EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC FOR THE PERIOD (2021-2027)¹

GENERAL INFORMATION

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PART I - BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT AND PAST EU ENGAGEMENT

A. THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY: BRIEF UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Enabling environment

Historically, civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic has been the most vibrant and active in Central Asia. There are over 600 civil society organisations that are active and many more are registered. Civil society organisations (CSOs) fall broadly into two categories: political, civil and institutional-focused organisations advocating for human rights, democratization reforms, openness and transparency of public bodies, and those focused more on social economic rights. These latter tend to be rural and regional CSOs addressing socio-economic issues of their communities or of particular social groups. The basic legal framework that currently regulates the activities of CSOs comprises the Constitution, the 2014 Law on Public Councils in the State Institutions, the Civil Code, the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations, the Law on State Registration of Legal Entities, the Tax Code and other national regulatory acts as well as international treaties acceded to by the Kyrgyz Republic.

Over the last two years, the enabling environment for civil society has remained dynamic. CSOs continue to face issues related to access to finance and legislative challenges that constrain their work. After the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, there has been a deterioration of CSO activity in the country, Civil society has faced numerous intimidation efforts by the authorities as well as by GoNGO proxies. Several events by CSOs were compromised, while civil activists were intimidated and/or harassed. 2020 saw an effort on behalf of the national Parliament to adopt controversial legislative initiatives that would go in violation of Kyrgyzstan's international commitments. Covid-19 restrictions and the year of Parliamentary elections (4 October 2020) could be considered as factors contributing to the flurry of such legislative initiatives. The draft law "On Non-Commercial Organizations", tabled in February 2020, foresaw burdensome financial reporting requirements on these groups that are incompatible with rights to freedom of association and expression. The Parliament considered the draft law in the third reading on 17 June 2021. Together with draft laws "On Manipulation of Information" and "On Trade Unions" it saw strong pushback by the active local civil society and international community alike, but was signed into law by the President on 7 July 2021.

¹ Alignment with the EU programming priorities for 2021-2027 in the Kyrgyz Republic

Unfortunately the Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies, as well as the Prosecutor-General's Office frequently put pressure on CSOs by opening groundless criminal or administrative cases against them, conducting humiliating searches etc. Often victims of such approach in the last two years were CSOs who defend freedom of expression and opinion, Freedom of Religion or Belief, LGBTI rights, minority rights to name a few. The corruption, revealed by internationally acclaimed investigative journalism, illuminated further the magnitude of corruption problem, but also prompted pressure, including intimidation and harassment, against free media and civil society.

Nevertheless, CSOs in the Kyrgyz Republic remain engaged in cross-cutting sections of public interest. CSOs play a vital role in the local development process (poverty reduction, better living standards, job creation, sustainable growth, access to basic social services, better and more inclusive education, etc), particularly in rural areas. Their participation in national development is also envisaged in national strategies. The country's National Development Strategy 2018-2040, for example, foresees a national digital transformation through the Taza Koom (Smart Society) programme, which aims to ensure the participation of citizens in decision-making processes. Thus CSOs are involved in policy dialogue relating to EU priorities such as green solutions, science, technology and innovation and digital, sustainable growth and jobs, and governance, peace and security, human development. The CSOs, including women organizations, are actively involved in the consultation on the National Strategy for the achievement of Gender Equality which is being drafted for a period of 2021 till 2030, and its Action Plan. By seeking to address the root causes of migration in the country, which tends overwhelmingly towards economic reasons, CSOs are also active in the area of migration partnerships. These synergies between CSO engagement and the EU five priorities present clear opportunities for CSO mainstreaming.

B. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PAST ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs

There is a clear participation of civil society in overseeing the Government and the Public Administration's work as well as the electoral and judiciary process, especially through the Public Councils established by a decree in 2010 and reiterated by law in May 2014. Some leading NGOs are involved in virtually all Government reform initiatives, especially with regards to the rule of law, human rights, providing greater transparency of public decision and policy making.

The EU engages in different ways with CSOs, with dialogue being one of them. Political dialogues are held regularly. The first EU-Central Asia Civil Society Forum held in Kyrgyzstan in 2019 with participation the HR/VP F.Mogherini and the EU Special Representative for Central Asia P.Burian highlighted the pivotal role of CSOs at the regional level along with the EU Strategy for Central Asia adopted in June 2019. Political developments in Kyrgyzstan as well as the COVID-19 pandemic pose particular challenges to the effective exercise and protection of human rights, especially for women and youth. This also includes labour rights, as the EU continues to prioritise decent work and respect for international labour standards. This is in line with the GSP+ regime, under which Kyrgyzstan commits to effectively implement a number of international conventions onhuman and labour rights, environmental regulations, and governance principles. Under the GSP+ scheme and its rigid monitoring mechanism, the EU engagement with the relevant CSOs have been strengthened. The mechanism also helps in keeping the authorities regularly accountable on the developments in the respective areas, including as regards the role and the government's dialogue with the civil society. The CSOs were consulted on the priorities of the Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy (2021-2024) in April 2021 based on the

EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2021-2024).

CSOs are mainstreamed through the EU sectors of cooperation and trade. Regular dialogues are held between the EU Delegation and relevant CSOs to discuss policy and programme strategies. The annual EU-Kyrgyz Republic Civil Society Seminars on the Rule of Law, Human Rights and Corruption issues and the Gender Workshop provide a high level of participation of regional CSOs, including women, media and youth organisations. This ensures participatory policymaking by enabling them to understand the policy issues, challenges and opportunities. A specific consultation was held exclusively with CSO representatives, including women and youth organisations to discuss the EU programming priorities for 2021-2027 and the CSO roadmap for engagement with the civil society. Here, CSOs welcomed the priority sectors (governance and digital transformation, human development, and green and climate resilient economy). The CSOs highlighted the importance of the MIP priority area 2 "Human development on Gender equality, youth engagement and human rights." In terms of women and youth, the EU intends to support the National Strategy for the achievement of Gender Equality 2021-2030, as well as the Youth Policy Concept of the Kyrgyz Republic 2020-2030. Contributing to empowering women, girls and young people to fully use their rights and increase their participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life is a key objective of the new Gender Action Plan 2021-2025. The EU will promote gender mainstreaming of all actions and targeted actions, also by addressing structural causes of gender inequality and gender-based discrimination. The three-year programme Spotlight Initiative will focus on the key thematic areas of engagement, including fighting against genderbased violence and promoting the economic, social and political empowerment and participation of women and girls, as well enhancing capacities of the women and CSO organisations.

Strengthening the capacity of CSOs in ensuring protection of human rights and promoting the role of CSOs as Actors of Change will be supported through the cooperation programmes, constant political dialogue and the specific complementary grant programmes. In view of the 2012 Communication on civil society and its 2017 review, the European Consensus on Development (2017), the Rights-based Approach to development (2014), Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline (2014), it will add value to the EU Toolbox to promote and uphold human rights.

Key lessons learnt from the process of implementing the previous RM.

Civil society has become an important force for educating the public about the legality and ethics of the Government and its policies, as well as about human rights in general. However, there is a growing dissatisfaction with regards to a somewhat superficial participation of civil society in the decision-making process whereby recommendations made are not necessarily taken into account.

The neighbouring countries, as well as some regional leaders put pressure on Kyrgyzstan to tougher its legislation regulating the work of the CSOs. In order to resist the local civil society activists should keep seeking support from their international partners, as well as the EU and other most advanced democratic countries. The civil society in Kyrgyzstan should remain vigilant and smoothly react to frequent legislative initiatives aiming at restricting their rights and limiting their scope of work.

In this context, the policy and political dialogues in the framework of budget support (BS) operations proved to be instrumental to pursue dialogue on reforms, strengthen country systems and contribute to sustainable results, while promoting fundamental values. Therefore, connecting BS policy and political dialogues is particularly critical, whenever it is relevant to raise points at government/presidential level to unlock a situation.

Civil Society involvement in the Joint Programming (i.e. Working Better Together) and connections/interactions between the RM and the JP process.

N/A

C. THE STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE EU COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT AND AGENDA 2030/SDG

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	RELATED SECTOR & COMMISSION PRIORITY	RELATED SDG
1 Enhance the contributions of CSOs to Governance and Digital Transformation	Justice and rule of law, governance, peace and security Public finance management Digitalisation Commission priorities: Governance, peace and security, human development Alliances for science, technology and innovation, and digital	 Gender equality (SDG 5) Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) Industry, innovation and infrastructures (SDG 9) Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)
2 Enhance contributions of the CSOs to promoting human development focusing on inclusive quality education and skills development, and promoting gender equality and youth empowerment	Human Development Commission priorities: Alliances for science, technology and innovation, and digital Governance, peace and security, human development Alliances for sustainable growth and jobs	 Education (SDG 4) Gender equality (SDG 5) Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)

3 Strengthening of civil society and	Related sector:	Gender equality (SDG 5)		
promotion of a favourable envi- ronment for its activities	Gender equality	Reduced inequalities (SDG 10)		
	Involvement of youth and CSOs	Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)		
	Commission priorities:	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global		
	 Governance, peace and security, human development 	partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17)		
4 Enhance contributions of the CSOs	Related sector:	Zero Hunger (SDG)		
to promoting Green and Climate Resilient Economy	Climate change mitigation Water	Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)		
		Affordable and Clean Energey (SDG 7)		
	 Energy 	Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)		
	Sustainable green economy	Climate action (SDG 13)		
	Commission priorities: • Green Deals	Life on land (SDG 15)		
	 Alliances for sustainable growth and jobs 			

D. THE ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
	SO 1: Promoting Rule of Law and respect of human rights	Rule of Law programmeDigitalisation Budget Support operation
1 Enhance the contributions of CSOs to Governance and Digital Transformation	a) Improved access to justice for all b) Right to a fair trial and	 Support to CSO to address digital divide through CfPs under geographic/bilateral programme
	equality before the law is ensured	 Twinning programmes on governance and digitalisation Human Rights and Democracy thematic programme

	c) Improved accountability, transparency and credibility of the justice system d) Improved efficiency and quality of justice e) Improved individual and institutional independence and impartiality of the justice system	 CSO thematic programme Human Rights Dialogue Member States cooperation
	a) More effective and transparent PFM system b) Strengthening capacity in Domestic Revenue Mobilisation c) Improved governance and anti-corruption functions SO 3: Building of effective, confident and non-discriminatory digitalisation a) Strengthened cybersecurity,	
2 Enhance contributions of the CSOs	privacy and data protection b) Increased access to public electronic services c) Reduced digital divide (e.g. gender digital divide, rural- urban digital divide)	Education Rudget Support programme
to promoting human development focusing on inclusive quality education and skills development, and promoting gender equality and youth empowerment	SO 1 - Development of inclusive and equitable quality education as well as improvement of digital, media and green skills. a) More inclusive and equitable quality education;	 Education Budget Support programme Support to CSO to address equal and inclusive quality education through CfPs under geographic/bilateral programme TA focused on Education quality improvement, equality and inclusiveness; Cooperation with Member States on Education quality improvement through Twinning;

	b) Improved digital skills, c) Improved media literacy; d) Improved green skills. SO 2- Gender equality, youth empowerment, strengthened Human Rights. a) Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, fully enjoy and exercise their equal economic, labour and social rights b) Strengthened environment for civic engagement of youth c) Increased capacity of CSOs to contribute to the development of accountable, transparent and democratic institutions, social and economic development d) Reduction in gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for women, men, girls and boys.	Gender equality, youth engagement and human rights programme Human Rights and Democracy thematic programme CSO thematic programme Human Rights Dialogue GAP Country Level Implementation Plan Spotlight programme Member states cooperation
3 Strengthening of civil society and promotion of a favourable environment for its activities.	 Strengthen environment for civic engagement of youth Increase capacity of CSOs to contribute to the development of accountable, transparent and democratic institutions, social and economic development Swift towards a more structured dialogue with CSO, including youth 	 Gender equality, youth engagement and human rights programme Human Rights and Democracy thematic programme CSO thematic programme Human rights Dialogue Annual EU-Kyrgyz Republic Civil Society Seminar Member States cooperation

	movements and organisations 4 Integrate a gender perspective in the Political, security and sectoral policy dialogues by engaging in dialogue on GEWE with governments and national gender equality mechanisms, parliaments, other key institutional actors, local authorities and CSOs (including women organisations) in the framework of EU Roadmaps for engagement with Civil Society and involving youth soundboards.	
4 Enhance contributions of the CSOs to promoting Green and Climate Resilient Economy	SO 1 – Support climate and environmental action and promote integrated water resource management a. The institutional and regulatory framework is aligned with the principles of IWRM and gender equality and the capacities of national and local water authorities have been strengthened. b. Improved drinking water security, accessibility, availability and reliability and improved access to sanitation /waste water management. c. Improved sustainable and climate resilient irrigation water supply.	 Support to Integrated Water Resource Management reforms Create opportunities for sustainable agro-bio value chains and SMEs through blending operations CSO thematic programme Member States cooperation

busine	ss and green economy		
a.	The awareness of consumers on the impact of the products they buy is improved.		
b.	Enabling frameworks for Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) are in place (i.e. ensuring coherence between economic and environment policies across relevant areas such as the business environment, finance and investments, employment).		
c.	Economic growth starts to become decoupled from environmental degradation and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are reduced.		
d.	Uptake of Sustainable Consumption and Production practices by Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises is increased.		
e.	Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, and alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy		

PART III— FOLLOW-UP OF THE RM

OBJECTIVES FOR EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	OUTCOME INDICATORS	TARGET	BASELINE INFORMATION	SOURCES OF INFORMATION & MEANS OF VERIFICATION
			(if available)	
1 Enhance the contributions of CSOs to Governance and Digital Transformation	Level of improvement in the environment for CSOs, allowing them to promote good governance and digital transformation, according to recognised international sources.	Governance Effectiveness (-0.38), Control of Corruption (-0.55), Voice and Accountability (-0.16). (2027)	Governance Effectiveness (-0.68), Control of Corruption (0.95), Voice and Accountability (-0.46) (2019)	Worldwide governance indicators https://info.worldbank.org/ governance/wgi/
	Number of initiatives funded by the EU targeting National Human Rights Institutions, law enforcement, prosecutors, courts to support legal and judicial reform.	0.61 WJP-ROLI-2027 0.36 WJP-ROLI 2027	0.60 WJP-ROLI-2020 0.35 WJP-ROLI 2020	Ministry of Justice of KR World Justice Project Rule of Law index *(WJP-ROLI) WJP-ROLI
	Capacity development initiatives supported by the EU (EUD and MS) for the engagement with CSOs enabling them to oversee the government's accountability and advocate for fair, open and democratic governance	2027: OBS score: transparency 65, public participation 40 and budget oversight 82).	2019 OBS score: transparency 63, public participation 33 and budget oversight 78;	OBS Country Score: www.internationalbudget.org
	Number of the EU initiatives aimed at strengthening the role of CSOs in ensuring protection of human rights which will prioritise activities linked to the Guidelines	Country Cybersecurity Score – 0.3., (2027)	Global Cybersecurity Survey/Country Score- 0.254, (2018)	Global Cybersecurity Survey Score: www.itu.int

	on freedom of expression online and offline (2014) and standards on data protection and privacy (GDPR).			
2 Enhance contributions of the CSOs to promoting human development	Better country score for Human Development Index (HDI), incl. Gender Inequality Index (GII), at	HDI- 0.697 GII- 0.369	HDI – 0.7 GII – 0.38	UN Human Development Reports: www.hdr.undp.org
focusing on inclusive quality education and skills development, and	the end of the EU intervention	(2019)	(2027)	Ministry of Education and Science
promoting gender equality and youth empowerment	Status of gender analysis to reduce gender stereotypes of all new teaching and learning materials (e.g. the promotion of gender equality and positive images of girls and boys, and their abilities and aspirations)	Compulsory gender expertise of all new teaching and learning materials was adopted by the Ministry of Education in 2019.	At least 80% new teaching and learning material revised following compulsory gender expertise adopted by MoES	Ministry of Education and Science Education Management Information System Gender CLIP
	Number of initiatives funded by the EU (EUD and MS) aiming at enhancing the involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue on human development from the local to the national level. Number of the EU initiatives to support CSOs actions targeted at improving the inclusion and skills development of	0, (2020)	One third of relevant education level teachers and students trained in digital skills and media literacy (gender-and urban/rural disaggregated))2026-2027)	

	marginalised children, including those left behind due to labour migration, out-of-school			
	children, young people affected by violence, disadvantaged girls, children with disabilities and others at risk of failing to benefit from education.			
	Gender mainstreaming of all actions and targeted actions and strategic engagement: GAP III implementation is informed by updated gender profile in line with the National Strategy on Gender Equality and framed in "country-level implementation plans" (CLIP) (GAP III objective 5)			
3 Strengthening of civil society and promotion of a favourable environment for its activities	Level of responsiveness of the government to the needs of CSOs when drafting/updating civil society legislation CSOs' perception on the quality	CIVICUS Monitoring Ranking- Obstructed (2021)	CIVICUS Monitoring Ranking- Open (2027)	Ministry of Justice Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) Reports of Ombudsperson
	and applicability of the legal framework regulating CSOs Level of adherence by the authorities to international	Nations in Transit Ranking Global Freedom Score – Not free 28/100 (2021)	Nations in Transit Ranking Global Freedom Score – Partly free 45/100 (2027)	CIVICUS' Enabling Environment Index - https://monitor.civicus.org/
	standards and conventions in relation to fundamental rights and freedoms of expression/assembly/association, in aspect particularly related to			The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) https://www.bti-project.org/en/index/

	Civil Society Number of initiatives, supported by the EU (EUD and MS), with a dedicated focus on contributing to an enabling environment for civil society Number of initiatives, supported by the EU (EUD and MS) aimed at a comprehensive approach to capacity building to strengthen CSO partner capacities Number of alliances/joint actions/campaigns/etc. (including through networks) in the area of human rights. Number of initiatives in the framework of EU-supported activities aiming at improving policy dialogue, sharing and disseminating knowledge to communities of experts, decision-makers and the general public in the areas of human rights and the			The USAID NGO Sustainability index https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/cso-sustainability-index-methodology ICNL report (e.g. assessing trends on NGO laws) http://www.icnl.org/ Freedom House Nations in Transit https://freedomhouse.org/country/kyrgyzstan/nations-transit/2021 SDG reports https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/ GSP+ biannual report (Staff Working Document) https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2020)20⟨=en
	rule of law.			
4 Enhance contributions of the CSOs to promoting Green and Climate Resilient Economy	Number of EU-funded initiatives (EUD and MS) aiming at enhancing CSOs' participation in climate and environmental action and promote integrated water resource management	Greenhouse Gas (GHG) 13,795 (2021)	Greenhouse Gas (GHG) -3% (2027)	World Data Bank Ministry of Agriculture
	Capacity-development initiatives funded by the EU (EUD and MS)			State Water Agency under the Ministry of

aiming at strengthening the capacity of CSOs to effectively advocate for environmental action and promoting integrated water resource management			Agriculture
Enabling frameworks for Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) in place in target countries (i.e. ensuring coherence between economic and environment policies across relevant areas such as the business environment, finance and investments, employment)	0 (2021) Inclusive Green Economy policy instruments adopted / implemented	3 (2021) Inclusive Green Economy policy instruments adopted / implemented	Ministry of Economy
Number of initiatives carried out in the framework of EU programmes (EUD and MS) aiming at the development of green business and green economy	o, (2021) of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises or local (informal) entrepreneurs reporting the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production practices	2500, (2027) of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises or local (informal) entrepreneurs reporting the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production practices	

PART IV - ANNEXES & REFERENCES

ANNEX 1: THE PROCESS

How were MS/EU+ present in the country involved in the drafting of the RM?	The draft roadmap has been shared for comments and suggestions with the MS present in Bishkek: DE, FR, HU
What mechanisms are set up to ensure the involvement of MS/EU+ in the implementation and follow up of the RM?	MS will be consulted on the implementation of the Road Map. Several activities will be planned and implemented jointly or in close cooperation. The Delegation to Kyrgyz Republic is conducting regular meetings with MS Embassies, dedicated to human rights, where falls the topic of the Road Map. The final Roadmap will be presented to the MS in the all-inclusive EU HoMs format.
What consultations with CSOs were organised? What type of actors were involved? What mechanisms, if any, were used to ensure the inclusiveness of the process?	Consultation with CSO representatives to discuss EU programming priorities 2021-2027 (26.11.2020) Consultations on HRDCS On CLIP Gender profile

What mechanisms, are set up to continue the dialogue with CSOs? What mechanisms, if any, will used to ensure the inclusiveness of the dialogue?	Regular consultations with CSOs on EU development policy processes, as well as in preparation of annual HR Dialogue and other institutionalized bilateral meetings, high level visits, Civil Society Seminars and Gender workshops), as well as ad hoc individualized topic-related meetings. Under the GSP+ scheme and its rigid monitoring mechanism which helps in keeping the authorities regularly accountable on the developments in the respective areas, including as regards the role and the government's dialogue with the civil society. At global and regional level, the Kyrgyz CSOs participate at a Policy Forum on Development (PFD), which was established in 2013, following the Structured Dialogue for an effective partnership in development, with the aim of upholding the principles of aid and development effectiveness, ensuring accountability and strengthening EU development policy. The annual EU-NGO Forum includes participation of the local CSOs, which provides a wide network and knowledge sharing with the EU NGOs on topics of digitalisation, climate change, women's rights, freedom of expression, etc.
How is the RM integrated /coordinated with the JP process?	N/A
How does the RM relate to other country processes including human rights and democracy country strategies, the gender action plan, etc.?	While drafting the updated Road Map, the HRDCS has been considered as important tool, moreover the latter update has been finalised earlier in 2021 and it reflects the current situation in the country. Both documents prioritise main elements of GAP III.