



Strengthening EU support to civil society organizations

- *What the Civil Society Operational Facility can do for you*

Background

In order to support EU Delegations in the implementation of the thematic programme relating to civil society organisations (CSOs), technical assistance has been mobilized since 2014 through Operational Support Facilities. During its previous editions, the Operational Facility mostly assisted the European Commission's headquarters and EU Delegations in the implementation of the CSO-LA and NSA-LA programmes.

At headquarters level, Framework Partnerships agreements (FPA) with umbrella civil society organisations (CSOs) or associations of local authorities were supported, enabling a constant dialogue and the implementation of actions grants. At country level, EU Delegations were supported in implementing the NSA-LA and CSO-LA programmes through calls for proposals leading to action grants covering different priorities: gender equality, youth, climate change, root causes of migrations and crisis situations. The production of a range of studies and events was also supported.

Today

The **ongoing Civil Society Operational Facility (CSOF)** is active since October 2021 and will run until October 2023. It provides technical support to stakeholders, including DG INTPA Headquarters, EU Delegations, Framework Partnership Agreements' signatories, other CSOs and networks of CSOs in the implementation of the Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme. The Facility provides **responsive support on operational issues**, directly relating to the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) Civil Society Organisations programme, and more generally to the European Union's support to civil society.

The Facility has **two key results areas**:

- To provide **tailored assistance to EU Delegations** (remote and in-country), on a demand-driven basis, to manage the overall calls for proposals process (from guidelines to assessment) under the CSO-lot, to organize capacity building activities, informative sessions and consultations, and to produce ad-hoc studies/evaluations on awarded grants to CSOs at country level;
- To provide **global assistance** to: 1. CSOs who signed FPAs (and future FFPAs) on procedures to apply to grants and monitor them; 2. DG INTPA Headquarters in organizing capacity building activities, informative sessions and consultations, and in issuing analytical studies, methodological tools and information and communication materials.





How can the Civil Society Operational Facility support EU Delegations?

The CSOF can provide tailored technical assistance to support EU Delegations on a variety of issues. Services provided by the Facility include:

- Remote **technical support to EU Delegations** in **commenting draft guidelines** for the launch of new CSO programme **calls for proposals**
- **Assessment** of the received **concept notes and full applications**
- **Technical assistance** to EU Delegations for the organisation of **information sessions** on the thematic programme
- **Capacity-building sessions** for CSOs and/or other stakeholders on EC procedures and Project Cycle Management (PCM), Logical Framework Approach (LFA), or other subjects related to the implementation of the thematic programme
- **Ad hoc studies and/or evaluations** related to results/monitoring of the grants for CSOs at country level



Modalities of the CSOF support to EU Delegations:

Country missions can be delivered remotely, through a field mission or with a mixed modality. Since the Facility began working in October 2021, the support to EU Delegations was delivered only remotely.

How to request the support of the CSOF?

- The EU Delegation should address **a request for the CSOF support to INTPA G2**, specifically to the CSOF Coordinator, who will assess and approve the request in line with the resources available.
- **Specific Terms of Reference** have then to be developed by the EU Delegations (using a short template provided by INTPA G2) in order to request technical support.

Our contacts

The Civil Society Operational Facility is managed by NIRAS and implemented by a core team of three experts in addition to a pool of international experts.

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