



ANNEX 1

to Commission Implementing Decision on the ENI East Regional Action Programme 2017 Part 2 (including two actions on budget 2018 and two actions on budget 2018 & 2019), to be financed from the general budget of the European Union

Action Document for the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility 2017 – Regional Actions

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants in the sense of Article 128(1) of the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012) in sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 concerning grants awarded directly without a call for proposals.

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	<u>Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility 2017 – Regional Actions</u> CRIS number: ENI / 2017 / 040-594 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) and the Russia Federation The action shall be carried out at the following location: Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and the Russian Federation
3. Programming document	Regional East Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2017 – 2020
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Civil Society, Good Governance, Public Participation, Strategic Communication
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 8 315 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 8 000 000 This action is co-financed by potential grant beneficiaries for an indicative amount of EUR 315 000
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management: grants (direct award) and procurement of services

7. DAC code(s)	15150 – Democratic participation and civil society			
8. Markers (from CRIS 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"/>
	9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/A		
10. SDGs	Secondary SDG Goal(s) on the basis of section 4.1			

SUMMARY

The European Union has committed to move from financing to supporting civil society in Eastern Partnership countries. That commitment is reflected in the deliverables associated to the Eastern Partnership agenda. While substantial civil society support packages aiming to diversify and expand outreach to various civil society actors are being implemented and rolled out in each of the countries, the regional component of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility 2017 – hereby presented – aims to underpin existing support. The action proposes a series of instruments relevant across countries or regionally, that together with ongoing instruments, are meant to increase the impact of civil society advocacy on policy development and bring more recognition to the added value of civil society work.

The logic of the intervention follows two streams – on the one hand, increasing the impact of policy advocacy on sector governance issues prioritised during the 2015 Riga Eastern Partnership Summit, on the other hand, creating the premises for higher trust in civil society work across the region.

In relation to the first stream, the action will fund:

1. Support to the Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (aiming towards improvements that would help it become an ever more effective channel of advocacy for civil society organisations);
2. A pilot project aimed at supporting innovation in strategic communication across the Eastern Partnership and Russia;
3. A "Rapid Response Mechanism" to enable fast reaction to changes in the policy debate and/or political landscape.

In relation to the second stream, the action will fund:

4. A qualitative monitoring mechanism on civil society work.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Regional context and thematic area

Disbelief that pluralistic debate is a crucial element of democracy left room for vilifying political dissent across the Eastern Partnership. According to the World Values Survey¹ on average more than half of the respondents surveyed in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova² and Ukraine between 2006 and 2014 believed that a strong leader who does not have to go through election cycles and Parliaments is a good thing. Only 30% agreed with this statement in Azerbaijan. While this opinion can be a consequence of transition fatigue, it also laid fertile ground for civil society groups critical to the government to be portrayed as enemies of the state and their work to be heavily politicised, despite transition from civic activism to seeking political office being exceptional.

A combination of societal pressure and government regulation qualifies the EU's Eastern Neighbours at the top of the most innovative and effective sources for mechanisms of civil society constraint worldwide. Within a comprehensive list of possible restrictions on exercising freedom of association and assembly, Eastern Partnership countries have at work an extensive array of mechanisms³. Those that are government enforced include restrictions on foreign funding (or its stigmatisation), restrictions on donation collection, criminalisation of civil society activities and association of offenses with disproportionate punishments. Complementary, societal pushback against the liberal values which progressive non-governmental organisations are associated with is intended to erode credibility of civil society work. While the Orthodox Church enjoys a high level of credibility, as the most trusted civil society organisation (CSO) in 5 out of the 6 Eastern Partnership⁴, overall trust in CSOs and their agendas has been decreasing over time⁵. Although cross-country comparable data is not available, reconciliation of various polling sources (wherever possible) in Eastern Partnership countries tends to indicate an association between the level of trust in work of civil society

¹ World Values Survey Wave 6 2010-2014 Official Aggregate v.20150418. World Values Survey Association (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). Aggregate File Producer: Asep/JDS, Madrid, Spain.

² Hereinafter referred to as Moldova.

³ 'Civil Society Space and the United National Human Rights System. A practical Guide for Civil Society', 2014, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/CivilSociety/CS_space_UNHRSystem_Guide.pdf.

⁴ Public opinion in all 5 Orthodox EaP countries seems to be highly supportive of providing public funding for Churches: Georgia – 82%, Moldova – 68%, Armenia – 62%, Belarus – 44%, Ukraine – 38%. 'Religious Believe and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe'. Pew Research, 2017. See page 102 <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/05/15120244/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf>.

⁵ Survey data shows in Georgia a decrease from 41% in 2007 to 20% in 2011 (http://www.ipseng.techtone.info/files/6213/6724/4357/SUMBADZE_-_Book.pdf), 'The Caucasus Barometer' 2015 USAID CSO Sustainability Index, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/Europe_Eurasia_CSOSIRreport_2015_Update8-29-16.pdf.

and the extent to which the general public perceives CSOs as directly addressing citizen needs⁶.

Providing tangible results for citizens is at the core of the priorities agreed between leaders of EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries in Riga in 2015. The Eastern Partnership Summit Declaration commits parties to maximise impact of their cooperation for citizen benefit under each of the four priorities agreed in Riga. In order for this to be achieved, the new and further focused EaP framework pursues intensified policy dialogue with CSOs, as well as a tailor-made approach to its needs in terms of capacity development⁷.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

Civil society engagement is key to the achievement of the objectives of the Neighbourhood Policy. The Revised EU Neighbourhood Policy⁸ of 2015 commits to a higher diversification of the range of civil society actors which the EU engages with. Following up on the previous 2011 Review⁹, through which the European Commission was recognising for the first time the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum as the entity to channel structured dialogue with civil society in the Eastern Neighbourhood, the 2015 Review commits to an ever stronger support to the Forum. As a reflection of these commitments, the 'Eastern Partnership – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables' Staff Working Document¹⁰ aims not only at civil society engagement in all priority sectors of cooperation between the EU and partner countries, but also sets targets for the outreach of the capacity development programmes in partner countries and the quality and inclusiveness of the dialogue with the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and its National Platforms. As expressed in these documents, the EU seeks meaningful engagement with relevant civil society equally on all Riga priorities.

EU's commitment to support civil society is global. Support to the development of capacities of CSOs, engagement in policy dialogue and protection of participation space are the three areas towards which the European Commission has committed its work through the 2012 Communication 'Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations'¹¹. The 2012 Communication brought the recognition – shared unanimously by EU Member States – that CSOs are governance actors in their own right. They should therefore receive an opportunity to become equal partners in EU assistance to partner governments. Since 2012, the EU has repeatedly re-instated its commitment through a series of policies that have externalities on civil society policy. The EU Global Strategy and the Gender Action Plans in particular, have generated both expectations and opportunities for civil society engagement.

⁶ 2016 Survey data from the Public Attitudes Survey in Georgia indicates that 24% of Georgian respondents believe that NGOs address issues of their concerns.

⁷ 'Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key priorities and deliverables', Joint Staff Working Document, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near-eeas_joint_swd_2016467_0.pdf.

⁸ 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy', Joint Communication, JOIN(2015) 50 final, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf.

⁹ 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood', Joint Communication COM(2011) 303, 2011, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/review_en.pdf.

¹⁰ SWD(2016)467 of 15.12.2016.

¹¹ COM(2012)492, 12.09.2012
<https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2012-communication-roots-of-democracy-and-sustainable-development.pdf>.

A less significant, but important part of EU's policy when it comes to civil society support is reflected in its reactions to a number of crises that the Eastern Neighbourhood has been facing since 2014. The fast pace of change in the political environment in the EU's East Neighbourhood brought a need to re-define the narrative surrounding civil society engagement. It has also demanded from CSOs in the region to become better communicators of their work and advocacy agendas. A number of political commitments came as a response to the 2014 crisis in Ukraine, political changes in Moldova throughout 2015, the possible opening to engage more in Belarus, and shrinking space in Azerbaijan. EU response to the crisis situations is an integral part of the standing policy on civil society engagement. This part of 'living policy' requires accurate and timely input from CSOs, that need to have the capacity to adequately and appropriately communicate their results.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

Based on data collected between 2014 and 2016, a number of cross-country issues stand out in relation to the quality of policy dialogue between governments and civil society, across countries and regionally. Across EaP countries, CSOs seem to develop technical expertise in selected sectors, while their impact on national policy debate is limited. In relation to technical expertise, active CSOs in the Eastern Partnership concentrate their areas of activity primarily around social service provision, community involvement and advocacy on human rights and democracy. To a lesser extent, active CSOs identify economic development and environment protection as sectors in which they engage¹². There is also a higher likelihood that CSOs will be able to provide more input to government policies on areas in which they are active.

The advocacy impact on shaping policy seems to be very small, even in areas where CSOs do have significant technical expertise (first category of sectors listed above), and almost none where CSOs still have some expertise (second category of sectors listed above). In Armenia, a media monitoring report from 2015¹³ indicated that an average of 11% of references to top public policy issues on national state television covered contributions of civil society. Survey data available in Belarus (2015) show that only 10% of central government officials see some impact of CSO work on policy development in the area of social work while they report none in policy areas such as environment or healthcare. In Ukraine, a survey among CSOs indicates that no more than 3.4% believed to have an impact on central level policy-making, while around 10% seem to believe they are able to influence local decisions¹⁴. In Georgia, 12.8% of CSOs would be able to declare some impact on policy making, while the majority would not be able to identify the impact of their work, if any¹⁵. In Moldova, CSO respondents in a 2014 survey seemed to be more positive, at least half of them indicating that to a certain extent their work has an impact on either local or national policy¹⁶.

At regional level, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is the entity that should provide CSOs across the region a vehicle to push their agenda onto the regional debates in the

¹² Mapping studies produced by 'Civil Society Dialogue for progress', published under 'Research' page.

¹³ <http://www.civilsociety.am/resources/strongsco//pubs/7e824bff6af09cdc3d1626e4068de25d.pdf>.

¹⁴ http://www.csdialogue.eu/sites/default/files/mapping_ukraine_1-3_0.pdf, p. 23.

¹⁵ http://www.csdialogue.eu/sites/default/files/mapping_study_of_engagement_in_policy_in_georgia.pdf.

¹⁶ http://www.csdialogue.eu/sites/default/files/mapping_md_idis.pdf.

framework of the Eastern Partnership. A 2015 evaluation of the Forum commissioned by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) indicated that while striving to achieve maturity, the Forum would need to put more effort into becoming an international advocacy player. This largely refers to the advocacy strategy of the Forum, which – as per the recommendations of that evaluation – should go beyond engagement with the European Union, and significantly strengthen its national policy engagement. In addition, looking at the distribution of thematic working groups in the structure of the Forum¹⁷, there is a noticeable difference between the number of organisations working on democracy and human rights, and the rest of the sectors. The Rules of Procedure that guide the selection of Forum participants are perpetuating this discrepancy, making it difficult for organisations from less populous sectors to compete for spots in the Annual Assembly. While the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is a critical actor in regional policy dialogue with civil society, these are some of the issues that undermine its credibility and increased appeal for other organisations to see it as a vehicle of promoting their agendas.

Eastern Partnership governments continue to declare their commitment to engage with civil society in policymaking, with discrepancies in the implementation of these commitments. Generally, associated countries – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine - tend to have a more favourable environment for public participation in decision making and policy dialogue, as compared to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus – where civil society activities have either grown to be increasingly more difficult or have remained as difficult as they were. Latest developments in Ukraine and Moldova tend to indicate that the enabling environment presumably secured by governments in these countries is still fragile.

All major civil society donors are present in the region, including implementing agencies of EU Member States. The past years have seen some fluctuations in the level and type of their involvement, that have had an impact also on the demand for civil society support from the European Union – namely that EU support should be better adjusted to the needs of newer civil society actors, that it should be mobilised faster and be more aligned to local agendas, much rather than EU priorities.

Non-governmental organisations (including international ones) with a capacity-building and advocacy mandate are an integral part of the donor landscape. This group includes private foundations or CSOs that have a core mandate development of civil society, democracy advancement and human rights protection in the Eastern Neighbourhood. The European Endowment for Democracy, as one of the organisations that works closest with the EU on these topics, is part of this category, along with organisations such as the Prague Civil Society Centre, the Open Society Foundations, East Europe Foundations or private funds (e.g. Black Sea Trust or Polish Solidarity).

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

The deliverables linked to the four areas of priority cooperation agreed during the 2015 Riga summit assume a high level of participation of civil society. This is reflected in the sector-specific deliverables of the 'Eastern Partnership 20 Deliverables for 2020' Staff Working

¹⁷ Looking at sector distribution of types of organisations across thematic working groups.

Document. However, as presented in the analysis of the civil society regional landscape, impact of civil society on policy making and implementation is hindered by either external factors (government restrictions and negative public opinion on civil society work) or by factors linked to the nature of CSOs and their work - namely, lack of technical expertise, lack of CSOs able or willing to conduct advocacy work on certain sectors, lack of appropriate advocacy tools, including innovative communication tools, and limited access to channels of advocacy within the Eastern Partnership.

Negative public opinion on the work that CSOs conduct. The 2015 CSO Sustainability Index¹⁸ indicated that although the public image of CSOs in EaP countries has been slightly improving in four out of the six EaP countries, with the exception of Ukraine (where perception of CSO work is generally positive), public across the region perceived mostly negatively the work of CSOs. Across the region (looking at average numbers) the public opinion has grown to be more negative towards civil society work.

EURASIA: Russia, West NIS, and Caucasus																			
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	N/R	5.5	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9
Azerbaijan	N/R	6.5	6.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	5.0	5.7
Belarus	N/R	N/R	N/R	6.0	5.5	5.2	5.6	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.7
Georgia	N/R	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.4	4.4	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.8
Moldova	N/R	N/R	N/R	5.0	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Russia	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	5.0
Ukraine	4.0	3.9	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.4	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3
Average	4.0	4.4	4.8	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5

Table 1. 2015 USAID CSO Sustainability Index, Scores on public image of CSOs in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia, over the years. Lower scores indicate a more positive image of CSOs.

Although EU support to civil society has been less the target of smear campaigns up until 2014, the association between the negative image of CSOs and EU support geared by a more determined agenda to engage with civil society at all levels, has picked up since the crisis in Ukraine. Improving the quality of monitoring and evaluation systems can:

- 1/ generate evidence on the impact that EU-supported civil society work has on the ground and what benefits it brings for citizens (*see section 1.1. – evidence shows that a positive image of CSO work is linked to the perceived benefits for the society*)
- 2/ provide evidence for better communication of CSO work (by CSOs themselves) and
- 3/ build a more accurate image of the level of transparency of civil society work
- 4/ stimulate the set up of self-regulated accountability mechanism within the civil society.

To conclude, **building the credibility and accountability of CSOs work will be one of the priorities of this action.**

Low impact of civil society advocacy on policy change. To complement the data presented in the previous sections in this fiche, the advocacy sustainability scores in the 2015 CSO Sustainability Index¹⁹ (translated as the capacity of CSOs to react to the public agenda), confirms the decrease in the likelihood that impact of CSO advocacy on policy would have long term effects (with the regional outlier being Ukraine).

¹⁸ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/Europe_Eurasia_CSOSIRreport_2015_Update8-29-16.pdf.

¹⁹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/Europe_Eurasia_CSOSIRreport_2015_Update8-29-16.pdf.

EURASIA: Russia, West NIS, and Caucasus																			
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	N/R	6.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.2	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2
Azerbaijan	N/R	6.5	6.0	5.5	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.8	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.7	5.4	5.9
Belarus	N/R	N/R	N/R	6.0	5.5	5.4	5.7	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.4
Georgia	N/R	4.0	3.5	2.0	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.9
Moldova	N/R	N/R	N/R	5.0	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3
Russia	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.5	4.9	4.2	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.6
Ukraine	4.0	4.4	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.1
Average	3.5	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1

Table 2. 2015 USAID CSO Sustainability Index. Scores on sustainability of advocacy of CSOs in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia, over the years. Lower scores indicate a higher sustainability of advocacy work.

One additional element relevant for understanding these issues (built also on evidence presented earlier in the document), is the discrepancy between the perceived impact of advocacy work – by both civil society and civil servants – across governance sectors. Namely CSOs seem to have some impact on development of social policies or those related to governance in general, but to a less extent on culture, while sectors such as energy and transport are not even mapped separately as being covered by civil society engagement. Cross-referencing this sector distribution with the Riga priorities and the EU's ambitions to work closer with civil society on all areas, it can be concluded that support needs to be channeled into formalising a critical mass of CSOs that are able to engage with the government on sector governance issues. **Equipping CSOs with the tools they need in order to increase the impact of their advocacy work within sectors relevant for the Riga priorities is a priority of this action.**

Linked to the latter, this action will pursue **three sub-priorities**, each made to address the pitfalls of CSO advocacy work, and thus increase impact. First, acknowledging the fast pace of the changes on the policy agenda in the Eastern Neighbourhood, increase their reaction capacity to these changes. Second, increase the technical capacity of CSOs to improve their communication and work on strategic communication issues in the region. Third, support the activities of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum as a vehicle for local CSOs to escalate advocacy work at regional work, within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Deteriorating security situations	M	Continue to monitor the situation in areas with frozen or ongoing conflicts
Environment for public participation significantly deteriorates in EaP countries	M	Engage in dialogue with the government, case by case
Recipients of financial support to third parties receive extensive pressure	L	The EU is making available an extensive array of mechanisms to support human rights defenders and protect the rights of human rights workers (at risk or not). These instruments can be activated as a

		mitigating measure
Assumptions		
Possible restrictions to civil society work in EaP countries will still allow for some sort of financial support from foreign donors.		
Governance structures of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum willing to push for reform		
The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum continues to position itself as the main civil society body to channel dialogue between decision makers and CSOs in the context of the Eastern Partnership structures; the Forum mirrors the new architecture of the Eastern Partnership		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

The implementation of higher amounts of targeted civil society support in the Neighbourhood East, combined with the new policy to diversify the range of actors the EU engages with (and appropriate methods to do so), have rendered a number of lessons learnt. Here are those that laid the ground the design of the 2017 Regional Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility.

The lack of capacity of CSOs to engage in meaningful policy dialogue with the government is not un-surmountable. The regional technical assistance 'Civil Society. Dialogue for progress' (2011 – 2016) has produced a significant amount of data regarding the needs of CSOs, their profile and technical expertise already gained (mapping studies component). The multi-stakeholder dialogue component has shown that even in the most unwelcoming environments, dialogue with government that leads to policy change can be successfully carried out when other conditions – such as extensive technical expertise – are met.

With the increased outreach policy of the EU, more and more EU Delegations and regional projects implemented for and/or through CSOs have a financial support to third parties component (for example sub-granting). Sometimes 'financial support to third parties' is the main purpose of the action. The experience so far has shown that financial support to third parties allows reaching out to CSOs that are not able to directly apply for EU grants. In anticipation of use of financial support to third parties becoming the norm, a qualitative monitoring system needs to be foreseen, with checks in place that would prevent possible doubts on the accountable use of financial support to third parties. Evidence will also need to be collected on the effectiveness of this policy against its set objectives. Ability to capture successes and create synergies between actions to support the successful actors that emerge from small scale support is also much needed to avoid fragmentation of support.

The political developments in the past 3 years in the Eastern Neighbourhood showed that CSOs need to be enabled to react rapidly to changes, including in relation to advocacy work carried out in the context of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. Two elements of their ability to react are also the access to appropriate communication tools and professional communication skills. One of the projects supported by the regional component of the EaP Civil Society Facility 2015 – 'Monitoring progress, empowering action' – has incorporated a mechanism of early warning, in this particular case, on sudden restrictions on civil society space. A mechanism would be needed to make available small amounts of money for policy-

oriented CSOs to react to sudden shifts in the policy agenda and enable them to contribute effectively to public debates, in all policy areas, in particular those identified in Riga.

EU's policy towards the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum has enabled an image of the Forum as a structure that was set up to engage with the EU and the EU alone. A 2015 evaluation of the Forum and its platforms has shown that the Forum has reached a level of institutionalisation that would make it a unique model in the world in terms of regional civil society self-governance. At the same time, it has identified issues related to its inclusiveness (and thus its relevance on the long run) lack of policy-driven national strategies and action for the working groups as well as with the recognition, role and visibility that the EaP National Platforms have found for themselves at national level. This action will pursue measures to help the Forum pursue change that would address these issues.

Last but not least, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility will be covered by an EU strategic evaluation scheduled for 2018. It is expected that the result of this evaluation will feed into the development of Result 4 – the set-up of the monitoring and evaluation system for ongoing civil society projects.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

Bilateral components of the Civil Society Facility East (European Neighbourhood Instrument) in all EaP countries are the main source of civil society support. They are complemented by use of country allocations foreseen under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Civil Society Organisations (Development and Cooperation Instrument) programmes. The measures proposed in this action are meant to complement ongoing bilateral support as well as underpin implementation and development of future support.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is currently funded from the regional component of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. Funding to the Secretariat of the Forum covers 90% of the cost of the activities of the Forum, including some small regional activities conducted by Eastern Partnership National Platforms. Funding to national activities of the National Platforms is not equally distributed in all countries. The platforms in Georgia and Armenia receive some funding for operations and small activities. The support comes from bilateral financial allocations. Services are currently made available for the platform in Moldova based on its needs, while the Ukrainian platform receives significant support for the next 3 years. Discussions are being carried out for support to activities to be conducted by the Belarusian National Platform.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility technical assistance makes available a range of services for civil society support, targeted generally civil society actors, as well as specifically at better engagement with strategic civil society partners of the EU.

Regular coordination exchanges are carried out with USAID, which is the other major donor in the region for regional programmes. In addition, close coordination is maintained with infrastructure NGOs providing support in the region. Input from their donor coordination meetings at regional level was duly considered in identifying the actions proposed here.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

Issues related to gender, transport, energy, environment and culture are considered to be cross-cutting. The content of the dialogue that will be carried out by CSOs at national and regional level will have to be geared towards reaching impact on each of these areas.

Namely, results 1 – 3 have specific sub-components on gender and environment issues, while – as explained in section 1 – all components are directly linked to enabling participation of citizens to public life. The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum will be supported to achieve gender balanced representation. Topics covered by the Forum at regional level include environment, energy and public administration reform. The biggest working group is on human rights and democracy issues. All working groups will be enabled to better perform their work as a result of this support and supported to foster increased technical capacity of CSOs working in their sectors.

The "Rapid Response Mechanism" (Result 3) is meant to make available support on multiple areas, including gender and environment issues, as well as enable a fast reaction in case of sudden closure on space to exercise certain categories of rights.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

The overall objective of the Regional East Civil Society Facility 2017 is to support increased technical expertise and credibility of CSOs across the EaP.

As a goal, it is expected that CSOs across the Eastern Partnership will be enabled to bring a more meaningful contribution to the achievement of the Eastern Partnership 20 deliverables.

The action will pursue two specific objectives:

SO1: To increase impact on policy change of civil society-led advocacy in sectors covered by the Riga priorities.

Result 1: A strengthened Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Result 1.1: An increased membership of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

Result 1.2: Balanced membership across sectors of activity in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum; equal representation of men and women to the Annual Assembly of the Civil Society Forum, meaningful representation of CSOs dealing with gender issues at the Civil Society Forum.

Result 1.3: The reform strategy of the Forum is developed and implementation starts.

Result 1.4: The outreach strategy of the Forum is developed and put in place.

Result 1.5: National Platforms have developed concrete policy priorities and/or action/work plans for each of the Platform's policy engagement.

Result 1.6: EU civil society participation is increased.

Result 1.7: Increased technical capacity of CSOs to engage in dialogue on sector governance issues covered by the Riga priorities.

Result 2: Pilot project on increased capacity of CSOs to engage in regional strategic communication

A critical mass of organisations and/or citizens groups that have (increased) technical capacity to engage in strategic communication across the region, employing innovative civic engagement IT tools.

Result 3: A "Rapid Response Mechanism" to sudden policy changes is established.

This is meant to enable CSOs to contribute effectively and timely to national debates.

SO2: To increase credibility and accountability of CSO-led work.

Substantial evidence on the impact that civil society support in the Neighbourhood East has had on promoting national reforms and providing tangible benefits for citizens in EaP countries. Higher accountability of CSOs to deliver on their mandate and as a result of project funding is expected to deliver greater trust and credibility of work carried out by CSOs.

Result 4: A qualitative monitoring and evaluation system of EU-funded civil society projects is set up.

4.2 Main activities

Activity cluster 1 (linked to Results 1.1 – 1.4)

A1.1. Organise the Annual Assemblies of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in a revised format, possibly using long-distance live engagement IT applications (R1.1. and 1.2).

A1.2. Provide gap support for operations of the EaP National Platforms (competitive) (R 1.3 and 1.5).

A 1.3. Provide support to regional projects elaborated and implemented by Working Groups of the Forum, including those aiming at increased technical capacities of CSOs working on Riga relevant governance sectors (R1.1 and R 1.7).

A1.4. Set up an Early Warning and Resilience Mechanism to enable fast reaction of thematic working groups of the Forum to elaborate joint positions/ reactions/ recommendations (R1.2).

A 1.5. Elaborate a new organisation development strategy, covering the period at least until 2018 and carry out its implementation (R 1.3).

A 1.6. Revise the advocacy and communication strategies of the Forum to reflect the need to expand outreach to other organisations, donors and international actors (R 1.4).

A 1.7. Elaborate and publish the Eastern Partnership Integration Index (R 1.1. – 1.2).

A 1.8. Grant prizes to selected civil society advocates for their record in advocacy and monitoring work in the region.

Activity cluster 2 (linked to Result 2)

A 2.1. Identify the main needs of CSOs and emerging non-political civic actors in terms of capacity for strategic communication.

A 2.2. Conduct civic innovation workshops together with worldwide specialists in sector governance (health, energy, transport, environment, IT and digitalisation etc.).

A 2.3. Make available financial support for the implementation of the most innovative strategic communication tools.

A 2.4. Conduct capacity development activities to help civil society organisations become better communicators of their work.

A 2.5. Provide step-by-step support in the implementation of the funding, couple with oversight of the organisation's own development strategy and ambitions.

Activity cluster 3 (linked to Result 3)

A 3.1. Support the elaboration of at least 30 policy briefs

A 3.2. Support the organisation of policy roundtables, small projects, visits or advocacy campaigns on niche policy issues relevant to cooperation within the Eastern Partnership

A 3.3. Support ad-hoc policy advocacy and monitoring, based on evolving policy priorities in the EaP countries

A 3.4. Other activities that may enable CSOs to better respond to sudden policy shifts
Support will be given in the form of small grants, of up to 60 000 EUR.

Activity cluster 4 (linked to Result 4)

A 4.1. Set up a registry of ongoing and upcoming EU projects implemented to the benefit and/ or through CSOs.

A 4.2. Develop appropriate qualitative monitoring indicators for projects implemented through CSOs.

A 4.3. Screen narrative reports of ongoing civil society projects and cross-check the reliability of the reporting.

A 4.4. Report any discrepancies between reporting and ground situation to responsible EU project managers.

A 4.5. Elaborate regular reports and strategic communications materials on the positive impact of CSOs on citizen wellbeing.

A 4.6. Identify best practices in outreach of CSOs to citizens/ visibility.

A 4.7. Liaise and ensure synergy with other EU funded projects that may benefit from the outputs of this project

4.3 Intervention logic

The activities proposed are meant to altogether increase the impact of civil society advocacy on policy making, with a particular focus on dialogue on sectors covered by the Riga priorities. Available data on the structure and activity of CSOs in Eastern Partnership countries indicates that a combination of unfavourable environments, low technical capacity and lack of appropriate advocacy tools undermine CSOs in reaching their advocacy objectives. This action is set out to address these three dimensions (while legal environment as provided by the states where CSOs are active will be controlled for).

Activity clusters 1 through 3 are meant to enable a better quality of advocacy on sector governance issues linked to Riga priorities. The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum has been operating since 2009, and has been assertively establishing itself as a channel of advocacy for organisations in the region. Activities proposed under cluster 1 are meant to support the Forum step up its level of recognition in the region and beyond, and enable it to become a better channel for advocacy, to the benefit of its members. Activity 2 is meant to help organisations and civic actors become better communicators of their work, while taking advantage of cutting edge technology innovations and their applications in the civic space. It is expected this action will also allow organisations to be more innovative when it comes to their practices on policy advocacy and fundraising. Under activity cluster 3 small grants will be made available to CSOs who justify the need to immediately react to a sudden policy change. It is expected – as a positive externality – that the capacity of the EU to adapt to changing political situations affecting civil society in the region will also increase with this component.

As explained in the problem analysis section, one of the reasons why advocacy has a low impact has to do with the lack of trust in CSO work. Evidence earlier provided also showed that there is an association between trust in CSO and a public perception that their work responds to citizen needs. Therefore, this action proposes activities (cluster 4) that are meant to make available evidence that will bring out the link between the two. The monitoring mechanism for projects implemented by civil society will be mobilised for new and ongoing projects, in order to feed possible readjustments of specific interventions to new realities on the ground.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Action Document.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

5.4 Implementation modalities

Both in indirect and direct management, the Commission will ensure that EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures affecting the respective countries of operation.

5.4.1. Grants: direct award to the Prague Civil Society Centre for the pilot project: 'Civic innovation for strategic communication in the EaP and Russia' (direct management)

(a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The main objective of the action will be financial support to third parties, in the form of a combination of operating support and project funding, in line with the activities corresponding to cluster 2 (linked to Result 2). The project will support CSOs and selected non-political civic actors to become better communicators through innovation guidance, capacity development and mentoring on implementation of IT tools for strategic communication.

Based on the Prague Civil Society Centre's experience on technological applications to civic engagement, the expected result is the creation of a critical mass of organisations and/or citizens groups that have (increased) technical capacity to engage in strategic communication across the region, employing innovative civic engagement IT tools.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Article 190(1) (f) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 authorises that grants be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. On this basis and under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to a specialised entity having relevant specific experience and capacities in the fields of intervention. For the reasons detailed below, the Prague Civil Society Centre has been identified as the most suitable entity.

The Prague Civil Society Centre was set-up in 2015 to respond to specific needs faced by emerging civic actors in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In the past 2 years the Prague Civil Society Centre has established itself as the leader in technological applications on civic innovation. It is currently the main source of capacity development and innovation for civil society organisations and citizen groups in Eastern Europe and Central Asia when it comes to linking innovative IT and technological solutions to public monitoring and accountability, as well as running advocacy campaigns.

Across the Eastern Partnership and Russia technological applications to civic engagement are growing in importance, impact and relevance. The new generation of civil society and civically minded technological leaders are experimenting with technology and devising creative ways to reach wider society and spread their message. They are redefining the type of engagement driving positive change throughout society. They are engaging with groups from different countries, along with professionals, experts and academics from different fields to gather the best ideas and projects from across the world and learn how to tailor them for a new environment and community.

The programmes initiated by the Prague Civil Society Centre place at their centre to help civic actors become better communicators and develop the skills they need to communicate strategically. A critical element of this is forging connections to continue this innovation and experimentation. The Prague Civil Society Centre has already gained extensive recognition

from civil society on leadership in the field of creative communication and constituency-building that is vital to build sustainable, robust and vibrant civil societies.

The Prague Civil Society Centre was therefore identified as the recipient of this grant based on its technical expertise on civic and technological innovation applied to strategic communication.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call: design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is up to 95%.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

Trimester 1 of 2018

5.4.2. Grant: direct award 'Support to the Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum II' (direct management)

(a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

This grant pursues increased impact on policy change of civil society-led advocacy in sectors covered by the Riga priorities, by transforming the Civil Society Forum into an enhanced channel of advocacy at regional level across the Eastern Partnership.

The expected results of this grant are:

- Result 1.1: An increased membership of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.
- Result 1.2: Balanced membership across sectors of activity in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum; equal representation of men and women to the Annual Assembly of the Civil Society Forum, meaningful representation of CSOs dealing with gender issues at the Civil Society Forum.
- Result 1.3: The reform strategy of the Forum is developed and implementation starts.
- Result 1.4: The outreach strategy of the Forum is developed and put in place.
- Result 1.5: National Platforms have developed concrete policy priorities and/or action/work plans for each of the Platform's policy engagement.
- Result 1.6: EU civil society participation is increased.
- Result 1.7: Increased technical capacity of CSOs to engage in dialogue on sector governance issues covered by the Riga priorities.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Article 190(1) (f) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 authorises that grants be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. On this basis and under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to a specialised entity having relevant specific experience and capacities in the fields of intervention. For the reasons detailed below, Forum has been identified as the most suitable entity.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is a self-organised body of civil society from the six EaP countries and the EU. Its main objective is to engage in structured dialogue with the EU on issues related to policies carried out at regional level. It has been operational since 2009, and received EU funding since 2011 to carry out regional dialogue. Eastern Partnership National Platforms engage in national level policy dialogue in each of the EaP countries, however their level of funding – from the EU and other donors – has been inconsistent.

The Civil Society Forum (with its regional setup and National Platforms) has a unique role in the region and in relation to the EU. It presents a self-styled governance model that is also unique in the world in terms of regional platforms of civil society. At the same time, the Forum needs continuous support to develop its strategic vision and streamline its organisational processes. Since its organisation mirrors to a large extent the areas of engagement of the EaP, the Forum will need support in reflecting the changes in the EaP into its own structure. The policy dialogue process between the EU and the Forum is ongoing. Support is channelled through other tools for the Forum to start developing its own theory of change strategy, under the leadership of its elected Steering Committee. This grant will build on these efforts and support the roll-out of this reform strategy, aiming at strengthening the role of National Platforms in the regional Forum, creating stronger links with EU based organisations, raising the ambitions of the Forum's advocacy to international policy levels and fostering inclusiveness and openness.

The Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is the organisation that was set up to ensure technical and administrative support for the functioning of the Forum. This organisation will receive and administer this grant.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call: design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is up to 95%.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

Trimester 1 of 2018

5.4.3. Grant: direct awards 'Eastern Partnership Rapid Response Mechanism' (direct management)

(a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The **overarching objective** is to increase the reaction capacity of CSOs to participate in partner countries' policy debates on critical governance issues (see Activity cluster 3).

The political developments in the last years in the Eastern Neighbourhood showed that CSOs need to be enabled to react rapidly to unexpected changes, including sudden restrictions on civil society space. In order to respond to these threats to civil society, it is necessary for the EU to set-up a reactive mechanism allowing to make rapidly available reasonable support in the form of grants for policy-oriented CSOs to react to sudden shifts in the policy agenda and enable them to contribute effectively to public debates, in all policy areas, in particular those identified in Riga. This is the purpose of this "rapid response mechanism" that will allow to swiftly provide on an ad hoc basis a support to CSOs through the direct award of grants of little to medium size in terms of EU funding. It is expected that a maximum of 20 grants would be awarded under the "rapid response mechanism".

(a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The overarching objective is to increase the reaction capacity of CSOs to participate in partner countries' policy debates on critical governance issues. This is meant to enable Activity cluster 3.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the authorising officer by delegation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals to CSOs in order to respond to immediate and isolated needs arising from sudden changes in their environment as described above. The recourse to such an award is subject to fulfilling the conditions defined in Article 190 of Commission Delegation Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 and must be in line with the achievement of the objectives of the present action. Such award will be considered on a case-by-case basis in the light of these requirements.

It is expected that priority will be given to organisations that demonstrate to have a proven track record of engaging in dialogue with the government or extensive advocacy on a particular governance issue, ad-hoc coalitions of CSOs (or particular extensions of advocacy work conducted by established coalitions, networks and platforms), CSOs having proven citizen support for a particular advocacy idea and public policy think tanks based either in the European Union or in one of the Eastern Partnership countries, with a track record on policy work aimed at EU policy in the Eastern Partnership.

The support will be focused on enabling the grant beneficiary to carry out advocacy work that would pursue a narrow policy issue, in response to a sudden change of circumstances and on topics driven by changes on either government policy agenda or public debate in a particular country in general.

(c) Eligibility conditions

The eligibility applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities are restricted to all types of CSOs. They must be legal entities registered in one of the Eastern Partnership countries, in the EU, in one of the IPA beneficiary countries or in the European Economic Area.

(d) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant. The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is **up to 100%**.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

All over 2018.

5.4.4. Procurement (direct management)

Subject	Type	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Monitoring mechanism for civil society projects	Services	1	Trimester 1 of 2018

5.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.6 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
'Increased impact of advocacy work'	6 500 000	315 000
5.3.1 - Grants: direct award to the Prague Civil Society Centre for the pilot project: 'Civic innovation for strategic communication in the EaP and Russia' (direct management)	1 500 000	75 000
5.3.2 - Grant: direct grant 'Support to the Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum II' (direct management)	4 500 000	240 000
5.3.3 - Grants: direct award for an 'Eastern Partnership Rapid Response Mechanism' (direct management)	500 000	
'Increased credibility and accountability of civil society-led work'	1500 000	NA
5.3.4 - Procurement (direct management)	1 500 000	NA
Totals	8 000 000	315 000

5.7 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

Each of the four results proposed will have its own governance structure. The monitoring and evaluation project, implemented through a service contract, will benefit from a steering committee in which civil society in the region will have dedicated seats. In the case of the civil society led grants, the European Commission will be seating in the steering committee of the pilot project on evocative grant making.

The Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum already has a steering committee. The Forum is a self-organised body of civil society and therefore the EU is not represented in this steering committee. The members of this steering committee are representatives of civil society in EaP countries and the EU, elected by members of the Forum during their Annual Assembly.

In relation to the Rapid Response Mechanism, working arrangements within the EU will be developed in order to guide the decision making process for the awards it would make available.

Periodical project steering committees will be agreed upon with the Prague Civil Society Centre. The European Commission will be a member of this steering committee.

5.8 Performance monitoring and reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action and the project resulting from the call for proposals will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners shall establish

a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

5.9 Evaluation

Having regard to the content of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components. An EU strategic evaluation of civil society support is foreseen. It will have a focus on the Neighbourhood East.

Since an evaluation is not foreseen, the Commission will, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation of certain components for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The evaluation reports may be shared with key stakeholders. The implementing partners and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of such an evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

5.10 Audit

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of any audits shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

5.11 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

The components of this action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.6 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Outreaching/awareness raising activities will play a crucial part in the implementation of the action, in the case of budget support the national government shall ensure that the visibility of the EU contribution is given appropriate media coverage. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and 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 with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) will be strictly adhered to.

Where relevant, the provisions of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement concluded between the European Union and the selected international organisations shall apply.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY) ²⁰

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action without an amendment to the financing decision. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for listing the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) when it is relevant and for reporting purpose on the achievement of results as measured by indicators.

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	To support increased technical expertise and credibility of CSOs across the EaP.	Percentage of survey CSOs declaring they believe to have a meaningful impact on policy change	30% (rough average based on country surveys) (2014 – 2015)	50% (2020)	Mapping studies on CSOs	
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	Increased impact on policy change of civil society-led advocacy in sectors covered by the Riga priorities.	Percentage of CSOs declaring their activity sector as energy or transport or security or culture	10% (2014 – 2015)	20% (2020)	Mapping studies on CSOs Other values based surveys	
	Increased credibility and accountability of CSO-led work.	Percentage of population (within statistically representative national level samples) declaring a positive opinion on CS work	18% (2011 – 2016, based on compiled data from multiple sources, counting proxy indicators)	30% (2020)	Public opinion Barometers/ surveys	
Outputs	A strengthened Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.	Percentage of new CSOs attending the Forum's Annual Assembly as compared to previous year Comparative size of regional working groups dealing with environment, energy, transport, climate, security related issues	30% (2016) 10% (foreseen for 2017)	50% (2020) 30% (2020)	Mapping studies Shadow reports Public opinion barometers Other values based surveys Reports issues by the EaP CSForum	

²⁰ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

		Number of issues raised by the Forum having had an influence at the EU level	12 (2016)	15 per year	Secretariat Statements of the CS Forum Annual Assembly Surveys	
		Number of women in the leadership positions of the Forum (SC, WG Coordinators).	5 of 9 WG Coordinators; 3 of 12 SC (2016)	Balanced between women and men		
		Increased visibility and better public perception of the Forum	32,2% increase (2016)	30% increase		
	Pilot project 'Civic innovation for strategic communication in the EaP and Russia	Number of CSOs employing technological applications for civic engagement	Less than 10% (2014 – 2015)	More than 10% (2020)	Project reports	
	A Rapid Response Mechanism to sudden policy changes.	Number of civil society work references in televised debates on top policy issues in a country at a given moment	0% (2014 – 2015)	5% (2020)		
	A qualitative monitoring system of EU-funded civil society projects is set-up/established.	Number of narrative reports surveyed	10% (proxy, 2015, based on data available in selected countries)	30% (2020)	Media monitoring reports Projects reports	
		25 best practices/ lessons learnt of EU support to civil society in the past 7 years	0 (2017)	500 (2020)	Project reports	
			Less than 10 identified (2017)	50 practices identified, and 25 qualified as the best (2020)		