Joint Learning and Coordination Workshop for EC, UNDP, WB Country Office Staff Responsible for Civil Society Development Programmes
• Vienna, June 15 – 16, 2006 •

United Nations Vienna International Center
Vienna, Austria

ACTIVITY REPORT

Summary

A joint learning and coordination workshop for European Commission, UNDP and World Bank country office staff responsible for civil society development programs took place in Vienna on June 15-16, 2006. The workshop was convened jointly by the Austrian Development Agency, the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank, and took place at the premises of the United Nations Vienna International Center.

The main purpose of the workshop was to provide field staff of the participating agencies with an opportunity to identify practical means of strengthening donor collaboration in the field of civil society development in the region. The vehicle for enhanced coordination on this theme is DECIM – Donor Exchange, Coordination & Information Mechanism recently initiated by the European Commission and the World Bank.

Altogether twenty six countries were represented in the workshop, which convened for the first time a forum for comparing and discussing the agencies' extensive and varied experience of civil society programming in the region. The process allowed for a stock taking of the achievements of civil societies and their further potential for strengthening developmental outcomes in the sub-regions.

Despite the varied challenges facing civil societies, there was general agreement on the relevance of a regional approach to coordination. The gains included the opportunity to learn lessons from experience and make potential alliances for more effective programming.

Participants placed particular emphasis on realistic assessment of the scope for civic action within country – a task to be undertaken jointly by DECIM partners with the active participation of local civil society actors. They reconfirmed the relevance of the five thematic areas of DECIM for the strengthening of civil society and its organizations: Policy Dialogue, Delivery of Social Services, Legal Framework, Financial Sustainability and Capacity Building.

There was extensive discussion of the comparative advantage of individual donors in respect of civil society development. Some had resources, others could exert leverage with government; some focused on service delivery, others on advocacy; some had presence in country and local networks, others had particular capacities, such as monitoring and evaluation. The benefits of matching these assets for enhanced development outcomes were evident.

This led to a clear commitment by a majority of participants to promote DECIM within country as a means of enhancing coordination between the agencies. Building on existing mechanisms where they are in place, participants determined to engage more actively with their colleagues in order to share strategies, avoid duplication, achieve complementarities or design joint programs. Participants also undertook to engage systematically with bilateral agencies, member state embassies, private foundations and other interested donors.

Participants were however emphatic that the effectiveness of DECIM at country level would depend upon active encouragement and support from their hierarchies. They suggested that there should be two mutually reinforcing and complementary aspects to DECIM – at headquarters and at country level.

Participants expressed surprise and satisfaction that the event had been the first time such a diverse group of people who work with civil society had the chance to meet, while especially welcoming the opportunities presented by DECIM for further structured dialogue and exchange of information and experiences. At the close of the workshop the organizers invited participants to sign up to a dedicated website hosted by CIDA as a means of sharing knowledge of civil society development amongst DECIM partners.

> *The DECIM launch will allow looking at CS development in the country more comprehensively and making the changes on the ground real and strategic.*
>
> *My expectations of fellow donors and my organization will be much higher in terms of making a difference for civil society in measurable and meaningful terms.*
>
> Workshop Participants

1. Key workshop topics and questions

DECIM is a new initiative that is intended as a "light" form of coordination between donors (including private foundations) with an active commitment to improving their support for civil society programmes in the region through sharing information, experience and lessons learned. Fifty staff of the European Commission, UNDP and the World Bank, as well as partner agencies in the field of civil society development from 26 countries took part in the workshop.

- Major topics countries were represented discussed during the workshop included:

1) DECIM background and objectives
2) The role of the European Commission, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank in supporting DECIM
3) The role of country office staff responsible for civil society development issues in DECIM
4) The role of bilateral donors and foundations in DECIM
5) The feasibility of civil society development in the context of different countries in the region and sub-regions : current status of civil society and civic action, challenges, proposals
6) The role of donors in facilitating civil society development: overlapping and complementing activities
7) The role of local communities and civil society organizations in fostering civil society development
8) The role of governments in developing the capacity of civil society – financing of the NGO sector through public funds; tax deduction laws
9) The role of communication and coordination among donors, civil society and governments
10) Financial sustainability of civil society organizations.

- Key questions which developed in the course of the workshop included:

1) What are the challenges facing civil society in Europe and Central Asia?
2) What is the status of civil society in the different countries in the region?
3) What does it take to develop civil society? How to strengthen the capacity of individual civil society organizations (CSOs)?
4) How do we develop civil society in countries in which there is no government support to the process?
5) What are the prerequisites for enhancing cooperation among donor agencies, and governments?
6) How relevant and appropriate are the terms "civil society development" and "DECIM" for the respective countries in the Europe and Central Asia region?
7) What is the coordination role of country office staff responsible for civil society development issues and how can DECIM best support it?
8) How can DECIM bring added value to projects being developed on the ground?
9) How can overlap in donor activities be overcome?
10) Is civil society development an end in itself or should we include it in the overall development agenda?

2. General trends during the discussion

During the first day of the workshop, participants discussed the role of donors in supporting civic action, the necessary conditions for enhancing civil society capacity and potential, proposals for preventing competition or overlap in donor activities, and the role of governments and individuals in enhancing civic action.

During the second day of the workshop, the discussion centered on innovative methods for supporting civil society in times of insufficient government support to the process, and challenges and opportunities related to the financial sustainability of civil society organizations.

During both days of the workshop, the participants discussed obstacles to coordination and civil society development as well as examples of successful donor coordination. They also emphasized the importance of knowing the context at regional, sub-regional and country levels, of including donors, civil society and governments in the coordination process and of building and maintaining trust and open channels of communication between the stakeholders.

3. Regional Context: challenge and opportunity

The region's heterogeneity and the varying extent of civic space across the countries poses a constraint to development in some sub-regions but, at the same time, an opportunity for cross country knowledge sharing and capacity building. In the New Member States – **NMS** for example, civil society has demonstrated its capacity for making real advances in quality of life for citizens, yet donors are still leaving before governments and local constituencies are able to provide the right kind and level of support for CSOs. There are therefore lessons to be shared regionally amongst donors about the timeframes required for embedding civil society in countries that undergo profound transformations.

In the Commonwealth of Independent States – **CIS**, where space for civil society is shrinking rather than expanding, political developments have huge impact on civil societies. Participants were clear about the need to look at sub-regional and country context much more seriously and realistically. Otherwise, experience revealed, the risk of failure in civil society development programmes was high. Over and again participants emphasised the importance of a thorough understanding of civil society development in country as a basis for identifying needs and realistic approaches with future potential. Within country, leading civil society actors were considered essential guides for this process.

Central Asia, with its hostility to the advocacy role of civil society, was considered to present the most serious challenge in the region, with all donors encountering difficulty in applying their definitions of civil society development. Here several donors found themselves operational in the face of government reluctance to recognize even the service provision function of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Participants observed that service delivery CSOs, where free to operate, ran the same risk of premature donor withdrawal which had so adversely affected policy and advocacy CSOs in the NMS . It was clear that there would be no short cuts to strengthening civil society in Central Asia and donors needed to coordinate effectively amongst themselves to meet the challenge.

4. Civil society: the role of individuals and organizations

Speakers from the New Member States (NMS) in search of a common language around civil society development found the traditional conceptualization of civil society as tripartite division of state, market and civil society no longer tenable. Instead they drew on the more recent concept of a *space* for civic action lying between the "fuzzy" boundaries of household, state and market to describe the process of civil society reinventing itself and its relationship with the state. Although the arena this creates has the potential to empower individuals for civic action, they found that the concept of civil society in NMS remains essentially associational, in that organizations – mainly NGOs – are its strongest feature, governments are their main donors and service delivery is their principal activity.

Participants were not convinced however that activism had been entirely "bought out" and that CSOs were now working exclusively to a government agenda[1]. There was acknowledgement that during the transition to the market economy, the role of the individual in the free market was over-emphasized at the expense of individual and voluntary roles in the public sphere. Despite this error, and from their perspective as practitioners, participants from the NMS saw increasingly confident civil societies which have a clear understanding of their particular role and are successful in campaigning for resources from the state. Their view was that even if NGOs dominated the civic landscape, they largely demonstrated the "civil" in society and should not be abandoned now. There was, however, still much work to be done before achieving a strong and vibrant civil sector with a diverse funding base. Aid coordination towards achieving this end was seen as a potentially valuable contribution.

Civil society means "*a non-governmental sector of organizations consisting of people who help democratic and economic processes go forward; advocate for social and political changes; provide oversight of government's performance; monitor some of the state functions; fill the gaps the government is not covering; react, raise awareness, offer alternatives and lobby for changes to the benefit of marginalised groups.*"

Civil society development is an "*important mechanism that contributes to the communication and dialogue between government and population, on issues relevant to the various aspects of the country's development.*"

Participant Views on Civil Society (see Annex 1)

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5. The role of local communities in enhancing civic action

Elsewhere participants maintained that local communities are vital driving forces in the development of vibrant civil societies. In the case of UNDP's work in Bulgaria, local communities had taken part in a rural development project through Local Action Groups.

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[1] Refer to Annex 1 for a summary of participants' responses to the question: what is civil society development?

After developing proposals based on the needs of local communities, they managed to have them approved by the local councils and implement them successfully.

Community Driven Development of this type has also become a popular donor strategy in Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, with EC funding, UNDP has responded to shrinking space for local civic actors by engaging directly with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and positioning itself between citizens and local authorities for poverty reduction. Similar work by the World Bank in the more benign environment of Kyrgyzstan demonstrates the extent to which donors are becoming operational in the sub-region.

Participants debated whether such initiatives strengthened local civil society by supporting it at the only level acceptable to the authorities or weakened it by supplanting local intermediary CSOs. The question is where the added value of donors lies: in delivery or in using its influence with government to enlarge the space for civic action? For further discussion of this issue see the case below of joint EC-UNDP support at community level in Uzbekistan.

6. Coordination for What? DECIM areas of intervention

DECIM's five areas of intervention were well received by participants who considered them both relevant across the region and a useful guarantee for ensuring that coordination between agencies was focused on practicalities.[2] It was felt that there was room for prioritizing these within country and also that there was scope for individual donors to take the lead on areas where they had comparative advantage. A strong mechanism for cooperation across and within these areas was seen as a distinct added value of DECIM. Through these DECIM could demonstrate that it was usefully filling a gap, there being no other donor forum for cooperation and information exchange in civil society development at regional level. Moreover the area of intervention would provide a framework for sharing lessons, thereby improving the effectiveness of donor interventions.

7. The importance of country staff feedback and involvement

As pointed out by the organizers, DECIM was developed at headquarters while the process itself primarily seeks to engage colleagues who work out of country offices and delegations in the sub-regions. The workshop was a feedback-seeking session, designed to obtain an idea what people in country offices considered the best methods of enhancing donor coordination for civic action. Throughout the workshop, the organizers stressed the importance of country office staff involvement in DECIM, as no improvement could be achieved in the absence of field staff support to the process. In turn the country office staff expressed the need for recognition and support regarding their coordination role from senior management within their own organizations.

Thus while the organizers prioritized field level collaboration within DECIM, the field officers themselves stressed the importance of the active involvement of the hierarchy

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[2] The areas of intervention are i) CSO legal framework ii) public advocacy, policy dialogue and governance iii) delivery of social services and creation of social capital iv) CSO financial sustainability and v) CSO capacity building , knowledge sharing and networking.

within headquarters. By implication, they felt that little would be achieved beyond what they are doing already, without formal, high level buy-in to the process. This was seen as essential in order to promote harmonization at levels as varied as the strategic and procedural. More active involvement of stakeholders in country assistance strategies was cited as an example of the former. Regarding the latter, participants remarked how different approaches to tendering and procurement made collaboration especially difficult.

Such considerations gave rise to the possible need for mutually reinforcing DECIMs at both headquarters and country levels. According to this scenario coordinated activities on the ground would integrate with and complement humanization, policy development and capacity support from headquarters.

8. The role of communication in coordination

The degree to which field officers with civil society remits said they communicated with each other was very mixed. All agreed however that regular exchange built trust amongst each other and that this was a key factor in enhancing the quality of their coordination. Although several participants expressed satisfaction with the level of cooperation between agencies, all agreed that the workshop was their first opportunity to engage with each other across the region. Several said that they had never previously engaged in this type of focused exchange between donors. This feature of DECIM was seen in an especially positive light and the organizers were encouraged to pursue this innovation during the three year pilot.

Communicating beyond the existing DECIM partners was seen as an advantage and the suggestion was made to include other civil society representatives in future workshops. Those missing included other bilateral donors with an interest in civil society, government agencies for cooperation with NGOs and private foundations.

The advance of technology was also seen as important in maintaining such channels and there was considerable interest in the web site that CIDA is hosting for DECIM participants. They felt that the resources on the web and its Community of Practice would reinforce what they valued most: interaction and learning from the experiences of colleagues in the field.

9. Donors' activities: overlap, relevance and harmonisation

Overlap and relevance of donor activities were two themes discussed extensively. In Russia, despite the existing coordination mechanism, donors discovered that they had separately commissioned four studies of the new, restrictive NGO Law. At least the donors had discussed the results together before making them public, but such a high degree of overlap is a symptom of very weak coordination.

The relevance of some donor approaches to capacity building was also questioned, with a 3 month training programme for 150 NGOs in Ukraine that was cited as an example of how NOT to go about such processes. Such anomalies could be avoided by donors sharing quality standards for capacity building that ensure civil society and its

organizations are enabled to strengthen strategies, performance and relationships incrementally and over time scales that take account of their absorptive capacities.

Mobilizing resources for under funded activities was outlined as another important element in enhancing donor support. Participants acknowledged that donors under pressure to deliver successful programmes have a tendency to avoid risk, leading to what one speaker described as the artificial creation of islands of success. This comment led to the observation that coordination should not mean homogeneity, thereby reinforcing supply-driven funding fads.

A project for **Macedonia's education sector** was presented as an example of successful harmonization of donors' activities. Intense donor interest in education was difficult for the government to handle and gave rise to a pressing need for coordination. Ownership for coordination was considered a key ingredient of success. This remained within the Ministry as it was empowered to oversee assistance through a coordination secretariat. In turn the secretariat did not interfere with implementation, which it left to the governing bodies of individual schools. The World Bank, USAID, DFID and the Japanese Government have all made different contributions to the project through the coordination secretariat.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion was presented as another example of successful coordination and harmonization. After extensive assessment of the situation of Roma in Central Europe, the DECIM partners and the Open Society Foundation identified education, employment, health and shelter as priority areas for combating Roma social exclusion in the sub-region. At country level, in Hungary, the stakeholders also include bilateral donors and private foundations. **The Decade in Hungary** offers an example of donors overcoming competition amongst themselves. The government has also played a pivotal role in empowering civil society. It accessed EU resources for employment generation and passing them on to CSOs for local social inclusion programmes.

10. The role of governments: obstacles and strategies

Good practice shows how strong, supportive government is a prerequisite for a strong civil society in the region. However, where government is authoritarian and represses civil society, autonomous civic action becomes difficult, even impossible. In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, for example, the political and economic system is increasingly closed to civil society. In other cases, the government is simply not willing to work with civil society. In these circumstances, civil society development is practically not feasible. Participants concluded that donors have to be prepared to work with governments, while being flexible, pragmatic and innovative in order to foster civic space. Even if the central government remains hostile to civil society development, social capital formation is still possible through service delivery.

CS Coordination in Difficult Circumstances – The EC and UNDP in Uzbekistan

Following the closing down of NGOs in Uzbekistan in 2004 activities undertaken by the EC and UNDP were presented as a good example of coordinated support in environments unfriendly to civil society. The Commission and UNDP adapted their project strategies to the new circumstances and, in the absence of NGOs, utilized the knowledge and experiences of people who once belonged to these organizations to carry on their activities under the more acceptable EC and UNDP banners. In the discussion, the participants said donors should use their influence to convince governments that the direct participation of CSOs in public life is essential for development.

Where governments are supportive of civil society, donors have an important role in fostering the enabling environment of favourable legal and tax frameworks for CSOs. There is substantial potential for supporting the cross-fertilisation of experience across the region, not only in the one per cent tax laws that have spread from Hungary to seven countries since 1997, but also in establishing government offices for cooperation and drawing up strategies for strengthening civil society. Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovenia are positive examples where government and civil society capacities exist for technical support.

11. The impact of accession on CSO sustainability

There was concern with donors scaling down their financial assistance to European countries after European Union accession. The phase out of Central European countries has had a particularly negative impact on policy and advocacy CSOs, whose activities can challenge governments. There are examples in the Visegrad countries of such CSOs having to join government think tanks for survival because they lack independent sources of funds. Greater awareness of the situation and better coordination amongst donors could have set in place strategies for these CSOs to manage the transition more effectively.

Service provision CSOs have done better in the NMS and government has become a significant source of support through provision of European Union funds or legislative measures such as tax deduction laws. In this respect, participants pointed out the importance of introducing supportive legal and economic frameworks for civil society and its organizations *before* European Union accession. Albania, where donors have cooperated on the legal framework for NGOs since 1996, is a good example.

12. Mutual comparative advantage

Given that not all donors could meet all the various needs of civil society development in the region, there was a perceived benefit in exploring the synergies that coordination between them could produce. There was extensive discussion of what each of the DECIM partners could contribute in each of the sub-regions and how this could be coordinated best. For example, knowledge from one organization could be combined with funds from another.

A break-out group at the workshop approached the question of comparative advantage by asking the question: what are the specific institutional responsibilities of individual donors? It recorded the discussion in the following table (Table 1) which clearly sets out particular advantages such as EC country presence and resources, World Bank policy frameworks and expertise, UNDP commitment to the MDGs and so on. Set against these are of course such challenges as inflexibility in EC programming and lack of funds at UNDP.

The question of who leads coordination is also relevant in this context. The EC is a focal point for USAID and other bilateral donors. UNDP can also lead on aid coordination, which may in some countries give it a comparative advantage in the more specific DECIM field of civil society development.

Elsewhere civil society actors have been the natural conveners. Where international CSOs play this role, coordination will most likely be temporary. This was the case in Almaty, where coordination ceased after INTRAC's departure. Armenia's Partnership for Open Society is more strongly established because it arose through local initiative, when CSOs expressed the need for better donor coordination. The principal aim of the Partnership is policy dialogue. The Romanian Donor's Forum is a registered federation of 6 local foundations, joined later by two internationals. It exists to promote local philanthropy for the sustainability of civil society.

Table 1. Perception of comparative advantage amongst current DECIM partners.

Agency	Advantages	Challenges
EC	• Wide network of delegations, focal point for member states and USAID. • Open to cooperation, to co-financing within framework. • Shift towards large projects, evaluation, performance management and reflection. • Resources exist. • Small grants for community, pilots, response driven. • European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan.	• Small grants procedures have admin burden; finance the bigger NGOs. • Need to respond to governing body. • EC is not always active in these countries. • Different CS approach across new instruments
UNDP	• Information / data on issues such as gender, human rights. • UNDAF / National Human Development Report. • Capacity for Monitoring & Evaluation. • Leads coordination efforts. • Wide network of country offices • MDGs.	• Priority is working with government.
WB	• Policy framework: CAS (socioeconomic, data, PRSP). • Methodologies in M&E, SD/Social Accountability.	• Limitations, e.g. working with government on human rights.
General Suggestions	• Involve embassies / delegations for info exchange to influence own governments. • Other donors: USAID, ADB, IDB, JICA. • Foundations, partners to administer grants. • Enhance capacity of local CSOs for grant making. • Coordination will prevent duplication.	• Capacity of existing donors to coordinate. • What is government position? • Capacity of CSOs to operate? • Shifting from NGO to CBO (which is unknown).

During the discussion, a participant observed that the DECIM model cannot only be designed by donors and that "*seats in the conceptual discussions should be spared for civil society representatives*".

Other fundamental considerations include the position of the government and the capacity of CSOs to function. As seen in the Uzbekistan case above, donors can play an important "*holding*" role in such circumstances.

Although this particular table was developed with the CIS in mind, it is readily adaptable for other sub-regions and levels. A similar exercise could usefully be repeated with other interested parties including bilateral donors, Embassies and Foundations, as a basis for making DECIM operational.

Over time particular bilateral donors and foundations have developed their own comparative advantage across the region and these will also be important to map. Austria, for example, has an interest for historical reasons in similar sized countries in the vicinity.

Participants noted that detailed mapping of donor strengths and weaknesses will not always be easy as some. The private Foundations, for example, have enjoyed long term status as independent donors and may be reluctant to share their leading positions – or risk their own partnership with civil society by coordinating with larger but possibly less compatible donors. Expansion of DECIM will therefore need to proceed cautiously and be accompanied by appropriate confidence building measures.

Another break-out group looked at comparative advantage from the perspective of the qualities a donor needs to coordinate CSD effectively:

Table 2. Attributes of effective donor coordination in civil society development

Professional expertise and ability to access knowledge
Convening power
Ability to coordinate
Ability to fund capacity building of
   o Government officials
   o CSOs and NGOs
   o CBOs
	Flexibility in moving resources quickly
	Shaping the enabling environment
	Access to media
	Field presence/credibility
	Trust
	Ability to influence networking
	Ability to shape policy debate

13. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. There is an historic opportunity of learning from the donor intervention in Central Europe (a lesson learned – poor exit strategy) and avoiding these mistakes in CIS.

2. There are opportunities for enhancing civic space in pre-accession countries through leverage by the EC and finding ways of involving private foundations.

3. There is a vital role in creating space for civic engagement in hostile environments by adopting a consistent message and policies by a broad range of donors.

4. Not "*just another coordination mechanism*": the difference is that the DECIM approach focuses specifically on civil society development. Donors have not attempted this before.

5. Trust is the essential ingredient of coordination. The first steps may appear obvious, but they are effective: getting to know your counterparts in country and sharing information.

6. Next steps: organisations tend to join groups when they see something that works. Keep in mind a comprehensive strategy for civil society development in your country, but start cautiously.

7. Avoid supply-driven solutions or exclusive donor models. Map the civic context precisely and keep seats at the table for CS representatives.

8. Exploit comparative donor advantage: some to engage the government, others to encourage work at the grassroots, yet others to promote bottom up pressures for accountability of public institutions by CSOs

9. Ensure organisational buy-in for coordination: two mutually reinforcing and complementary aspects to DECIM – one coordinating headquarters, the other officers at country level.

Table 3. Conclusions and recommendations from a break-out group

What is Civil Society Development?
- CS Development depends on country contexts
- Assessment of CS needs to be discussed within the country with involvement of local, leading civil society actors
- The 5 Areas of Intervention (proposed for DECIM) could be prioritized within country context
- Be realistic with expectations
- What is the role of NGO / CS in the areas of governance, corruption?
- Need for M&E capacity, knowledge and methodology among NGO / CSO

14. Participants' Evaluation

18 participants responded in writing (see Annex 2) to the question: "once DECIM is launched what would you do differently, if anything?" One participant was uninspired by the workshop and would do no nothing on return. Several would continue with the existing in-country coordination mechanisms, but attempt to steer them towards civil society strategies. Others planned to take stock, overhaul their own civil society strategies, extend their contacts, develop a stronger culture of exchange, and establish a regular schedule of meetings – in other words, operationalise DECIM in-country.

In addition there was a suggestion of repeating the workshop but enlarging the group with other country-based civil society liaison officers, from bilateral donors, the public sector and private foundations).

Annex 1:   **Views of Participants on Civil Society and Civil Society Development by Sub-region**

A. New Member States of the EU

<u>Civil society</u> is a broad category that includes traditional NGOs but also religious groups, employees' organizations, sport organizations and associations of business people. This definition basically excludes political organizations and business entities.

It is a fully fledged stakeholder in the transformation, development and EU convergence agenda processes and its modus operandi. The challenges it is facing are clear proof of the maturity of both the country and its citizens, clearly stating the success of the democratization process of the past 16 years.

Civil Society is one of the most important stakeholders in the development process of a country and plays both a complementary and a control role vis-à-vis government efforts in its development agenda.

<u>Civil society development</u> (CSD) means building confidence on the part of individual citizens and communities to influence decision making process on resource allocation by the state. CSD is a process through which people and organizations acquire capacity and skills to mobilize human resources to solve problems of common interest.

B. Western Balkans and Turkey

<u>Civil society</u> means a non-governmental sector of organizations consisting of people who help democratic and economic processes go forward; advocate for social and political changes; serve as a mechanism to control government's performance, fill the gaps the government is not covering, monitor some of the state functions; react, raise awareness, offer alternatives and lobby for changes to the benefit of marginalised groups.
.
<u>Civil society development</u> is an important mechanism that contributes to the communication and dialogue between government(s) and population, regarding issues relevant to the various aspects of the country's development. CS development includes and can be measured by:
- o Emancipation of its own representatives and members – both professional and technical
- o Increase of their capacities and enlarging their influence in respect of their activity and its impact on the country's future.
- o Better use of the existing resources and development of capacities to mobilize additional resources (local, donor funds etc.)
- o Empowerment of CSOs to enter into an effective dialogue with public institutions and citizens in their respective areas of interest.

C. Commonwealth of Independent States

<u>Civil society</u> is litmus paper of all processes within the country. It is:
- o a check and balance for democracy

- empowering an increasing number of ordinary citizens to participate in the good governance of the country and so advance democracy
- consensus around major critical issues that the sub-region faces in the longer term.

Alternatively, Civil Society is a great unknown at its best. At its worst it is a threat dreaded by all those who have an interest to maintain the status quo, i.e. the largest segments of the population across all strata and supported by "authorized" political groups.

Civil society development is about empowering civil society to participate in the decision-making processes. CSD means improved understanding by civil society of government policies and its own role in development. It implies building capacity of the numerous existing CSOs to enable them to communicate more substantively with the government/donors on development issues. It leads to more involvement of civil society in the preparation of national strategy/policy and in monitoring its implementation.

Social development in a newly independent country would mean a process of transformation of a society affected by transition with all attendant circumstances (inherited and changing structures, mind set-up, economic and political disarray, conflicts and post conflicts etc.) into one where citizens would feel and be empowered and capable to keep the governments accountable and responsible for quality, service delivery; and the governments fulfilling their service deliverer and regulator role, fully responsive, responsible and accountable before its citizens!

4. N/A or unspecified

Civil society should be the people or groups of people who advocate in favor of society's needs (when these are not met) such as justice, environment, etc. Not only through asking for rights but also recognizing duties. They should have an interest in improving specific or general areas of life in their society (country, region, sub-region).

Civil society development is the strengthening of these associations in their specific societies which results in stronger efforts towards achievement of their goals. It includes:
- Free media.
- Social change that leads to a just and peaceful society.
- An enabling environment for CSOs, including legal framework.

CSD is also about taking stock of achievements and supporting civil society respond to the issues it has not been brave enough or competent to tackle. What it is not? Building capacity so that CS can take the place of the public sector!

Annex 2:   Participants' intended follow-up of DECIM in-country

In response to the question: "once DECIM is actually launched what would you do differently, if anything?"

New Member States of the EU
1. I'll start to look for information on other donors' arrangements on a regular basis through contacting the right persons.
2. Nothing.

Western Balkans and Turkey
3. It will depend on how DECIM will officially start and what push (that is support, encouragement) will it have from HQs. Until then, I will help the present level of light coordination which is satisfactory.
4. Inform central level government on the joint EU/WB/UNDP initiative and then organize a meeting with local NGOs.
5. I will help initiate the country DECIM network and based on my organization's priorities for civil society. As a result I will have information on who can do what better.
6. Analyze once again the strategy and plan of my organization; meet counterparts from other organizations; discuss future interventions and use the synergies and avoid overlap; set up a calendar of regular meetings.
7. My expectations of fellow donors and my organization will be much higher in terms of making a difference for civil society in measurable and meaningful terms. It is up to expectations from us and from civil society.
8. Continue the donors' meetings to identify the joint strategy towards the civil society development.

Commonwealth of Independent States
9. The DECIM launch will allow looking at CS development in the country more comprehensively and making the changes on the ground real and strategic.
10. I will find out how the coordination mechanisms among the three organizations work, the open and not so open agendas, so that I can avoid mistakes that would alienate the trust of the three organizations.
11. Organize a stock-taking meeting.
12. The same as I do now: call my colleagues from different international organizations to get information. In that way they would be obliged to share it.

N/A or unspecified
13. I will share information in the initiative with all of my colleagues who work on civil society in the Europe and Eurasia region. If USAID/DECIM "chiefs" concur, I will send contacts (WB/EC) to our USAID colleagues in the field and share USAID contacts with DECIM.
14. Profile myself and conduct a pro-active exchange with other organizations and encourage a stronger culture of exchange within my organization.
15. I will continue to interact with my counterparts but expand to other agencies such as USAID and DFID. And, do so more frequently.
16. I will circulate an organigram of the EC (headquarters) desks involved.

17. I'll try to bring it down to the local level.
18. I will clarify my role in DECIM.

AGENDA

Wednesday, June 14

       Arrival of participants

20:00   Opening Dinner – welcome remarks by Dr. Josef Müllner (Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - venue 'Zur alten Kaisermühle' Alte Donau, 21A Fischerstrand 1220 Wien Tel: +43-1-263 35 29 www.kaisermuehle.at

Thursday, June 15 (*)

9:00   ***Welcome and Introductory Remarks*** by Johanna Mang (Austrian Development Agency), Francesco De Angelis (European Commission), Ben Slay (UNDP) and Franz Kaps (World Bank), chaired by Johanna Mang

9:45   <u>***Session 1:***</u> ***Donor Exchange, Coordination & Information Mechanism (DECIM)*** Presentation of agenda, objectives, introduction and expectations of participants, that will include the background and context of DECIM, goals, areas of focus, proposed next steps, by Jeremy Nagoda (European Commission) and Jan Pakulski (World Bank)

10:30   Break

11:00   <u>***Session 2:***</u> ***Civil Society Development: what does it mean? How do we support the process in sub-regions:*** Plenary introduction by Boris Strecansky (Ekopolis Foundation) and Jakub Wygnanski (Poland), followed by Working Groups, facilitated by Vigen Sargsyan (WB/Armenia)
            -   ***Central Europe***
            -   ***Balkans and Turkey***
            -   ***CIS***

12:30   Lunch

14:00   <u>***Session 3::***</u> ***Perspective from the field: Examples of coordination by EC, World Bank, and UNDP staff***: Branka Andjelkovic (UNDP/Serbia), Tunde Buzetsky (WB/Hungary), Laura Rio (UNDP/Uzbekistan), Anne De Ligne (EC/Romania), Denis Boskovski (WB/Macedonia), followed by questions and answers, chaired by Michael Voegele (EC/Turkey)

15:30   Break

16:00   <u>***Session 4:***</u> ***An Independent Perspective: Is there a scope for stronger donor coordination in regard to civil society development in our region?*** Panel presentation with Nilda Bullain (European Center for Not-for-Profit Law), Monique Nowicki (USAID), and John Beauclerck (Intrac) followed by discussion, chaired by Jafar Javan (UNDP)

17:30   End of session

19:30   Dinner in town - venue 'Schuppich' 18 Rotensterngasse 1020 Wien Tel: +43-1-212 43 40 www.schuppich.at

Friday, June 16 (*)

9:00   ***Session 5:***   ***Perspectives on the Five Areas of Intervention: Establishing a Common Understanding.***   Panel presentation (five minutes per speaker) on the proposed DECIM areas of intervention and modes of coordination, chaired by Geoff Prewitt (UNDP), followed by discussion
-     ***CSO legal framework*** Georg Salzer (EC/Moscow)
-     ***Public advocacy, policy dialogue and governance*** Tanya Shumkova (UNDP/Bulgaria)
-     ***Delivery of social services and creation of social capital***   Janna Ryssakova (WB/Kazakhstan)
-     ***CSO financial sustainability*** Petra Vehovska (WB/Slovakia)
-     ***CSO capacity building, knowledge sharing and networking*** Martin Schieder (EC/Ukraine)

10:30   Break

11:00   ***Session 6:*** ***Taking stock and exploring mutual comparative advantages.*** ***How can we develop synergies and take advantage of the DECIM framework?*** ***How can we measure our progress and impact on the ground***? Plenary discussion, three sub-regional Working Groups that examine five thematic areas of intervention in greater detail reviewing possible activities, timeframes, information exchange, monitoring, etc., chaired by Adam Novak, (Alternatives)
-     ***Central Europe***
-     ***Balkans and Turkey***
-     ***CIS***

12:30   Lunch

14:00   Working Groups continued

15:30   Break

16:00   ***Session 7:***   ***Reports from the working groups and discussion,*** chaired by John Beauclerck (Intrac)

17:30   Closing remarks by Geoff Prewitt (UNDP), Jan Pakulski (World Bank) and Jeremy Nagoda (European Commission)

20:00   Closing dinner – venue 'Luftburg' 128 Waldsteingartenstr. 1020 Wien Tel:+43-1-729 49 99-301 www.kolarik.at

Saturday, June 17

       Departure of participants

(*)   Sessions held at the United Nations Vienna International Center:
- Conference Room II, on the 7th floor of the C-Building
- Meeting Rooms D0702 (7th floor D-Building) and C0434 (4th floor of the C-Building)
- Offices C0711 and C0717, adjacent to the Conference room
Informal dress code throughout – Reporting consolidated by Intrac

European Commission / United Nations Development Programme / World Bank
Joint Training Workshop for Civil Society Liaison Officers

June 14-16, 2006

Vienna, Austria

List of Participants

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