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Progress Report

Since the Bečići Conference February, 2011

Cooperation Between Local Self-Governments and CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey

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Compiled by Simon Forrester

10 January 2013

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Contents

Preface	5
Notes on Terminology & Abbreviations	6
Acknowledgements	9
Introduction	11
Overview of the Status in the Region	12
Part One:	
Progress in the Countries of the Region	15
ALBANIA	15
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	17
CROATIA	22
FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA.	24
KOSOVO	28
MONTENEGRO	32
SERBIA	34
TURKEY.	38
Part Two:	
Emerging Good Practices	41
TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY	41
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	43
FUNDING COOPERATION	47
CAPACITY BUILDING	48
COMMUNICATION	50
PARTNERSHIP	51
Conclusions and Recommendations.	53
References	57
Annexes	65
Annex I	
Summarised tables for each national report	67
Annex II	
Cooperation Between Local Self-Government and CSOs in W. Balkans & Turkey - A Summary of the Legal/Policy Environment	77
Annex III	
Concept and Terms of Reference for Drafting the Regional Progress Report	81

Preface

We are pleased to present a regional progress report on the results of the National Activity Plans agreed during the conference on “Cooperation between Local Self-Governmental Institutions and CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey”, held in Bečići in February 2011.

The Bečići Conference delivered a set of activities agreed upon by each of the countries in the region with regard to strengthening cooperation at the local level. The planning and agreement on these activities were largely driven by an approach of what might be most realistically achieved. Thus now, two years on from the event in Bečići, is a good time to take stock and review what has been done, what impact recent activities have had, and the current status of local-level cooperation across the region. The report also endeavours to capture emerging good practices from countries in the region and to highlight the challenges still to be addressed.

The report has been compiled in a participatory manner; drawing upon research and experience from a range of stakeholders engaged with the Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) programme and, as such, contains a wealth of analysis and practical advice from practitioners and experts from all the countries. In addition to the main narrative sections of the report, there are also tables summarising the individual country’s progress reports and matrices with a summary of legal provision for cooperation in each country.

We would encourage all those interested in cooperation between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local self-governments (LSG) in the region to make use of this report and to assist in further disseminating the tasks that lay ahead.

The report was compiled by Simon Forrester in close cooperation with the TACSO resident advisors and the coordinator, Sanela Klaric.

We hope that you will find this progress report useful.

Palle Westergaard

Team Leader

January 2013

Notes on Terminology & Abbreviations

Terminology

During the autumn of 2012, the Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) programme initiated a survey of the eight participating countries in the region to identify the status of the institutional arrangements guiding cooperation between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local government. The survey pre-defined some key concepts and, as the findings from that survey are used in this report, the same definitions are used for reporting purposes:

The term: **institutional mechanism** for collaboration between the local self-government (LSG)/parliament and civil society organisations refers to a distinct government/parliament's body or a designated person with the local government/parliament whose primary mandate is to nurture and support collaboration between the local government/parliament and civil society organisations, as defined by pertinent laws, regulations or decisions. This may include, but is not limited, the following: the local self-government's office for collaboration with CSOs; the local self-government's council on civil society, or similar cross-sector advisory bodies; contact persons with various line local secretariats, or with the local parliament; public funds or foundations for civil society; etc.

The term: **informal mechanism** of collaboration refers to good practices of collaboration between the local self-government/parliament and CSOs, which are not necessarily regulated by law or any other legal instruments, but were rather developed despite the lack of a particular legal instrument governing such collaboration. For example, regular consultations with environmental protection CSOs, which a competent local secretariat introduced, despite the fact that such consultations are not mandated or prescribed by law.

The term: **policy document** refers to the local government's strategies for civil society or other strategies and policy documents (compact, memorandum of understanding, code of citizen participation in public policy, etc.) dealing with the enabling environment for CSOs.

Abbreviations

BCIF	Balkan Fund for local initiatives
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCC	Centre for Civil Communication
CDNPS	Centre for Development of the Non-profit Sector
CF	Community Forums
CoE	Council of Europe
CoM	Council of Ministers
CRNVO	Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPC	Civil Society Promotion Centre
CSSA	The Civil Society Support Agency
DEI	Directorate for European Integration
ECNL	European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law
EHO	Educational Humanitarian Organisation
EU	European Union
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDM	Institute for Democracy and Mediation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
LEC	Local Economic Councils
LESC	Local Economic and Social Councils
LOD	Local Democracy Programme (of UNDP)
LOTUS	Local, Accountable and Transparent Government and Self-Government
LSG	Local Self-Government
MoJ BiH	Ministry of Justice, Bosnia and Herzegovina
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTS	National Training Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PPP	Public-Private-Partnerships
SCGCS	Strategy for Cooperation with CSOs
SDCA	Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
STE	Short Term Expert
TACSO	Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UoM	Union of Municipalities

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This regional progress report has been compiled from research and analysis conducted by a number of different local TACSO consultants and TACSO resident advisers, and has benefitted from much reviewing and feedback provided by both the national and regional TACSO offices and members of the local advisory groups, including a dedicated group established in Kosovo* just to advise on this topic. Thus, the author would like to acknowledge the invaluable support and effort provided by Aida Bagic, Hajrulla Ceku, Goran Djurovic, Slavica Drašković, Ana Efremova, Kadri Gega, Valdete Idrizi, Agron Maxhuni, Ardita Metaj-Dika, Veton Mujaj, Ana Novakovic, Selma Agovic Osmanagic, Neslihan Ozgunes, Genci Pasko, Branka Pavlovic, Branka Peuraca, Zorica Raskovic, Suncica Sazdovska, and Fikret Toksoz.

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The lead author of the report is Simon Forrester, assisted in research by Eda Cullu, both provided by Eurasia Social Change Ltd.

29 December 2012

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Introduction

The technical assistance service contract for the implementation of “**Capacity Building of Civil Society in the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) countries and Territories**” (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as Macedonia), Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) known as the project Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (**TACSO**) is an European Union (EU) - funded project (EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi-additional services) led by the Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU International AB) on behalf of a consortium from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Poland and Romania. The main purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) and to strengthen their role within a participative democracy. The main expected outcomes of this project are: increased influence of CSOs in democratic decision-making processes; strengthened capacity of CSOs to further their agendas; improved capacity of CSOs in service delivery; strengthened cooperation and networking among the CSOs and between external stakeholders and CSOs; raised public awareness of CSOs, improved public image of CSOs.

One aspect of TACSO’s efforts is the focus on strengthening civil society’s contribution to good local governance in the region, although, as with all areas of the programme, this focus varies in its manifestation from country to country. On the whole, this effort largely involves contributing to a stronger partnership between CSOs and local self-governments (LSG) with the purpose of promoting and strengthening citizen participation in the decision-making process. To this end, in **February 2011**, the TACSO programme brought together a group of key stakeholders from the eight countries of the region for a conference on “**Cooperation between Local Self-Governments and Civil Society Organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey**”. The conference was held in the town of Bečići in Montenegro and as such is referred to by TACSO, and throughout this document, as the ‘**Bečići Conference**’.

Background to the Bečići Conference

The Bečići Conference brought together more than 100 delegates from the Western Balkans and Turkey, representing local and national CSOs, the elected and appointed officials of local self-governments, central governments, the media, and international organisations. During three days, the delegates participated in the following sessions: mapping the institutional mechanisms on cooperation between CSOs and local self-governments in the region thus enabling further exploring of relations between CSOs and local government; exploring possibilities for further development of institutional mechanisms; and identifying relevant actors and stakeholder for broadening regional cooperation. In addition, the conference focused discussions around three thematic areas:

- Transparency and Accountability of Local Self-Governments and CSOs’ roles;
- Participation in the Decision-Making Processes – Mechanisms at the Local Level;
- Financing of CSOs’ Actions at the Local Level.

As a consequence of the conference there were two important outputs. First, as **a tool for further dissemination and learning**, a report was published on the ‘good practices of the cooperation between civil society organisations and local self-governments in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey’². The twenty cases presented in the report serve as inspiration and promotion of close collaboration that foster public citizen participation in key decision-making processes, public service delivery and public transparency and accountability as crucial aspects of good governance.

2 The report from the Bečići Conference on ‘Good Practices of the Cooperation Between Civil Society Organisations and Local Self-Governments in the Countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey’, February 2011, is available to download at the TACSO Web site: www.tacso.org.

Second, the delegates worked with TACSO, both during and after the conference, to draft **national action plans** for follow-up work to promote more local level cooperation. These national action plans were a joint endeavour between the representatives of the public sector and CSOs in each of the countries, with many of the proposed actions having local stakeholders who had committed themselves to implementing the work in collaboration with a range of supporters. However, there were also proposed actions, which had weaker levels of ownership and less commitment but were, nevertheless, actions considered by the delegates to be a priority.

Purpose and Content of this Progress Report

Following the discussions at the Bečići Conference and the work implemented in each country since February 2011, this progress report is an attempt to address a number of issues:

- a. Review the current situation across the region by considering the progress made in each country on strengthening cooperation between CSOs and local self-governments, particularly in respect of the institutional mechanisms available and how effective they are in supporting collaboration;
- b. Highlight the on-going constraints to local level cooperation and, in so doing, offer guidance to future phases of TACSO and other supporters of local good governance on the priorities still pending;
- c. Promote the numerous good practices and successes that are evident in varying degrees across the region and, therefore, further contribute to building the capacity of CSOs and other stakeholders committed to effective partnerships between organised civil society and local governments.

Given these objectives, this report is divided into two main sections. Part one offers summaries of the situation and progress made in each of the eight countries, and Part two takes a look at practices and constraints in the region in six different thematic areas. It should also be noted that the TACSO offices in each of the countries in the region have also prepared **National Progress Reports**, all of which are available from the country pages of the TACSO Web site and which have been used as the main data source for this regional report. Summaries of these can be seen in the annexes to this report.

This report should NOT be read as an evaluation of the implementation of any of the national action plans, but rather viewed as a 'snapshot' of what cooperation between CSOs and local self-governments looks like as of today. The information presented in the report was compiled from two main sources: the national progress reports generated by each TACSO country office and the reports on the feedback from questionnaires administered to samples of key stakeholders in each country. These 'questionnaire feedback reports' were also managed by the TACSO offices and designed in consultation with working groups in each country with members drawn from delegates who participated in the Bečići Conference and others.

Overview of the Status in the Region

Situation as of the Bečići Conference, February 2011

The Bečići Conference confirmed a number of regional trends: that for all countries the legislative and regulatory environment was fairly enabling for cooperation between CSOs and local self-government, but that guidance and capacity for implementation were weak; that there was much room for improvement in terms of the transparency and accountability of local government and in the ability and competence for CSOs to monitor such issues; and that there was a fairly mixed picture across the region in terms of policy documents to help structure the relationships for cooperation between CSOs and authorities at the local level. In addition, mechanisms and procedures for funds from the local budgets to finance CSO activities were either not being well implemented or were inadequate. There were few examples of effective strategies for communication between CSOs and local government.

Given the challenges explored at the Bečići conference, most participating countries developed action plans based on addressing aspects of these and since February 2011 have taken certain actions to

strengthen the effectiveness of local-level cooperation. Some of these actions have been directly supported by the TACSO programmes, whilst others have had other supporters or have manifested themselves as additional momentum to existing programmes and reform processes.

Since February 2011

The region has seen varying levels of activity and interventions. Mostly, given the priorities mentioned above, the activities have either been related to training delivery, designing and implementing monitoring systems, or to the facilitation of continuing discussion between CSOs and local authorities on the strategies and procedures that might be agreed to promote cooperation. In terms of capacity building, the TACSO programme has been particularly active, for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina where 156 CSO representatives, mainly from smaller and more remote municipalities, have received training on preparing project proposals to be submitted to local sources of funding, and other important stakeholders have demonstrated how to lead on the important issue of building capacity. In Montenegro the Union of Municipalities (UoM) is implementing a National Training Strategy (NTS), which includes elements to strengthen capacities for cooperation.

In terms of using monitoring activities and reporting as tools for improving transparency and accountability, for better informing cooperation agreements, significant work has taken place in Croatia through the Local, Accountable and Transparent Government and Self-Government (LOTUS) research programme of CSO GONG and Association of Cities. CSOs in Kosovo, such as the Kosovo Democratic Institute, have been using their Web sites to publish monitoring reports on local government performance. In both Macedonia and Serbia the TACSO national offices have supported symposia and local reports, which have focussed on transparency and accordingly a number of local municipalities have taken actions to improve their provision of public information.

Many of the activities since Bečići have been events to continue the debates from the regional level to national level, and many have been events that have continued on-going discussions in the countries. Some of these have seen concrete commitment to action emerging, but for others, such as the research project in Albania of the Municipal Association, it is not yet clear what will be the impact. In some countries the Bečići conference has been a re-confirmation of needs and further motivated pre-agreed actions. For example, in Montenegro a partnership between the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Union of Municipalities, and the Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CRNVO) supported the drafting of procedural guidelines for cooperation between CSOs and local government, and in Macedonia continued support has been given for the community forums model to be rolled out in more municipalities. In Turkey, the levels of activities are still low compared to the size of the population and numbers of municipal authorities, but there has been a slow continuation of rolling out the Citizens' Assembly mechanism.

Delegates from Albania during one of the Bečići Conference Working Groups



Although a period of less than two years (the time between the Bečići Conference and the drafting of this report) is perhaps too little to be able to confirm the impact of any activities in the region, some of the actions described in this progress report have given rise to important outcomes. More local level strategies to guide CSO-municipal cooperation have been agreed upon (for example in Macedonia) and agreed procedural guidelines have been published and distributed to local authorities (Montenegro). Local governments are increasingly recognising the added value that CSOs can bring to local governance (for example, Kosovo's Municipal Council's on Safety in Communities, and the success of the 'Places in the Heart' award scheme in Serbia), and in some countries they are bolstering their human resources so as to improve coordination with CSOs (Croatia) and actively seeking training support to build their capacity for developing projects with CSOs (Albania). Transparency has improved and there is more funding available from local governments to support cooperation with CSOs, but as has been reported in Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro, these positive outcomes need also to be enhanced with a wider use of open and competitive processes for dispersing funds.

The Continuing Challenges

Across the region there remain some common challenges:

- Although the legislative environment is generally well developed in support of cooperation, there is still room for **improvement in the regulatory frameworks** (for example in terms of the use of funds from the local budgets to finance CSOs) and for national policy documents to address the terms of cooperation in some countries (Serbia and Turkey);
- There are diverse levels of capacity across the countries and within the various sectors and, therefore, **investments into developing cooperation 'know-how'** across the region are much needed. This is true for both local governments and for CSOs with varying needs. For example, in Macedonia, the smaller municipalities are challenged with limited human resources so that the focal points for cooperation with CSOs are juggling this responsibility with many others. In Serbia, a capacity weakness across both sectors exists in terms of establishing and running monitoring systems for cooperation;
- The communities in **rural and remote areas of the countries are the least active in terms of collaborative actions**, with a weak organised civil society and overstretched local administrations. Strategies need to be developed to assist cooperation in these specific contexts;
- There are plenty of good practices and a wealth of experience in both CSOs and local self-governments across the region, and there are plenty of workable models and procedures for cooperation, but there remains a scarcity of dissemination and inertia for cooperation to be implemented. Thus, there continues to be a need for **strengthening networking** across the region and **campaigns to demonstrate that local governance is fairer, more efficient, and more effective the more that administrations cooperate with CSOs.**

Part One:

Progress in the Countries of the Region

In this section of the report we will look briefly at the situation in each country in the region before and since the Bečići Conference. The country summaries cover the perceived situation as reported on at the conference, the activities and outcomes of work since the conference, as well as pending challenges, specific examples of 'added value' provided by the cooperation between CSOs and local administrations to more participatory governance, and comments on the efforts to build more capacity for effective cooperation.

In addition to these narrative summaries, in the Annexes there are lists of relevant legislation, regulations and other relevant policy documents for each country, and tables summarising the specific activities and impact in each country of contributions facilitated by TACSO.

ALBANIA

The Albanian Constitution and a range of comprehensive legislation make for a **relatively enabling environment for cooperation** between CSOs and local administrations. Lists of the relevant regulations and policy documents can be found in the Annex, but below is an overview of the situation leading up to the Bečići Conference and some illustrations of the cross-sector policies which support cooperation.

In December 2006, the Albanian government adopted the Strategy of Decentralisation of the Local Government for 2007-2013 and in the Chapter on Good governance, effective governance, increase of local democracy and civic participation, the following citation is found:

"The decentralisation strategy and the reforms undertaken within its framework have created the legal opportunities for broad civic participation in decision-making, aiming at increasing the quality of services in favour of communities."

The law of March 2005 on Social Assistance and Social Care stipulates that the municipality council should "adopt collaboration programmes with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious institutions and representatives of Civil Society, in line with national and regional plans for social assistance and social care". Another example is the Law on Equal Gender Society which refers to 'participation in the decision-making process' and suggests that CSOs must not only abide by this in their internal management, but may play a role in ensuring implementation of equal participation.

However, there are **some basic constraints in the implementation of these policies**. First, it should be noted that although the laws make provision for cooperation with CSOs at both the national and local level, there are no special regulations in Albania that would guarantee NGO participation at any level of government. Second, the various strategy papers in the different sectors which foresee participation from citizens and CSOs are written from a perspective of central government only and thus support the relevant line-ministries to develop relationships at the central level with CSOs, and avoid including local government structures.

A third constraint to cooperation that has been noted at the Bečići Conference and which is still very much valid is that of capacity - both within public institutions and CSOs. In this respect it is worthwhile to look more closely at some of the opportunities offered by the regulatory frameworks but which are lost through a lack of capacity and competence.

According to the law, the organisational structure of the local government in Albania gives the power of local decision-making to municipality councils. They are local-level key structures with legal power to institutionalise mechanisms of collaboration between the local self-government and CSOs. This is clearly defined in the law on the Organisation and Functioning of Local Governments in Albania under

Article 34 “The organisation of open council meetings”. It states: ‘Meetings of municipal councils must be open to the public. Every citizen has the right to attend Municipality Council meetings according to the regulation approved by the council.’ Furthermore, there is specific guidance on Public Hearings: The Public Hearings are obligatory in relation to budget approval and amendments to it; approval of the change of the ownership or use of its public property; decision on the rates of all local taxes, tariffs and fees. The hearings must be organised according to the manner determined in the regulations of the council by using different ways such as open meetings with citizens, meetings with specialists, institutions, or NGOs, as well as taking the initiative to organise local referendums.

Unfortunately, CSOs are not well organised or active in using these opportunities. There is no comprehensive research to demonstrate the degrees of involvement of CSOs in the local mechanisms such as Public Hearings, however, the TACSO office in Albania, through desk studies and surveys of municipal Web pages, has only found evidence of CSOs engaging in formal consultations with four of the larger municipalities, and even these tend to be more engaged with individual activists rather than organised civil society.

One of the biggest steps forward in Albania was the establishment of a separate independent agency for the support of civil society organisations. The Civil Society Support Agency (CSSA) was established in 2010 to encourage the sustainable development of civil society in Albania and the creation of favourable conditions for civic initiatives aiming at enhancing democracy by increasing the level of civic participation. Thus, although the agency is a central body, it has developed tools and mechanisms that have been used to directly **support capacity growth** for cooperation of local CSOs with their local authorities. Indeed, in September 2010 the agency launched its first small grants programme, with criteria which enabled 20 of the total 52 awarded CSOs to implement projects aimed at addressing local issues. Of these projects, 12.5 percent had as their purpose the encouragement of the citizens in participatory processes for their community development; 18 percent had as their purpose to increase the impact of CSOs in the processes of drafting adoption and implementation of public policies. It is also good to note that the efforts of the Albania TACSO office to involve local government representatives in the training and information-sharing activities, around Calls for Proposals of EU-funded grant schemes in 2011, resulted in the municipalities seeking further assistance to build their capacity for developing projects with CSOs.

“Albania provides a relatively enabling legal framework for civil society yet achieving desired outcomes and influencing positive developments appear to be difficult tasks for civil society, not only due to its own internal challenges or the limited dialogue and relatively inefficient interactions with the state, but also due to the generally distrustful attitude of citizens towards the key institutions, processes and even the third sector itself. These are characteristics of a vicious circle that triggers negative reaction on all aspects, once poor performance is noted even in a single element.”

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Albania, IDM 2010

The post-Bečići Conference plan of the Albanian delegates focussed on three broad action areas: to establish better monitoring of the ways in which local administrations ensure transparency and accountability; to undertake more research and analysis of the local participatory processes; and to build capacity for CSOs and local government to jointly develop and implement EU-funded projects.

In relation to the first and second action areas, the **continuing small grants programme of CSSA** has made an important contribution. In the third Call for Proposals, administered during November 2011, a total of 69 projects were approved, 15 of which were directly related to local governance and civil society partnership. Of these 15 there was one particular project, implemented by the Albanian Association of Municipalities and “De Gasperi Institute”, which undertook an evaluation of the support, collaboration, and the relationship of local government structures with CSOs on local development policies. Part of the process of the project was the bringing together in roundtable discussions representatives of all kinds of CSOs working at the local level and a selection of municipal council members and municipal

executive staff. All the local stakeholders debated and reflected on the principles, levels and steps of participation at local level, with specific focus on the lack of sustainable tools of interaction and space given by local government structures to civil society organisations. At the time of drafting this progress report the impact of the interaction was not known, however, the participating CSOs and local authorities had committed to a process of change.

There has also been another innovative project implemented by the Tirana based Co-Plan Institute for Habitat Development. This organisation has engaged with the municipal authorities at Kamza to pilot practices in **Community-led planning** and development. This involves a range of methodologies, but at the heart of the process is participatory planning sessions led by community-based organisations (CBOs). These sessions help to produce Neighbourhood Development Agendas, which are later presented and negotiated with the municipal authorities by the CBOs and incorporated into the administrations strategic plans.

Despite a lack of capacity and commitment of CSOs to engage with the local authorities on policy issues and to pursue local social contracting arrangements to provide services, there is growing evidence in Albania that **CSOs are contributing to supporting local level debates through various local media**. In Albania there are 71 local private television stations and 56 local private radio stations operating according to current legislation. These local media naturally focus mainly on local issues and often have programming which invites local politicians, local administrators, and civil society representatives to debate local policies. One good example is in the town of Berat, where during 2011 there was a local debate on 'TV-Berati' focusing on "women representation in politics". The organisers of the debate and TV programme were a network of women's NGOs called "Equity in Decision-Making".

Clearly one of the most **urgent and continuing challenges to be addressed in Albania is the building of capacities** both within in local CSOs and their counterparts in local administration for effective collaboration. Many of the municipalities have not only shown goodwill to promote participation, but have also demonstrated a commitment to it through the implementation of various projects. For example, the practice of Participatory Budgeting is commonly accepted, and is especially well implemented in the larger municipalities such as Shkodër, Elbasan Durrës, Vlorë, Berat, and Fier, however, the **quality of the participation is often fragile and questionable, and also not particularly sustainable**, as it is mostly driven by just a handful of individual activists, without organised civil society making much of a contribution.

The **isolation and under representation in civil society organisations of rural communities** (a view held by 70 percent of the CSO representatives interviewed in the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) / Civicus Organisational Survey) is another fundamental weakness in the potential capacity for local level cooperation, given that Albania is a predominantly agricultural economy.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

At both the national, entity level, and at the level of local self-government, there are fairly comprehensive **provisions through laws and municipal statutes** and strategic guidelines to support effective cooperation between CSOs and local authorities. For example, in 2010, the Council of Ministers (CoM) of BiH adopted a Report on the implementation of the Rules on Consultation in legislative drafting in institutions of BiH, which includes recommendations and conclusions on strengthening the public consultation process. Similarly, the Local Self-Governance Development Strategy of the Republika Srpska (RS) Government has included clearly identified competencies for local self-government to encourage cooperation with CSOs in the new draft Law on Local Self-Government. In 2010, a new internal organisation was introduced into the RS Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance, which established the Department for Assembly System, Political Organisations, Citizen Associations and Foundations, and National Minority Issues. (A list of legislative provision can be found in Annex 1).

In operational terms, the relationship between the public sector and civil society has been effectively guided at the national level by the 2007 Agreement of the Council of Ministers on Cooperation with NGOs. This Agreement helped to promote the negotiation at the local level of a range of similar

Compact³-like agreements between CSOs and municipalities. These negotiations were spearheaded by CSOs from a national network known as the 'Sporazum Plus' network, formed by more than 300 CSOs in 2009. The work of the network has led the process of developing and signing these agreements in 75 out of 142 municipalities in BiH as of the beginning of 2011.⁴

These cooperation agreements clearly define joint and separate obligations of the individual municipalities and CSOs with respect to, and implementation of, commonly agreed values and principles in everyday practice. The agreements promote and advocate the development of agreeable regulations of relations between municipality and civil society; establish institutional mechanisms for development of dialogue and partnership between municipality and civil society; promote, recognise and protect independence and freedom of work of CSOs; establish principles of consultations in planning and creation of programmes, strategy and other instruments of public policies that have influence on civil society, development of cross-sectoral cooperation and good governance; promote principles of public and transparent financing of programmes, projects and services of CSOs from the municipal budget.⁵

At the time of the Bečići Conference, delegates from BiH were able to present a forward-leaning agenda of cooperation between CSOs and the local government, with national priorities set against considerable achievements to date. Need was expressed for both fine-tuning of the institutional arrangements and for considerable effort to be made in capacity building and in promoting good practices to ensure higher levels of accountability and transparency.

In terms of the legislative and policy environment, further progress has been made. The CoM BiH initiated the development of the Strategy for Encouraging Civil Society Development in BiH in May 2011. The BiH Ministry of Justice (MoJ BiH) is coordinating the process of developing the strategy with a working group, which includes five representatives from government institutions and five representatives from civil society. The Revised Action Plan of the Strategy on Public Administration Reform adopted in September 2011 includes additional objectives regarding strengthening the consultation process with CSOs as well as cooperation with CSOs.

In April 2011, the RS Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance adopted a new rulebook on the criteria and procedure for allocation of funds to public interest associations, other associations and foundations. In the same year the ministry also developed special project application forms for applying for public funds and report formats for justifying spending.

According to research carried out by the Institute for Youth Development in April 2012, 63 percent of municipalities in BiH have a youth officer. However, most frequently these are municipality staff members who are not exclusively responsible for the youth issues, but have a quite wide-ranging scope of work. Also, youth councils have been set up in BiH in some municipalities, in line with the Republika Srpska Law on Youth Organisations and the Federation BiH Law on Youth. Namely, the institutional framework for the youth policy in both BiH entities involves establishment of youth councils as a partner who will represent the interests [of the youth] and work for the general benefit and competency and influence youth policy development. The purpose of establishing the municipal youth councils, among other things, is to contribute to civil society development in BiH and the establishment of the institutional structure of youth representatives, so that these structures can take part in all decision-making processes related to youth issues at all levels of authority.⁶ Municipality Novo Sarajevo is an example of successful collaboration between the municipal authorities and the municipal youth council, in particular when it comes to youth policy and activities related to the development of the Youth Strategy for the Novo Sarajevo Municipality, with Action Plan for period 2012 – 2014.⁷

3 Compact is the term used in the UK on a non-binding agreement signed between government and civil society. The first such compact was agreed on at the national level in 1998 by the Blair-led government and has since been repeated in a local form across all kinds of local authority and civil society in the UK.

4 http://civilnodrustvo.ba/sporazum_nvo_vlada/sporazumi_vlada_-_nvo.html

5 "Best practice of Civil Society Promotion Centre", Slavisa Prorok, Presentation at the Second Regional Conference on "Cooperation between Local Self-Governments and Civil Society Organisation in the Western Balkans and Turkey", Bečići, Montenegro, on 22-24 February 2011.

6 http://www.mladi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=783&Itemid=327&lang=en.

7 <http://www.novosarajevo.ba/stream/press/index.php?sta=3&pid=3649>.

A significant achievement has been the introduction and **capacity building** of systems to ensure more transparency in how local budgets are used to fund CSO activities. Considering that local governments are the biggest external funders to CSOs, it has become clear in recent years that the funding mechanisms were far too casual and did not promote transparency and accountability. Also, the funding process tended to favour not only those organisations politically aligned to the local administrations, but also those that were the 'usual' recipients, with smaller and newer grassroots organisations excluded. To address these issues the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented the Local Democracy (LOD) programme has, amongst other things, supported activities to introduce more transparent mechanisms and has worked in partnership with TACSO to deliver training on project proposal development. The new mechanisms have included the use of public Calls for Proposals, terms of reference for commissions to be established and used to evaluate proposals received by the municipality, and procedures for monitoring compliance to the guidelines of the calls.

CSOs & municipalities in Project Proposal Writing Workshops in BiH 2012



To complement the introduction of these new mechanisms and to ensure that there is fair competition for local funds; TACSO BiH has been working with a range of local CSOs to build their capacity for developing proposals to submit for local funding consideration. These activities are described in more detail below and can be said to have impacted on the process of more effective cooperation by bringing to the 'market' 77 small, grassroots organisations that were previously unable to bid for such local public funds.

Despite the comprehensive and practical nature of the institutional arrangements for cooperation between CSOs and local government, research tends to show that the best practices in cooperation and the most effective forms of cooperation seem to develop in those municipalities where there are both elected members and administrators who are, as individuals, committed to promoting cooperation. But this trend is encouraged the more that good practices are shared. Thus, the case of Doboj Jug municipality is a good example that demonstrates that an effective working relationship between citizens, organised civil society, and the local administration can **add considerable 'value' to the local governance**. In the Duboj Jug municipality authorities initiated a process of spatial planning that would help to create preconditions for local development. From the beginning, the municipality showed its intention to assure good quality involvement and contribution of citizens in

the process. The local authorities decided to apply a new model of spatial planning, which differed from the traditional model in that it involved citizens in early phases of preparation of a spatial plan draft. The plan for citizen participation was made in cooperation with an experienced NGO from Tuzla (BiH). It was conceptually envisaged as a partner dialogue among municipal bodies, the urban institute and citizens with facilitation support from the Tuzla NGO.

At the operational level it meant organising two rounds of informative and promotional campaigns aiming at preparing citizens to take part in public consultations in a qualified way. In the first round citizens gave inputs and discussed the pre-draft of the spatial plan. In the second round, citizens were consulted about the draft of the spatial plan.

“Citizens and organisations do not understand processes. They lack expertise. It is important that the civil sector profiles itself and is armed with knowledge because only in that way can they become equal partners in dialogue.”

*Smail Kličić, Secretary of the Assembly of Unskosanski Canton
(May 2010 'I Participate Therefore I Contribute' report, ACIPS, Sarajevo, BiH)*

Public tribunals and panels offered a real chance for citizens to take part in the process, to express their opinions (reflecting their individual and/or collective situations and interests), suggest solutions and participate in setting the hierarchy of priorities. Doboju Jug citizens significantly influenced the final solutions in the spatial plan, and their interests were paramount in addressing the planning needs of the private sector without damaging disputes.

Experiences with citizen engagement are currently successfully used by the Doboju Jug administration for public consultations on the municipal budget. Sustainability of results is also seen in the fact that today the municipality keeps records about public hearings in each department. Such records are used for informed decision-making. In the earlier period, there was no systematic monitoring and reporting about public hearings. Moreover, municipal administration fosters and monitors citizen activism in general. For example, they keep track of the number and type of comments or questions asked by citizens during radio live broadcasts about municipal issues (e.g. the regular weekly hotline with the mayor) and the number of visits at the official municipal Web site. The important value of the process is that all actors of society were included: local administration, Local Community representatives, NGOs, citizens, legal bodies, entrepreneurs, media, experts, and so on. They all had their roles in the spatial plan-making process and contributed to community development.

TACSO BiH established close cooperation and synergy with the LOD II project and, based on lessons learned through that process; it designed and conducted **Educational Cycle on Project Proposal Writing** towards domestic sources of funding. The aim of this education cycle was to enhance project proposal writing skills of the CSO representatives located outside of the big urban centres in order to:

- Increase the capacity of rural CSOs in understanding administrative and evaluation criteria for selection of applications;
- Increase the number of small and rural CSOs and enable them to diversify their fundraising portfolio.

From February until June 2012 there were four two-day and four three-day trainings held, combined with one-on-one coaching for each CSO and a workshop for developing a monitoring system for 156 representatives of 77 CSOs from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. These CSOs were mostly organisations from smaller and more remote districts, which had not previously received funding support for their projects from the municipal authorities as part of the LOD project.

Since the Bečići Conference TACSO BiH has also managed the integration of other relevant capacity building measures. For example, in cooperation with the Directorate for European Integration (DEI) and the BiH Ministry of Justice, TACSO BiH organised promotion of the *Europe for Citizens 2007 - 2013* programme both for local self-governments and CSOs. This programme provides space and a forum for advancing cooperation between local governments and the CSOs, thus TACSO BiH has used promotion

of the programme to hold network-building events. Information workshops were held in Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Brčko and Mostar during November-December 2011, with additional sessions arranged with SERDA - Sarajevo Macro Region Economic Agency, Association of Towns and Municipalities of Republika Srpska and Association of Towns and Municipalities of the Federation of BiH.

Building capacity for joint proposals - workshop participants in BiH, 2012



In terms of **current and emerging challenges** in BiH, although more than half of all municipalities have signed some kind of cooperation agreement with CSOs, a lot still remains to be done to get the rest of the municipalities on board and to encourage implementation of already signed Agreements. It must be stressed that this is an on-going process that takes time and requires great efforts by the CSOs focused on presenting the framework document and its advantages to the municipal authorities. For this reason, efforts still need to be made to promote advantages of these mechanisms among the key stakeholders.

In terms of establishment of the joint municipal committees for allocation of municipal funds to CSOs, as part of the LOD project, it is important to stress that there is great interest among the municipalities to take part in this project which, however, can include only a limited number of municipalities. Because of that, the LOD project was extended to include a third phase, lasting for 24 months and including 11 new municipalities. Namely, it emerged that project extension was necessary as a result of all the analyses and evaluations carried out, indicating such intervention was needed. In addition to 11 municipalities participating in the LOD III project, other municipalities that are not part of the project will also obtain tools on how the monitoring, reporting evaluation systems could be improved.

The BiH TACSO team will continue to work closely with the third phase of the LOD project and, as part of its commitment to follow-up from Bečići will, during the coming months, provide technical assistance in the form of trainings to an estimated 150-200 less experienced civil society organisations in the 11 partner municipalities of the LOD III project: Bosanska Krupa, Čapljina, Kozarska Dubica, Livno, Lukavac, Ljubinje, Novi Grad, Srbac, Stari Grad Sarajevo, Teslić and Žepče. These municipal authorities will be supported by the LOD III project to make an open call to select CSOs to participate in the training in an open and fair manner.

CROATIA

The central government has had the EU at the centre of its agenda for some time and, in parallel, a maturing civil society has been applying effective advocacy across a range of policy areas. Accordingly the reform process has supported the **development of a sound regulatory environment for cooperation** (as summarised in Annex 1) and a range of national policy documents which both support cooperation between CSOs and the public sector at the local level per se (for example through the 2007 Code of Good Practice, Standards and Benchmarks for the Allocation of Funding for Programmes and Projects of NGOs) and which promote inclusion of CSOs in specific policy areas (such as the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011-2015).

As part of the global Open Government Partnership Initiative⁸, which Croatia joined during 2012, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs (Office) was instrumental in the development of an action plan for the participatory process. Among others, the plan identifies tasks that need to be implemented by the Office and the National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, in order to further partnership, consultation and ensure inclusion of civil society in implementation, at both the national and local level, of the commitments undertaken by the government.

The **consultation processes** are increasingly inclusive as it regards representatives of civil society on one side, and representatives of the local and regional self-government on the other. One of the most recent examples of those processes is the creation of the Action Plan of the Partnership for Open Government on the National Level, in which representatives of associations of municipalities (local self-government units encompassing the area of several dwellings with common natural, economic and social features as well as common interests of its' inhabitants), cities (local self-government units with common urban, historical, economic and social features, with population over 10,000) and counties (regional self-government units with common historical, traffic, economic, social and self-governmental features) were involved.

The most important development on the national level related to the mechanism of collaboration is the adoption of the new National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012-2016, (July 2012). This strategy contains an entire chapter dedicated to civil society and participatory democracy and covers all the critical issues identified in collaboration of self-government units with CSOs. Improvement of the conditions for development of participatory democracy and of the participation of CSOs in decision-making processes on local levels are two of the goals defined in the strategy, with all the important elements for the implementation (activities, responsible bodies, deadlines, resources and indicators). The strategy provides guidelines for improvement of the framework on different levels: legal, financial and institutional system of support to CSOs.

The specific chapter relevant to cooperation at the local level outlines a number of measures to be taken during the next five years: to improve efficiency of consultations with CSOs in processes of adopting laws, other regulations and bylaws; to improve legal framework for realisation of rights for access to information and to improve its implementation; to establish training programmes for civil servants and officials on the local level for efficient cooperation with civil society in implementation of public policies; to introduce and systematically implement civic education on all levels of the educational system; to ensure support to CSOs supporting development of participatory democracy and to their programmes and to ensure conditions for their evaluation; to introduce educational contents directed to acquiring knowledge, attitudes and values related to volunteering in the educational system; and to improve conditions for the operation of non-profit media.

Although most of the representatives of the self-government units claim they have strategies of cooperation with CSOs or for development of civil society, a closer look reveals that in fact they mean strategies created in cooperation with CSOs. This indicates that, on the one hand, participation of CSOs in processes of defining local strategies is increasing (especially in regards to counties and, to lesser extent, municipalities). One of the reasons for the progress is the adoption of the act prescribing partnership principle in creation of development strategies of Croatian counties, which clearly states

8 <http://www.opengovpartnership.org>.

necessity for representation of all sectors, including civil society, in the process.⁹ The role of CSOs providing services or advocating for specific groups (such as people with disabilities or youth) is significant in the planning processes aiming to define strategies or activities focused on that specific group or their priorities.

However, on the other hand, it is evident that the local strategies mostly present CSOs as actors who can provide specific social services, while the strategic approach to the CSOs and their sector is lacking. As a consequence, in most of the self-government units, there is neither a vision of their development nor measures for their empowerment and capacity building.

As with other countries, one of the main challenges in Croatia is that the actual **implementation of policies tends to be weak**, particularly at the local level and in the more rural areas. For example, the Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in Procedures of Adopting Laws, Other Regulations and Acts has two main implementing mechanisms: (1) appointment of the coordinator for consultation and easy access to him/her, and (2) announcement of the statement of interested public with summarised and aggregated justification of rejection of the objections of the public. From research in 2011¹⁰, these mechanisms were only operational in just three self-government units.

Moreover, although the Law on Access to Public Information prescribes the obligatory appointment of the official responsible for informing the public, 17 percent of the self-government units did not appoint their officials. The responsible body for implementation of this law is known (*Agency for Protection of Personal Information*), but the sanctions for failing to fulfil the law's requirements are not.

At the beginning of 2011 the areas that were prioritised by the TACSO facilitated working group as needing action related to:

- Supporting more dialogue between CSOs and local government on a thematic or sector basis.
- Improve local government's acknowledgement of the contributions of CSOs to better decision-making.
- Introduction of the 'free chair'.
- Strengthen civic education at the local level.
- Improve existing sets of guidelines and standards.

During the last two years, since the Bečići Conference, some progress has been made on some of these issues. There has been some positive movement in the allocation of municipal human resources to liaise with CSOs and in some sectors, for example youth policies, a growth in cooperation mechanisms. This progress is described more below, as are the continuing challenges.

Although there are no available data on the number and distribution of the officials nominated for cooperation with CSOs (or of the offices executing this function), a recent survey by the national TACSO office has revealed trends of local government offices dealings with CSOs. Many of them have established formal functions, or added communication and cooperation with CSOs to the job description of an employee (such as Samobor, Karlovac, Crikvenica, Opatija, Zabok, Solin, Križevci, Delnice). Some of them, in addition to the designated employee, also have an office for cooperation with CSOs (for example, Zabok and Križevci). There are no reports on the formal role of a contact person with the city council.

Forty-one percent of local self-government units have established youth councils, and out of them, 57 percent of the councils have been active.¹¹ Conclusions of the research conducted on youth councils¹² call for deeper analysis of the quality of cooperation instead of accepting formal proofs of cooperation (such as mere existence of the bodies for cooperation), and stresses the importance to sensitise, inform and educate local governments in order to increase their capacities and willingness for true cooperation. The prescribed framework is inadequate for smaller municipalities with limited

9 Narodne novine, 53/10.

10 LOTUS research by CSO GONG and Association of Cities, 2011. <http://www.gong.hr>.

11 The aforementioned LOTUS research.

12 Network of Youth of Croatia, 2012.

human resources for cooperation on both sides (self-government units and CSOs) and capacities for participation in processes bringing about structural changes are not up to the task and this impedes involvement even in cases when self-government units are open to such participation. The problem of inadequate capacities was mentioned very often and illustrated by the examples of cases where CSO representatives were invited and either did not attend or did participate but were not able to contribute beyond reiterating demands for action on particular problems (rather than presenting potential policy solutions and systematic changes.)

Local self-governments do have a statute provision for citizens to attend working sessions; however, recent research indicates that only nine percent of local governments adequately announce the agenda and dates of such sessions. The upcoming new legislation on Freedom of Information (expected late 2012) will force local authorities to be more pro-active in the provision of information and its implementation will need to be monitored by local CSOs.

In the last two years, 62 percent¹³ of the local self-government units have financed activities or projects of CSOs, with the shortfall mainly coming at the lowest administrative level, with only 53 percent of the municipalities providing funds, compared to 100 percent of the 'county' level administrations. The trend of local public financing of CSOs is on the rise, however, it is disturbing that only one third of those units that financed CSOs have based their financing on public Calls for Proposals. This means that the implementation of the Code of Good Practice, Standards and Benchmarks for the Allocation of Funding for Programmes and Projects of NGOs, adopted in 2007, is still not satisfactory, since a significant portion of the resources is allocated to the CSOs without clear and transparent criteria. The municipalities lagging behind both in financing CSOs and in using public calls might indicate that they lack capacities to plan and implement public calls and selection processes, or that the number of local CSOs in some municipalities is low, but also that they simply do not recognise the importance of the public calls and transparent distribution of funds.

A CSO representative reported difficulties with administrations of cities and of counties, since their criteria for funding took into consideration only the welfare sector, while both health and education were left out, since the persons responsible did not understand that social services include education and health, too.

Finding from TACSO Croatia's national survey on progress on CSO-Local Government cooperation, October 2012.

Civic education was introduced in Croatian schools for the first time in September 2012 by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Science. These national-level efforts are at last complementing the work done at the local level by a number of CSOs; yet local level capacities are still very restricted. CSOs such as 'Cenzura Plus', based in Split, work on the promotion of human rights, freedom of media, and civil society development through independent television production, informal education and advocacy. CSO IKS from Petrinja sought and received EU funds for civic education activities, through their democratisation project for rural women "Enabling Local Democracy 2010-2011".

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The **legal provision for supporting cooperation** between CSOs and local authorities is well developed and has been supplemented with a growing number of strategy documents at both the central and local levels of government. The commitment to EU integration has greatly galvanised both the authorities and CSOs to improve the ways in which they work together and clearly changes at the central level (for example, the fact that every line-ministry and major public body has a focal point for civil society) and positively influences the structuring of local governance. Leading up to

¹³ These statistics are taken from the findings of the research conducted by the GONG Research Centre (in 2009 and in 2011-2012) entitled "Local, Accountable and Transparent Government and Self-Government – LOTUS".

the Bečići Conference the main structural weaknesses were to be found in the smaller municipalities where a lack of resources and limited staffing capacity have hampered the implementation of certain cooperation mechanisms.

The issues related to public participation in terms of realising their basic democratic rights, and the relationship between citizens and local governments are regulated by the Constitution, the Law on Local Self-Government, the Law on Financing the Units of Local Self-Government and the Law on Associations and Foundations. The Law of Local Self-Government regulates the types of citizen participation, including provision for civic initiatives, referenda, complaints and suggestion collection mechanisms, public debates and forums, and surveys. The Law on Associations and Foundations provides legal basis for foreseen measures aimed at the improvement of the civil society sector.

At the local level the mechanisms for civil dialogue vary from municipality to municipality. In general, urban municipalities with larger and more experienced administrative staff have a more pro-active approach to cooperation with CSOs. The majority have units (in the case of the Municipality of Skopje) or responsible persons for cooperation with CSOs within the Departments for Local Economic Development (as is the case in Karpoš, Štip, Aerodrom, and Debar), or within other departments (such as the municipalities of Veles and Ohrid in the Department for Education, Culture, Health and Social Care). In the rural municipalities the institutional arrangements are much more challenging. Some of the municipalities have appointed persons responsible for cooperation with CSOs; however, they also have a range of other responsibilities and thus struggle to effectively promote participation.

The country has benefitted from the establishment of the Unit for Cooperation with CSOs in the Government's General Secretariat (as evidenced in the ECNL¹⁴/TACSO report, "**Keeping up the Momentum: Improving Cooperation between Public Institutions and the Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey**", October 2012) and subsequent national level Strategy for Cooperation with CSOs (SCGCS), and accordingly the largest municipal authorities in the country, Skopje, have also made provision for local policies supporting civil society engagement. The city authorities prepared its first strategy in 2007-2011 and did so in a participatory manner with 80 NGOs involved within the consultation process. The success of this strategy is currently being evaluated.

At the Bečići Conference in early 2011, the delegates from local government and from CSOs from Macedonia highlighted **particular weaknesses**, which might be addressed in order to strengthen cooperation. These included finding more opportunities to institutionalise the mechanisms and good practices for cooperation, such as the adoption at all levels of the Council of Europe's (CoE) Code of Good Practice on Participatory Governance, and expanding and strengthening the existing community forum approach; improving transparency and accountability through improved content and format of information available to local citizens; increasing and diversifying the funding opportunities for CSOs at the local level through the use of practices such as Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) and enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility.

During the last two years **progress has been made** in improving cooperation between CSOs and the public administration at both central and local level. The Government of Macedonia has prepared a new SCGCS for the period of 2012-2017. The new strategy embraces five strategic priorities: (1) developed and sustainable civil society; (2) active participation in defining policies, legislation and European integration; (3) economic and social development and cohesion; (4) strengthened civic activism and support from the community; and (5) strengthened institutional framework and practices of cooperation. The strategy is primarily focused on the national level, however, it also presents an example and encourages the Units of the Local Self Government to accept and apply its principles on the local level. Some of the specific measures foreseen that are directly targeting the local level are (1) the promotion of positive models for cooperation on the local level and provision of social services by CSOs to the community on behalf of the local self-governments, and (2) the introduction of communication networks and system for sharing of best practices of local self-governments about their cooperation with CSOs.

14 European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law.

Further municipalities have also prepared their own **strategy documents**, in consultation with local civil society to guide cooperation with CSOs and more participatory local governance: the Municipalities of Bitola, Debar, and Jegunovce all have strategies of cooperation with civil society for the period 2012-2015. Moreover the Unit for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations, within the General Secretariat of the Government of Macedonia, has an EU-funded project in the pipeline, which includes a component to deal with preparation of local strategies for citizen cooperation with eight municipalities.

There are also some municipalities with other policy tools to assist cooperation. For example, the Municipalities of Veles and Karpoš do not have a Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society, but have prepared Annual Programmes for Support of CSOs, a Strategy for People with Disabilities, and a Strategy for Youth and Sport, both of which have provision for cooperation.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project for Transparent Governance has been implemented in three phases since 2009, involving 13 different municipalities, and recently, during 2012, has been able to share more widely good practices in more transparent local governance. From the various consultations that it has supported, the project partners (Foundation "NGO Info-Centre," in partnership with the Centre for Civil Communication (CCC) from Skopje, and the Educational Humanitarian Organisation "EHO" from Štip) have identified a range of weaknesses and proposed good practices, many of which relate to improving information made available on local government budgets, and **improving the flow of information within local administrations** so that every department and unit is better connected to the citizens that they serve. The local self-government from Vinica, for example, discusses the budget with citizens before submitting the proposal to the council for approval.

It is noteworthy that from the project's recent evaluation surveys, representatives of civic associations express greater satisfaction and higher levels of information about the functioning of municipal administrations, accessibility of information and documents, where there is demonstrably more concrete collaborations between the CSOs and local administration, whereas the satisfaction levels of CSOs is lower in places where their cooperation with the municipal administration is smaller.

The national TACSO office has also facilitated progress on the issues relating to improving transparency through better flows of information. In cooperation with participants from the Bečići Conference, TACSO organised a National Conference on Cooperation between Civil Society Organisations and Local Self-Government, in Ohrid, in June 2011. The issue of **transparency and accountability** was the focus of one working group, which came up with a number of recommendations. This national conference not only assisted in further raising awareness to the importance of strengthening the mechanisms for cooperation, but some of the participants departed from the conference and began to implement changes. For example, some of the recommendations have been met by the municipalities of Veles, Aerodrom, and Karpoš in terms of new forms of cooperation and communication with CSOs and citizens.

According to the discussions with some representatives from civil society and the Association of the Units of the Local-Self Government of Macedonia, better transparency does now exist in some of the municipalities such as in Štip, Veles, Strumica, Prilep, Karpoš, and Aerodrom. Some of the urban municipalities also have certificates for ISO 9001:2008 standards for development and provision of services under the jurisdiction of the local government, which reinforces the implementation of mechanisms for transparency.

At the national level, the previous Strategy on Civil Society has already been acknowledged for facilitating the development of a more transparent mechanism of public funds distribution to CSOs (the enactment of the code on public grants distribution) and the role of the Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs in the process of distribution. Such practices are now becoming widespread in the allocation of public funds at the local level. Also, in terms of facilitating more **innovative funding mechanisms for joint actions** between CSOs and local government, the recent Law on Concessions and Public-Private Partnership (2012) has enabled some municipalities to use the PPP model, and some are doing so by partnering with organisations from the private sector, which are both for-profit and not-for-profit. For example, Kočani Municipality has involved the Association for the Elderly in a PPP arrangement for service delivery for older people.

In recent years the interests of the private sector, particularly in terms of **local economic development**, have been a significant driving force in improving collaboration between organised civil society and the local governments. In some municipalities (Prilep, Veles) Local Economic Councils (LEC) exist. The Local Economic and Social Councils (LESC) are initiated or are in the final phase of forming in Kavadarci, Kumanovo, Strumica, Tetovo, Bitola, and Štip. These Councils intend to help establish and maintain a public private dialogue between all community stakeholders interested in local economic activity.

The use of **Community Forums** (CF) has also increased and strengthened in this period. These Forums, which have been active in more than 40 municipalities, are simple 'town hall' style meetings where citizens can actively engage with local decision-makers and influence the projects and actions that are financed under the local budget. To run the forums there is a group of five CSOs, supported by the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDCA), which has provided training to local administration staff and local CSOs. Recent successful examples of these forums demonstrate that the collaboration between local administrations and CSOs can facilitate more citizen participation. In the Karpoš Municipality between June and October 2012, five forum sessions were realised prior to finalising the decision about financing a project (to increase the energy efficiency of a local kindergarten). The first session was attended by 336 citizens, the second by 222, third by 172, fourth by 196, and the last one by 220 inhabitants.



“The Community Forums programme is a really successful way of involving the citizens in the process of decision-making. Their extensive participation (on average, over 100 citizens) at the Forums’ sessions clearly demonstrated that they have the desire and the willingness to actively be involved and to give their contribution in order to improve their living environment. I think that this positive approach will continue to be practised in future, even after the completion of this programme”, says Ismet Balazi, co-moderator of the Forums in Kichevo, FYROM, and as illustrated by the community involvement in an infrastructure project above.

The national TACSO office has also contributed to strengthening the capacity of CSOs to facilitate more citizen participation at the local level. The programme designed and delivered trainings to a total of 42 CSOs on topics such as Citizen Activism, Citizen Participation in Local Decision-Making, and Advocacy and Lobbying.

On the negative side it can be reported that there has not been much progress on building the capacity for analysing deficiencies in the existing mechanisms for communication among local administrations and CSOs and citizens, as the planned introduction of an evaluation methodology has not yet been implemented.

Another **on-going capacity challenge** is how to better organised smaller local administrations in relation to institutionalising their cooperation with CSOs. Having an individual staff member who is assigned as a civil society focal point along with other responsibilities is a start to the problem. However, a long-term solution needs to be generated so that cooperation with CSOs is integrated across all elements of the local self-government.

KOSOVO

Kosovo has been going through a dynamic transition period since 1999, with a huge amount of legislative drafting and the establishment of a range of institutions. A significant part of these changes has been the development of the appropriate institutional arrangements to foster effective cooperation between CSOs and local self-government. Prior to 2011, these institutional arrangements had been advanced and the most pertinent aspects are summarised below, however **implementation is hampered by both a lack of capacity and unclear priorities** of organised civil society.

At the national level, the 2009 Law on Freedom of Association and the 2008 Law on Local Government provide the mainframe for CSO and local government cooperation. The Law on Local Self-Government recognises the right of citizens of a municipality to take part in the latter's activities, with detailed provisions on open meetings of the municipal's assembly, rules to enable citizen participation in the meetings, access to information, regular mechanisms for public information and consultation, and the fact that municipalities must inform the citizens of 'the important plans or programmes for public interest'. Moreover, the law specifically refers to CSOs in Article 73, obligating the municipalities to establish consultative committees within sectors in which they must include the representatives of CSOs.

The Law on Freedom of Association was drafted with considerable input from CSOs themselves, captured in a TASCOS publication, 'Growing Together', in June 2011, and provides for appropriate legal entities from civil society to partner with local government.

The Law on Public Financial Management and Accountability and the Budget Circular specify which forms of public consultation should take place during the municipal budget preparation and approval process. Such public consultation is meant to contribute to the drafting of a municipal budget that reflects the needs and priorities of municipal residents as well as municipal commitment to the good governance principles of transparency and accountability.

There is also **legal provision for consultations with civil society** on local spatial planning, and a particular provision to ensure that the youth sector is empowered. The Local Youth Action Council is an advisory body, which operates at the local level and represents the interests of youth and youth organisations at the institutions of local government.

The **municipal government is obliged to create an enabling environment** for access to official documents, and the municipal assembly may establish sectorial committees enabling resident participation in the decision-making process. These committees should include residents and representatives of non-governmental organisations. The committees may submit proposals, conduct research and provide opinion on municipal assembly initiatives, in accordance with the Municipal Statute.

Statutes and regulations for each municipality are all based on the above laws and, as they have been drafted recently and in a comparatively short period of time, tend to be very similar. One of the most useful regulations is that establishing the criteria for the subsidies and transfers. Through this regulation, municipalities may allocate local public funds to assist both public and non-public entities. The beneficiaries of the subsidies can include civil society organisations that operate at the local level.

Financial support varies from municipality to municipality. Organisations receiving the most support from the municipal budget are those that deal with issues regarding youth, gender, multiculturalism and culture. Support amounts are usually small and they range from a few hundred to several thousand euros (rarely over 5000 euro). Small municipalities, which have even smaller budgets, have a very modest annual support for civil society, while larger municipalities are known to have a total provision of up to a hundred thousand euro.

Kosovo's **municipalities do not have specific offices for coordination with civil society**. Different municipalities have different mechanisms, but in most cases the coordination role is assigned to municipal units responsible for European Integration, for Human Rights, for Communities, for Gender issues and other departments. This means that CSOs can only identify a local government counterpart by a particular issue rather than as a partner in local governance. However, a number of strategic documents adopted by municipal authorities in Kosovo have been formulated in close cooperation with civil society. Some of these strategic documents focus on fields such as culture, environment, and the integration of community. The strategy formulation process differs between municipalities. In most of the cases, CSOs take the initiative to establish official cooperation with local governing authorities. However, there are also cases when the authorities (usually the Mayor) initiate the request for cooperation.

As of 2010, despite provisions in the local government legislation and regulations, a relatively small number of consultative committees, including representation of CSOs, have been established in some of the municipalities in Kosovo.

During the last two years there have been **two main areas of progress** in terms of local government/civil society cooperation. First, the number of CSOs that monitor the work of local governments has increased and, second, there has also been an increase in CSOs being engaged in the drafting of local thematic strategies (for example, on youth, integration of communities, and culture). However, it can also be noted that unfortunately many of these recently developed strategy documents are poorly resourced and therefore are weakly implemented.

The monitoring of local governments seems to be a positive trend, with active support to CSOs from international organisations (such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe). This activity has led to increased local transparency and at the same time obligated the municipalities to be more careful in the observance of democratic decision-making standards. The leading CSOs pushing for enhanced local level monitoring include the Kosovo Democratic Institution in the municipalities in the Prizren region, Initiative for Progress in Ferizaj and Pristina, Youth's Action for Human Rights in Lipjan, and EC Ma Ndryshe in Prizren (of which there is more described in the case study section on page 43).¹⁵

A recent addition to the institutional architecture has been the organisation and functioning of the Centres of Services for Citizens in Municipalities (CSCM), through an Administrative Instruction from the Ministry of Local Government Administration in April 2011. This administrative instruction aims to facilitate the administrative procedures and to increase the efficiency of municipal bodies in the provision of public services to citizens. The CSCM should obtain daily information from municipal bodies and duly inform the citizens and businesses on decisions issued by observing the rules and legal procedures. This information is also supposed to be published on the municipal webpage.

15 Democratic Institute of Kosova is one of the leading civil society organisations performing monitoring activities at local level and covering all municipalities of the Prizren region. The findings from the monitoring are regularly uploaded and published through their webpage www.kdi-kosova.org.

CSO-Municipal agreement signed in Prizren, Kosovo, 2012

In terms of **CSOs providing 'added value' to local governance** it is clear that in recent years the municipal authorities acknowledge and actively seek out the expertise from CSOs in developing their sectional strategies. But in addition to this, there are also examples where the municipalities see that CSOs can bring credibility and wider-community engagement in certain local government policy areas. The Municipal Councils on Safety in Communities (MCSC) are a testament to this. Most of the municipalities, when asked to give good examples of cooperation with the civil society, mention the establishment and functioning of MCSCs. In these councils CSOs are an integral part of the discussions and actions undertaken together with the municipal authorities and security institutions. Because the Mayor chairs these MCSCs they have executive power and CSOs directly influence decision-making on security issues.

There is also increasing evidence of effective partnerships between CSOs and the municipalities in joint initiatives and products to increase the tourist attractiveness of towns, and in the development of local environmental action plans.

These signs of improvement in cooperation would suggest that capacities within both the local government bodies and CSOs are strengthening. Part of this capacity building process has benefitted from inputs from the TACSO programme and its national partners. For example, TACSO Kosovo, in partnership with Kosovar Civil Society Foundation, produced a publication "**Beyond Zero**" in June 2011 that analyses the existing legal framework and institutional mechanisms for cooperation with civil society in Kosovo. In preparing this study, the partners conducted broad consultations with civil society and government bodies in Kosovo with the aim to jointly discuss the issue and to find common ground on which to further develop quality dialogue between local government and civil society. The publication provides concrete information from the field on how the dialogue between government and civil society is going and what needs to be done to advance it.

The TACSO Kosovo publication 'Beyond Zero' captures a number of good practices. For example, the Municipality of Peja demonstrates a positive approach to the implementation of laws and regulations in regards to cooperation with civil society. Almost every directorate or unit of the administration, including the Mayor's office, has very fruitful and open cooperation with civil society organisations. However, the process of establishing such a constructive relationship between both parties in this municipality has not been an easy one:

'We had huge difficulties in the way to open doors of communication and to establish good cooperation with municipal structures', noted the Executive Director of NGO Syri i Vizionit from Peja during a TACSO workshop in July 2011.

After the conflict in Kosovo the legal infrastructure to guide cooperation was lacking and most stakeholders, particularly those in local government, had a poor understanding of the concept and role of civil society. However, local CSOs have worked tirelessly to raise awareness and provide sufficient information on their missions, and the Peja municipal authorities have come to appreciate that the application of the principles of democracy and good citizenship mean that cooperation should be pursued and that, indeed, local level cooperation brings many benefits.

Furthermore, TACSO Kosovo worked closely with the EU Delegation in Kosovo and the People 2 People programme in organising the event Cooperation between Local Governance and Civil Society that took place on May 15-16th, 2012 in Prishtina. Representatives of local authorities and CSOs participated in the workshop and amongst various discussions, explored how recommendations in the TACSO reports, 'Growing Together' and 'Beyond Zero', can be implemented.

There are, of course, still **considerable constraints and challenges**. One of the major obstacles is the lack of willingness and capacity of citizens and organised civil society to make use of the participatory tools provided for in the various legislation and statutes of municipalities. These provisions allow for the use of 'direct democracy' mechanisms and consultative methods, however, CSOs mention that the loss of public trust in legal and institutional solutions to their problems is a contributing factor to the lack of engagement. Similarly, CSOs themselves are not making use of the participatory opportunities, but rather it continues to be international organisations, such as the OSCE Mission, which push for the realisation of consultative committees and the like.

On the side of the local self-governments, there are also various capacity challenges. Perhaps the most prominent of these is making the Municipal Offices for Public Communication effectively functional. Currently they lack proper equipment for work, as well as professional staff. In most cases meetings between municipal authorities and civil society are carried out informally, without any structure or organised follow-up to any suggestions or issues raised in the meetings.¹⁶ In addition, the supply of public information continues to be haphazard and below expected requirements with, for example, poor provision of documents relevant to any public debates and little interactive channels through municipal Web sites.

16 Kosovar Civil Society Foundations, Us and Them, Public Participation in Kosova, October 2011. http://www.kcsfoundation.org/repository/docs/Ne_dhe_Ata_Pjesemarrja_qytetare_ne_Kosove_b5.pdf

MONTENEGRO

Although there remains room for improvement in how local government and CSOs cooperate in Montenegro, the last two years have seen some **significant improvements in the important areas of capacity to enable cooperation and practices to promote transparency**. These are explored in more detail below, but first it is useful to comment on the institutional and legislative arrangements for such cooperation.

The functioning of local self-governments is regulated by the 2008 Law on Local Self-Government and this law contains regulations on cooperation between local self-governments and CSOs in a specific, dedicated chapter (entitled 'Relations between local self-government bodies and CSOs'). This chapter prescribes the ways in which cooperation between the two sectors may be manifested and in so doing provide a comprehensive enabling environment for the following:

- Local government informing CSOs about all the issues relevant to their work;
- Consulting civil sector about programmes of development of local self-government as well as about drafts of local acts;
- Enabling participation of CSO representatives in working groups for preparation of normative acts and creation of plans and programmes;
- Organising joint public discussions, round tables, seminars, etc.;
- Financing, from the local public budget, CSO projects of interest for local populations, based on prescribed rules and procedures;
- Providing work conditions for CSOs, in accordance with possibilities of local self-government.

Thus, the legislation defines all universal models of cooperation between public authorities and CSOs, (around information, consultation, and partnership) as recommended in European good practices, such as the Council of Europe's Code on Good Practices for Citizen Participation in Decision-Making.

Although the legal framework has been developed effectively and relatively quickly, over recent years the biggest constraint to efficient and meaningful cooperation between CSOs and local government has been the **lack of procedural tools** and capacities. This has badly impacted on the work of both sectors. Prior to 2011 there was high dissatisfaction among CSOs and local self-government with mutual cooperation. CSOs were willing to contribute to the quality of local policies, but were always faced with a lack of procedures for their participation. That is why many of their initiatives were not being submitted to relevant organs and consequently failed. On the other side, the local self-governments were also expressing their willingness to make their work more transparent and open for CSOs, but didn't have the tools to make it happen.

In 2003, at the time of the enactment of the first law relating to local self-government, a coalition of more than 180 CSOs signed up in support of a campaign aimed at empowering cooperation with local self-government and transparency of its work. This campaign resulted in raising awareness of mayors and local officials about benefits of cooperation with CSOs and the necessity of involving citizens in decision-making. The campaign also significantly strengthened the capacities of local CSOs in field of mechanisms and tools for participation at the local level, and even forced municipalities to develop their own local policies for cooperation with CSOs. However, despite a five-year period of awareness raising and monitoring of the cooperation, there was still a significant lack of procedures and know-how to support the cooperation.

At the time of the Bečići Conference in 2011, both the local government bodies and CSOs had identified urgent issues that needed to be addressed. In terms of building capacity, it was clear that there was a need to develop a comprehensive set of procedural guidelines and good practice 'models' to facilitate cooperation and that, in addition, as acknowledged in the Bečići Conference Action Plan for Montenegro, there was a need to raise skill and knowledge levels relating to cooperation amongst the various stakeholders. The follow-up action plan from the conference also highlighted several other issues to be addressed. In terms of improving transparency, the delegates agreed that information channels, such as municipal Web sites and printed matter, needed to be better developed and that the law needed changing in order to allow public procurement to be made more visible.

Procedures facilitating citizen participation in decision-making needed to be improved and adopted. Local governments should adopt the good practices laid out in the CoE's Code and agree to more partnership arrangements with CSOs. The financing of CSO actions at the local level might be improved with more transparent and competitive procedures in applying for public funds, and with more data made available about past projects, donor activities and the possibilities of Public-Private-Partnerships.

The **first significant achievement** during 2011 has been the development of a set of guiding procedures relating to five areas of CSO-local government cooperation. These procedural guidelines have been researched and drafted through an innovative partnership involving the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Union of Municipalities, and CRNVO. The five guidelines cover model procedures for citizen participation in conducting public affairs; establishing a Council for Cooperation between Local Self-Government and CSOs; rules for local parliament and a Model of Agreement on Cooperation between Local Parliaments and CSOs; and criteria, format, and procedures for the distribution of funds to CSOs. These models were adopted by the Managing Board of the Union of Municipalities (which is consisted of representatives of municipalities) and submitted to each municipality for adoption. Having in mind the differences amongst municipalities, these guidelines contain minimum standards and rules in relevant fields. It is up to each local self-government to adjust these guidelines to their local context. To date, only four municipalities adopted policies in accordance with these models, which indicates that further advocacy is needed to institutionalise these practices.

The Bečići Conference itself has been an effective catalyst amongst the local government representatives and CSOs to work together in identifying ways in which cooperation can be enhanced. Recommendations and conclusions from that regional TACSO office were submitted to each municipality in Montenegro and, according to ad hoc interviews, inspired many of them to improve the transparency of their work. The regional conference also gave rise to a series of three dedicated roundtable meetings at different locations in Montenegro during 2011 to help fine-tune the priorities for action. These roundtable discussions culminated in recommendations to create local Councils for Cooperation between Local Self-Governments and CSOs; change the decisions that regulate the processes of financing CSO projects from local budgets; change the decision on budgets in terms of making it the obligation of local self-government to publish any contract they sign with individuals or legal entities; organise trainings for local officials on cooperation with the civil sector; and organise meetings with councillors in order to strengthen their cooperation with CSOs and thus enhance link with citizens.

In terms of strengthening the means for making the **local governments more transparent and accountable**, there has been progress in developing the municipal web portals with only three (out of 21) local administrations now without an updated Web site. There have also been changes in the legislation to promote more transparency. From July 2012 each municipality is obliged to publish any contract it signs with legal entities and individuals, and since January 2012 the law requires that municipalities publish each public procurement contract on their Web site. It is perhaps too early to comment how these changes are being implemented.

With respect to the introduction of the 'model' procedures for citizen participation in decision-making, this is a slow process, but the Union of Municipalities and TACSO continues to be very supportive in this effort and where it is implemented there has been an improvement in the local public consultation process (as witnessed by CRNVO). Three municipalities have fully adopted the model, with the Municipality of Bijelo Polje taking it as a basis for public discussions and a big consultation with CSOs, before adopting what they considered the most applicable regulations in their context.

There has also been **some progress in the adoption of agreements on cooperation** between local authorities and CSOs. In total, 18 agreements have been signed during the last two years. However, it should be noted that the impact of these specific agreements might not be sustained as they are all in relation to specific joint projects and not long-term arrangements nor agreements with coalitions of CSOs. This said it is hoped that the experience of signing such partnership agreements will be evaluated by both the CSOs and local administrations and will form the foundations for more long-term arrangements.

In addition to the sharing of good practices at the TACSO-facilitated roundtables, the local governance sector has greatly benefitted during the last two years from a **substantial national training programme** being rolled out by the Union of Municipalities in conjunction with the Human Resource Management Authority. This training programme is organised under the guidance of the National Council for trainings for local self-government, which consists of various stakeholders, and ensures both quality standards in the training and that training needs of local officials are carefully assessed, including those related to cooperating with CSOs. In total more than 800 local administrators have participated in courses ranging from Public Ethics, Transparency and Accountability, Public Procurement, and on Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

Finally, there has also been some progress on institutionalising procedures, which allow for local public funds to be used to finance CSO projects and services through open, competitive processes. However, the progress is very limited, with only two municipalities adopting and implementing the model procedures developed by the UoM and CRNVO. For this reason, commentators (including CRNVO) on cooperation between CSOs and local governments still complain that **the issue of financing remains as the biggest stumbling block**. There are many local governments who continue to disperse funds from the local budget in ways that are non-transparent and which are not evaluated for their effectiveness and efficiency.

There also still **remains much to be done in terms of developing databases and systems for sharing experiences** and good practices from joint actions and projects of CSOs and local administrations. The items on the national action plan relating to this remain unaddressed. Likewise no actions have yet been taken to strengthen the coordination and networking on funding opportunities of external donors.

SERBIA

The decade prior to 2011 was mostly noteworthy for the **legal provisions** made in support of CSO cooperation with local government and for the **mechanisms** developed on a case-by-case basis to facilitate collaboration and joint actions. The most significant laws passed in this period are on how local self-government is regulated and the new legislation for associations. However, without a national level strategy on cooperation with civil society, efforts to institutionalise cooperation at the local level have been uneven.

- In the Republic of Serbia the functioning of local self-government is regulated by *the Law on Local Self-Government* (2007). The law states that the cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations has the purpose to improve the quality of life in the local community. One particular article in the law introduces the opportunity for local administrations to cooperate with all stakeholders (including CSOs) in order to improve local community development. Furthermore, Article 20, which regulates the domain of local government activities, states that the local authority encourages the development of different forms of support and self-support and solidarity with persons with disabilities, as well as, with all persons living in underprivileged conditions and encourages organisations of persons with disabilities and other socio-humanitarian organisations working in its territory.

CSOs Fair in Novi Sad, Serbia, 2012



- *The Law on Associations of Citizens* (2009), has a dedicated section on ‘the resources for the Realisation of Programmes of Public Interest’ and states that resources for the realisation of the programmes of public interest are allocated in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, the budget of the autonomous province and the budgets of Local Self-Governments. The programmes of public interest are programmes in the following areas: social protection, protection of persons with disabilities, social care for children, support to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, support to the elderly, health protection, promotion and protection of human and minority rights, education, science, culture, information, environmental protection, sustainable development, anti-corruption and other programmes following recognised public needs.
- Serbia still has not adopted the strategy for CSO development, even though a lot of serious preparation, including detailed research, has been carried out. The newly established Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society took a leading role to open up the final process of making the strategy. However, in almost all national strategies CSOs are mentioned as actors of the different strategic actions or partners in their realisation. It is worth noting those strategies, which have emphasised CSO roles:
 - National Strategy for Poverty Reduction;
 - National Strategy of Sustainable Development;
 - National Strategy for Development of Social Protection;
 - National Strategy for Preventing and Suppressing Violence Against Women in Family and Partnership Relations;
 - National Strategy for Solving Refugees and IDPs Issues for the period 2011-2014;
 - Strategy for Managing Migrations;
 - Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma in Republic of Serbia;
 - National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Increasing Gender Equality;
 - National Action Plan for Children.

These sector based-strategic documents refer to CSOs at local level and see them in the following possible roles:

- Partners in developing and implementing the actions, projects, etc. for beneficiary groups;
- Service providers for local self-government;
- Implementing actors of some measures and activities planned by strategic documents.

Thus, policy at the national level is attempting to lay the foundations for effective cooperation at the local level.

Almost all of the local self-governments in Serbia have at least one or two local strategic documents (for example, Strategy of Sustainable Development, Strategy for Local Economic Development, Local Action Plan for Children, etc.) and these documents also are explicit in seeing local CSOs as important actors in policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Similarly, the policy documents were mostly drafted in consultation with working groups, which had CSO members.

Based on the Law on Local Self-Government, local authorities have developed their statutes, which range in quality and detail. Some of the local governments have included in their statutes the opportunities for cooperation with CSOs. Some of the examples of this practice are municipalities Bačka Topola and Kanjiža, City of Užice, and the City municipality Crveni Krst in City of Niš. The practical realisation of this cooperation tends to manifest itself in a few specific ways: partnerships for the implementation of joint projects; participation of CSO members in the different working bodies for developing local strategy papers, plans and programmes; CSOs as transparently selected and contracted service providers; or contact person in the local assembly.

The local governments with the poorest records for cooperation with CSOs and the weakest capacities for promoting cooperation tend to be those which may be most politically polarised and most economically challenged (for example, with average incomes under 50 percent of the national average income, and considerable outward migration). Another common factor for a rather weak experience in cooperation and unsustainable collaborations is the fact that, despite the developed legislation, some Serbian **local governments lack agreed standards** to be applied to practices such as cooperation with CSOs and transparency.

Given the above, the Serbian National Action Plan resulting from the 2011 Bečići Conference focused on two broad areas for improvement: first, the need to develop and adopt a range of standards and standardised practices, especially in relation to the provision of local public funds to local CSOs; and second, the need to build capacity in a number of ways: procedures and models for cooperation; development of human resources and skill sets for cooperation; and the provision of incentives and rewards for effective cooperation.

Since the Bečići Conference some progress has been made on these issues. In terms of assisting with **standards for transparency**, the national TACSO office, in July 2011, produced a document on "Transparency in Spending Local Public Funds (481 Budget line) for CSOs Activities" which included findings, best practice examples, and other practical recommendations. The publication was widely disseminated and since September 2012, TACSO has continued to work in this field by providing assistance to a selected number of local networks/CSOs that want to advocate for introducing transparent procedure in public budget spending and decision-making at the local level. Similarly, the Centre for Development of the Non-profit Sector (CDNPS) undertook a comprehensive analysis of the budget line 481, its purpose and allocations and spending funds in practice during May-July 2011, and those findings have also informed on the re-shaping of practices.

At the national level, the Act on Resources for Financing or Partly Financing Programmes of Public Interest Realised by Associations was passed in 2012. This legal regulation is the Governmental Act for more precise setting of the criteria, conditions, scope, awarding procedures, as well as the return procedures for the resources for financing the programmes or parts of the programmes realised by the associations of citizens, which are of the public interest. The act is not especially emphasising the local administration budgets, but does clearly cover the financing of CSO activities from public funds in general and should bolster the standards for transparency.

Another useful contribution in terms of standards has been the implementation in 2012 of a **feasibility study on the forming of local partnerships**. This analysis, carried out by Civic Initiatives, CNVOS and APPS, has helped to identify key areas and modalities for partnership between CSOs and local governments for community development. The study comes on the back of a busy year in Serbia for developments in partnership practices. In May 2011 TACSO facilitated a national conference on partnership building amongst CSOs, local government and businesses, and in October of the same year initiated a national competition to **award the best initiative for local partnership**. This competition, named the 'Places in the Heart' award, attracted 34 entrants, with 17 being shortlisted for the final prize.

The *Telenor Foundation* has worked with TACSO on this competition and they have awarded 3000 Euro to the **Society for Protection and Improvement of Position of Children and Youth for a project in the Kruševac area, implemented** in close partnership with various public institutions. The award scheme, which will be continued each year, has proved to be an excellent way of showing the **added value that CSO/Local Administration partnerships can bring to communities**. Stories about the winning partnership and those shortlisted have been disseminated through short TV films and other local media.

In terms of **capacity building**, in addition to the publication on best practices of local partnerships, TACSO and local partners have developed an analysis of good practices in transparent financing of CSOs by local administration and presented them at workshops with the local authorities of Vojvodina. Similar workshop events are planned for other regions in the coming weeks. With the support of UNDP there was also training provided to 42 local governments at the end of 2011 on a methodology for Accountability, Transparency, and Verifiability (ATV).

There is no official model of monitoring the implementation of the institutional mechanism of collaboration between local administrations and CSOs. Up to now the monitoring has been realised in different ways and according to different approaches. Some local governments used the direct project monitoring of the projects supported from local budgets, including field visits to the project beneficiaries; however, this is not a very common practice. Most local governments use the overview of the narrative and financial project reports as the way of monitoring the project results. It seems that in practice more importance has been given to the financial reporting, neglecting, sometimes that transparent spending of the funds according to the budget should be accompanied with achieving positive changes in the community. According to the respondents to the national TACSO survey on cooperation, it seems that **monitoring is seen as the weakest step** in the whole procedure of cooperation and collaboration between local government and CSOs.

However, it should also be noted that, despite some optimism from the various stakeholders, the survey respondents continue to maintain that the **constraints to cooperation** are still the 'traditional' ones:

- The resistance of some local governments which are still not recognising the role of civil society in their local community or neglecting that role;
- The lack of understanding of the importance of that mechanism between both interested parties;
- Weak and not persistent advocacy efforts from civil society for continual improving of established mechanisms;
- Small number of CSOs in some local areas and their poor capacities for partner dialogue.

TURKEY

Despite reforms during the last decade, there remains a strong culture of hierarchical public administration and a dominance of representative democracy, which tends to overshadow participatory processes. Additionally, civil society is not well organised in many parts and sectors of the country, thus cooperation between CSOs and local government continues to be underdeveloped. However, before looking at the specifics of the last few years, it is important to review the enabling landscape that has developed in the last 10 years and which does offer a sound foundation for cooperation.

There are specific laws regulating the functioning of local governments defining mechanisms of cooperation between local self-governments and civil society organisations in Turkey. The Turkish government that came to power in 2002 decided to undertake a deep-rooted reform of public administration in response to the democratisation programme of the government complying with the EU *acquis*. For this purpose, a series of draft laws were prepared. The draft laws are as follows:

- Public Administration Law;
- Municipality Law;
- Metropolitan Municipality Law;
- Law on Special Provincial Administration;
- Law on Local Administration Unions;
- Public Finance and Control Law;
- Revenue Sharing between Local Government and Central Government Law;
- Access to Information Act.

Except the Public Administration Law, all of the above legislation has been enacted. Together they provide for comprehensive institutional arrangements at the local level and the Municipality Law guides much of the statutes and procedures of these institutions.

The **institutional mechanisms** related to collaboration between local self-governments and CSOs introduced by local government reform are comprehensive: the *Mahalle* (neighbourhood) and *Muhtar* (the Office of the Headman) a genuine traditional local institution, which today can support the development of local self-government and local democracy, particularly in urban areas; the participation right of citizens; specialist commissions in the municipal councils; strategic and emergency plans; Citizens' Assemblies; and voluntary participation in municipal services. Of these it should be noted that the Citizens' Assemblies and strategic planning processes are both new to local governance in Turkey and have offered constructive opportunities for cooperation.

Citizens' Assemblies have their roots in the Habitat II Conference held in Istanbul in 1996. The Turkish government made a commitment to set up Citizens' Assemblies as part of its Local Agenda 21 initiative. These assemblies are forums of civil society organisations, professional associations and public bodies that monitor the decisions of local governments. The Local Administration Reform of 2005 envisaged a more institutionalised relationship between local governments and Citizens' Assemblies.

Nevertheless, the main novelties of the Citizens' Assemblies are the establishment of assemblies for children, young people, the elderly, the disabled and women. These assemblies, which operate under the auspices of the Citizens' Assemblies, give these previously disadvantaged groups in society an opportunity to excel in civic skills and to gain experience in public management. These groups, if well organised and backed by municipal authorities, act as advocates of these vulnerable groups' rights in their communities.

Activities of the Citizens' Assemblies as defined in the current legislation may be classified in three main areas:

- Participation in the local decision-making process for social development;
- Participation in the local decision-making process for the other areas such as urban planning,
- Service delivery, economic development;
- Monitoring the local administration.

Citizens' Assembly has been established in around 400 municipalities out of 2915 according to the Ministry of Interior. The municipalities are obliged to prepare strategic plans and this process has created great opportunity for the Citizens' Assemblies to work actively with the participation of CSOs. Strategic planning is one of the new techniques that have been introduced by the reforms to the local government management system. This is not only a tool for better fiscal management, but also it creates further opportunities for public participation. Article 41 on the strategic plan and performance programme underlines the importance of participation: '[the] Strategic plan shall be prepared in consultation with universities (if any) and professional chambers together with the relevant civil society organisations, and shall take effect following adoption at the municipal council.'

There are some areas in which cooperation between municipality and CSOs is realised outside of Citizens Assemblies. One of them is related to the positions of the professional organisations such as Chambers of Architects, Bar Associations and similar. These professional organisations are actually established under law and, therefore, have a quasi-public entity. This nature of professional organisations made them different from the associations, which are the largest element in organised civil society. Since they are public entities, they are entitled to run joint projects with municipalities in their areas of expertise. For example, the Chamber of Architects in Antalya is authorised by the Metropolitan Municipality to run a project through a protocol signed between the municipality and the chamber related to redesigning of the Republic Square. In Muğla, the Chamber of Medical Doctors runs a campaign for eyesight defect inspection in primary school children. Municipalities may allocate some funds or provide some facilities to these organisations according to protocol jointly signed.

There are some other special areas such as art and culture festivals or rehabilitation of street children in which projects or activities are run by non-profit companies: the Antalya film festival and the Beyoğlu Rehabilitation Centre for Street Children in İstanbul are two examples. Local governments can transfer money to these types of non-profit organisation; however, the establishment of a non-profit company is not easy under the current regulations, with the status of 'non-profit' only being awarded by the Council of Ministers.

The priority targets in the Turkish Action Plan from the Bečići Conference highlight a number of issues to be addressed. First, the need to build capacity within both organised civil society and local governments and to ensure that information about the legal rights for participation and good practices in cooperation are better disseminated. Second, the need for better coordination and networking on matters relating to CSOs cooperating with local authorities, both within Turkey and between Turkish stakeholders and counterparts in the EU and other candidate countries, and strengthening and expansion of existing platforms, such as the Citizen Assemblies. Lastly, the plan calls for more attention to the legislative environment for cooperation between CSOs and the public sector.

Since the beginning of 2011 there has been some progress on these priority issues, however, the **progress is much slower** than in the years of the first decentralisation reform and is somewhat patchy, meaning that there are large parts of the country and particular sectors where there is still very little cooperation between local administrations and CSOs.

With regard to improving the legal environment, very little has happened at the national level, however, some momentum is expected to be achieved through a coalition of five CSOs that are working together, supported by EU funds, to research and run nationwide consultations on what kind of a framework for cooperation will best suit Turkey. This initiative will involve lengthy discussions with the relevant central level authorities and is hoped to result in major policy changes which will affect the ways in which CSOs can interact with public institutions at all levels.

At the local level, some minor changes have come about in the procedural relationships between local government and CSOs through pressure from the various Citizen Assemblies. This lobbying has resulted in the Ministry of Interior issuing several circulars and comments on Citizens' Assemblies' concerns. One of them, issued in 2011, clarifies that municipalities are entitled to allocate and spend funds for the joint projects and services run together with CSOs. This does not mean that direct money transfers can be made from the municipal budget to CSOs, but municipalities can pay the expenses for some areas such as hiring experts, transport costs, meeting venues and so on.

There is some evidence of an **increased capacity and willingness of local media** to cover issues relating to CSO cooperation with local authorities. Indeed, increasingly CSOs are using local media to advocate their causes and to explain the functions of mechanisms that facilitate citizen participation in the decision-making process. For example, in November 2012, a headline in the local Antalya media states: 'Citizens' Assembly is not a backyard of anybody!' This is a report on the statement of Semanur Kurt, the President of Antalya Citizens' Assembly, confirming that the assembly is an open, all-party mechanism and that members of any political party can join the assembly and participate in its working groups. The statement was made against any attempts of the ruling party to co-opt the structure.

In terms of **capacity building**, there are various initiatives to pilot tools that CSOs might use in the local planning processes, with some of these led by technical projects funded by the EU through the Ministry of Interior, and some by NGOs, such as TUSEV. The national TACSO office and Civil Society Development Centre have also assisted in the dissemination of good practice materials and facilitated training events.

The Habitat Association continues to work to strengthen the Citizens Assemblies, but as these are only established in just over 10 percent of all local governments, there is a long way to go before all parts of the country have such supportive mechanisms. The EU integration process continues to be a useful catalyst for encouraging cooperation between CSOs and local authorities. In 2011 **provincial level consultative councils were established on EU Affairs**, with representation at the local level from all types of organised civil society. These councils are facilitated by the Ministry of Interior and EU Affairs Ministry through the Governorates, but their membership includes the local governments and this has proved to be a useful additional mechanism for local administrations and CSOs to network. The TACSO office has also assisted in building relationships between CSOs in Turkey and those in other candidate countries on matters relating to local level cooperation, such as a networking event held in Serbia on improving local governance for Roma.

The progress overall has been slow and undoubtedly the **continuing constraints** are those related to: a lack of national policy on cooperation between CSOs and public administration; poor spreading of experience on cooperation and information on citizens' rights; and very weak capacities of grassroots CSOs.

Part Two:

Emerging Good Practices

In this section the progress report explores the emerging good practices and lessons learnt in six key thematic areas.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Publishing Ratings for Levels of Transparency Makes Croatian Local Government More Open

A tool has been developed, as a part of a larger research on transparency and openness in the 576 local and regional self-government units in Croatia (127 cities, 429 municipalities and 20 counties), and used to facilitate on-going monitoring of how open and communicative the local administrations are. The GONG Research Centre, a Croatian CSO based in Zagreb, has developed a methodology for monitoring transparency and openness. In cooperation with the Association of Cities of the Republic of Croatia, GONG conducted two rounds of research (in 2009 and in 2011-2) entitled "Local, Accountable and Transparent Government and Self-Government – LOTUS".¹⁷ Every city and municipality was covered by both rounds, and the second round also included the counties, in order to determine the present situation and, in the case of cities and municipalities, assess the progress made since the first round of research in areas relevant to transparency of activities and openness towards citizens, cooperation with civil society organisations and the functioning of local self-government. These areas have been recognised as the key factors relevant for further development of democracy and citizen participation in the political lives of their local communities.

Sources of data used in the research are the statutes of the various local governments, the rules of procedure of their representative bodies, official web pages, survey questionnaires that were faxed and e-mailed to all self-government units, and telephone calls made to their central telephone number. In addition, GONG's volunteers sent 'mystery requests' to all the self-government units to gain insight into the implementation of the *Law on the Right to Access to Public Information*.

The basic concept of transparency of activities in local and regional self-government was taken in the broadest sense and measured against five general criteria:

- Openness of council sessions to the public;
- Openness of executive authorities;
- Implementation of the *Law on the Right to Access to Public Information*;
- Cooperation with civil society organisations;
- Citizen's direct participation in decision-making.

The monitors in Croatia have noted in their latest report (covering research for 2011/12) that there have been positive shifts since the last report (in 2009), with transparency levels improving within local governments. From observations in several municipalities by the TACSO office, it is clear that one of the motivations for improving transparency has been the publication of the research findings. The publication not only makes the stakeholders more aware of how local governance can be more open, but the publication of the levels of transparency for each local government has become an incentive for improvement.

¹⁷ The research was conducted within the project entitled "CAT against Corruption", funded by the IPA 2008 EU funds, and co-funded by the Government's Office for Cooperation with NGO's and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development.

Documenting CSO Beneficiaries of Local Funding in Bosnia & Herzegovina

The Civil Society Promotion Centre (CSPC) is a Bosnian and Herzegovinian non-governmental and non-profit organisation with a mission to promote and strengthen citizen action, civil society and democracy building in BiH. CSPC serves as a think tank and problem analyser in the field of democracy, good governance, and civil society building. One of CSPC's new activities, supported by TACSO BiH, is to survey the publication of the annual financial reports of CSOs in BiH for the year 2011 that have received funding from domestic institutions. The aim, as a first step, is to collate in one place information on all organisations in BiH that have received funds from budgets of the local institutions. The survey results will not only make more transparent the trends in local financing of CSOs, but will also make more accountable those CSOs that have received such funds and enable CSOs in the relevant municipalities and cantons who have not received funds but are interested in doing so to explore further the procedures for securing such financing. In parallel to this survey it should also be noted that in Republika Srpska central authorities are already addressing this issue and some organisations of public interest have already undergone the financial control and financial inspections by relevant governmental institutions.

For more information on this please visit CSPC's Web site at <http://www.civilnodrustvo.ba>.

Setting Standards in Grant-Making to Local CSOs in Albania

CSSA was established in 2010 to encourage the sustainable development of civil society in Albania and the creation of favourable conditions for civic initiatives aiming at enhancing democracy by increasing the level of civic participation. Thus, although the agency is a central body, it has developed tools and mechanisms that have been used to directly support capacity growth for cooperation of local CSOs with their local authorities.

One of the significant tools of the agency has been the mechanism, which it uses to provide finance to CSOs to support joint actions at the local level. This tool is a traditional grant-making one and the procedures developed by the agency set a good example for local authorities to follow.

First, once the agency has decided to provide financing to CSOs in any given year to meet specific objectives, there is a decision of the supervisory board defining the rules and regulations for the procedures of the call (or calls) for proposals.

The agency, in January of each year, presents an annual programme "for the participation in the competing procedures for being financed by grants". This programme is accessible on the web page of the agency. This official web page contains all documentation needed by CSOs to be accepted and qualified for the next round. The announcement of the call for proposals is also published in public media.

For each of the agency's calls for proposals there is a set of requirements determining the eligibility for any applicant to apply for a grant. These are:

- The conditions set and the required supporting documents;
- Restrictions and exclusion from the process;
- Time extension and limited sum of financing;
- Criteria of evaluation and conflict of interest;
- Decision-making and contract signing;
- Steps of financing and co-financing;
- Monitoring of project implementation and arbitrage.

The agency's supervisory board establishes a dedicated commission to evaluate applications and this commission defines the successful applicants according to Albanian legislation, the rules and regulations of the agency, and the specific requirements of the call.

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest Through Independent Commissions

The City Council of Kruševac in Serbia uses independent commissions in order to maintain transparency and fairness in its procedures to allocate funds to local CSOs. The local self-government has established the following commissions: the Commission for the Selection of the Projects and Estimation of the Impact of the City Strategy for Social Policy Development (2009); the Commission for the Selection of Projects and Estimation of the Impact of the Strategy for Improving the Roma Position (2010); the Commission for Selection of the Programmes and Projects of Public Interest in Social Protection, Support to IDPs and Refugees and Social Care for the Elderly (2011).

These commissions have been established by the local authorities, as were the local budgets. There are provisions of resources for financing CSO projects of public interest, as well as the funds for the realisation of the City Developmental Strategy, and for supporting CSOs, which provide services for local social protection to communities in the city.

The commissions were established by the local authorities according to their statutes and include a membership, which draws representatives from both the local administration and from civil society. The commissioners oversee the announcements of the financing opportunities and the procedures for administering funds.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

A Methodology for Supporting Community-led Local Planning

In Albania the Tirana based Co-Plan Institute for Habitat Development has developed a 'step by step' methodology for working with local governments to help them facilitate community-led planning. The methodology requires an experienced team from a CSO for implementation and a local administration, which has both the political will and resources to commit to a lengthy participatory process. However, Co-Plan has proven that the methodology can bring significant results, having worked with the Kamëz municipality and used the methodology to help empower citizens in disadvantaged communities and strengthen community leadership.

The 10-step methodology is as follows:

- First step:** Co-PLAN has a specific approach to the problem, attacking it both from the municipality and neighbourhood level. After the first initial contacts with the authorities, formal and informal visits are paid to the community 'hot spots' to deeply understand the situation and the problems.
- Second step:** An assessment of the situation is made using both participatory tools within the community (such as interviews with individuals, group discussions, visits to families) and expert socio-economic studies of both the targeted communities, and the municipality in general.
- Third step:** Establishment of CBOs at the neighbourhood level through mobilisation activities or support of the existing CBOs. CBOs are based on membership of specific groups: marginal and vulnerable groups especially children, women and girls, youth, and aged persons. Priority is given also to institutional strengthening of these organisations, based on performance indicators, including their formalisation as proper and legitimate institutions.
- Fourth step:** Community Driven Planning and development and drafting of intervention programmes, including budgeting. This is done through the facilitation of CBOs and then a presentation of a draft plan to the municipal authorities.
- Fifth step:** Implementation on site of the parts of the strategic plan for neighbourhood development, such as opening and extension of public spaces with community involvement, and support from experts from the municipality and Co-PLAN. This

has to be achieved through strategic investments in the social infrastructure, such as kindergartens, health centres, community centres, sport terrains, or basic infrastructure in critical sites. The interventions are frequently considered as job opportunities for communities and support to poor and marginal groups of neighbourhood populations.

- Sixth step:** Drafting of a Neighbourhood Local Development Agenda combining social interventions with physical improvement measures. The interventions are not focused on solving the problems only, but also by using participatory processes designed to foster a strong commitment to long-term cooperation between the CBOs and local authorities. The CBOs leads the process of change, while Co-PLAN facilitates or negotiates with the local authorities establishing a cooperative environment between all stakeholders.
- Seventh step:** A negotiating process between local CBOs and the local authorities to discuss local concerns and solutions to change the existing situation. The finalisation of negotiations, with the signature of a partnership contract, on the main social services to be provided and the infrastructure of the site, where each party defines its own financial contribution and schedule for the implementation.
- Eighth step:** The implementation of the interventions, in coordination with the line ministry and Tirana Circle, as an important step toward the legalisation and the full integration of these communities. The majority of inhabitants will have paid some contribution for the basic infrastructure construction.
- Ninth step:** The municipality, CBOs and Co-PLAN collaborate with the government, the parliament, donors (World Bank, EU, etc.) to facilitate the needed changes to the legal framework of the Albanian State in order to better support the process.
- Tenth step:** The municipality works with the other actors to draft a full 'vision document', drawing upon their recent collaborative experience, to outline future development, combining it with a public awareness campaign and town hall style debates.

Culture As an Entry Point and Resource for Improved Participation

NGO EC Ma Ndryshe, based in the Prizren municipality of Kosovo, is continuously exercising pressure on the local government to enable access of civil society and citizens to the decision-making process. Apart from direct participation in public consultation, EC Ma Ndryshe has been advocating the need for local government to respect the legal obligations for public consultation, the wide inclusion of communities in public consultation, and the need to include the voiced concerns of the community in the public policy documents. The work of the organisation focuses on three levels of operation: targeting policy issues; empowering the community; and applying means of direct intervention for the purpose of protection and promotion of cultural heritage. EC Ma Ndryshe's strategy of work is thus to apply an approach which they refer to as a *culture – participation – development* (resource – mean – result) triangle. This approach suggests that culture is a resource to be utilised; participation is a means of action; and economic development is the desired result.

Aiming to offer a concrete model of public consultation, EC Ma Ndryshe has run a programme of "Open Citizens' Forums", where the forum instrument was promoted as a functional model of civil participation in decision-making. Furthermore, through the Cultural Organisations Network in Prizren, EC Ma Ndryshe has facilitated the establishment of an advocacy platform for the cultural community of the city, turning the Network into an active participation in formulating the cultural policies at the local level.

CSO EC Ma Ndryshe facilitates cooperation with the Prizren Municipality, 2012



Citizens Assemblies - organising civil society to participate

Citizens' Assemblies are a way in which civil society can better organise itself to engage with local self-government, particularly in the absence of any experienced CSOs to advocate the interests of the most marginalised and disadvantaged citizens. The concept has been well practiced in Turkey, where it was first implemented about 15 years ago, and has since been institutionalised through the recent Municipality Law, meaning that local governments are obliged to support and engage with such assemblies. There are currently about 400 Citizens' Assemblies in Turkey, covering about 10 percent of all local governments, and, although the concept and the realisation of these assemblies have their critics, CSOs and local government are increasingly finding them a useful tool to enhance citizen participation. As such, below is a summary of the key elements of the assemblies and how they work.

The duties of the Citizens' Assembly:

- Ensure the spread of democratic participation at the local level, development of townsmen's law and a sense of common life, adoption of multi-partner and multi-actor governance;
- Ensure sustainable development, preparation and implementation of plans for solving problems that may arise during this process;
- Contribute to creating common sense that encompasses the entire city in determining, implementing and monitoring the main strategies and action plans for the city;
- Develop culture of participation, democracy and consensus in the framework of the principle of subsidiarity;
- Protect and develop historical, cultural, natural and similar values of the city's identity;
- Contribute to effective, efficient and fair use of the city's resources;
- Promote programmes that are sensitive to the environment, reduce poverty and enhance the quality of city life based on sustainable development approach;
- Contribute to the development and institutionalisation of the civil society;

- Increase the activity of children, youth, women and people with disabilities in social life and ensure their active participation in local decision-making mechanisms;
- Contribute to the implementation of principles of transparency, participation, accountability and predictability in the city administration;
- Ensure that the opinions of the citizens' assembly are communicated to the relevant municipality for consideration.

The formation of the Citizens' Assembly:

The assembly should draw its membership from the following:

- The highest civil administrator of the locality, or his representative;
- The mayor or his representative;
- Representatives of public entities;
- All neighbourhood *Muhtars*;
- Representatives of political parties;
- Representatives from universities;
- Representatives of public professional organisations, trade unions and CSOs;
- One representative from each of the assemblies and working groups formed by the Citizens' Assembly.

The organs within the framework of the Citizens' Assembly:

- **General Assembly:** The general assembly constitutes the most powerful organ of the citizens' assembly and is composed of the representatives of civil society organisations, universities, the public sector and the private sector as well as the representatives of political parties. The general assembly convenes with the simple majority of the members at least twice a year in January and September.

The chairman of the citizens' assembly presides over the general assembly. The general assembly lays down the election and working principles of the executive committee, assemblies and working groups.

- **Executive Committee:** The executive committee is composed of at least seven people elected by the general assembly for a two-year-period in the first term and for a three-year-period in the second term. The chairman of the general assembly also serves as the chairman of the executive committee.
- **Assemblies and working groups:** Citizens' assemblies may form youth, women, disabled, children and elderly assemblies and working groups. The general assembly lays down the working procedures and principles for such assemblies and working groups.
- **Chairman and Secretary General:** The chairman of the citizens' assembly is elected by the general assembly. The term of office of the chairman of the citizens' assembly shall be two years for the first term and three years for the second term. The secretary general of the citizens' assembly is elected by the executive committee from among three candidates nominated by the mayor. The secretary general of the citizens' assembly ensures harmony and coordination among assemblies, working groups and similar structures.

The decision-making processes of the Citizens' Assemblies:

In the first meeting of Citizens' Assembly, it determines the establishment of the assemblies and working groups proposed by governor, mayor or any member of the assembly. Each assembly or working group elects a chairman and a reporter. The assemblies and the working groups set up their agenda and working principles of their entities.

When the assemblies and working groups reach a decision on any topic related to their relevant areas, this decision is presented to the chairman. The chairman of the Citizens' Assembly forms the agenda of General Assembly according to demands or proposals from assemblies and working groups.

The proposals or ideas adopted in the General Assembly are submitted to the municipal council. After that the mayor has to put the proposal adopted by the Citizens' Assembly in the agenda of the first meeting of the Municipal Council.

FUNDING COOPERATION

Community Foundations in Croatia

The Foundation for Partnership and Civil Society Development was founded in 2006 by the county of Istria, in Croatia, with the aim to promote international cooperation, philanthropy, volunteerism and overall development of a democratic society, paying particular attention to constant improvement of life in local communities. According to European classification, the foundation is classified into the category of 'public mixed foundations', with a combined grant-making programme and implementation of operational activities. Its mission is to promote community development and active citizenship by providing financial support, information, consulting and development of cross-sectoral cooperation and other forms of support to civil society organisations.

The foundation has three **functions**: (1) to provide important information about civil society; (2) to fund initiatives and projects through public calls; and (3) to organise workshops, panels, seminars and roundtables on topics related to the civil sector and the issues important to all citizens.

In the last five-year period, the Foundation had a total budget of 8.65 million HRK (just over one million EUR), financing 21 public calls for funds through which 144 projects were supported. The foundation implemented four projects funded by EU grants (total 356,800.00 EUR), and organised 20 events such as round tables, information days, and training. The **priority areas supported by the foundation's** programmes are: (1) environmental protection and sustainable development; (2) democratisation and Human Rights; (3) youth; (4) civil society capacity building; (5) promotion of Social entrepreneurship.

The foundation is one of the five local foundations implementing a decentralised model of providing financial support in cooperation with the National Foundation for Civil Society, on whose tenders may apply civil society organisations from the county of Istria, and counties of Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Lika-Senj. It also serves as a contact point of the Agency for Mobility and EU programmes, cooperates with the TACSO office in Croatia, and the Association Office of the Republic of Croatia Government and others.

Making The Local Budget Have More Impact

In Montenegro, as the national policies were reformed and strengthened to allow for and promote the use of local public funds for CSO projects, there were some municipal authorities who took the lead in trying to find the best procedural ways of achieving a transparent flow of funds and effective project implementation. One such municipality was that of Tivat.

In 2008, in cooperation with CRNVO, the municipality of Tivat started the preparation of documents that would ensure qualitative and transparent procedures for the distribution of local funds to CSO projects. The motivation for doing this was the high levels of dissatisfaction of both sectors with results of the investment of local funds to CSOs. Representatives of local self-government were open for suggestions from CSOs and, at the end, adopted the new Decision on Criteria, Manner and Procedure for the distribution of funds to CSOs entirely as it was proposed by CRNVO.

The new regulation introduced by the Tivat municipality was very innovative in the field of financing CSOs. It prescribed the composition of a commission for the distribution of funds to include civil society representatives, as well as local officials. And in respect to the essential importance of the quality of projects, the commission made it an obligation that the municipality would allocate at least 80 percent of the requested budget to the supported project. This part of the regulation meant that the previous practice of distributing only extremely small amounts to CSOs was disabled. Previously, the impact of CSO activities was often questionable, as projects tended to be very small scale and of little importance in the community, and often unfinished because of a lack of resources. By supporting

a project with 80 percent of the requested budget, it is certain that a project will achieve its results and goals. Moreover, this policy prescribed qualitative tools for monitoring, clear criteria for decision-making and an obligation for ensuring transparency of the process.

The regulation and procedures developed and followed by the Tivat municipality have had a positive impact on the improvement of cooperation between local CSOs and local self-government. CSOs are satisfied with the level of transparency, and there have not been any complaints about the process. Furthermore, the levels of trust of CSOs in local self-government have increased, and this has helped to ensure an increase in the quality of the cooperation. What is more, final beneficiaries are much more satisfied with the CSO activities, because they feel real, sustained benefits.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Using a Rights-Based Approach to Build Capacity for Cooperation

In six cities in Turkey a Joint Programme of several UN agencies helped to facilitate a process by which local development plans were discussed and drafted using a rights-based approach. The joint programme undertook this support having conducted initial research, which identified capacity shortages relating to the implementation of the new legislation on human rights. It found that up-to-date national and local action plans were needed to create an enabling environment for women and girls to fully enjoy their rights. Government agencies charged with the realisation of rights required better funding and more efficient administrative mechanisms.

Other findings of the initial research included the need to foster dialogue and networking between government agencies and CSOs at the local and national levels, as well as supporting networking within the CSO sector at the local level. There did not appear to be extensive monitoring of how municipalities fulfilled responsibilities such as opening shelters for women and children, and providing social services and vocational training. Both local government and women's CSOs were looking for ways to step up their efforts to protect women and girls from violence and to ensure their access to education, health care, employment and politics.

In addition, local government officials were seeking opportunities for comprehensive training in gender equality, gender budgeting and local services for women, girls and vulnerable populations. However, the CSOs did not know how to effectively communicate with local government, advocate on behalf of women and girls, manage projects, mobilise resources or empower women and girls. Furthermore, the general public demonstrated low awareness of what women's and girls' rights are, and where and how women and girls can access services.

A set of situation analyses were conducted in the six participating cities (*İzmir*, Kars, Nevşehir, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon and Van) as participatory events intended to lead 'duty-bearers' and 'rights-holders' to express their opinions and systematise their ideas at the local level. These participatory events not only brought together the various local stakeholders, but also were an effective means by which the capacities of the different stakeholders were enhanced.

The local situation analysis has made women's organisations better prepared to take concrete action on the basis of their demands, rather than passively waiting for duty-bearers to respond. Women's CSOs have begun to publicise their opinions and to form partnerships with other CSOs and with local authorities regarding the issues they want to see addressed in the preparation of the local action plans. Women from different cities shared common concerns, including women's unequal access to education, a lack of services aimed at preventing violence against women and providing support to the victims of such violence, poor urban infrastructure and transport, poor nursery and childcare services, and poverty.

Various location-specific concerns were also identified, such as safety problems stemming from derelict buildings in the centre of *İzmir* and language-related obstacles for immigrants from rural areas and for asylum-seekers in Van. Participants from Şanlıurfa expressed concern about women's high fertility rates there, and those from Nevşehir noted psychological problems stemming from living in a traditional society.

The local situation analysis described above proved to be an important capacity building experience. The exercise was very much driven by the concerns of local participants, including the women's CSOs. By coming together in highly participatory meetings with other actors, most notably representatives of local government agencies, the women's CSOs discovered that they were able to put their newly acquired skills to immediate use, and further hone those skills through being involved in helping to guide the situation analysis through to completion.

The testimonial below is from Kizbes Aydin, of the Çigli-Evka Women's District House, in the City of İzmir. (It has been extracted and edited from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Case Studies in Human Rights, 2008)

"For me, what matters most is working together with the municipality. Before, I used to be apprehensive, worrying about whether I would be blamed for bringing up issues that were not worthy of consideration. Now I am confident. I know that dialogue and lobbying are part of my quest for my rights.

This programme has helped me and other women identify what we want, and why, and also what we will talk about; for example, how we are unhappy about the rubbish, the dangers of the river and canals in our district... The buses and dolmus [taxis carrying several independent passengers] need to be increased, and we need new lines. We have collected 1,500 signatures for this.

In Çigli [a district of the City of İzmir] we have started to have talks with our Mayor. First we went to him with the following demands: transportation for our trips to meetings; support for the women's meeting; joint development of our concept for establishing a space for women and children; and preparing a project for water in the recreation area.

We participated in the strategic planning meeting of the municipality. There we proposed improvements in intra-city transportation and the establishment of a local women's council. Then we held a meeting with four district representatives.

We asked the Mayor to send representatives to these meetings. He sent a representative who noted everything. Of course we were very pleased...

We went twice to the municipal council following the discussion about our demands. This was very effective. Now we send a representative to each meeting to follow up and take notes."

National Training Strategies for Local Government which Include Training on Cooperation

During 2008 the Union of Municipalities in Montenegro, with support from SNV and OSCE, undertook a Training Needs Analysis of staff of local administrations and from this developed a comprehensive NTS for Local Government. This NTS is particularly significant, as one of the key aspects of the strategy is the need to build capacity within the local governments for better citizen participation and cooperation.

Some important aspects of the Montenegrin NTS are:

The description of the key challenges facing local governance in Montenegro:

- There is a demand for greater decentralisation. On the one hand, this is the responsibility of government, which needs to establish new competences, resources and assets for local self-government, in light of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. On the other hand, municipalities have to show that they have the ability to exercise these competences effectively and be accountable for a growing proportion of public funds.
- The expectations of local people, organisations and business are increasing. They see that the standards and life quality of people, organisations and business in well-organised and educated local self-government are getting higher and higher. The Internet and mass media expose them to the wider world. They look to municipalities to make a difference for them, to provide jobs and services to their communities and to improve their standards of living.

- Integration into Europe provides strong motivation throughout the country. European standards are seen as essential in, especially, attracting business and investment, protecting the environment and increasing public health. Municipalities have a key role to play in raising the standards of public services.

Some of the needs and problems identified by staff of municipalities:

- Many of the One-Stop-Shops have been established inappropriately;
- There are no complaints books or other systems of communication with citizens;
- Citizens do not show interest in participating in the decision-making process;
- The organisation of work is very poor; most employees do not have good “working habits”;
- Citizens have free access to all offices without any protocol; this interrupts office work and prevents the proper performance of duties;
- Assembly members represent the interests of political parties before public interests and good local government.

The recommendations of the NTS are that priority should be given to capacity building measures to address the following:

- Leadership development;
- Citizen participation;
- Management and organisation;
- Tax collection, asset management and budget management;
- Local economic development.

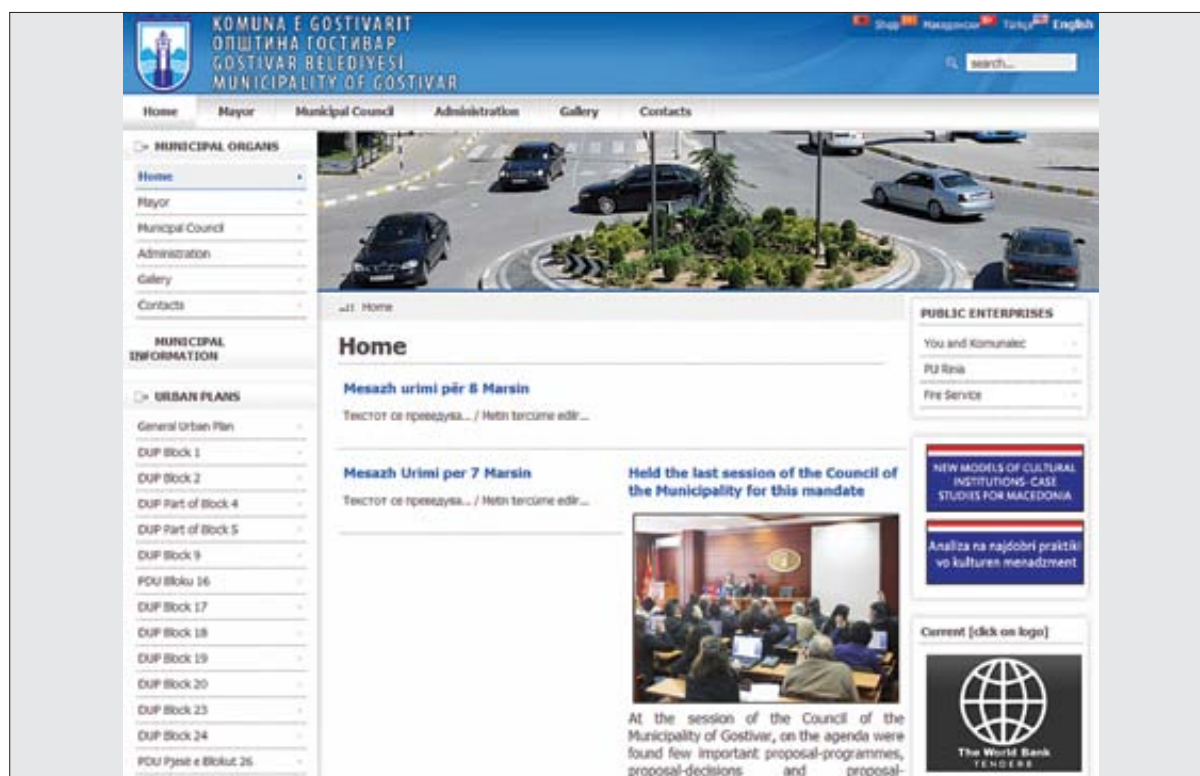
COMMUNICATION

Ensuring Web Portals are a Credible Communication Tool

The Municipality of Gostivar in Macedonia has understood the importance and power of the tools of e-governance and, as such has not only maintained an up-to-date web portal, but designed it with interactive features, multi-lingual options, and a library of resources and municipal decision and documents. Furthermore, in 2005, the municipality took the initiative to support the establishment of a foundation dedicated to promoting e-governance and better communication with citizens and CSOs. The ‘Information Technology Centre’ is a non-governmental organisation founded, as its mission declares, ‘to help the developing process of the local self-government during the decentralisation period and further to trigger the development of information technology, to build it up as an administrative tool in the municipality and to take into consideration the needs of the administrative workers’.

The organisational structure of the Information Technology Centre consists of an administrative body, supervisory board and executive director. The administrative body consists of five members nominated by the founder, the Municipality of Gostivar, following criteria to ensure inclusion of representatives of the municipal council, workers in the local administration, and representatives of NGOs, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and of cultural and science activities. The main services and activities of the centre relate to the promotion of Information Technology (IT) within the city, training of municipal and NGO staff, assistance to the municipality in developing and implementing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies, and providing new educational and cultural strategies in the use of the Internet.

Gostivar Municipality ensures constant updating of its web portal, which gives it credibility as a communication tool, supported by an autonomous Information Technology Centre.



A CSO Using Local TV to Communicate Local Governance Messages

Albania has 71 officially registered local private TV stations and 56 local private radio stations. These stations obviously aim their news coverage on issues affecting the communities in which they are broadcast and they also run debate and discussion programmes on a range of local issues. This is an invaluable way for the local authorities to raise local issues of importance and key municipal decisions and for the various locally elected politicians and would-be politicians to voice their positions. However, this local media can also provide a platform for CSOs to facilitate citizens to express their opinions on local policy-making and to communicate concerns and needs to the local government.

As an example, in the city of Berat in 2011, there was a local debate on 'TV-Berati' focusing on 'women's representation in politics', which was organised by the women's network, 'Equity in Decision-Making'. The debate was held in the premises of the Berat Women's Centre and was broadcast by local TV. Women candidates running for the mayoral election were invited, along with representatives of the women's forum, and members of the network. The live debate explored issues on the electoral code, gender equity, and equal opportunities.

PARTNERSHIP

A Macedonian Municipality Partners with a CSO to Support Local Civil Society

Starting from last year (2010), the Municipality of Veles engaged the NGO Focus as a strategic partner to ensure that all CSOs in the area are regularly updated about the municipality activities. The NGO had previously been mostly financed through grants from the Soros Foundation and had been known as the Centre for Support of NGOs; however, after the ending of the foreign financial support Focus became financed by the municipality. The NGO is located, together with other NGOs, in the House of NGOs (provided free of charge by the municipality to the NGO sector). When any calls for proposals are publicly announced, Focus informs and helps local NGOs in preparing their proposals.

Moreover, when the draft programme and budget for the municipality are prepared for the forthcoming year, a public debate is organised by the municipality and Focus provides some facilitation for this, including provisions of transportation for representatives from civil society from all rural and urban neighbourhoods. After the debate the citizens' remarks are included in the revised programme and budget, and thereafter this is presented to the municipal council for final decision.

Partnering with a Coalition of CSOs for Sustainable Local Development

The city municipality of Zvezdara in Serbia took the innovative step of providing funding for a project aimed at strengthening the role of the civil sector and multi-sector cooperation in the development and implementation of the municipality's Strategy for Sustainable Development. The funding was channelled through an initial public call for proposals, advertised on the municipal Web site and through the Web sites of various CSOs in Serbia.

From the evaluation of the proposals received, the municipal authorities selected (against the announced criteria) a project called "The Network for the Sustainable Development of Zvezdara". The innovative nature of this was that the project was implemented by a consortium of seven CSOs in a six-month period from November 2011 to May 2012. The project was so successful that the municipality is now formally partnering with the established centre and, in doing so, is enabling collaboration with a group of CSOs, which is growing in numbers each month.

A key part of the success of the centre has been having its credibility endorsed through a range of supporters from different sectors. These include:

- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for EU Integrations;
- The Group for Sustainable Development;
- Balkan Fund for Local Initiatives (BCIF);
- Project team of the National Employment Service;
- Green Initiatives (the network of 22 civil society organisations in Serbia, which are relying on the national ecological project in cooperation with the Institute for Sustainable Communities with the financial support of USAID).

The results of the partnership are impressive and continue to grow:

- The Centre for Sustainable Development of Zvezdara has activities which involve 19 CSOs;
- Centre for Sustainable Development of Zvezdara is formally recognised by the city municipality Zvezdara as a strategic partner;
- The civil sector of the city municipality Zvezdara has been empowered;
- Developed strong networking CSO for support to local sustainable development, the first of its kind in Serbia;
- Established Experts Club of 56 members;
- Established Business Club of 20 members;
- Internet portal of the Centre for Sustainable Development of Zvezdara has become one of the key media for informing and educating citizens of Zvezdara in the area of sustainable development;
- Collected and digitalised in the standard format all available development projects connected with aims and priorities of the sustainable development of Zvezdara;
- Developed a framework for the monitoring and evaluation of projects in support of sustainable development;
- Created a database of reference material on sustainable development.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This regional progress report was not explicitly developed to provide recommendations, however, given its purpose to provide a 'snapshot' of the current situation on strengthening cooperation between CSOs and local self-governments, as compared with the situation prior to the Bečići Conference, to highlight the on-going constraints, and to promote the numerous good practices and successes across the region, it has provided analysis which suggests some clear conclusions. From these conclusions the author would propose a number of recommendations, which might be usefully acted upon in order to further strengthen cooperation between CSOs and local self-government more equitably across the region.

Conclusions

Progress has been made in the region since the Bečići Conference, but with varying degrees in terms of specific countries and sustainable impact. In the last two years Croatia and Macedonia have witnessed particular milestones (such as proven impact on improved transparency through civil society monitoring and formulation of local level strategies to guide cooperation), and Montenegro and Serbia have positioned themselves to be ready for significant reform and procedural progress, with new guidelines and draft policies, but these await implementation or necessary legislation. The TACSO programme and follow-up activities planned at the Bečići Conference have made notable contributions to the progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia, whereas in other countries TACSO's Local Advisory Groups (LAGs) have suggested programmes focus on other priorities and local level cooperation has been more influenced by other stakeholders (for example, UNDP and EU support to participatory local governance in Turkey).

Perhaps one of the key supports of the TACSO programme and its partners has been contributions to the establishment of a framework for guiding the strengthening of local cooperation and monitoring the progress. The essence of this is captured in this report and it is intended that the sub-topics of Transparency & Accountability, Funding Cooperation, Mechanisms for Partnership and Citizens' Participation, and Capacity Development will continue to offer a framework for structured investments into strengthening local level cooperation and will continue to be monitored by the various national and regional stakeholders. As such, decision-makers, practitioners, and civil activists are encouraged to use the country 'progress matrices' in the annexes.

There are undoubtedly a number of clear and common **On-Going Constraints** to local level cooperation across the region. These include:

- Room for improvement in the regulatory frameworks (for example in terms of the use of funds from the local budgets to finance CSOs) and for national policy documents to address the terms of cooperation in some countries;
- There are diverse levels of capacity across the countries and within the various sectors and, therefore, investments into developing cooperation 'know-how' across the region are much needed. This is true for both local governments and for CSOs, with varying needs;
- The communities in rural and remote areas of the countries are the least active in terms of collaborative actions, with a weak organised civil society and overstretched local administrations;
- A scarcity of dissemination of proven good practices and inertia for cooperation to be implemented. Thus, there continues to be a need for strengthening networking across the region and campaigns to demonstrate that local governance is fairer, more efficient, and more effective the more that administrations cooperate with CSOs;
- The latter point above is partly due to poor communication strategies of both local government organisations and CSOs, which tend to be constrained by a lack of key messages on the subject of cooperation and participation, and underdeveloped communication tools.

There are not only plenty of **opportunities to promote good practice**, but also a wealth of success stories and emerging good practices that can be captured, documented, and shared with practitioners across the region. There is also evidence that international good practice, and particularly European good practice (for example, as articulated in the Council of Europe's Code of Good Practice) is being studied, adapted, and utilised. However, the current impact of sharing such good practices remains somewhat limited given the capacity constraints of those organisations and networks dedicated to improving local governance, as concluded in a number of the final bullet points above. There is also a tendency for the introduction of new practices in cooperation to be 'dampened' due to a lack of urgency being expressed by both locally elected politicians and by CSOs.

Recommendations

Given the conclusions above, there are a number of recommendations for implementation by both a mixture of governmental and non-governmental bodies, including external programmes such as those funded by the EU. Thus, the general recommendations below are for the consideration of all stakeholders in each country. No attempt has been made to make country-specific recommendations, as that would be beyond the scope and competence of a regional report such as this. However, it is hoped that the TACSO LAGs and other such umbrella groupings will debate what might be relevant for their country and how the recommendations might be acted upon.

The recommendations are grouped under three main headings:

1. Recommendations Relating to Institutional Development

- 1.1 Regulations to improve the operating environment for local level cooperation. There is a continuing need for reform or fine-tune the regulatory framework in each country. The specific needs in each country are, on the whole, well documented and provisions already proposed, (for example in the post-Bečići Conference Action Plans), however, enacting the regulations and any necessary legislation is slow. Thus, there is a need for dedicated Task Forces (made up of CSOs and unions or associations of local self-government) to review the needs and advocate for both the passing of regulatory changes and their implementation. Likewise, where they do not currently exist, it is recommended that national-level policy documents on cooperation between civil society and the public sector have a provision for the development of similar agreements or 'compacts' at a local level.¹⁸
- 1.2 Development of 'co-operation know-how'. In the EU Member States the Public-Private-Partnership approach is well developed and well supported by capacity building services focussed on 'partnership'. In the last 20 years or so this area of expertise and support has also been extended to local level partnership development and not just for local governments to partner with businesses, but also with the non-profit sector. For example, in the UK the Treasury and Local Government Association have a dedicated joint venture agency, called simply 'Local Partnerships', to provide training and advisory services to local stakeholders on how to get the most out of collaborative arrangements. Now is the time for stakeholders in each IPA country to develop strategies to ensure that the specific needs and context of their local governance is well serviced with capacity building programmes, which go beyond the traditional basic 'partnership development' trainings. The Local Government National Training Strategy in Montenegro is a good example of a well-intended starting point for developing such strategies but, as with most of these recommendations, it is important that the development of 'cooperation know-how' is pursued jointly by both the public sector and civil society.

¹⁸ In addition to these general recommendations relating to the regulatory environment, readers should also refer to the specific recommendations in the TACSO/ECNL report 'Keeping up the Momentum: Improving Cooperation between Public Institutions and the Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey', October 2012.

Communities of Practice

'Communities of Practice for Local Government' is a Web site that supports collaboration across local government and the public sector. (See www.communities.idea.gov.uk - English only) It is a freely accessible resource that enables like-minded people to form online communities of practice, which are supported by collaboration tools that encourage knowledge sharing and learning from each other's experiences. This service is provided by the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA).

- 1.3 Establishment of practice-based support systems. Following the recommendation above, and in line with the recommendations and activities of groups such as the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs and the Dutch Local Government Association (VNG), support structures in the region (meaning CSOs with missions to support civil society development, unions of municipalities, and relevant central government departments) can contribute more effectively to facilitating citizen participation by ensuring their support services are more practice-based. In other words, locally elected officials and local government administrators are more likely to respond positively to cooperation advocacy if they are offered simple, practical solutions to local constraints to collaboration with CSOs.
- 1.4 Strengthening of networking. In addition to the needed investments to support technical capacity development, it is also recommended that investment be made into the development of infrastructures to help deliver and monitor the capacity building. The region has examples of rights-based and humanitarian CSO networks and platforms, and within local government organisations (such as NALAS¹⁹) dedicated efforts to network on issues such as cooperation with civil society, but there is a need for more networking between CSOs in the region on the topic of local level cooperation and for CSO umbrella groups to be better network with municipal unions and the like. It is also recommended that cross-border networking and exchanges be strengthened so that the proven good practices in one country might be more easily shared and adapted for a neighbouring country.
- 1.5 Structural changes to support the management of cooperation. There is clearly an effort in many of the countries in the region for local administrations to have focal points or even dedicated departments to manage and respond to initiatives for cooperation between CSOs and the local self-government. However, such arrangements need to be systematic across all local governments in the region and thus it is recommended for CSOs to advocate to the municipal unions that they ensure all their members have such structures and that they have transparent strategies for building capacities for cooperation and clear access points. EU practice would suggest that a 'One-Stop-Shop' approach is the most efficient way for local administrations to ensure strong coordination with CSOs across all sectors of service delivery and local affairs.
- 1.6 Increased research to expose the benefits and effectiveness of cooperation. In many cases the lack of cooperation between CSOs and local self-government remains because both sides do not have a clear understanding of the benefits of cooperation. It is often understood by local stakeholders that the concept of participation is a 'good one', but they are often unsure of what the tangible, concrete benefits are. Thus, it is recommended that more effort and importance be placed on researching and analysing the impact of local level cooperation within the IPA region. Such research needs not only to examine the cost-benefit aspects of cooperation, but also to expose the strengths and weaknesses of the various methodologies being used to support cooperation. This analysis will ensure a more informed debate and experiences to share through 'communities of practice' outlined above. Any such research can also be complimentary to the on-going initiatives in the region to improve the monitoring of local governments, which it is also recommended to be encouraged and scaled-up.

19 NALAS is a network that brings together 13 National Associations, which represent over 4000 local authorities, directly elected by more than 80 million citizens, in the region of South Eastern Europe.

2. Recommendations Relating to Communication

It is common in many aspects of reform that policies change before the attitudes of people, which can lead to a delay in the implementation of the intended policy. In terms of facilitating citizen participation and cooperation between local self-governments and CSOs in the IPA region, this 'lag' between policy change and implementation has much to do with weak communication strategies, both on the side of local administrations and civil society. Although there is clearly a need for more institutional development, there is also a need for existing attitudes to be more challenged by effective communication. Thus, key stakeholders, such as CSO support organisations and associations of local self-governments, are recommended to review their communication strategies as follows:

- 2.1 Key messages. The benefits of improved cooperation between CSOs and local government (for example, better informed decision-making, improved service delivery, less social exclusion, budgetary efficiencies, etc.) need to be better understood by citizens, activists, administrators, businesses, and all other local stakeholders. Thus, there is a need to review, re-formulate, and prioritise the 'messages' being communicated on this issue.
- 2.2 Tools. There is a wealth of choice of communication tools available to promote more effective cooperation between CSOs and local government, however, the local stakeholders are often overwhelmed with the choice or lack the competence to make the right choice of tools. It is, therefore, recommended that guidelines be prepared to enable CSOs and local governments to jointly make the 'right' choice of tools for better communication. Such guidelines would make use of existing good practices in the region, as well as offer comparative studies of the implementation of communication strategies in EU Member States.

3. Recommendations Relating to Rural/Remote Areas

- 3.1 Integrated strategies. As is highlighted in the introduction to this report, most evidence suggests that in the more rural and more remote areas of the region organised civil society is weak and local self-governments overstretched in their capacities. It is, therefore, unlikely that there will be any major increase in effective cooperation between the sectors anytime soon. However, the principles of cooperation and its potential benefits need to be promoted in these areas and local stakeholders need to have access to support to build their capacity for cooperation. Thus, it is recommended that capacity building for cooperation is integrated into all programmes and interventions aimed at rural and remote communities. For example, training programmes on how to develop and manage projects in rural communities should have a mandatory section on how to build partnerships for such projects.
- 3.2 Dedicated approaches. In addition to the 'mainstreaming' of capacity building for cooperation in all programmes in rural areas, it is recommended that CSO support organisations and associations of local governments explore ways in which cooperation can be best facilitated in these more remote and less densely populated areas. For example, models of inter-municipal cooperation are being tested in many countries in the region, primarily with the aim of ensuring more efficient and effective local service delivery by the smaller municipalities and such models offer opportunity for local administrations to help each other in how they coordinate and collaborate with civil society. Similarly, within the EU's various community programmes contributing to cohesion and rural development there are many approaches and tested practices (for example, the 'LEADER' approach to local development) which offer ways in which cooperation can be supported between grassroots organisations and local administrations. CSOs and the local government associations in the region are recommended to review these and to develop joint pilot projects to test the applications of such methodologies.

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Editor's Note:

The contents of this report have been informed primarily by research conducted in each of the eight IPA countries served by TACSO, by local consultants and resident advisers. These consultants and advisers, listed in the acknowledgement section at the beginning of the report, used various methodologies and sources of information for their research. Thus, the references below are based on edited lists provided by the consultants and advisers. It should be noted that for some countries the research was largely based on existing literature (which is detailed in the references), whereas for others the main source of data was interviews with informants and information available from public sources, such as Web sites. There is, therefore, diversity in the range of references mentioned below.

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Web sites of CSOs, networks, and commerce:

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Montenegro

Publications:

- Law on “Protection of Confidential Data” (official title: Law on Statistics and Statistical System), numbered 69/05, dated 2005.
- Law on “Local Self-Government”, numbered and dated; 42/2003, 28/2004, 75/2005, 13/2006.
- Law on “Public Procurement”, dated January 2012.
- Law on “Protection of Personal Data”, numbered 79/08 and 70/09, dated December 2008.
- ‘Model on new decisions on citizen participation in conducting public affairs’, dated 2011, CRNVO
- ‘Model on new decision on criteria and procedures for distribution of local funds to CSOs projects’, dated 2011, CRNVO.

Web sites:

- Centre for Development of Non-governmental Organisations. www.crnvo.me.

Serbia

Publications:

- The Law on Local Self-Government, “Official Gazette of RS”, no. 129/07 <http://www.pregled-rs.com/?lang=en>.
- The Law on Associations of Citizens, “Official Gazette of RS”, no. 51/209 www.projuris.org.
- The Law on Associations of Citizens, “Official Gazette of RS”, no. 51/09.
- BID – Business Improved District, (established through the CRDA project (Community Revival through Democratic Action), implemented by IRD (International Relief and Development) and funded by USAID (2001-2007).

Turkey

Interviews:

- Mayor of Mugla, Osman Gürün.
- Mayor of Kadikoy, Selami Öztürk.
- President of Kadikoy Citizens' Assembly, Korel Göymen.
- President of the Chamber of Architects of Antalya Branch, M. Osman Aydın.
- Former Secretary General of Mugla Citizens' Assembly, Meral Canan.
- President of Antalya Citizens' Assembly, Semanur Kurt.
- Secretary General of Giresun Citizens' Assembly, Hakan Adanır.
- Former Secretary General of GAP Union of Municipalities, Abdülmenap Şeker.
- Secretary General of Kocaeli Citizens' Assembly, Sedat Yücel.
- Secretary General of Yalova Citizens' Assembly, Hasan Soygüzel.
- Secretary General of Bursa Citizens' Assembly, Enes Battal Keskin.
- Secretary General of Mediterranean Union of Municipalities, Hüseyin İnce.
- Member of City Council of Aydın Municipality, Altan Güney.
- Representative of CEKUL Foundation in Citizens' Assembly of Bursa, Mithat Kirayoğlu.
- Former Mayor of Gaziantep, Esat Kaya Turgay.
- Former Governor of Usak (Former General Director of Local Governments in the Ministry of Interior), Kayhan Kavas.
- The Head of Governance Studies of TEPAV, Emin Dedeoğlu.
- Researcher of Governance Studies of TEPAV, Emre Koyuncu.
- Expert for EU Good Governance Project- Ülge Uğurlu.
- General Coordinator of Small Parliament Assembly Platform- Şanar Yurdatapan.
- President of the Chamber of Architects of Antalya Branch, M. Osman Aydın.
- Secretary General of Giresun Citizens' Assembly, Hakan Adanır.
- Secretary General of Kocaeli Citizens' Assembly, Sedat Yücel.
- Secretary General of Yalova Citizens' Assembly, Hasan Soygüzel.
- Former Secretary General of GAP Union of Municipalities, Abdülmenap Şeker.

Annexes

- I. **Summarised tables for each national report**
- II. **Matrix with summary of legal provision for cooperation in each country**
- III. **Concept and Terms of Reference for Drafting the Regional Progress Report**

Annex I

Summarised tables for each national report

ALBANIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
Monitoring the way municipalities provide transparency and accountability.	No specific data available	No specific data available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft memorandum of cooperation with selected local units and CSOs. • Evaluation of local media impact through roundtable meetings. • Evaluation of effectiveness of communication tools used for transparency and accountability. • Verify the outputs and outcomes of the new improved process. • Verify the position of the actors in this process. (Local CSOs and LSGs). • Create the database of the existing structures, instruments and actors, which have the power to formalise transparency and accountability at local level.
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
SWOT analyses of the participation process.	No specific data available	No specific data available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect all documentation on the legal framework concerning civil participation at local decision-making processes. • Draft questionnaires for improving level of participation into the decision-making processes. Presentation of these questionnaires during council meetings. • Focus activities on municipal council in terms of CSO participation and analyses of meetings. • Establishment of standards of the level of cooperation, information, consultation, dialogue and partnership. • Develop a database on the outputs and outcomes of local civic groups' participation in decision-making process. • Round table meetings for LSGs, CSOs and municipality council.
Promotion of best practices in transparency and accountability at international, national and local level.	No specific data available	No specific data available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of international, regional, national and local conferences on outputs and outcomes of the project. • Study visits in the region and EU member states for learning best practices. • Support twinning municipalities; twinning CSOs at local level. • Produce a manual on the participation of CSOs at local level decision process.

ALBANIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Capacity building for Municipalities and CSOs and local government to absorb EU funding and apply jointly.	TACSO Albania has involved two-three representatives of local government in trainings to absorb EU funding.	Increased partnership between local government and CSOs to apply for EU funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings on Proposal Preparation for EU funded projects for LSGs and CSOs. • Support CSOs in drafting and adopting cooperation agreements between LSGs, CSOs and other community-based groups. • Establishment of civil society groups. • Promotion of civic participation. • Creation of local structures for improving capacities on lobbying and contributing to setting priorities of local government development. • Trainings on transparency, accountability and local participation process to municipality staff and local CSOs.
Support local government and CSOs to absorb EU.	No specific data available	No specific data available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building trainings on application to EU funds and encouraging joint actions to LSGs and CSOs.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
To establish new ministry "Ministry of Local Governance and Self Governance" for the need of developing a systematised registry of CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently CSO registration process is still under the competency of the FBiH Ministry of Justice. Implementation of this activity depends solely on the political powers that actually decide on the establishment of a new Ministry within FBiH Government. It is fully outside of the scope of BiH participants of Bečići Conference and BiH TACSO Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Developing a central registry centre within the new ministry of local governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity was not implemented yet. The new Draft Law on Associations and Foundations was prepared and includes provisions on the central CSO registry. As a further activity TACSO BiH will develop a database of CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An important information tool and monitoring baseline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of this activity depends only on political decision of the relevant government authorities.
A national conference on Analyses of Cooperation Practices of BiH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TACSO BiH is planning to organise a conference with all ministries cooperated or linked with CSOs, UNDP, and other related institutions. Initial preparations are continuing. (2012) TACSO Role: Leading the organisation of the conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of the Conference.
Conferences on definition of organisations of public interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TACSO BiH is planning to organise two conferences/panels/forums on entity levels and then one joint conference on the state level. Discussion sessions will be conducted on the Draft State Strategy for Creating and Enabling Environment for the Development of Civil Society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of the conferences.
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Analysis and evaluation of LOD Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is planned to share experience of the LOD project related to the capacity of CSOs and municipalities, which are implementing projects, with not-awarded CSOs and municipalities. For this purpose analyses and evaluations of LOD project will be carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact will be improved reporting and evaluation systems in terms of project planning and implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Capacity building activities for smaller CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TACSO BiH organised a partnership event with the Coalition of Organisations of Disabled People to create an action plan for joint activities in advocating the establishment of a mixed model of support to people with disabilities at the community level. Outcomes of the event were the promotion of values of cooperation and partnership of different actors in the process of creating policies on the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifty representatives of organisations for disabled people improved their capacities on developing action plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further activities will be organised for improvement of skills among small CSOs on how to run a campaign, network and find funding.
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Capacity building activities for CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings on Educational Cycle on Project Proposal Writing towards domestic sources of funding are conducted for CSOs. (2012) "Europe for Citizens" 2007-2013 programme for cooperation of LSGs and CSOs, is promoted by TACSO and the Directorate for European Integration. Additional five initial workshop/sessions are also organised to make further contact network through LSGs and CSOs. (2011) <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading the process and technical support.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives of 80 CSOs located outside of urban cities improved their project proposal writing skills. Following the trainings, CSOs feel closer to the LSGs and improved their capacity on project management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Capacity building activities in line with "Integrated Local Development Project" (ILDLP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs applied to participate at comprehensive capacity building programme designed based on the same PCM manner and organised within the ILDP Project with broadened human resources capacity of CSOs. (2012) <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading the organisation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forty small CSOs participated and significantly built their capacities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Activities for transparency in financing mechanisms on funds given to organisations of public interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A survey activity has been started to publish the "Annual Financial Report" of CSOs in BiH for 2011 that had received funding from domestic institutions. Research and evaluation activities have been conducted on controlling government budget spending for organisations of public interest and effective use of budget. <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading research activities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic implementations and financial transparency of CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities will continue.

CROATIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
“Free Chair” mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following adoption of “Freedom of Information Act”, the current mechanism, which has not been implemented yet, will be improved and started to implementation to ensure pro-active attitude of self-government units on publication of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption and implementation of “Freedom of Information Act”
Activities and trainings for improvement and implementation of existing guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below actions have been started and/or planned. Standards for official institutions’ Web sites are developed. A new code on financing CSOs in order to establish the same procedures for the EU and national financing sources. Trainings of LSGs on the code for financing CSOs. Workshops and trainings on capacity building for LSGs and CSOs. Public participation models are developed and LSGs are trained on these models. A model is implemented on transparent financing of CSOs in more local communities <p>TACSO Role: organised a workshop on “Developing, Monitoring and Evaluation Plans for Representatives of LSGs in Zagreb Responsible for Grant-Making to CSOs”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities are in progress.
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Organise thematic meetings to develop a dialogue among stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy for “Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development” designed. The strategy provides guidelines for improvement of the framework on different levels: on legal, financial and institutional system of support to CSOs. (2012) <p>TACSO Role: Distribution of Information, Creation of an Environment for Exchange of Information and Experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress indicated by LOTUS research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation will be continued.
CSOs contribution to decision-making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs contribution to decision-making processes is provided through an award on best practices of transparency and openness (2009-2012) <p>TACSO Role: Implementation of the awarding process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the LSG units have improved their score since 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation will be continued.
Instigate information sharing through building networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing functional network of OCDs (Coalition of OCDs called Platform 112) that instigates information sharing through online networks and consists of CSOs operating on national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Raising awareness of stakeholders by trainings, discussion workshops, sessions and guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National strategy for creation of an enabling environment for civil society development adopted in July 2012. Within the strategy specific goals are identified for improvement of the conditions for development of participatory democracy and participation of CSOs in decision-making processes on local level. <p>TACSO Role: supported P2P Seminar “Good practice in the consultation of CSOs in the local decision-making process in Croatia”, supported roundtable and visibility activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil education has been introduced in Croatian schools for the first time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation will be continued.

CROATIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Focus activities on youth participation in local decision-making through activities, public forums and establishing youth councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Network Croatia in 2012 has conducted research on implementation and effectiveness of the Law on Youth Councils. The law adopted on national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the new law, promotion of good practices.
Evaluation and Monitoring of the LOTUS Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the LOTUS research project is completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per LOTUS indicators, successful self-government units have a clear idea on standards and recommendations from the research report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for Web sites will be developed.
Capacity building activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below activities on capacity building are planned/conducted. Education of media on their role in motivating public participation in decision-making. Educate children in schools and media. Education of all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

MACEDONIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
Improvement of Content of Information. Improve the content and quality of information to be provided to citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs and improvement areas of municipalities are identified according to the Surveys of Current Practices carried in several municipalities in three regions, within the USAID project for Transparent Governance. (2011-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the municipalities have started to implement standardisation for more transparent management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations of the TACSO "National Conference on Cooperation between CSOs and LSGs" will be implemented.
Enhance the format of information. Diversify and enhance information channels. Establish procedures for structured dissemination of information, communication and consultation with other CSOs and mobilise their participation through various forums.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Law of Free Access to Information, most of the municipalities submitted brochures of the budget and programme of the forthcoming year. Regarding channels of information, some of the municipalities preferred to use online communication tools and most of the urban municipalities preferred to organise info days and info centres. <p>TACSO Role: Improved communication among CSOs and LSGs. Organised separate sessions on Transparency and Accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to discussions with some representatives from the civil society, these implementations will enhance transparency of municipalities within two years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Establish Community Forums to enable CSOs to effectively participate in decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Forums are implemented in more than 40 municipalities and financed by five CSOs and the involved municipality. Through those forums citizens participate in decision-making regarding the projects and part of the budget of the municipality. (2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bigger involvement of the citizens into the decision-making process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manuals of CF project will be prepared and training will be organised for municipalities and the association of the LSG of the Republic of Macedonia. Projects of municipalities will be funded by CF or included in the budget of the municipalities for the next year.
Explore Opportunities for adoption of the CoE Codex on Participation of CSOs in the Decision-Making Process so that it is internalised and effectively adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CoE codex is partly transformed into the domestic Codex of Good Practice for Civil Society Participation in the Policy-Making Process. (2011) <p>TACSO Role: Through a series of trainings, TACSO supported to increased awareness of the CSOs about mechanisms for participation in decision-making on the local level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

MACEDONIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Explore opportunities to effectively use the PPP model through facilitating the draft of relevant legislation, lobby for its adaptation and exchange of good practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new Law on Concessions and PPP (Public-Private-Partnership) is in use from March 2012. Some municipalities started to use the PPP model already. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PPP model was just recently implemented in a municipality; therefore, there are no indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities will implement PPP model.
Adopt and effectively implement Social Responsibilities standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2008, the institutional framework for support CSR was established by adopting the National CSR Agenda for 2008-12. Multi-Sector Coordination Body (CB) is involved in an EU project and implemented several trainings on local level with participation of companies. <p><i>TACSO Role: Improved the flow of information from private sector to CSOs by provision of possible cooperation opportunities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs are involved in promotion of CSR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Facilitate improvement of the Law on Donations as to enhance the system of taxation related to CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on Donation and Sponsorship in public activities (LDSPA) has been improving. A new Law on Associations and Foundations was approved and amended. (2011-12) <p><i>TACSO Role: Raised the issue related to the gaps in the LDSPA and created a forum for discussion and proposals of possible solutions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

KOSOVO		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
Monitoring and evaluation.	In recent years the number of civil society organisations that monitor municipal bodies work has risen. This activity has led to increased local transparency and at the same time obligated the municipalities to be more careful in the observance of democratic decision-making standards. From the monitoring activities of the organisations, analyses and reports have been produced to ascertain the state of facts for the situation and identify the flaws of local governance in Kosovo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve good governance. 	TACSO Kosovo will follow up based on the conclusions and recommendations of the report.
Access to information. Reporting expenditures.	Kosovo's municipalities are still unable to find effective mechanisms to report regularly on budgetary expenditures. Citizens and civil society can be informed of the expenditures through the quarterly report of the Mayor submitted to the Municipal Assembly. Municipal information officials do not show any interest in using the Web site as a tool informing more frequently about budgetary expenditures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve good governance. 	TACSO Kosovo will follow up based on the conclusions and recommendations of the report.
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Public consultations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal authority officials lack proper understanding of the public consultation processes, where some officials confuse this process with meetings of municipal authorities with citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve participatory process. 	TACSO Kosovo will follow up based on the conclusions and recommendations of the report.

KOSOVO		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings are considered more an obligation that derives from the Law on Local Self-Government and Municipal Statutes rather than an opportunity to learn about the requests and concerns of the citizens and their involvement in local decision-making process. Municipal authorities hold these meetings twice per year, as it is required by the law. These meetings are characterised by low level of participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve participatory process. 	TACSO Kosovo will follow up based on the conclusions and recommendations of the report.
Participatory budgeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kosovo Municipalities still lack good practice in involving the community in discussion and decision-making when it comes to budgeting. Even though there are few cases where the municipal mayors organise meetings with groups of citizens to discuss the annual budget, it remains unclear how much the needs of citizens are reflected in the annual budget projections of the municipal authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve participatory process. 	TACSO Kosovo will follow up based on the conclusions and recommendations of the report.
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Strategic and transparent budgeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support varies from municipality to municipality. Organisations receiving the most support from the municipal budget are those that deal with issues regarding youth, gender, multiculturalism and culture. Support amounts are usually small and they range from a few hundred to several thousand euros (rarely over 5000 EUR). Small municipalities, which have even smaller budgets, have very modest annual support for civil society, while larger municipalities get support of up to 100,000 euro. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	TACSO Kosovo will follow up based on the conclusions and recommendations of the report.

MONTENEGRO		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
Design and develop communication tools to raise awareness and ensure transparency and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ten municipalities established new Web sites; eight municipalities improved the content of Web sites (2011-12). <i>TACSO Role: Outputs of TACSO conference were distributed as a guideline to municipalities.</i> Leaflets and Guidelines on "Information of Citizens' Interest" distributed by six municipalities (2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of information ensured through newly developed and currently updated web sites. Impact was not sufficient due to small number of printed materials and implementers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of established Web sites and development of new Web sites to three more municipalities. Same implementation is planned by other municipalities.
Update of legislation related with transparency and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on LSG and public procurement has been revised (1 June 2012). <i>TACSO Role: Suggestion of TACSO Montenegro office to revise the law in terms of transparency of the work of LSG.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens' trust to local institutions is increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obligation of municipalities to publish contracts with local entities and individuals.
Capacity building of local officials and CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several trainings and workshops organised on LSG related laws, international organisations and self-improvement. 800 local officials attended trainings (2011-12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local officials' capacities are improved in different fields. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training needs analysis and preparation of new trainings for local officials.

MONTENEGRO		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Revision of legislations related to participation of citizens to policies and decisions on public interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A model of new decision on citizen participation prepared and adopted by three municipalities (2011). <p>TACSO Role: Support on advocating of new regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes of public discussions are improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of new model to all municipalities.
Adoption of the agreements on cooperation between the local authorities and CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eighteen agreements were signed between LSGs (seven municipalities) and individual CSOs (2011-12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These agreements served a basis for creation of long-term agreements amongst LSGs and CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Capacity building of local administrations and councillors on models of citizens' participation and establishment of community forums.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several trainings organised on local budgeting issues for local officials. (2011-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local officials' capacities are improved in local budgeting issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue trainings, which are part of National Training Programme for LSG.
Strengthening participation of CSOs in decision-making processes through using best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three regional meetings on good practices of citizens' participation in decision-making processes held with representatives of LSGs and CSOs (2012). <p>TACSO Role: Active participation to meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSGs and CSOs are informed on methods for increasing citizen participation to decision-making on local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of a future action plan based on suggestions during the meeting.
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Improving transparency and procedures of financial support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with distribution of local funds to CSO projects, a new model prepared which includes clear procedures, criteria of beneficiaries, scoring of project proposals, contracting, evaluation and monitoring. Two municipalities adopted this new model so far (2011). <p>TACSO Role: Support to advocate for new regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant improvement of the process of distribution of local funds in terms of transparency and quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy activities to ensure adoption of the new model.
Establishing databases on supported projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four municipalities improved transparency of decisions and reports on distributed funds to CSOs (2012). TACSO Role: Support to improve transparency of distribution of local funds and availability of supported projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of transparency of decisions and reports of CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign of CSOs for strengthening transparency.
Capacity building on project cycle management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three trainings organised on project proposal writing, management, quality system of monitoring and transparency for employees of LSGs (2011-12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local officials' capacities are improved on project cycle management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue trainings, which are part of National Training Programme for LSG.

SERBIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
Organise state level competitions for CSOs and LSGs in the fields of transparency, cooperation and funding procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State level call for best practices has been established within the national fund "Places in the Heart" and sustainability ensured (2011). <p>TACSO Role: Establishing the Partnership Award. A new award introduced with 17 best local partnerships selected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to the sustainable cooperation between CSOs and LSGs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The award became a sustainable practice. New competition is on-going in 2012.
Organise capacity building activities/ trainings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of capacity building activities conducted on existing practices, challenges and opportunities on Transparent Financing of CSOs from local budgets in line with senior and operational municipality management (2012). <p>TACSO Role: Leading the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to the development of models for transparent financing of CSOs from local budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A similar action plan is prepared for other two regions to introduce local initiatives about the mechanisms for transparent financing at local level.

SERBIA		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Standardisation Activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of below stated standardisation activities conducted: The Special Accounting and Financial reporting for Non-Profit Organisations in Serbia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to introducing innovative practices in financial management in CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual monitoring of the accounting and financial reporting practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of procedures for spending the public budget on local level and analysis of examples of best practices on terms of transparent procedures. <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading the process.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving transparency of CSOs financing from local budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous introducing of this standardisation and supporting local networks and CSOs about this issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monitoring of allocating and spending funds under local budget line 481. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the purposeful use of the local budget line 481. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodical review if the allocating and spending funds under this local budget line.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study for Forming Local Partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence on the local partnership principles and mechanisms and inclusion of citizens in the decision-making processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For local community development, identifying the key areas for partnerships between LSGs and CSOs.
Consultative meeting on "Transparent Allocation of Public Budget Funds to CSOs".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinions and suggestions of CSOs are gathered in terms of developing the Regulations for Transparent Funding (2012). <p>TACSO Role: <i>Co-organiser</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearer criteria and procedures for allocating state subsidies/ public funds to CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodical overview of financing CSOs from public and local budgets.
Top management and operational level management trainings in municipalities in ATV (Accountability, Transparency and Verifiability) methodology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATV methodology and a manual on "methodology for identifying the Index of Accountability, Transparency and Verifiability at the local level is developed (2011). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corruption in LSGs is decreased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the developed methodology.
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Organise National Partnership Conference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of this conference, relevant actors are informed about regional and EU practices on cooperation between government and CSOs (2011). <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading the conference.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributed to strengthening the building of the sustainable partnership between different sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the steps for improvement of mechanisms of Government/CSO cooperation.
Publish best practice collection and handbook of best practices from Serbia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication materials (brochure, video, film) designed for promoting best practice partnerships among CSOs and other sectors. <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading the process (2011).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the concept and importance of partnerships is improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation will be continued in 2012.
Initial assessment of Serbia governmental institutions' practices for consultations with CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National conferences and meeting are conducted to share Serbia governmental institutions' practices and consultations with CSOs (2011). <p>TACSO Role: <i>Leading the process.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultative practice between LSGs and CSOs in Serbia is improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report on "Initial Assessment of Serbia Governmental Institutions' Practices for Consultations with CSOs" will be published.
Regional Conference, Partnership for Change, Civil Society and the Governments in the Western Balkans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices on CSOs role in EU accession process; sustainable financing of CSOs and mechanisms for participation of CSOs in public policies creation is discussed (2012). <p>TACSO Role: <i>Co-organiser.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key basis for the development of CSOs' partners' role at a different level is established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodical exchange of information on the experiences of CSOs functioning at local and national levels among the countries in the region.
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Financial Sustainability of CSOs in time of crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchanged ideas for new approach to financing CSOs in time of crisis (2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of past approach, which was not implemented sufficiently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic overview of financing mechanism and resources at local and national level.
Establishment of clear and transparent procedures for financing CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard application forms, budget and reporting templates are prepared (2011). <p>TACSO Role: <i>Lead the research on financing CSOs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public insight is increased in decision-making processes on financing CSO projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual financial reports of LSGs to Ministry of Finance.

TURKEY		SUMMARY PROGRESS MATRIX	
Target Activity	Progress	Potential Impact	On-going and Planned Activities
Transparency and Accountability			
Media as a source of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local media started to cover news related to cooperation between CSOs and municipalities in line with local level participatory mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities became more sensitive and transparent to meet the critiques and proposals of CSOs. The quality of service delivery is increased as a result of effective working local participatory mechanism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media will continue to announce meetings, critics and proposal of Citizens' Assembly.
Outputs of EU funded projects as a source of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web sites of EU funded projects implemented by municipalities and CSOs are source of information in terms of cooperation, transparency and financing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every individual or institution has access to reach the necessary information easily through these Web sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Participation in the Decision-Making Processes at the Local Level			
Mechanism for cooperating with CSOs and municipalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Municipal Act came into force in 2005 and, after seven years of experience, these institutions have more experience and knowledge on legal framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popularity of CSOs is increased through experiences and knowledge of their members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Cooperation meetings with CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women Friendly Cities Project is implemented for gender sensitive budgeting and collaboration of CSOs and LSGs for enhancing women's human rights. This project is implemented in 6 cities by a UN Joint Programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This programme is on progress.
Coordination Mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination among CSOs, local authorities and public institutions for local issues has been provided by Citizens Assemblies. Mechanisms are developed for making local strategic plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory mechanism created a network, which provides partnerships of different actors such as universities, local authorities, CSOs, NGOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Financing of CSO Actions at Local Level			
Strategic and transparent budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure participatory mechanism a legal provision is implemented as a special circular for local authorities to submit expenditures to the Ministry of Interior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Annex II

Cooperation Between Local Self-Government and CSOs in W. Balkans & Turkey - A Summary of the Legal/Policy Environment

The table below provides a snapshot of the legislation, regulations, and non-binding frameworks relevant to the relationships between CSOs and local government structures in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. The contents of the table are not presented as an exhaustive list.

Countries	Legislation/Regulations & Pending Policy Papers
Albania	Pre-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution of Albania, dated 28 November 1998. • Law on the “Right of Information Over the Official Documents”, numbered 8503, dated 30 April 1999. • Law on “Organisation and Functioning of Local Governments in Albania”, numbered 8652, dated 31 July 2000. • Law on an “Equal Gender Society”, numbered 9198, dated 26 February 2004. • Laws on “Duties of the People’s Advocate”, Numbered 8454 - dated 4 February 1999, numbered 8600 – dated 10 April 2000 and numbered 9398 - dated 12 May 2005. • Law on the “Organisation and Functioning of the Civil Society Support Agency”, numbered 10 093, dated 9 March 2009. • Law on “Territorial Planning”, numbered 10119, dated 23 April 2009.
	Post-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Non-Binding Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Legal Frameworks to impose that local NGOs be included in participatory process. (Implementation cities; Albania, Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodër, Vlorë and Gjirokastra). • Local Government Decentralisation Programme, dated 2001. • Decentralisation and Local Development Programme (DLDP), dated 2007-ongoing. • Master Plan of Tirana City, dated 2012.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Pre-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hercegbosna Canton, Law on Local Self-Management, dated March 1998. • Draft Electoral Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, dated 1999. • The Draft External Debt Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, numbered 1/97, Official Gazette of BiH. • Draft Law on Local Self-Management, dated July 1999. • Bosna-Podrinje Canton, Law on Local Self-Government, numbered 8/97, Official Gazette of Bosna-Podrinje Canton. • Budget Law of the Republika Srpska, dated 13 September 2002. • Law on Principles of Local Self-Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, dated 2006.
	Post-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Non-Binding Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Strategy for Novo Sarajevo Municipality, 2012-2014 • ‘Agreement’ on cooperation between government and non-government sector • Draft state strategy for creating enabling environment for development of civil society. (ref. Country Progress Matrix page seven).

Countries	Legislation/Regulations & Pending Policy Papers
Croatia	Pre-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Freedom of information Act”, numbered 200-04, dated 10 December 2010. • Law on “Act on Youth Councils”, 16 February 2007. • Law on “Media”, dated 2003. • Law on “The Associations Act”, numbered 88, dated 11 October 2001. • Law on “Local and Regional self-government”, numbered 569, dated 11th April 2001 • Law on “Foundations and Funds”, numbered 36/95, dated 1 June 1995.
	Post-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Access to Public Information” dated 15 October 2003, which is currently under review.
	Non-Binding Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012-2016”, dated July 2012. • Code of practice, standards and benchmarks for the allocation of funding for programmes and projects for NGOs. • Code of practice on consultation with the interested public in procedures of adopting Laws, other regulations and acts. • Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of the Republic of Croatia. • National Strategy on Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disability. • National Strategy for Youth 2009-2013. • National Strategy on Gender Equality.
Kosovo	Pre-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Spatial Planning”, numbered 2003/14, dated 10 September 2003. • Law on “Access to Official Documents”, numbered 2003/12, dated 16 October 2003. • Law on “Local Self-Government”, numbered 03/L-040, dated 20 February 2008. • Law on “Local Government Finances”, numbered 03/L049, dated 13 March 2008. • Law on “Public Financial Management and Accountability”, numbered 03/L048, dated 13 March 2008. • Law on “Empowerment and Participation of Youth”, numbered 03/L145, dated 30 September 2009.
	Post-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Non-Binding Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Instruction on Organisation and Functioning of the Centres of Services in Municipalities, Ministry of Local Government Administration, dated 18 April 2011. • Administrative Instruction on Monitoring of Municipal Assemblies through the Information Technology equipment “Telepresences”, Ministry of Local Government Administration, dated January 2011. • Administrative Instruction on Youth Action Councils in Kosovo, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, dated 12 August 2010. • Administrative Instruction on Municipal Community Safety Councils, Ministry of Local Government Administration, dated 20 March 2009. • Administrative Instruction on Cooperation Agreement of Municipalities with Villages, Dwellings and Urban Quarters, Ministry of Local Government Administration, dated 15 July 2008. • Administrative Instruction on Transparency in Municipalities, Ministry of Local Government Administration, dated 15 July 2008. • Administrative Instruction on Organisation and Functioning of Consultative Committees in Municipalities, Ministry of Local Government Administration, dated 15 July 2008. • Guide to Municipal Participatory Governance, OSCE Kosovo and Association of Kosovo Municipalities, dated December 2007.
Macedonia	Pre-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Local Self-Government”, numbered 52/95, dated 25 January 2002. • Law on “Financing the Units of Local Self-Government”, numbered dated 2004. • Law on “Associations and Foundations”, numbered 52, dated 16 April 2010.
	Post-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Non-Binding Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for Cooperation with the CSOs 2007-2011. • Strategy for Cooperation with the CSOs 2012-2017.
Montenegro	Pre-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Protection of Confidential Data” (official title: Law on Statistics and Statistical System), numbered 69/05, dated 2005. • Law on “Local Self-Government”, numbered and dated; 42/2003, 28/2004, 75/2005, 13/2006. • Law on “Public Procurement”, dated January 2012. • Law on “Protection of Personal Data”, numbered 79/08 and 70/09, dated December 2008.
	Post-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Countries	Legislation/Regulations & Pending Policy Papers
	<p>Non-Binding Frameworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model on New Decision on Citizen Participation in Conducting Public Affairs, dated 2011. • Model on New Decision on Criteria and Procedures for Distribution of Local Funds to CSOs Projects, dated 2011.
Serbia	<p>Pre-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Local Self-Government”, numbered 129/07, dated 2007. • Law on “Associations of Citizens”, numbered 51, dated 2009. <p>Post-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Resources for Financing or Partly Financing Programmes of Public Interest Realised by Associations, dated 2012 www.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs. <p>Non-Binding Frameworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National strategy for “Preventing and Suppressing Violence Against Women in Family and Partnership relations” • National strategy for “Solving Refugees and IDPs Issues for the period 2011-2014. • Strategy for Managing Migrations. • Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma in Republic of Serbia”. • National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Increasing Gender Equality”. • National Action Plan for “Children”. <p>All national strategies are available at www.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs.</p>
Turkey	<p>Pre-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on “Municipalities”, numbered 5393, dated 3 July 2005. • Law on “Metropolitan Municipalities”, numbered 5216, dated 10 July 2004. • Law on “Special Provincial Administration”, numbered 5302, dated 22 February 2005. • Law on “Unions of Local Authorities”, numbered 5355, dated 26 May 2005. • Law on Public Financial Management and Control, numbered 5018, dated 10 December 2003. • Law on “Appropriations of Shares to Special Provincial Administrations and Municipalities from General Budget Tax Revenues”, numbered 5779, dated 2 July 2008. • Law on “Access to Information Act”, numbered 4982, dated 9 October 2003. <p>Post-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Non-Binding Frameworks</p>

Annex III:

Concept and Terms of Reference for Drafting the Regional Progress Report

Background

In February 2011, the TACSO programme brought together a group of key stakeholders from the 8 countries of the region for a conference on “Cooperation between Local Self-Governments and Civil Society Organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey”. The conference was held in the town of Bečići in Montenegro and as such is referred to by TACSO, and throughout this document, as the ‘Bečići Conference’. Nearly two years after the conference, the TACSO team (made up of experts in the eight National Offices (NO), members of the Local Advisory Groups, and staff from the Regional Office (RO)) agreed that a regional progress report should be drafted so as to both document any progress since the conference and to contribute towards stimulating future progress.

To guide the process of drafting the regional progress report, the TACSO Regional Office produced two documents: a Concept Note on the Regional Progress Report, and a Terms of Reference for a short term expert (STE) to implement the drafting. In order to explain the methodology and process of the drafting of this report, key sections from these two documents are copied.

The Concept Note - Motivation for the Report

There is not any comprehensive regional report about cooperation between local-self-governments and civil society organisations made after the Bečići conference report. The Bečići Conference in February 2011 delivered a set of agreed activities by each of the countries in regards to cooperation on the local level. All agreed activities have been chosen in a realistic approach by TACSO workshops moderated by a Resident Advisor. The best time to a run one progress report about improvement made on agreed activities and implementation details is now, almost two years later. The report will be focused on the achievements of the agreed local level activities in the implementation phase and also on common issues, activities and achievements on the regional level including impact where that is possible.

The Concept Note - Proposed Content of the Report

Part 1: The report should, for each country, individually provide a picture of:

- Agreed activities implementation progress report by each of the countries (progress made and obstacles recognised);
- Follow up information about formal and informal local self-government structures, mechanisms and policies for CSO cooperation by each country;
- How much of those mechanisms and policies have been used by CSOs in last two years? What outcomes we can recognise from those practices?
- Current added values of cooperation activities and mechanisms from government and form the CSO perspective;
- Level of CSO capacity for cooperation with local self-government after two years’ time;
- Local Self-Government capacity to cooperate with civil society after two years’ time;
- Good practical examples, good practice exchange.

Part 2: The report should, on the regional level, provide a picture of:

- Transparency and Accountability role – common examples and exchange of good practices in the region;
- Participation of citizens – common examples and exchange of good practices in the region;
- Financial support - common examples and exchange of good practices in the region;
- Capacity building –common examples and exchange of good practices in the region;
- EU practice – common examples and exchange of good practices in the region;
- Communication strategy or plan on place - common examples and exchange of good practices in the region;
- Partnership – common examples and exchange of good practices in the region.

The Concept Note - Proposed Methodology

The report will be partly a desk study, compiled from inputs received from each TACSO national office, including gathered information on regional level.

Because of the great knowledge and close involvement RAs will lead national inputs, supervise NO STE work on final draft product and gather all necessary information from the field.

The Senior STE will be involved in at least seven stages of the process:

- Define and produce content/structure, format and common methodology and common questions for the Skype interviews;
- Analytical approach to all gathered information from the NO draft progress reports, regional gathered information, including a special focus on regional dimensions;
- Analysing the results of the questionnaire, and finalising the questions for the Skype interviews to fill in the gaps;
- Implementing Skype interviews;
- Managing and gathering all information in the report to include a national and regional dimension with focus on good practical examples;
- Drafting the report.

Development of the final report

Resident Advisers would be involved at the following stages in the process:

- Supervision of the preparation of the draft progress report produced by NO STE;
- Developing and approving of the draft questionnaire and standard questions for the interviews;
- Analysis of progress in the field by questioners, interviews and other relevant methodologies;
- Informing LAG members and other relevant representatives about the report and the research methodology, ensuring their active support and understanding;
- Filling in the questionnaire and participating in Skype calls with the senior STE;
- Supervising of gathering completed questionnaires from key stakeholders and other relevant representatives (and sending them back again, if they are not completed in a satisfactory manner);
- Active analytical approach;
- Gathering information for the regional dimension elements of the progress, providing inputs on the questions for the Skype interviews;
- Providing comments on the draft report on NO and RO level.

The Civil Society Capacity Building Coordinator would:

- Assist NO in regards NO STE TOR;
- Identify the senior STE (draft open call and select appropriate STE);
- Coordinate and monitor the progress report development process on NO and RO level, ensuring that it is conducted in a timely manner;
- Coordinate and monitor the regional follow up activities, ensuring that it is conducted in preferred direction and timely manner.

The Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for a CSO expert for the preparation of a progress report - evaluation of the achievements of the national activity plans including the regional dimension are included the following key sections:

The Progress Report

The purpose of the progress report is to provide updated information about the status of cooperation between local self-governmental institutions and CSOs in the Western Balkans (WB) and Turkey, the progress of the implementation process, achievements and impacts of the national activity plans agreed upon and presented during the conference "Cooperation Between Local Self-Governmental Institutions and CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey" and included in the report from this conference as well as all regional elements and achievements. The report is intended for CSOs and local self-government representatives in the WB and Turkey as well as for other stakeholders active in the process of cooperation on the local level that are experienced and familiar with the bottom up approach.

The Position

The expert will be expected to gather information, research and write the report during autumn 2012. The final progress report would be published, at the latest, at the end of December 2012.

Research and preparation of the report

S/he will be involved in desk research in the following stages of the process:

- Developing the content of the report and research plan;
- Analysing all gathered information and recommendations prepared by the TACSO national offices;
- Developing a questionnaire, if necessary, which will include possible gaps and will collect necessary regional information from the TACSO Resident Advisors in each country;
- Implementing Skype interviews if necessary;
- Analysing the Bečići progress report including all eight national office progress reports prepared by the national offices, including other key relevant documents, the TACSO; Resident Advisors' responses to the questionnaire, the results of the Skype interviews and other related information;
- Preparing the draft report;
- Preparing the final report after consultation with the TACSO team.

Assignment

The work is expected to include 20 days of analytical research work, interviews, preparation, writing, consulting and finalising of the report.

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* *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.*