

## EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN LESOTHO FOR THE PERIOD 2021 -2023

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Status: Public

Date of approval: 27.07.2021

Update of a previous RM: Y

Part of the Joint Strategy? N

Approved by (list of MS and possibly other donors endorsing the RM):

## PART I – BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT AND PAST EU ENGAGEMENT

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### A. THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY: BRIEF UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

#### Introduction

Civil Society plays a vital role for development and governance, is vital to fight inequalities to build inclusive societies; and thereby fulfil the central commitment of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development of **leaving no one behind**. The priorities of the 2012 Communication, the roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations remains a valid framework, as reiterated in previous Roadmaps (2014-2017), (2018-2020). These priorities are reflected in the NDICI, constitute the core of the CSO Thematic Programme and remain highly relevant for programming;

- **Fostering an enabling environment for Civil Society** is a vital dimension of the EU priority on Governance, Peace and Security at large. It is also a key condition to ensure the achievement of the SDG's.
- **Promoting participation of Civil Society in national**, sub-national and sectoral multi-stakeholder policy processes and the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and other key domestic and international policy processes.
- **Strengthening of Civil Society Organisations' capacity** to hold authorities accountable, be legitimate representatives of the interest of citizen groups and effectively perform their roles as independent actors of development, governance and public diplomacy.

#### Key developments in the Civil Society context over the past three years.

- a) The European Union continues its support to the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN), the umbrella organisation under which CSOs in Lesotho are organised. LCN is active in the areas of governance, human rights, and support to open budgets and accountability. It holds the primary coordination and advocacy role for CSOs in Lesotho. However, it has limited institutional capacity particularly related to financial management. Present EU support is in form of a direct grant of EURO 1,5 million, under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund. The direct award was justified based on the strategic and unique role LCN holds in Lesotho. The support aims to provide institutional support and capacity development for LCN and its member organisations.
- b) During the period covered by the previous Road Map the Delegation launched four Calls for Proposals. These calls are both under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF as well as under thematic instruments, Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). This support is aligned with ongoing support to the EDF 11 priority area governance. The thematic areas covered are fostering of human rights, security sector compliance with the rule of law, youth, gender and entrepreneurship.

To date, ten Civil Society organisations are currently supported either as lead organisation or consortia member. Their activities cover a wide variety of themes.

#### Update in Civil Society capacity of the past two year – key challenges and opportunities

##### a) The Enabling Environment

Over the last three years the legal enabling environment has remained unchanged. CSOs are established with relative ease due to various pieces of legislation in particular the **Societies Act of 1966, the Partnership Proclamation, the Deeds Registry Act and the Cooperatives Societies Act of 2000** providing for their establishment. Generally local CSOs have limited capacity. At times they are labelled as 'unwelcome watchdogs' in their quest to ensure respect for the rule of law and state accountability. Recently CSOs have reported difficulties in accessing official Government information. In consultations with the EU, CSOs have expressed that the overall enabling environment is still conducive to their work. However, they also perceive that the enabling environment is shrinking.

##### b) Political Environment

Government and politicians recognise Civil Society as legitimate social and political actors that provide systematic opportunities for state and Civil Society to work together. Nonetheless, CSOs feel that at times Government does not sufficiently consult Civil Society and the consultative space is getting more exclusive and out of reach for the wider public (e.g. the National Development Plan II).

Activities of CSOs frequently include awareness raising, for selected topics, and civic education.

Since 2017 Lesotho has embarked on a National Reforms Process. CSOs have been actively involved in the initiation of the process as well as in its execution. During the consultative stage of the process CSOs organised in-district consultations throughout Lesotho and in diaspora communities in South Africa. As an active driver of the overall National Reform Process CSOs are widely welcome and are represented as members in the National Reform Authority, the authority tasked with the overall implementation of reforms.

While CSOs are actively involved in the overall political environment they would welcome more political support by the European Union in terms of political dialogue with a view to maintaining and extending the CSO's role in shaping policies and politics.

### **c) Resources and Capacity**

CSOs lack access to a reliable and continuous source of funds, both domestically and internationally. The number of international partners who provide funding is very limited in Lesotho while domestic funding is virtually absent. The United Nations and the USA, along with the European Union are providers of funds to CSOs. There is a competitive situation among CSOs to secure funding. As a result work of CSOs often is project-based, depending on available funds. CSOs perceive this situation as limiting them in setting their own agenda and priorities. Instead of defining their own priorities, they perceive their work is aligned with and directed by the guidelines and priorities defined by the funding partner. Additionally, CSOs report a lack of institutional and technical capacity.

As part of the Participatory Initiative for Social Accountability Programme (PISA) II it is foreseen to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between LCN and the Independent Electoral Commission. It is planned that through the MoU the IEC can channel Government funding via LCN to preselected CSOs who continue the implementation after the end of the programme and the exit of GIZ as the implementing partner.

Additionally, under the Institutional Support grant to LCN, one of the expected results is to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between LCN and the Government of Lesotho that would ideally foresee some regular funding for Civil Society.

Due to the lasting COVID-19 pandemic and the respective regulations implemented by the Government of Lesotho in early 2020 it has been difficult and partially impossible for CSOs to implement projects, especially campaigns that require physical attendance. A majority of projects have been implemented "virtually". Aggravating though is the country's under-developed digital infrastructure, which complicated implementation.

## **B. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PAST ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs**

The EU Roadmap 2021-2023 is the third defined strategy for engagement with Civil Society in Lesotho, following the first Roadmap 2014-2017 and the second Roadmap 2018-2020. The EU Roadmap 2021-2023 continues to lay the foundation for engagement with CSOs.

Outlined below are some key lessons:

- a) As there is limited domestic and international funding available, there is a continued need for development partners to support CSOs;
- b) There remains a high level of difficulty with CSO in Lesotho complying with EU rules and procedures. However, international CSOs usually have more experience and find it easier to comply with EU rules. Concerning Calls for Proposals it is evident that international organisations have a higher capacity to respond adequately and with higher quality proposal to guidelines;

- c) There is limited sustainability with EU funded projects as it has become evident that activities usually end after the life-span of the project and hardly go beyond;
- d) Development partners tend to set the agenda, therefore CSOs must collaborate to set their specific objectives.

**PART II – EU STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TO ENGAGE WITH CSOs**

**C. THE STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE EU COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT AND AGENDA 2030/SDG**

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	RELATED SECTOR & COMMISSION PRIORITY	RELATED SDG
Increased technical and institutional capacity of (local) CSOs	Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development	16
Continued resources for CSO's to complete their mandates	Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development	16
Ensured participation of CSOs in domestic policy agenda setting and development cooperation	Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development	16

**D. THE ACTION PLAN**

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
Increased technical and institutional capacity of (local) CSOs	- Provide technical assistance to CSOs to improve and strengthen institutional structures and capacity	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI); Thematic Financial Instruments; EDF 11 "Building LCN insittuitaonal capacity for effective and constructive engagement in development and governance"
Continued provision of resources for CSO's to complete their mandates	- Launch of Calls for Proposals to assist CSO funding needs	Thematic Financial Instruments; EDF 11 "Building LCN insittuitaonal capacity for effective and constructive engagement in development and governance"
Ensured participation of CSOs in domestic policy agenda setting and development cooperation	- Engage Government in political dialogue to emphasise and further CSOs' participation  - Mainstream CSO participation in EU projects and programmes (e.g Steering Committee Members)	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)

**PART I II– FOLLOW-UP OF THE RM**

OBJECTIVES FOR EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	OUTCOME INDICATORS	TARGET	BASELINE INFORMATION (if available)	SOURCES OF INFORMATION & MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Increased technical and institutional capacity of (local) CSOs	i) Number of CSOs receiving EU support/ technical assistance to strengthen technical and institutional capacities	All CSOs who benefit from direct funding through European Union grants	2021 Evaluation Report – FED/2017/040 406 “Support to Civil Society in Lesotho”	i) CSO reports illustrating how EU grants support the establishment of technical and institutional capacities ii) Survey to question targeted CSOs
Continued Resources for CSO’s to complete their mandates	i) Number of (local) CSOs who receive funding from European Union sources  ii) Existence of financing modalities in favour of CSOs autonomy and sustainable financing mechanisms of local CSOs	1-2 CSOs per Call for Proposal	2021 Evaluation Report – FED/2017/040 406 “Support to Civil Society in Lesotho”	i) European Union-funded project/ programme reports  ii) CSO activities reports
Ensured participation of CSOs in domestic policy agenda setting and development cooperation	i) Degree of participation of CSOs in implementation of European Union funded projects  ii) Degree to which CSOs are involved in the formulating and defining of priorities for domestic policies and development cooperation	CSOs are mainstreamed as implementing partners/ actors in programme/ project structures	2021 Evaluation Report – FED/2017/040 406 “Support to Civil Society in Lesotho”	i) Programme/ project documents illustrate the involvement in project structures

## PART IV - ANNEXES & REFERENCES

### ANNEX 1: THE PROCESS

How were MS/EU+ present in the country involved in the drafting of the RM?	There are no EU member states in Lesotho, therefore none were consulted.
What mechanisms are set up to ensure the involvement of MS/EU+ in the implementation and follow up of the RM?	Consultative sessions with the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations as the umbrella body to highlight key areas of intervention for Civil Society with support from the EU.
What consultations with CSOs were organised? What type of actors were involved? What mechanisms, if any, were used to ensure the inclusiveness of the process?	<p>Consultative sessions with the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations as well as with its member organisations have been conducted.</p> <p>Additionally, consultations with Civil Society were organised and held as part of the Article 8 Political Dialogue in April 2021.</p> <p>Furthermore, a digital survey with CSOs on future cooperation has been conducted.</p>
What mechanisms, are set up to continue the dialogue with CSOs? What mechanisms, if any, will be used to ensure the inclusiveness of the dialogue?	Consultations, dialogues and round table discussions will be held to engage CSOs on issues of national importance.
How is the RM integrated /coordinated with the JP process?	N/A
How does the RM relate to other country processes including human rights and democracy country strategies, the gender action plan, etc.?	The Roadmap complements all country strategies that are in place.