

## Terms of Reference

# **Study on EU funding delivery mechanisms supporting civil society organisations (CSOs) as key actors in development**

## **1. Purpose**

A study will be produced in order to inform CONCORD's constituency on the current changes and new features being introduced in how the EU provides development funding to CSOs.

The study will provide an overview of news and trends in EU funding mechanisms, based on existing factual information. Where facts are not available in EU documents, information will be sought through interviews with EU officials, CSO staff and other relevant stakeholders. It will also present the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders on how these changes could affect different types of CSOs and their relationship with the EU. The study will have a twofold purpose: It could be used as a tool by CONCORD's members in their internal discussions to help them understand the implementation of the new funding modalities and their possible implications, and as a source of information for CSOs wishing to engage with EU institutions.

What is not the purpose?

In order for the study to be focused, feasible, relevant and clearly limited there are some points of interest to CSOs that will not be covered:

- The study will not formulate any advocacy recommendations regarding delivery mechanisms of EU funding: The main purpose of this study is to provide information and inputs for future discussions.
- The study will not provide advice on how to prepare successful applications for EU funding. Instead, the study will help CSOs understand how different EU funding delivery mechanisms work and provide information that will help CSOs interested in EU funding analyse what the new trends in EU funding mechanisms will mean for them.
- The study will not cover funding delivery mechanisms aimed specifically at Local Authorities (LAs), but will focus instead only on those mechanisms relevant for CSOs.

## **2. Background**

The EC's 2012 Communication on the role of CSOs in EU external action defines the EU's approach to working with CSOs. Prior to this Communication, the European Commission held an ambitious dialogue with multiple stakeholders including CSOs, LAs and member states during 2010-2011, the Structured Dialogue. One of the more direct outputs of this dialogue were 12 technical fiches on EU aid delivery and selection mechanisms suitable for effective support to CSO and LA actors. Many of those changes discussed were introduced in the programming for the budget period 2014-2020. The year 2015 will be the year when many of the new modalities will be put into practice (since 2014, the first of the new MFF, was essentially a planning year).

The introduction of new funding delivery mechanisms has generated both interest and questions in the CSO community, which is why the FDR working group of CONCORD has planned to study the topic and seeks to provide information to its members and partners. FDR members have been consulted on the key questions they would like the study to answer, and these ToR have been developed based on their comments.

### 3. Target groups

Primary stakeholders and users of the study are:

- CONCORD members' staff involved in institutional resource mobilization or policy work related to EU funding, both in Europe and in regional/ country offices.
- CSO programme staff in EU partner countries, particularly in organisations, platforms and networks who represent a wider constituency, who may be in contact with EU delegations.

These are strategic target groups in order to reach other interested CSOs, since they often provide training and advice to colleagues, members and/or partners on issues related to EU funding. The primary target groups will be encouraged to share the study's findings with local organisations and their partners, members and colleagues.

Secondary stakeholders: The study may also be of use to target groups within the EU institutions as it will provide an easy to read overview of the issue, as well as increase their understanding of CSOs' perspectives. This group includes DEVCO staff, EU delegation staff, and representatives of member states and the European Parliament.

### 4. Key questions

The study will answer the following key questions:

#### **1. *Why are new features and funding delivery mechanisms being introduced by the EU in the way it supports CSOs?***

Introduction to:

- The background to the new delivery mechanisms mentioned in the 2014-2020 programmes: why have they been introduced?
- The reasons behind the EU prioritising certain modalities in certain situations.
- Where and when are decisions regarding funding modalities made?
- Some of the inherent challenges in the choice of modalities of the EU's support to CSOs (recognizing that different CSOs have different interests and operational structures; that different approaches and mechanisms may be better suited to different stakeholders; striking a balance between demands for agile, cost-effective, and efficient EU processes, transparency and accountability, and the time and resources needed to support a broad and diverse group of civil society actors; how will the EU attempt to create an appropriate mix of modalities; the need to follow up the impact of the new modalities).

#### **2. *What are the different funding delivery mechanisms available and what do we know about how they are implemented/ will be implemented?***

A number of approaches and funding delivery mechanisms will be described, in regard to questions such as:

- What are the new funding approaches and delivery mechanisms?
- What rules and procedures apply to them?
- What funding modalities are foreseen under different funding instruments?
- Who are the intended beneficiaries for different funding delivery mechanisms?
- What are the criteria needed to assess the pros and cons of each mechanism/approach?
- Examples of where funding mechanisms are being used
- How to determine whether your organisation will be able to access different funds

#### **3. *How can CSOs navigate the landscape of changing EU funding delivery mechanisms?***

Reflections by different experts and stakeholders on strategies that CSOs can adopt in response to trends regarding:

- Size of projects and grants

- Role and space of CSOs in programmes that involve other stakeholders (UN, WB, the private sector) such as the GPGC, and in multi-stakeholder approaches.
- Changes in local CSOs access to EU funding
- Predictability and timing
- Changes in specific sectorial areas of interest
- Entry points for accessing funding and how to get more information

## 5. Outline

- **Executive summary (1 page)**  
Think about what an organisation needs when they engage with the EU on funding!
- **Foreword (1 page)**
  - An overall picture of trends in EU funding
- **Introduction (3-4 pages) (very short overview/ mention of each point)**
  - The wider programming framework, how the EU funds CSOs
  - Agenda for Change
  - The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations
  - The Structured Dialogue
  - Devolution to EU delegations and decentralised management
  - EC and EUD human and administrative resources
  - Changes in EU support to CSOs and impact - issues and challenges
- **Changes in EU funding delivery mechanisms (8-10 pages)**
  - Trends affecting how the EU provides funding to CSOs:
    - Multi-stakeholder approaches
    - Private sector involvement
    - Supporting local and grassroots actors
    - Geographic funding and CSOs
    - Global public goods
    - Flagships
  - Core funding
  - Programme funding/ FPAs
  - Regranting/ Financial support to third parties
  - Ringfencing in calls for proposals
  - Follow-up grants
  - Direct awards
  - Co-financing
  - Pool funding/ Trust funds
  - DEAR – funding to development education and awareness raising
  - Blending
- **Reflections on the changes in EU funding approaches and delivery mechanisms (8-10 pages)**  
Comments by CSOs on their experiences, for example (to be decided):
  - a grassroots group commenting on the trend of more subgranting
  - a CSO with experience of working with direct award of grants
  - a CSO managing a subgranting scheme
  - a network/ platform in Europe commenting on DEAR requirements
  - a CSO with experience of funding from one of the flagships already in effect

- a local CSO in the role of main beneficiary, including reflections on the role of INGOs as co-applicants
  - etc. (list preliminary and not exhaustive)
- **Conclusions (1 page)**
  - **Appendices: Bibliography used and list of interviewees with contact details**

## 5. Participants

The ToR and preparation of the study will be coordinated by a small group of CONCORD members, with regular consultations with the CONCORD FDR working group/Instruments sub-group. Contact person in the FDR working group is Åsa Thomasson, [asa.thomasson@concord.se](mailto:asa.thomasson@concord.se). Contact person in the CONCORD Secretariat is Vania Freitas, [vania.freitas@concordeurope.org](mailto:vania.freitas@concordeurope.org).

Contributions will be sought, either in the form of written papers or by interviews, from:

- CSO representatives with resource mobilization expertise and experience of different EU funding delivery mechanisms.
- DG DEVCO and EUDs, to gather information, lessons learnt from different types of grants, and recommendations for CSOs in country.
- Member states, to get other views on the changes in the EU funding approaches and mechanisms, and lessons learnt on effective support to CSOs by MS.
- (Possibly also short interviews with private sector actors or actors in the UN system on trends and funding approaches when it comes to roles of different development actors).
- A CSO or think-tank who could contribute to the overall picture of trends in EU funding mechanisms.

An external consultant will write the study based on a desk study, interviews and input from CONCORD members.

## 6. Approach

Texts will be drafted by voluntary contributors and by an external consultant.

The method and timeline of the work of the external consultant will be developed more in detail in dialogue between CONCORD and the consultant.

The external consultant will be responsible for desk research, interviews in Brussels and by phone or skype with EU delegations, member state representatives etc., and preparing the report. No travel is foreseen.

## 7. Timeline (tentative, to be adjusted together with the consultant)

- Circulate draft ToR to FDR ISG members: 15 April
- Crowdfunding: 15 April-25 May
- Decision on final version of ToR based on the input from members and budget available: 25 May
- Identify and recruit voluntary contributors: 15 May-26 June
- Recruit external consultant: May-June
- Document review: July-Sept
- Interviews: July-Sept

- Deadline for texts from contributors: 15 Sept
- First draft: 30 Sept
- Comments by CONCORD: 5 Oct
- Final draft: 12 Oct
- Consultations with stakeholders on the draft: 13-25 Oct
- Final version ready: 1 Nov
- Copy-editing: 2-8 Nov
- Layout: 9-15 Nov
- Release and plan+activities for dissemination: End of Nov

The total number of working days of the external consultant is expected to be 15-20 working days spread out over the period from July 1<sup>st</sup> to Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. The timeline can be subject to modifications according to agreement between the consultant and CONCORD.

## **8. Dissemination**

The study is expected to be approximately 25-30 pages, excluding appendices.

The study will be available online on CONCORDs web page.

A detailed dissemination plan to distribute the study to the CONCORD constituency and partners will be developed, and could contain: a media and social media plan, webinars, accompanying presentation materials, distribution to relevant stakeholders, etc.

## **9. Branding**

This will be a CONCORD report with CONCORD logo on the front cover. All CONCORD members will be listed on the back cover, unless otherwise indicated (national coalitions of NGOs not officially members of CONCORD that have contributed to the report will also be listed on the back as was the practice in previous reports).

## **10. External consultant**

Will provide:

- Expression of interest explaining how they would conduct the study (e.g. methodology and approach, including the documentation to use, interviews or surveys to perform, data to collect, etc.)
- Outputs and deliverables
- Qualifications and expertise
- Timeline
- Fees and proposed budget