



Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları için  
Teknik Destek Projesi



Bu proje Avrupa Birliği  
tarafından finanse edilmektedir.

## CSO Consultation Workshop for Defining the National Targets of Civil Society Development in Turkey 17-18 December 2014, Ankara

### Background

TACSO Turkey facilitates the discussion among civil society key stakeholders for **EU Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries**, 2014-2020 in Turkey, following the monitoring framework developed by TACSO Regional Office for all TACSO countries.

EU Guidelines provides a result framework for progress of conducive civil society environment and CSO capacity that will act as reference points to track the progress in respective areas as well as provide guidance for policy development for national reform processes.

Following the EU Guidelines framework, the Commission will encourage enlargement countries to make legislation more conducive for civil society with its political support. It will also promote the involvement of civil society in the pre-accession process, including in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of sector strategies for EU financial assistance which will be strengthened under IPA II. The Commission's financial assistance will use an appropriate mix of funding instruments to respond to different types of CSOs, needs and country contexts in a flexible, transparent, cost effective and results focused manner that also considers the administration burden for the Commission.

**EU Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries**, 2014-2020 was shared with key stakeholders from Western Balkans and Turkey in Kick Off Conference organized on 6-9 May 2014 in Tirana. The Guidelines indicate that, EU support to civil society within the enlargement policy should be focused on enabling and stimulating participatory democracy. This should be reflected in two main goals: achieving an environment that is conducive to civil society activities and building the capacity of CSOs to be effective and accountable independent actors. The Conference hosted representatives from key civil society stakeholders from Western Balkans and Turkey.

In Turkey, EU Guidelines Turkey Working Group; with participants to Kick Off Conference in 2014, established a working group for EU Guidelines related works and used Local Advisory Group for further consultations. Having members from the Ministry of Interior/Department of Associations, EU Ministry/Projects Implementation Unit, Ministry of Development/Regional Cooperation Unit, Directorate General Foundations/ Foundation Services Unit and two key CSOs: Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV) and Civil Society Development Centre (STGM); worked on providing feedback to Country Baseline Reports (2013) prepared by TACSO regional office based on BCSDN's Monitoring Matrix Project findings and TACSO regional research with IPSOS. Two

working group meeting were devoted to discussion of findings on CSO Capacity, also TUSEV and STGM representatives attended a regional working group meeting in Belgrade in February 2015 to discuss about methodology issues related to baseline reports.

The cooperation among key stakeholders around EU Guidelines in Turkey led to an important **output, that is publication of national register of associations:** Ministry of Interior Department of Associations gave access to public to database of all associations (over 100.000) in Turkey on their website. The database is listing Associations based on province and area of work. It is a live database and every association registered is reflected automatically everyday. This development is a product of EU Guidelines working group discussions and is an impact of their support to civil society development monitoring.

One of the functions expected from the EU Guidelines is to provide guidance to national reforms for civil society development accordingly with result framework on improving conducive environment for civil society and CSO capacity. In this regard, all national TACSO Offices facilitated the process to define 2020 national targets to guide the expected progress in respective countries. EU Guidelines Turkey Working Group decided to organize a CSO workshop for developing country targets for EU Guidelines Result Framework. It was decided that, due to lack of individual and specific strategies, policies and laws regarding enabling environment for civil society in Turkey; the EU Guidelines Turkey working group members will provide expert opinions and will identify existing public initiatives, laws and practices also plans for future related to refinement of proposed national targets for EU Guidelines result framework.

### Workshop Objective

Following the above mentioned process, TACSO Turkey organised a CSO consultation workshop in cooperation with the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV), the Civil Society Development Center (STGM) and the Sivil Dusun (Think Civil) EU Programme to discuss the Results Framework within the scope of the guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries during 2014-2020 period. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To discuss and endorse findings concerning the current situation in Turkey (traffic lights report)
- Identifying the national targets for 2020 on the Results Framework
- Collecting opinions and recommendation on the monitoring and evaluation aspects concerning the Results Framework

### Workshop Method

The workshop was a one and a half day event composing the three sessions:

In the first session, the participants were presented the findings concerning the current situation in Turkey based on the TACSO baseline study and the results of the IPSOS survey. Participants

discussed and commented on the findings, provided additional input and communicated their views on baseline findings.

In the second session, participants worked on the Results Framework in three groups (conducive environment, CSO-government relations and CSO capacity) to identify the national targets for 2020 based on the benchmarks provided.

The last session was a plenary discussion of identified national targets and the M&E aspects. Each work group presented their national target proposals and participants scored the targets to identify the priority ones. Participants also provided recommendation for possible means of verification for national targets.

## Workshop Outputs

### Findings on current situation

Following the presentation of the Traffic Lights Report by TACSO Turkey and BCSDN member TUSEV representatives, the participants provided feedback and input both verbally and in writing. Most of the more prominent feedback and inputs were focused on the conducive environment, the financial conditions for CSOs and CSO capacity. The participants particularly emphasized the gaps and ambiguities in the legislation, lacking or deficient participation to decision making mechanisms, arbitrary practices of security forces during peaceful assembly and demonstrations of CSOs, difficulties encountered in access to information, taxes and fines that CSOs are subject to, inequalities in legislation towards CSOs having different status (eg. public benefit status), capacity problems of CSO concerning fund raising, volunteer management, legal matters, etc. The discussions pointed out that findings regarding conducive environment for civil society in Turkey were found relevant as described briefly. The findings related to capacity of CSOs in Turkey were not found very convincing and participants pointed out the need to adopt more comprehensive intervention to determine capacity of CSOs in Turkey.

The feedback and input received from the participants were duly noted to be incorporated in to the Traffic Lights Report.

### National Target Discussions in Scope of the Results Framework

The participants worked on the Results Framework in three groups in order to identify the national targets for 2020. The Results Framework already presents a benchmark as EU average for each indicator and asked for a national target compatible with the benchmark, but keeping in mind that there could be Turkey specific issues which are not reflected in the framework, the participants were granted the liberty to insert additional national targets if necessary. Indeed, one or more additional targets were proposed for almost every indicator in the framework, which pointed out the need to adopt the Result Framework not only by deciding on the quantitative content of each national target, but revising the Framework as necessary to ensure a better fit with the national conditions.

### Monitoring and Evaluation Aspects

Despite the complex nature of M&E planning, the workshop was used as an opportunity to collect recommendation at least on the means of verification for the national targets identified by the

participants. In addition to the ones envisaged in the Results Framework, additional MoVs were proposed in three main topics, ie. the conducive environment, CSO-government relations and CSO capacity.

Concerning the improvement of the legal framework and its implementation, participants proposed adding the monitoring and advocacy reports of the human rights CSOs, applications to the Constitutional Court and the Ombudsman Institution as well as court cases on freedom of expression, assembly and association. Legal assistance demands from resource centers such as STGM was also indicated as an information source to be used as MoV.

The primary MoVs proposed about employment and volunteering were the statistics published by the Turkish Statistical Institution and the registries of the Department of Associations and General Directorate of Foundations. It was also underlined that DoA and GDF publish only a portion of the data in their hand and there is need for further transparency in this respect. Luckily, the TACSO Turkey team achieved to convince the DoA to share some of the additional data they have before the workshop, which was an indication of the chances to further benefit from the DoA data in future works.

For the monitoring of the financial environment , the participants proposed to look into the DoA and Ministry of Finance reports as well as the grants schemes available to CSOs and relevant donor reports. Relating to public funding to CSOs, reports of ministries providing grants to CSOs and independent monitoring reports (eg. National Integrity Systems report by Transparency International) are among the sources of information. The public benefit status is perceived to be a critical issue to closely look into, since there are several exemptions and incentives for those CSOs with public benefits status. In addition to the registry of the Ministry of Finance, the participants emphasized parliamentary reporting of annual budget, which indicates especially large scale public funding and donations to CSOs, as an important MoV.

The CSO-government dialogue is one of the more difficult topics to propose MoVs, since regular reporting is limited on this issue. In addition to the regular monitoring by the BCSDN and TACSO, government reports on CSO consultation and the reports to be produced by the CSO Consortium Project (Direct Grant IPA Project, Phase II) will be instrumental to see the progress in this respect. Institutional plans (such as strategic plans and action plans) of government bodies are also important to indicate the commitment made and steps to be taken to enhance dialogue. Participants mentioned that official lists of public institutions for invitation to consultation may also show the consultation profile preferred by them.

The participants made comparatively less recommendations for MoVs to monitor the CSO capacity. Again the major sources will need to be The BCSDN and TACSO monitoring reports. The Civil Society Index conducted by CIVICUS as a multi-country survey could serve as a MoV also allowing for comparison at international scale. Some of the data collected and compiled by the DoA and GDF would also be useful if shared in a transparent manner.

Participants' input on MoV were taken as references by BCSDN member TUSEV regarding their works for monitoring the conducive environment for civil society and inputs for monitoring on CSO capacity were noted by TACSO and STGM, TACSO Resource Centre in Turkey.

### Process of Refinement of National Targets Drafted by CSOs

TACSO Turkey, TUSEV and STGM representatives and national STE worked on reporting the outputs of Workshop. TACSO Turkey published the outputs of the workshop and workshop report in Turkish for additional inputs on website for two months, however, due to technicality of the issue very few comments were received.

On 17 March 2015, in Ankara EU Guidelines Working Group Members and national STE came together to review the outputs of CSO workshop on national targets and provide inputs on existing public policies, future plans and expected developments in areas related to result framework. They also provided their expert opinion on feasibility of some proposed country targets, as well as possible means of verification.

Based on inputs from Turkey working group members from government institutions for feasible targets; TACSO Turkey, TUSEV and STGM with national STE worked to refine the proposed targets into feasible and realistic targets reference to baseline situation and merge the additional national targets to defined targets in result framework for feasible monitoring. CSO workshop results are provided on TACSO website before refinement in Turkish ([http://tacso.org/news/news\\_announcements/default.aspx?id=11775&template\\_id=73&langTag=tr-TR&pageIndex=1](http://tacso.org/news/news_announcements/default.aspx?id=11775&template_id=73&langTag=tr-TR&pageIndex=1)) which provides guidance to all parties that works on monitoring of CSO environment and capacity in Turkey. Finalisation of advised Country Targets accordingly with EU Guidelines is under development, following the discussions for improvement of result framework.