

Assessment of Proposals for FSTP Implementors

16 – 18 April 2024, Pristina, Kosovo*

WORKSHOP REPORT



Prepared by:

Andreja Tonč, Key Expert for Capacity Building, EU TACSO 3

Sara Salihu, Country Coordinator for Kosovo, EU TACSO 3

Contents

Introduction	3
Getting acquainted and identification of key issues	4
What is the KEY (crucial) in the assessment process?	5
Case studies from the current practice	8
Simulation of the evaluation committee meeting.....	10
Feedback provided by participants.....	11
Conclusions and recommendations.....	15

Introduction

The Second Annual FSTP Community of Practice (CoP) Meeting, held in November 2023, concluded that a key challenge faced by FSTP implementers is ensuring fair, informed, and transparent selection of subprojects and the effective functioning of proposal evaluation committees.

This issue was discussed in more detail in the breakout session: “Development of inclusive selection criteria to reach out to more CSOs who have limited experience and financial capacity”¹ where different experiences from practice on the assessment of proposals and selection of grant beneficiaries have been presented, this led to a recommendation that further capacity-building activities would be desirable to improve the assessment and selection process.

The following topics were proposed for further capacity building activities:

- The role of the Evaluation Committee in the assessment of proposals.
- How to select appropriate Evaluation Committee members?
- How to prepare Evaluation Committee members for their role.
- Do we have to monitor Evaluation Committee members and how?
- How far we can go in supporting applicants (training, mentoring, help desk)?
- Good quality proposal vs a good idea with poor capacities.
- Key stages of the assessment process.
- Key challenges of the assessment process.



Therefore, the EU TACS 3 project has organised a live workshop for the FSTP Implementors from the Western Balkans and Türkiye to promote good practice in managing the sub-granting selection process.

The workshop was implemented in period 16 – 18 April 2024 in Pristina, Kosovo* for a group of 28 participants (16 women and 12 men). The participants' previous experience varied from highly experienced professionals with over 20 years of working experience in grant management to young professionals who had just completed their studies and started to work for a CSO FSTP implementer. Thus, participants were encouraged to share their knowledge by presenting examples from practice and by asking questions, doubts and issues they are facing in everyday work.

To maximise the workshop's impact and applicability, a strong emphasis was placed on interactive and experiential learning. The experts who designed and implemented the workshop aimed to create a dynamic, participant-centred experience that not only facilitates a deeper understanding of the topics at hand but also fosters an environment of active engagement, collaboration, and practical application. By preparing participants for this immersive learning approach from the outset, we aim to enhance the capacity-building outcomes for all FSTP implementers involved.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

¹ More detailed information on the case studies presented and discussed can be found in the report of the event available in the [TACS library](#).

Getting acquainted and identification of key issues

The workshop started with welcoming words and a short presentation of the workshop's background and purpose by Ms Andreja Tonč, a Key Expert for Capacity Building under the EU TACSO 3 project. Shortly, the EU TACSO 3 support to the FSTP Community of Practice has been presented and reasons for designing and organising this workshop event.

Following this introduction, the participants were divided into small groups to get acquainted and share key issues from the practice of assessing proposals they are facing within the FSTP projects they are implementing.

The following key issues were reported. Each issue and the expert's response are presented below.

Key issues identified in the assessment of proposals:

Challenges in ensuring transparency and flexibility for grant beneficiaries

At the beginning of the grant-making process, we have big dreams and ideas on how to ensure the process will be transparent and will ensure that the best proposals are selected. This is, as should be, our honest and positive intentions towards the provision of good quality service. Therefore, we cannot play with the rules of the game. Flexibility and fair selection might be counterproductive and confusing. This might result in questioning our transparency in the process and especially equal treatment of applicants. If we are going to provide support to less experienced applicants, then we need to design the grant scheme around that capacity instead of “playing” with flexibility in the selection process.

Tensions in communication with grant beneficiaries



The issue reflects on communication we have as FSTP implementers with our colleagues from other CSOs who applied for grants under our project and have been rejected, or smaller amounts of funds have been awarded to them, or those implementing the grant but are not fulfilling our expectations in terms of the quality, fulfilling the contractual requirements etc.

In this situation, we must reflect on the important segment of the grant-making process, which is communication. Our grant-making system must include how we will communicate all aspects of the process including the rejection of not selected proposals, ensuring respect of standards in implementation of the projects supported and resolving openly issues faced.

To be a good FSTP implementer, we need to be aware of the borderline that differentiates when we partner with other CSOs and when we are taking responsibility for the EU funds. The same relates to the distinction of roles when we provide support as mentors, or through training events, etc. We cannot take responsibility for the quality of proposals, for the successes in the implementation phase, etc. Our responsibility is in the role of the FSTP implementer to ensure that projects contributing to the achievement of the objectives of our project are awarded and successfully implemented.

Discrepancy between applicants' stated credibility and actual situations

There are situations when the donor is informed that the actual situation of the particular applicant differs from the one stated in the submitted documentation. For example, misuse of funds from

another donor, underperformance in the implementation of the previous project, key staff members just resigning, etc.

As the contracting authority, the FSTP implementers have a right to ask for additional information prior to making the final decision on awarding the grants. However, we already asked for certain documents as part of the application procedure.

Furthermore, we need to ensure that requesting additional information will ensure respect for our principles and rules of the selection process and will lead to supporting us in justifying we have invested additional efforts to confirm the applicant has a proper capacity to implement the awarded project.

The selection process might include different phases, including asking for additional documents, conducting outreach, conducting a pre-award audit, etc., depending on our capacities and the grant-making system established (which then includes such an approach to the selection process).

Over-support for CSOs, particularly those lacking implementation capacities

The FSTP is part of the capacity-building process and, as such, expects us to invest certain efforts in strengthening those we are supporting. However, the level of support should differentiate if we awarded a grant in the value of 30,000.00 EUR for monitoring of polices and if we awarded a grant to a local community initiative in the value of 3,000.00 EUR. The point of the FSTP is not in the “babysitting” of our grant beneficiaries but in providing support that will result in the growth of our future partners. Once we provide help-desk and mentoring services, we have to ensure it is clear “how much” of that service is available and that the grant beneficiary is responsible for implementing their part of the contractual arrangement.

The presented issues above are just some of the key issues selected for the purpose of reporting and pointing out those messages that can help further in improving the FSTP practices. Among other issues listed are the lack of qualified staff and resources to offer attractive incentives for such staff, the limited information in the PRAG (the EU’s Practical Guide to procurement and contracting) on FSTP implementation, a need for simplification of procedures and excessive requirements by auditors etc. Not all issues listed relate exclusively to the assessment process. However, they are important for understanding the overall approach towards the FSTP implementation including the selection of applicants and assessment of proposals.

What is the KEY (crucial) in the assessment process?

The session started at the beginning of the second day of the workshop and included the reflection of the expert on the key issues reported the day before and some often situations observed to date in the grant-making/FSTP practice.

Human resources

In the past few years, the number of grant managers employed in CSOs in the region has grown. This is the result of the market needs and increase in employment (and production) of grant managers. However, what is also observed through communication with members of the Community of Practice is that grant managers are employed project-based and are often again without employment after completion of the FSTP projects, which usually last for 2 – 3 years.

Significant efforts are invested in building capacities of new grant managers, but due to the lack of funds within new projects, those resources are often lost and hired by other projects or organisations (often international with whom we usually can’t compete when talking about incentives).

We are facing here several issues:

- 1) **How to ensure proper team needed for efficient management of the grants** – the key challenge is how to justify expenses needed towards the donor (including number of staff members and competitive salaries);
- 2) **How to ensure our investment will last** – in terms of investment into human capital in area of grant management;
- 3) **How to adjust organisational attitude** - the grant management is perceived often within organisations as something we all are familiar with and not perceived as area that needs continuous development. Thus, those newly recruited, usually younger staff are lacking mentorship support, struggling with daily tasks in terms of the quantity of work and burden of communication with grant beneficiaries etc.

It is suggested that a discussion on these issues be opened within FSTP CoP to further explore the topic as such and exchange HR practices in relation to positions related to grant management.

Establishment and practicality of the grant management system

There is no successful grant-management without the system. The system includes already mentioned human resources and a detailed description of all phases and procedures of work and documents to be used (forms, checklists, etc.).

To build the system takes time. However, once built, the system is not fixed and should be continuously improved over time to adjust its functionality to the needs of the organisation and grant beneficiaries. If needed, we can revise our system from call to call to improve it.

The expert and participants have shared their experiences from practice. In the majority of cases, 3 – 6 months were needed to build the system by the staff with already relevant knowledge of grant management. The expert also shared their experience of piloting the grant scheme in one geographical area of the target country, after which the needed adjustments (prior to publishing the large call) were conducted.

The importance of creating the system was emphasised several times during the workshop, and participants were instructed to visit the TACSO online library for already published resources on grant management.

Discrepancies between promised outcomes and reality

This issue relates to the long-lasting discussion on how to ensure that what is written on paper reflects on the actual implementation of the particular project in real life. We, as grant-makers can't be responsible for the actions or poor performance of our grant beneficiaries. However, we need to ensure proof that we have applied in our practice as much as possible to ensure the awarded project is implementable by the proposed organisation and is likely to be successful.

Thus, again, we need a system of procedures, criteria for selecting proposals, and qualified staff that can manage all process requirements. We also need a monitoring and capacity-building system based on the risk assessment of every grant beneficiary. We need to be proactive and ready to step in when needed.

The first month of the awarded projects is crucial, and we need to establish individual contact with each grant beneficiary to assess the situation.

In this process and approach presented we have to consider also:

- How good we know our target group? It is expected certainly better than the actual donor. Is that right?
- How far we can go in instructing, influencing on applicants and grant beneficiaries?
- How much of failures we can afford/allow? It is not realistic to expect there will not be failures among awarded projects.

Following the introduction by the expert, the participants worked in small groups to discuss key phases of the assessment process and the preparations needed for each phase. In summary, following has been reported by participants:

Key phases of the assessment process

- Formation of the Evaluation Committee
- Administrative application checks
- Documentation preparation for assessors
- Quality control and face-to-face meetings
- Development of shortlisting criteria
- Scoring and final selection
- Creation of a reserve application list
- Complaints procedure development
- Decision publication method
- Contracting and project initiation



The expert provided feedback to presentation of each group and responded on additional questions to participants, and then presented a comprehensive overview of the assessment process, aligning with group discussions. She detailed internal procedures design, observation of proposal implementation, committee composition, proposal selection, risk assessment, result publication, and lessons learned. The presentation discussed and explained a step-by-step process of the evaluation, and key identified procedures discussed such as:

- Design of internal procedures: defining the procedures, developing forms and timelines, building staff capacity, and piloting the system internally.
- Observing the implementation of the Call for Proposals. It is of high importance to clearly explain to other staff members and a step-by-step clarification of all procedures that will be implemented.
- Composing the Evaluation Committee process: selection of assessors – explanation of different methods of selecting these committees, the importance of the background of assessors and examples in various organisations, the importance of instructions for scoring when preparing for the evaluation preparation.
- Selection of proposals: facilitation of the process—preparation and facilitation of the meetings and review of proposals; decision-making—individual assessment, group assessment, and the final decision maker, including quality assurance; and reporting on the individual assessment of each proposal as well as the report on the whole process.
- Risk assessment
- Publishing the results

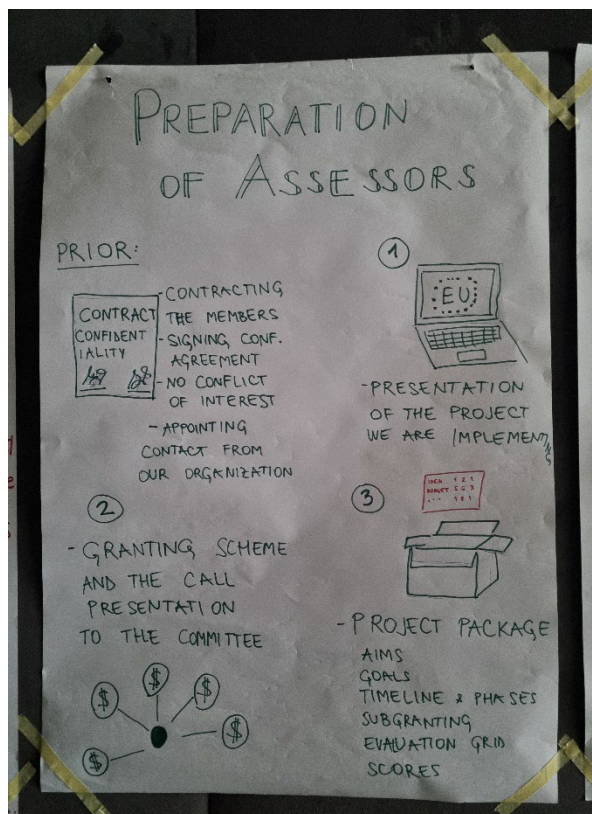
- Debriefing and lessons learned

The presentation was conducted with the active involvement of participants, and thus, a joint group discussion took place on challenges, issues and different practices, and the role and treatment of assessors. The discussion included different approaches CSOs are using in this regard, involving whether it is the role of the assessor to consult or instruct, also to review different parts of the proposal; whether assessors should give recommendations and what are the CSOs' views on the assessors' findings, also what is the level of endorsement of these findings.

Case studies from the current practice

The experts prepared four case studies describing the actual situations from practice in the region. Each case study was reviewed and discussed in one small group. All groups had a task to provide their overview of how they would respond to the described situation.

Case study: Preparation of assessors



Your grant scheme is to empower young people, from job training to community projects. The proposals include vocational training programs, entrepreneurship initiatives, and community development projects. Your responsibility is to ensure that the Evaluation Committee comprises individuals with different expertise in youth development, education, and social entrepreneurship. Your Evaluation Committee members are: one business sector representative (employee in the local bank); one education sector representative (teacher in the local primary school); and one youth activist (previous beneficiary of a similar grant).

How are you planning to structure the preparation of those Evaluation Committee members for the assessment of proposals?

Responses derived from the group discussion included the definition of the steps of the process of preparation of assessors, such as:

- Prior to starting the process, the contract should be compiled, with special attention to conflict of interest and incorporating the context from the contracting organisation.
- Step 1: project presentation
- Step 2: presentation of the grant scheme and the call
- Step 3: presentation of the project package – aims, goals, timelines and phases, subgranting evaluation grid, scores.

Case study: Demanding assessor

You have hired three assessors for the assessment of the projects and one assessor is constantly demanding more information about the applicants even though the rule is that additional information

can't be provided (except those presented in the application form). The assessor also tends to delay with submission of assessment results. However, his/her ideas for solutions to the problems in the community are valuable and stimulative. The findings in the assessment and recommendations are of better quality than those from the other two assessors.

What are you going to do? How will you ensure that the process is effective and efficient?

The group was of the opinion that regarding the additional information requested by the assessor, they would provide a kind reminder to the assessor about the rules and procedures by repeating the instructions of the evaluation, referring to the specific rules and pages of the contract. Also, they mentioned another possible issue that might arise during this process, where a delay in assessment might happen, specifically because of the assessor's stand, where their solution was planning for additional days in advance, also involving a follow-up of the process within the continuation of this issue.

Case study: Defining selection criteria for Evaluation Committee members

You're choosing proposals to build healthcare facilities in underserved areas. The proposals range from renovating hospitals to establishing mobile clinics. Your responsibility is to ensure that the evaluation committee comprises individuals with the necessary expertise to effectively assess the technical, financial, and social aspects of the proposals.

How will you define the selection criteria for Evaluation Committee members? Which expertise do you need?

Solutions discussed in the group presented the specifications of the evaluator's expertise. They listed 3 main pillars that would define the work of different experts, starting with the technical expertise of a construction engineer (at least 5 years' experience) and a mobile clinic expert. Their solution continued with the importance of contracting the expertise of a doctor with expertise in rural areas (at least 10 years' experience). The second pillar explained the financial part of this plan, where they presented the importance of consulting a financial expert, preferably medical field expertise, and a procurement expert's expertise. The third pillar presented the social perspective of the project, where the importance of an expert in marginalised and vulnerable groups was highlighted as a crucial support to the planning phases, adding the importance of expertise in project proposal writing on the area and context of the environment of people with disabilities, elders, children and also gender mainstreaming.



In her feedback to the group, the expert emphasised the importance of boosting the community and improving the environment for the next cooperation initiatives.

Case study: Finding a transparent solution

You're evaluating proposals to improve education in rural areas, from renovating schools to innovative teaching methods. Your job is to ensure the evaluation committee makes fair and effective decisions.

However, your budget is limited, and you can support only 30% of the proposals received. You were not expecting such a high number of proposals from so many different communities that need financial support.

How will you approach making a transparent but effective solution for this situation?

A group discussion took place, where they, along with the expert, discussed the best practices and innovative teaching methods. The importance of considering the geographical coverage, gender participation, expertise in the field and other components and balancing them was presented as a practical solution to this criteria issue. The expert emphasised that we can't stick only to criteria and without considering other aspects like geographical coverage. So even i.e. a particular project is not among the best selected, we can award it if needed to ensure geographical coverage. However, that means the project has to fulfil the minimum requirements to be awarded and to be the best selected in the particular geographical area. The point is not to change the criteria during the implementation but to ensure that other aspects of our call for proposals are considered as well.

Simulation of the evaluation committee meeting

As the final component of the workshop, a role-play exercise on assessing one short project proposal (concept note) and a simulation of the evaluation committee meeting have been implemented.

The instructions to participants included an example of a short proposal prepared on behalf of the CSO who is applying for a project including the FSTP component, meaning to act in the role of the future FSTP Implementor and specific tasks their role has, including the assessment form.

All participants were tasked to assess the proposal, while those with specific roles were instructed to prepare for their role.

The following roles were played:

- Chair of the evaluation committee
- Secretary of the evaluation committee
- Assessor 1: Social protection expert
- Assessor 1: Civil Society expert
- Observers of the process (2 participants) and
- Assessors outside the meeting (two other participants)



After preparing for the simulation, a 20-minute role-play meeting took place. During the discussion, many aspects of the evaluation were revealed, such as the sustainability of the project, specific objectives and clarification on the mission and impact of the project, the financial aspect, and also the realistic possibility of implementation, always maintaining their appointed roles.

While assessors justified their perspectives and scores for the project proposal, the secretary and the chair of the committee were involved in the discussion to ensure that the meeting involved all aspects of the project proposal and that important topics were covered and decided on.

After the role-play- there was a discussion among the whole group, where different aspects of the roles were discussed, and involved participants shared their opinions on the matter from their perspective and reflected on their opinions on their appointed roles. Issues that were raised during the role-play were discussed, and additional clarification and support on a broader range of information was provided during the discussion along with the facilitator's involvement. The importance of every role and their background was discussed, highlighting that the involvement of all

these perspectives is crucial to make the assessment process an efficient one. Another important practice of keeping meeting notes and distributing them with the rest of the members to confirm was highly recommended.

Feedback provided by participants

Feedback from participants was collected continuously to ensure the workshop was tailored to their needs and capacities. Depending on the number of questions and topics for discussion, the sessions were prolonged or shortened whenever needed.

At the end of the workshop, the participants' feedback was provided using the standard EU TACSO 3 evaluation, which was sent to them as an online questionnaire. A summary of their responses is provided in the further text.

Chart results

Evaluation: Regional Workshop on Assessment of Proposals for FSTP Implementors

a. The event met my expectations



Number of responses: 15

b. The content of the event was relevant to the interests of my organisation



Number of responses: 15

c. I understand more and feel better informed about issues than before



Number of responses: 15

d. The event allowed to share good practices and lessons learnt



Number of responses: 15

How will the information, knowledge and experience gained at this event serve you in your work?

- ✓ The insights and expertise acquired during the Workshop on Assessment of Proposals for FSTP Implementors will significantly enhance my capabilities in evaluating and executing FSTP (Financial Support and Technical Proposal) projects. I'll be better equipped to analyse budgets, assess risks, and evaluate project impact by mastering effective assessment techniques. This newfound knowledge will empower me to contribute more effectively to the success of FSTP initiatives in my professional endeavours.
- ✓ I have become richer in experience by learning from the practice of others. I have much to share with my team and colleagues, which better prepares us for future scenarios.
- ✓ We will apply the lessons learned during the implementation of the EU-funded project we received this year. We have FSTP in our project, and what we learned will be directly used for developing procedures, selecting Committee members, etc.
- ✓ The knowledge gained from the training could directly serve my work, as I am currently managing FSTP schemes, and our call for participants just closed; we are precisely in the moment of assessing the applications received and selecting our grant beneficiaries. The training arrived perfectly at the right time, and as our project partner was also a participant, it allowed us to directly reflect on our FSTP assessment process, improve its quality, and answer doubts directly with the trainer and other participants who gave us many useful inputs to produce a great final assessment procedure. We wrote a report to our consortium and integrated all the inputs in our FSTP evaluation process, greatly improving its efficiency and quality. In addition, I could share this knowledge with all my colleagues (also managing FSTP schemes) and suggested organising an internal working group to share best practices on the matter and improve our overall practices regarding FSTP.

- ✓ My organisation and I had quite limited previous experience with FSTP, if any. Thus, the training for me was beneficial while also being general enough, allowing me to easily follow it. This year, we are starting a new EIDHR-supported project whose component is FSTP. The information and knowledge I have gathered, as well as the practical experiences I have heard, have already proved to be valuable. When I came back, we already had a project-related meeting, and I provided some input based on what I had previously learned. I will use my knowledge as the project coordinator, as one of the persons directly responsible for the FSTP, and in my upcoming professional adventures.
- ✓ We, as an organisation, already have some experience in sub-granting. However, it was not done at this level, in this capacity. Even though the workshop title was Assessment of Proposals, I learned so much about all other dimensions of sub-granting. I will surely use it in my future work, given the circumstances that Sarajevo Open Centre's strategic goal is to provide support to local CSOs in BiH.
- ✓ Collecting information, experiences, and different methods of solving problems is particularly important in my work. It's essential because each organisation I met operates in its niche. Therefore, universal practices and procedures should be singled out to be transparent, fair, efficient, and valid for all FSTP implementers. Thanks to this workshop, I gained a broader insight into FSTP practices and valuable input from colleagues.
- ✓ I learned more about how to act in situations when the donor-EU points me to one thing, and the audit to another, which was of great importance to me.
- ✓ As a new EU project recipient who will distribute a subgrant, the training was quite timely. The training input greatly benefited the design of the evaluation phase. For future subgrants, we will design the whole process based on the training content.
- ✓ Participating in the workshop provided valuable insights into evaluating project viability, financial sustainability, and overall impact. The workshop's interactive nature enhanced my ability to adapt to different scenarios, fostered dynamic discussions, and facilitated collaborative problem-solving. Engaging with peers allowed for diverse perspectives and enriched my learning experience.

Which aspects of the event were the most useful for your work?

- ✓ Sharing experiences with people who work in the same field and finding out about their practice and solutions to potential problems.
- ✓ The most useful aspects of the Workshop on Assessment of Proposals for FSTP Implementors were the in-depth guidance provided on effective assessment techniques, proposal evaluation, and best practices for successful project execution. The focus on budget analysis, risk assessment, and impact evaluation gave me practical tools and strategies to enhance my project assessment skills. These insights will undoubtedly serve me well in my professional endeavours.
- ✓ The group works were well designed as they allowed us to work on concrete cases (our own projects and fiction cases), allowing us to reflect on our practices and exchange knowledge and experience. The participants had some relevant experiences, and in addition to the amazing inputs

from the trainer, I could also take away a lot of useful information and tips from them during the group work.

- ✓ I also enjoyed the trainer's theoretical presentations and her willingness to leave a lot of time for questions and discussions so we could really discuss certain topics in depth.
- ✓ Content-wise, the sessions on the Evaluation Committee were useful for me, as were the discussions of Risk mitigations, which is the main difficulty I face in my work when implementing FSTP. I have learned a lot during those sessions, which will directly impact my work.
- ✓ Case studies were the most useful in our work to understand from a different perspective (sometimes more challenging) the various approaches leading to FSTP. Moreover, while understanding the case studies, we also put ourselves in that perspective so that mutual sharing of experiences and feedback produced could provide meaningful cooperation instances that can shape or improve the approaches relevant for such case studies in the context of FSTP. In general, case studies limited our own possibilities, but at the same time, they gave us ways to discover a professional methodology for FSTP, including the technical approach and adaptability to the smaller organisations receiving financial support.
- ✓ I found the presentations and the more "theoretical" aspects of the training to be the most useful since I believe that they serve as a groundwork for anything more interactive. I loved how they sparked discussion and exchange of experiences since those were valuable to me. I was feeling a little bit uncomfortable since I did not have much knowledge and experience to share, but I am lucky that that has changed after this training. Moreover, the people and contacts I have gained are always the most precious things.
- ✓ Everything was very useful to my work and my organisation's work. Given the circumstance that I listened to this topic for the first time, I tried to gather as much information as possible. However, I think the part of preparing the assessors for evaluation was the most interesting for me.
- ✓ Ms. Tonč's presentation was balanced, nicely structured, and broad enough to cover various aspects of the topic. In a pleasant atmosphere, informal work in groups let me get better acquainted with CSO colleagues' experiences, views, and attitudes, thereby influencing a better understanding of my work.
- ✓ Every part, in some segment, was significant for me. The most useful aspects for my work involved learning about the specific procedures and documentation required when working with an external evaluator. Additionally, the trainer provided practical examples of how to navigate complex situations while assessing potential grantees.
- ✓ The most useful moments for me were my past experiences of situations that were a bit in between. Proceeding by the book sometimes does not solve complicated situations.
- ✓ As someone new to this sector, the workshop's most beneficial aspects were understanding real-life challenges associated with re-granting schemes and learning practical strategies for their successful implementation. Understanding the potential obstacles and solutions discussed during

the workshop will be invaluable as I navigate the complexity of managing our program's re-granting initiative.

- ✓ The part where the trainer shared her experience and knowledge with the participants.

Which aspects of the event were the least relevant to your work?

- The information provided did not explicitly specify the least relevant aspects of the Workshop on Assessment of Proposals for FSTP Implementors. However, it's essential to recognise that every learning opportunity contributes to our overall growth and understanding. While some aspects may not directly align with my current work, they still broaden my perspective and enhance my ability to adapt to diverse scenarios.
- The trainer performed excellently, providing valuable insights and guidance throughout the session. For future improvements, I suggest organising advanced trainings specifically tailored for those of us already involved in grant management. This approach will enable us to explore more complex aspects of the field with which we are not yet familiar.

What could be improved in terms of content, trainers, logistics?

- I have no comments on potential improvements for the event's content, trainers, or logistics. Overall, I found the workshop to be well-organized, informative, and well-delivered.
- Maybe the duration, I think that one more day was needed to continue the training.
- Every detail was thought out well. The visit to the centre was also a good touch cause it was my first time in Kosova.
- It could have been useful to share templates of different elements mentioned during the training (e.g. template for a simplified grant application, template for jury's evaluation, template for minutes of the evaluation committee, etc).
- The coaches and the whole team did an excellent job. I don't have any suggestions in this regard.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Every capacity-building activity stimulates the development of new ideas and initiatives. The workshop implemented succeeded in ensuring a high level of participants' involvement and contribution. Such an approach helped the expert respond to the current issues FSTP implementors are facing in practice.
- Implementation of the workshop in the live form required a number of logistical tasks to be implemented and limited the number of participants. However, it proved that adjustment of the agenda is easier, a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and especially, the level of trust and group cohesion are stronger in live events compared to online.
- The group of participants was limited to 30, which required a detailed selection of the number of CSO representatives interested in participating. The balance among the different experiences and

roles participants have in their organisations is considered. In this sense, peer learning and the transfer of practices from other organisations were ensured.

- The event proved the high need in the region for building the capacities of CSO staff involved in grant management. It also observed that such staff has limited capacity-building experience compared to other CSO staff members (e.g., programme and project managers).
- The duration of such capacity-building events is always challenging, considering the availability of participants and the need to learn more. Therefore, it is suggested that such events last 2 – 3 days.
- The same applies to the production of the handout material, as requested by some participants. Some sessions included developing the forms and structuring their content instead of just providing the already ready-made templates. Thus, the Community of Practice is established with the idea of exchanging examples from FSTP practices proven to be efficient.
- Further collection of successful practices, as well as case studies presenting the issues faced and how they were handled, is recommended. This may lead to the creation of a compendium of practices, a list of practical tips, a collection of different types of forms, etc.