engage with civil society in a more strategic, structured way, and consequently to draw up country roadmaps for engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs).

It is therefore important that civil society is considered a valid interlocutor in these processes, and that its views are represented in the different priorities identified by the EUD. To this end, the handbook aims to help and strengthen civil society active at the country and local levels to engage better with EUDs in the future.

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1. INTRODUCTION: WHY THE HANDBOOK?

WHY THE HANDBOOK?

CONCORD has developed its “EU Delegations unwrapped. A practical guide for CSO engagement with EUDs” handbook on EUD engagement with civil society, a capacity-building tool to:

1. support civil society organisations (CSOs) active at the country and local levels to engage effectively and meaningfully with EU Delegations (EUDs) in country and the EU in general;
2. build the capacity of CSOs on the key EU policies and programmes – including funding opportunities and the main relevant entry points;
3. further foster regular and constructive dialogue between the EU and CSOs at country, regional and capital levels to achieve better development outcomes.

The handbook takes into consideration the latest developments that are shaping the EU international cooperation policy landscape, including the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (2021–2027), which is currently under discussion.

HOW TO USE IT

The handbook provides an overview of the EUDs’ structure and areas of focus, suggesting how to effectively approach EUDs and strategise a medium- to long-term mutually beneficial engagement with them. The handbook is a practical and accessible tool, which can be easily shared and disseminated. It can also be a useful basis for an organisation or a coalition of CSOs developing an EU engagement plan in a given country following their programmatic orientations, values, experience and respective added value.

BACKGROUND: CONCORD’S WORK ON EUDS

CONCORD has been monitoring the relationship between EUDs and CSOs in partner countries since 2005, when the EU started devolving to EUDs the management and administration of its development programmes accessible to CSOs.

CONCORD’s analysis first focused on CSO access to funding, including contracting and compliance issues. In 2014, the reports started also assessing the role of civil society in programming of European Commission (EC) aid and in the political dialogue between the EU, partner governments and civil society.

Recommendations from the CONCORD “EU Delegations Report 2017” aimed to contribute to a constructive, evidence-based dialogue between EUDs and civil society with the ultimate goal of protecting and expanding civil society’s space and promoting an enabling environment for it.

CONCORD put forward clear recommendations, making sure that there is complementarity and an effective division of labour on capacity building between international and national CSOs and other actors, including:

- the need to improve coordination on the lessons learnt from international NGO capacity development programmes;
- the need to share lessons learnt with partners, and for better coordination between them

To this end, CONCORD developed the “Engaging with the EU Delegation” training toolkit, alongside the “EU Gender Action Plan” training toolkit. These toolkits are innovative instruments that were tested at “Training of Trainers”, a capacity-building event that took place in Brussels in May 2018, mainly attended by CONCORD members and partners. The toolkits are still available for CONCORD members and partners.

BOX A: AN OVERVIEW OF THE EU INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

The *European Union* (EU) is a *regional political and economic organisation*. It was founded in 1957, as a result of the Treaty of Rome, as the European Economic Community. The current configuration of the EU was created in 1992, as a result of the Treaty of Maastricht. Today, the EU's legal frameworks are the Treaty of the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (both are also known as Treaty of Lisbon). The EU is composed of 28 European member states¹ and its population is of more than 500 million. The EU's principal institutions and bodies are based in Brussels (Belgium) and are the following:

- The European Council
- The Council of the EU
- The European Commission
- The European External Action Service (EEAS)
- The European Parliament
- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

In the *European Council*, all EU member states' heads of state and government sit together and trace the *political lines and interests of the EU*, including establishing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and designating the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It is an intergovernmental body.

The *Council of the EU* has *legislative and budgetary powers* and works closely with the European Parliament to set the legislative process. It is organised into different configurations and working parties, in which EU member states are represented by their ministers for different policy areas. Directors from the European External Action Service (EEAS), experts from the EC and EU member states, take part in the Council of the EU meetings. Some of the configurations and working parties relevant to the EU external actions are:

- Foreign Affairs Council (FAC): responsible for the EU's external action, which includes foreign policy, defence and security, trade, development cooperation and humanitarian aid;
- Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODEV): deals with the EU's development cooperation policy;
- Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA): discusses the EU's humanitarian strategies and policies, including its response to humanitarian crises. Its work is guided by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid; the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence; and international humanitarian law.

The *European Commission* (EC) is the *executive institution of the EU*, composed of the President of the EC and the College of Commissioners (28 members; one for each EU member state). The EC is organised into directorates-generals (DGs). The EC works independently of the EU member states, guarantees the *general interest of the community*, is the guardian of the European Treaties, and is considered a supranational body. It has the power to initiate legislation and implement legislative decisions; but it also monitors and manages EU policies and programmes. The most important DGs for the EU external policies are:

- DG for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO): responsible for designing European international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world in cooperation with the EUDs;
- DG for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR): responsible for EU policy on enlargement and the EU's eastern and southern neighbours;
- DG for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO): the department for overseas humanitarian aid and civil protection.

The *European External Action Service* (EEAS), established under the Treaty of Lisbon, is the EU's diplomacy service and led by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (who is also Vice President of the EC). The EEAS is organised in geographic and thematic divisions, and it manages EU external action policies, strategies, instruments and missions. The EEAS is also in charge of the network of the more than 140 EUDs across the world.

The *European Parliament* is elected by direct suffrage every five years and is composed of 751 Members of European Parliament (MEPs). It has three powers: *legislative* (which includes adoption of the EU legislation in co-decision with the Council of the EU; approval of international agreements, as well as cooperation and humanitarian aid policy; review of the EC work); *supervisory* and *budgetary*. The European Parliament also has delegations to keep and exchange with other parliaments from third countries and regions. It comprises several thematic committees. The most important for the EU external policies are:

- Committee on Development (DEVE)
- Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)
- Committee on International Trade (INTA)

The *European Economic and Social Committee* (EESC) is an *advisory institution to the EU*: it puts forward the opinions of CSOs and groups from the EU to the EU institutions.

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

2. THE ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF EUDS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY



The EU's policy and institutional framework recognises and promotes the **central role played by civil society** in democratic governance and building equitable, inclusive societies. In recent years, the EU has attempted to develop a more strategic engagement and structured dialogue with CSOs in partner countries. Mainstreaming this into all its cooperation instruments and programmes, and all sectors of cooperation, is an important aspect of the endeavour, in which EUDs have an important role to play. This is particularly so since the Lisbon Treaty (2009) set up the EEAS to provide a more coherent framework for the EU's external action, with an expanded role for EUDs in implementing EU external policies and in political dialogue with partner governments. From that moment, **EUDs gained diplomatic status and they now officially represent the EU in partner countries**. Some EUDs also represent the EU to regions.²

At the international level, EUDs play a **key role in designing, programming and implementing EU development cooperation programmes**, and also take a leading role by coordinating with member states the implementation of all EU assistance, both multilateral and bilateral, to boost synergy and increase the visibility of the EU. Additionally, the EUDs have been engaging in a comprehensive dialogue with civil society in various global forums such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

The adoption of the EC Communication “**The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations**” (2012) marked the beginning of a new era for EU relations with civil society and for the EU to support the multiple and diverse roles of civil society. The communication **recognised CSOs as development actors** and requested **EUDs engage with civil society** in a more strategic, structured way and draw up country roadmaps for engagement with CSOs. The country roadmaps (formally known as “**roadmaps for engagement with civil society at country level**”) were launched for the first time in 2013, and they are a valuable tool to strengthen the strategic cooperation and structured dialogue between the EU and its member states, and between the EU and CSOs (for more information, see chapter 5).

The relationship between EUDs and CSOs goes beyond the access to funding, contracting and compliance issues. It also includes the role of civil society in the programming of EC aid and the political and policy dialogue between EU, partner governments and civil society.

² Some EUDs that represent the EU before regions are the following:

- the EUD in Addis Ababa represents the EU to Ethiopia and the African Union;
- the EUD in Managua represents the EU to Nicaragua and to the Central American Integration System;
- the EUD in Jakarta represents the EU to Indonesia and to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations;
- the EUD in Fiji represents the EU to the Pacific.

3. WHO IS WHO IN THE EUDS

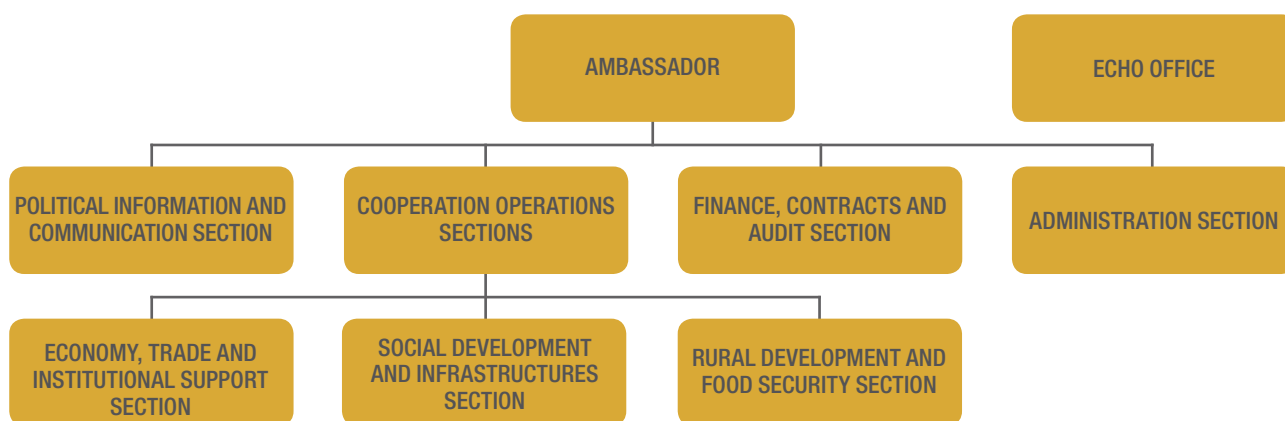
The **EU Delegation**, or EUD, is **responsible for EU programming** at the country level and the **EU's political and policy dialogue**, including with the local authorities, national governments and regional organisations.

EUDs now have increased responsibilities in allocating EU funds and managing EU grants. They publish and fully manage calls for proposals, overseeing the selection of successful proposals independently or jointly with the headquarters in Brussels. The **relationship of CSOs with the EUD** is consequently crucial to influence funding priorities, access information and be properly pre-positioned in an often very competitive environment.

To engage effectively with them, it is **fundamental that CSOs are familiar with the structure of EUDs**. Understanding who is who in the EUDs will help identify who is the appropriate person to contact depending on the issue.

In each EUD, there should be one focal point for the dialogue with civil society. Some focal point roles (i.e. the gender, human rights and disability focal points) may be held by the same person. EUD teams might differ depending on the country, but the **structure will remain similar in all EUDs, as detailed below:**

ORGANIGRAM OF AN EU DELEGATION



YOUR ORGANISATION

If your organisation is planning on approaching the EUD for the first time, you **should approach the Head of Cooperation first** and ask to be directed to the right person for the specific issue you are bringing forward. The email of EUDs staff normally follows the formulation name.surname@eeas.europa.eu. Depending on the issue you would like to reach out to the EUD on, use the following table as a guide:

TOPIC	WHO TO CONTACT IN THE EUD
Political dialogue	Head of Cooperation
Policy dialogue	Civil society focal point; other focal points in the EUD on specific issues (e.g. human rights, gender, disability and trade)
Funding	For programmes and opportunities, contact specific focal points. For implementation and administration, contact Head of Finance and Contracts

You can see the **organigram of the EEAS headquarters in Brussels**. Even more relevant for your organisation, you can find **key contacts in the EUD** of your constituency on its website: as an example, see the **webpage of the EUD to Ghana**, where all contact details of EUD staff are listed. The **webpages of all EUDs** are available on the EEAS website.

All embassies of the EU member states in countries outside of the EU should follow the same direction as the EUD, and they often work closely together.

4. RELEVANT EU POLICIES FOR EUDS

A. EU Gender Action Plan

THE EU GENDER ACTION PLAN: AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH THE EUD AND EU MEMBER STATE EMBASSIES

The Gender Action Plan is the key framework for the EU approach to gender equality in all external relations. The Gender Action Plan thus applies to all countries regardless of location and level of stability and development. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan is mandatory and is a shared responsibility of EU institutions and member states. They are currently implementing the second Gender Action Plan 2016–2020, known as GAP II.

CONTENT OF THE GENDER ACTION PLAN

The Gender Action Plan has three **thematic priorities**: physical and psychological integrity; social and cultural rights – economic and social empowerment and political and civil rights; and one horizontal priority of shifting EU institutional culture towards one that places gender at the heart of all EU external actions.

GAP II is implemented through a **three-pronged approach**:

- **Political dialogue** is engagement by the EU and EU member states with stakeholders such as partner countries' governments, regional bodies and the UN to advocate to deliver international women's rights commitments. This inclusion of gender in political dialogue should take place during a conference and during technical or budget support discussions, the updating of a development plan, trade negotiations, legislative reform, and so on.
- **Targeted activities** are initiatives, projects or call for proposals aimed specifically at improving gender equality and lives of girls and women.
- **Gender mainstreaming** means including a gender perspective across policies, projects, budget support, sector support programmes, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and so on.

ENTRY POINTS TO ENGAGE WITH EUDS ON GENDER

Listed below are opportunities to raise your organisation's profile on an issue that is considered crucial for the implementation of all EU programmes, even though there are no financial resources specifically earmarked to implement GAP II. These are also opportunities to influence the EU policies and practice on gender equality through EUDs and member state embassies. As a CSO in a partner country, the Gender Action Plan is a great way forward and entry point for you to engage with the EU on gender equality and help ensure that the EU is delivering commitments set in GAP II. The entry points to engage with your EUD on gender are:

- **Gender analysis**: submit your reports and gender analysis, organise briefings (or push the EUD to organise these), and advocate for relevant sub-objectives. Gender analysis is mandatory for EUDs, and they will welcome support from local civil society to get this right. This should be the basis to inform all new programming in country, so it is a powerful tool.
- **Policy and/or sectoral dialogues** (e.g. budget support or agriculture or infrastructure): advocating for proper gender mainstreaming and implementation of international commitments on gender equality and women's rights.
- **Annual obligatory reporting processes**: hold EUDs accountable for delivering on GAP II, asking them how they are implementing the Gender Action Plan, how much they are spending on each pillar of the plan, what their gender-disaggregated data are for the programming they fund, and so on. They usually have to provide those details to Brussels in February to March.
- **Become an implementing partner**: suggest how you and/or your partners/networks/alliances can deliver particular priority targeted actions on gender equality if funded by the EU.
- **Influence policies, projects and programmes to include a gender perspective**: whenever there is a consultation or you hear of a new policy, project or programme being developed, be the one that brings in a gender perspective. Getting known as the gender expert can also help you to get contacted to implement gender programmes.

BOX B: GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP GROUP: THE GOOD PRACTICE FROM MOZAMBIQUE

The contents of the EU Country Roadmap for Mozambique entail an analysis of the civil society national context (including enabling environment frameworks, roles and capacity of different actors). The Roadmap for Mozambique contains also an assessment of the EU and its Member States actions at the country level. In terms of drafting process, in October 2014, the CSOs mapping study was launched. The Roadmap Group worked on, published and shared a **template** (known as “**La Brochura**”) for small and medium NGOs active in Mozambique, where each of them could input with its financing sources and mechanisms, as well as advocacy programmes and specific projects.

In January-February 2015, CSOs active at the country and local level were consulted; while in May 2015 the study was finally published. The mapping exercise was then presented to the group of donors active in Mozambique – which later became officially the Roadmap partners group, composed by around 30 members (EU, EU Member States present in the country, but also USA, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Japan, UN Women). The Roadmap group held a wide consultation with CSOs; subsequently developed the Country Roadmap and worked out the second edition of “Programa de Apoio aos Actores Nao Estatais em Moçambique” (PAANE), targeting CSOs national platforms.

In June 2015, the Country Roadmaps was published. The Country Roadmap is planned to be revised in 2020 – aiming to give more space and include new perspectives from the EU for CSOs.

To recap, to get to develop a programme for support to Mozambican CSOs, the steps were: to conduct a mapping study, to develop a general strategy with all partners, to hold a consultation with meetings in all Mozambican regions. EUD engagement with Civil Society in Mozambique developed especially through national platforms.

In parallel to the Roadmap, the EU Gender Action Plan I (adopted in 2009) was also implemented in the years 2010-2015. In this framework, the EUD in Mozambique promoted the creation of a Gender working group to strengthen EU and its Member States coordinating and mainstreaming EU GAP. Coordination was provided for the annual report on GAP I indicators. The group met to discuss, reflect and strategize, according to the issues and the needs, on how gender issues could be enhanced from an EU perspective at Mozambique level.

In the framework of EU GAP I, it was compulsory for EUDs and Member States to conduct mandatory gender analysis: therefore, a Gender Country assessment was launched to

analyse and map existing actions and programmes. For this, the Government of Mozambique also was involved in the process. Additionally, national organisations engaged in the Gender Country assessment.

When it comes to implementation, to keep high Civil Society participation, the Roadmap group agreed on joining the two existing working groups (Civil Society and Gender), creating the “Gender and Citizenship Group” – which now deals not only with projects for Civil Society, but also as interlocutor for the EU on gender-related issues. Its objectives are to widen the understanding of gender-related major topics; but also to promote also coordination through the CSO Country Roadmap and the GAP implementation and reporting.

The programme of the group developed a list of topics to discuss yearly. The group organizes 3 meetings a year (3h each): at each meeting, CSOs present their activities, a study and/or a project and field of expertise, but also their positions on the topics there are doing advocacy around. As example, during the first meeting, the **JOINT** (Mozambican NGOs network) was introduced and they presented the work they are doing around the new national law on the associations, which includes clauses on INGOs.

In terms of proposed topics for 2019, it is possible to find a list below:

GENDER:

1. the proposal law on early marriage;
2. women’s movement on national reconciliation and peace building;
3. state of affairs on advocacy for abolition of decree 39/2003.

CSO SPACE AND ADVOCACY:

1. CSO position on the decentralisation process;
2. presentation of cases study on alternative citizen movements;
3. youth engagement.

Worth to mention is that each time that the EUD Ambassador or its CSOs focal point move around the country (e.g. to monitor a project), the EUD organizes ad hoc meetings with the civil society active in that region. These meetings deal with both funding opportunities and dialogue with civil society active at the local level, and take place about every two months. These meetings, however, are a good practice that show that the implementation of the EU Country Roadmaps are not only about setting up structures and strategy, but also promoting a mindset that highlights the importance of the dialogue with Civil Society in every possible opportunity.

B. The Human Rights Country Strategies: an opportunity for CSOs to engage with the EUDs on human rights issues

THE ACTION PLAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY: EU'S POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

To implement the EU human rights and democracy agenda as reflected in the **2012 “Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy”**, the **“EU human rights guidelines”**, council conclusions and country strategy papers, an **Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy** was adopted for the period 2015–2019 and seeks to **promote and protect human rights and support democracy in EU external action**.

CONTENT OF THE ACTION PLAN

The action plan covers a wide range of topics: children's rights, gender equality, women's and girls' rights and empowerment, electoral processes, torture, ill treatment, death penalty, etc. It also details the EU's commitment to invigorate support to human rights defenders and promote, monitor and defend civil society space in order to address threats to it. The EU recognises the key role that CSOs and human rights defenders can play in contributing to the creation of a safe and enabling environment

and therefore encourages CSOs to support the EU in promoting its human rights-based approach.

ENTRY POINTS TO ENGAGE WITH THE EUDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

In view of the adoption of the **2020–2025 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy**, consultations with CSOs should be organised by EUDs. We would therefore advise CSOs to contact the EUD's human rights focal point to get further information on the consultation process in country and to look into opportunities for engagement. However, you could have access to the document through the human rights focal point of the EUD should you wish to have further information on the content.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY STRATEGIES: PUTTING THE ACTION PLAN INTO PRACTICE

In order to ensure effective implementation of the action plan on the ground, **each EUD must identify priority areas to feed into Human Rights Country Strategies**. These strategies seek to ensure that the fulfilment of human rights becomes an integral part of the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development policies and projects. Not all Human Rights Country Strategies are published online; publication depends on the sensitivity of human rights issues with the national government. **Human Rights Country Strategies are renewed annually**. It is therefore likely that the renewal process of the 2015–2019 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the Human Rights Country Strategies will be aligned and coordinated.

Box C: Policy Coherence for Development: impact of EU policies on sustainable development in your country

Several EU policies can have serious impacts on partner countries' sustainable development plans and their people's human rights: for example, from cheap subsidised exports that local food producers cannot compete with, to EU companies eating up precious natural resources or not paying taxes where they are due. It is often a case of giving with one hand and taking with the other. This could happen while the EU and its member states actually have a legal obligation to make their policies coherent with development objectives, as stated in the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). Key policy areas that have an impact on sustainable development include trade, energy, external relations, security, environment and climate change, migration, tax and finance, agriculture and fisheries policy, and others.

Hereof, several tools have been set up to help EU officials develop policies that do not have a negative impact. One important actor in this regard is the EUD. In their annual reporting to the EU headquarters, the EUDs have to report on the impact of EU policies on partner countries. EUDs are also encouraged to engage in regular discussions on this impact of EU policies with partner countries.

To this end, CONCORD believes EUDs, in close collaboration with civil society actors, should assess proactively the impact of non-development EU policies on the partner country they reside in, and they should do this throughout the policy-making cycle. This would allow for better EU policies that do not negatively but instead positively contribute to sustainable development in partner countries. Only then will the EU be able to ensure its policies are coherent with sustainable development.

Additionally, in order to halt such negative impacts of EU policies, it is important for civil society to flag these directly to the EUD, asking them to report this back to their headquarters. Depending on your concern, you might have to speak with different people in the delegation (see chapter 3). In each EUD, it is likely that a different member of staff is responsible for economics and trade, someone else for food and rural development, and yet another person for migration, fisheries and natural resources, all depending on the specific delegation's structure in your country.

For this reason, have a look at the official website of the EU Delegation in your country to see who best to approach. If you have any doubt, or it is the first time you are approaching your EUD, CONCORD suggests referring to the Head of Cooperation (see chapter 6 for tips on how to do this).

5. CSO RECOGNITION IN THE EU'S EXTERNAL ACTION: EU COUNTRY ROADMAPS



A. The EU's policy shift towards promoting CSOs as actors of governance and democracy

CSOS AS ACTORS OF GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

Recent processes and policy documents reflect the EU's new approach to CSOs. They converge in favour of a **greater role for civil society, especially as a key element of democratic governance, accountability and building just, equitable and inclusive societies**. These papers were adopted partly as an outcome of the **"Accra Agenda for Action"** (2008), the structured dialogue for an efficient partnership in development and the preparation of the **Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness** (2011)³, and partly as a follow-up and response to the so called "Arab spring" and the role played by civil society.

2012 EC COMMUNICATION "THE ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY"

In 2012, the EU decided to push its long-standing support for civil society a step further, via the EC Communication entitled **"The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations"**. This renewed and more ambitious approach intends to promote civil society's meaningful and structured participation in government policies and democratic processes, which was

deemed not to be sufficiently sustained and structured. The communication set **three priorities for EU support to CSOs**:

1. to enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries;
2. to promote a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in the domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes;
3. to increase local CSOs' capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively.

B. EU country roadmaps: a strengthened EU engagement with civil society

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY ROADMAPS

To translate its political commitment into practical action, the EU decided to develop and adopt in 2014 **"country roadmaps" for engagement with civil society**. These roadmaps present an EU analysis of the panorama of civil society, its enabling environment and the obstacles, constraints and opportunities faced by CSOs in each partner country. By identifying EU priorities when engaging with and supporting CSOs in partner countries, **the roadmaps are to improve the impact, predictability, visibility and consistency of EU actions**.

³ See indicator on the *CSO's enabling environment*.

ROADMAPS PROCESSES

Roadmaps are elaborated for countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the European neighbourhood. Mainly, EU member states and civil society have been engaged in the roadmaps development process. This is not a uniform process: the local context and, more relevant, the EUD's interest in CSOs, which will be dependent on the influence of the CSO focal point within the EUD, will have a huge impact on the structure and transparency of this process. Roadmaps are not always published on the EUD websites. Host countries and other donors can also adopt the roadmap if they wish to.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF THE ROADMAPS

The roadmaps are designed to facilitate common approaches by supporting joint programming on the ground and increasing EU collective impact and division of labour. Given the strong focus on joint programming now within all EUDs, the roadmaps process can be considered a success story. The roadmaps process facilitates a dialogue with CSOs, to set more structured relations, and a good analysis of CSOs in country, which is acknowledged as a reference document for the government, helping to improve transparency.

C. EU country roadmaps: towards a more structured and transparent dialogue with CSOs

UPDATED CONTENT

Given the 2030 Agenda adopted in 2015, as well as new EU priorities such as the new European Consensus for Development adopted in 2017, the need to update or re-draft the roadmaps was identified. With a focus on fragile countries, in line with the new EU priorities, the review was conducted on a case-by-case basis either updating the priorities or entirely re-drafting the document. The new roadmaps now include SDGs, with a focus on those considered as a priority and where the CSOs can play a role in achieving them. This helps in the discussion with partner countries where some networks can be put forward in a structured dialogue with the government.

UPDATED PROCESS

There is a clear push towards a more structured and formalised dialogue, ensuring inclusiveness and reaching out to new actors, including networks. DEVCO acknowledges that this, however, remains very dependant on the interest of the EUD in CSOs, but it is confident that this interest will increase with the inclusion of support to CSOs in the geographic programmes in the next EU budget (Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027).

CURRENT STATUS

Today, all **second-generation roadmaps (2018–2020)** are yet to be approved by the EU. Some EUDs are still in the process of finalising the renewed roadmaps, while others have completed the drafting and approval process. These should be made available on the website of your EUD for greater transparency and dialogue with CSOs, although not all are made public (see earlier point about sensitivity).



ENTRY POINTS WITH THE EUD ON THE CSO ROADMAPS

The content of the EU roadmaps is crucial for CSO; it allows them to be familiar with the **priorities of the EU's engagement with CSOs, which enables them to prepare for calls for proposals released under the CSO and local authorities thematic programme.** Moreover, the EU and its member states will ensure that the roadmap process becomes naturally embedded in EU programming and policies (such as the Human Rights Country Strategies) and that it is linked to other relevant processes at country level. Hence, **priorities retained in the roadmap will inform those of the upcoming EU programming cycle for the 2021–2027 Multiannual Financial Framework.**

For the **implementation of the roadmaps**, continuous consultation and dialogue with civil society is essential. Therefore, do not hesitate to engage in the process: you could either ask for a meeting to provide more information on older country roadmaps in the context of the underway survey, or you could ask for regular meetings to take stock on the implementation of the roadmaps.

The EU is currently conducting **a survey** to evaluate the first generation of roadmaps and to draw lessons learnt. The results will be consolidated in **a report** that will be published online and will serve to improve the implementation of the 2018–2020 roadmaps. If the country roadmap is not available online, do not hesitate to contact your EUD to get further information on the roadmap status or to ask for its publication online.

BOX D: MYANMAR: THE EU STRATEGY FOR A STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

BACKGROUND

The EU has been a long-term partner of CSOs in Myanmar. The EU has recognised the added value and crucial role in socio-economic development of the country and supports their efforts in the democratisation process. CSOs active at the country level in Myanmar are key actors in fostering peace and conflict resolution: the democratisation of the country is at the heart of their action, calling for growing transparent and accountable governance.

The EUD active in Myanmar has recently developed the “European strategy for a strengthened partnership with civil society in Myanmar (2018–2020)”. The strategy was built on the lessons learnt from the “Roadmap – EU engagement with civil society 2014–2017” implementation and in consultation with CSOs active at the country and local levels.

OBJECTIVES

As reported in the [strategy](#), the overarching objective is:

- to strengthen the EU–civil society partnership in Myanmar;
- to promote an enabling environment for CSOs’ participation in policy-making and policy implementation processes.

Additionally, one specific objective of the strategy is to foster the information sharing, communication and learning between the EU and CSOs. The EUD in Myanmar put much effort into the latter point: the dissemination of information about the EU–CSOs partnership aims to strengthen the institutional relations between the EU and CSOs through better communication and outreach, implementation arrangements and EU support for civil society. This will be possible and include (but not be limited to):

- creating networking spaces;
- providing centralised information (e.g. one website) about open calls for proposals managed by the EUD and/or its implementing partners (EU member states might eventually use this site for their calls for proposals);
- publishing an annual forecast of funding opportunities for CSOs from the EU (EUD and member states);
- establishing a database of EUD- and EU member state-funded projects, including projects/grants implemented through partnerships with other international partners, national and regional CSOs;
- publishing relevant EUD and EU member states news and reports to CSOs;
- publishing stories from the field.

In terms of practical tools and activities to reach out to CSOs, the EU strategy includes:

- web-based tools, such as Facebook, the EUD website, Myanmar Information Management Unit and other existing online platforms (e.g. development partners’ websites, Mohinga website) and email distribution;
- structured dialogues that provide a unique path of direct communication with key stakeholders to distribute information on the EU’s engagement with civil society and civil society work;
- public information outreach through press conferences on major initiatives and press releases;
- public events such as cultural events, civil society fairs, celebration of women’s day, human rights day, the international day for persons with disabilities, etc.

FUNDING

To ensure implementation of the EU strategy, the EU committed to make finances available. The financial resources will cover the costs of technical assistance, research and organisation of structured dialogues, civil society fairs and other communication and outreach events. The financial support to CSO projects will continue to be supplied through existing programmes (e.g. bilateral funding for EU focal sectors, thematic funding for civil society and local authorities and the EIDHR). To this end, more information will be available on the Myanmar EUD website and other information sources.

6. TIPS TO ENGAGE WITH EUDs

EUDs have repeatedly told CONCORD, as well as other international NGOs and local Southern CSOs, that they are **willing to interact with an engaged and informed civil society**. However, when CSOs have limited information to share and the conversation is focused on funding opportunities, meetings can be detrimental to CSOs profiles. This is why we have made **suggestions to prepare or improve the engagement with your EUD to make sure that you raise your organisation's profile**. This will ensure CSOs build strong relationships with the EUDs, which will enable them to raise their profile and ultimately access funding.



1. GET ORGANISED!

Make sure that **your organisation** and others are **aware of the programming process and opportunities for engagement** with the EUD. Even in a competitive environment this should be extremely useful to build the institutional knowledge of your organisation and interact with potential consortia partners, in a context where the EU seems to push for larger projects. You could:

- **coordinate your information⁴ gathering and responses** by grouping together, for example as a thematic network or general civil society grouping;
- consider **how you inform and communicate** with each other as civil society – what is appropriate for your context?
- find out where you can best find information on the activities of the EUD, such as via the delegation website;
- **engage with EU member states**. Through their embassies they may be willing to financially support initiatives aimed at facilitating dialogue or network building. This could be divided per NGO and per country. This could be particularly relevant in the context of joint programming. You might also be able to get assistance from the EUD;
- seek advice and information from international NGOs and national platforms in cases where you are unable to access this information from the EUD. Building your organisation's institutional knowledge is crucial.

⁴ This information entails background on current and future EU programmes in-country, on current and future EU project implemented, on coming future programmes and funding opportunities, as well as policy information and political updates.

⁵ This can include information on access to work visas for NGO workers, or issues related to access to areas of operation or challenges to implementing principled humanitarian and development work.



2. KNOW WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION HAS TO OFFER

To make sure that any interaction with the EUD helps raise your organisation's profile, you need to understand what type of information would be useful for them. Depending on the issues, meeting the EUD with other CSOs could be more effective. You could:

- **help build EUDs' understanding** to help them to engage with CSOs (or types of CSO, if there are particular needs) by sharing your experience and analysis of constraints for CSOs. You could also share your programmes at the country level, your reports, outcomes and the innovative approaches you use;
- **share information** on what is happening in **your context** to provide your EUD with joint recommendations, shared observations, common observances and coordinating contributions. This could be particularly useful for the EUD in the context of post-2020 programming. In general, EUDs are interested in CSOs' first-hand knowledge in specific geographic areas or on sectors;
- **share analysis and concerns⁵ with your EUD**, and invite them to events your organisation holds in relation to the political situation or policy issues that are important in your country or in EU/national government relations, at the national or regional level;
- share analysis and concerns about an enabling environment for civil society with the EUD, through the **EU country roadmap process**. Together with the EUD, see how they can represent these concerns in their political dialogue with governments. **Engage constructively and consistently** in the development, implementation and regular review of EU country roadmaps for civil society and human right strategies. Entry points could include the survey on the previous roadmaps or the takings stock on implementation of the roadmaps;
- make sure meetings are relatively regular to maintain and build the relationship, always bringing something new on the operational context or the needs identified.



3. KNOW WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION EXPECTS FROM THE EUD

This could include:

- **capacity building** for CSOs (e.g. accessing EU grants, EU grant management);
- **access to** EUD annual planning documents and announcements of consultations;
- **involvement of civil society** in discussing and monitoring the EU's budget support to the country you are in;
- **raising civil society concerns** with the national government and establishing a tripartite dialogue with the government;
- **financial support** for organising an advocacy coalition or platform, advocacy or campaigning projects, or seminars and public events;
- a variety of methods of engagement with CSOs depending on the context (e.g. ongoing dialogue, focus group discussion, e-consultation, roundtables, email groups, the EUD website, Facebook and Twitter)



4. KNOW WHAT THE EUD EXPECTS OF YOUR ORGANISATION

You could:

- be proactive in **strengthening networking and coordination** between different social actors (from local grass-roots to international NGOs);
- play a **prominent role in providing access to EUDs for local civil society** and making sure that all civil society actors are heard;
- **push for consultation and engagement in dialogue** on national development strategies, plans and policies through a coordinated approach;
- **strengthen** each other (**civil society**) in the **making and implementation of policy** by local and national government including, monitoring EU budget support, government spending, implementation and monitoring progress made by countries to achieve the SDGs (shadow reporting);

- provide information on the situation at grass-roots level and share intelligence;
- **share information and knowledge about the EU's** policies and programming to strengthen local civil society's capacity for advocacy and policy work (specifically for international NGOs).



5. KNOW WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION WILL NEED TO PUSH FOR

You could request:

- timely notification of consultations and other information from the EUD so that you (civil society) have time to prepare and coordinate;
- the right information at the right time and received by the right people;
- structured EUD engagement with a wide variety of civil society actors (not just a selected few).
- feedback following consultations (e.g. next steps/plans, outcomes, confirmed common understanding, processes for having the issues raised taken forward).
- feedback following allocations of grants, whether through calls for proposals or direct awards.

7. EU FUNDING TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

While the EU rules and regulations for grant management are fixed in the Financial Regulation (and interpreted for external cooperation through the “Procedures and practical guide”⁶) and the rules that set the scope, objectives and limits for the financial instruments have a clear legal base, the interpretation is often more fluid.

Trends that impact how the financial instruments are interpreted (and subsequently the programming). In the EU context, these are often stimulated by the following:

- political influence from the European Parliament;
- changes in how the individual EU members states are working on external development (e.g. influencing thinking and ways of working in the EC);
- global initiatives (such as the SDGs);
- changing needs and requirements for showing accountability to taxpayers for funds spent;
- other changes in the sector that impacts what we do and how we work (e.g. responding to increased scrutiny on how CSOs are working with children and vulnerable adults).

Sometimes the trends are opposing. For example, the EC pushes for larger projects that can work at scale with a corresponding desire for more local ownership and direct financial and capacity-building support to local civil society.

In terms of EU policy and project programming, below are some of the anticipated trends CONCORD has identified over the last few years:

- stable levels of support to CSOs, but accompanied by thematic, geographical and results-based conditionalities;
- stronger and more visible integration of the SDGs;
- increased focus on gender – specifically the inclusion of women and girls and issues of violence against women and girls;
- clearer linkages and integration of development projects with climate/environment responses;
- more explicit on the link between the targeting of fighting root causes of migration (with migration continuing to be an underlying trend) and development;
- closer alignment of development cooperation as a foreign policy and an internal security tool;
- EU pushing for increasing requirements on CSOs to be accountable, have clear processes and administration;
- donors become more “management orientated” than “partnership orientated” – a shift to a more service-delivery or works relationship.



- a desire to support grass-roots CSOs in EU partner countries, but having to balance this against capacity at the EUD level to manage small grants and issues or accountability/risk management;
- more explicit linkages with the private sector touching on all aspects of development themes.

The implications that these trends have on CSOs are many. CONCORD has singled out the following:

- it is important to make sure that your organisation is clear on how it is working in alignment with the SDGs;
- it is essential your organisation thinks about the climate/environment. You could raise the question if there are elements to your ways of working that will need to change or ask if you already have a good practice to showcase;
- it is possible to spot that the increasing use of financial support to third parties mechanism as a way of supporting small and grass-roots civil society. In this case, it is important that your organisation inquires if it is a realistic partner for the EU or better to explore how you can access funding through the third party support mechanism;
- increasing risk is being passed on to CSO partners in terms of accountability (e.g. financial, social such as professionalism, and co-financing). For this reason, if you work with an EU grant, please reflect on how you are prepared to manage the risk elements;
- if you work with local partners or grass-roots organisations, consider what kind of relationship you want to develop and how this might be impacted by different types of funding.

⁶ See the latest version of the *EU Procedures and practical guide*, 2018.

8. THE PROPOSED EU BUDGET 2021-2027

Disclaimer: discussions on the future EU budget and on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) are ongoing. Therefore the information in this chapter is subject to change. It will be updated when the new EU instrument for international cooperation and development has been adopted.

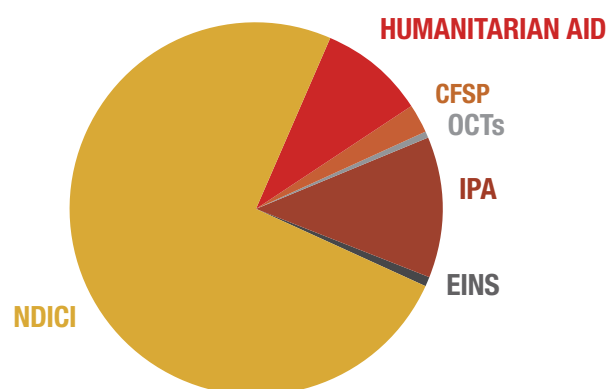
At the end of 2020, the EU's current long-term budget or Multiannual Financial Framework will come to an end. Therefore, a new budgetary cycle will be set up for the period 2021–2027. This chapter gives an overview of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027 with a specific focus on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)⁷ and EUD involvement in the programmatic process to help CSOs identify entry points for effective engagement with the EU and EU member states in country.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE EU MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2021–2027

The next EU budget will have seven headings allocated to different areas of the EU's work and priorities. These are:

1. Single market, innovation and digital
2. Cohesion and values
3. Natural resources and environment
4. Migration and border management
5. Security and defence
6. **Neighbourhood and the world** – the budget line that focuses on the EU external relations, including humanitarian and development aid
7. European Public Administration.

The main priorities and overall budgetary framework for the EU's external action are set out in heading six: 'Neighbourhood and the world'. The main instrument for development cooperation will be the **NDICI**. This will be the EU's main tool to contribute to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development, prosperity, peace and stability. However, it is also aimed at promoting EU interests. This heading also includes funds for humanitarian aid, the Common Foreign and Security Policy, support to overseas countries and territories, and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.



OVERVIEW OF THE NEW EXTERNAL INSTRUMENT NDICI

In the current proposal, the NDICI groups together most of the existing instruments for external development cooperation and includes the European Development Fund (EDF), which is currently outside the Multiannual Financial Framework. The NDICI consists of geographic programmes, thematic programmes, rapid-response actions and an unallocated reserve.

GEOGRAPHIC PROGRAMMES	THEMATIC PROGRAMMES	RAPID-RESPONSE ACTIONS
(a) Neighbourhood (b) Sub-Saharan Africa (c) Asia and the Pacific (d) Americas and the Caribbean	(a) Human rights and democracy (b) CSOs (c) Stability and peace (d) Global challenges	(a) Stability and conflict prevention in situations of urgency, emerging crisis, crisis and post-crisis (b) Resilience and linking humanitarian and development aid (c) Foreign policy needs
Unallocated funds (or "cushion")		

⁷ Please note that the information provided in this section reflects the current proposal on the next EU budget, which is subjected to changes upon negotiations between different EU bodies. A final agreement is expected by the end of 2019.

The geographic programmes will have greater importance, as around 75% of these funds will be channelled through the geographic envelope. Thematic programmes and rapid-response actions will be complementary to geographic programmes.

One of the key principles of the NDICI is flexibility. Given the complexity of the current global challenges, the EU wants to be able to react swiftly to evolving needs and priorities, amongst others, via a flexibility cushion.

EUD INVOLVEMENT IN ADOPTING NDICI PROGRAMMATIC AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

The proposed NDICI policy and funding priorities will be set through **EUD ownership, joint programming** between the EUDs and embassies of member states present in a given country, as well as **dialogue with the partner country and involvement with other key stakeholders such as civil society**, academia, the private sector and local authorities.

EUDs are involved in different policy processes, which will all have an impact on the programming of the future development instrument. To ensure that civil society views are reflected in the priorities identified by the EUD, effective in-country engagement around the processes listed below will be crucial.

- Preparation of **programmes for the future new EU financial instrument**. First steps: an internal assessment of prioritisation has been sent by the EUD to DEVCO at the end of April 2019 for review. End of June 2019: a short concept note will be submitted by the EUDs to DEVCO.

In this context, sharing context analysis or needs assessments and suggested approaches to address challenges or identified gaps could be very useful.

- **Joint programming between the EU and member states** is listed as a preferential method for the next Multiannual Financial Framework: coordinating in-country engagement with EU member states according to respective international NGO state of origin could be very useful.
- Revision of the **EU country roadmaps** with civil society, which could cross with other processes (e.g. in some countries, CSOs have been involved in joint programming, but there exists a wide divergence between countries).
- **Multi-stakeholder approach in EU strategies and plans: in 107 countries, action documents on the private sector** have already been drafted. Sharing with the EUD your experience of engaging with the private sector in development work could be very useful to access the action document.
- New **Africa–Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs**, which entails job creation and growth compact and implies that in-country consultations on supply chains (and other topics, including the External Investment Plan) will be carried out. Sharing information and updates on programmatic achievements and challenges in job creation and growth could be an entry point to be involved in consultations.

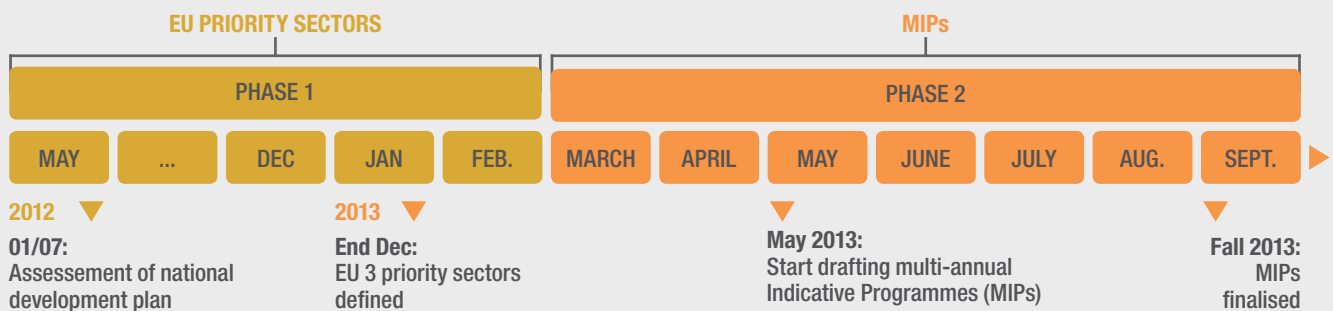
It is therefore important that civil society is considered as a valid interlocutor in these processes and that its views are reflected in the different priorities identified by the EUD.



9. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE 2014-2020 PLANNING CYCLE AND PRELIMINARY STEPS FOR THE NEXT

Disclaimer: the key steps of the next EU programming cycle have not yet been shared publicly. Therefore, the information in this chapter is subject to change. This paragraph will be updated later in 2019, as soon as relevant information is made available.

GEOGRAPHIC PROGRAMMING PROCESS: PHASES AND TIMELINE



THE EU 2014–2020 PROGRAMMING CYCLE

This chapter gives a sense of **what the EU programming is about**. This paragraph refers to the period 2014–2020, which is coming to an end. Therefore, it will not be comprehensive of the future of the EU budget. Still, it can help CSOs that are active at the local and country levels to see the EUD engagement opportunities in the current programming.

The EU introduced a **process for programming its development cooperation assistance** under the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2014–2020, and under the 11th EDF. The objective of the programming is to identify future areas for cooperation in each country or region for the seven-year period, in consultation with national governments and, as far as possible, in line with their national development plans. For 2014–2020, the **EUDs played a crucial role in the programming process**; they prepared and proposed the EU strategy for engaging with a partner country to their Brussels headquarters. During the process, they were required to consult civil society.

The **distinction** for the EU budget 2014–2020 was **between geographic and thematic programming**. During the first phase of the EU geographic instruments⁸ programming, each EUD had to identify its three priority sectors for 2014–2020. One EUD requirement was to consult CSOs when identifying the three sectors. Many CSOs engaged in these consultations and were closely involved in the discussions on the priority sectors. The second and most important phase of the programming process, during which EUDs developed a **Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP)**, detailed the EU support for the three chosen priority sectors.

The MIP was essential; it explained how the EU would support the selected sectors, with which instruments, and in which area of the country. It was a great opportunity for CSOs to have a say in the implementation modalities of EU development aid, in accordance with the country's national development plan or poverty reduction strategy paper, and opinions of local organisations. It was also the moment where EUDs could benefit most from the in-country expertise of CSOs. At that time, CONCORD strongly recommended CSOs to be proactive in approaching the delegations. Several organisations

⁸ The EU geographic instruments for 2014–2020 are:

- European Development Fund (EDF) for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
- Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), for Latin America, Asia and Central Asia
- European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)

participated in the first phase of this process and remained involved afterwards. Coordination and information sharing with international and local NGOs at country level strengthened the advocacy approach.

For the thematic instruments⁹ programming process, the headquarters in Brussels started drafting **MIPs for all of the thematic instruments**. Afterward, for these instruments, the EC shared to draft MIPs and gave CSOs the opportunity to provide feedback.

THE NEXT EU PROGRAMMING CYCLE: PRELIMINARY STEPS AND THE ROLE FOR EUDS¹⁰

Now that the EU budget for 2021–2027 is under discussion, **some steps for the post-2020 EU development cooperation programming are being taken**. Although it is still early to point out how programming of the future EU instrument for development cooperation will take place, some preliminary work that will feed into it is underway.

This stage, also known as the “**analytical phase**”, aims to **develop strategic assessments about partner countries and regions**. The main questions the Brussels headquarters would like to receive responses on are the following:

- What are the EU’s key foreign policy interests and strategic priorities in different countries and regions?
- What are the shared agendas with EU partner countries and regions?
- How can EU ODA best pursue EU interests, promote EU values and support countries’ transition to sustainable development?

To do so, the Brussels headquarters have screened strategic documents, **engaged with EUDs to develop shared strategic visions**, and consulted with several DGs in the EC. Additionally, this work has been done as far as possible with EU member states. In particular, **DG DEVCO, in collaboration with the EUD heads of cooperation, is now defining EU’s cooperation priorities**. This exercise points to identify shared agendas with partner countries (mainly based on SDGs dialogues), identify value chains (primarily Jobs and Growth Compacts) and simulate joint programming (which will be increasingly important for the period 2021–2027).

Once the shared priorities are defined, they must be validated politically by the new EC, which will take office in November 2019. Only when the EC gives a green light to the resource allocation formula and common political cooperation priorities will the formal programming cycle will start. The beginning of the cycle is planned to start in January 2020. The cycle should consist of the following steps:

- the headquarters in Brussels send the programming guidelines to the EUDs;
- the EUDs prepare the draft MIPs. This includes: country analysis, multi-stakeholder consultations, coordination with EU member states (joint programming), and dialogue with partner countries;
- regional seminars;
- the headquarters in Brussels and EUDs have a dialogue on the drafted MIPs;
- the preparation and adoption of EC decisions.

The cycle process should be finalised by the end of 2020. The next EU budget is planned to start in January 2021.

It is, however, difficult at this stage to reveal the exact process of the next EU development cooperation process for the period 2021–2027. This is because there are still open questions and variables that might have an impact: the negotiations on the next EU budget, Brexit, the European Parliament elections and the appointment of a new EC will influence the next programming cycle.

⁹ The EU thematic funding instruments for 2014–2020 are:

- CSO-local authority instrument
- Global Public Goods and Challenges, which covers the following thematic issues:
 - Environment and climate change
 - Food security
 - Migration and asylum
 - Sustainable energy
 - Human development (social sectors, health/education)
- European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
- Instrument for Stability (IfS)

¹⁰ This section is mainly based on the European Centre for Development Policy Management infographic “**NDICI geographic (bilateral) programming**”.

BOX E: ECUADOR: A GOOD PRACTICE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT AND JOINT PROGRAMMING

BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

In Ecuador, the process that led to the publication of the country roadmap 2014–2017 and its subsequent 2018–2020 update can be considered a paradigmatic example of good practices for all countries.

Firstly, the roadmap in Ecuador was an initiative conceived and developed jointly by the EUD, EU member states in the country, and a series of local, regional and international organisations, aiming to consolidate an informed, participatory and representative civil society able to face emerging challenges from a changing political context.

The roadmap 2014–2017 was the guiding document that indicated the common strategic framework adapted to the current context and its specific challenges. It was also an important cooperation strategy between the EUD, development agencies of the member states and CSOs, putting in place coordination mechanisms that allowed non-duplication of actions and exchange of experiences.

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN EUD, MEMBER STATES AND CSOS

The adoption of the roadmap 2014–2017 was the starting point of a regular process of consultation between the EUD, member states and CSOs. Within the framework of five jointly identified priorities, four plenary assemblies were held with participation from more than 70 organisations, representing different sectors of the civil society, including the indigenous population. Within the assemblies, four working groups were created that met on a regular basis, preparing outcomes that would later be shared in the assembly. This division of labour has allowed the CSOs not only to take ownership of the process, but also to share successful experiences with other countries in the region (Brazil and Mexico).

In the assembly of July 2017 (during which the roadmap was updated), due to the changes in context in Ecuador, participatory organisations indicated new priorities for the strategic engagement with CSOs:

- a) enabling normative framework
- b) citizen participation in public management
- c) capacity building of CSOs.

As a result, three working groups were formed, one for each priority. Group one “Enabling normative framework” (led by Grupo Faro) succeeded in proposing amendments to the law for the creation, management and dissolution of social organisations (Decree N.193 23.10.2017). The relevance of the initiative must be understood within the Ecuadorian political context, in which the succession of statist inclinations by the central government has led to shrinking the participation spaces and to the devaluation of the subsidiary role of the CSOs. Group two “Citizen participation in public management” (led by Fundación Futuro Latino Americano) promoted a public forum of intersectoral dialogue for

sharing experiences and capitalising best practices. Group three “capacity building of CSOs” (led by Fundación Esquel) focused on creating a school of citizenship to strengthen CSOs and draw up a catalogue of the services offered by the CSOs, to complement the mutual work.

The roadmap 2018–2020 was issued in November 2017. Within the general framework of Agenda 2030, it incorporates a new perspective aimed at revitalising rural areas, giving priority to the decentralisation of information and processes. It focuses on the most vulnerable populations and prescribes that gender perspective should be mainstreamed in any action.

The call for proposals on the CSOs’ local authority budget line launched by the EUD in April 2018 reflected the agreed priorities to enhance the role of the CSOs in public policy. The funds have been largely allocated to enhance the leading role of the CSOs in the post-earthquake reconstruction. Specifically, Group 3 recommended that they: “use existing legal instruments in the country so that citizens can be informed of the instruments and improve their use to monitor the use of reconstruction funds”. Furthermore, thanks to the boost of the CSOs local authority thematic programme, the Ecuadorian Confederation of Civil Society Organizations was created, bringing together more than 100 organisations and seeking legal personality recognition to actively present proposals of law.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the roadmap process has strengthened the organisational and communication capacities of the CSOs by enabling the creation of dialogue platforms, advocacy proposals and shared experiences at local, provincial and regional levels. As the roadmap of Ecuador is a regular process, it has updated priorities, keeping the same objectives that had been set from the onset but adapting them to the new conditions of the specific context. At the same time, the process has shown ownership by CSOs and a greater capacity to face new challenges.

The EUD in Ecuador can also be considered an example of good practice in joint programming and multi-stakeholder consultations. The EUD has drafted the country analysis for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027 (the first draft was sent to the headquarters on 25 April 2019) in consultation with the member states present in the country: France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom. In June the EUD will launch the consultation process with all stakeholders: the national government, the CSOs and the private sector. The final country analysis and a concept note will be prepared on the basis of the consultations and sent to the headquarters by the end of June. It is recommended that all local partners contact the EUD to be involved in the consultation process.

APPENDIX: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

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