

The Policy Forum on Development Chart

Set up and Working Modalities

1. Background

Enhancing regular dialogue and consultations with Civil Society (CS) is one of the principles stated in the Lisbon Treaty, with a view to ensuring consistency and transparency of EU policies. In the development field, the European Union has, over the last decade, promoted the comprehensive and progressive participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and, more recently, of Local Authorities (LAs) in countries' development processes and in broader political, social and economic dialogues at all levels.

In this context, an intensive consultation process, the **Structured Dialogue (SD) for an efficient partnership in development** took place bringing together, in 2010-2011, more than 700 CSOs and LAs from all over the world, as well as participants from the EU Member States, the European Parliament and the European Commission. During regional seminars and meetings in Brussels, participants reflected upon and defined ways to improve the effectiveness of all actors involved in EU development cooperation. The Final Statement of the SD, known as the **Budapest Declaration**, recommended the EC to enhance dialogue at all levels and to establish a regular **space for dialogue** with Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities.

The Communication on CS issued by the EC (COM 2012/492), “**The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations**”¹, covering developing, neighbourhood and enlargement countries, gives particular attention to CSOs dialogue with European Institutions. It envisions the setting up of a consultative multi-stakeholder group (the Policy Forum on Development) allowing CSOs to dialogue with EU institutions on EU development policies, as well as on the provisions proposed in the Communication.

On the LA side, the new Communication foreseen on “**Local Authorities in development**”² also echoes the importance of dialogue at all levels, starting from the local, to the national, (sub) regional and global levels.

The need of a **high level policy dialogue** was repeatedly confirmed by stakeholders during an intense consultation process that ran from November 2011 to November 2012. The set-up of the Policy Forum on Development is the result of these consultations (See annex 1).

2. Goal, objectives and scope of the PFD

2.1. Goal

The overarching goal of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) is **to offer CSOs and LAs from the EU and partner countries, as well as European institutions, a multi-stakeholder space for dialogue on development issues at EU Headquarters level.**

2.2. Objectives

More specifically, the PFD aims at achieving the following objectives:

- (i) Facilitating dialogue on **cross-cutting issues directly related to the role of CSOs and LAs as relevant development actors;**
- (ii) **Promoting policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences**

¹ See Annex 1 (section A) for more information about the EU policy framework.

² Scheduled for adoption in May 2013

on EU main policies and initiatives in the development field. Priority will be given to topics relating to EuropeAid's mandate, aligned to its Work Programme, including discussions in the preparation of high-level events;

- (iii) **Supporting the implementation of the Structured Dialogue's recommendations³** by providing a room for regular update and peer review by all actors.

2.3. Scope

In continuity with the Structured Dialogue, the PFD is conceived as a confidence and trust-building mechanism and not as a negotiation or decision-making space. It will promote communication and better understanding among all stakeholders.

The PFD primarily focuses on **European development policies**, as well as global development agendas, building on the **momentum gained by current debates and discussions on the global architecture for international aid.**

Despite its central position as a dialogue mechanism at headquarters level, **the PFD does not intend to become the “only entry point” for CSOs and LAs:** it shall not replace existing consultations at national (EU Delegations) and regional levels, practices and bilateral discussions where, among others, programmatic issues are discussed⁴.

The PFD builds on the **added value and complementarities brought by the different actors**, in their capacity to contribute to analysis, design and monitoring of EU development policies.

The PFD is set-up for an initial period of 2 (two) years with a possible extension on the basis of an evaluation (see 4.5).

3. Membership: general principles & allocation of seats

3.1. Principles

The Policy Forum gathers representatives of CSOs and LAs from global, European and regional levels⁵ together with representatives of European Institutions and bodies. All four (4) regions where EU cooperation is implemented will be represented: **Neighbourhood Region, Africa, Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.**

A balanced representation of actors shall be ensured: building on the outcomes of current international debates⁶, the PFD integrates different categories of representative platforms of CSOs and LAs on the basis of their distinctive added value and includes the European Platforms already involved in the Structured Dialogue.

3.2. Allocation of seats

With a view to guarantee quality of debates and effective participation of all stakeholders, the PFD should remain in a workable size. Seats are distributed amongst the different categories of CSOs and LAs and assigned according to the following criteria:

- (i) The level of representation of the actors (regional/sub-regional levels, European and global)

³ For more information, consult the Structured Dialogue Concluding Document at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Structured_dialogue

⁴ Such as the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee, the Latin America Civil Society meetings, the Euromed Summits, the *Assises de la Coopération décentralisée*, etc.

⁵ Even though the country level is not directly targeted by the PFD, the PFD will acknowledge the necessary links across all levels. It will furthermore recognise the importance of developing and/or supporting consultations as well as other knowledge-management mechanisms and tools to allow feedback and input through the various levels (see section on Working Modalities).

⁶ i.e. Article 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action and Article 22 of the Busan Declaration, which explicitly refer to CSOs and LAs as "independent development actors in their own right".

- (ii) The typology of the actors involved: CSOs (including Trade Unions, Cooperatives, NGOs and Foundations in the large sense), LAs, organisations representing the private sector (including Chambers of Commerce and Employers Federations).

3.2.1. Regional and sub-regional level

Seats are allocated covering the 4 regions with the following level of structuration⁷:

| Africa | Latin America and the Caribbean | Asia and Pacific | European Neighbourhood region |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| NGOs ⁸ : 4 | NGOs: 4 | NGOs: 4 | NGOs: 4 |
| Trade Unions: 2 | Trade Unions: 2 | Trade Unions: 1 | Trade Unions: 1 |
| Cooperatives: 1 | Cooperatives: 1 | Cooperatives: 1 | Cooperatives: 1 |
| Local Authorities: 3 | Local Authorities: 3 | Local Authorities: 3 | Local Authorities: 3 |
| Private sector: 1 | Private sector: 1 | Private sector: 1 | Private sector: 1 |

3.2.2. European level

The PFD includes:

(i) European platforms and networks, namely those involved in the Structured Dialogue, as well as other relevant European actors. Seats are allocated on the basis of 2 seats per platform to the following platforms/networks:

- European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD);
- Cooperatives Europe;
- European Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Eurochambres);
- European Foundation centre (EFC);
- European network of Political Foundations (ENOP);
- Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD);
- Green 10;
- Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN);
- European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)/Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN);
- European platform of Local and regional authorities (PLATFORMA);
- Red Cross;
- European Youth Forum;
- Fair Trade Movement (FTAO).

At the European level, the PFD will allow flexibility for new comers.

3.2.3. Global level

Seats will be allocated to this level, on the following basis:

- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-TUDCN): 1 seat
- International Cooperatives Alliance: 1 seat
- CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CDPE): 1 seat
- United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), in coordination with other transnational networks: 1 seat
- International/Global representation of the private sector: 2 seats.

⁷ Agreed by participants during the PFD Interim Session on 18 October 2012. The report of the meeting is available at: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Policy_forum

⁸ One of the seats attributed to NGOs will be allocated, in every region, to a regional women's network/platform.

In addition, representation of Member States and the following European Institutions and bodies is ensured:

- European Commission (EC)
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- European Parliament (EP)
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- Committee of the Regions (CoR)
- European Investment Bank (EIB).

The PFD ensures flexibility and inclusiveness in its participation: according to topics and themes on the agenda, the PFD may consider inviting, for specific sessions, thematic groups and issue-specific organisations, as well as experts from CSOs and LAs which are not members of the PFD, as well as representatives of academia and think tanks.

3.3. Selection process and membership criteria

The Forum ensures a balanced representation of all regions and categories of actors and the selection of members will be inclusive, transparent and flexible.

Mandates are assigned to Organisations⁹ (Networks/Platforms), for a period of 2 years. Appointed organisations (the "Members of the PFD") are responsible for **selecting their own representatives** on the basis of **commonly agreed criteria¹⁰**.

In order to guarantee quality of debates, representatives will fulfil the following requirements:

- Capacity to **represent and express the views of their constituencies**; demonstrated capacity to **provide their constituencies with regular feed-back** on the discussions and conclusions reached within the PFD;
- A **commitment to take part in the PFD in the short and medium terms, and availability** to fulfil this commitment;
- A **gender balance** and
- Excellent **communication skills** (both verbal and written), **interpersonal skills and language skills** (English, French or Spanish).

Appointed organisations **will also designate a contact person within their organisation (i.e. the focal point)**, who will be responsible for communications with the EC and other stakeholders on PFD issues.

Failure from members (appointed organisations) to participate in two (2) consecutive PFD sessions will lead to the discontinuation of membership from the process.

4. Working modalities

4.1. Coordination by EuropeAid and active commitment and participation of all stakeholders

EuropeAid is in charge of the overall organisation of the Forum. More specifically, the CSO/LA Unit coordinates and ensures the smooth undertaking of activities, in close cooperation with all parties involved, through adequate joint agenda-setting and co-chairing mechanisms. Participation of other relevant EuropeAid Directorates and Units is also ensured, depending on the

⁹ To ensure organisational memory and prevent the "personalisation" of representatives' roles, please see Annex 1 for the approach agreed upon for the Regional NGOs' selection process.

¹⁰ Appointed organisations have the free choice to send into the discussions the best-positioned participant who can bring added value, according to his or her technical background, into the Policy Forum.

topics addressed.

Active participation and commitment of all members is a key element for the relevance and effectiveness of the Forum and contributes to ensuring the collective ownership of the process.

The PFD is chaired by EuropeAid and there are **two co-Chairs** from the CSOs and LA stakeholders (one CSO and one LA). The selected co-Chairs are members of the **PFD Task Force** and have a **two-year mandate**.

4.2. Establishment of the PFD Task Force

A **PFD Task Force** is set up and helps maintain communication between PFD meetings and undertake preparatory work. This group monitors the functioning and performance of the PFD (towards this end a set of indicators may be defined during the first six months of operations).

The Task Force is composed of a maximum of 15 participants: **two representatives (CSO and LA) per region, two representatives (CSO and LA) of European Platforms, two representatives (CSO and LA) from the global level** and staff from the CSO/LA Unit at EuropeAid. The two co-chairs of the PFD are selected among task Force Members. The Task Force members **have a two-year mandate**.

4.3. Transparent and inclusive agenda setting

The agenda is defined in a **participatory, transparent and inclusive** way.

Yearly work plans are agreed upon during the PFD sessions, based on the EuropeAid Work Plan and on the calendar of international events. Additionally, Members have the opportunity to propose specific themes to be addressed at the PFD. To ensure that the PFD meets the interests of all stakeholders, the **Task Force ensures the preparation of the PFD sessions**.

4.4. Live and online events to promote continuous flows of information and debates

Two meetings of the PFD are organised each year.

As a general rule, meetings of the PFD take place in Brussels¹¹ and participation is on invitation. **Ad-hoc working groups** may be set up, with the task of preparing specific discussions and ensuring that there is active participation from all members.

Finally the PFD may develop and/or support consultations (including regional consultations) and information sharing between the events as well as other knowledge sharing mechanisms and tools.¹²

4.5. Flexibility and adaptation over time

After an initial phase of two-years, on the basis of feedback received from stakeholders and the follow-up and monitoring work by the Task Force, revision and improvements of the working modalities shall be considered, as well as the composition and membership of the PFD.

¹¹ For meetings in Brussels: the EC will cover travel and accommodation costs for all regional participants (provided that participation to the PFD is not already foreseen under on-going EC funded projects). For EU Platforms, the EU will only cover travel and accommodation costs for one representative per Platform, provided they are not based in Brussels and that participation to the PFD is not already foreseen under on-going EC funded projects. In the event of meeting taking place in the regions: the EC will cover travel costs and accommodation for all European and regional participants (provided that participation to the PFD is not foreseen under on-going EC funded projects)

¹² Primarily, this will be done through capacity4dev (<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/>). This portal will allow to continue the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices, as well as to keep stakeholders regularly informed and to foster communication amongst the actors involved. The use of other online tools and/or social media may also be envisioned.

ANNEX 1 - Background information on the Policy Forum on Development

A. The new EU policy framework: Dialogue becomes a priority at all levels

Dialogue is highly prioritised in the **EU policy framework for both CSOs and LAs**.

The new Communication on CS issued by the EC ("**The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations**", COM (2012) 492)¹³), proposes an enhanced and more strategic approach in its engagement with local CSOs. The Communication, which covers all regions, including developing, neighbourhood and enlargement countries, places a strong emphasis on CSOs' engagement to build stronger democratic processes and accountability systems and to achieve better development outcomes, and puts forward three priorities for EU support: (i) To enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries; (ii) To promote meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes; and (iii) To increase local CSOs' capacity to perform more effectively their roles as independent development actors.

At the regional and global level, the Communication foresees support for organisations, networks and alliances working to tackle transnational and global challenges, monitor policy coherence for development, and contribute to the promotion of global citizens' awareness. It further acknowledges the evolution of information and communication technology that has played a key role in the growth and changing role of transnational networks. At the EU level, attention is given to CSOs dialogue with European Institutions.

On the LA side, the new Communication on "Local Authorities in development" also echoes the importance of dialogue at all levels, starting from the local, to the national, (sub) regional and global levels.

Against this background, the EC works to promote spaces for dialogue **at all levels**. Undoubtedly, the follow-up at the in-country level is a high priority¹⁴, but the **two other dimensions are also key to implement the new policy**. The regional (and sub-regional) dimension is particularly relevant for connecting with existing regional initiatives, institutions and networks. The EU level is relevant for promoting stock taking, facilitating cross-learning through exchanges, feeding results into policy discussions on international cooperation and development, and ensuring the overall monitoring of the implementation of the SD recommendations.

B. The Interim phase of the Policy Forum: Keeping the momentum and safeguarding the spirit of the Structured Dialogue

Since the end of the Structured Dialogue, in May 2011, a number of steps have been taken to establish a permanent space for dialogue between the EU and CSO & LAs at headquarters level. They include:

The organisation of a Structured Dialogue follow-up meeting in November 2011: Prior to the meeting, a Working Document entitled "Towards a multi-level dialogue space", introducing the idea of a "dialogue on policy issues, including high-level discussions", was sent to participants, to gather comments on the follow-up of the SD. During the meeting, the proposal for a **high-level policy dialogue** (the so-called Policy Forum on Development – PFD) was well received, confirming the need to bring together, at the EC Headquarters in Brussels, relevant stakeholders working on development and cooperation issues, to exchange and discuss: (i) issues linked to the follow-up of the Structured Dialogue (i.e. recommendations and further elaboration of selected

¹³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁴ The process is to be facilitated by EU Delegations with political and technical support from the EC Headquarters. In this regard, positive dynamics are in place.

themes); (ii) EU main policies and initiatives; and (iii) more global policy issues linked to the EC and the international development agenda.

Following this meeting, a first **working document** entitled "*Creating a space for dialogue with Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities: The Policy Forum on Development*", was prepared by EuropeAid and circulated **in February 2012 among relevant stakeholders¹⁵ for comments on three building blocks**: Goals and objectives of the PFD, Working modalities and, Membership. By the 23rd of March 2012, seven European platforms, the European Economic and Social Committee and seven SD Ambassadors sent their remarks. The contributions received were then analysed to identify areas of consensus, as well as issues requiring further discussion amongst the key stakeholders.

A first interim meeting of the PFD was organised in May 2012. In the course of this meeting the results of the afore-mentioned consultation were presented to stakeholders. No decisions were yet adopted and stakeholders were invited to send their proposals on membership.

In June 2012, European platforms sent a joint position letter to the EC asking for the setup of a Steering Committee which could support the EC in shaping the future working paths and modalities of the PFD, specifically in what concerns: (i) Facilitating the joint drafting of future agendas of the PFD to encourage focused policy debates and exchange; (ii) Setting out commonly expected results and (iii) Framing the overall contents, structure and membership of the future PFD.

A second working document, entitled "**Design of the roadmap leading to the establishment of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) starting in 2013**" was prepared by EuropeAid and circulated among relevant stakeholders in July 2012. It was intended to gather their consolidated comments and feedbacks, after consultation with their respective members and constituencies. Building on the first working document and taking stock of the debates that had taken place to date, the second working document focused on the way forward, underlining the areas that required further reflection and debate, and the proposed concerted steps.

In August 2012, building on the outcomes of the regional consultations, a small "Working Group" was created. It was composed of EuropeAid and regional CSO & LA representatives (considering the five 'Structured Dialogue' regions: Africa, Asia, Latin America, ENPI++, Europe) and was given the task of assisting the EC in shaping the future working paths and modalities of the PFD.

A second interim meeting of the PFD was organised on the 18th and 19th of October 2012 in Brussels. Building on the work done by the Working Group (which held a meeting on the 17th of October, before the PFD), a concrete proposal was brought forward for the setup of the permanent structure¹⁶.

Stakeholders warmly welcomed the proposal and only a few concerns were expressed and/or minor amendments proposed either during the session or in writing during the following weeks of consultation. They were taken on board or discussed further with the parties involved to reach a consensus.

Regarding the selection process of Regional networks and platforms (section 5.1), although this is confirmed for LAs, Cooperatives, Trade Unions and the Private sector, it was agreed that a tailored approach is required **for the identification of the NGO members at regional level**, considering the variety of networks and alliances in the four regions.

The approaches agreed by the stakeholders for each region are as follows:

¹⁵ Namely European platforms and Regional Ambassadors. During the SD process, participants to the regional seminars (Brussels, Bamako, Amman, Asuncion, New Delhi and Baku) designated their "Ambassadors" to represent them at each session and event of the SD process. The 32 Ambassadors took part to the first follow-up meeting of the SD in Brussels (November 2011), as well as the two Interim meetings of the PFD (May and October 2012).

¹⁶ See report at: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Policy_forum

In **Latin America** NGO members to the PFD will be identified by the existing well-established regional platforms and by sub-regional constituencies.

In **Africa** the identification of NGO members will be done by (sub-) regional platforms and networks, taking into account the on-going dynamics the progress made to date with regards to the set-up of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE).

In **Asia** the use of current CPDE systems will also be used to identify the best options for NGO participants at the sub-regional level.

In the **ENP South & East** the identification of NGO participants will be done by sectoral networks on the basis of the proposals put forward by the SD Ambassadors, complemented by a desk research.