

Concept note on Consultation on the Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations:
The Global Initiative on Support for an Enabling Environment

31 May 2022
13:00h - 16:00h CET

Background: The Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations and the Monitoring and Engagement System for an Enabling Environment

The Multiannual Indicative Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations 2021-2027¹ (MIP) identifies the closing civic space and the continuous deterioration of an enabling environment for civil society as the main challenge for civil society, as well as for EU cooperation with civil society. An enabling environment is a prerequisite for the ability of civil society organisations to act freely as actors of good governance and development in their own right. A focus on an enabling environment is therefore central to the programme, delineated through core priorities and objectives, and should be mainstreamed in all initiatives and actions under the programme.

In addition to a continued and strengthened mainstreaming of an enabling environment throughout all levels, a new global initiative, a coherent **"Monitoring and Engagement System for an Enabling Environment"** (*tentative working title*), will be developed and funded under the global envelope of the programme.² This initiative has the aim to strengthen the capacity of civil society, at global, regional and partner country level, to prevent further deterioration and promote a sustainable and accessible enabling environment for civil society. It will encompass the following three connected pillars:

- **Monitoring** of a broad range of aspects pertaining to civic space and an enabling environment for civil society and **early warning** in times of imminent change;
- **A Flexible Support Mechanism** to enable civil society actors to quickly respond in situations of deterioration and/or positive developments pertaining to this environment;
- **Long-term support for CSO capacity** in areas of relevance to an enabling environment including, but not limited to, advocacy and promotion of a positive narrative around civil society, digital capacities, access to legal advice and support, etc.

The initiative will be **CSO led and independent**, contracted through a **Call for Proposals** to be published later this year. It will be implemented by global and regional civil society organizations and/or networks or consortiums of civil society organisations contracted through this call. The global and regional partners will be obliged to implement the initiative together with, and through, CSO partners at country level through the establishment of a **network modality**. Through the establishment and implementation of a Flexible Support Mechanism (managed by global partner/-s), a broader range of CSOs in partner countries will also benefit from funding under the initiative.

Objective

The Terms of Reference for the call for proposals is being developed. The consultation will seek input from civil society partners and stakeholders to **best design the call, and to ensure the future relevance of the initiative as a whole**. Thus the focus of the consultation is to provide a concrete opportunity for civil society partners to share knowledge and offer input into the terms of reference (including on but not limited to prioritised issues,

¹ Consult MIP and MAP [here](#)

² Consult MIP and MAP [here](#)

organizational and management structure, implementation modalities and planned activities, etc.) that is currently being drafted by DG INTPA.

The **framework for the initiative** will have to follow the principles outlined in the annexed adopted MIP and the Multiannual Action Plan for 2021-24 (MAP). These constitute the legal framework for the initiative (such as overarching objectives, type of partners, contracting modality, etc.) and are not open for alteration. The focus of the consultation also means that broader, highly relevant, issues of relevance to enabling environment (including EU funding instruments at large) will not be covered.

It is furthermore important to note that the consultation is **not an information session** on the upcoming call for proposals. No information beyond what is offered in the annexed MIP and MAP on the planned initiative can or will be shared by the EU, as this would risk the integrity and the impartiality of the call for proposal process.

Methodology and structure

This consultation includes only PFD members. The initiative will be of most relevance to, and offer funding opportunities for, CSO partners. LA members of the PFD are welcome to contribute with knowledge and input to the process, but will not be eligible for funding under this call.

The event will be a moderated online discussion. In the first plenary session, the main rationale and objectives of the initiative and the consultation will be presented with an opportunity for clarifying questions pertaining to the consultation and to publicly available information on the initiative and the call for proposal procedure.

The opening plenary session will be followed by in-depth discussions in breakout rooms, focusing on the three envisioned pillars of the initiative as well as the structure and set-up of the initiative as a whole.

Participation to each group will be pre-assigned since the virtual breakout rooms will be closed.

The event will be concluded by a wrap-up session in plenary. A rapporteur from each sub-group will briefly present conclusions of the exchanges held. The moderator will briefly wrap up the discussion.

Framing questions

Discussions will be guided by the following questions (complemented by participants own input):

Monitoring and Early Warning:

- Given your knowledge and experiences of **monitoring and/or early warning** initiatives of relevance to the enabling environment, what gaps and/or opportunities do you perceive,³ and what recommendations would you like to give for the development of the monitoring and early warning pillar under the new initiative?

Flexible Funding Mechanism:

- What can you share with regard to experiences of **financial mechanisms designed to address rapid changes** in the enabling environment, and what recommendations would you like to give for the Flexible Funding Mechanism under the new initiative?

Long-term capacity:

- In terms of capacity development, and your perception of the **most pressing capacity needs**⁴ that CSOs have when addressing the EE, what recommendations would you like to give for the focus, formats, etc., under the capacity development pillar under the new initiative?

Draft Agenda

13h00 – 13h30: Welcome and Introduction - Presentation of the Monitoring and Engagement System and clarifying Q&A

13h30 – 15h15: Breakout room discussions

15h15 – 15h30: Break to prepare feedback

15h30 - 15h50: Presentation of discussion and recommendations as identified per breakout room.

15h50-16h00: Conclusions

³ This can for example refer to issues such as geographical coverage; breadth and variations in monitoring of selected themes (e.g. formal legislation and regulatory context, political culture, state-civil society interaction, and perceptions of civil society legitimacy etc.).

⁴ This can for example include capacity development including secure digital communication, legal assistance and protection of activists, advocacy and networking approaches under restrictive civic space, access to funding; etc.