



EU COUNTRY ROADMAPS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

An introduction

The policy framework

The September 2012 Communication from the European Commission “The Roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations” envisages the **elaboration of Roadmaps** at country level. Conceived as a joint initiative between the European Union and Member States, they aim to strengthen the strategic engagement with civil society.

The October 2012 Council Conclusions welcome this initiative, stressing that it shall be developed taking into account the views of **local civil society** and **existing coordination structures**.

The European Parliament has also expressed its support to the process in its October 2013 Resolution on local authorities and civil society, by welcoming the envisaged more ambitious **partnership with civil society organisations**.

The objectives

The purpose of the Roadmaps is to develop a **common strategic framework** for the engagement of EU Delegations and Member States with civil society at country level, with a view to improving the **impact, predictability and visibility** of EU actions.

Roadmaps are also intended to improve the **consistency** of EU cooperation vis-à-vis civil society, across sectors and instruments, and to progressively promote better **coordination** within EU Delegations, Member States and other relevant actors. They will target countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Pacific and the Neighbourhood region.

The first generation of Roadmaps

The first generation of the Roadmaps, for which preparatory work is currently underway, will cover the period **2014-2017**. It is planned that a first version of the Roadmap is available by the **end of July 2014**, approved at country level. Roadmaps should be seen **as a continuous process** and they should be **updated each year** in January as well as when major changes in the context take place.

A second generation of Roadmaps will then cover the period 2018-2020.

The contents

Roadmaps comprise of five interlinked sections. Sections 1 and 2 provide the **analytical foundation** by assessing the state of civil society (i.e. enabling environment, roles and capacity) as well as the current EU engagement with civil society (i.e. dialogue, mainstreaming, and coordination).

Sections 3 and 4 in turn set direction by defining **EU priorities and actions** for engagement with civil society in the period 2014-2017 – and beyond.

Finally, Section 5 provides a framework, in the form of a **dashboard**, for tracking the Roadmap process. To this end a set of indicators, process and outcome oriented, will be used.

The process

The drafting of Roadmaps is very much a **joint responsibility** between EU Delegations and Member States. If warranted a Member State may even take the lead. Non-EU donors with substantial civil society engagement could also be involved where relevant and feasible.

To facilitate the process, EU Delegations have been provided with a **template and guidance** setting out a number of points for consideration and inspiration. A key priority has been to develop a model that can be adapted to local context, as a specific approach may be called for including in fragile states or in countries with particularly restrictive environments. Other support measures are currently being developed, including a Roadmap Facility for country support.

When developing the Roadmaps, EU Delegations are strongly encouraged to build on **existing analysis** including the Concept Notes prepared for the future Thematic Programme Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities, the EU Human Rights Country Strategies, mappings and other available studies etc.

Dialogue and consultation

Dialogue and consultation with local civil society is seen as a key aspect of developing and not least implementing the Roadmap. For consultations with local civil society, it will be necessary to embrace a **wide range of actors** with different roles and mandates. The basic principle is that each country is specific and approach to consultations and dialogue should respect that.

Where feasible, it is also strongly advisable to consult with **national and local authorities** not least in view of the important role they have in defining, respecting and facilitating the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for civil society. International NGOs with a strong presence in the country are also relevant partners to associate in the process.

Communication

Where appropriate and feasible, agreed priorities and actions will be published at country level in a brief version. EU Delegations are also encouraged to make use of **press releases, websites** etc. to promote predictability and visibility of EU actions