



Concept Note

Structured Dialogue for Civil Society and Local Authorities on GAP III 2025

Exchanges on GAP III implementation and Focus Group discussions for inputs to the External intermediate GAP III Evaluation

This concept note outlines the organisation of three sessions under the umbrella of the Structured Dialogue on GAP III between 16 and 18 September 2025.

These sessions will allow the EU to share updates on the implementation of GAP III and provide a platform to exchange best practices, challenges, and lessons learned from local-level GAP III implementation, while also supporting the ongoing external evaluation of GAP III.

The sessions will be supported by the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) and closely coordinated with the European Commissions DG INTPA, ENEST, MENA and the European External Action Service (EEAS), the GAP III Structured Dialogue steering group, and the ADE external evaluation team. To build further on the lessons from previous structured dialogues, three sessions (rather than a single global meeting) will take place in different time zones to better encourage participation and accommodate regional differences.

Background

The EU's Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) for 2021–2027 is focused on accelerating gender equality and empowering women and girls through its external action. A core element of GAP III is enhancing collaboration with civil society partners to monitor and implement gender initiatives at the local level effectively. The GAP III Structured Dialogue, which has featured annual events since the adoption of GAP III, was established to maintain continuous communication between civil society organisations (CSOs), local authorities (LAs), and EU stakeholders, thereby strengthening the GAP III implementation.

The ongoing external independent evaluation of GAP III, commissioned by DG INTPA, covers the period from 2021 to 2024 and aims to learn, assess, and inform future strategies. The focus is on gender equality in the green and digital transition and through support to and engagement with women's rights organisations in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

The GAP III evaluation report will be presented and discussed at a high-level event in November/December 2025, with the participation of CSOs and LAs.

Draft Agenda

- **Welcome and Introduction**
- **Presentation on the Implementation of GAP III by the EU**
 - Updates on the EU's Implementation of GAP III, followed by Q&A
- **Presentation by the ADE Evaluation Team**
 - Main preliminary observations from the 10-country case studies
 - Introduction to the focus group discussions

- **Focus Group Discussion** (with Cluster 1 and 2 running parallel or consecutive - tbd):

Cluster 1 – EU's approach, results, and transformative change

Overarching question: How effective has EU support under GAP III been in enabling WRO/CSO engagement and achieving gender-transformative results that reach the most marginalised women and girls?

- Prompts: What types of engagement approaches worked best? What results have been achieved for women and girls? To what extent did interventions reach marginalised groups from an intersectional perspective? Where has change been transformative versus incremental?

Cluster 2 – WPS; climate/peace nexus; and protection (from SGBV)

Overarching question: How has EU support under GAP III advanced the WPS agenda and linked gender equality with climate resilience, environmental protection, conflict prevention, and the protection of WROs/CSOs?

- Prompts: Beyond SGBV, how have women been supported as peace and security actors? How has the EU integrated gender with climate/environment/peace actions? What strategies have been effective in protecting WROs/CSOs and sustaining their participation in shrinking civic spaces?

- **Plenary Discussion - Good practices, recommendations, and links to GAP III**

- What good practices should be scaled, and how can the EU strengthen the protection and sustainability of WRO/CSO engagement?

- How can these lessons inform future implementation of GAP III and shape the EU's approach in fragile and conflict contexts?
- **Wrap-Up and Closing**

Participants

Participants will include CSO and Local Authorities representatives drawn from the GAP III Structured Dialogue network¹, ensuring a diverse group of stakeholders from different countries in the regions. However, the focus of the intermediate evaluation will be CSOs.

Dates and times

The schedule of meetings is as follows:

- Tuesday 16th September at 13:00 – 16:00 CEST: focus Middle East/North Africa/the Gulf & Sub-Saharan Africa (in English / French)
- Wednesday 17th September at 09:00 – 11:30 CEST: focus Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood/Asia-Pacific (in English)
- Thursday 18th September at 16:00 – 18:30 CEST: focus Latin America & Caribbean (in English / Spanish)

¹ For the purpose of structured dialogue on GAP III, PFD has a list of approximately 300 persons from CSOs and LAs from different countries around the world.