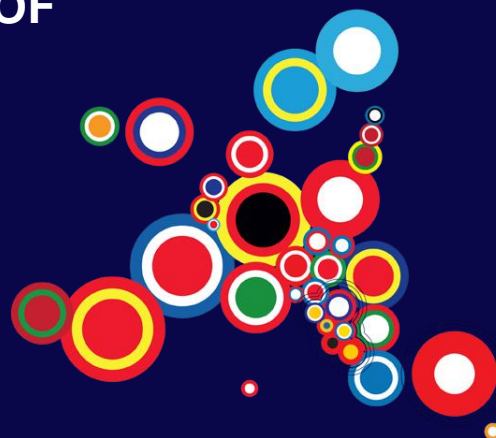




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Civil Society Facility and Media
Programme 2018-2019



Action summary

The action aims at supporting civil society in the country, in line with the EU guidelines for support to civil society, further strengthening their involvement in policy and decision making, including in the EU key sector reforms and start of the accession negotiation. It also supports the CSOs in implementing actions relevant for the enabling environment for civil society involving the business community and public institutions.

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019
Action Title	Civil Society Facility 2018-2019 for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Action ID	IPA 2018/040-646.04/multi-country/CSF & Media/MK IPA 2019/040-647.04/multi-country/CSF & Media/MK
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	Regional and territorial cooperation
DAC Sector	15150- Democratic participation and civil society
Budget	
Total cost	2018: EUR 3 000 000 2019: EUR 3 300 000
EU contribution	IPA 2018: EUR 3 000 000 IPA 2019: EUR 3 000 000
Budget line(s)	22.020401 – Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	Direct
<i>Direct management:</i> European Commission <i>Indirect management:</i> Entrusted entity	Delegation of the European Union to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Implementation responsibilities	N/A
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A
Timeline	
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	IPA 2018: 31 December 2019 IPA 2019: 31 December 2020
Indicative operational implementation period	72 months from the adoption of this Financing Decision

Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
Aid to environment	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have already played an important role in preparing society in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for the European Union (EU) accession being involved in different sectorial reforms.

In order to strengthen the enabling environment for the CSOs in the country, the EU support to CSOs focuses at building stronger democracies, improving accountability systems and ultimately achieving better policy and economic and social development. It seeks to empower civil society to fulfil the following key roles:

- Creating stronger links to citizens by engaging in public policy processes, reaching out to society as a whole including marginalized groups and grass-root communities and encouraging civic activism and public participation in policy-making across all areas;
- Becoming professional and reliable partners in the policy-making and reform process through evidence-based advocacy across all sectors and close monitoring of reforms;
- Contributing to enhancing responsible and inclusive leadership in the political, economic and social spheres and providing early warning in case of societal change,
- Strengthening economic development and create better links with business by promoting entrepreneurship, social innovation and job creation.

Any step forward in the integration process will increase the need for objective information of the citizens on the EU accession process and its real impact on their daily lives. In order to obtain a continuous support for the citizens in the enlargement process of the country one of the important instruments for such support is the active work of the civil society. Therefore, **further empowerment of the civil society remains one of the core focuses of the EU support**. The need for continued political and financial engagement with civil society in the EU enlargement agenda is identified in the European Commission Guidelines for EU support to civil society in the enlargement countries 2014-2020. This assistance is envisioned to provide further strategic, efficient and tailor-made support for the civil society enabling environment through the 2018-2019 programme under the IPA Civil Society Facility Instrument.

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Civil society continued to play a constructive role in supporting democratic processes and ensuring greater checks and balances. Since the second half of 2017, the climate in which civil society organisations operate in the country has improved and the government has shown commitment to dialogue and increased CSOs inclusion in the policy development and legislative drafting. Yet, an improved legal, financial and policy framework is still needed to strengthen an enabling environment for civil society.

The civic dialogue on issues important for the civil society development in the country is recently growing but still needs improvements in practice, including institutional dialogue on public policy. The Government Unit for Cooperation with CSOs (established in 2005) continues to function within the General Secretariat but is not yet fully operational in the pursuit of its mandate, notably due to a lack of dedicated funding to carry out its role. The stable functioning of this Unit is important for it to perform efficiently its mandate as a government focal point for cooperation with CSOs, to coordinate the inter-ministerial network of civil servants and to perform the role of a technical secretariat for the newly established Council for cooperation between government and civil society.

This Council was established in May 2018 as an advisory body to the government to establish a structured cooperation and dialogue with civil society. It was a very important step towards strengthening the CSOs enabling environment in the country. The establishment of the Council was one of the main objectives of the 2012-2017 Government Strategy for cooperation with civil society.

Following its establishment, the government needs to build a long-term strategic framework for cooperation with civil society and prepare the 2018-2020 action plan, as well as binding rules for state financing of CSOs.

In general, the legal framework for civil society is adequate by guaranteeing the freedoms of association, assembly and expression. However, legal solutions are still needed for having a fully enabling legal framework for the civil society in the country, in particular ensuring its long-term financial sustainability. The Law on Association and Foundations expanded the freedom of associations by enabling legal persons to be founders. The provisions of the tax laws relating to civil society organisations are not supportive enough.

State funding, including funds generated from games of chance and entertainment (lotteries), would benefit from reform. The State allocates approximately EUR 4 million annually through the budget (item 463 Transfers to non-governmental organisations) but they are not sufficient to cover the needs of civil society. Civil society mostly relies on foreign donations. The individual and corporate donations are still low mainly due to complex legal procedures.

Multiple surveys show that the cooperation between civil society and business community is often limited to donations and sponsorships to CSO projects, while other innovative mechanisms for collaboration are lacking.¹ Corporate donations remain a modest source of funding and are often provided on *ad-hoc* basis, as they do not create direct added value for companies or lasting impact. Such funding does not contribute to developing a long-term partnership, where both entities share resources in pursuing common goals. CSOs act rarely as providers of services to the business community or strategic partners in development efforts. CSOs possess important knowledge on issues of interest to companies and experience on how to address them. There is a need to establish sustainable cooperation between civil society and business community in a way that diversifies CSO funding sources by offering services to the private sector and addressing issues of common interest, such as the consumer protection, fair market relations, etc.

The recent few years have seen a growing trend of civil society establishing or strengthening sectorial networks that also extend to CSOs from the Western Balkan region, Turkey and the EU. Yet, there are common shortcomings that need to be further addressed regarding the capacities of the CSOs in the country, as follow:

- Regarding internal organisation, an important number of CSOs has insufficient organisational development and management i.e. lack of strategic planning and management; short-term and project focus; lack of long-term institutional development; lack of professional staff; insufficient accountability; and weak financial management. Few organisations have developed strategic plans where they define their long-term programme and organisational objectives. One of the factors that impact the low level of long-term planning in CSOs is the weak strategic leadership.
- CSOs are often without functional organisational structure in which a governing body provides strategic oversight and holds the organisation to its mission and vision in the long run.
- Most CSOs are working with insufficient funds, thus the financial sustainability becomes greater challenge because more CSOs rely on international donors. There is a strong need for

¹ For e.g. "*Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation*". CIVICUS - Civil Society Index - long way to go to bigger civic engagement", page 30. http://civicus.org/images/stories/csi/csi_phase2/macedonia%20acr%20final.pdf

capacity building in areas such as fundraising from domestic sources, tax incentives, economic activities, cooperation with business sector etc.

- CSOs working on local and grass-root level comparatively have weaker capacities and are disadvantaged due to even more restricted funding possibilities at this level, unfavourable socio-cultural context, weak cooperation with local government and small support from the community.
- In terms of networking, civil society is increasingly recognises the benefits of cooperation, particularly in relation to the growing interest in advocacy and policy dialogue. There is a trend for CSOs to form programme-oriented coalitions or partnerships around single policy issues, lending expertise and “weight” to a concrete agenda. However, many of the previously most active networks showed very low level of activity over the last few years, mostly due to lack of funds.
- CSOs show limits in their visibility and external communications with stakeholders including developing relationships with members, constituencies and citizens; mobilizing support from the business community and individuals; effective public communication; cooperation with the media, creating a positive public image and building trust.
- There is a need to increase CSOs’ impact on policies by further increasing capacities for dialogue with decision makers, undertaking "watchdog" role, advocacy and lobbying for own interests and broader issues, building constituency, raising public awareness, mobilising support and building strong partnership.

The above analysis explains the comprehensive range of challenges that need to be addressed in order to support an enabling environment for civil society in the country. In this respect civil society, along with the business community, government institutions and other stakeholders, has the potential to promote solutions for the shortcomings affecting the enabling environment for CSOs through the assistance that will be provided with this Programme.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

This IPA II assistance will be focused on enabling the legal, policy and financial environment for the civil society; and on improving the dialogue, cooperation and partnership between the CSOs and the public institutions. This will be done through:

- I. Technical Assistance to Government and Civil Society Initiative for improving the enabling environment for civil society,
- II. Operating support to CSOs for implementing agreed work-plans in a number of pre-defined sectors. Some experience of the CSOs in the country in operating or institutional grants already exists with the IPA CSF Regional programme as well as with other donors operating in the country. Yet, a more structured approach is needed when providing such operating grants in the way that CSOs are encouraged to have harmonised and complementary actions in the overall sectorial/policy interventions with the government institutions and other relevant stakeholders.
- III. Support to CSOs' networks/platforms working for enabling environment for civil society in cooperation with public institutions (at national and local level) and the business community.

These actions will increase civil society and government integrity-building partnership in situations where such mutually beneficial relationships are lacking or inadequate. It will promote change in public attitude and practices by fostering dialogue, cooperation and trust between the government, civil

society and business community. It will seek to enhance the impact of civil society through their involvement in public policies whose implementation requires further development and upgrading of civil dialogue, stronger and active contribution in policy and watchdog initiatives, improved CSOs effectiveness, transparency and accountability, improved cooperation with business community and diversified financing for civil society.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II MULTI-COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The Indicative **Country Strategy Paper** for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (ISP) is a broad document where support to Civil Society is seen from a sectoral and cross cutting aspect. It indicates that "*Specific attention will be paid to a number of cross-cutting issues. These include environmental sustainability and climate change, gender equality, democracy and human rights, as well as corruption.*" Sectoral support is also foreseen under Democracy and Governance, where "*A more independent civil society as a key component of a democratic system*" is one of the main results.

Support for CSOs will be provided through assisting in the implementation of the national Civil Society Strategy with a focus on the new advisory body – the Council for cooperation between government and civil society; by assisting the establishment of an improved legal and financial environment, favorable to sustainable and independent CSOs, able to work in a representative, transparent and accountable manner; through supporting capacity-building and improving CSOs' cooperation with public institutions and business community, and an improved access to public information; and through promoting the inclusion of CSOs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of sector policies

The Multi Country Strategy Paper indicates that "*Increased support for **civil society**, including capacity building and encouraging the creation of an enabling environment for its development and greater involvement of stakeholders in reforms, including through greater transparency of government action and spending.*"

The 2018 **Enlargement Strategy**² acknowledged the constructive role that the civil society organisations have played through demanding accountability from the political actors across ethnic lines, including during the political crisis. Following a difficult period, the country has overcome its political crisis, including through the implementation of the Pržino agreement³ and the Urgent Reform Priorities.

As part of the "Pržino agreement", the early parliamentary elections were held in December 2016 and resulted in a change of government in May 2017. Politics and society are undergoing significant change, with a renewed spirit of hope and openness. Steps are being taken to consolidate democracy, restore the rule of law and trust in institutions. Efforts are being made to ensure the inclusiveness of reforms by reaching out to the opposition, to civil society organisations, businesses and other

² COM(2018) 450 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy

³ The June/July 2015 "Pržino Agreement" covers the return of the opposition to parliament, establishing political and legal accountability for the wiretaps, establishment of a technical government to organise early parliamentary elections, the holding of those early parliamentary elections, implementing the Ohrid Framework Agreement, good neighbourly relations, a commitment to implement EU recommendations on systemic rule of law issues and the holding of a High Level Accession Dialogue meeting.

stakeholders. The transparency of decision-making has increased and proper checks and balances on the power of the executive by Parliament and civil society are gradually being restored. The harsh rhetoric, pressure and targeted investigations against civil society have receded.

The new government has made significant progress in moving forward the EU reform agenda, including the "Urgent Reform Priorities", by reaching out to the opposition, civil society and other stakeholders. Its "3-6-9 plan" prioritised measures to be adopted in the initial phase of reforms, ahead of the 2018 enlargement package. In this government plan, the document prepared by the group of civil society organisations: "Proposal for Urgent Democratic Reforms" (Blueprint) was also in great portion included, and the results based on the consultations with the civil society.

It is important to stress that the 3-6-9 plan also included actions for strengthening participation of civil society representatives in the work of the parliamentary bodies, as well as for establishing thematic working groups and starting the revision of the Draft Strategy for Public Administration Reform and the Action Plan with the institutions and the civil society and in line with the Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) recommendations. Challenges remains for coordinating the reform processes.

In this respect, the further development of a civil society culture requires political stability and a favourable environment for the enhancement of CSOs and civil society dialogue. Consequently, CSOs, governments, media, business community and other stakeholders should work together to establish structured cooperation for civic dialogue and strengthen policy/sector advocacy.

The EU has been supporting the needs for improved enabling environment through the IPA Civil Society Programmes. One of the best examples is addressing the needs of civil society organisations through the EU-funded regional action "Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (TACSO⁴)", but also throughout the ongoing EU project for the National Resource Centre for supporting CSOs in the country other regional and country level grant projects implemented under this EU instrument IPA Civil Society Facility (CSF).

The (then) *DG Enlargement Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020* remains a key document for the programming, reporting and monitoring of the EU assistance to the civil society in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Guidelines focus on fostering the development of an "environment that is conducive to civil society activities and building the capacities of CSOs to be effective and accountable independent actors". Finally, the action complements the national IPA programmes as well by offering numerous smaller pilot projects on sector level, to be determined in the future programming activities.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Civil society cooperation programmes have proven to be a particularly useful tool in:

- Harmonising the methodologies and outputs for enhancement of Civil Society Support;
- Sharing best practices;
- Creating networks of experts among the enlargement countries but also with the Member States' experts;

⁴ www.tacso.org

- Strengthening the thematic networking among CSOs and their increased responsibility in involving grass rooting organisations;
- Improving the regulatory environment in the country;
- Promoting CSO's access to EU funding;
- Improving the dialogue with the European Commission and on country level;
- Allowing for country specific activities.

Experience has also shown that support to Civil Society is considered as being too fragmented. Therefore, this programme will further follow the path set by the Civil Society Facility in strengthening the overall coordination and coherence of assistance and activities carried out or funded by the EU, its Member States and other public and private donors. The European Commission endeavours to improve coordination by organising regular meetings throughout the year with authorities in the Western Balkans and Turkey, EU Delegations and other stakeholders. Drawing from the lesson learnt from previous programmes, there is a need to well coordinate the different types of assistance activities.

The combination of multi-beneficiary and national IPA programmes and other sources of funding can be extremely efficient by exploiting complementarities and synergies if coordinated. The European Commission is the largest donor in the region, providing significantly more support than all other donors taken together. Experience shows that there is a need for continuous support of civil society.

Furthermore, evidence indicates that civil society should not be supported in isolation, but as an integral part of every policy area. Civil society should therefore be regarded as cross-cutting issue and not as separate sector. The EU is applying this approach by supporting the pro-active involvement of CSOs, through the CSF, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) etc. in the decision making process and sectorial/ policies reforms important for the EU integration of the country. Such support varies from CSOs networking in sectors and unifies their voice and efforts, to granting to smaller CSOs to strengthen their voice on local level and support the local governments to adequately address the needs of their community/citizens. This also includes assisting the CSOs to build horizontal mechanism for dialogue and consultations and their structured involvement in the working groups of the government across institutions.

A valuable assessment of the country portfolio so far implemented for EU assistance to the civil society provided in the Mid-term Evaluation of the IPA Civil Society Facility programme for the period 2011-2016. also was taken in consideration. Follows part of the conclusions relevant for the 2018-2019 programming:

The Civil Society Facility financial assistance is relevant for civil society in the country. The CSF objectives and priorities were generally aligned with the Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020⁵. In the framework of the three Calls for Proposals (allocations 2012-3, 2014, 2015), stated objectives followed the identified setbacks in the general (enabling) environment in which civil society operates in the country, as well as the specific sector (also EU-*acquis* related) issues. Here, the media component became an important part of the support, in the 2014 allocation, as did support to the inter-communal relations/ multiculturalism/ Ohrid Framework Agreement. The CSF financial assistance has been efficient in supporting sectorial networking, in areas related to the EU *acquis*, but with limited reach to grass-root and community-based organizations.

⁵ DG ELARG Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/civil_society/doc_guidelines_cs_support.pdf

The current interventions under the CSF in the country require all supported project to include support to third parties - a sub-granting scheme, with the specific intent of improving the reach of CSF grants towards grassroots and community-based organisations and the geographical spread of CSF funding. The sub-granting scheme has considerably facilitated networking and sharing of know-how between more and less developed CSOs and in (sectoral) networking, but it has so far had a limited reach to grassroots and community-based organizations. There has been a learning curve, both on the side of the EU Delegation and CSOs/CSF beneficiaries in terms of the needed length of projects and benefits and limits of the network, including the approach of the financial support to third parties. It will be important in future programming cycles to further utilise what has been learned, on all sides, in this process.

The CSF assistance achieved considerable sectoral and thematic cooperation among CSOs, but with limited outcomes due to closed and uncooperative institutions. The main contribution of the CSF has been in strengthening sectoral/ thematic cooperation, and the consolidation of the research and advocacy capacity of CSOs, particularly in areas related to the EU *acquis* and fundamental rights. In the areas of media freedoms, the CSF has contributed to sustaining minimum investigative journalism capacity, and standards and awareness on media freedoms. There are a number of areas in which the CSF's financial assistance is contributing to the achievement of the CSF's strategic objectives – these include dialogue with public institutions, sectoral networks, CSO-media cooperation and sectoral priorities in the EU accession agenda.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans and Turkey by empowering civil society to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society and pluralistic media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assessment of existing legislation and policy framework; • Quality of structures and mechanisms in place for cooperation between CSOs and public Institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent assessments by international organisations and CSOs; • Progress reports; 	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>1. To improve the legal, policy and financial environment for civil society.</p> <p>2. To improve the dialogue, cooperation and partnership between the CSO and the public institutions (at national and local level).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for permanent dialogue with civil society are operational / fully operational Council for Cooperation with the CSOs; • Funding mechanisms for CSO's further strengthened 	<p>For both specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO registration records; • Project records; • Media outlets records; • European Commission country report • CSO Baselines for the country; • Government Reports on CSO cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political consensus and fully operational structured mechanism / Council for cooperation with CS • Structured National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC) mechanism for CSOs consultation and further inclusion of the CSO in the decision-making process, both at local and central level
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS

<p>Results to Objective 1:</p> <p>1.1 National and local authorities adopt enabling policies and rules for grass-root organisations</p> <p>1.2 Government support to CSO's is provided in a transparent, accountable, fair and non-discriminatory manner</p> <p>1.3 CSO activities are guided by strategic long-term organisational planning</p> <p>Results to Objective 2:</p> <p>2.1 Public institutions include CSOs in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies, strategies and operational programs</p> <p>2.2 Advocacy CSOs use research and other forms of evidence to underpin their activities</p> <p>2.3 CSOs regularly network within and outside country borders and make use of coalition-building for increased impact in campaigning and advocacy</p> <p>2.4 CSOs participation with Government is representative and with mechanisms in place to engage/inform constituents and beneficiaries</p>	<p>Result 1</p> <p>1.1 Number of grass-root organisations increased</p> <p>1.2 Quality of legislative framework for state funding of CSO's</p> <p>1.3 Share of CSOs that monitor and evaluate the implementation of their strategies and make this information publicly available/accessible</p> <p>Result 2:</p> <p>2.1 Number of CSOs which take part in monitoring policies, EU and other donor funding and negotiation process</p> <p>2.2 Percentage of CSOs taking an evidence-based approach to their work</p> <p>2.3 Share of CSOs taking part in local, national, regional and international networks</p> <p>2.4 Percentage of government/CSO consultations (working groups) where the selection of representatives has been done in an open and transparent way.</p>	<p>For both results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission country report • ISP Mid Term Review • CSO registration records • Project records; • Media outlets records • Surveys and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political consensus on the need for further and structured inclusion of the CSO in the decision-making process, both at local and central level • Government is committed to implement National Strategy for development of civil society sector in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia • Resources allocated in government budget to support CSOs • Commitment to the DG ELARG Guidelines 2014-2020
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DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Activity 1. Technical assistance to CSOs for improving the enabling environment for Civil Society (contributing to results 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 2.1 and 2.4)

The technical assistance will support the CSOs in implementing actions relevant for the enabling environment for civil society involving the business community and public institutions. Support will cover the following four (4) components:

Sub activity 1: Support to implementation of main objectives of the new Government Strategy for Cooperation of civil society (2018-2020) that are pivotal for having enabling environment for civil society (e.g. enactment of bylaws for standardization of state funding to CSOs, harmonization of tax legislation, law on donations, functioning of Council for Cooperation with CSOs, structured involvement of CSOs in the EU negotiation working groups and cooperation with the Parliament). This sub-activity should also contribute to the reformed legal and fiscal framework for CSOs and functional institutions for inclusive civil dialogue.

The activity will make sure to facilitate early stage stakeholder involvement i.e. prior to legislative drafting, using appropriate structured mechanisms.

Subactivity 2: Support to the finalisation and implementation of the civil society initiative – New Road Map of Civil Society, where CSOs are creating their “to do” agenda to improve the enabling environment for civil society. This component will also create synergy activities with the revised Government Strategy for Cooperation with civil society and the new Action Plan. This will support for example consultations, monitoring, working group meetings, and meetings with public institutions, business community and public in general.

Sub activity 3⁶: Activities and initiatives for the development and operations of small grass-root organisations / citizens. This may cover for example: supporting CSOs efforts to feed into decision-making processes, enhancing CSOs' capacities and experience related to internal governance structures; strategic planning; communication and visibility; improving financial management; results monitoring and impact evaluation; networking, coalition-building and advocacy, etc.

Supported organisations would be those that have submitted an appropriate work plan for organisational strengthening and institutional development in the direction of improved internal structures, strategic planning, and financial management.

This activity will improve the environment for active citizenship and strengthen the capacity of organised active citizens through support to activities of small civil society and citizens right-based initiatives via an active citizenship mechanism managed by the service contract. Such mechanism is expected to provide more flexible, transparent and accessible support to rights-based work carried out by activists, civil society organisations, platforms, networks, civil initiatives, foundations, associations, cooperatives, etc. Non-financial support will be provided under different categories such event management, mobility and networking, organisational capacity building, campaign, and communication. The final beneficiaries will be civil society organisations engaged at various levels through activities such as CSO helpdesk, trainings and ad hoc coaching.

⁶ This component derives from good practices and impact of the IPA CSF project Sivil Düşün. It was launched by the EU Delegation in Turkey in 2013 under the IPA II Civil Society Facility Turkey Programme. Sivil Düşün works to improve the environment for active citizenship and strengthen the capacity of organised active citizens. With its successful presence in Turkey, Sivil Düşün entered its second phase (Sivil Düşün II) in 2016.

Sub activity 4: Monitoring system and other supportive measures; this will include monitoring of the grants schemes for civil society including mapping, synergies and interaction, transfer of knowledge of CSF Regional grant project with the CSF grant project on country level; improving visibility of CSF actions, donor coordination for civil society, information sessions, kick-off events etc.

Activity 2. Operating support for CSOs (contributing to results 1.3; 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4)

The functioning of civil society organisations will be supported through an operating grant. This will enable implementation of CSO's core activities against an agreed work programme in a number of pre-defined sectors, with a main objective of having a positive impact on the lives of citizens and ensuring their active involvement in the sector reforms. This support may in future continue with a maximum of additional 3 years (1+3). Themes/Sectors of support will be defined through consultations with civil society and other stakeholders before the launch of the Call.

Activity 3. Support to networks/platforms to cooperate with public institutions and the business community for an enabling environment for CSOs and for improved lives of citizens (contributing to results 1.3; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4)

CSOs will be supported to promote an enabling environment and to carry out horizontal actions for concrete cooperation with public institutions and the business community (e.g. utilising provisions from Law on Association & Foundations for transfer of public authorisations from Government to CSOs; Expert cooperation with Government institutions in policy areas and chapters, cooperation with business community for funding diversification through services to companies, etc.) Supported actions should aim at having an impact on the lives of citizens and improved environment for them in all important society aspects.

Potential target sectors will be defined through consultation cycle with civil society and other stakeholders before the launch of the Call for Proposal.

RISKS

The development of a civil society culture in the region requires political stability and a favorable environment for the enhancement of CSOs and civil society dialogue. Consequently, CSOs, governments, media, business community and other stakeholders should work together to establish alliances and coalitions to help strengthen advocacy, etc. These efforts will fail if the authorities implement policies and actions that are counterproductive to achieving a civil society culture. It is therefore of paramount importance that the EU and other donors keep a close eye on this and take appropriate measures, if necessary.

The main risks involve horizontal support provided by bodies or institutions without a sufficiently clear mandate and experience, or support that it is not tailored clearly to the national needs and priorities. These risks are addressed through a rigorous selection mechanism privileging long standing partnerships which have already demonstrated a clear added value. Another element is to ensure that the horizontal support is based on a clear national needs assessment done in close collaboration with the beneficiary countries, the EU Delegations and geographical units.

Furthermore, the EU procedures for the award of grants, including complex application documents and financial rules as well as co-financing requirement may affect the motivation of the CSOs, especially those with limited capacities, to participate in the action. Mitigation measure: EUD will make sure that capacity building opportunities are available in a timely manner to all potential beneficiaries, notably via Activity 1, but also involving the EU funded National resource center for support of the CSOs work and improve their capacities and involvement in the policy creation and decision making. Additional support in this respect may be also provided through the next TACSO 3 EU regional project likely to be operational by end of 2018.

Lack of political support for the action that may lead to low or limited interest of public institutions at all levels to co-operate with CSOs. **Mitigation measure:** The implementation of activity 1 will among others focus on strengthening cooperation between CSOs and public sector. These activities will be useful to ensure adequate interest of public institutions. Besides, the lead institution of the civil society sub-sector will be continuously informed of the development concerning this action implementation. Furthermore, the national resource centre and the future TACSO 3 EU regional project have components that also focus on strengthening the cooperation and interaction between the public institutions and CSOs. The Council for cooperation with civil society will be effective mechanism to address any lack or low level of commitment by both (public initiations and civil society) and to find solutions to remove potential risks or problems in this respect.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

All necessary conditions for the successful implementation of the proposed action are in place.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Apart of the broad and inclusive consultation process where the beneficiaries and the national counterparts already contribute to the preparation of this action on the IPA Civil Society Facility Programme 2018/2019, additional series of consultations will be organised for the preparation of the grant and procurement documentation.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD(S) AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING

The action will be implemented under direct management by the Delegation of the European Union to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (EUD).

Activity 1 - Technical assistance to Government and CSOs for improving the enabling environment for Civil Society: 1 service contract.

Activity 2 - Operating support for CSOs: Operating grants awarded following a call for proposals.

Activity 3 - Support to networks/platforms: The grant beneficiaries will be selected through Calls for Proposals.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines for evaluations. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

Performance will be measured against the indicators set out in the log frame matrix and the specific indicators laid out in the *Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-*

2020 and Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries 2014-2020. The main means of measurement is the level of compliance with the European standards in the area of CSO by the beneficiary country. Apart from the compliance level indicator, other sources of monitoring can also give a qualitative assessment of the progress made. Such sources include the enlargement package, Peer Reviews, reports from the contracts and grants.

A mid-term evaluation of the Enlargement support to CSOs in the enlargement countries was already carried out mid-way through the period (2017) assessing progress towards objectives and results as well as the continued viability of the strategy. A final evaluation should be commissioned at the end of the period (2020) to provide the necessary inputs for further support after the end of the current financial framework.

Other related technical assistance teams, if possible, could provide pre and post-grant implementation-related training to beneficiaries. TACSO (or any future similar projects) could also support the EU in monitoring the execution of the project by monitoring of the implementation of individual grants. Monitoring framework of the grant scheme for civil society and media will be developed as a part of the larger framework mentioned above but also reflecting specifics of grants schemes that are limited in scope and time. Monitoring will be based on a set of indicators developed for grant scheme and embedded in the very call for proposals. The guidelines for applicants for each Call for proposals will include the indicators for the monitoring of the impact of the projects in the specific thematic area to be awarded. The applicants will be required to propose indicators that will measure the outcomes of their proposed activities and the impact of their activities on the target groups and beneficiaries. The aggregate impact of all actions undertaken by grantees will be measured after the end of the programme.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (value + year)	Target 2020	Final Target (year)	Source of information
ISP indicator(s) – if applicable				
Action outcome indicator 1 (Specific objective 1) Funding mechanisms for CSO's further strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binding framework of rules for state financing of civil society not in place (2015). • CSOs institutional donor orientation is strong: 67% (2015) 	Binding framework for state financing of civil society in place CSO's institutional donor orientation is decreased (60%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission country report • Surveys • Independent assessments • Synthesis of the baseline brief
Action outcome indicator 2 (Result 1) Share of CSOs that are registered in the country that monitor and evaluate the implementation of their strategies and make this information publicly available/accessible	52% of CSOs neither have established system for assessment of efficiency of employees in their organisation, nor system internal assessment of strategic plan dealing with these issues.	70%	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission country report • Baseline study/Need Assessment for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Action outcome indicator 3 (Result 2) % of CSOs that are registered in the country which take part in monitoring policies, EU and other donor funding and negotiation process	Solidly placed institutional framework and policy for civil dialogue are not fully functional and not consistently implemented.	10% of CSOs to be consulted	25% are consulted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission country report • ISP Mid Term Review • CSO registration records • Project records; • Surveys and research Independent assessment by International Organisations and/or regional CSOs.
Action outcome indicator 4 (Result 2)	0%	25% CSO's to be included in an open	50% of CSO's to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission country report

Indicator	Baseline (value + year)	Target 2020	Final Target (year)	Source of information
<p>Percentage of government/CSO structured consultations/working groups where the selection of representatives has been done in an open and transparent way through a structured mechanism for their involvement</p>		<p>and transparent way</p>	<p>be included in an open and transparent way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ISP Final Review •CSO registration records •Project records; •Media outlets records •Surveys and research •Audience measurement Independent assessment by International Organisations and/or regional CSOs.

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

The country has not yet established a full-fledged sector wide approach when it comes to strategic planning and EU assistance programming. Nevertheless, efforts are being made for a creation of a wider consultation board that would allow the inclusion of relevant stakeholders and non-state actors in a wider dialogue for priority identification, taking into account the existing sector strategies which are numerous in some cases.

The forthright position of a number of Civil Society organisations in the country has led in their coordination and production of an IPA paper that the EU also reflected upon when preparing the Country Strategy Paper. Their proactive approach should be used for increased inclusion of CSO in programming of IPA assistance following the sectors identified in the ISP. This initiative is supported by the National IPA Coordinator within the Secretariat for European Affairs, however, participation in the decision making structures (former Programme Based Approach working groups) has not yet materialised. This is necessary, in order to enable more inclusive and transparent dialogue, consultation and communication with all relevant stakeholders in the field of planning and programming of EU funds and international development assistance, and ensure aid effectiveness. This action document could very well contribute to this type of activities.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming and gender balance will be fully respected in the composition of the Steering Committee and all other decision making and operational structures. The activities supported by this Programme will actively address the concerns and interests of both girls and boys and of women and men in the design and implementation of the projects activities and will contribute to a better understanding and monitoring of the mainstreaming of equal opportunity in the design and delivery of the beneficiary's services in accordance with EU gender equality principles and practice and the Law on Equal Opportunities on Women and Men and the Government Strategy for Gender Equality.

All of the actions planned under this programme will be required to have a component for measuring the impacts on gender that very action will have during the implementation and in finalisation phase of the project as well as potential impact in the future. It will be also required that in the projects one of the members of the consortium should be an organisation working in the area of gender mainstreaming to secure as a horizontal approach the gender mainstreaming. Namely, monitoring gender equality should be both a tool and a guardian of these achievements and will be incorporated as a requirement in all of the types of procurements under this programme. This activity aims to empower right-based gender CSOs for achievement of greater gender equality and participatory democracy in the country.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal opportunities will be mainstreamed within the project preparation, training participation and publicity materials. The different project implementation structures will ensure the observance of the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Support to vulnerable discriminated, marginalised and underserved groups, including women and girls in difficult conditions and gender discriminated groups, is one of the traditional sectors of activity of CSOs in the country. Intentional efforts will be made to apply rights based approaches for ensuring that CSOs addressing and articulating the rights, needs and entitlements of these groups will be well-represented among the beneficiaries.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The accelerated approximation of the national with the EU legislation, along with the obligation for full harmonisation up to the accession date, will further the legislative, strengthen the administrative and

judicial authorities, full and correct implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and improve the EU *acquis* adoption, implementation and enforcement data, indirectly leading to overall improved stability, respect of minorities, vulnerable groups (including persons with disabilities, persons of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community and non-majority communities) and good governance. In an EU context, reference is made to the “Race directive” of 2000 (200/43/EC of 29 June), which has an important impact on employment (incl. vocational training, working conditions, social protection etc.) and is also a crucial aspect of the EU *acquis*. The beneficiaries will be assisted to improve their internal performance vis-à-vis minorities or other vulnerable groups. Projects should ensure active involvement and outreach to excluded groups and ensure against both direct and indirect discrimination providing accessible environments inclusive for all.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

The structured and ad hoc consultation and communication will constitute important aspects of the experience exchange established through the cooperation of the civil society and public institutions with the EU Member States and EU Non State Actors throughout the implementation of this programme/projects. The generated experience will further contribute to the inclusiveness of the national consultation platform, and will improve the transparency and clarity of the national communication strategy with regards to the negotiation process (both with regards to the participating institutions and structures and the general public). This should also refer to the process of raising public awareness, increasing transparency and a comprehensive dissemination of the results towards the citizens of the country, the Region and the EU.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The European Union as a longstanding commitment to address environmental concerns in its assistance programmes (as part as a wider commitment to sustainable development). Key references include art. 6 of the Treaty and the Cardiff process which foresees the systematic consideration of environmental aspects into European Commission development cooperation and in other policies (hence very important for the EU *acquis*). Beneficiaries shall ensure that during the implementation shall take into consideration national and EU policies related to environmental management and they would be included in all materials/project outputs that may occur.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0.5 million
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7. SUSTAINABILITY

The short-term assistance activities supported through this Facility will produce results on the short run since all relevant structures are in place and the support provided would increase the capacities to meet the challenges ahead of the administration. Financial sustainability will be ensured with the final beneficiary co-financing and additional budget allocations to support the planned increase of institutional and human capacities in order to implement IPA II Programmes.

As indicated in article 18 of the European Commission Regulation (EC) No. 236/2014 of 11 March 2014 laying down the Common rules and procedures for Implementing the Union External action Instruments and in order to enhance partner countries' ownership of their development processes and the sustainability of external aid, and in line with international aid effectiveness commitments entered into by the Union and partner countries, the Union should promote, where appropriate in light of the nature of the action concerned, the use of partner countries' own institutions, systems and procedures.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line EU Communication and Visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by DG NEAR and the EU Delegations in the field. The European Commission and the EU Delegations should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.