Preliminary wrapping-up document
Working Groups 1 & 2
December 2010

The content of this document has been drafted with the assistance of the Technical Assistance Team. It is not legally binding and has the purpose to provide a preliminary wrapping-up as a basis for consensus in the context of the Structured Dialogue. In that sense, it does not constitute any commitments neither from the European Commission, nor from others stakeholders involved in the Structured Dialogue process.
### Acronyms

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Accra Agenda for Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>African Caribbean and Pacific countries</td>
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<td>AE</td>
<td>Aid Effectiveness</td>
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<td>AIDCO</td>
<td>EuropeAid Cooperation Office</td>
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<td>CoA</td>
<td>European Court of Auditors</td>
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<td>CONCORD</td>
<td>European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Civil Society</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>Country Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>DCI</td>
<td>Development Cooperation Instrument</td>
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<td>DG DEV</td>
<td>Directorate General Development</td>
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<td>DoL</td>
<td>Division of labour</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
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<td>EEAS</td>
<td>European External Action Service</td>
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<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
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<td>ENoP</td>
<td>European Network of Political Foundations</td>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument</td>
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<td>EP</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
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<td>EUD</td>
<td>European Union Delegation¹</td>
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<td>EUROCHAMBRES</td>
<td>Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<td>EYF</td>
<td>European Youth Forum</td>
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<td>HRBA</td>
<td>Human Rights Based Approach</td>
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<td>HRDN</td>
<td>Human Rights and Democracy Network</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International NGO</td>
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<td>ITUC</td>
<td>International Trade Union Confederation</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority (EC definition includes Regional Authority)</td>
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<td>LRA</td>
<td>Local and Regional Authority</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>European Member States</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
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<td>MSH</td>
<td>Multi-stakeholder</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NGDO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Development Organisation</td>
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<td>NIP</td>
<td>National Indicative Programme</td>
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<td>NNGO</td>
<td>Northern NGO</td>
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<td>NSA</td>
<td>Non State Actors</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Paris Declaration</td>
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<td>PLATFORMA</td>
<td>European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development</td>
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<td>RELEX</td>
<td>Directorate General for External Relations</td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>Structured Dialogue</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance (team of experts)</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>WG</td>
<td>Working Group</td>
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¹ Terminology updated after the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty, before referred to as "European Commission Delegation".
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Introduction, rationale of the document & next steps

The Structured Dialogue for an effective partnership in development was launched by Commissioner Piebalgs in March 2010. This initiative will last until May 2011 with a final conference co-organized with the Hungarian Presidency of the EU. For the first time ever, the EC is proposing such a long-term & predictable window of opportunity for dialogue with civil society organisations (CSO) & local authorities (LA) worldwide.

The main objective of this process is to find a common understanding and reach a multi-stakeholders consensus on the main topics linked to civil society & local authorities' involvement in EU development cooperation. This process is ambitious as it tries to be as inclusive as possible. It has however some limitations: (i) it is not a decision-making process (the EC is committed to use results of the Structured Dialogue to feed forthcoming institutional discussions with EU Member-States & European Parliament and expects that involved stakeholders will also take on board recommendations to improve their own practices); (ii) it has not been possible to directly involve Partner States representatives; (iii) it evolves in a rather institutional uncertainty due to the current reshaping of the overall EU external actions' institutional setting: creation of the EEAS & DG DEVCO² of the European Commission.

Methodology & current status of the process

To guide exchanges of views, it has been decided to organize discussions around 3 working groups: 2 of them addressing policy-oriented issues and 1 tackling specifically Aid delivery & selection mechanisms. Stakeholders agreed on the fact that outputs of policy-oriented WGs (1&2) should directly feed the more operational WG3. For that reason, WG1&2 started in April 2010 whereas WG3 discussions only begun in October. In December 2010, the main topics at the agenda of WG1&2 have been addressed and the bulk of planned activities have been organized (3 regional seminars out of 4⁴; 3 Brussels-based session out of 5; the 3 supporting initiatives⁵).

In total, 11 European CSO&LA platforms⁵ have been consulted together with more than 400 CSO&LA representatives coming from 50 Partners countries. Time has now come to engage in the rather complex exercise of wrapping-up of discussions. This exercise should be based on reports of the 2010 Brussels-based sessions & regional seminars that have been finalized thanks to written contributions of stakeholders⁶. All produced material is available on the Civil Society Helpdesk - CISOCH⁷.

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² DG DEVCO is the name of the future Directorate General of the EC that will be created on the 1st of January 2011 after the merge of DG EuropeAid & DG Development.
³ Three Regional Seminars have taken place in Bamako (2-3.06.10), Asunción (15-16.09.10), and New Delhi (10-11.11.10). Each regional seminars gathered around 120/150 participants, mostly representatives of local CSOs & LAs. The last Regional Seminar will take place in Baku (9-10.02.11) and will cover the 17 European Neighbourhood countries & Yemen.
⁵ CONCORD, COOPERATIVES EUROPE, EFC, ENOP, EUROCHAMBRES, GREEN 10, HRDN, ITUC, PLATFORMA, RED CROSS, & YOUTH FORUM.
⁶ Direct contact with the technical assistance, posts on the Blog, position papers etc.
⁷ Please visit CISOCH to download supporting documents & reports of Structured Dialogue’s sessions: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/ftpis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Structured_dialogue (the New Delhi Report will be finalized by the end of 2010).
Rationale of this document

This document focuses on WG1&2 and has a two-fold objective: (i) to wrap-up discussions of the last 8 months and (ii) to progressively build a consensus on the main conclusions and recommendations per category of stakeholders. It is a preliminary wrapping-up document that intends to provide a first synthesis of discussions held in the different gatherings on every topic & within each working group. Redundancies may be present (as some messages are common to the different topics): they are the confirmation that some key messages are of cross-cutting nature. Please consider this document as a work in progress to be duly refined in the forthcoming months.

This document is available in English, French & Spanish. It is organized around 8 topics (4 per WG) and each topic is organized in: (i) foreword, (ii) synthesis of discussions, (iii) preliminary conclusions and (iv) preliminary recommendations. At the end of the document, a summary table is available to concretely organize links between WG1&2 and WG3.

How to contribute to the wrapping-up exercise?

As from the presentation of this document during the European Development Days on the 7th of December 2010, stakeholders (CSO&LA platforms, regional seminars "Ambassadors", EU Member-States and Members of the European Parliament) have until the 25th of January to react via the BLOG (http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/dialogue/) or contacting the Technical Assistance Team beatrizs@pangea.org with europeaid-structured-dialogue@ec.europa.eu in copy). This written contribution exercise will be the first step toward reaching a consensus on the understanding of WG1&2’s topics.

In order to facilitate the integration of the numerous contributions expected, we would like to kindly ask contributors to: (i) concentrate on preliminary conclusions (key messages) and preliminary recommendations of each topic; (ii) be precise and concise when drafting comments; (iii) propose, if necessary, alternative phrasings. Above all, it is of crucial importance that comments remain faithful to debates held so far.

Next steps...

On the 26th & 27th of January, the second session of the Working Group 3 will take place in Brussels. Methodology will be available by mid-December on CISOCH.

Then, in February 2011, the EC, with the assistance of the Technical Assistance Team, will compile comments from all stakeholders and integrate ENP Regional Seminar perspectives (9th&10th of February) as well as links with the three supporting initiatives of the Structured Dialogue.

On the 3rd & 4th of March 2011, a last WG session will be organized in Brussels (2nd step of consensus-building) to discuss any controversial issues that may still prevail concerning WG1&2 (3rd of March) while finalizing WG3 (4th of March).

Finally, by the end of March 2011, an issue paper including WG3 discussions will be produced as the main preparatory document for the final conference of the Structured Dialogue (3rd step of consensus-building) that will be co-organized with the forthcoming Hungarian Presidency of the EU on the 5th-7th of May in Budapest. This Final Conference shall be the opportunity for all stakeholders to endorse the final document of the Structured Dialogue.

The agenda for 2011 is available at the very end of this document for your convenience.
WG1 discussions have revolved around the roles and added-value of CSOs & LAs in development cooperation, the ultimate objectives being: to develop a better understanding of the different actors, a more effective “division of labour”, more complementarities and an adequate space for each actor.

During the three working sessions held to date in Brussels and the three regional seminars that already took place, WG1 has explored inter-regional and inter-family complementarities among actors, the notion of an enabling environment and questions around political multi-stakeholder dialogues and territorial approaches.

In the different gatherings, the development and implementation of multi-stakeholder approaches to development, which explicitly recognise CSOs & LAs as drivers of change in governance and development processes, has been identified as a challenging but important element for progress, mainly for three reasons: (i) these approaches enable CSOs and LAs to contribute effectively and complementary to the prerogatives of central governments, in respect of their distinct roles and added value; (ii) they furthermore stimulate reinforced cooperation between the different actors and finally; (iii) they can create a more enabling environment for social economic development, poverty reduction and enhanced governance.

Multi-stakeholder approaches can, however, only deliver if the prevailing instrumental view8 of CSOs&LAs is overcome and if a new paradigm of managing “the public good” (that is to say of designing, executing and evaluating public policies) is in place, according to the participants involved in the Structured Dialogue. At the same time, the development and implementation of such multi-stakeholder approaches raises substantial questions to all actors (from partner governments and donors to partner countries and European CSOs&LAs). Old-fashioned notions, such as North-South divides, also need to be revisited and sustained efforts are required to adapt working methods in order to make a better and more strategic “use” of the added-value of each category of CSOs&LAs.

Finally, a number of transformations are required to sustain these processes. First, reinforced political dialogue is needed between CSO and the State at various levels, and also with the EU, of whom a greater political role is requested, albeit in respect of the principle of sovereignty. Secondly, effective stakeholder engagement mechanisms, particularly at local level, need to be developed to take advantage of existing windows of opportunity for enhanced CSO involvement and to do so adequate CSO&LA empowerment appears as a priority. In addition, CSOs&LAs need to engage in critical self-analysis and improve their self-governing mechanisms, allowing for enhanced transparency, accountability and credibility vis-à-vis governments and donors. This is also true for European CSOs&LAs, who need to redefine their specific added-value in the multi-actor partnerships that are emerging. Last but not least, donors need to rethink their support models, on the basis of the needs, priorities and systems of the different specific CSO&LA actors, with a view to support long-term processes of change.

1. Promoting an enabling environment for CSOs&LAs to operate

A functioning legal and judicial system that ensures the right to organize, the right to expression and information, and the right to participate in public affairs remains the primary responsibility of partner governments9 as they should guarantee an enabling environment. The openness of

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8 That is to say solely as providers of services on behalf of the government and/or donors and not as development actors in their own right.
9 Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness. Issues paper. Final Sept. 17, 2007. Consult the extranet site (http://web.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cs) for the most recent version. The rights of CSOs to operate and function freely can be defended on the basis of governments’ obligations to protect and promote the rights of expression, peaceful
government and donors to engage with CSOs, the transparency and accountability with which information is shared, and the CSO community’s own collective mechanisms for self-monitoring, accountability and collaboration, are equally crucial elements. Finally, security is needed for operating and delivering results\(^\text{10}\).

In the framework of the Open Forum for CSO development effectiveness, **enabling standards** have been described as: “...a set of interrelated conditions —such as legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural— that impact on the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.” Recently, also the OECD-DAC set up a multi-stakeholder working stream\(^\text{11}\) on the topic of enabling environment.

### 1.1. SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSIONS

Apart from the crucial legal elements, **six other characteristics of an enabling environment have been identified**: (i) Good governance; (ii) Efficient decentralized politics (both administratively and fiscally)\(^\text{12}\); (iii) Solid economics and democratic institutions; (iv) Freedom, peace, security (internal stability), and respect for human rights (including gender equality); (v) Partnerships between CSOs and LA (with collective control and accountability systems); and last but not least, an (vi) Open attitude and reciprocal trust/recognition of all type of actors.

In terms of **opportunities**:

(i) **Positive examples of rights-based CSO recognition** deriving from the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of the UN qualifying the freedom of association\(^\text{13}\);

(ii) Increased awareness that the Paris Declaration principle of **ownership should go beyond governmental ownership, to be broad-based & democratic**;

(iii) **Increased awareness on legislation** (e.g. put CSO legislation on accountability and freedom of association into practice);

(iv) **Enhanced credibility of CSOs** by strengthening their autonomy, transparency and self-regulation (i.e. via Codes of Conduct, self-certification bodies, etc);

(v) **Progressive institutionalisation of spaces for policy-forming multi-stakeholders dialogue**, particularly at the local level.

(vi) **A more political/visible role of the EU** in its support to CSOs, especially in Human Rights issues.

In terms of **challenges**:

(i) **Lack of political will and increasingly restrictive environments** for CSOs\(^\text{14}\) & LAs (e.g. non respect of LA’s local autonomy);

(ii) **The problem of GONGOs**\(^\text{15}\) and **ad hoc civil society organizations**;

(iii) **The institutional fragility and political volatility of LAs**;

\(^{10}\) Please also refer to the outcomes of the supporting initiative on Democracy and Human Rights (June 2010 seminar in Amman). (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/HDR:_Seminar_1)

\(^{11}\) In April 2009, the **Work Stream on Civil Society development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment** was established in response to one of the final recommendations made to the OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS).


\(^{13}\) e.g.: the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe; or the very recent Resolution of the Human Rights Council on “The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association”, adopted on 27/09/2010. (from ITUC position paper)

\(^{14}\) In many countries, legal environments are not adequate (either obsolete and/or too many laws regulating CSOs). Besides, repressive environments prevail in many countries (hostile conditions for CSOs; centralisation of power; harassment of CSOs, particularly those which are most critical towards the government; etc)

\(^{15}\) Governmental NGOs
(iv) The **fragmentation of CSOs, lack of common vision & lack of strategic thinking** on their own sustainability;
(v) **Limited access to information** given to CSOs&LAs by both governments and donors;
(vi) **Short-term thinking and non-continuation of efforts** over time (e.g. EC's project approach, punctual character of election monitoring, etc.).

Finally, it was noted that ‘**context matters**’: e.g. in the case of fragile states and post-crisis situations, humanitarian organisations are challenged to remain neutral and at the same time ensure a participatory approach to policy design and evaluation.

### 1.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

(i) Considering its multi-dimensional character, an enabling environment needs to be promoted as part of a **broader democratic governance and democratic ownership of development agenda**. Efforts should be particularly addressed towards:
   a) **Improving CSO legislation** (incl. awareness raising on it);
   b) Deepening **political and administrative decentralisation** efforts;
   c) Developing a **common overarching vision and strategy on the role of CSOs&LAs** in development, human rights, democratization, governance and conflict transformation, on the basis of their distinct added-value16;
   d) **Strengthening CSOs&LAs autonomy, transparency and self-regulation**;
   e) Engaging in genuine and institutionalised policy dialogue with CSOs&LAs.

(ii) Secondly, the **responsibility of the CSOs&LAs themselves in terms of transparency/accountability/legitimacy** is as important as standards and legislation set up by the governments (both at central and local level) and donor policies.

### 1.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:

(i) **Respect** well-defined **international principles protecting civil society**, which are embedded in international law and other agreements/initiatives17, including norms and conventions that regulate and protect civil society from government intrusion;

(ii) **Respect local autonomy and deepen decentralisation efforts**;

(iii) **Support the creation of, and use existing multi-stakeholder policy spaces for CSOs**;

(iv) **Develop an appropriate NGO legislative/regulatory environment** and increase accountability;

(v) **Participate in the EC dialogues with CSOs/LAs** (so as to make them “tripartite”);

(vi) **Involve CSOs in their policy dialogues to enhance mutual monitoring**.

#### 1.3.2. CSOs&LAs are called on to:

(i) **Contribute to good governance of aid** (budgets, programs, strategies) by improving internal capacity and working closer together through **networks at all levels**;

(ii) **Set up self governing mechanisms** (i.e. Code of Conduct) to improve accountability and transparency;

(iii) **Approach governments on issues where there is room for agreement or a punctual intervention**;

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16 Please refer to CONCORD position papers.
(iv) Use control mechanisms regarding budget expenditure monitoring where they exist;
(v) Work closer with the Parliaments & with the media (if there is an opportunity).

1.3.3. Donors, particularly the EC & MS, are called on to:

(i) Take on an active political role to promote an enabling environment (i.e. support to actions on freedom of association and freedom of expression). However, donors need to be careful when interfering with government policies (principle of national sovereignty);
(ii) Endorse a human rights-based approach to development (HRBA)18;
(iii) Ensure CSOs&LAs right of initiative by providing adequate political and financial support (free from State control);
(iv) Endorse the Istanbul CSO Effectiveness Principles and include the promotion of an enabling environment for CSO & LAs to operate as part of the governance-related conditions between donors and partner governments;
(v) Promote regular multi-stakeholder dialogues (particularly at local level) but also at national level to increase trust and complementarity across stakeholders;
(vi) Embrace a process and impact-oriented approach (e.g.: provision of long-term funding and core funding; more flexibility in programme implementation and reporting; support to platforms and networks; etc.);
(vii) Enhance coordination and harmonization efforts.

1.3.4. Last but not least, all actors are called on to:

(i) Encourage trust-building by good governance of aid;
(ii) Increase accountability (both towards final beneficiaries & donors).

2. Political multi-stakeholder dialogues

The EU policy framework calls for an effective and comprehensive involvement of CSOs&LAs throughout the development process19, as development actors in their own right, whose roles are complementary to those of partner governments. Particularly multi-stakeholder (MSH) processes20 aim to bring together all major stakeholders in a new form of communication and decision-finding (possibly decision-making). The deconcentration of aid to EU Delegations has been a major opportunity to foster dialogue at local level and on the international arena, the AAA has set a more inclusive framework, in which the role of CSOs, LAs and Parliaments is duly recognized21. However, current processes of dialogue need to be deepened in view of the requirements set by the aid effectiveness agenda. As a recent CoA’s report22 highlights, the current practice still falls short of the sustained and structured dialogue envisaged by EU legislation and the EC’s own guidelines23.

2.1. Synthesis of discussions

Multi-stakeholder dialogue, conceived as a democratic tool that favours transparency, inquiry and reflection, as well as public participation and inclusion, can play a decisive role in improving the quality and effectiveness of policy-making and implementation processes, considering their potential to articulate the roles of the different actors, improve the exchange of information and ultimately build confidence. They are, however, a new practice for all parties involved and time is

18 Please refer to HRDN’s Contribution to the Structured Dialogue
19 From the preparation of the national development policy and the EC response strategy; to policy dialogue on sectors of intervention; implementation of programmes/projects and monitoring and evaluation.
20 For more info, please also refer to the definition of MSH processes in the glossary, to be downloaded on: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/structured-dialogue_en.htm
21 i.e.; Article 20 of the AAA.
still needed (i) to adapt attitudes, roles and working methods; (ii) to overcome the prevailing instrumental view of CSOs&LAs (particularly in non-ACP countries) and; (iii) to achieve equity and mutual accountability across stakeholders.

In addition, despite the fact that the willingness for dialogue is increasing on the side of both partner governments and donors, whilst reportedly, the capacity and bargaining power of CSOs&LAs to understand, analyse and influence public decision-making is growing substantially, some relevant challenges remain:

(i) There are no “blueprint” approaches on how to engage with CSOs&LAs given that national contexts are simply too different for uniform approaches. Thus understanding country contexts is essential and a ‘one size fits all’ approach to engaging CSO&LA needs to be avoided;

(ii) Political contexts interfere and CSOs&LAs participation can be sensitive;

(iii) CSOs&LAs do not always have the capacity or the resources to devote to policy debate. This also applies to EUD and government officials;

(iv) The representativeness and legitimacy of platforms/networks is not always ensured. This holds particularly true in contexts where the rapid increase in donor funding has resulted in fierce competition among CSOs&LAs and/or the creation of “fly-by-night” actors;

(v) In many contexts, inequalities and power asymmetries are embedded into strong local patriarchies and a serious risk of “elite capture” arises;

(vi) Conditions for effective engagement are often missing (lack of adequate information flows, absence of structure mechanisms for dialogue, etc).

2.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

On the basis of accumulated experience on both dialogue processes between CSOs&LAs and national governments and with European donors, the following governing principles and conditions appear essential to implement effective multi-stakeholder dialogues, involving CSOs&LAs:

(i) Clear objectives and results. Dialogues that are not output-oriented nor related to concrete policy measures, should be avoided and win-win results for all actors need to be envisaged;

(ii) Political will to create change and genuine interest in the themes and outcomes. Yet there is a difference between making commitments and making dialogue results binding, as not all

24 The EEAS is also seen as an opportunity to bring more coherence in EUD/CSO dialogue and to foster state and civil society relations in a specific country
25 This holds particularly true for countries with fragile democratic traditions, where the authorities may consider CSOs, but also LAS, as “opposition forces” rather than partners that can be consulted.
26 Organizations established solely for the vested interests of individuals or groups under the alleged purpose of social development.
27 The ‘elite capture’ problem is particularly serious when donors rush and skip the empowerment phase when embracing participatory approaches to development. When the required time is not spent to ensure that the most vulnerable groups acquire real bargaining power the required capacity to engage, ‘ownership’ by them is most likely to remain an elusive objective, and power relationships may be open to abuse.
28 Please refer to CONCORD paper on Bottlenecks to a meaningful participation of civil society in EU development policy and aid processes.
29 This refers to dialogue between CSOs & LAS at local level with partner governments.
30 This refers to consultation processes in which EC, EUD & Member States participate. Examples: MSH Group on Development Education, the Stakeholder Advisory Group, the Structured Dialogue itself.
31 A negative experience evinced in casuistic dialogues is that in some cases the agendas proposed are not congruent with the actors. Moreover, casuistic dialogues could become a way for authorities to avoid their responsibility.
32 “It is ultimately the political recognition that can make the difference to ensuring the dialogue is mutually beneficial and should thus be a regular (structured) exercise”. (see HRDN’s Contribution to the Structured Dialogue)
commitments can be legally mandatory;

(iii) **Joint ownership, notwithstanding governments’ initiative** to convene dialogues in public policy making;

(iv) **Coherence throughout the different phases**, from convening to implementation and follow up. It is recommended that partner governments (at national and local level) take on the responsibility of convening dialogue processes for public policymaking, as they will be in charge of implementing such policies.

(v) **Actors’ representativeness and inclusiveness**. Participants should represent concrete sectors with specific demands and they are valid and representative interlocutors. It is therefore particularly challenging **how to reach CSOs beyond the “usual suspects”**;

(vi) **Comprehensive design** of the process (including strategy and reporting mechanisms) with sufficient resources and an adequate degree of institutionalisation;

(vii) **Clear (and ethical) procedures**. Otherwise, dialogues generate dissatisfaction and undermine credibility;

(viii) **Adequate understanding of context, interests, and correlation of forces**. Time is required to understand “who’s who” (e.g. through strategic mapping exercises) and to build confidence;

(ix) **Sufficient capacity of all actors involved**. This is particularly relevant for local CSOs&LAs who often better act alone in local dialogues but require enhanced capacity building efforts by their European counterparts. Northern actors should thus be attentive not to endanger the legitimacy of locally owned processes in case of too direct involvement. However, they can share experiences about dialogues at EU level and put their privileged access to information on EU legislation at the disposal of their partners.

(x) **Ensured transparency and access to information**, continuous feedback and reflection and;

### 2.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 2.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:

(i) Create & progressively institutionalise **opportunities for dialogue**;

(ii) **Adopt an explicit policy on CSOs&LAs engagement** (put Cotonou into practice with enough resources in ACP countries and in non-ACP countries, foresee an **alternative politically binding consultative framework**);

(iii) Foresee a **responsible person or service at the side of the public authority** and involve **Parliaments** more;

(iv) **Act in a sustainable way** (with serious & common objectives in relation to the administration/implementation and follow-up/evaluation of public policies).

#### 2.3.2. CSOs&LAs are called on to:

(i) Promote broad participation to **avoid exclusion** of certain actors (find a balance between representativeness and diversity);

(ii) **Give feedback to constituencies** and consolidate inputs in a structured way;

(iii) **Invest in capacity building** to guarantee meaningful participation.

#### 2.3.3. Donors, particularly the EC & MS, are called on to:

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33 The principle of inclusiveness may be expressed in a variety of ways: in terms of the perspectives or voices that must be part of the process; in terms of gender balance; in terms of the inclusion of minorities and marginalised social groups, etc.

34 i.e.: beyond those who willingly participate over and over again, attend events, volunteer at numerous organizations and whose voices are heard loudly and clearly.
(i) Place dialogue in the centre of the development cooperation strategy with CSOs&LAs;
(ii) Adopt an explicit policy on CSOs&LAs engagement and a support strategy outlining CSOs&LAs multifaceted role in development, human rights and democratisation, governance, public awareness, peace and security;
(iii) Prepare, at the level of the EU delegations, a road map in view of establishing a structured on-going dialogue with CSOs&LAs;
(iv) Follow the EC guidelines on dialogue and consultation, and possibly redefine them in order to ensure a coherent approach;
(v) Improve communication around consultations (accessibility & timeliness of info via the right media) and their organization (timetable, frequency, consistency);
(vi) Go beyond the known actors/beneficiaries of funds and use mappings of the national CSO landscape on an ongoing basis (regularly updated) in order to identify the most relevant actors;
(vii) Support the institutional capacity of LAs and CSOs platforms through funding (for research, advocacy and networking) which empowers CSO/LAs to participate effectively;
(viii) Include criteria relating to the space and right of initiative of CSOs&LAs in governance analysis (both at the national and local level);
(ix) Build in-house expertise. In line with the principle of decentralisation, EU delegations should have a focal person with expertise in human Rights and in local and international civil society actors.

3. Inter-regional and inter-family complementarities between actors

CSOs and LAs, both in Europe and partner countries, have taken on ever expanding developmental roles and responsibilities. Whereas European development NGOs have always been the EC and MS’ main implementing partners, other CSOs&LAs have increasingly been recognized in all their diversity as important drivers of change in development and governance processes. The EC and MS have recognised this trend and progressively embraced participatory development approaches to ensure their involvement in the European policies, dialogue processes and funding instruments.

However, the rapid expansion and diversification of actors, coupled with the emergence of a global CS&LA movement, together with the challenges posed by the aid effectiveness agenda, compels all stakeholders to rethink and adapt their working methods in order to make a better and more strategic “use” of the added-value of each category of CSOs&LAs (on the basis of inter-family complementarity) while revisiting the split between North & South roles (on the basis of inter-regional complementarity).

3.1. SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSIONS

(i) About CSOs

Article 20 of the AAA explicitly refers to CSOs as independent development actors in their own right, whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector, on the basis of their

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35 However, when undertaken, the results of mapping exercises must be used correctly (i.e. to create synergies between projects, also fostering the complementary of the EC geographic and thematic funding, to support some weaker projects, to help the different geographical areas, build partnerships, adapt funding, do a follow-up of the impact(s), develop evaluation policies, etc. In addition, security and confidentiality of “mapped” organizations must also be ensured in sensitive cases. (please refer to HRDN’s contribution to the Structured Dialogue)

36 Please refer to HRDN’s contribution to the Structured Dialogue

37 The EU focus, alike other donors, is therefore shifting from support for development NGOs involved in service delivery or advocacy, to a much more dynamic look at the role of civil society in pushing for social, economic and political change.
manifold potential (not excluding) roles as actors of social change\textsuperscript{38}. These are\textsuperscript{39}:

a) **Mobilisation and organisation of grass-root communities** for social, economic and political development;

b) **Awareness-raising & social empowerment**;

c) **Monitoring of governments & donors**;

d) **Service-delivery and development programming** (filling gaps, when needed);

e) **Building coalitions & networks**;

f) **Mobilisation & leverage of EU resources** in partnerships (particularly for European partners);

g) **Involvement in the Governance agenda**;

h) **Advocacy**;

i) Promotion of **democratic ownership**;

j) **Involvement in the Human Rights agenda**;

k) **Provision of humanitarian assistance** (post crisis).

Besides, CSOs can bring a distinct added value to external cooperation on the basis of their nature as self governing and voluntary organisations, through: (1) their right-based approach to development\textsuperscript{40} and good governance; (2) their outreach capacity to the most marginalised and their ability to empower them; (3) their capacity to react rapidly and flexibly; (4) their links of local needs with global issues, and (5) the power to promote and trigger social innovation\textsuperscript{41}.

\textbf{(ii) About LAs}

On the basis of their legal competences\textsuperscript{42} and the recognition of the subsidiary principle, LAs can play a political and cornerstone role in the promotion of local development & governance\textsuperscript{43} and in the delivery of aid (through decentralized cooperation). Among others, LAs can:

a) **Link decision-making more closely to local priorities** and thus bring processes of planning, implementation, monitoring and accountability closer to the population;

b) **Implement territorial development strategies**;

c) Ensure an equitable **delivery of basic services** and implement local democracy and local

\textsuperscript{38} It must be noted that the diversity of CSO roles, and the multiple contexts in which they work, make it difficult for CSOs at national, regional or global levels to agree on the areas and practices in which CSOs are most effective or least effective (for further information, please consult: “Synthesis of the Outcomes of the Open Forum Country Consultations”. http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-global-report,052-.html?lang=en ).

\textsuperscript{39} These roles identified in the course of the SD are in line with the outcomes of the country and sectoral consultations in the framework of the Open Forum for CSO development effectiveness. For further information please consult: “Synthesis of the Outcomes of the Open Forum Country Consultations”. http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-global-report,052-.html?lang=en as well as the report of the WG1 session held in Brussels on the 27th of April 2010. (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/ftpfs/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD:_Session_1)

\textsuperscript{40} A rights-based approach to development aims to transform the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of poverty, disempowerment and conflict into a virtuous cycle in which all people, rights holders, can demand accountability from states as duty-bearers, and where duty bearers have both the willingness and capacity to fulfil, protect, and promote people’s human rights. A rights-based approach rejects the notion that people living in poverty can only meet their basic needs as passive recipients of charity. People are the active subjects of their own development, as they seek to claim their rights.

\textsuperscript{41} Please refer to CONCORD position papers.

\textsuperscript{42} As a result of free democratic elections, local and regional governments have political legitimacy to be key development actors at the corresponding levels. They are established by law, and therefore have full authority and legitimacy (for further information, please refer to Platforma position paper on Roles & Added value of CSOs&LAs).

governance, involving a shift to downward accountability through participation and transparency;

d) Bring together all relevant development stakeholders and create synergies between actors from private & public sectors;

e) Replicate successes for community-wide benefit;

f) Foster dialogue between different tiers of government thus ensuring coherence between national, regional and local strategies;

g) Contribute to an enabling environment for local CSOs to operate;

h) Raise citizens' awareness in North and South.

(iii) Against this background, the central challenge lies in integrating the multiple contributions and dimensions of CSOs&LAs in a coherent strategic actor-based framework, which addresses:

a) inter-family complementarities (in terms of division of labour)

b) inter-regional complementarities (in terms of roles taken up by European actors versus their partners in the field).

3.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

About inter-family complementarities & division of labour among CSOs&LAs

(i) The division of labour agenda affects CSOs&LAs in a very different way than State to State cooperation. The AAA does not sufficiently acknowledge CSOs&LAs specificities and division of labour needs to be framed more in terms of coordination & partnerships among actors to avoid fragmentation and duplication of efforts.

(ii) As a principle, an actor-based framework should recognise the diversity44, autonomy45 and initiative of CSOs&LAs as actors for development in their own right and should in addition:

a) Recognise the global dimension of CSO&LA movements, whilst respecting the specificity of every actor46 and harnessing synergies;

b) Acknowledge the political dimension of supporting CSOs&LAs47, the importance of the context/environment and the extent to which it is conducive for CSOs&LAs to perform as development actors in their own right in an effective way;

c) Tap on the potential of different CSOs and of LAs, on the basis of a thorough assessment of their complementary role. To this end, it is necessary to invest in understanding the local Civil society and LA arena (through strategic mappings which need to be adapted to changing conditions and priorities, particularly at field level);

d) Acknowledge that the capacity of CSOs & LAs to coordinate amongst themselves and with other actors is also dependent on the requirements imposed by official donors.

About inter-regional complementarities

44 “CSOs are diverse in their nature, size, organisation, financing, role, and added-value within development and external cooperation and partnership relations.” (for further information refer to CONCORD position paper)

45 i.e.: “Governments (donors and recipients) should respect the autonomy of the CSO channel and apply as a principle, a policy of non-interference into CSO matters as is recognised by ILO C87 and 98 concerning trade union freedom and right of negotiation.” (ITUC Position paper)

46 The recognition of the specific contribution of the different groups of actors is the prerequisite for the cooperation to be effective (ITUC Position paper)

47 Supporting CSOs&LAs as key development and governance actors is not just about providing financial resources but also about facilitating state and CSO&LA relations and defending CSO&LA space when necessary.
As a principle, it should be recognised that fair North-South CSO&LA partnerships that are based on shared visions and objectives create solid, effective and sustainable bonds and results. The existence of international, regional and national CSOs&LAs networks and platforms can foster capacity building and the capitalization of experiences, as well as improved advocacy work & participation in political dialogues, among others.

However, the North-South CSOs&LAs unbalance still prevails. Differences in capacity are apparent and there is still a certain lack of responsiveness to Southern priorities, of communication/coordination and of truly joint decision-making/ project development & implementation. Thus, there is a need to:

a) Promote dialogues between Northern and Southern CSOs that respect the different capacities and diversity of visions, that foster peer-learning and co-responsibility, and that reinforce capacities as a priority;

b) Promote demand-driven partnerships. Southern actors should thus be given the right of initiative and allowed to express necessary improvements. This should be a 2-step process: (i) an agreement based on the needs of the southern partners and; (ii) on this basis, define the role of northern actors;

c) Redefine the specific added-value of European CSOs in the multi-actor partnerships that have emerged (i.e. capacity building of Southern CSOs&LAs; Increase awareness & engagement of European citizens for development, etc.) and gain a better understanding of international networks (like trade union networks) and their development impact both in Europe and in partner countries;

d) Use more and better the existing CSOs&LAs platforms;

e) Adapt approaches to the different levels of action (local, regional, national, international).

3.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:

(i) Ensure genuine participation of local CSOs&LAs in partner countries in the consultation process for the preparation of country strategies and in the programme cycle;

(ii) Acknowledge and tap on the potential of different CSOs and of LAs present in the country and give them the right of initiative to participate in development cooperation in a conducive environment;

(iii) Adapt approaches towards various CSOs and LAs also to the different levels of action (local, subregional, regional and national).

3.3.2 CSOs&LAs are called on to:

(i) Enhance knowledge and clarity about their roles and practices;

(ii) Enhance efforts to improve accountability, transparency and legitimacy of CSOs&LAs;

(iii) Capitalise on successful multi-stakeholder experiences, such as the Charter of Local Governance.

In particular European CSOs&LAs are called on to:

(i) Increasingly understand the needs of Southern partners through research and dialogue;

(ii) Not to engage in “brain drain” at local level;

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(iii) Leave the Right of initiative with Southern CSOs&LAs.

3.3.3. Donors, particularly the EC & MS, are called on to:

(i) Support the institutional capacity of LAs and CSOs platforms in partner countries, to improve their capacity to participate in a proactive manner in national dialogues and to engage in the EU cooperation process;

(ii) Put into place effective, results-oriented and mutual-accountable targeted support modalities, based on the needs, priorities and systems of the different specific CSO actors\(^{51}\);

(iii) Promote complementarities and effectiveness in the interaction of the national and international support mechanisms;

(iv) Develop a Global database of CSO and LA actors, to facilitate capitalization of experiences and access to information\(^{52}\);

(v) Explore the possibility to impose conditions to foster partnerships\(^{53}\);

(vi) Earmark funds for Southern actors and use positive discrimination mechanisms to facilitate Southern partners’ access to funding;

(vii) Improve information exchanges among EC & MS on credible CSO/LA partners.

3.3.4. All actors are called on to:

(i) Optimize information flows to develop more “mutual learning” processes\(^{54}\).

4. Territorial approaches to development: CSOs&LAs articulation and CSO partnerships at the local level

A territorial approach to development puts the territory (understood from a two-fold perspective, the space but also the actors interacting in the space) at the heart of local development & governance efforts. Considering its multi-stakeholder nature the approach requires bringing all relevant actors on-board, on the basis of the principle of “different visions but shared interests”. LAs and CSOs have different but complementary roles, which can be duly articulated to achieve not only political gains and benefits in improved local social services and enhanced governance, but also economic gains leading to poverty reduction.

However, despite of the increased awareness among LAs&CSOs of the need to work together, the recent genesis of these approaches in the development arena makes it necessary to further assess them, from the perspective of their potential opportunities and challenges, the conditions and mechanisms required for an effective articulation between LAs&CSOs and the roles that the different stakeholders (including European actors) can play to support them\(^{55}\).

4.1. Synthesis of discussions

Opportunities brought by the territorial approach:

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\(^{51}\) See ITUC position paper

\(^{52}\) This could possibly be done on the basis of an elaborated PADOR (which provides information on potential and existing grantees), with the possibility to screen the organisations involved. Such tool could also include data from donor mapping studies of CSOs.

\(^{53}\) e.g. de facto partnerships with Southern actors could be a condition for project approval

\(^{54}\) Please refer to the preliminary outcomes on political multi-stakeholder dialogues (WG1).

\(^{55}\) Other actors are also playing a role in territorial approaches to development (national authorities, universities etc.) but discussions in WG1 focussed on relations between CSO&LA at the local level.
A territorial approach to development puts emphasis on linkages between actions of civil society organizations and local governance. Participation is seen as a key element of a strategy to mobilize local resources & social capital (on the basis of the potentialities existing in the territory), to use access to local information to increase the effectiveness of local public policies and related services and to improve the outreach to grass-roots levels and potentially marginalised groups. Accordingly the approach has the potential to enhance ownership of local development policies (in line with the corresponding Paris declaration Principle).

The approach also enhances coordination of development efforts at the local level (in line with the Paris Declaration Principle of harmonization & division of labour via local development plans), avoids duplication of efforts and allows for the standardization of processes.

Remaining challenges:

(i) The lack of mutual trust between CSOs and LAs, communication deficits and lack of capacity and resources of both CSOs and LAs;

(ii) The absence of an enabling environment (in the form of a regulatory and institutional framework) allowing for institutionalised participation at the local level;

(iii) The problems of coordination among local CSOs and the difficulties related with opportunist CSOs that are dividing and weakening the image of the whole CSO movement;

(iv) The risk of neglecting advocacy & watchdog oriented local CSOs for fear of criticism, and of neglecting minorities and non-mainstreamed CSOs;

(v) The inherent tension between local and national levels of governance and the consequent need to reconcile the existence of a strong national strategy (able to ensure the overall coherence) with the adaptation of this strategy to the diversity of local contexts.

4.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

(i) LAs can play a catalyst role for local governance and local development due to their democratic legitimacy, proximity to the citizens, mandate to deliver essential services, and ability to replicate successes for community-wide benefit. By providing an effective decision-making framework for establishing local development priorities LAs can also foster an environment of collaboration and dialogue with their citizens.

(ii) A number of conditions can contribute to a workable articulation between LAs and CSOs and thus to an effective territorial approach. Some of these are:

a) Political will on the side of LAs and a confirmed interest and demand on the side of CSOs, allowing for the establishment of a common agenda, on the basis of shared interests;

b) Clarification of the respective roles of LAs & CSOs to address potential tensions;

c) Thorough understanding of the actors and their dynamics (to this end mapping exercises can be very useful);

d) An institutionalised participation/engagement framework at the local and/or regional level throughout the public policy cycle (from assessment of needs & policy design to implementation & evaluation), on the basis of a process of dialogue and negotiation;

56 The strengthening of CSOs places strong demands for greater democratic participation on LAs and for greater coordination between local and national policies and programs.

57 E.g.: participatory municipal planning and budgetary processes involving citizens, community organizations and the private sector, can help ensure closer alignment of central government and donors’ plans and programs with community needs. (cfr. Paris Declaration)

58 Generally speaking, LAs contest the accountability of CSOs, whereas CSOs regret the instability of local authorities, whereby collaboration depends on electoral success and corruption can occur as well.

59 Cfr the preliminary outcomes on inter-regional and inter-family complementarities between actors (WG1).
e) Ideally, frameworks should be created beforehand but experience shows that even in the absence of an enabling environment, local spontaneous initiatives can take place;

f) A consistent approach amongst all development partners (including donors) to avoid fragmentation.

(iii) Finally, it is important to acknowledge that “context matters” (formulae should be adapted to local dynamics and not vice-versa). It seems possible, to have a two-fold, combined approach (bottom-up and top-down)60.

4.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:

(i) Strengthen the coordination between local and national development planning processes;

(ii) Improve the transparency of aid management and strengthen the resources accessible to local authorities;

(iii) Promote an enabling environment for LAs&CSOs to operate as agents & catalysts of development & governance and as advocates for social justice and equity.

4.3.2. LAs are called on to:

(i) Enhance self-efforts to improve accountability, & transparency of LAs;

(ii) Strengthen the coordination between the local level and superior levels of governance (with regional, sectoral and national levels);

(iii) Strengthen coordination of decentralized cooperation and other international cooperation activities to enhance their impact and effectiveness within their territory.

4.3.3. CSOs are called on to:

(i) Enhance self-efforts to improve accountability, transparency and legitimacy of CSOs;

(ii) Identify drivers for change/champions among CSOs, who can co-pioneer (with LAs) the implementation of territorial approaches to development.

4.3.4. Donors, particularly the EC &MS, are called on to:

(i) According to country situations, make LAs-CSOs dialogue & cooperation a demand-driven project in itself61, which requires time, adequate resources, and built-in flexibility;

(ii) Include indicators linked to local governance in the set of conditionalities related to donors’ partnership with national governments and support partner governments & CSOs&LAs efforts to promote an enabling environment;

(iii) Identify drivers for change/champions, who can pioneer the implementation of territorial approaches to development;

(iv) Invest in the capacity building of both LAs and CSOs in respect of their right of Initiative (with a particular attention to the elaboration of integrated territorial plans and their self- efforts to improve accountability, transparency and legitimacy);

(v) Support decentralised cooperation efforts by LAs62;

60 No major development issue can be treated at one level. Interaction between levels of territory (subnational, national, global) is essential for public policies’ cohesion. The local level can be effective for programming, implementing, and ultimately bring public policies closer to the populations, while the national level provides the overall framework, and ensures coherence and consistency.

61 e.g. CSO projects to be developed in partnership with the corresponding local or regional authority.
(vi) Offer a **balance of aid delivery mechanisms** (e.g. projects, program based approaches, budget support, etc) to support local development and governance efforts;

(vii) **Reinforce EU delegations capacities**, e.g. by appointing a focal point on local governance and decentralised cooperation.

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62 LAs and their associations mobilize community assets and significant resources, which can be complemented by the financial contributions from donors
WG2 debates complementarity and coherence within the Aid effectiveness Agenda the ultimate objective being an improved understanding of the challenges & opportunities of the Paris Declaration & the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) principles for addressing issues of aid effectiveness of importance to CSOs & LAs, including how CSOs & LAs can better contribute to it.

In the course of the 3 working sessions held so far in Brussels and the 3 regional seminars that already took place, participants in WG2 have explored four of the five aid effectiveness principles underpinning the Paris Declaration (local ownership, alignment, harmonisation and mutual accountability). Debates were carried out from a two-fold perspective. On the one hand, the implications of these principles on CSOs&LAs within EU external cooperation were discussed. On the other hand, the group reflected on CSOs&LAs contributions to current aid effectiveness debates, with a view to moving forward the reform agenda, and shifting from a technical focus on cost-effective aid delivery mechanisms to a broader and deeper reform process, based on the notion of development effectiveness.

What stood out in the different meetings is the need to progress towards a shared vision of what development effectiveness means for all relevant stakeholders, and how they see their own implication in the process, in order to overcome current technocratic and reductionist views of the reform agenda.

CSOs&LAs acknowledge their own responsibility in contributing to more effective development, but they also insist on the importance to safeguard a possibility to act in an independent way (by dint of their Right of Initiative), including when not in line with government priorities. They expect to be supported when doing so, on the basis of their added value to development processes, and their commitment to sound internal governance. The Istanbul Principles, as agreed in the Open Forum’s General Assembly in Istanbul (September 28-30, 2010), should be the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness, which puts (among others) emphasis on CSO’s own accountability.

Opening up the space for regular and inclusive dialogue, allowing relevant actors to be involved in strategic discussions on development priorities and processes, is seen as a central challenge both in WG1 and WG2. In line with the current shift from a top-down to a horizontal model of governance, donors can contribute to facilitate such processes, but they need to adapt their mechanisms and widen the scope of their funding modalities.

Finally, a number of transformations are required to sustain these processes. First, CSOs and LAs capacity strengthening should not be seen as a leitmotiv; but rather as a real necessity to allow them to acquire the required skills and bargaining power to effectively engage with governments and donors at the different levels (local, national and international). Second, these processes require strong political commitment at the highest level, on the side of both governments and donors. Finally, adequate means are needed, as well as CSOs&LAs willingness to bet on the partnership card even when the environment is not very conducive.

Many participants underlined the fact that the Paris principles would effectively work in a context of participatory and good governance, in which government fully accepts CSO inputs in strategic dialogue, and commits to transparency and appropriate information, on the one hand, and in which CSOs have the means and capacity to deliver. Such “ideal scenario” is seldom the case.

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63https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/WG2:_Complementarity_and_coherence_within_the_Accra_Agenda_for_Action
However, all agreed on the fact that whatever the reality of the context is, building trust between actors and developing multi-stakeholder partnerships is conducive to effective development.

1. The ownership & alignment principles and their practical implications

Following the Paris Declaration (PD), country ownership is based on the fact that donors need to support nationally owned policies of partner governments. CSOs & LAs have welcomed this commitment but claim that debates need to move forward, and shift from a technical focus (on cost-effective aid delivery mechanisms) to the notion of development effectiveness. This broadens the scope of country ownership to democratic local ownership, thus allowing for citizens, CSOs and LAs to occupy a central position in the aid process.

Furthermore, the Paris Declaration commits donors to ‘align’ their overall support with priorities and strategies set by partner countries, rather than imposing their own priorities or setting parallel systems in place for the implementation of projects. Ever since, donors have worked towards an increased use of **sector wide approaches and budget support modalities, in line with national budgets**. At the same time, partner countries undertake greater efforts to adopt sound policies and to improve operational procedures to enable donors to rely on their country systems.

When looking at alignment in relation to democratic ownership, some fundamental questions need to be answered, such as: how the alignment principle can be reconciled with the participatory development agenda endorsed by donors and what opportunities, risks and challenges appear for local CSOs & LAs when they align with the governmental priorities. Furthermore, there is a need to carefully rethink ways to improve local actors’ ownership of development strategies as well as the specific roles that CSOs & LAs play in the new aid modalities (NAMs); and the subsequent skills that need to be developed to effectively play such roles.

1.1 Synthesis of discussions

Ownership and alignment offer a potential for CSOs & LAs to actively strengthen their involvement in national development policies, but it is not yet a full fledged reality.

**Opportunities brought by enhanced ownership and alignment:**

(i) Country ownership and enhanced alignment offer the opportunity to promote inclusiveness and better interaction among CSOs, with Parliaments, audit institutions, and Government at national & local level.

(ii) They can contribute to create a conducive environment for multi-stakeholders strategic dialogue, boosting complementarity and learning process between all stakeholders to actively share knowledge and draw lessons from experience and evaluations/reviews.

(iii) They support greater autonomy and capacity of CSOs & LAs when allowing them to participate in the governance and monitoring of aid in a sustainable way;

**Several significant challenges remain to be tackled:**

(i) New aid modalities (NAM), especially budget support, may reduce the space available for CSOs & LAs in decision making processes and shrink funding available to them, if they are not brought consistently in the process. Furthermore, as regards LAs, there is a risk that

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64 Government, donors, CSOs & LAs.
65 See for example Istanbul principle 7 as agreed in the Open Forum’s General Assembly in Istanbul (September 28-30, 2010): Create and share knowledge & commit to mutual learning.
66 “New aid modalities (...) represent a challenge for civil society at three levels. First, by concentrating aid on supporting the state’s responsibilities and capacities donors may reduce financial support to civil society. Second, in countries where the State has little interest or capacity to meet the most basic needs of its citizens or uphold Human Rights - in particular in fragile states and states with high levels of corruption - investment in the state often does not result in poverty reduction and frequently does not reach the most vulnerable. Third, new aid modalities threaten instrumentalising CSOs in order to support European concerns”. See CONCORD position paper
alignment of donors with national budgets and priorities undermines the principle of subsidiarity and the respect of LA autonomy.\(^{67}\)

(ii) There is a risk of adopting a ‘one fits all’ model in supporting the multiple roles of CS. As participants underlined, it is up to CSOs themselves to determine the conditionalities of their role and function with regards to the specific context they are operating in.\(^{68}\)

(iii) Promoting transparency and information-sharing has to be a pre-condition for democratic ownership, alignment and accountability.\(^{69}\)

(iv) There is a need for enhanced donors’ efforts towards finding means and methods for creating an enabling environment in which civil society is capable of operating freely from government and donor influences, including by acting as a critical voice, when needed, especially on politically sensitive issues or fragile state environments.

(v) More efforts are required to address Southern CSOs lack capacities (policy analysis skills, language, improving understanding of macro-economic mechanisms) and means to meaningfully contribute to policy dialogue and aid programming. Although diagnosed for a long time, this need is not well tackled, partly due to the limited scope of donors’ funding modalities (namely the project approach).

(vi) Finally, sustained efforts are needed to trigger CSO’s capacity at national level through strong coalitions/networks, while connecting these processes down to the local level, in order to set common agenda and develop a trust relationship with the central government, which is often weak, defiance still being strong on both sides.

1.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

(i) The principle of ownership means that all stakeholders share responsibility for development by negotiating a broad consensus to promote and implement shared development strategies. It is translated into a better enabling environment for CSOs & LAs to act according to their added value,\(^{70}\) and should encourage the active participation of groups often excluded from decision-making. A number of elements can contribute to establishing a conducive environment to enhanced ownership. They include:

a) A collective resolve (based on national leadership) to move forward multi-stakeholder engagement processes should be considered as a sine qua non condition;

b) A strong political determination and a clear commitment to openness (via strategic dialogue) from both governments and donors;

c) A serious political economic analysis\(^{71}\) as a basis to define the most suitable modalities and/or instruments to support CSOs & LAs participation;

d) Capacity-strengthening and support to CSOs & LAs on how to monitor budget support and hold government to account more effectively.\(^{72}\)

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\(^{67}\) See Platforma’s position paper on WG2 debates

\(^{68}\) Promoting imported models of participation that have no roots in society does not work well. See preliminary outcomes on the Right of initiative.

\(^{69}\) Discussions showed that efforts have to be made by each group of actors since there is plenty of room for improvement.

\(^{70}\) See Istanbul principle 3: Focus on people’s empowerment, democratic Ownership and participation.

\(^{71}\) I.e. a “mapping” from a holistic perspective that reflects power and inter relations between CSOs, Government and other institutions.

\(^{72}\) E.g. in enabling them to proceed according to these steps: (i) identify key decision-making processes, (ii) collect public information and lobby for greater access to information where necessary, (iii) identify opportunities for influence, (iv) consider strategic alliances and opportunities, for example, alliances with Parliaments & audit institutions.
Alignment cannot be understood in absolute terms (mechanistically) and solely in relation with government-defined priorities (via National Development Strategies) as it could limit the complementary role of CSOs, especially when they deal with unanswered needs or specific target groups not benefiting from government priorities. It would furthermore risk encouraging the use of the ‘alignment principle’ to recentralise and control aid or even prompting co-option and politicisation of funding. Some elements can contribute to make the best use of the alignment opportunities. They include:

a) Undertaking an analysis of key change agents in the country (the so called drivers of change), in order to boost synergies between actors on the chosen national development priorities;
b) Investing in building a consensual approach on the national and sectoral strategies with the diversity of specific groups of actors.
a) Recognising that increasing civil society’s voice in strategic dialogue and governments’ accountability on national development strategy can take a long time.

1.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS
1.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:
(i) Exploit the opportunity of decentralisation to fully use LAs’ potential, and through their contributions, to anchor strategies and actions in sector-based territorial approaches; Make use of decentralised general and sectoral budget support to strengthen democratic local ownership;
(ii) Improve their own public financial management systems and develop operational results-oriented national development strategies;
(iii) Provide an enabling environment for CSOs & LAs to play their role as development actors: through conducive and protective legislation, improved access to information, and through the protection of civil and political rights.
(iv) Demonstrate their commitment to the AAA (namely article 20) by investing in building a more constructive and sustainable relationship with Civil Society through regular & structured dialogue.

1.3.2. CSOs are called on to:
(i) Strengthen local ownership of Southern CSOs within the framework of North/South CSO relations and partnerships; develop a mutual understanding of the mandate & priorities of Southern counterparts, and build long-term relationships with them to support their actions;
(ii) Look for opportunities to partner with state actors on common national development objectives, while keeping a freedom to act according to specific added value and priorities;
(iii) Strengthen strategic partnerships of CSOs & LAs networks and platforms, at local & international levels, to be stronger when calling for greater responsiveness of national Governments and donors to their needs and concerns;
(iv) Trust that searching synergies between CS and LA actions and the government priorities more systematically is an efficient way to promote development (unless the context is too risky), even though acting independently is rooted in CSO history;

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73 Strategy papers such as the PRSPs (the majority of which are still donor-government driven).
74 Indeed, it’s about changing deep-rooted attitudes, reforming long-established structures, and altering power dynamics, which involved real societal changes.
75 I.e. see the CSO right based approach in the Istanbul principle: “All governments have an obligation to uphold basic human rights - among others, the right to association, the right to assembly, and the freedom of expression. Together these are pre-conditions for effective development”.
76 See Istanbul principle 6. Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity.
Work on building a CSO proper shared vision on national development priorities to empower their voice in the strategic dialogue with governments and donors;

Help to ensure closer alignment of central government and donors’ plans and programmes with community needs.

1.3.3. LAs are called on to:

(i) Improve and develop participatory budgetary processes in their territory, engaging citizens, CSOs and the private sector, to identify community needs;

(ii) Help to ensure a better ‘fit’ of Central Government and Donors’ programmes with these needs.

1.3.4. Donors, and particularly the EC &MS are called on to:

(i) Make clear commitments to ensure simultaneous support to CSOs capacity development in the areas of policy dialogue, monitoring and implementation (e.g. by dedicating a portion of budget support or earmarking other funds to this end)77;

(ii) Use decentralised budget support as a mean to empower LAs in improving the synergy between national development plan feed and community needs78;

(iii) Create sustainable long-term and predictable funding arrangements79 to support more specifically the CSOs’ watchdog & advocacy role, and the networks’ efforts to participate in strategic dialogue with the different official stakeholders at all levels (e.g. local, regional, national, international).

(iv) When supporting CSOs, strike a balance between their own priorities and initiatives, on the one hand, and their commitment to implement programmes identified by government or donors, on the other hand.

(v) Support long term shared engagement (‘partnership agreements’) where CSOs, LAs and governments commit themselves to work together and projects that are clearly positioned as part of a larger strategy.

(vi) Facilitate the organisation of inclusive in-country processes of multi-stakeholder dialogues on thematic priorities, and emphasize the importance of safeguarding participation of CSOs&LAs in strategic dialogue80.

2. The Right of Initiative of CSOs & LAs in view and in light of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda

In the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), the notion of Right of Initiative (RI) acknowledges the diversity, autonomy and initiative of CSOs&LAs, as actors for development in their own right. It stresses the importance of democratic ownership of development strategies. It also highlights that specific contributions of the different groups of actors, based on their comparative advantages, are conducive for effective cooperation. However, CSOs&LAs remain cautious about compromising their autonomy in the name of harmonization and alignment under Aid Effectiveness, with the

77 This is regarded as key to ensuring local ownership over the long term.
78 See Platforma Position paper on WG2
79 Possibly by using more often different modalities than project funding.
80 By using political dialogue with partner governments to highlight the importance of having an inclusive consensus on the use of budget support for example.
fear of seeing their role reduced to helping government and donors to improve their own performance.

A number of relevant questions need thus to be addressed and the very concept of Right of Initiative calls for further discussion: whose right of initiative should prevail (European actors vs. Southern partners) and ways through which support can be provided; how to find a balance between support responding to CSOs & LAs (own) priorities and support aimed at encouraging CSOs&LAs implementing role of government and donor programmes, or how the Right of Initiative stands up in the debate on division of labour between stakeholders, aiming at a better complementarity and sustainability of actions.

2.1. SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSIONS

Opportunities brought by the Right of Initiative:

(i) CSOs can launch innovative & pilot initiatives to complement those of the State, who can then scale-up, mainstream or ensure continuation of successful CSOs' actions;

(ii) The Right of Initiative creates the opportunity for donors to support issues/themes that are not grounded in national policies but are key to development;

(iii) The decentralisation agenda acknowledges that joint action between LAs & CSOs has the potential to make a positive contribution to sustainable local development, which can be boosted by the Right of Initiative.

Remaining challenges:

(i) Going around the obligation for CSOs to align with a national strategy (namely the PSRP), when they disagree on its content or the way it is prioritised;

(ii) Safeguarding the right of initiative of CSOs to obtain funding for their own mission/initiatives and in relation to their monitoring role;

(iii) Preventing CSOs from substituting the State, which must also be empowered to deliver public services and foster a conducive development environment.

2.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

(i) The right of initiative, recognised by the AAA, is intrinsic to CSOs and must be guaranteed in order to safeguard the added value and effectiveness of CSOs. It creates space for creativeness and innovation for CSO's, and offers a considerably degree of autonomy for CSO's.

(ii) The right of initiative should be seen in priority as an opportunity for Southern CSOs to preserve their autonomy of actions and freedom of expression on development priorities, with a support role from their Northern counterparts.

(iii) The Right of Initiative comes with responsibilities:

81 For example, in fragile states, where HRs' issues are concerned (freedom of press and watchdog role).
82 For example, by creating synergy in delivering essential services to populations or by supporting locally driven processes of societal change at various levels: political, institutional, social and economic. For more information please refer to Platforma position paper.
83 CS's role is to be a vigorous force, reminding the State of its responsibilities and keeping it accountable.
84 See CONCORD Position paper
85 It is also important to acknowledge that CSOs from Europe and from partner countries may have a different stance towards the Right of Initiative. For Northern CSOs, it means gaining freedom of action in using the funding from their own country or the EU. For Southern CSOs it has more to do with their role as watchdog vis-à-vis the public authorities, and the capacity to act without aligning when needed.
a) **Financial viability and reasonable capacities** are key to enable CSOs to put forward alternative visions, innovative actions and offer a long-term development perspectives;

b) **Sound accountability and full transparency towards target groups and constituency** is even more needed on behalf on CSOs when acting on the basis of the Right of Initiative and;

c) **Complementarity between the State and CSOs is to be sought** on the basis of every one’s specificity, legitimacy, representativeness and added-value.

(iii) It is important to articulate and find a balance between the recognition of the Right of Initiative by donors with their wish to finance CSOs initiatives in a more effective and strategic way.

2.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

2.3.1. **Partner Governments are called on to:**

(i) **Encourage an independent civil society** with effective roles, voice, performance, and accountability, and allocate resources to that;

(ii) **Dedicate part of the budget or sector support to local and regional budgets**, and ensure predictability of these transfers to LA to give room of manoeuvre to LA to match their local development plans with community needs;

(iii) **Facilitate regular live interactions with non-state and decentralised actors** to treat specific development issues and policies, to build trust vis-à-vis these actors, and to enhance partnership between state and non-state actors.

2.3.2. **CSOs and LAs are called on to:**

(i) **Act as legitimate players with specific goals**, going beyond the priorities of (national) Governments and Donors when needed;

(ii) **Work on their own structuring** according to the different interest they represent;

(iii) **Prompt the adoption of a representation system** of their own organisations and constituencies that is agreed by all and legally framed;

(iv) **Use self-governing tools such as: codes of conduct, codes of ethics, regulatory framework for their actions, etc**.

(v) **Capitalize on the specific added value and strength of the individual CSOs**.

2.3.3. **Donors, particularly the EC & MS, are called on to:**

(i) **Give political and financial support to CSOs** - especially those working on sensitive issues - as this will affirm their Right of Initiative.

(ii) **Move on with funding arrangements**, by developing more responsive programming cycle and modalities, which support the autonomy of CSOs & LAs partners.

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86 Donors should support CSOs capacities in their various roles while avoiding competiveness.

87 Points (ii) to (iv) are on using the Right of Initiative on the basis of a duly codified process, rather than an anti-government dynamic.

88 For instance, it is crucial to understand the complexity of the history of trade unions and cooperatives, and more generally to respect the nature of each group of social actor.

89 Such as human rights, labour rights, etc.

90 This is especially in light of the pressures faced by these groups due to the shift towards budget support administered by Governments. It can be done by creating financing lines to encourage innovation, having a dedicated package per category of actors or looking into new funding mechanisms, such as providing long-term core support, with negotiated objectives.
(iii) **Facilitate State – CS&LA dialogue**, without intervening, but through initiative and support, in order to foster more systematic partnerships between stakeholders.

(iv) **Integrate a number of conducive elements for the Right of Initiative**, such as legal framework, in their political dialogue with partner governments.

### 3. Mutual Accountability among actors

If aid relationships are to be further developed into ‘partnerships’, reciprocal commitments between donor and recipient governments, and mechanisms to monitor those commitments, need to be put in place. On the one side, the donor community commits to giving more and more efficient aid. On the other, partners commit to improved governance standards and focus on development results.

Echoing current debates on Democratic Ownership, discussions around the Paris Declaration principle of Mutual Accountability transcend the bilateral relationship between donors and partners governments, to include CSOs & LAs, as key actors in the accountability chain. Hence there is a need to carefully rethink the role of CSOs & LAs in reinforcing the democratic process and ensuring that donors and governments are held accountable to beneficiaries, and assess the conditions that affect CSO’s ability to play this role and their legitimacy to do so.

#### 3.1. SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSIONS

Mutual Accountability[^1] is one of the five principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Within the Structured Dialogue, participants have tended to broaden the scope of the principle, thereby referring to “Multiple/ social accountability”, which should be understood as an approach towards accountability that goes beyond the donor-partner government relationship, as it involves all stakeholders and therefore questions the role of CSOs & LAs in this dynamic.

**In terms of opportunities:**

(i) **Multiple accountability**, rather than mutual accountability, lies at the heart of democracy. As a principle of good governance that relies on civic engagement, it aims at promoting a system of checks and balances among all relevant development stakeholders[^2];

(ii) **Multiple accountability**[^3] lies at the heart of many potential benefits of decentralization, which empowers elected LAs as a distinct set of state actors and acknowledges that joint action between LAs & CSOs has the potential to make a positive contribution to sustainable local development. In various countries, new forms of participatory budgeting are gradually emerging and decentralised cooperation[^4] has been successful in supporting implementation and design of participatory policies[^5];

(iii) By guaranteeing on **clean and transparent internal accountability**, CSOs&LAs are empowered to demand it from governments and donors[^6];

(iv) A number of actors (including donors, CSOs, think tanks and LAs) are currently testing **new qualitative monitoring & evaluation systems**, aimed at shifting the focus of accountability towards the achievement of strategic goals.

[^1]: As stated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Donors and country partners are accountable for development results.
[^2]: It does not just concern CSOs but also National Parliaments, Supreme audit institutions, media and private sector.
[^3]: Two kinds of accountability have to be considered: (i) **downward accountability** of LAs to citizens, which is at the core of democratic decentralization; (ii) **upward accountability** of LAs towards central Government.
[^4]: See Platforma paper: What does aid effectiveness mean for LRA? Reflection paper by Jeremy Smith, Secretary General, CEMR. September 2009
[^5]: Importance of the involvement of local CSOs in those participatory mechanisms: raising awareness of citizens to local issues, making the voice of minorities heard, keeping local officials accountable.
[^6]: For further information please consult “Synthesis of the Outcomes of the Open Forum Country Consultations”, http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-global-report,052-.html?lang=en as well as the report of the WG2 session held in Brussels on the 14th of October 2010
In terms of challenges:

(i) CSOs perceive that the aid effectiveness focus on accountability is too restricted, as it mainly concerns disbursement procedures and financial accounting & reporting, rather than impact and results on the ground;

(ii) Transparent and public access to information on public policy, resources, decision-making and institutions is an essential condition for monitoring, but not always put in place;

(iii) Reporting formats often prove to be inflexible and conflict with the longer-term nature of some projects;

(iv) Progress on accountability for CSOs and LAs is often hampered by some structural weaknesses, which are not sufficiently addressed by donor support modalities. On the contrary, these modalities can be inconsistent and their level of technicity becomes an extra burden.

3.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

(i) In order to accompany societal change, a vision of mutual accountability that transcends accountancy and transparency (namely in the use of funds and compliance with procedures) is needed. Ideally, it should shift towards a notion of multiple/social accountability of development results; thus requiring a new mindset with shared commitments for all stakeholders.

(ii) To be effective, social accountability mechanisms require a strong involvement of CSOs&LAs throughout the public-policy forming cycle (from programming and implementation to evaluation). A number of conditions are needed:

a) A right based approach for CSOs&LAs participation in regular, inclusive and multi-stakeholder dialogues;

b) Sufficient resources for these inclusive processes and to strengthen actors capacities to play their role;

c) Established mutually agreed goals between partners;

d) Stronger dialogue and inter relation between CSOs&LAs and Parliaments, audit institutions, academia, media and private sector.

(iii) CSOs and LAs enhanced stance in accountability also comes with responsibilities and implies that they progress on their own systems. LAs are accountable to their constituency and the possibility to be sanctioned when renewing their elective mandate creates a specific incentive that CSOs do not have. CSOs thus need to progress in the establishment and rigorous application of self-managed standards and mechanisms to improve their accountability and transparency vis-à-vis donors and governments but also their constituencies and beneficiaries.

(iv) Enhancing the possibility to measure outcomes and impact implies to develop new tools that would give room to include CSOs and LAs knowledge. It is needed to move away from a technocratic and cost oriented approach to implementing of the aid effectiveness agenda.

(v) Applied research knowledge (such as the results of local academia research and studies or evaluations by other stakeholders), can contribute to measuring outcomes and impact, but is often under estimated and insufficiently used.

97 See ITUC Position paper
98 i.e. not just with donors.
99 As clearly defined for CSOs in the Istanbul principle 5 on Practice transparency and accountability. As development actors in their own right, working for the public realm, CSOs have a corresponding obligation to demonstrate leadership in being fully accountable for their development actions.
100 See Open Forum Country and sectoral consultations: a synthesis of outcomes. Towards a framework for CSO development effectiveness. September 2010
101 E.g. Istanbul principle 8 Commit to realizing positive sustainable change.
3.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:
(i) Ensure that information and disaggregated data is accessible and transparently shared with all stakeholders;
(ii) Proactively stimulate multi stakeholder dialogues to improve accountability;
(iii) Refrain from restraining accountability to accountancy, and shift more the focus on development outcomes and impact.

3.3.2. CSOs are called on to:
(i) Work along the line of an ethical code of conduct so as to increase public trust in their own governance and accountability;
(ii) Acquire good knowledge of budgetary procedures and budget monitoring in order to monitor financially the commitments governments have made to their citizens;
(iii) Continue pleading for more systematic participation in multi stakeholder dialogues, and strengthen links with other stakeholders, such as media, audit institutions, parliaments, and academia.

3.3.3. LAs are called on to:
(i) Plead for developing decentralised cooperation, which can play an important role in promoting mutual accountability (e.g. through peer-to-peer cooperation);
(ii) Enhance local capacity to plan, manage, implement and report on results, and develop participatory budgetary planning;
(iii) Increase the predictability, transparency and accountability of development aid at local level.

3.3.4. Donors, particularly the EC &MS, are called on to:
(i) Introduce results oriented frameworks into cooperation strategies and programmes, placing the focus on sustainable development outcomes, and the reporting systems on results instead of incentives;
(ii) Improve the transparency and predictability of aid flows by sharing timely and accurate information on disbursements;
(iii) Support CSOs and LAs with adequate modalities to strengthen their role and capacity to act vis-à-vis accountability.

4. Division of labour and Harmonisation among donors

Donor countries’ national interests continue to influence the agenda of official development aid. This situation causes imbalances in aid repartition (“darlings and orphans” at country and sector levels). Evidence also shows that “aid is becoming deeply fragmented and it is not distributed evenly;” Against this background, enhanced harmonisation - and consequently, better division of labour (DoL) - has been placed at the top of the international reform agenda and is prominently featured in the Paris Declaration. However, the harmonization & division of labour agenda affects CSOs&LAs in a very different way than State to State cooperation and a number of fundamental issues require further thinking, such as: the opportunities and challenges brought about by increased harmonisation throughout the

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102 I.e. geopolitical, economical, cultural and historical influence, as well as visibility.
103 “Worldwide there are 225 bilateral and 242 multilateral agencies funding hundreds of thousands of activities each year. In 108 countries, more than ten EU donors are providing country programmable aid. EU donors fund around 60,000 projects”, see AidWatch Report 2009.
different stages of the cooperation process, particularly for CSOs&LAs, and the ways to establish an effective multi-stakeholder division of labour at country level or at a decentralised level.

4.1. SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSIONS

Opportunities brought by the division of labour and harmonization agenda:

(i) Improved donor harmonisation shall result in reduced transaction costs in the beneficiary countries for all parties concerned, better use of financial/human resources\(^{104}\) (leading to increased efficiency) and enhanced complementarity\(^{105}\);

(ii) It can also increase dialogue between donors and other relevant stakeholders\(^ {106}\), contribute to knowledge sharing, promote joint initiatives (e.g. drawing-up of shared strategies) and increase predictability of funds;

(iii) Pool funds for CSO may bring more coherent support. However, their impact should be further analysed as they may strengthen larger organisations and weaken the diversity of civil society.

Indeed, some significant challenges (or even risks) remain:

(i) Division of labour requires significant coordination and self-assessment on the individual comparative advantages of every actor. Combining this process with partner country leadership of development processes (to ensure ownership) poses a major challenge;

(ii) Donors may be reluctant to implement division of labour because they wish to remain engaged in politically attractive sectors for visibility reasons;

(iii) Combining harmonisation and other Paris principles such as alignment and management for results when supporting CSOs & LAs can end in a loss of flexibility, if the main focus is on concrete measurable deliverables and if it limits the space to support innovative approaches or sensitive projects;

(iv) Donors risk to lose their connection and direct interaction with the field and its actors when they engage in delegated cooperation (e.g. via pool funds);

(v) A limited variety of support models as well as a limitation of the scope of actions can result in higher competitions between CSOs due to the concentration of funding.

4.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (KEY MESSAGES)

(i) Division of labour is desirable so all different actors can work according to their own expertise. Hence, the principle does not only concern donors, but must also involve country stakeholders in the wider sense (from the different State levels to the CSOs and the private sector, according to their relevance). In addition to vertical\(^ {107}\), horizontal\(^ {108}\) and cross-country harmonisation, the perspective of an actor-based harmonisation is also important.

(ii) A multi-stakeholder division of labour cannot be conceived globally and has to be adapted to the specific context of each territory. Thus, division of labour is particularly relevant at local and regional levels, given that each territory has its own specificities.

(iii) To be effective, division of labour & harmonisation require a number of conditions:

\(^{104}\) See CONCORD position paper

\(^{105}\) In several dimensions: (i) In-country: to lower the administrative burden and transaction costs in partner countries; (ii) Cross-country: interesting experiences are being developed to ensure a minimum of international support in countries where partnerships are difficult and domestic capacity is limited; (iii) Cross-sector: complementarity that builds on the added value and specific know-how of individual donors; (iv) Vertical: particularly in regards to global aid initiatives and regional organisations and; (v) Cross-modalities/instrument: to foster synergies among available modalities or instruments.

\(^{106}\) Democratic ownership is key to understand harmonisation.

\(^{107}\) I.e. from decentralised to central levels.

\(^{108}\) I.e. sector based.
a. The **comparative advantage of each actor has to be clear** to favour coordination and complementarity of action of different development actors in the framework of strategies that meet a high degree of social consensus;

b. **A strong political determination is needed** to improve coherence between the different actors’ inputs. The example on how to better articulate complementarities needs to come from donors\(^\text{109}\), and greater efforts need to be devoted **to develop the right incentives to invite state and non state actors to better coordinate their own efforts**;

c. **Relations of trust, sense of partnership** and transparency between government, CSOs, LAs and donors are equally important;

d. **The harmonization agenda of donors cannot be automatically transferred to CSOs**\(^\text{110}\). Plurality and heterogeneity need to be accepted as assets. Harmonization should not be seen as a means or an objective in itself. The question should be framed more in terms of coordination & partnership among actors to avoid fragmentation and duplication of efforts.

e. **Keeping a balance between harmonisation and flexibility** is key to enhance a CSOs & LAs involvement that guarantees diversity of representation and benefits from the potential of all actors. While better coordinating, donors should be able to keep enough room of manoeuvre to offer diverse possibility to support and involve CSOs and LAs.

(iv) **The programming of aid is a key moment to involve CSOs & LAs on the division of labour agenda.** It is therefore needed to move from ad-hoc consultations to institutionalised ongoing (albeit flexible) political dialogue, with a proper legal base and means to do so;

(v) **When supporting CSOs in a harmonised manner,** donors should avoid a number of risks, namely:

a. The **loss of connectivity** with the field in case of delegated cooperation;

b. A **limited variety of support models** (no “one size fits all”),

c. The **loss of diversity and the limitation of the scope of their actions** (in case of narrow objectives, sectors interventions or actors participation)

d. The **inability to support innovative approaches** and to support vibrant and independent CSOs that take risks.

e. The **loss of flexibility** for instance when combining Harmonisation and other principles such as Alignment and Management for Results and the subsequent risk to focus on concrete measurable deliverables and outcomes, without any space for societal change or impact.

### 4.3. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.3.1. Partner governments are called on to:

(i) **Promote participatory planning processes** to define, monitor and evaluate national strategies, in cooperation with donors;

(ii) **Promote a clear Division of Labour at country level**, which reflects the complementarities between the different development actors (State, Donors, CSOs, etc.).

#### 4.3.2. CSOs are called on to:

(i) **Carry on joint efforts to rationalize their work** (to avoid undue duplication or dispersion of effort) and to take a more systemic perspective;

(ii) **Push for funding mechanisms that are better adapted to more collaborative, programmatic approaches** among coalition of CSOs.

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\(^{109}\) Especially from EU donors since they have adopted a code of conduct on division of labour.

\(^{110}\) “The division of labour is not an appropriate concept to be applied to CSOs, who must respond democratically to individual situations, and with local partners, and who need to preserve their role in relation to democratic governance, and as watchdogs”. See CONCORD Position Paper
4.3.3. **LAs are called on to:**

(i) **Develop a clear DoL at the local level that reflects** the complementarities between the different development actors (States, Donors, CSOs, etc.);

(ii) **Promote participatory planning processes** to define action plans that are based on communities’ priorities and **that favour coordination and complementarity of actions** of different development actors;

(iii) **Claim their right to be informed on all interventions in their territories by development partners.**

4.3.4. **Donors, particularly the EC &MS, are called on to:**

(i) **Support the establishment of multi-actor frameworks** (at the local, national, regional and international levels) **to foster coordination through exchange of information, knowledge and experience.**

(ii) **Mutualise efforts at country level to:** a) refine and contextualise donors’ understanding of the social, economical and political landscape of partner countries and its CS; and b) prepare a road map in view of establishing a structured on-going dialogue with CSOs & LAs.
**Links between WG1&2 discussions and WG3 needs-table**

The following table presents the links between policy-oriented WG1&2 outputs (key messages & preliminary recommendations) and WG3 operational debates around EU aid modalities, on the basis of the list of needs that was agreed-upon by participants in the 1st Working Group 3 session, which took place in Brussels on the 14th of October 111.

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<td>(3) Support institutional development and capacity-building of CSOs</td>
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<th>(6) Support role of CSOs in political dialogue &amp; monitoring of government and donor policies and practices</th>
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<td>(10) Support service delivery in partner countries (filling gaps, when needed; support to innovative approaches) - in respect of LAs &amp; CSOs own mandates &amp; roles.</td>
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<td>(11) Support decentralised cooperation efforts by LAs (twinning efforts between Northern and Southern LA, LA networks...) To support needs 9 and 10</td>
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<td>(12) Increase harmonisation &amp; cost-effectiveness of aid delivery</td>
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AGENDA 2011

To be added to your agenda:

- **25th January**: Deadline for submission of comments

- **26th/27th January**: 2nd session of Working Group 3 (the methodology will be available by mid-December on the Civil Society Helpdesk)

- **9th/11th February**: ENP Seminar in Baku, Azerbaijan (Structured Dialogue + Local Authorities supporting initiative)

- **3rd/4th March**: Last Working Groups Session in Brussels: WG1,2&3

- **29th or 30th March**: Concluding session of the Local Authorities supporting initiative *(tbc)*

- **5th/7th May 2011**: Budapest final conference of the Structured Dialogue

USEFUL LINKS & CONTACTS

- For any query related to the Structured Dialogue Process, please contact: europeaid-structured-dialogue@ec.europa.eu

- To access background information & reports of sessions, please visit CISOCH: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Structured_dialogue

- To comment this document before the 25th of January 2011, please post a comment on the BLOG http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/dialogue/ or contact the Technical Assistance Team: beatrizs@pangea.org (with europeaid-structured-dialogue@ec.europa.eu in copy).