

Consultation on the draft Asia and the Pacific MIP

Virtual meeting held 19 May 2021

Comments received until 28 May


I. Summary

As a part of its consultations around the 2021-2027 programming of the EU, the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) hosted a virtual discussion to capture the views of PFD stakeholders and other CSOs and LAs on the EU Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Asia and the Pacific. 56 CSO and LA networks attended the initial consultation, 16 of which provided detailed written input (one being a joint response from 6 environmental organisations). This report summarizes both aspects.

Ioannis Giogkarakis-Argyropoulos, EEAS Head of Division for Regional Affairs and South Asia, opened the meeting and introduced the MIP. The MIP reflects the diversity of the Asia and Pacific region, which spans the Gulf and Caspian Sea to the Pacific Islands and is extremely heterogeneous in terms of human and physical geography, economy and level of development and democracy. While the NDICI-Global Europe, which is the new financial instrument under the 2021-2027 MFF, still retains a focus on SDGs and development cooperation, it recognizes that political alliances are needed to achieve the global agenda. Mr Argyropoulos stressed that the MIP was centred around the principle of subsidiarity, with actions taken at the national level as much as possible and regional actions only implemented if they have an added value. In the Asia Pacific region, the EU has identified three priority areas: regional integration, promoting EU interests with regional partners and migration. **Mario Ronconi**, Head of Unit for South Asia and South East Asia in DG INTPA further presented the five work areas in Asia Pacific, which correspond to the EU's geopolitical priorities, such as the green deal, digitalisation, sustainable growth, migration and governance, security and human development.

The EU has developed strategies for Asian sub-regions and has strategic partnerships with individual countries, which serve as a base for supporting multilateralism, tackling problems with democracy, human rights and connectivity. The region has been divided into five sub regions: the Gulf, Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific, in addition to a pan-Asian approach. These differentiated partnerships will allow for a focus to sub-regional demands. In addition, the EU is pursuing interests with key partners: China, India, the Gulf countries, and Asian partners (Japan, Korea and Australia). **Mr Ronconi** then presented the Team Europe initiatives planned for the region, stressing that complementarity and synergies between actions at bilateral level are key. He also discussed the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+) financial guarantees as an example of innovative programming. **Mr Argyropoulos** closed the presentation by presenting the cooperation facility, which will support activities in line with EU public diplomacy objectives.

Following the presentation, participants asked **clarifying questions** on whether the financial allocations for sub-regions have already been identified; whether the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic on the digital divide and gender equality have been incorporated into the MIP; if it was known which EU member states will join Team Europe initiatives in the region; and if the



Pacific Green Blue Alliance also covers energy. **Mr Ronconi** assured participants that the MIP had been drafted taking into account the post-pandemic context and that its focus will be on building back better; he also clarified that the Green Blue Alliance in the Pacific covers the issue of green energy and renewables. With regards to member state engagement on Team Europe, the exact membership was not yet confirmed but overall, the participation of member states is high. On financial allocations, **Mr Argyropoulos** clarified that while the sub-regional allocations were not yet known, it was confirmed that the overall allocations to the Asia Pacific region would be reduced compared to the 2014-2020 multiannual framework; the formal approval of the regional programme will take place at the end of 2021.


Other contributions pointed out the need to: enhance gender equality and address the digital gender divide in the MIP; tackle the issue of shrinking space for civil society participation, good governance and respect for the rule of law; prioritise a green transition, ensuring biodiversity and preventing deforestation in the region; and ensure social protection and decent work for migrants. Participants also stressed the importance of ensuring the involvement of local authorities, cooperatives and social enterprises. They noted Chinese influence in the region via the Belt and Road initiative, with engagement of some local authorities in this initiative. The importance of EU investment in local businesses, cooperatives, smallholder producers and family farmers in rural areas was also mentioned, as was the specificity of Pacific small island states.

The need to consult CSOs and LAs on regional programming was underlined. Participants also suggested that they would welcome the opportunity to review a draft version of the Regional Indicative Programme for Asia Pacific with regards to the technical sectors on which they have expertise.

In response, **Mr Ronconi** assured participants that CSOs' participation would be supported through a dedicated thematic programme and that the issue of shrinking space is on the EU agenda and addressed in the dialogue with partner countries. With regards to the role of LAs and cooperatives, they will be engaged at country level. **Mr Ronconi** stressed that the regional programme was not intended to cover all actions planned to be undertaken but to show the links between the national and regional levels. He clarified that gender equality and youth are at the centre of the EU's engagement, including under the programme components of green recovery and renewables.

With regards to the post-pandemic recovery, the topic is present in the EU dialogue on the EFSD+ and linked to labour rights, social protection and youth employment. In terms of the EU's approach to post-conflict situations, the EU's objective is to focus on conflict prevention, conflict sensitivity, and capacity building.

The meeting was wrapped up with remarks delivered by representatives of local authorities and CSOs. **Dr. Bernadia Tjandradewi**, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Government Asia Pacific, thanked the EU for its readiness to listen to different stakeholders. She stressed that the focus on sustainable development, localisation of the global agenda and subsidiarity were especially important in Asia Pacific, a unique and diverse region. Dr Tjandradewi stressed that the focus of EU programming should be to ensure that local actors, in particular cities, have access to finance and capacity building, as they are key to addressing migration, displacement and gender equality. She welcomed the focus on resilience and climate adaptation, which, due to the region's vulnerability to climate change but also other natural disasters, is a key issue. Finally, Dr Tjandradewi stated that the



EU could play a key role in improving connectivity, providing twinning, promoting cross border cooperation and encouraging ASEAN to localise the global agenda.

Aaron Ceradoy, Coordinator for the Migrants and Diaspora Constituency, representing the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, stressed the need to take into consideration the impact of the pandemic on systemic problems in the region – healthcare, education and the shift to online connectivity. He pointed out that governance, human rights, democracy and rule of law have been infringed upon by governments in the region during the pandemic. Mr Ceradoy pointed out that the pandemic has revealed that migrants are largely excluded from social protection, and that governments are using the health crisis as an excuse to impose limits on migration. He urged the EU to mainstream efforts on climate change, deforestation, protecting indigenous peoples, promoting gender equality and the role of youth.

Mr Ronconi delivered closing remarks in which he agreed that the issue of the localisation of the global agenda was crucial; he further clarified that a focus on migration will feature prominently within the MIP and that the programme recognises the relevance of cities for implementation. **Mr Argyropoulos** expressed appreciation for the input provided by the participants and stressed that the MIP aims to build on activities already ongoing at the national level.

II. Detailed input

A. Methodology

The meeting discussions (as well as written input) were structured around two questions: 1. how to best operationalise interaction with CSOs and LAs (modalities) and 2. what aspects of the areas laid out in the MIP are most relevant or what is missing (technical areas) and where there are opportunities to jointly implement the SDGs? Comments from the virtual session as well as written follow up are reflected in the points below.


B. Operational interaction with CSOs and LAs

This discussion focused on **how to best operationalise interaction with CSOs and LAs** to support the implementation of the MIP in line with the foreseen regional priorities and Team Europe Initiatives.

Participants pointed out that **the role of local authorities** was not clearly spelled out in the MIP, despite their being key actors in operationalising development actions and often being affected by regional programming. One participant stressed the difficulty that LAs in the Pacific faced in accessing EU funding and suggested that there needed to be more of a focus on local economic development as well as capacity building on how to make the best use of resources.

Reflecting the make-up of the group, which was largely CSOs, points were made as to the role of CSOs as well as how they could best be funded.

Participants encouraged the **recognition and use of CSOs for their technical expertise and capacities**, specifically for Team Europe Initiatives on sustainable production and consumption. Others stressed the **role of CSOs as watchdogs** and in promoting and ensuring accountability. The ability of civil society to help **facilitate inter-agency and transboundary cooperation** was also pointed out.



On funding, civil society groups stressed the need for **significant and predictable funding**, mentioned that calls for proposals at sub-regional level and including small grant facility schemes (with simplified procedures) remains a good way of funding civil

society. Participants said civil society must to be able to **access funds through both geographic and thematic pillars** in order to build their diverse capacities and CSO networks. The urgent need to create links with thematic programmes was noted, especially in the current health crisis.

“Create linkages with thematic programmes to support civil society and HRDs in holding governments to account, particularly to promote access to gender responsive public services, which is more relevant than ever due to the strain that Covid19 has put on healthcare, education and livelihoods for the most marginalised.” ActionAid International

Others deplored the channelling of funds to international organisations such as the UN rather than CSO and local authorities, as well as the lack of localisation of the global agenda. It was thus suggested that the EU should support partners such as LAs, CSOs and trade unions by financing them directly, involving them in a regular dialogue and building their capacities.

“Permanent dialogue and genuine consultations with a diversity of CSOs, including women’s rights organisations, youth organisations, and CSOs representing different geographies, sizes, and constituencies, are crucial to understanding the regional context and dynamics, including any potential issues affecting civic space at the regional level.” CARE International

Beyond financing, the importance of **regular, broad and continuous dialogue** was emphasised, especially in the context of shrinking civic space. Shrinking space was high priority, with the potential to undo many of the gains made in Asian countries in past years.

Participants called on the EU to help create opportunities for **dialogue with national governments**, especially in contexts of shrinking civic space. In the context of supporting democracy, a suggestion was made to **commit to a minimum funding percentage via CSOs**, and to eventually shift state allocation to CSOs if

governments were deemed responsible for a deterioration in democracy. Other suggestions included strong political support to CSOs and the **visible promotion of CSOs** (via inclusion as speakers in meetings and planning, for example). Drawing on the lessons learned from the roadmap process is important, as is including all framework partnership agreement holders in the country level roadmaps. Beyond roadmaps, making consultations and interactions with EU Delegations accessible to local partners is important. Participants suggested that outreach through global and regional networks could support this.



"Strengthen EU dialogue with a diverse range of CSOs, including Indigenous People & Local Community (IPLC) organisations and marginalised groups from grassroots, indigenous, youth and women's groups, climate justice and environmental defenders. The Climate, Land Ambition and Rights Alliance (CLARA) 2018 report, "Missing Pathways to 1.5°C", demonstrated the key role IPLCs play in ecosystem protection and the need to secure their land rights. Attacks on them and other environmental rights defenders are on the rise as pressure on natural resources increases. Protecting and empowering them must be part of the EU's approach." WWF European Policy Office, Conservation International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Wetlands International European Association, TRAFFIC, Climate Action Network Europe

At the regional level participants focused on strengthening and enlarging the breadth of dialogue. They encouraged the EU to design regional strategies that **particularly include youth, women and Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs)**. It was noted that children and youth can be engaged via existing platforms, and some stressed the need to see children as agents of change and empower them accordingly.


Participants stressed that CSOs can support the EU not only in the implementation of the MIP, but also through their extensive sectoral expertise; however, for this to occur, a **genuine dialogue and partnership** need to

be in place. This would require **more information sharing**, such as presenting the draft MIP for comment and follow up; the organisation of sub-regional discussions; and the allocation of funds directly to CSOs. It was stressed that there are existing multi-stakeholder partnerships and regional networks which the EU can tap into, allowing it to gain the expertise of local actors (a list of those specifically mentioned are in annex 1).

Team Europe initiatives should seek to **maximise the objectives and effectiveness of EFSD+ programmes by engaging CSOs** in the selection of target groups and programme participants. Also regarding the EFSD+, it was suggested to involve the PFD in the ex-post and evaluation process.

"A partnership between the private sector and CSOs can boost the engagement of youth and women, tackling gender inequality and promoting job creation among vulnerable groups. However, as the programme is currently set-up, CSOs are not encouraged to engage or seek partnerships within EFSD+. The Team Europe initiative should seek to maximise the objectives and effectiveness of EFSD+ programmes by engaging CSOs in the selection of target groups and programme participants." Red Cross EU Office

"CSOs are also important partners and brokers in the establishment of public-private-partnerships (PPPs), who have proven to be an effective tool for bringing together stakeholders in conservation actions." Wildlife Conservation Society



The EU should also **visibly promote interaction with and involvement of CSOs**. For instance, at every conference of regional blocs, there should be a CSO keynote speaker from the region concerned in a prominent place on the agenda (with space for and attention to women's rights organisations, as well as civil society representing a diversity of constituencies and perspectives). Beyond the important signal this gives in terms of promoting the importance of CSO space and voice, it grounds the discussions in the lived realities of people closest to the issue, thus promoting a human-centered approach.

It was stressed that the EU should **increase multi-stakeholder approaches** with more time for scoping, planning and implementation. Consultation via the Policy Forum, with the current practice of opening up participation to ensure coverage of more constituencies, was supported.


"Save the Children welcomes the use of the Policy Forum for Development (PFD) in discussing the Asia Pacific Regional MIP and extending the invitation to organisations who are not traditionally part of the PFD. We propose using this platform for future discussions on the regional programme's annual action plans and should the consultations be on-line organising specific break-out groups for the sub-regional programmes and priorities dedicating sufficient time for exchange."

C. Most relevant elements in the MIP, missing aspects and areas to enhance joint action with EU to achieve the SDGs

This discussion focused on the most **relevant and important elements of the MIP, what is missing from it and the areas of work in which CSOs and LAs see the most possibilities to enhance joint action** with the EU to achieve the SDGs.

1. Most relevant areas

Regarding the most relevant elements in the MIP, participants welcomed the reference to **human rights and consolidating democracy**, in particular the focus on human development, peace and stability that some of the sub-regional windows address, and the prioritising of specific programmes for child migrants, refugees and IDPs. They also welcomed the references to the focus on **sustainable production and consumption**, including through Team Europe initiatives, although they wanted to know more about the role of micro enterprises and cooperatives in this area. The MIP's increased attention to **climate change and 'climate resilience'** was praised, although the role of climate change in contributing to migration needs to be recognised, as well as the gender dimensions of migration and mobility, indicating that more **research and evidence-based programming on migration and internal displacement due to climate change** is needed. Environmental organisations especially applauded the EU geopolitical priorities on **Green Alliances and Partnerships** to support working with countries in the region to address global environmental challenges, as well as the identification of the most important **'Key Landscapes for Conservation'** in Asia through the very comprehensive 'Larger than Tigers' report.



However, some participants expressed concern with the continental priority of “pursuing EU interests with key partners,” more specifically “the engagement with China, India, the Gulf and high income and industrialized countries in the region,” and said that the EU’s development cooperation commitments should be the **promotion of the SDGs** in the region, based on solidarity, rather than economic and geopolitical interests. Others noted the limited paths of engagement for CSOs.

“The link between the priorities defined in the MIP and INTPA’s mandate is weak with regards to supporting vulnerable communities and building resilience among local communities. Out of the five geopolitical priorities, there is only reference to human development (which includes health, education, gender programmes among others) in the sub-section of one priority. As the priorities have been defined, there is very little or no engagement potential for CSOs within its main elements (Green Alliances, Alliances for Science, Alliances for sustainable growth, Team Europe, EFSD+). At the same time, one of the goals of the MIP is to strengthen the engagement of CSOs. We see a lack of coherence between INTPA’s mandate, its objective to strengthen the engagement of CSOs and the priorities defined in the MIP. We encourage [to] strengthen the role of CSOs/NGOs in the definition of programmes and their implementation.” Red Cross EU Office

2. Areas to reinforce or add


Participants pointed to the need to reinforce several aspects of the MIP. With clear urgency, they recommended that the EU:

- **Enhance the visibility of gender equity** (explaining how this will be mainstreamed) **and youth** throughout the MIP. For example, framing the Green transition from the perspective of Just Transition that takes feminist principles into account, as well as the job creation opportunities for youth that could emerge from the transformation into renewable energies. Also, a reference to GAP III and linkages to the Global Europe targets should be included.

- **Address the shrinking of space for civil society**, reinforcing good governance and respect for the rule of law. Participants call for the recognition of an enabling environment for CSOs as a precondition to the realisation of the SDGs. This would require EU support to capacity building and empowerment of regional CSO organisation, and to promotion of basic human rights (especially for marginalised groups, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and protection of the human rights defenders). Participants indicated that a **regional approach in this area would strengthen country level work** and step up EU strategic engagement.

“While shrinking space is increasing all over Asia, it has very little space in the draft MIP. A regional approach to this worrying phenomenon would strengthen the work done at country level and step up the EU strategic engagement with CSOs (regional) platforms.” Solidar and Solidar Suisse Hong Kong

- **Address the trend of deepening inequalities**, taking into account the impact of Covid-19, and in particular bring the digital gender divide into the MIP. Also related to digitalisation, some participants called for a human-centred approach to technology, that ensures access to, affordability and quality of technology. This should include a careful look at the digital divide in the Asia-Pacific region as a result of work and education shifting to virtual platforms due to Covid-19.



Secondly, participants suggested an **enhanced focus on human development**, including concerns such as respect for the environment and the creation of decent jobs to ensure a just transition under sustainable growth. **Prevention of deforestation and illegal wildlife trade were pointed out as gaps**, and it was suggested that a transboundary perspective should be taken on the Mekong river. In response, colleagues from DG INTPA clarified that the Mekong river is one of the sub-regions in focus in South-East Asia.

Thirdly, participants highlighted the need to **address the interlinkages** among:

- Environmental sustainability and social and labour rights. On the one hand, the Green transition is directly related to climate change, but also to biodiversity conservation and prevention of deforestation in the region, and to the transformation of the agricultural model towards sustainable ones (including agroecology). On the other hand, the Green transition is also linked to the creation of decent jobs; thus, the shift to a production and consumption model that leaves no one behind requires measures to ensure just transition, income support, training opportunities for people, decent jobs and rights at work.

"The EU Asia - Pacific regional programme should follow through on the commitments laid out in the EC communication on "Stepping up Action to protect and restore the world's forests" by adopting and implementing a comprehensive set of measures and initiatives, including supporting upcoming EU legislation to stop products linked to deforestation and ecosystem conversion from entering the EU market, to reduce the EU footprint on the world's natural ecosystems and to address underlying drivers." WWF European Policy Office, Conservation International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Wetlands International European Association, TRAFFIC, Climate Action Network Europe

- The need to address root causes of irregular migration, including badly designed policy, linked to the expansion of social protection (support to universal social protection systems) and the creation of decent jobs. Participants called for a **rights based approach to migration**, ensuring that migrant children and their families are included in social safety nets and that barriers to accessing vital services are removed (in particular child protection, healthcare, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and education). A regional and cross-border cooperation is required to create a continuum of care with harmonised case management systems, referral systems and standard operating procedures. The strategy should support creating of such cross-border coordination systems with different stakeholders and duty bearers to address care issues and provision of services for migrant children. Save the Children



cross-border cooperation and an inclusive and effective social dialogue.

“Migration, displacements, and human mobility require a human-centred approach, increasing capacities of both local governments and CSOs to accompany and respond to the needs of protection and assistance of people on the move. Vertical, horizontal, cross-sectoral and cross-border coordination among social agents must be supported. This should be done through multiannual programmes enhancing regional and global networks, able to track and assist individuals at origin, in transit and at destination.... aspects of return and re-integration should also follow Global Compact on Refugees and link to durable solutions.

....any re-integration support should be given to any returnees in vulnerable situations, regardless of where the return is from, and support social cohesion and include local communities in a whole-of-society approach.

While addressing irregular migration...protection of human rights such as the right to seek asylum, the right to family reunification and the right to basic services and protection from harm must be highlighted.”

Excerpts from submission from Red Cross EU Office

Finally, participants noted the following more specific areas where the EU could pay special attention during the implementation of the new MIP:

- Children’s rights should be explicitly mentioned and prioritised in the Asia-Pacific region, with particular attention given to the surge in child marriage and adolescent pregnancy.
- The need to look at conflict and post-conflict environments in a complex manner.
- The impact of digital development on areas such as fisheries and agriculture.
- The crucial role of cities as a convergence point of all these issues.
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), as a key component of sustainable development to achieve the 2030 Agenda, to be included the EC’s priorities around digitalisation, Green Deal, and jobs and growth.
- The involvement of local authorities, cooperatives and social enterprises.
- Chinese influence in the region and its Belt and Road initiative.
- EU promotion of investment in local businesses, cooperatives, smallholder producers and family farmers in rural areas; and the specificity of Pacific small island states.
- A focus on natural resource governance, family farming, sustainable food security systems, preventing deforestation and sustainable consumption and production as measures to hamper the spread of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19.
- Ensuring transparency of consultations, including through a review of indicators

3. Subregional recommendations


Region	Recommendation
Central Asia	Link human and women's rights and the environment to strengthen the inclusive governance of water. The integrated approach to peace and stability should have women playing a meaningful role and be at the table through the whole peace and stabilization processes
South Asia	Resilience to climate change and climate action with a gender approach. The promotion of human rights including women's rights and participation. Inclusive governance and digitalization.
South East Asia	Green alliances for resilience to climate change that work for people, especially women, girls, and youth. Cooperation on biodiversity protection and management that consider the role of women as key in ensuring sustainability and the participation of women-led organisations in regional policy dialogues with ASEAN.
Pacific	Green-Blue alliances to advance climate action and to build back better to have an inclusive economic development where women's economic justice could be advanced.
Indo-Pacific region	Empower civil society to respond to authoritarian measures enacted by governments throughout this region in response to COVID-19, by promoting international standards around emergency measures, free expression, independent media, access to information and other fundamental freedoms.
Pan Asia programme	To avoid increasing inequalities the support for MSMEs must have a gender angle as women face bigger barriers to accessing finance and e-services.
It was also noted that civil society is only referenced in the Central Asia subregion and is an important component of other subregions.	

4. Environmental recommendations

The most detailed recommendations came from environmental and conservation organisations in the form of written input. The topic areas are introduced here, and the full recommendations can be accessed in the original submissions upon request.

1. EU support to address wildlife trade

The illegal trade in wildlife has become one of the most lucrative global criminal activities and constitutes one of the most immediate threats to biodiversity. In addition to harming wildlife species, wildlife trafficking undermines local livelihoods and weakens impoverished rural economies further. In addition, the science is clear that pandemics of zoonotic origin such as COVID-19 are directly related to the increased human/wildlife interface caused by destruction of intact ecosystems, deforestation and forest degradation, and critically the trade of wildlife (both illegal and legal).
Wildlife Conservation Society



Prioritise actions to address the supply and the demand of wildlife-based products; in particular it is suggested priority is given to programs that build the political commitment of governments to tackle illegal wildlife trade, which in practice would result in adequate staffing, funding, mandate and integrity of law enforcement, judicial and other regulatory agencies mandated to bring wildlife criminals to justice.

2. EU support to improved ocean governance, including sustainable fisheries

Support Asian and the Pacific countries and their coastal communities to protect and conserve their marine ecosystems. It is critical to promote sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, both within and outside of protected areas, to support food security, climate adaptation and socio-cultural benefits. Support should focus on: protection of high biodiversity ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses in protected areas or other effective area-based measures; and more holistic management efforts such as ecosystem-approaches to fisheries management, integrated land-sea management, marine spatial planning and integrated ocean governance.

3. EU support for protected areas in oceans and on land


The EU should also support the identification and management of climate refugia where reefs can survive and the learning of lessons from those sites for the management of other reefs. While the EU could provide support to individual countries through national programs, a focus of the regional program could be on transboundary landscapes.

4. Fund nature-based solutions (NbS) to help achieve the EU multiannual financial framework target on biodiversity and the Global Europe climate target

Priorities for joint action are the creation of enabling policy and investment environments for integrating NbS in water engineering, capacity building, business case development and scaling up investments for Green Infrastructure including through innovative financing and support for pilot and project development. WWF European Policy Office, Conservation International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Wetlands International European Association,

5. EU support to halt deforestation

- Support partner countries to halt deforestation and forest degradation
- Prioritise EU support to reduce deforestation towards at-risk forest frontiers
- A risk-based framing for EU investments that prioritises support to at-risk forest frontiers can also have other substantial socio-economic, health, and environmental benefits.
- Engagement with Asian consumer markets of commodities driving deforestation and forest degradation.
- The EU should seek synergies between NDC processes and the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements in timber-producing countries and increase financial and political support for the FLEGT Action Plan.



6. EU support to implement a One Health¹ approach in Asia (make specific reference to this approach).

7. Prioritise support to enhancement and implementation of NDCs in regional programmes to achieve better climate and environment outcomes, integrated with SDG plans, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), DRR strategies, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans where available.

5. Joint work on SDGs

When commenting on areas of joint work to enhance the SDGs, multiple participants stressed the role of the EU in supporting civil society. First by ensuring and supporting an enabling environment, a necessary condition to fulfilling the SDGs, and then by supporting CSOs to carry out their own work in programme implementation at regional level, such as with migrants and refugees specifically from the Afghan, Rohingya and Syria crises. As addition to the implementing role of CSOs, their role as actors of governance is key as governance and rule of law are prerequisites for meeting other SDGs.

Enabling Space for CSOs, freedom of association and the right to peaceful assembly is a pre-condition for the SDGs to be met and for CSOs to exist and be able to operate. The EU has remarkable experience, policy frameworks and instruments to work with CSOs to prevent shrinking space, monitor enabling space and promote measures to enable CSOs to work. The regional approach would bring an added value to country-based operations. Solidar and Solidar Suisse Hong Kong

The role of the EU in promoting multi-stakeholder partnership was noted across several thematic areas. The EU is considered well positioned to support CSOs, as well as local government in dialogue and interaction with national governments. As part of the multi-stakeholder approach, the EU is encouraged to support business accountability and ensure that private sector investments are in line with SDGs and especially uphold decent work. The EU and its member states could build upon the European Pillar of Social Rights and its long-standing expertise in promoting decent work and social protection in its development cooperation programs.

In the area of environment, the leadership of the EU in the Green Deal was recognized with a reminder that a just transition should remain the central approach to the EU Green Deal Programs. The EU can play an important role in working with governments, civil society and private sector to advocate and promote the recognition of IPLCs to become champions of sustainable, holistic development and equitable conservation.

The role of the EU in upholding and mainstreaming climate and biodiversity objectives, gender equality, and a rights-based approach are central to the achievement of the SDGs.

¹ 'One Health' is an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. See <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/one-health>



III. Conclusions

The inputs from participants reflect a support for current overarching EU policy objectives. The recommendations focus on the detail and mechanisms to implement and uphold those objectives. Participants were active and appreciative of the opportunity to provide input; they stressed the need for more information and ongoing dialogue to support the implementation phase of programming and fulfil their role as development partners.

Annex 1: Suggestions of specific operational networks with whom to work (provided in written comments)

Solidar and Solidar Suisse Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Transnational Monitoring Network (ATNC) housed by the Asia Monitor Resource Centre – a regional labour NGO based in Hong Kong. The network works on the issues of labour rights in Asia and has members from more than 10 Asian countries/regions (South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka). • Mekong Migration Network (MMN) -a sub-regional network of migrant support NGOs, migrant grassroots groups, and research institutes active in the Greater Mekong Subregion with coverage (members) in – China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. • Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims – a victims support network with members and coverage in more than n 15 countries in East Asia (China, S Korea, Japan) Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia) and South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka). • Asian Roundtable for Social Protection – Social Protection network.
Save the Children	<p>The Red Alert campaign have started developing a network of youth and children in the region working on climate change.</p> <p>The Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) that have good youth networks across the region. At the 2019 Asian children’s summit they worked on a range of issues, including migration.</p> <p>Climate change and resilience:</p> <p>In Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa Save the Children has partnered with Arup International Development to deliver technical assistance program on Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Pacific.</p> <p>Save the Children, in partnership with Stockholm Environment Institute, is implementing the Landscape Analysis on Youth Involvement in Climate and Health across six countries (three in Asia [Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam] and three in Africa. This action-research aims to inform key issues and gaps as well as best practices in this field and how young people can be involved in addressing adverse impacts from global heating and contribute to community-based resilience and adaptation mechanisms.</p>
Eclosio	<p>ALiSEA (Agroecology Learning Alliance in South-East Asia) (https://ali-sea.org/)</p> <p>NF3 An informal platform of five Federations of Farmer’ Organisations in Cambodia (FAEC, FCFD, FWN, FNN, CFAP)</p> <p>JSF Cambodia & JSF Vietnam (Joint Strategic Frameworks) Consortium of Belgian NGOs active in South-East Asia under the strategic guidance of the Belgian Cooperation for Development agency (DGD)</p>
ITUC	<p>In the specific case of Asia-Pacific, the EU can count with the support of the International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific (based in Singapore) for permanent coordination and exchange at the regional level; with the support of the International Trade Union Confederation, based in Brussels, for coordination at the global level.</p>
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)	<p>UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Committee on Social Development, reviews the 2030 Agenda, migration and development, social protection, and health systems, addresses inequality and promotes social inclusion, gender equality and women’s empowerment.</p> <p>Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) is a civil society platform aimed to enable stronger cross-constituency coordination and ensure that the voices of all subregions of Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes at the regional and global level.</p>

Joint
submission*

Switch Asia - that support the transformation of our global economies towards absolute decoupling of economic activities from the consumption of limited resources, thereby promoting society-wide benefits for all within planetary boundaries. Expanding and strengthening “Switch Asia” programmes while promoting multi- stakeholders approaches: i) to support companies, particularly Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises (MSMEs), Existing Green and Blue Alliances and Partnerships led by CSOs, but also to support and make use of new regional initiatives and Platforms that are developing, such as **Building with Nature Asia (Wetlands International)** and **Resilient Asian Deltas (WWF)**, which aim for the adoption of Building with Nature as a socially and environmentally inclusive engineering approach

Red Cross EU
Office

*WWF European Policy Office, Conservation International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Wetlands International European Association, TRAFFIC, Climate Action Network Europe
The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO). Geographic scope: Asia & Pacific. Thematic scope: Disaster Risk Reduction, Forecast based Finance, migration, etc. Webpage: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/where-we-work/asia-pacific/>
The IFRC Livelihoods Resource Centre: Geographic scope: Global. Thematic scope: Promotion of livelihoods programming to achieve effective field impact. Gathering, analysis and dissemination of resources and lessons learnt on livelihoods programming and strengthening the capacities of communities and CSOs. Webpage: <https://www.livelihoodscentre.org/>
The Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre. Geographic scope: Global. Thematic scope: Climate Change Adaptation. Webpage: <https://www.climatecentre.org/>