



Tools and Methods Series

Concept Paper N° 3

Mappings and civil society assessments

*A study of past, present
and future trends*

September 2012

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Mappings and civil society
assessments

A study of past, present
and future trends

EuropeAid Development and Cooperation Directorate-General
European Commission

Brussels • Luxembourg, September 2012

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Luxemburg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012

ISBN 978-92-79-28468-7

ISSN 1830-8201

doi:10.2841/35049

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Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON ELEMENTAL CHLORINE-FREE BLEACHED PAPER (ECF)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This capitalisation study has been prepared by Beatriz Sanz Corella as part of the ‘Programme and project cycle management’ (PPCM) programme. The process was coordinated by the unit dealing with civil society and local authorities within DG Development and Cooperation — EuropeAid.

The views expressed in this study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission. However, as far as possible, the author has integrated the comments made by the Commission into the various draft versions, prepared by the author and shared with the Commission. The final draft report was also posted on capacity4dev (<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/>) and feedback was requested from EUDs.

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Policy Practice (<http://www.thepolicypractice.com>)

List of acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AMLAT	Latin America
CB	capacity building
CoA	Court of Auditors
CBO	community-based organisation
CS	civil society
CSI-RA	Civil Society Index Rapid Assessment
CSO	civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
DoC	drivers of change
EC	European Commission
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EDF	European Development Fund
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
FGD	focus group discussion
ICTs	information and communication technologies
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
LA	local authority
NAM	new aid modalities
NAO	national authorising officer
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NSA	non-state actor
OCAT	Organisation Capacity Assessment Tool
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PEA	political economy analysis
SCA	specific cooperation agreement
SD	Structured Dialogue
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TA	technical assistance
ToR	terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Setting the scene

1.1. Historical background and state of the art

Echoing now well-established participatory development approaches, Article 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and Article 22 of the Busan Declaration explicitly refer to civil society organisations (CSOs) as independent development actors in their own right, whose efforts complement those of public authorities (the state in its various forms) and the private sector, on the basis of their manifold potential roles as actors of social change ⁽¹⁾. In addition, several partner governments are gradually recognising this pivotal role of CSOs and, according to the democratic governance environment, progressively (although at a different pace) accepting them as legitimate policy interlocutors promoting civic engagement.

Over the past decade, the rapid expansion and diversification of CSOs, particularly in partner countries, but also across Europe, has led to the need for the European Union (EU) and other donors and partner governments to acquire a better understanding of civil societies beyond the traditional non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as a precondition for an effective engagement with all relevant actors, both in terms of policy dialogue and service delivery.

To this end, mapping studies ⁽²⁾ have been identified as a key tool in understanding the roles, potential, capacities and weaknesses of domestic and external CSOs and in situating the actors within the political economy context.

Recent studies focusing on CS engagement highlight the importance the EU has given to this assessment tool (see Table 1), which is increasingly used across countries and regions beyond the ACP sphere, where it started being implemented following the signature of the Cotonou Agreement back in 2000.

Table 1: What recent evaluations and studies say about mappings

The evaluation of EC aid delivery through CSOs (<i>Particip</i> , 2008)	The European Court of Auditors report (<i>European Court of Auditors</i> , 2009)	The capitalisation study on capacity-building support programmes for NSA under the 9 th EDF (<i>Floridi and Sanz Corella</i> , 2009)	Mid-term review of the NSA and LA thematic programme (<i>McCormick et al.</i> , 2009)	Non-state actors and new aid modalities <i>Reference Document No 12</i> (<i>EC</i> , 2011a)
<i>Mainstream the use of strategic 'mappings' of CSO actors. Reconsider the disparity in the approach between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region and Asian and Latin American countries.</i>	<i>The EC should assume a political role (and related responsibilities) when engaging in complex transformation processes. There is a need to invest in knowledge on the local civil society arena.</i>	<i>Make better use of the added value of different CSOs (NGOs, trade unions, cooperatives, etc.). EUD need to play a role as 'critical observer' (identifying relevant CSOs) and 'facilitators' of dialogue between CSOs and the government, Member State etc. To this end, mainstream the use of strategic mappings.</i>	<i>There is a need for mappings to identify civil society groups at all levels (roles and capacities).</i>	<i>Understand NSAs as actors in their particular context. A proper context analysis (including a mapping of those NSAs which matter in a particular sector or have a say on thematic and cross-sector policy issues) is therefore a key component of any effort to engage more strategically with NSAs.</i>

(1) See Methodological Tool 3 for more information about CS roles.

(2) By using the term 'civil society mapping' we refer to an analytical instrument aimed at providing a broad and dynamic overview of CSOs, their networks and their relations with other actors, such as public authorities and public players, donors and other partners.

Furthermore, the Structured Dialogue (SD) confirmed the relevance of this assessment tool in the realm of EU external cooperation. As the SD concluding document stipulates (EC, 2011b): ‘The EU needs to invest in understanding the local arena. To this end, strategic mappings should be regularly conducted and updated to identify the most relevant actors, yet going beyond the known beneficiaries.’

More recently, the consultation paper ⁽³⁾ issued to collect views to feed into the recent communication ⁽⁴⁾ about CSOs in EU development cooperation also reiterates the importance of this blend of strategic mappings, in the path towards a more strategic engagement with CSOs at country level. This idea is strongly endorsed by the contributors to the public consultation.

Box 1: What respondents to the online public consultation said about mappings ⁽⁵⁾

Considering that the CSO landscape changes rapidly in a country, there is a need to invest in understanding the local arena by developing and implementing sound mapping and context analysis systems and techniques.

Sound knowledge about the context and the relevant actors, their political orientation capacities and democratic disposition are essential for effective engagement. Tailoring activities to a beneficiary’s needs requires both a detailed analysis and thorough knowledge of important reforms needed.

1.2. Rationale of the study and structure of the document

Against this background, the time seems right to take stock of past experiences and present trends, with a view to informing future mapping initiatives ⁽⁶⁾. This is precisely the rationale governing the present study, which should be seen as an attempt to respond to this growing interest and request for further guidance.

The study contains three parts. The first provides a review of past and current trends in civil society mappings, illustrated with specific examples ⁽⁷⁾, and explores alternative and emerging systems and tools designed by other donors and institutions and organisations (including CSOs themselves).

The second is forward looking, with a view to providing generic guidance to the community of users of mapping studies, the final goal being to further fine-tune and streamline future mapping exercises so as to better suit the needs and national contexts of EUDs. It is thus intended to serve as a resource that can be drawn upon when preparing, commissioning and/or conducting future CS mappings.

The third part includes a set of methodological tools, including a checklist with issues to be looked at when drafting ToR, civil society definitions, types, levels of structuring and role of CSOs and a list of bibliographic references.

The study has been conducted from an evidence-based perspective and has benefited from the involvement of several units at headquarters level, as well as several EUDs. EUD engagement has been possible thanks to the two seminars on strategic engagement with CS organised in May and June 2012. The study was also posted on capacity4dev (<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/>) in June 2012 for comments and feedback.

Finally, the complete review of past and present mappings, used as a basis for the analysis offered in the first part of the study, is available in the annex.

(3) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/6405_en.htm

(4) The recent communication ‘The roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe’s Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations - COM (2012) 492 final - was published in September 2012
http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/file/05/10/2012_-_1750/lexuriserv.pdf.

(5) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/6405_en.htm

(6) As the UNDP (2011) study suggests, the foundation laid by the existing generation of mappings is not to be disregarded. On the contrary, many lessons can be learned and future mappings and civil society assessments will need to be built on the current successes and shortcomings documented over time.

(7) Particular attention has been paid to the results and lessons learned from the two regional studies in Latin America and Asia (EC, 2009 and 2010) and the capitalisation study on NSA support programmes, which contains a specific section on mappings (Florida, M. and Sanz Corella, B., 2009).

Part 1

TAKING STOCK OF PAST AND PRESENT TRENDS

CHAPTER 2

Rapid review of mappings — reading the facts

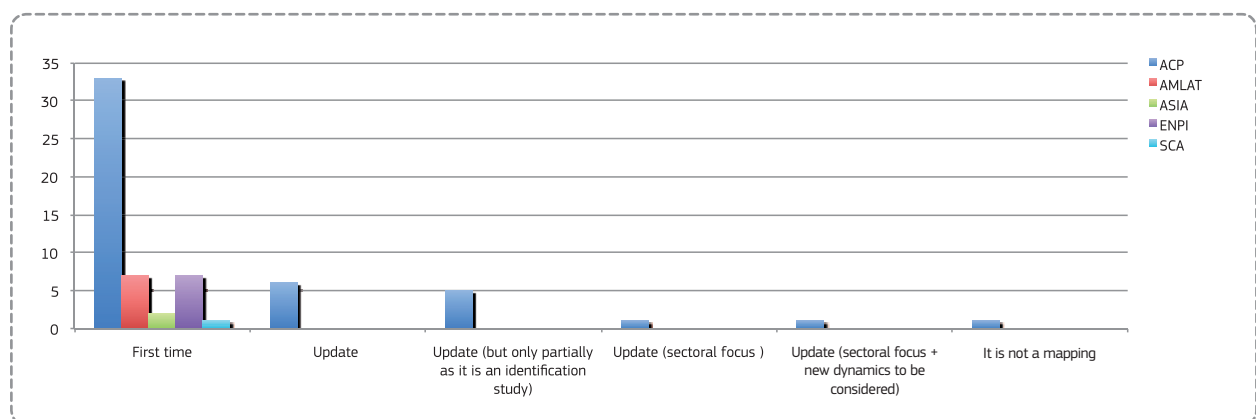
Over the past decade great strides have been made by the EU to advance knowledge on CSO and civic engagement across partner countries and regions. Since 2001, according to available data, a total of 64 mapping exercises have been conducted in the sphere of EU cooperation (see Table 2), of which 70 % have taken place in the ACP region.

Table 2: Overview of mappings conducted to date

By period and region					
	< 2007	2008—11	> 2011	TOTAL	%
ACP	26	15	4	45	70.31 %
AMLAT	1	4	2	7	10.94 %
ASIA	0	3	0	3	4.69 %
ENPI	1	4	3	8	12.50 %
SCA	0	1	0	1	1.56 %
TOTAL	28	27	9	64	100.00 %
%	43.75 %	42.19 %	14.06 %	100.00 %	

Some countries are in their second (or even third) round of mappings (see Figure 1). This is the case for several ACP countries, such as Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Haiti, Madagascar, Niger and Senegal. In addition, two regional studies on mappings have been conducted in Latin America and Asia (EC, 2009 and 2010).

Figure 1: Rounds of mappings



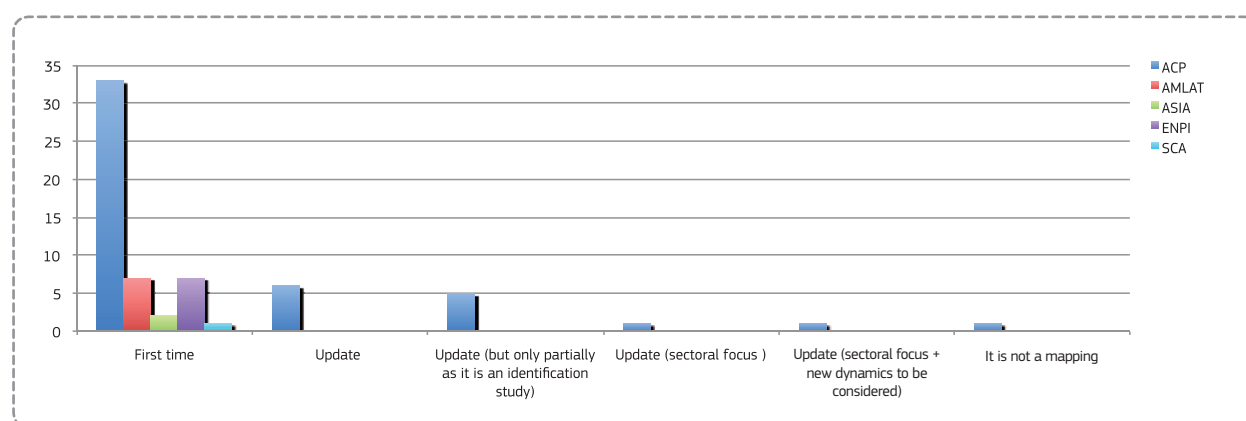
2.1. Objectives and intended results: what for?

Geography-wise, diversity prevails when looking at the objectives mappings have pursued to date.

Today, CSO mapping studies are a common exercise in the majority of ACP countries. The most frequent use of mapping has been to support the identification and formulation of programmes to support CSOs. Likewise, in some cases, CSO mappings have been carried out (in the form of strategic mappings) as an aid to the existing ninth EDF

support programmes or to the mid-term and final evaluation exercises (see Figure 2). It is only in recent times that mappings appear to be leaving the realm of feasibility studies and pursuing broader goals, such as the identification of a global strategy to support CSOs, the identification of actors with expertise and capacity to be involved in policy dialogue at national and sectoral levels, and the institutional assessment of CSOs (even on an individual basis) operating in a given sector.

Figure 2: Mapping goals (by regions)



This landscape differs largely from the one found in other regions. In Latin America, where mappings started to be implemented in 2007, the strategic goal has been prominent (see Box 2). Hence, mappings have mostly been used as an instrument aimed at providing a broad and dynamic overview of CSOs, understanding their roles, potentialities, capacities and weaknesses, and ultimately situating the actors within the political economy context.

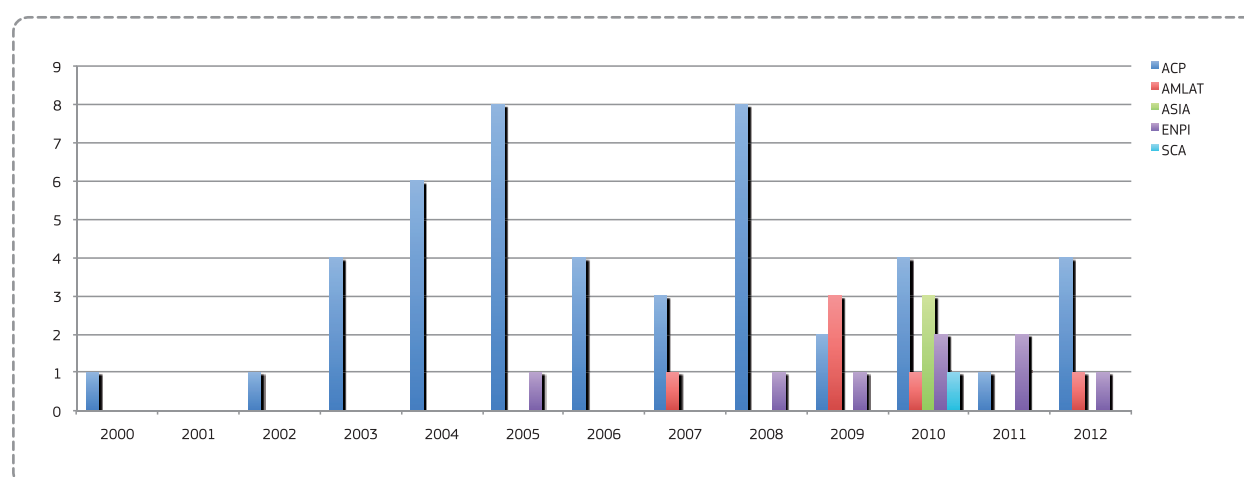
Box 2: What strategic mappings have been like

Although evidence suggests that there is no blueprint for mappings, some common trends or standards can be identified. More specifically, strategic mapping has so far been required to:

- *identify the key actors in a given country and/or sector, to gain a better understanding of how they are involved in development and governance processes and what their relevant dynamics are;*
- *take a diachronic and dynamic approach so as to address the orientations and actions of the actors that seem to be relevant in their specific development processes, rather than simply providing a static picture of 'existing organisations' without any strategic relevance;*
- *assess the role and position of these CS actors, as well as their linkages and relationships with other actors (including the public sector, the private sector, INGOs, donors, etc.) and their aspirations, strengths and weaknesses (to eventually support them in their role as partners in national and local development.*

In the Asian context, only one strategic exercise (See Box 1) and two rapid assessments (in the form of case studies or 'quick mappings') have been conducted in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, as pilot exercises in the framework of the regional study on mappings completed in 2009.

Figure 3: Period when mappings took place



Finally, in the 'Neighbourhood' region, mappings have been on the rise since 2008, with a similar strategic perspective to the one identified for the Latin American region (see Figure 3), and more particularly today, in the light of the Arab Spring ⁽⁹⁾, through the recently launched 'Regional capacity-building programme for civil society facility south' ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Box 3: The strategic mapping conducted in the occupied Palestinian territory ⁽¹¹⁾

The overall objective of the study was to strengthen the position of civil society in public debate and to further the implementation of development strategies, complementing the Palestinian Authority's strategy and actions. The study reflects some specific issues that emerge when dealing with East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

The mapping study was completed in June 2011 and a total of 262 CSOs (including community-based organisations, NGOs, charitable societies, coalitions and platforms) were consulted so as to have an adequate representation of the dynamics and processes characterising Palestinian civil society at national and local levels.

According to the study, CSOs in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) appear to be a wide and vibrant set of actors, managing a wide variety of activities (over 90 % of social services in the oPt are managed by CSOs). CSOs appear to work in all sectors, maintain the most precious of Palestinian human resources and hold an important reservoir of information and knowledge, constituting a main bridge between the oPt and the rest of the world. Nonetheless, there are a number of concerns and issues that CSOs in the oPt have to face, which include, inter alia: an unclear relation with the political field; the permanent condition of insecurity and emergency due to the political situation; the exclusive focus on service delivery; the lack of a common voice of Palestinian civil society; and the lack of recognition of civil society outside of NGOs.

The study in both English and Arabic is available at:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/projects/overview/index_en.htm

(9) In 2011, following the 'Arab Spring', the EC/European External Action Service issued their new communication outlining the EU's 'New response to a changing neighbourhood' and committed to building and consolidating healthy democracies. The EU will further strengthen its support of CSOs in situations in which governments engage in violations of human rights and democracy standards.

(10) The facility includes support to carry out a mapping study of the 'Neighbourhood South' region aimed at identifying the region's non-state actors and analysing their needs and capacities to get involved in policy dialogue, as well as the way in which these actors can contribute to specific policies,

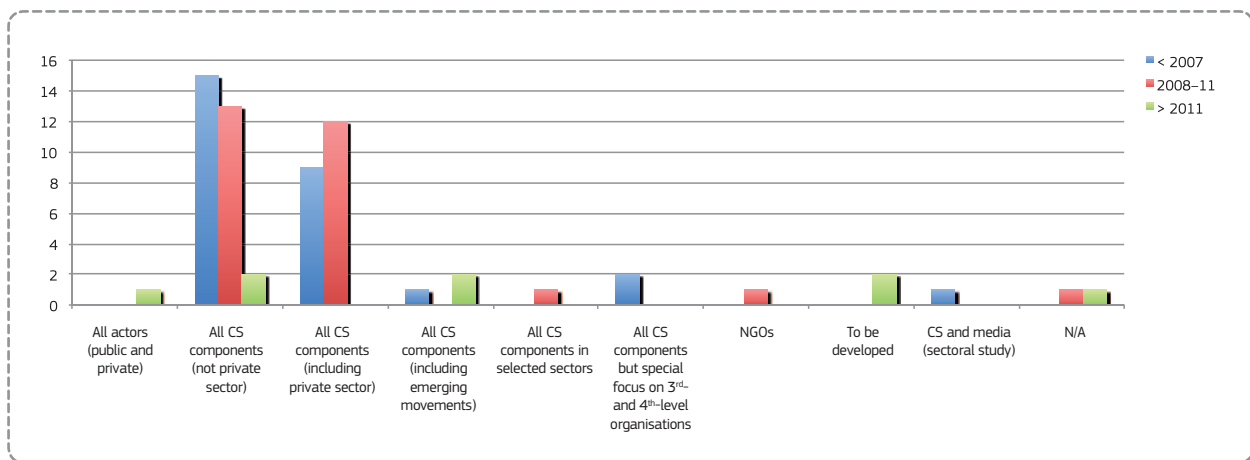
(11) Extracted from the European Union press release (Jerusalem PR/18/2011).

2.2. Scope of mappings: what and how deep?

The scope of mappings needs to be looked at from a threefold perspective: (i) the balance between inclusiveness and selectiveness of actors, i.e. the types of actors covered by the exercise; (ii) the inclusion (or not) of an assessment of the environment in which CSOs operate; and (iii) linked to the previous point, the extent to which participation, dialogue and engagement spaces are also considered and assessed.

The analysis shows (see Figure 4) that most mappings conducted before 2011 were quite comprehensive (in terms of the breadth of the study) and, therefore, considered all CS components⁽¹²⁾, even the private sector, but mainly focused on formally established CSOs. Only a few of them have focused on specific categories of actors (such as third- and fourth-level umbrella organisations⁽¹³⁾, the media or NGOs) and it is only recently that emerging movements, as well as other informal and fluid forms of civic agency, usually ‘below the radar’⁽¹⁴⁾, have started to be considered more systematically⁽¹⁵⁾.

Figure 4: Actors considered



Additionally, some mappings have adopted a rather actor-based approach, thus focusing primarily on the actors (CSOs and their capacity-building needs), while others have taken a broader political economy approach when looking at CS by also focusing on relationships with other stakeholders, such as governments at their various levels, parliaments and other state institutions, the media, the private sector and even donors and INGOs. As regards the context, it is a minority of mappings that do not include an assessment of the enabling environment for CSOs and social accountability (only 18 % of the mappings). The same applies to the assessment of participation, dialogue and engagement spaces between CS and public authorities, which has also been considered as a key element of the analysis.

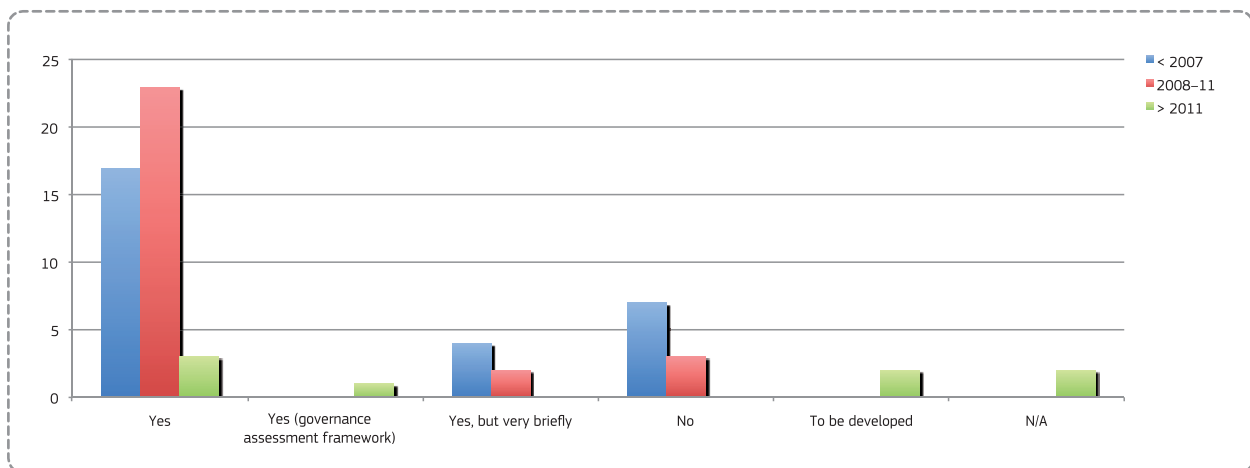
(12) See Methodological Tools 2 and 4 for further information

(13) See Methodological Tools 3 and 5 for further information.

(14) This expression has been coined by the Third Sector Research Centre. See <http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/Research/BelowtheRadarBtR/tabid/450/Default.aspx>

(15) See Section 3, What can we learn? — Interpreting the facts

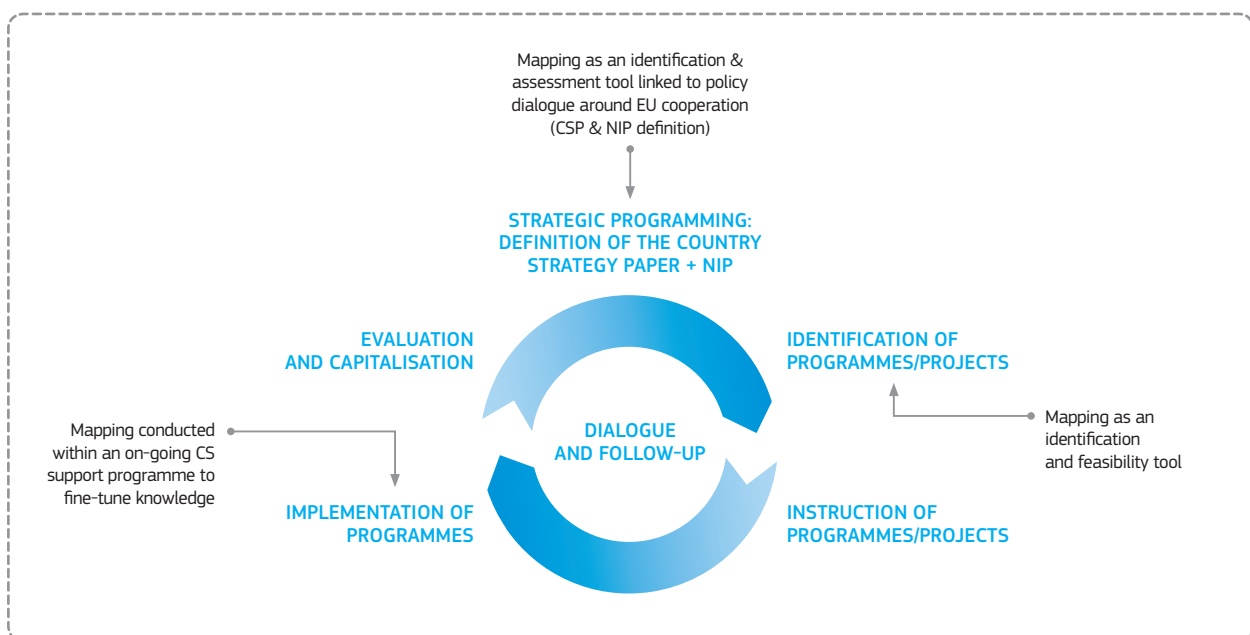
Figure 5: Consideration of the environment and existing participation spaces



2.3. The time within the EU policy cycle: when?

The time when a mapping is conducted depends on its objectives. When mappings have been used as an identification and feasibility tool (to prepare the grounds for a future CS support programme), they have been conducted during the programme's identification phase, right after the strategic programming stage and before the instruction phase. This has been particularly relevant in ACP countries during the ninth EDF. Some mappings have gone as far as drafting identification and action fiches and TA for ToR to assist EUDs in setting up the future programme (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Mappings within the EU programming cycle



Likewise, as previously highlighted, some mappings have been carried out as an aid to the ongoing ninth EDF support programmes (e.g. for the identification of capacity-building needs and priorities, to keep abreast of the changing environment) or to the mid-term and final evaluation exercises, i.e. throughout the implementation phase of the CS support programmes.

Box 4: Ethiopia mapping update

Prior to the second phase of the Civil Society Fund (CSF — the EDF-funded CS support programme), due to start in 2009, the delegation in Ethiopia commissioned a new mapping study.

This second mapping study aimed at updating the CS mapping exercise carried out in 2004. For the CSF, this exercise is intended to provide an updated picture of the distribution, coverage, and contributions of CSOs in order to inform and assist the planning and implementation of subsequent programmes aimed at enhanced CS participation as expected by the Cotonou Agreement. Moreover, the study was also expected to provide information that would be relevant to other donors and stakeholders to understand the CS landscape (including the legislative and institutional environment) and inform strategies and programmes related to their support. In terms of focus, the study endeavoured to respond to the eight specific objectives indicated in the ToR outlined below:

1. to update the 2004 CS mapping study by providing information on how many, what kind of and where, geographically and thematically, CSOs are currently working in Ethiopia,
2. to complement the 2004 CS mapping study and other relevant studies, notably by updating the 2004 CS mapping study and complementing the analysis on how CSOs organise themselves in networks and coordination fora, and how this benefits their contribution to development objectives,
3. to assess and present qualitative and quantitative information on the contribution CSOs make to national development and democratisation processes, particularly within the framework provided by the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (Pasdep), but also historically before the adoption of the latter, and to illustrate trends,
4. to highlight the challenges and opportunities that CSOs face in terms of contributing to the national development process and to propose solutions,
5. to assess CSO capacity to contribute to national development objectives, reporting developments, if any, in CSO capacity, and highlighting what capacity development requirements still exist,
6. to identify the needs of CSOs, especially in relation to capacity-building, with a view to improving their contribution to the development process and reinforcing their engagement, and furthermore, to propose strategies for capacity-building support which could help in future programme design,
7. to assess the status and quality of dialogue and cooperation between the government and CSOs towards achievement of national development objectives and propose measures to improve this dialogue and cooperation, if applicable,
8. to review how CSOs have been involved in policy development and monitoring and assess whether the implementation of the CSF has so far had a measurable impact on this involvement.

Mapping outcomes did not however inform the second phase of the CSF. In fact, the CSF second phase was basically 'an improved copy' of the first phase, which integrated the amendments progressively introduced throughout the first phase of implementation but did not bring major changes, particularly concerning institutional and management arrangements.

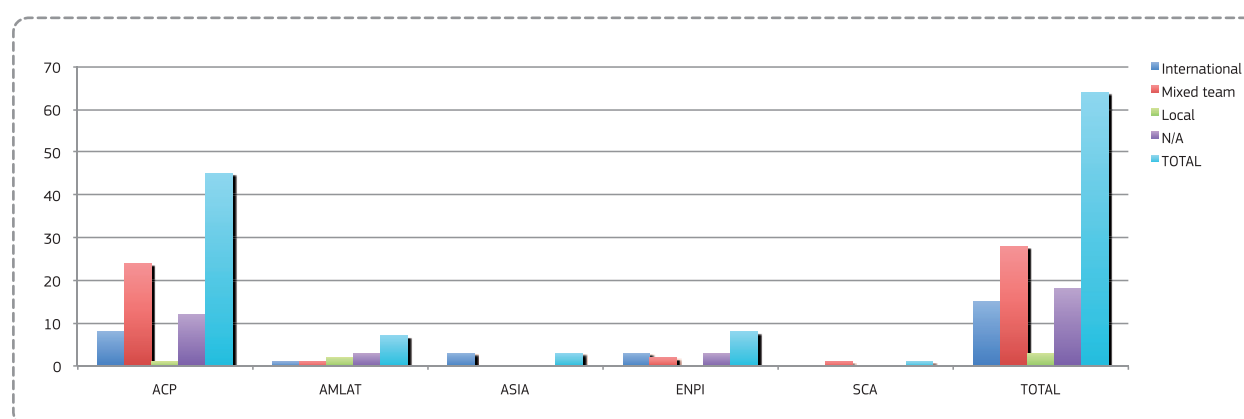
Finally, and more recently, mappings have started to be conducted as an aid to the programming stage, with a view to identifying the relevant CSOs for policy dialogue around EC cooperation and or sectoral policies (e.g. implementation of sector-wide approaches and/or budget support).

2.4. Resources mobilised by mappings (expertise, time and finances)

The question of resources needs to be approached from a twofold perspective: (i) the type of expertise mobilised to conduct the mappings; and (ii) the investment (in terms of financial resources and time) made by delegations from the preparation stage to follow-up.

As regards the expertise, most mappings have been conducted by a team of consultants, consisting of two to three experts in most cases, but up to seven experts in some mappings, particularly when the breadth and depth of the study were considerable (e.g. missions to all regions, surveys of a large number of CSOs). In terms of experts' nationality, most mappings have been conducted using a mixed team of experts (international and national) and only in one case was a local institution (a local university) involved.

Figure 7: Experts' nationality



With reference to the investment on the EUD side, two factors need to be considered. Firstly, there is the question of the financial resources that a mapping requires and the mechanisms to subcontract the expertise. Since the launch of the framework contract beneficiaries, the latter is the most commonly used procedure to contract out the expertise (Lot 7: Culture, Governance and Home Affairs). Correspondingly, mapping costs are usually under EUR 200 000. As for the provenance of these funds, they may come from the country allocation of the 'NSA and LA' thematic programme, or from the national indicative programme, particularly when governance and/or CS support are substantiated in the document and even more so when there is a CS capacity development programme. There are also new mechanisms of regional and thematic scope currently being developed at headquarters level. They include the DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid's mapping initiative in the realm of human rights and the recently launched 'Regional capacity-building programme for civil society facility south' ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Secondly, there is the issue of the time and dedication required from EUD staff (even beyond the civil society focal point) to ensure proper preparation, implementation and follow-up of the mapping results. Not only are EUD staff the main users of the mapping results, but they are also precious providers of knowledge and of support to the mapping itself (EC, 2010). However, considering that EUD are often overloaded, it may sometimes be difficult to actively involve all the relevant persons, in addition to the CS focal point, in the practical preparation and subsequent implementation of the study. Furthermore, evidence suggests that, unless there is a clear road map with straight-forward provisions on the use of mapping outcomes (e.g. in the framework of a CS support programme, to inform dialogue and select CS interlocutors), the follow-up stage is often neglected, as EUD staff attention turns to other matters and consultants move to a new assignment.

(16) The facility includes support to carry out a mapping study of the Neighbourhood South region aimed at identifying the region's non-state actors and analysing their needs and capacities to get involved in policy dialogue, as well as the way in which these actors can contribute to specific policies.

2.5. Common methodological approaches

While some mappings have opted for a rather normative approach (i.e. identifying CS groups that fit within pre-defined, often exogenous, criteria), others have adopted a more empirical approach (i.e. seeing what local/vernacular forms of association exist, including groups very specific to the particular national context and adopting the terminology accordingly). Furthermore, some mappings have been of a rather qualitative nature, whilst others have emphasised their quantitative dimension (i.e. 'getting the numbers right').

As regards the involvement of stakeholders, some exercises have been very participatory (i.e. strongly involving CSOs in the preparation and follow up of the exercise, or even in its implementation through a steering committee), while others have followed a more 'top-down' approach, steered by the EUD and eventually the national authorising officer (NAO) or partner country representatives.

Box 5: Example of participatory approach — The mapping study undertaken in the framework of the 'Strengthening Somali civil society' programme

The 'Strengthening Somali civil society' project (implemented by Oxfam Novib) was a new project in an area of programming for Somaliland, South Central Zone and Puntland. In order to develop the programme consultatively and to enhance understanding and visibility of Somali civil society, Oxfam Novib undertook a 'mapping' of Somali civil society organisations. The purpose of this mapping exercise was to understand better the nature of CSOs in Somalia and Somaliland and their links with Somali culture, tradition, history and language, links among themselves and links with INGOs, UN and donor bodies, so as to strengthen their role in the development of Somali society and to inform the international community on the status of social change within civil society in Somalia and Somaliland.

The mapping exercise entailed identifying, interviewing and recording CSOs and assessing their capacity, organisational structures, goals and mission and the relations among themselves and with international NGOs, the United Nations and donor agencies, and examining core issues, such as human rights, peace and the tension between tradition and modernity. In order to undertake this, the technique of sampling was used, as it was not realistic to assess every Somali organisation. However, it is felt that a representative sample from both Somalia and Somaliland was achieved.

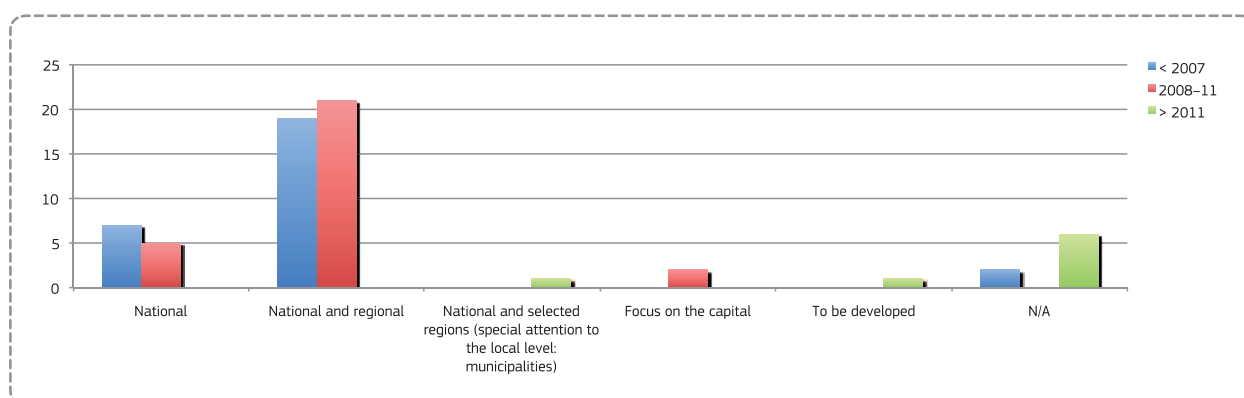
This activity proved to be an enormous undertaking. Oxfam Novib was and continues to be committed to using Somali skills and developing Somali capacity in activities as much as possible and also chose a participatory research methodology. A team of 21 Somali enumerators was identified by the lead consultant, Professor Mohamed Abdi Mohamed 'Gandhi', a respected Somali academic and peace activist. The enumerators were dispatched to all regions of Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Zone and, in total, interviewed nearly 500 organisations. The information from the questionnaires and focus group discussions was discussed and analysed in Nairobi. Oxfam Novib produced an analytical report, key findings were translated into Somali and the original team of enumerators took the translation back to the original informants for their comment.

This information and the report were presented to civil society representatives at a civil society symposium. Substantial comments were made on both the report and the database of organisations, leading to a thorough revision and consultation process. The mapping report was then published.

See: <http://somali-civilsociety.org/home/>

Geography-wise, only a minority of mappings have adopted a fundamentally national focus (approximately 20 % of the exercises, usually due to time and resource limitations), while the majority have balanced the national focus with some missions to regions/departments or even favoured the local focus, thus concentrating on local development and governance issues (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Territorial focus



As regards cooperation with other donors, there are only two cases of formal cooperation with other development partners (including donors and international NGOs) to conduct joint exercises. These are the mapping and identification study of a joint EU–UNDP governance in Chad and the mapping conducted in Somalia, co-funded by Oxfam Novib, in the framework of a CS support programme. Nonetheless, other donors and INGOs have reportedly shown an interest in EU mapping studies and used their outcomes.

Finally, it is also worth underlining that even though most mappings have so far been conducted as a ‘one-shot’ exercise, a number of them have been or are in the process of being updated, either completely or from a sectoral perspective.

CHAPTER 3

What can we learn? — Interpreting the facts

Moving now to an interpretative viewpoint, evidence confirms the evolving nature of mappings and the progress accomplished since the first exercises were launched back in the early 2000s, i.e. from a first round — or even first generation — of mappings, fundamentally ‘actor-based’ and aimed at obtaining a first snapshot of local civil society dynamics, and usually linked to the identification of capacity-building/development support programmes, to a second generation of mappings, more aware of the governance and political economy ⁽¹⁷⁾ implications of the exercise and oriented towards broader objectives (e.g. policy dialogue at local, national and/or sectoral levels). Such a qualitative leap was already underlined in 2009 for the ACP region ⁽¹⁸⁾.

Let’s take a closer look at the lessons learned and emerging trends, which support this view.

3.1. Lessons learned and emerging trends

3.1.1. Getting the balance right between state and society

Increasingly, mappings do not aim to produce a ‘still-life’ picture of the current situation of CSOs or a directory of existing organisations, but rather focus on the development and governance processes in which CSOs are involved, as well as on the ways in which CSOs can effectively interact and act as ‘drivers of change’ — and all this in a given set of dominant interests, key linkages, power relations and incentive systems, which the mapping also attempts to identify and assess.

This change of perspective goes hand in hand with the progressive recognition that CSOs are development actors in their own right ⁽¹⁹⁾, going far beyond the role of service providers. Today, democratic ownership is central to the notion of development effectiveness. This principle calls for a more strategic engagement with CS at the EUD level, on the grounds of a governance, multi-stakeholder and political economy perspective ⁽²⁰⁾.

It is also a change of perspective that echoes the current shift towards a new generation of capacity-development programmes, particularly in ACP countries (see Box 6).

(17) Political economy analysis is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth among different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time (ECDPM, 2010).

(18) The capitalisation study of CS support programmes (Florida, M. and Sanz Corella, B., 2009) stressed that mappings under the 10th EDF required a significant change in mentality. While in the course of the ninth EDF mappings had been fundamentally linked to the identification or the implementation of the CS support programme, over the course of the 10th EDF, mappings would instead have to be linked to the identification of a global CS engagement strategy (all modalities and instruments considered).

(19) See Annex 1 of the study ‘NSA and NAMS’ (EC, 2011a) for a comprehensive comparison between the conventional and strategic perspective of CSOs (NSAs in the study).

(20) In line with the Agenda for Change, CSO participation in public policy processes is increasingly seen as a core factor in ensuring inclusive and effective pro-poor policies and in the related allocation and management of public resources. Democratic ownership implies that governments systematically promote spaces for constructive participation of a variety of stakeholders (including civil society in its varied forms) in the different development policy phases. In Busan, governments, international institutions including the EU and civil society are committed to ‘operationalising’ this principle. In functioning democracies, national parliaments, supreme audit bodies and the judiciary are the institutions tasked with overseeing and building reinforced accountability systems to hold governments accountable (notably, but not only, at national level). CSOs can also play a determinant role in these domestic accountability systems. By analysing budget proposals and monitoring and tracking public revenues and expenditures, CSOs can contribute to ensuring that public resources are used to maximise impact on poverty reduction and equitable growth.

Box 6: Towards a second generation of capacity-development programmes in support of NSAs: the case of Mali

As in many other ACP countries, the EC launched an NSA support programme in line with actors' approach to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. This programme provided all parties involved with an opportunity to learn. Yet experience has shown that the programme lacked a strong enough focus on capacity development for participation in policy processes and advocacy work.

The donor community gradually focused on the important roles NSAs can play in the context of new aid modalities. As a result, a new type of NSA programme has been produced to address in a more targeted fashion the structural weaknesses of NSAs in Mali. The programme is a multi-stakeholder cooperation between donors (Canada, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, UNDP, EC), government and NSAs.

Source: EC, 2011a.

3.1.2. 'Going beyond the façade and looking below the 'radar' ⁽²¹⁾

Conscious of the fact that civil society comprises much more than formal CSOs and that in every society there is a mixture of formal and informal practices and institutions at work, mappings are progressively transcending the boundaries of formality, when looking at both the actors and processes (see Box 7) that interplay. This move is not, however, without its problems, considering that this inclusive approach has strong implications resource-wise, in terms of the increased level of financial resources required, longer time-span necessary to conduct the mapping, technical and methodological challenges and stronger EUD political commitment.

Box 7: About inclusion

'Large numbers of CSOs that fall outside such boundaries are much more important for the health of society than the formal ones inside the boundaries.' (Holloway in UNDP, 2011a)

'A further feature of methods is the extent to which assessments can move beyond a convenient starting point of capital city, urban settings, elites and the formal, visible features of civic associational life. Robust assessments must include foundational, rural, informal and fluid forms of civic agency, such as social movements and networks, and the processes connecting them. Achieving this inclusion has proven costly and technically problematic. [...] Simply put, sound assessment is tricky and costly. Results are seldom comparatively robust. But they are often adequate for the purpose of stimulating debate and attention to a relatively neglected sociopolitical force and phenomenon.' (Fowler in UNDP, 2011a)

'Far too often the relations between state and civil society are taken at face value. They are judged on their formal characteristics, relying heavily on a superficial assessment of the constitution, or formal state structures and procedures. However, in every society there is a mixture of formal and informal practices and institutions at work in these state–society relations: the so-called 'rules of the game'. The formal and more visible arrangements attract the attention: the laws, the rules, the codes, etc. But these don't tell the whole story. They need to be understood in their relation to informal practices and institutions.' (EC, 2011a)

(21) Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) - 'Below the Radar'

Despite the inevitable challenges, a number of countries are already moving in this direction when conducting new mapping studies. This is the case for instance in Senegal (see Box 8), where a mapping update exercise is currently taking place, which aims at integrating new actors, such as religious groups and emerging citizen movements. The current mapping exercise in Tunisia is another example, in the aftermath of the Jasmine Revolution.

Box 8: Senegal opens the way to a new mapping generation

Between January and July 2012, a new comprehensive mapping study was conducted in Senegal. Its purpose was twofold.

On the one hand, it aimed to update the information of its predecessor mapping (conducted in 2008), by looking ‘below the radar’ and integrating civic dynamics that had not been considered at that time (namely religious movements, as well as informal and fluid forms of citizen action and groupings, particularly at urban and peri-urban levels (e.g. youth movements). On the other hand, on the basis of EU commitments to domestic accountability and democratic ownership, the mapping aimed to provide a governance assessment of a number of selected sectors of particular relevance to EU cooperation (i.e. the quality of public finance in connection with the provision of basic public services, land management, natural resources management and social urban development).

The mapping, which adopts a more ‘political’ vision of the role of CS in domestic change, was conducted in combination with a political economy assessment, so that the two exercises could complement each other. A mixed team of seven consultants was deployed, and several sectoral workshops were organised, with a view to reaching a common understanding of the relationships and interactions amongst key stakeholders (state, CSOs, private sector, etc.) within each of the sectors on the basis of a sectoral multi-stakeholder governance framework. CSO internal governance systems were also analysed considering their relevance for the legitimacy and credibility of CSOs as development and governance actors in their own right. The ‘enabling environment’ also received particular attention.

See: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/senegal/index_fr.htm

It also needs to be emphasised that this approach is particularly pertinent in fragile contexts, with endemic instability and very limited governance. In this context, support is needed to build the resilience of communities as an essential foundation, through the creation or improvement of formal and informal systems from which an active CS can join, organise itself and act. Accordingly, it is of paramount importance that a broad range of local CS actors (even in a disorganised or informal manner, or not matching European standard forms of organisation) are involved in country assessments, as well as in political dialogue and in the programming and implementation of development cooperation, so that state building and the promotion of CS and citizenship take place in parallel and the social contract between the state and its citizens is established or reinforced.

3.1.3. Mapping as a catalyst to promote new relationships

Rather than being a simple research study, CSO mapping may constitute a change process involving several actors, namely: (i) the EU delegation, which may use the mapping to establish contact, in a new way, with a whole array of development actors, and discuss relevant development and governance policy and operational issues; (ii) the CSOs that participate in the study and are involved in a reflexive process implying a partial reconstruction of self-representation, a partial redefinition of their roles and initiatives and a redefinition of their ways to interact with EU and other development partners; and (iii) other development partners involved in consultation activities, which are also involved in rethinking ways to cooperate with the EU and with CSOs.

Reportedly, the scope of the change process linked to the mapping is directly proportional to the participatory approach being used and/or the breadth of the consultation activities being carried out. As a general principle, the change process is expected to be very limited if the CSO mapping exercise is based mainly on interviews with key persons and does not include collective interviews, focus groups and feedback workshops. On the contrary, the change process can be much more important if many collective consultation activities are carried out (EC, 2010). Nonetheless, some particular contexts deserve special attention. Evidence shows that in circumstances such as a weak system of rule of law or a conflict mappings require special methodologies to avoid further endangering CSOs.

In this context, considering the highly volatile political environments and the fragility of democratic political cultures, approaches need to be carefully designed. Any intervention should be based on local ownership, whilst the principles of ‘do no harm’⁽²²⁾ and abstain from risk-taking adventures also apply. Conflict analysis for priority setting and country programming needs to be used, as well as enhanced information, cooperation and joint advocacy with other development partners, including international CSOs.

3.1.4. Mapping agenda becomes more specific and focused

Most developing countries have been witnessing deep political, institutional and societal changes that have transformed the landscape in which CSOs operate. They include democratic changes (even revolutions), enhanced decentralisation efforts, rapid economic growth or economic stagnation, pressing demands from youth, rapid urbanisation, diversification of the economic basis, emergence of a new middle class and/or new socioeconomic groups, social inclusion challenges, technological changes, widespread use of ICTs, migration patterns and climate change. As mappings evolve, and particularly when updates are conducted, they tend to become increasingly focused (in terms of the questions addressed, the themes and sectors assessed and and/or actors covered by the study), hence leaving behind the ‘all-encompassing approach’ that used to characterise the first generation of mappings.

Box 9: Changes in the Asian landscape

The wide set of changes that have taken place in this region (characterised by its growing centrality in the world economic and political scenario) have interacted with the development of CS and CSOs. However, the new roles and the new features assumed by CSOs in this changing environment require further research and analysis. Some issues may be specifically identified as worthy of further exploration through CSO mapping studies, including:

- the way CSOs are interacting with the broadening of the middle class and the new professional groups in urban and rural areas, and how they are dealing with the social crisis that is often related to these processes (new socially excluded groups and new social exclusion processes, etc.);
- the role played by CSOs in the management of economic, social and technological changes, and particularly the extent to which they adopt an innovative perspective or, on the contrary, a conservation role;
- the way CSOs are involved in the management of urban development processes and in the delicate and complex relationship between urban and rural areas;
- the way CSOs are participating in political and institutional processes: the extent to which they adopt a proactive role, or are a mute witness or passive subject in enlarging or decreasing democratic processes.

Without further reflection on the position of CSOs in the general development processes of the Asian region, identifying an EU strategy to support civil society development will prove difficult.

Source: EC, 2010.

This specialisation trend is particularly evident as regards the sectoral approach⁽²³⁾, which mappings increasingly adopt. This development goes hand in hand with the increasing use of budget support and sector-wide approaches and the now widely acknowledged role CSOs play in domestic accountability and democratic ownership, as put forward by the recent communication on the future of EU budget support to third countries⁽²⁴⁾.

(22) For further information see Anderson, Mary B. (1999) and Lynne, R. and Le Billon, P. (2000).

(23) Also referred to as the ‘domain’ approach to avoid confusion with the mappings that consider civil society as a sector.

(24) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0638:FIN:EN:PDF>

The communication calls for systematic support to domestic accountability, with particular focus on CSOs' role in oversight functions and participation in budget processes. The communication calls for 'strengthening the openness, transparency and accountability of the budget process' and promotes a 'participatory budget approach' ⁽²⁵⁾. This is an important new area of engagement for EU support ⁽²⁶⁾.

Box 10: Mapping the transport sector in Ivory Coast

Between March and August 2012, a sectoral study was conducted in Ivory Coast, to map out the relevant actors and assess their roles, core functions, interactions (amongst themselves and also with the public and private sectors) and internal capacity. The assessment was part of the identification phase of a new EDF-funded comprehensive programme supporting the road sector in Ivory Coast, particularly in connection with a component of the programme aimed at supporting the capacity development of both key CS and private actors directly or indirectly involved in the sector. CSOs and private actors from all levels (from grassroots to national) were targeted, including organisations such as transport trade unions, drivers' associations, women's associations, common-interest membership-based organisations and private transport companies. In total, 45 actors were interviewed and several regional multi-stakeholder workshops were organised to debate the sector's problems and potentialities. The report came up with a concrete proposal to support the capacity development of the key actors within the overall programmatic framework targeting the national transport endowment.

See: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/cote_ivoire/index_fr.htm

3.1.5. Sound and increasingly sophisticated frameworks and methodologies

The landscape of mappings has evolved greatly in the past decade, with the emergence and progressive consolidation of a number of sound and increasingly sophisticated frameworks and tools, which intend to better capture and assess the complexities inherent in civic dynamics and CSOs. They include the development of sound methodological approaches to mapping, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods ⁽²⁷⁾, as well as ever more participatory techniques aimed at ensuring ownership of the mapping process and outcomes, the use of the actor-differentiated analysis framework ⁽²⁸⁾, now widely used across mappings, the adoption of a multidimensional concept of CS capacity development ⁽²⁹⁾, particularly when developing CS support programmes, or more recently the operational guidance framework developed for the engagement of NSA in budget support (EC, 2011a) among others (see Box 11).

(25) 'Participatory budget processes' are processes in which citizens and CSOs are involved in formulating and monitoring budget implementation, potentially leading to more equitable and effective public spending and fostering transparency and ownership. Participatory interactions in these budgetary processes may range from consultation to information sharing and monitoring. Participation in budgetary processes is a key entry point for CSO engagement in choosing public priorities and actions.

(26) See reference document on 'Engaging non-state actors in new aid modalities' (http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/file/09/11/2011_-_1127/nsa_en_ver_web.pdf).

(27) Qualitative methods include interviews with key informants, focus groups and collective interviews and the analysis of documents, etc., while quantitative studies include small surveys, available statistics, institutional assessments grids, surveys on capacity strengthening needs, etc.

(28) See Methodological Tool 3.

(29) Based on the identification of three main capacity areas: (i) individual skills, where questions linked to the professional capacities of staff and questions linked to strategic leadership are addressed; (ii) organisational internal dynamics, which include the presence of organisational conditions in order to make the most of individual skills and available resources, with specific attention paid to identity aspects, as well as to the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness; and (iii) the organisation's interactions with other actors and the context, including capacities to interact with the environment and to manage available opportunities and challenges. Promoting capacity development can, therefore, be a highly complex process, as it needs an appreciation of many domains of knowledge and many disciplines.

Box 11: Common methodological strengths as identified by the current capitalisation study

- Adaptation of terminology and methodology to the specific context and inclusion of vernacular dynamics in the analysis.
- Widespread use of the participatory approach (e.g. focus groups, workshops, steering committee comprising CSOs).
- Sound assessment of the enabling environment and existing engagement and dialogue spaces.
- Use of a territorial approach and good balance between national focus and regional/local coverage.
- Good balance between quantitative and qualitative analysis.
- Good balance between general assessments (CS as a whole) and in-depth assessments, particularly of third- and fourth-level CSOs.

3.2. Challenges, tensions and limitations

On the flip side, mappings have been confronted with a number of challenges, tensions and limitations.

To start with, most mappings have had to strike a balance between the breadth and depth of the study, considering the limited resources and time available. What is more, and all too often, there has been a mismatch between the level of ambitions portrayed in the mappings ToR and the resources that have been effectively invested.

This mismatch goes hand in hand with the absence of clear objectives and a flawed design which have characterised some of the mappings. Evidence suggests that clear objectives are of paramount importance to ensure the quality of the work and use of the findings. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case in past mappings, which have also sometimes suffered from an overly strict ‘actor-based’ approach and the absence of formal links with other EU political economy and governance assessment tools.

Insufficient cooperation with other donors, using different but complementary analysis tools, as well as the insufficient ‘stock-taking’ of existing and parallel analyses, is another common limitation. This study reveals that only one mapping and feasibility study was conducted as a joint mission with another donor. Cooperation is, therefore, an ‘outstanding matter’ for the aid effectiveness agenda, especially considering the increasing number of complementary frameworks and tools available (e.g. power analysis, drivers for change, governance assessments), as will be further assessed in the next section.

The tension between exogenous notions and endogenous and vernacular processes has been present in a number of mappings. As Holloway notes (UNDP, 2011a), the majority of the discourse about civil society, and civil society assessments, is under the umbrella of the international aid industry. In this regard, mappings and CS assessments are generally shaped by the agendas of donors or other international actors and driven by the nature of the funds and the funder.

This distance from local reality is also evident in mappings where there has been insufficient buy-in from local CSOs. Most commonly this low ownership has resulted from the lack of a more elaborated participatory approach, whereby CSOs are not just seen as ‘the objects’ of the assessment, but rather as subjects whose involvement needs to be ensured throughout the process.

The risk of political interference has been particularly evident in difficult and/or non-conducive environments. True, a critical challenge faced by civil society in many countries around the world concerns the issue of political space for the implementation of mappings. Evidence shows that open mappings and CS assessments within non-enabling and restrictive political environments may overly expose a sector that is generally seen as ‘antagonistic’ or even ‘oppositional’ to government interests. Accordingly, in some contexts, the drafting of a shadow report has become a common practice (e.g. the mapping in Venezuela).

Further tension results from the need to strike a balance between the provision of a general overview of CS and the undertaking of individual CSO assessments, on which to base funding and partnering decisions. So far, only a few mappings have included individual assessments of CSOs (usually third- and fourth-level CSOs) and have favoured an overall view of CS. However, this kind of in-depth assessment is increasingly required (i.e. to assess CSO values and aims, performance, internal governance mechanisms) as EUDs shift to a more strategic engagement with their partners.

Box 12: Critical dynamics within CSOs

CS is not a homogenous group, nor does it represent one set of interests. CS is not exempt from the political and power dynamics that shape the rest of the policy. The role of CSOs should not be accepted uncritically or naively. Over the past 15 years, there has been a massive proliferation in the breadth and number of CSOs in many developing countries. This rapid expansion calls for prudence in assuming the inherent ‘good’ of various CSOs. Unsworth questions the simplistic dichotomy between civil society as an ‘autonomous, democratic sphere’, in opposition to an ‘authoritarian state’. In reality, there may be as many challenges posed by ‘civil’ society as there are positives.

For example, reviews conducted in Mozambique and Nepal found that a proliferation of civil society organisations did not necessarily reveal the strength of the political system, as many groups (particularly NGOs) were in reality ‘little more than personal enterprises’ and vehicles for receiving funds. Moreover, where CSOs are concerned, there is a dominant tendency to focus on the ‘usual suspects’, such as national NGOs. This can lead to the legitimacy, representativeness and credibility of these actors being unquestioned.

Source: EC, 2011a.

And last but not least, as already evidenced in the report, there is the not-yet resolved imperative to update the exercises, considering the evolving and changing nature of local civil societies and the costs that regular updating may entail. As the two regional studies highlighted (EC, 2009 and 2010), an important feature of a mapping is its linkage with time and with processes and events. A mapping cannot produce findings that are valid forever. Because of the changing nature of CSOs and their environment, the mapping exercise needs to be replicated after some time ⁽³⁰⁾.

(30) Interestingly enough, several of these challenges, tensions and limitations are also evidenced in recent studies, such as the UNDP conceptual analysis on participatory CS assessments conducted in 2011. According to Fowler (UNDP, 2011a), the 10 most common challenges, tensions and limitations faced by CS assessments are: (i) the adoption of generally exogenous (modernised, Western-informed) perspectives on civil society as an analytic category and its functions; (ii) the assumption that a particular quality of citizenship is in play; (iii) overly homogenised findings to aid comparative analysis; (iv) a strong focus on actors rather than on sociopolitical processes, particularly in relation to power (re)distribution corresponding to civil society as a political category; (v) mappings remain predominantly within the realm of the formally established expressions of civic agency; (vi) the exhibition of urban biases in terms of elite perspectives and participation; (vii) difficulties in capturing the layering of associational forms from local to (trans)national; (viii) underplaying subnational governance and other power arrangements as (potential) policy and action sites; (ix) the absence of a gender approach; and (x) the correspondence to the interests of established, urban CSOs rather than the mass of citizens. See the next section for further information.

CHAPTER 4

Other civil society assessment tools and current debates ⁽³¹⁾

As experienced by the EU, recent years have also seen a sustained trend among development partners to mainstream civil society assessments, together with governance and political economy analysis, into their policy and operational frameworks ⁽³²⁾. In addition, CSOs themselves have increasingly become interested in CS assessments, in their search for practical frameworks and tools with which to assess their capacity and/or performance to deliver results and be accountable to their constituents.

Echoing this growing interest, recent years have seen substantial developments in the landscape of civil society assessments, with the emergence of a number of new frameworks, methodologies, applications for policy and practice, and tools. The repertoire today is wide-ranging, a situation that corresponds to the assortment of factors which inform the reasons why the assessment is being undertaken, for whom, with what scope, where and when, as well as the resources available.

4.1. Different approaches to assess civil society

4.1.1. Civil society mappings vs. assessments of individual or small groups of CSOs

Civil society assessments generally fall into two categories: those that aim to evaluate the civil society arena or sector (in line with most EU mapping studies conducted to date) and those that assess the individual performance of a number of selected CSOs.

In the first category, assessments may focus on the CS sector as a whole (e.g. Civicus assessments, see Box 13) or alternatively on CSOs in aggregate (thus focusing on aggregated CSO capacity, engagement, governance and impact, legal context, basic freedoms and space for social and political action) (UNDP, 2011b). Additionally, as the next section addresses, civil society assessments can be part of a broader governance assessment or concentrate exclusively on CSOs.

(31) Recently, UNDP has produced a set of three interrelated publications (comprising a conceptual analysis, a users' guide review of existing tools and a compilation of a number of case studies) in an effort to take stock of what has worked and identify lessons for future exercises. The analysis that follows is largely based on UNDP's findings, complemented by lessons learned on the use of political economy analysis and governance assessment tools.

(32) According to ECDPM (2009), this shift is instilling more realism in donors' strategies, including in the support they provide for civil society and evidence that relevant lessons have been learned. Context comes first: by investing in understanding the local civil society area, development partners have become aware that there is no room for one-size-fits-all approaches. It is context that determines what is feasible and who the drivers are. Strategies need to be adapted to changing conditions and priorities at field level. Secondly, politics and power matter: development partners have realised that supporting civil society as a key development and governance actor is not only about providing financial support and capacity development. It is also about facilitating state and civil society relations and defending CS space when necessary.

Box 13: The Civicus Civil Society Index (UNDP, 2011b)

Within the existing landscape of civil society assessments, one of the best known is Civicus' Civil Society Index (CSI). The CSI has extensive coverage globally and is very widely used, probably even the most widely used civil society assessment.

The CSI is a method created by and for civil society. A team of civil society representatives leads the process and information is provided by other CSOs through workshops and surveys. The CSI is also one of the few CSO-led methods that consider the civil society sector as a whole.

The first round of CSI implementation covered 49 countries and territories and the results of the second phase were released in 2011. The CSI's greatest strength is its breadth: it enables a comprehensive evaluation of all major aspects of civil society. The method covers five dimensions of civil society (civic engagement, level of organisation, practice of values, perception of impact and environment). It uses multiple indicators and strives for a comprehensive assessment. The CSI examines 27 sub-dimensions and does so through diverse methods — surveys, focus groups and analysis. It includes ratings for comparison and reports for background and nuance.

The CSI has been implemented and used in so many contexts it has created a common understanding of civil society among policymakers, advocates, and scholars. The CSI has mobilised donor support for civil society programming, sparked national policy dialogues and fed national strategies on civil society and created an enabling environment for civic participation.

The CSI's greatest weakness comes from its strength: its comprehensiveness can make implementation challenging, as it requires substantial time and resources. This is probably the main reason why the CSI has not been conducted in more countries or more often. But another reason is that it is not the right tool for all contexts. The CSI method favours comparability over adaptation, and while the method used for the 2011 release has increased space for local methodological changes, the CSI will always have requirements that will conflict with the diverse needs and priorities found around the world. Countries which, for example, wish to delve deeper into a single area or want to tie their civil society assessment to another governance assessment method being implemented will benefit from alternatives to the CSI. Moreover, the CSI is implemented in several countries simultaneously as part of an international effort, a timeline that may not fit with some local considerations.

In order to maintain certain global standards and project unity, Civicus has sacrificed some of the stakeholder ownership of local civil society assessments. This has meant that the CSI's reach has not always been as broad as desired. The CSOs directly involved may learn from the process and promote change, but it can be difficult to impact on other CSOs or policymakers in the country. In addition, the intense level of resources required for CSI implementation can be difficult to maintain, resulting in unrealised recommendations and findings that are never used for action.

See: <http://csi.civicus.org/>

The second group of assessments examines a single CSO or, more generally, a small group of designated CSOs. These types of assessments usually cover the following institutional dimensions: internal capacity; programme impact; engagement with beneficiaries; and accountability and other internal governance features. They also cover the legal and political context and assessments of the civil society sector. Some of the latter are designed as self-assessments, in which a CSO evaluates itself, and others are external assessments, in which a CSO is evaluated by government, donors, academic researchers, intergovernmental organisations or other civil society organisations (UNDP, 2011b).

Box 14: The Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)

The Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) is a tool for nonprofit organisations used to measure operational capacity and identify areas for improvement. The OCAT was designed 10 years ago to help nonprofits assess their organisational capacity and identify areas that need improvement. It allows nonprofits to rate themselves across a range of critical areas, including vision, strategy, organisational health and human resources. Since its launch, the tool has been used by thousands of funders and nonprofits, more than 70 organisations have requested permission to modify or replicate the tool, post it on their websites or distribute it among their own grantees, and it has been translated into 11 languages. Today the OCAT 2.0 initiative online is being launched.

See: <http://www.vpppartners.org/learning/mckinsey-vpp-ocat>

4.1.2. Focus on CSOs vs CSOs as part of a broader governance agenda

While some assessments adopt a 'sectoral approach' when looking at CS, i.e. focusing exclusively on CS (as opposed to the public and private for-profit sectors), there are an increasing number of assessments including CS within a broader governance assessment framework, on the grounds that a healthy and vibrant civil society is an inherent part of any system of democratic governance. This is the case, for instance, of the 'drivers of change' approach (see Box 15).

Box 15: 'Drivers of change' by DFID

'Drivers of change' (DoC) is an approach developed by DFID to address the lack of linkages between a country's political framework and the operations of development agencies. The approach focuses on the interplay of economic, social and political factors supporting or impeding poverty reduction.

The evolution of this approach has gone hand in hand with an approach to development which emphasises that: (i) the way development happens, or does not happen, is shaped by political context; and (ii) to be effective, donors' country strategies must be based on a sound understanding of historical and political context.

More specifically, DoC is rooted in a concern to better understand how to make change happen in specific country contexts: 'Usually, we have a good idea about what needs to be done to achieve poverty reduction, but are much less clear about why it's not happening. All too often, we attribute slow or no progress to lack of political will ... It's this black box of lack of political will that DoC analysis unpacks. This should result in this phrase disappearing from the risk column of a country assistance plan or regional assistance plan.' (Suma Chakrabati, at the time DFID Permanent Secretary, quoted in Thornton and Cox, 2005).

Source: ODI, 2009.

Experience shows that the results of a more intensive and extensive CS assessment can help give more informed and nuanced results on governance. On the flip side, a civil society assessment is not always useful in isolation. The capacity, engagement, internal governance and impact of CSO are all affected by the environment in which CSOs operate. Thus a governance assessment can supplement civil society assessment results to give a better understanding and help develop a plan of action. Ultimately, both governments and CSOs must be evaluated to best gauge overall effectiveness. In some cases, governance assessments may be challenging, especially in countries with strong authoritarian structures. In these cases, a civil society assessment may instead be paired with another assessment such

as a poverty assessment (UNDP, 2011b). Ultimately, regardless of whether they are conducted in parallel or the CS is part of a broader governance assessment framework, what is important is to reinforce the link between the two.

4.1.3. CSO-led assessments (self-assessments) vs external assessments

From this perspective, the scope of civil society assessments can be broadly divided into two groups: those that are led by CSOs (the so-called self-assessments) and those that are not, which are for the most part donor-driven. In the latter, CSOs usually remain major stakeholders and may be consulted, participate in data collection or play some role other than leadership.

Donors continue to be the main promoters of CS assessments. Generally speaking, donor-led assessments cover the same range of themes and questions as those promoted and led by CSO themselves. However, they tend to reflect the priorities of the international community (i.e. donor assessments may be more concerned with accounting for how resources were used or with meeting a set of benchmarks). In extreme cases, a donor assessment may divert resources and attention from CSOs' own missions and goals. Donor methods also tend to be less transparent (not often published) and are rarely performed in a participatory process. On the other hand, donors are more likely than CSOs to consider international standards, such as the millennium development goals. Donor-led assessments have a more consistent focus on gender (millennium development goal number 3) as well as poverty (goal number 1). In addition, because they are generally adequately funded, they can be more comprehensive. In practice, CSO-led assessments give CSOs a greater opportunity to learn from the assessment process and have ownership over the results. This makes future improvement in performance and impact more likely (UNDP, 2011b).

4.2. Lessons learned and emerging trends

Based on the past and present landscape of CS assessments, a number of lessons and trends can be highlighted, some of which are very much in line with ones that characterise EU mappings.

To start with, there is genuine and growing interest in CS assessment frameworks and tools. Over the past decade, new and innovative civil society assessment methods have continued to be published on a regular basis, thus testifying to the interest in civil society assessments, which, along with the drive to develop and release new methods, has not waned over the years.

Despite this growing interest, there is room for improvement in the use of CS assessment outcomes, particularly by CSOs. So far, CS assessment outcomes have been used in a broad range of ways, from improving knowledge about CS in order to better ground policy and operational decisions (mainly donors) to strengthening CSO coalitions and the sector as a whole, or even improving CSOs' own strategic programming and decision-making. The most common use for civil society assessments remains funding and programmatic decision-making among donors who produce their own assessments, on the basis of their own policy and operational requirements. There is a risk, however, that this becomes a 'missed opportunity for CSOs' (UNDP, 2011b), as they could greatly benefit from leading, co-leading or at least being strongly involved in their own assessments.

Lately, in response to this statement, CSO-led assessments seem to be on the rise. Allegedly most available framework tools have been developed in a participatory manner and can, therefore, be implemented through a participatory process. Today, thanks to the existing wealth of tested frameworks and tools, CSO-led assessments (both of CS as a whole and as self-assessments of individual or a cluster of CSOs) are easier to implement. There is also a trend towards good practice standards and/or codes of conduct, in the face of increasing external scrutiny regarding CS governance and accountability systems. Even donor-led tools recognise the importance of engaging with CSOs and including them throughout the process as a means to ensure ownership over the process and its outcomes.

In addition, the objectives and purpose of the assessment, as well as the context where it is applied, matter. In other words, to be fully relevant, assessment tools need to be adapted to: (i) better serve the purposes they pursue; and (ii) suit the specificities of the context (e.g. absence of political will by authorities, risk of political interference, fragmented CS, absence of reliable data). Genuine 'civil society infrastructure' emerges indigenously (UNDP, 2011b) and even though external drivers can influence this process, initiatives are unlikely to last without successful adaptation to local context and realities.

Furthermore, there are a number of tools that do not require major investment and/or can be implemented easily. Although several CS assessments require a considerable investment (both in terms of human and financial resources),

there are some tools that can be conducted using existing knowledge and available resources (this holds particularly true for the individual CSO assessments which can be undertaken by CSO staff) and, consequently, do not involve major investments. There are also new developments in CS assessments, such as the new generation of rapid assessments launched by Civicus (see Box 16).

Box 16: The World Alliance for Citizen Participation (Civicus) has recently launched its new civil society self-assessment tool, the Civil Society Index Rapid Assessment (CSI-RA)

To meet rising demands, Civicus, building on its landmark Civil Society Index project, designed the CSI-RA as a flexible, faster and cheaper civil society self-assessment tool, offering a new methodology to help civil society better assess its own strengths, challenges, potential and needs in a range of different situations and contexts. Each CSI-RA assessment will be customised around the desired outcomes in each context, to ensure that the assessment generates useful and actionable data. Once customised, CSI-RA projects will be easily repeatable, offering the opportunity to identify trends over time.

Led by and for civil society, the CSI-RA has already generated considerable CSO interest, and Civicus aims to roll out the first phase of the CSI-RA in north, west and central Africa throughout 2012. Tunisia is the first roll out ⁽³³⁾. Following the Jasmine Revolution, the project, starting in March 2012, is expected to contribute to a broader UNDP programme to support active citizenship, with four main components: (i) a needs assessment of Tunisian civil society; (ii) a proposal for a reformed regulatory framework for civil society; (iii) a strengthened technical and institutional framework for civil society capacity development; and (iv) stronger democracy education for young people.

Finally, as for the EU, evidence reveals that CS assessments are rarely repeated to track results over time. Despite the growing use of CS assessments, there is not yet a strong body of results demonstrating performance over time (UNDP, 2011b). Only a few data collection systems and the CSI (which has so far been implemented twice) have been conducted regularly. As a result, there is little systematic knowledge of how CSOs have changed and developed or of global trends over time. Funding shortages are reported as one of the major problems to be tackled if this trend is to be changed.

(33) <https://civicus.org/news-and-resources/766-after-the-jasmine-revolution-civil-society-index-rapid-assessment-csi-ra-launches-in-tunisia>

Part 2

THE WAY FORWARD

CHAPTER 5

Where next with mappings and civil society assessments?

So far, mappings have played an important role in acknowledging the relevance of CS in a country's institutional landscape and in providing evidence-based knowledge of how local societies interact. Furthermore, mappings have been useful in developing and establishing a common language and discourse, which have permeated the public arena.

Today, building on the progress made since 2000 and in response to the calls for a more strategic engagement with CSOs, particularly at country level, there is a common understanding that the time is right for a next generation of mappings and civil society assessments which complement, but extend beyond, existing logics and practices.

5.1. The changing environment and the need for a strategic engagement with local CSOs

There is increasing recognition across both the academic and aid practitioners' literature that development and social change are fundamentally political processes in key respects. This represents a major shift from past practice, when development partners commonly saw their role primarily in terms of the provision of financial and technical assistance to promote particular agendas around governance, growth or service delivery (DFID, 2011).

In the aftermath of the people-led Arab Spring, which underscores that sound progress on the millennium development goals is essential, but not sufficient, and through the recently issued communication 'An agenda for change', the EU has reaffirmed governance, in its political, economic, social and environmental terms, as a cornerstone for inclusive and sustainable development. The communication (2011) also places a strong emphasis on the need for the EU to strengthen its links with different CSOs through regular dialogue and use of best practices. It also stresses the importance of support for the emergence of an organised local civil society able to act as a watchdog and partner in dialogue with national governments.

Against this background, a new communication is currently being prepared by the European Commission ⁽³⁴⁾ on how to further enhance the effectiveness and impact of its partnership with CSOs, particularly at country level, in democratic governance and sustainable development. This post-Busan communication, which builds on the results of the structured dialogue, will be issued in the second half of 2012, and is intended to provide a policy framework for a more strategic engagement with CSOs for the period 2014–20.

There are no clear-cut recipes for engaging more strategically with CSOs. A tailored common vision needs to be constructed and operationalised at country level, on the basis of the context and its drivers for change. This requires a sound understanding of the actors, the environment they operate in, the national/sectoral/local processes of change they are engaged in, their interrelation with other relevant actors (the state, the private sector) and their own dynamics and governance systems.

The following sections guide the reader through a step-by-step process of conducting a mapping. They are directed at mapping commissioners and users, who are interested in mapping design and implementation ⁽³⁵⁾.

5.2. Determining the objectives and scope of the mapping and getting the timing right

5.2.1. Defining what the mapping is for

The first step in any mapping process is to know the objectives (why or what the mapping is for). Without clear objectives, the findings of a mapping will not be useful ⁽³⁶⁾. Since mapping is about supporting decision-making, the clearer the scope of decision-making and the actors involved are, the more accurate and straight-forward the ToR will be and, consequently, the more useful and concrete the results will also be (see Box 17).

(34) The communication was not yet public when the study was finalised (July 2012).

(35) See Methodological Tool 1 for a comprehensive checklist for mapping commissioners.

(36) See Section 3.2 about challenges and tensions.

In other words, one should determine what it is trying to accomplish, as well as who the target audience is, both within and outside the boundaries of the EUD. For example, is it about identifying relevant CS actors in priority sectoral areas with whom to consult in the definition and follow-up of sectoral policies? Is it about identifying and assessing legitimate actors (hence looking at their internal governance mechanisms) with whom to dialogue about the country strategy paper and other national and/or sectoral policies? Is it about constructing a common vision of CS as ‘an institution’ to be shared with CS actors themselves, the government and other development partners? Is it about ‘making the case’ for civil society to enhance its visibility (of both the actors and their development outcomes) vis-à-vis the government? Or is the goal more specific, such as contributing to project identification, formulation and management by identifying key roles of CSOs in the different phases? Or is it about collecting information to feed the forthcoming CfP guidelines?

All reasons are legitimate reasons, but need to be agreed upon and subsequently spelled out in the ToR.

Box 17: Why do we need to assess civil society?

Assessing civil society is important for a number of reasons:

1. Assessments enable CSOs to enhance the quality of performance and demonstrate results.

If the weaknesses of the CSO sector are not clear, they cannot be addressed. Assessments are crucial to understanding where improvement is necessary and to maintaining civil society as an effective force. CSO assessments can help to examine how programming decisions are made and whether the concerns of beneficiaries are considered in them.

2. Assessments improve CSO accountability, internal governance and legitimacy.

Over the past few decades, the size of CSOs and their number, scope and influence have grown massively. This growth has raised understandable questions about their legitimacy, transparency and accountability. Assessments allow CSOs to be scrutinised against the same standards they demand of governments. Even if the results expose weaknesses, the simple process of conducting and publishing an evaluation increases organisational accountability and legitimacy and also improves public perception. Civil society certification programmes have the added benefit of enabling an external seal of approval to be granted. Scrutiny is important because doubts about civil society can undermine support for the genuine contribution that CSOs make to policy and society. If a donor withdraws funds due to concerns about corruption, a CSO might have to cease operations. If a government rebuffs CSO advocacy on the basis that the CSO does not maintain its own internal governance structure, an entire programme could be challenged. Public perceptions of CSOs may be tarnished by scandals or misperceptions that could be clarified by revealing internal processes.

3. The process itself can make civil society stronger.

Learning how to implement an assessment often strengthens CSO capacity to conduct and disseminate research, as well as take action based on evidence. Assessments can also enhance connections between CSOs, promoting cooperation and mutual support. In addition, if an assessment is led by a CSO, it gives the organisation the opportunity to address the need for evaluation on its own terms, rather than leaving it to others who may have different objectives and interests. Through assessment, the CSO will gain knowledge about the state of civil society and its role in the country’s governance and development in a way that does not threaten its independence.

4. Assessments can help improve conditions for civil society.

Assessments of the environment in which civil society functions can provide valuable information about the external challenges CSOs face, such as weak public support or an antagonistic regime. The findings can be used to help devise strategies to improve conditions and support the strengthening of CSOs, as well as for awareness raising. In particular, multilateral donors have an interest in assessment as the first step towards determining what kind of intervention is required and the potential for partnership. This is in keeping with the Paris Declaration, which commits donors to strive for an enabling environment for civil society.

5.2.2. What is wanted vs what is feasible: context matters

In the definition of the objectives, it is important to consider the context. Evidence suggests that context matters and strongly influences objectives by introducing the dimension of feasibility: are the ambitions underpinning the objectives feasible in the given context? A number of examples are given below.

In countries with a strong and rich civil society, mappings can focus on governance issues and on the participation and dialogue space CSOs are able to negotiate and maintain through their vertical and horizontal integration. This is particularly relevant in those contexts where, despite being rich, diversified and recognised, civil society is deeply fragmented, a factor that strangles civil society's capacity to participate effectively in governance and policy processes

There are also countries where civil society's contribution to facilitating poor and marginalised people's access to basic services is well acknowledged, but CSOs are not recognised as autonomous actors, i.e. as development actors in their own right. In such cases, mappings can aim to make the various roles played by CSOs visible (particularly governance and agency-related roles, beyond traditional service delivery). In some of these countries a key issue may be identifying the boundaries of civil society. As a matter of fact, these boundaries are very often mobile or uncertain, as also revealed in many cases by the legal framework of CSOs. In some countries, there is no legal framework, whilst in others, autonomous CSOs, 'governmental NGOs' (the so-called GONGOs or even royal NGOs in some contexts) and politically affiliated 'mass organisations' are all considered in the same category.

There are contexts where civil society is weak and/or underdeveloped, and still struggling with fundamental issues of capacity and sustainability. In such settings, mappings can be a constructive tool to identify major capacity gaps at the various levels and the support modalities that are well suited to address them.

There are also countries where civil society space is virtually absent, because no actor has the capacity to adopt a proactive role, interpreting and representing the perspectives and the needs of the people, and to translate these into policy agendas that can be fostered at the various levels, from very local to national (EC, 2010). These situations require different approaches and strategies in mappings, as they require 'going beyond the radar' in terms of actors and processes.

Finally, in difficult environments, when carefully conducted to avoid further endangering CSOs, mappings can become a useful tool for digging into the context and assessing the contravening forces that CSOs face.

The geographical scope of the mapping is another relevant issue. Experience suggests that it is not feasible to have one single 'mapping' in very large and differentiated countries (e.g. China, India). In such cases, regional, local or sectoral mappings are more relevant options.

5.2.3. Defining when to conduct a mapping

The time when a mapping should be conducted depends on its objectives ⁽³⁷⁾. Three moments appear particularly relevant in the programming cycle (see Figure 9):

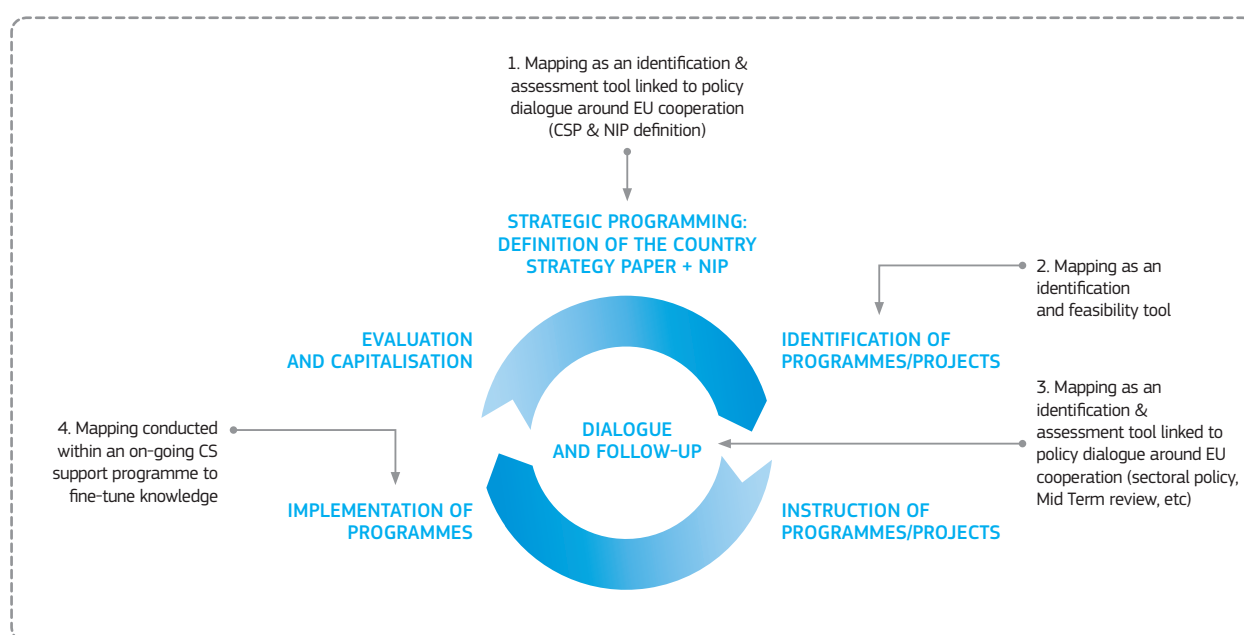
- The programming stage: general mappings can be conducted as an aid to the programming stage, with a view to identifying the relevant CSOs for policy dialogue around EU cooperation. Gaining a better understanding of CS and its interactions with the state can also help improve the EU's ability to determine the types, levels and modalities of engagement and support. Alternatively, mappings can be conducted in a more targeted manner, for instance in the form of a sector mapping related to a focal area of intervention. Evidence suggests that, when properly implemented, mappings can be a first building block to a purposeful context analysis that seeks to contribute to more effective country planning and programming.
- The identification phase of programmes: mappings can also be used as an identification and feasibility tool to prepare the grounds for a future CS support programme. In this regard, mappings can be a useful tool to gain a deeper understanding of CSO structure, interests and motivations, their capacities and roles, how they are governed, relations with other actors and the power they exert.
- The implementation phase: mappings will also be undertaken as an aid to ongoing CS support programmes (e.g. to keep abreast of the changes in the environment, fine-tune knowledge about the spaces for dialogue, gain a

(37) See also Section 2.3 of the report.

better understanding of specific sectors or levels of structuring, deepen regional and local knowledge, map out donor support models).

- Dialogue and follow-up of policies, strategies and programmes: mappings can be a useful tool for identifying and assessing the specialised and legitimate interlocutors who can play a role in advocacy work, policy research and monitoring of budget processes, and who will be brought on board in policy discussions around sector-wide approaches/budget support, etc. They can also help to assess the legitimacy of these actors, which relates to questions about whom they represent and how.

Figure 9: Mappings within the EU programming cycle



5.2.4. Determining the scope of the mapping

Once the objectives and timing are agreed upon, the scope of the mapping should be clear, i.e. the key questions and issues that will be addressed in the study and which will be outlined in the ToR. This is particularly relevant as evidence shows that mappings sometimes fail to answer the questions that are of concern to EUD because they have not been clearly articulated in the ToR.

The decision about the scope is twofold. On the one hand, the breadth of the study needs to be defined (i.e. the processes and actors that will be assessed). On the other, the depth of the mapping also needs to be agreed upon, and realism should prevail when doing so. In other words, considering the objectives and the level of available resources (financial resources that can translate into expertise, but also time available for the study), how far can the assessment go into the different dimensions that have to be addressed? And also, regarding the geographical scope, can all regions be covered, or is prioritisation deemed necessary?

To start with, it has to be clear whether the mapping should cover the civil society sector as a whole or a number of CSOs either operating in specific or thematic and cross-sector policy areas (e.g. health, education, governance) or belonging to a specific level of structuring (e.g. third- and fourth-level organisations, grassroots, informal movements)⁽³⁸⁾. Furthermore, the issue of those organisations and movements that ‘are below the radar’ but increasingly important in processes of social change, should also be considered.

Another relevant decision to make is how the environment in which CS operates will be considered. Mappings are increasingly leaving behind a purely actor-based approach and taking into account connections and power relations across institutions, rather than isolating civil society as a single sector, on the basis of a multi-centred theory of governance⁽³⁹⁾.

(38) See Methodological Tools 3, 4 and 5 (in Part 3).

(39) See Section 3.1.

This trend supports the prevailing idea that CSOs do not operate in a vacuum. Quite the opposite, their ability to exist and perform their manifold roles in society depends on the existence of an enabling environment. This refers to a functioning democratic legal and judicial system that ensures, in law but also in practice, the right to organise, to secure funding, freedom of expression and information and the right to participate in public affairs with the aim of effectively and freely contributing to the public sphere (EC, 2011b). In recent years, the promotion of an enabling environment for CS has been recurrent in international debates. Its essentiality as a prerequisite for development has been strongly reiterated in the Busan partnership document (Article 22).

Furthermore, this trend also confirms that mappings can be key in understanding CSOs in their relations to other clusters of actors, largely state actors (such as checks and balance organisations, frontline service providers, core public agencies, the political system and government) but also private-sector organisations and donors, who can also influence the behaviour and effectiveness of CSOs (EC, 2011a).

Box 18: How to consider the legislative and institutional framework and policy dialogue in mappings

1. The legal framework: the idea is to define and describe the legislative framework in which CSOs develop their activities, taking into account that this framework may be more or less hostile. It is important to identify the rules determining their status and the degree of protection that is granted to them through the national legislative framework. References in the constitution (if there are any) have to be considered, particularly as regards the macro political context and freedom of expression and freedom of association. More concretely, the legal framework conditioning the design of public policies has to be identified, as well as the incidence capacity the civil society organisations enjoy.

2. The institutional framework: the idea is to define the institutional framework in which the actors operate: the institutionalised mechanisms to access local/national/intergovernmental authorities, as well as formal or informal consulting dialogue mechanisms. Attention should be paid when comparing the existence of a formal legal framework and the effective implementation and enforcement of what is foreseen.

However, these frameworks (legislative and institutional) do not by themselves solve practical operational difficulties for CSOs. The limits of the state apparatus may make it impossible for state actors to manage public space, because of process restrictions or political obstacles.

3. Policy dialogue: the idea is to identify the level of CS involvement in effective political dialogue and within open institutional frameworks, as well as the effective monitoring capacities of civil society associations. This part has to do with the 'watchdog' role performed by civil society associations.

Source: EC, 2009.

It is important to note that while every environment in which CS operates presents its own unique challenges that need to be duly factored in, some contexts deserve particular attention. In circumstances such as a weak system of rule of law or a conflict, a mapping may require specially adapted questions that can dig deeper into the impact on civil society and how CSOs are encouraging change (UNDP, 2011b)

In addition to the environment, it will also be necessary to determine which other dimensions of CS and CSO should be evaluated to meet objectives. For example, if the objective is to consider whether CSOs have effected change, impact should be assessed. To understand CSO networks and platforms and their ability to effectively engage in policy dialogue and watchdog functions, to reveal the level of resources with which CSOs are functioning or to assess the performance of CSOs at the local level in the provision of basic services, capacity should be included. Engagement will also need to be assessed if the mappings aim to determine how well CSOs reach out to their constituencies, their beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Finally, when the EU seeks to promote space with government for full CS participation, a more in-depth knowledge about the practices of accountability to citizens or constituencies, and the ways in which CSOs meet internal governance standards, is necessary. Hence, the governance dimension should be included.

Box 19: Dimensions and sample indicators to guide CS assessment

UNDP's users' guide recognises five dimensions covered by assessment methods: capacity, engagement, environment, governance and impact. The following are examples of each dimension, drawn from different sources appearing in the source guide ⁽⁴⁰⁾, to display the variety of available methodologies.

Capacity

- Are there enough skilled staff to implement programme/project activities? (PCNC 'Guidebook on the basics of NGO governance')
- When appropriate, does the organisation partner with other NGOs and civil society organisations that share similar missions and values to support the achievement of common objectives? (Compliance manual of the World association of Non-Governmental Organisations)
- We routinely offer staff training. (POET)

Engagement

- The organisation establishes particular times when consultations are organised with major stakeholders to promote debate on policy issues, advocacy, needs assessment, funding, project design, implementation, monitoring and impact assessment. (NGO manager's 'Organisational assessment tool')
- For [the following], could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member: some other voluntary association or community group. ('Afrobarometer')

Environment

- Laws governing CSOs should be written and administered so that it is relatively quick, easy and inexpensive for all persons (including natural and legal persons) to register or incorporate a CSO as a legal person. (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law's 'Checklist for CSO laws')
- In practice, the government does not create barriers to the organisation of new anti-corruption/good governance CSOs. (Global Integrity's 'Integrity indicators')

Governance

- The CSO demonstrates accountable and proper utilisation of resources as agreed. The CSO reports in a timely manner to donors and other relevant stakeholders. ('Kenyan CSO standards' by the Poverty Eradication Network)
- The procedure adopted for the appointment of new board members is democratic. (Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy's 'Non-Profit Organisations certification model')
- Your organisation incorporates learning from project and programme evaluations into the strategic planning process. (One World Trust's 'Civil society accountability')

Impact

- What changes in people's lives occurred as a result of the NGO's programmes? (Peace Corps's 'NGO capacity profile')
- How has the hostel. facility helped you? (Centre for Good Governance's 'Social audit')

Source: UNDP, 2011b.

Finally, it may also be worth considering, when defining the scope of the mapping, the need to make the exercise more forward-looking (and not just focus on the past and present), in an attempt to make it more relevant to emerging issues that will influence EU policymaking ⁽⁴¹⁾.

(40) Please refer to the user's guide for further information on each one of the referred methods (UNDP, 2011b).

(41) For more information see Anheier's views in UNDP (2011a).

5.3. Setting the tone

Once the objectives, timing and scope of the mapping are agreed upon, it is time to address the question of ‘how should the mapping be conducted’, in terms of both the principles that should underpin the study and other relevant issues, such as cooperation with other donors, choice of expertise and methodologies.

5.3.1. Principles that should underpin mappings

Four general principles can be recommended as beneficial for effective mappings ⁽⁴²⁾:

(a) Collective ownership and CS participation: For a mapping to be effectively used, CSOs must be committed to it. This requires that they have ownership over the process and its outcomes, i.e. a feeling that the process is relevant to them, that the findings can be theirs (at least in part) and that they as CSOs are essential to future outcomes. The best way to give CSO ownership is to involve them as much as possible, in both the design and implementation of assessments. To ensure CSO commitment, CSOs should be included early in the process, while simultaneously taking into account the many other demands on their time and resources.

It is also important that all groups represented in society have a voice ‘beyond the usual suspects’ and proactive mechanisms to reach out to these groups may be required. How broad the participation should be is a question that must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Broad participation is important, but it must be balanced with good management of available resources.

As a general rule, it is recommended for: (i) identifying key stakeholders (especially through a stakeholder analysis); (ii) holding focus groups and/or review workshops in which stakeholders have the opportunity to criticise the methodologies findings and outcomes and provide recommendations; and (iii) making revisions accordingly, taking stakeholders’ views into account.

(b) Transparency and accountability: As a general principle, transparency is to be preferred and should be the default option. This means that mapping results (including sources referenced, evidence used for decision-making, organisations and people involved, etc.) should be published in full and distributed freely.

However, it must be noted that in some situations, full transparency may not be advisable. For example, if an assessment generates findings that could jeopardise CS activity because they will be sensitive for an antagonistic government, full publication may not make sense. Some parts of the analytical work may be kept confidential, while others are shared. Information may have to be edited and rearranged for broader dissemination. The form of communication and information sharing also matters. Passively putting sensitive information on the web is likely to have a different impact to organising seminars and investing in reaching out to less connected domestic actors.

In connection with this, mappings can increase CSO accountability, since they provide evidence as a foundation for future action. Even seemingly negative findings about CSO performance are useful, as they will be recognised as the product of commitment to accountability.

(c) Adapted methodologies: It is the purpose and scope of the mapping that will drive the decision about the methodologies to be used, including the degree of participation of domestic stakeholders and the communication strategy on the mapping outputs. As a general principle, mappings require a mix of methodologies, such as in-depth deskwork to review all relevant documentation, use of surveys, institutional grids and/or capacity assessment tools, engagement with informants via bilateral interviews, focus group and/or workshops and participant observation of ongoing processes. The consultant team will make the choice of methodologies during the inception phase, on the basis of a preliminary desk review and after having had an exchange of views with the EUD. The study will also require analysis and the interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data (using different tools including matrices and graphs: see Box 20 for an example of a governance assessment matrix), as well as a number of interactive restitution sessions with relevant stakeholders.

It will also be important to indicate the selected approach and assessment framework (e.g. governance framework, political economy assessment approach) and to spell out the hypothesis, if any, which the research intends to study and/or is premised upon. The broader process in which the study is embedded (usually very much linked to the purpose

(42) Adapted from EC (20110, Floridi and Sanz Corella (2009) and UNDP (2011b).

of the mapping) will also have to be indicated, so as to ensure continuity in the learning and to help prevent mapping workshops, studies and surveys from becoming isolated one-off events.

Finally, and as far as possible, the mapping will build on the existing sources of context analysis from local sources (produced by universities, think tanks, specialised CSOs, media, etc.) and produced by or on behalf of donors. Certainly, a closer look at the existing material can already help identify the information gaps that need to be further assessed.

Box 20: The Governance Assessment Matrix

The matrix below is a simple tool for mapping governance actors and stakeholders. It serves as one element for analysing the change of readiness towards enhanced governance in a sector. The columns indicate the following assessment parameters:

- Role and importance: Is the actor playing a governance role or an accountability role or a mixture of both? How important is the actor for actual governance and/or accountability, respectively? In forward-looking perspectives, should the importance increase or decrease?
- Interests pursued: What is the actor's short and long-term agenda? Which mix of formal and informal objectives is the actor pursuing? What is the mix between pro-poor objectives and objectives linked to bureaucratic policies and power struggles, or individual positioning and individual interests? Which one would prevail over the others, which are negotiable and which are not?
- Power and resources: What power and resources does the actor have? Which part is formal, which part is informal? Is the formal power undermined by counteracting the informal power of other actors?
- Key linkages: To whom is the actor connected? Who knows whom? Which connections and allegiances does the actor have?
- Incentives: Which positive and negative incentives does the actor have to maintain or change his/her 'governance behaviour'? Which rewards would the actor perceive to get from maintaining or enhancing sector governance, respectively, and which sanctions would be likely in both cases? Which constraints would actors face for pursuing or resisting change? What is the 'system sum' of pushes and pulls of the various factors which incentivise certain behaviour? A system under great stress or a system marked by fear may induce passivity.

Mapping of governance actors and stakeholders	Role and importance for actual governance/accountability	Interests pursued	Power and resources for influencing	Formal and informal linkages	Incentives
<i>Non-public sector</i>					
<i>Political system</i>					
<i>Core public agencies</i>					
<i>Frontline providers</i>					
<i>Checks and balances Actor 1, Actor 2, etc.</i>					
<i>Development agencies and external actors Actor 1, Actor 2</i>					

Source: EC, 2011a.

(d) A dynamic approach: State-society relations evolve and many of the questions that the previous section raises are not easy to answer or study in one go. Mappings ought to follow a dynamic logic since they are a ‘living exercise’ that has to be updated regularly, when circumstances require or opportunities arise. This is already the case in several countries, as evidenced in the analytical part of the report.

5.3.2. Donor coordination and building on existing studies and tools

Harmonisation and division of labour are key features of the Paris, Accra and Busan agendas. So far, donor harmonisation efforts have primarily focused on partner governments, much less on CSOs. In this field, fragmentation still prevails. This is reflected in the proliferation of donor strategies and funding schemes for CSOs. The EU has committed itself to engaging CSOs as an active part of the participatory development agenda, in general discussions on aid effectiveness and in the division of labour processes at country level. Through its code of conduct, the EU encourages in-country complementarities by pressuring EU donors to concentrate their support on a maximum of three sectors. However, civil society support is not considered a ‘sector’. All this puts a premium on developing smart partnerships among donors in dealing with CSOs, particularly in the context of budgetary support and sector-wide approaches (EC, 2011a). There are several areas where smart collaboration would be particularly helpful. The knowledge development dimension is one of them and a number of measures could be adopted (see Box 21).

Box 21: Extract of the guiding principles on donor approaches to governance assessments

- **Build on what is available in the country and strengthen the domestic capacity to assess and debate development issues.** This is, in fact, the first guiding principle of the OECD DAC. Here, donors are encouraged to harmonise efforts in support of research and assessments by different actors (statistical offices, universities, think tanks, social and political movements). This is a difficult yet highly relevant investment to make. It is in line with the ultimate objective of ensuring domestic ownership. Donors are increasingly providing direct forms of support, together or separately, to developing analytical skills and research capacity among non-state actors, such as the media, think tanks and research institutes. This is crucial for contributing to country-driven policy debates on key development issues.
- **Acting collectively,** donors can also help domestic accountability actors to get access to quality information about roles, functions and inputs of external actors or about major development policy issues. These smart partnerships may create incentives for domestic CSOs to ask questions, to invest in policy research and analysis (e.g. on the state’s budget, the quality of service delivery) and to engage in a meaningful policy dialogue with the state.
- **Build on what is available within development partners.** In the context of the implementation of the EU code of conduct, there are ongoing efforts to map the comparative added value of donors and their respective areas of expertise. This may provide a first snapshot of likely partners for smart partnerships in deepening the understanding of context, institutions and actors.

Source: OECD/DAC, 2009.

Another relevant issue to consider is the need to build on what already exists and avoid ‘reinventing the wheel’. There are numerous existing sources of context analysis from local sources (produced by local think tanks, universities, specialised NGOs, media reports, etc.) and produced by or on behalf of other donors and international CSOs. A closer look at the available material can already help identify those gaps that need to be further studied or analysed to address the scope and objectives that have been agreed upon.

5.3.3. Selecting the expertise and mobilising the necessary resources

It is important to make sure that the right mix of skills and expertise is requested in the ToR. The skills required for designing and conducting research methods (particularly participatory ones), collecting and analysing data, drafting survey questionnaires, leading effective focus groups, etc. should not be underestimated. One relevant question to consider is the degree of local ownership and involvement of local actors and even local institutions (e.g. universities, local researchers) to make sure the mapping is not simply a ‘fly-in-fly-out’ exercise conducted by international consultants.

Furthermore, experience shows that plunging into local dynamics can indeed be challenging for outsiders (international consultants) and that ‘getting introduced’ to the local CS community by a local actor(s) who is aware of the dynamics, without being entrenched in them, can prove very effective. The language question is also not to be disregarded.

In addition, once the experts are hired, mapping commissioners at the EUD level should make sure the team whose job it is to collect and assess information are well suited for the task, and have the necessary policy and operational orientations. In connection with this, several meetings may be necessary (in addition to the formal briefing meeting) and a workshop could even be organised at EUD level to inform and raise awareness among other units. This was the case, for instance in the sectoral mapping conducted in Senegal during the first half of 2012, and is also envisaged in the mapping in Madagascar. Close liaison with DG Development and Cooperation — EuropeAid’s Unit Civil Society, Local Authorities is also strongly encouraged.

Last but not least, the question of financial resources is crucial, as the level of resources should match the level of ambitions (in terms of purpose and scope of the mapping). Evidence suggests that if the required level of resources is not possible, the scope of the mapping will need to be revised accordingly.

5.3.4. Mapping structure and time frame

Timing is another crucial issue to be looked into, particularly in the implementation phase of mappings. Generally speaking, notwithstanding the particularities of each context, a three-phase structure can be suggested:

- a preliminary and preparatory phase to gather background information, contact the EUD and start exchanges on the ToR (particularly concerning the objectives and scope of the exercise), contact key informants, fine-tune the research hypothesis and methodologies, conduct desk research work (if necessary) and prepare the fully fledged field mission;
- the core mapping phase consisting of: (i) the fully fledged field mission, to allow the implementation of meetings, focus groups and workshops, along with further interviews with key informants; and (ii) the analysis and interpretation of gathered information, and preparation of a draft report and other relevant deliverables (PowerPoint, etc.) with a view to formalising relevant knowledge;
- a final phase consisting of: (i) the presentation of the mapping draft outcomes in a final workshop, with a view to collecting feedback and reactions to the findings; and (ii) the drafting of the draft report, its circulation for comments and their integration in the final report.

However, the number of phases (as well as the contents of each one of them) is not ‘carved in stone’. Depending on the contents, purpose and scope of the exercise, mappings may require more or less time. All in all, what is important is that there is a clear understanding of the mapping as a process, which requires time to identify, process and digest the findings.

5.3.5. Cooperation with EUDs

Another relevant issue to consider concerns cooperation between the team of experts in charge of the mapping and EU delegations. The EUD staff are not only the main users of mapping results but also precious providers of knowledge (e.g. knowledge held by political sections about the context and governance environment) and of support for the mapping itself (EC, 2010). However, considering that EUDs are often overloaded, it may sometimes be difficult to actively involve all the relevant persons, in addition to the CS focal point, in the practical implementation of the study.

In order to facilitate this involvement, three main elements should be clarified and made visible right from the outset. The first is the use and possible application of mapping results, the second concerns the manifold contributions the EUD can provide the study with throughout its implementation (e.g. information about EUD experience with formal and informal consultation processes with local CSOs, support in the understanding of key political and social processes, regular discussion of study results and of research hypotheses, support in the identification of key partners already involved in European cooperation or expressing interest in EU policy, support in the identification of local expertise to be involved in the study) and the third concerns the links that can and should be established between the mapping and other governance and political economy assessment tools used by the EUD. In order to avoid duplication, synergies should be identified between civil society and broader governance assessments. A strong civil society assessment can feed a governance assessment by providing detailed information, something which broader assessments are often unable to do. Most governance assessments focus solely on the context in which CSOs operate, as opposed to the performance of CSOs.

5.3.6. Overcoming obstacles and challenges

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the potential challenges and obstacles that may arise and think about ways in which to deal with them, in addition to questions related to resources and the expertise required ⁽⁴³⁾.

To start with, as mentioned throughout the text, it is important to be aware of the context and the degree to which it is conducive for a mapping. Hostile political environments, particularly where governments are antagonistic or even suspicious of CS, can severely hamper mappings. Violence and conflicts are also challenges. In such circumstances, it is important to carefully assess the situation (i.e. using risks assessments), act within the limitations and draft mitigation plans.

The availability of data can also be challenging in some contexts, where data is scarce (i.e. national statistical offices may not collect CS-related information, previous mappings or governance assessments may not have been conducted). Poor communication and transportation infrastructure may also make it difficult to conduct surveys or interviews in some parts of the country. In these circumstances, alternative sources should be used (UNDP, 2011a). For example, case studies or focus groups can serve as a representative sample if there are no official data statistics. If resources and time allow, surveys can also be conducted.

Assessing the dimension of impact is also challenging with so many factors at play and with unresolved attribution and contribution dilemmas. This is because CS work, particularly in governance-related areas, is part of a larger and complex process of change whose many contributors cannot be disentangled: linking improvement to any specific actor or factor would not only be impossible but also inaccurate.

Finally, there is the issue of keeping the mapping updated. In this regard, one possibility that might be worth exploring is to integrate a local institution within the consortium awarded the task of carrying out the mapping exercise. This would allow constant follow-up with local CSOs and make it possible to integrate quantitative studies and the collection of feedback from the involved actors 'so as to foster a process of co-construction of the knowledge on CSOs that would make the most of the information and knowledge that can be produced through the inter-action between different actors' (EC, 2010). The external expert(s) would then be able to access systematised information and inputs and provide quality control in general. Through this modality, the EUD could also be more involved in the process, thus strengthening its ownership over both the process and the results.

(43) See Methodological Tool 1 for a comprehensive checklist for mapping commissioners.

Part 3

METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND APPENDICES

Methodological Tool 1

Checklist for organising a mapping

What for and for whom?	What is the purpose of the exercise? What will the mapping results be used for? Is the purpose feasible considering the context? To what extent is the context conducive enough to conduct a mapping? Who is the primary audience of the mapping? Are there tensions between different audiences and how should these tensions be managed? Are there other governance assessments and/or political economy analyses going on? If yes, how does the mapping link to them? Is there sufficient internal buy-in to the importance of the mapping and its value for decision-making and programming? Is there a clear owner or champion with responsibility for taking forward mapping outcomes and implications (e.g. head of governance section, head of cooperation)? Mappings can be conducted for a number of different purposes e.g. to inform programming (at a county strategy or sectoral level), identify policy interlocutors and influence policy dialogue, identify a CS support programme, etc.	Work can be commissioned for different audiences (both within the EUD and outside the EUD) and special attention needs to be paid to parallel governance and political economy assessments and the links that will be established with them. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to agree on both the purpose and intended audience at the outset, as this will greatly influence how the mapping will be conducted, the dissemination of its outcomes and follow-up. The context also needs to be brought into the discussion as it may influence what is feasible in terms of mapping and assessment. Potential tensions also need to be acknowledged (i.e. in fragile and/or non-enabling contexts, where CS is deeply fragmented). Furthermore, sufficient buy-in needs to be ensured and, as far as possible, a clear owner should be identified to make sure that mapping outcomes and implications can be taken forward.
When?	Is the timing right to feed into strategy/ programming/ project identification/ reviews and evaluations or other decisions? Is the length of the process proportionate?	Once the overall purpose and audience has been agreed, it is then important to focus on the timing to make sure mappings will be used for their intended purpose. The length of the process also needs to be considered, from a realistic point of view.
What will be analysed?	What are the key issues and questions that need to be addressed? What are the current development and governance challenges and how should the mapping reflect on them? Are the defined issues and questions relevant vis-à-vis the purpose of the mapping? Are they relevant for all the audience?	There is also a need to carefully consider and identify the key issues and questions that need to be examined. Mappings sometimes fail to answer the questions that are of concern to EUD because they have not been clearly articulated in the terms of reference.

What skills and expertise?	What mix of skills and expertise is required to undertake the mapping work? How can local ownership be further fostered (e.g. work with local institutions, universities, etc.)? What financial resources are required and how can they be mobilised?	It is important to make sure that the right mix of skills and expertise is requested in the ToR. In addition, once the expert(s) has (have) been hired, they should make sure the team whose job it is to collect and assess information has been provided with appropriate guidance and training in this thinking. One relevant question to consider is the degree of local ownership and involvement of local and national institutions (e.g. universities, local researchers) to make sure the mapping is not simply a ‘fly-in-fly-out’ exercise. The question of financial resources is also crucial as: (i) the level of resources should match the level of ambition (in terms of purpose and scope of the mapping); and (ii) if the required level of resources is not possible, the scope of the mapping will need to be revised. Finally, some thinking needs to be done as regards the methodology and assessment tools that will be applied, even though this question will have to be further addresses by the expert/team of experts that will undertake the mapping
Donor cooperation?	Can other donors/partners be involved in the mapping process? How? Is there room for a joint mapping or is sharing more feasible?	A key decision when undertaking a mapping is whether to conduct the exercise as an independent venture or jointly with other donors/partners. Experience shows that joint mappings can add significant practical value by helping to develop a shared understanding of the CS landscape, whilst providing the basis for potential future joint action. They require, nonetheless, cooperation from the outset, including joint drafting of ToR, agreement on the expertise required and funding implications, agreement on time frame and full engagement with the emerging findings throughout the process.
What participatory mechanisms?	Which mechanisms are necessary to foster CS ownership over the mapping process and results? Which mechanisms will be used to disseminate and discuss mapping findings? Who will be consulted? Who do these organisations represent? Are we going beyond the ‘usual suspects’? How will the mapping process information and mapping outcomes be disseminated and to whom? Do different deliverables need to be created for different audiences?	Another key decision when undertaking a mapping is the extent to which the process should and/or can (i.e. considering the context) be made participatory. Beyond contributing to consultations and field work, CSOs can be invited to comment on the preliminary findings (e.g. final workshop or forum), be part of the steering committee (if any) set up to supervise the mapping process and/or even be commissioned to gather data and conduct analyses. Whenever and wherever possible, the leaders of a number of CSOs (e.g. third- and fourth-level CSOs, not only active at national level) should be asked to participate in the various discussion fora, where mappings findings are to be presented and debated. Attention should also be paid, right from the outset, to issues of accountability and transparency throughout the process, as information should reach out, beyond the ‘usual suspects’.

What about the government?	Is it desirable and feasible to involve the government? How?	The scope for engaging government in mappings needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. As with political economy analysis (DFID, 2009), trade-offs are always likely between openness and transparency on the one hand and the quality and rigour of analysis on the other. In difficult political environments, full disclosure of findings may serve to undermine relationships and fuel tensions. However, in more conducive contexts, the benefits of working with national governments and other partners (e.g. local authorities) can often outweigh the costs. Even where full disclosure proves to be difficult, steps will be taken to at least disseminate key findings or summaries (avoiding the most conflictive areas, which can be part of a 'shadow report'). This has the potential to lay the basis for a more productive policy dialogue going forwards
What about afterwards?	What results are we expecting from the work? Have process and outcome indicators been developed to assess the impact of the mapping on programmes and processes? Is there an agreed process for follow-up once the mapping is complete? When and how is the mapping expected to be updated?	A mapping should be viewed as a dynamic process rather than a static output. As with political economy analyses (DFID, 2009), the measure of success is not just conducting the study itself but also the extent to which findings are integrated into strategies and programmes and ultimately contribute to improved results on the ground. Ideally, mappings should become integral to the work of the EUD, with knowledge being regularly updated over time and fed back into programming. To this end, it may be helpful to develop a number of process and outcome indicators to monitor progress and impact over time. Short case studies or stories highlighting lessons learned could also be put together to feed into an emerging body of evidence at country level on the contribution of mappings to EUD cooperation practice and outcomes. Furthermore, past experience suggests that the follow-up stage is frequently neglected, as consultants move to new assignments and EUD staff attention turns to other matters. It is critical, therefore, to ensure provisions are made right from the outset as regards follow-up initiatives (e.g. workshops, policy briefs).

Methodological Tool 2

Towards a working definition of civil society

There is no universally accepted definition of the term civil society, which itself can be traced back to Thomas Hobbes and the philosopher Adam Ferguson. Even within the development sphere, development partners and practitioners, academic institutions and CSOs themselves define civil society in different ways.

Box 22: What the EU means by CSOs

The concept of “CSOs” embraces a wide range of actors with different roles and mandates. Definitions vary over time and across institutions and countries. The EU considers CSOs to include all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic.

Source: European Commission, 2012.

Allegedly, the limitation of the concept of civil society is based on its strict opposition to the two other large spheres of society: the state and the market. That is why civil society is very often compared with the concept of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or with the concept of the non-profit sector (or tertiary sector). Nevertheless, these strict definitions do not allow for the distinction of a series of grey areas comprising complex, variable and changing realities that characterise civil societies. In these grey areas, one could find the foundations of companies or corporate organisations representing the rights of the economic sector (EC, 2009).

A working definition of civil society should not exclusively reflect idealistic concepts that only recognise those organisations embracing democratic values and/or promoting the common good or democracy. It should foresee, first and foremost, a realistic conception of society, accepting the fact that the values which feed the various organisations are multiple and not necessarily ‘idealistic’ (EC, 2009). Putting aside this type of normative contents will make it possible to escape from a naïve vision of civil society and duly take into account the tensions, governance shortcomings and (dormant and/or open) conflicts existing within the sector. As Marcusen already underlined back in 1996: ‘Civil society is not a uniform and homogeneous group of institutions. On the contrary, the institutions of civil society are a myriad of particular interests, which have got an institutional form or an institutional expression. They express conflicts, rivalries, and struggles — or consented action. They may act as integrating or disintegrating elements.’

In addition, the working definition should also account for plurality, in terms of multiplicity and heterogeneity, of all organisational forms, even emerging ones, belonging to the civil society sphere — where grassroots, vernacular and informal forms, trade unions, membership or faith-based organisations and even social movements are given the same social legitimacy as platforms, networks and classical NGOs belonging to the intermediate level and/or a restrictive development agenda.

This definition of civil society, which has gained currency in recent years in academic and international development circles, refers to the sphere outside the family, the state and the market (as described above in the institutional framework). It thus excludes for-profit business, although professional organisations or business federations may be included.

All in all, what is paramount is to begin from the broadest and more flexible definition in order to incorporate the immense diversity of actors who play a significant role as civil society players, including new forms of citizen participation.

One of the most coherent definitions of civil society is given by Civicus, which defines civil society as: ‘the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market, where people associate to advance common interests. In this context, working with a definition of non-state actors enables opening a civil society area that encompasses a broader spectrum, including the private sector and the existing hybrid zones located in between the market and the state’.

Box 23: Other definitions of Civil Society

‘Voice and accountability for human development: A UNDP global strategy to strengthen civil society and civic engagement’, UNDP

Civil society is an arena of voluntary collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values distinct from families, state and profit-seeking institutions. The term civil society includes the full range of formal and informal organisations that are outside the state and the market — including social movements, volunteer-involving organisations, mass-based membership organisations, faith-based groups, NGOs and community-based organisations, as well as communities and citizens acting individually and collectively.

‘What Is civil society?’, London School of Economics

Civil society is the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market although in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power.

Source: UNDP, 2011b.

Methodological Tool 3

The actor-differentiated analysis

The actor-differentiated analysis refers to the methodological approach taken when looking at CSOs from the perspective of their level of structuring and influence. It creates four levels of analysis, corresponding to the four typologies currently used by experts in the non-profit field. This typology, widely used across mapping studies, makes it easier to identify differences in terms of aspirations, mission and vision and intervention logic of the CSOs present in a given country and helps differentiate their specific needs, obstacles and potentialities. In addition, it prevents confusion as to the role and positioning of each actor within civil society, the aim being to avoid competition between actors unable to share the same starting point. True, the values, mission, technical skills, functioning and/or leadership of a grassroots organisation cannot be compared with that of a higher-level umbrella organisation, even if they are of the same area or field. Lastly, this type of civil society organisation enables an understanding of the positioning of the various organisations, as well as of the existing links across levels (inter- and intra-wise). The chart below illustrates the various levels.

Figure 10: The actor-differentiated analysis

Level 4 Platforms and dialogue fora
Grouping of umbrella organisations and/or dialogue fora, created with the aim of pursuing advocacy goals and taking a common stance and campaigning with respect to common external problems, public authorities, donor policies, etc. In many instances, they link local, national and international groups to address larger strategic objectives.
Level 3 Umbrella organisations and thematic networks
Networks, federations and geographical and/or thematic groupings of organisations, whereby individual organisations decide to get together to foster cooperation across their strategies, share costs, improve information flows, learn from each other and exchange experiences, better represent and defend their interests, mobilise support, have a greater political impact, etc. Established (more or less formal) umbrella organisations usually create spaces for information exchange, communication, consultation and organisation of joint actions and provide services to their members on capacity development, external projection and access to funding.
Level 2 Formally established organisations
Legally registered organisations with approved articles of association, working mostly for the direct benefit of the population or in service delivery, frequently in collaboration with grassroots organisations (CBOs).
Level 1 Grassroots organisations/community-based organisations
Informal groupings or ad hoc organisations working in the immediate local context both in rural and urban areas. They generally convene right-holders, have limited geographical or thematic focus, are membership-based and are mostly self-financed through members' fees and contributions (e.g. co-ops, women's associations).

Methodological Tool 4

Towards a CSO typology

Whereas in the past, development agendas used to be ‘monopolised’ by traditional development NGOs, recent years have witnessed an increasingly important role of a wider and more complex spectrum of organisations and constituencies within global, national and local civil society. Cooperation and the development agenda have thus opened up to alternative forms of civil society organisations, which were traditionally excluded from national debates. This is the case of trade unions, popular movements, farmers’ organisations, locally elected governments, etc. The list below outlines the various types of civil society organisations that exist across European and partner countries. However, given the fact that CSOs are shaped by context, history and cultural features, it is possible that some of these types of organisation do not exist or are just labelled in a different way:

- **NGOs:** The term NGO (non-governmental organisation) is sometimes used synonymously with a civil society organisation. In general, the term NGO is used here to refer to those organisations that, due to humanitarian, political or religious motives, work to help others (local populations directly or through grassroots organisations). Many NGOs in developing countries are set up to channel donor funds and have a relatively small membership. Regardless of such limited popular legitimacy, they continue to play an important role in development cooperation as facilitators of cooperation with, for example, grassroots organisations and informal local organisations.
- **Popular or membership-based organisations:** In contrast to the NGO group, these membership-based organisations and movements organise people with the aim of serving and protecting their own interests, usually by self-help activities. This category covers, for example, farmers’ organisations, women’s rights organisations and indigenous population organisations.
- **Trade and labour unions:** These are formally organised associations of workers, having as a goal the advancement of working and living conditions (wages, hours of work, working conditions, etc.). They frequently associate themselves in umbrella organisations and federations at local, national and international levels. In some cases, labour unions are affiliated to political parties.
- **Community-based organisations (CBOs)** are generally created to directly address the immediate concerns and needs of their members. Community-based organisations adopt different forms ⁽⁴⁴⁾.
 - **Tenants and neighbourhood associations** are typical organisations of the urban population — both in slum or squatter areas and in the areas of the so-called ‘formal city’. These organisations usually mobilise people to advocate for better services and an improved management of urban space, protesting against or supporting the actions of public authorities.
 - **Community development organisations, resource-user groups and water-user groups:** At local level, particularly in rural areas, forms of aggregation exist to manage common resources, such as water for irrigation and forests, and to promote the improvement of local livelihood or infrastructures. These groups are often based on traditional kinds of organisation. Sometimes they are promoted by public officers or by the representatives of the state at local level.
 - **Self-help groups**, including support groups in which members provide each other with various types of help, usually nonprofessional and nonmaterial, for a particular shared — usually burdensome — characteristic, and saving groups, which usually involve women or micro entrepreneurs with homogenous social and economic backgrounds. Some countries have become famous for these groups and their relevance in setting up a micro-finance system.
- **Faith-based organisations**, including religious based groups organised around a place of religious worship or congregation, a specialised religious institution or a registered or unregistered institution with a religious character

(44) Adapted from EC (2010).

or mission. They often have a high degree of legitimacy among co-religionists. While in some contexts there may be a great degree of cooperation between different religious groups, in other contexts relations of conflict with other religious communities may possibly arise.

- **Traditional organisations:** so-called ‘traditional’ political, social cultural and ethnic structures at village and local level. They play a central role and most frequently have a high degree of popular legitimacy. While the traditional structures can ensure broad participation and consultation in a local community, they can also contain strongly authoritarian elements.
- **Cultural organisations:** cultural and sports groups.
- **Professional groupings and organisations:** membership-based organisations, created to represent and defend the professional interests of their members. In some cases, professional associations are among the main actors in processes of public service reforms (e.g. in the health sector where doctors and nurses associations often assume a pivotal role, in the education sector, where teachers’ associations play a cornerstone role).
- **Foundations,** including philanthropic and charitable organisations set up by individuals or institutions (even private companies and political parties) as a legal entity (usually a corporation or trust) to support causes consistent with the goals of the foundation. In recent years, foundations, both at national and international level, are emerging as one of the main forms of corporate social responsibility and are increasingly considered an important source of funding of the activities of other CSOs.
- **Other:** the media and policy research community. Frequently, the media (with the exception of its professional organisations) is not viewed as a part of civil society, since it is considered to belong to the private or public sector. An independent, critical press is, nevertheless, of immense importance if civil society is to be able to act as an active partner or critical voice in relation to the state. As for research institutions, this cluster includes organisations and think tanks, which, apart from the academy and state institutions, conduct research and/or knowledge dissemination frequently in relation to public policy issues.

It is finally important to acknowledge that these categories are not hermetic and that different groups are often interconnected, e.g. religious communities which have organised special development organisations in the form of NGOs and local traditional organisations associated with national movements for the indigenous population.

Methodological Tool 5

About Civil Society roles

CSOs have a critical role to play in development. However, as stressed by the advisory group on CS and aid effectiveness (OECD, 2007), the definition of civil society, in and of itself, does not define the roles that civil society can play in development. In fact, 'roles' require the identification of (a) normative framework(s) concerning the positive roles that civil society is meant to play.

Echoing their heterogeneity and diversity in forms and constituencies, civil society organisations can perform a wide range of tasks and roles. These vary from very local direct activities that meet the immediate needs of members or those involved to activities where organisations, through the way in which they are set up, consciously or unconsciously lobby and influence national political debates and development policies. Some organisations provide an organised vehicle for the expression of the interests of the poor and marginalised sectors of the population, while others act as a watchdog of the state in developing and extending democratic forms of government.

Box 24: CSO roles as defined throughout the structured dialogue

Article 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) explicitly refers to CSOs as independent development actors in their own right, whose efforts complement those of national authorities and the private sector, on the basis of their manifold potential (not excluding) roles as actors of social change. These are ⁽⁴⁵⁾:

- (i) mobilisation and organisation of grass-roots communities for social, economic and political development;
- (ii) development education, awareness-raising and social empowerment;
- (iii) monitoring of governments and donors;
- (iv) service-delivery and development programming (filling gaps, when needed);
- (v) building coalitions and networks;
- (vi) mobilisation and leverage of EU resources in partnerships (particularly for European partners);
- (vii) involvement in the governance agenda;
- (viii) advocacy;
- (ix) promotion of democratic ownership;
- (x) involvement in the human rights agenda;
- (xi) provision of humanitarian assistance (post-crisis).

In addition, CSOs can bring a distinct added value on the basis of their nature as self-governing and voluntary organisations, through: (i) their right-based approach to development; (ii) their outreach capacity to the most marginalised and their ability to empower them; (iii) their capacity to react rapidly and flexibly; (iv) their links to local needs with global issues; and (v) the power to promote and trigger social innovation.

Finally, there seems to be a prevailing assumption of a progressive transition in the role and functions of civil society, mainly NGOs, from relief/rehabilitation and care assistance, through development activities to advocacy and lobbying. This evolutionary scheme is, however, questionable, since it is more probable that civil society will always be plural and diverse in its objectives and functions.

For more information about CSOs' roles, see EC reference document No 12 (EC, 2011a)

(45) These roles identified are in line with the outcomes of the country and sectoral consultations of the open forum for CSO development effectiveness. Please consult: <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-global-report,052-.html?lang=en>

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A study of past, present and future trends

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

2012 — 63 p. — 21x29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-28468-7

ISSN 1830-8201

doi:10.2841/35049

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