Monitoring and Evaluation Needs Assessment Report

Bosnia and Herzegovina

June 2011

Report prepared by Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic
Sarajevo, June 2011

TACSO

Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations   •   www.tacso.org

Monitoring and Evaluation Needs Assessment Report

By Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic
June 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes much of the work conducted during the M&E needs assessment assignment conducted by Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic to NGOs receiving EU IPA support in the areas of environment and human rights.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) consultant visited relevant NGOs implementing projects on environment and human rights with an aim to conduct a participatory M&E system, data and staff capacity assessment and provide technical assistance and training to the local NGOs in monitoring and evaluation. To carry out this task, consultant conducted interviews, document review and used M&E system and capacity assessment tools tailored for this purpose to obtain the necessary information and accurately gauge capacities, priorities, constraints, approaches and needs pertaining to M&E. While the assessment revealed a broad spectrum of capacity and systemic gaps to conduct systematic M&E - ranging from minimal capacity or clarity of roles and mandates to a strong desire and commitment of NGO members to systematize M&E processes – several overarching constraints and opportunities were identified:

Constraints
- While the projectshave a defined results framework and implementation plan, the M&E plans are not in place in most of the NGOs, especially local NGOs which are partners in Projects. The Needs assessment revealed that only MDPi, Center for Ecology and Energy, CCI, REC and CARE had developed some kind of M&E system.
- The NGOs have insufficient M&E capacity and coverage. The NGO teams do not have clarified M&E roles and relevant skills. The M&E is done on ad-hoc basis by manager of organizations. Also, there is no day–to–day technical support and coverage for ongoing M&E needs and tasks.
- Though project activities have started, monitoring system has not been set up and data is not gathered consistently to track the progress towards delivery of outputs and outcomes of the projects.
- Lack of clear roles, responsibilities and time commitments of Project staff to M&E is present.

Opportunities

- All visited NGOs acknowledge the needed for technical assistance to systematize monitoring and program management and display readiness to make necessary adjustments and incorporate recommendations.
- Majority of NGO members are highly motivated and committed to learning and program quality. They also recognize the potential role of M&E in strengthening the project quality and achieving their goals of sustaining the project impact beyond the timeframe of the project.

Based on existing M&E capacity and above mentioned constraints and opportunities, the Consultant carried out a practical, output oriented experiential learning training in basic M&E during which knowledge and experiences with M&E concepts and frameworks has been shared.

II - M&E Needs AssessmentReport

Background of the assignment
The general objective of TACSO project is to strengthen the overall capacities and accountability of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) within the IPA beneficiaries and to guarantee the quality of services of CSOs and a sustainable role of the CSOs in the democratic process. The main purposes of the project are to:
    Increase and improve the capacity and actions of CSOs and to
    Improve the democratic role of CSOs.
An important activity under this heading is TACSO monitoring and guidance activities as part of Project Component 2 (Research, Guidance and Help desk). Providing guidance and capacity building activities are part of TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina planned activities which have been agreed with Delegation of the European Union to the Bosnia and Herzegovina (DEU) as technical assistance for projects implemented under mentioned calls.

The purpose of the consultancy is to provide technical support to the project implementation teams (grantees) to improve monitoring capacities towards increasing their accountability to both the donor (EC) and their own project users. Thus, the focus of the Assignment have been 11 projects supported by EU IPA and lead by NGOs active in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This Needs Assessment methodology was designed to guide the assignment and represents a comprehensive set of activities and approaches that produced the key deliverables in a timely manner, while also methodically reaching and engaging project teams in M&E functions and activities using experiential learning approaches aimed at strengthening their Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacity through the tailor made training conducted by the Consultant.

The outputs of the assignment are:

* Needs Assessment Methodology developed
* Needs Assessment conducted through site visits of project implementers
* Specific findings and recommendations related to the capacity development needs for each of the CSO defined
* Methodology and approach for improving monitoring capacity of CSOs implementing projects proposed
* Actual assistance-modalities (one day technical training) conducted
* Report on conducted actual activities including feedback from CSOs involved in TA

ThisNeeds assessment examines the state of the M&E system, preparedness, practices and needs of the NGOs implementing EU IPA funded projects. It also assesses training needs and other relevant factors affecting overall M&E resources and capacities at the project level.

The following are the findings and recommendations arising from the assessment.

Assessment process: The assessment had two stages. Firstly, a literature review and scoping exercise was conducted to provide in-depth understanding of the context and projects'background and to identify key elements of the projects' M&E system. Secondly, field visits and interviews with relevant NGO teams have been conducted to identify prevailing M&E practices, to take stock of existing skills and gaps, and to understand M&E capacity development needs.

The scoping exercise involved interviews and informal discussions with NGO staff involved in the projects. To facilitate this process, field visits have been organized to Tuzla, Banja Luka, Drvar, Doboj, while meetings with NGOs based in Sarajevo have also been organized.

Findings: The report presents the general observations and findings in the following seven main categories examined:

1. **M&E Staff:** Skills, qualifications and clarity of roles;
2. **M&E Plan:** The state of the M&E plan and data collection process;
3. **Database and Management Information Systems:** Capacity, experience and understanding among staff and systems;
4. **Performance Management:** existence ofsystematic method for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating impact;
5. **Ownership:** Level of ownership and commitment to Project Development objectives
6. **Participatory monitoring:** level of activeengagement of key project stakeholders in reflecting and assessing the progress of their project and in achievement of results
7. **Impact Assessment:** level of awareness, appreciation and strategy/preparedness to address issues of sustainability and measure impact?

General observations

Monitoring and Evaluation represent a continuous effort to help anticipate the probability of success and measure the changes the organization will contribute to. It demands frequent stops to look back and decide whether the organization is still on track to achieve the anticipated short-term, medium-term and long-term results. M&E ensures the organization increases its knowledge as it implements the project. The organisations that have been subject to the M&E needs assessment vary in size, experience and level of organizational development. With regards to M&E, the NA reveals that the organisations may be roughly divided into two groups:

1. organisations that already have developed structures and standards for M&E (best example is REC), but these systems are still predominantly ad-hoc and underdeveloped thus, not reflecting the complex needs for comprehensive M&E of the organizational work (CCI and MDPi). These existing M&E systems have mainly been adopted from international organisations that supported the work of these organisations (CCI and MDPi), or (in case of Center for Ecology and Energy) developed based on recognized needs and upon trainings on M&E.

2. organisations that have no capacities, knowledge and/or M&E structures adopted. It is interesting to observe that even more developed and experienced organisations (such as Heinrich Boll and Forum gradjana Tuzle) do not have any systems or capacities for comprehensive M&E. these organisations do collect data for reporting, but this data is not systematically collected and analysed.

Generally, organisations have succeeded in attracting EU funds, but majority of organisations (especially partners in projects) still struggle with good definition of the results framework, especially in terms of defining suitable Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs). None of the visited organisations have developed baseline studies for the EU funded project. Organisations do not have the tradition to develop baselines for other projects either. The review of project proposals shows that none of the organisations discusses internal Monitoring procedures, while only a small number of organisations mention evaluation measures to be undertaken.

Besides the REC, all other visited organisations (even those with some M&E systems in place) do not collect and analyse data to track progress and achievements within their strategic goals. This is very relevant finding in perspective of measuring impact prospects and achievements, obstacles and impediments in the work of these organisations. The fact that organisations do not have true participatory planning and monitoringin terms of ensuring active participation, input and feedback from stakeholders, primarily beneficiaries does not help the performance management.

Organisations are generally pretty strong in their areas of expertise, but their organizational capacities may at times be an obstacle to organizing the work in the best possible manner. The lack of adequate M&E system also places additional burden to the management staff members, who need to collect data and analyse it besides other duties. Building capacities and sharing responsibilities and roles with other members of the organization would be very beneficial.

General recommendations

This M&E NA has been a very positive exercise as it provided an insight into the current state of the M&E tools and systems in organisations, but also provided input, knowledge and frameworks for M&E. The recommendations linked to general observations are the following:
- ✓ The EU (through TACSO) should invest in ongoing training and coaching of wider specter of organisations on M&E;
- ✓ The EU should require all organisations competing for EU funds to present their approach and work on M&E for the particular project they submit.

The discussion on findings within each category assessed and related recommendations are presented in the Table below.

Project Category	Findings	Recommendations
M&E Staff: Skill, qualifications and clarity of roles		
Skills to perform M&E functions	The NGOs do not have sufficient skill levels and manpower to perform M&E functions. There is no staff appointed specifically for M&E in any of the NGOs visited. Majority of organizations have no prior exposure or background in M&E and do not possess relevant skills to perform core M&E functions. The exceptions are MDPi, CCI and REC. The Center for Ecology and Energy from Tuzla has developed an M&E framework, which is a positive step forward in developing the M&E system and it should be further supported.	**Recommendation:** The target NGOs of this NA are predominantly small NGOs, and there is no need to have a specifically designated person for M&E. However, on-the-job M&E capacity building and training plan can be developed for persons conducting M&E within their work to address their existing skill and knowledge gaps. Adequate resources should be designated for this task.
Well defined roles and job descriptions	There are no M&E positions in the target NGOs. The Job Descriptions do not contain specific reference to M&E and no defined time commitment expectations. Designated management staff are performing other functions and often have competing priorities that interfere with their ability to perform M&E functions.	**Recommendation:** It is highly recommended that the Job descriptions for management positions specify adequate level of M&E functions to be performed (per capacity level) and clarify their mandate. Furthermore, in the light of the above recommendation, the tasks to be envisaged and clarified should be primarily those tasks of data collection, analysis and participatory monitoring and evaluation.
M&E PLAN: What is the state of the M&E plan and data collection process		
Results Framework/ Logical Framework	The projects have varying level of quality of the defined results framework. Organizations do not have specifically designed Monitoring Plans that have been included in their project documents. There is evidence of included Evaluation plans in some of the Projects, but the NA interviews revealed that these evaluation plans are not further elaborated.	**Recommendation:** Participatory process of developing the results frameworks for new projects should be organized, and specific and well-elaborated M&E plan for each project should be developed. This approach would largely help the quality of the projects.
Baseline data	No NGO reported to have conducted a Baseline for their projects to date.	**Recommendation:** Baseline documents should be developed to reflect that baseline situation relevant to the project and its OVIs.

Project Category	Findings	Recommendations
Performance Targets and Benchmarks	Performance targets and benchmarks have not been established for the projects. The NGOs report to use the timeframe documents (which are part of the Project document) as framework for performance targets and benchmarks.	**Recommendation**: Following the baseline report, the process of identifying targets and benchmarks within each projects should be conducted. The results framework and its related Indicators should be used as basis for establishment of the targets and benchmarks and to track and report on the progress towards achievement of these targets and benchmarks. The NGOs would hugely benefit from this approach as it would contribute for more transparency and inclusion of relevant staff members and partners in the process of discussing and establishing desired targets and benchmarks for achievement of these targets. It is recommended that this process be completed promptly following the baseline report.
Data Collection Plan	None of the organisations have data collection plans.	**Recommendation:** These should be developed as part of the overall M&E system and process. Recommendations above.
Data Quality Assurance	No data quality assurance mechanisms present.	NGOs should develop data quality assurance mechanisms as part of the overall M&E system.
DATABASE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS: Capacity, experience and understanding among staff and systems		
Existence of information system	None of the NGOs has an M&E related Information system. There is no knowledge on such systems among the NGOs.	**Recommendation**: The existence of an M&E Information system understood as specific M&E software is not important for NGOs – especially those smaller NGOs that have been included in the NA. However, basic M&E framework in the form of Excel sheet is highly recommended to be set up and used persistently. Such example of an M&E framework in Excel has been shared during the Training and its use was advocated to NGOs.
Understanding of potential for data use to improve program performance	All NGO members demonstrate appreciation and understanding of the potential for data use to improve project performance. This understanding has particularly increased after the M&E training delivered.	**Action taken:** Consultant carried out a practical, output oriented experiential-learning training in basic M&E. The importance of data and its use for project implementation management has been discussed and practically illustrated as part of this training.
Data analysis	The projectsare not collecting systemic data, and consequently not conducting systematic data analysis (especially in terms of impact assessment). The project related data analysis and reporting is done by the Project management. Capacity to perform such analyses is not well developed in majority of NGOs.	**Recommendation**: It is recommended that data analyses is organized as a participatory process, which would contribute to its value of reflecting on the achieved and discussing the potential impacts of the activities conducted.

Project Category	Findings	Recommendations
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: Is there systematic method for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating impact		
Impact assessment	The projects do not have a systemic method for designing, implementing and evaluating impact at present.	**Recommendation:** The NGOsteams should institute regular monthly project meetings where data on performance indicators would be discussed and analyzed and actions decided upon.
OWNERSHIP: What is the level of ownership and commitment to Project Development objectives? What are you trying to achieve with this project?		
Understanding of project strategy	The NGO members understand the overall strategy of the project; however interviews reveal that some NGOs struggle with lack of clarity on specific steps for achieving it.	**Recommendation**: It is recommended that the NGO teams continue to develop presentational materials (power point presentations, flyers etc.) that show the intended impact and goals of the project (using the results framework and implementation plan) to promote the projects widely.
Commitment to Project Development Objectives	The commitment of the NGOs to the Project Development Objectives is positive. The impression from interviews with NGO members is that teams are motivated to see the project reach its goals.	
Understanding of intended impact of the project	Majority of NGOs understand the intended impact of the project and have shown initiative to identify the indicators of such impact.	
Overall perception of project	The NGOs largely see their projects as important initiatives to address pressing needs in the area of environment and human rights.	
IMPACT ASSESSMENT: What is the level of awareness, appreciation and strategy/preparedness to address issues of sustainability and measure impact?		
Concern for sustainability needs	The NGOsare interested and motivated to achieve sustainability of their projects.	**Recommendation**: It is recommended that the sustainability strategy is developed based on thorough understanding of the context in which the project is implemented. It is highly recommended that the projects tap into the potential and resources available through sources.
Importance of impact measurement	The NGOs understand and value the importance of measuring impact. However, there is no adequate knowledge and skills to conduct such task. Also, due to the lack of specific baselines and performance measurement instruments, measuring impact is a daunting task.	**Recommendation**: The Impact evaluation framework and the plan should be developed to accompany the project baseline.
Use of impact indicators, baseline information		

Project Category	Findings	Recommendations
Regularity of planning activity	Project planning is a weakness of the project and needs to be instituted and strengthened further.	**Recommendation:** Hold regular and participatory planning meetings at all levels of project implementation that should feed into and be derived from the Project Implementation Plan. Each project team member should have an annual work plan that specifies their tasks, responsibilities and milestones throughout the year to guide their involvement in supporting the project implementation. These plans should be developed by the teams and approved by supervisors.
PARTICIPATORY MONITORING: What is the level of active engagement of key project stakeholders in reflecting and assessing the progress of their project and in achievement of results?		
Active involvement of primary stakeholders in monitoring process	The NGOs report to involve the all key stakeholders in every stage of the PME cycle—planning, data collection, analysis and use. However, the interviews give the impression that most NGOs understand this participation and inclusion more as information sharing (very shallow) instead of active engagement of stakeholders.	**Recommendation:** Relevant stakeholders, especially beneficiaries of the projects should be actively and truly be involved and engaged in participatory planning and monitoring.
Measures to build capacity and involve local stakeholders (beneficiaries, other actors) to analyse, reflect and take action	NGOs do not have approach to building capacities of local stakeholders to participate in project monitoring	**Recommendation:** Systematic approach to building capacities of local stakeholders to participate in project monitoring should be developed as it can contribute extensively to transparency, deeper reflection and more motivation and commitment to the project goals and achievements.
Joint commitment to taking corrective actions	The project teams do have understanding of project objectives and understanding of the information needs of key stakeholders. However, there is a varying extent to active involvement and support to project by project stakeholders	**Recommendation:** See above.
Regularity of involvement of stakeholders in project monitoring	There are no procedures or schedules in place for self-assessments, mid-term evaluation, etc.	**Recommendation:** Mid-term evaluation organized in participatory manner should be conducted, as it is important tool to reflect on achieved results, deviations and impediments of the project.

Deliverables:
1. M&E Needs Assessment matrix for each visited NGO (Annex 1)
2. M&E Needs Assessment Report

III - Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Training – June 2011

A one-day Monitoring and Evaluation Training was delivered to the NGOs. Eleven (11) members of different NGOs took part in this training that had following **learning objectives:**

- To acquire/extend understanding of the basic concepts and practical approaches to performance monitoring and evaluation
- To learn state-of-the-art tools and techniques used specifically to monitor and evaluate projects and programs.
- To gain hands-on experience in designing project monitoring plans

The training was delivered utilizing the following learning methods:
- Lectures
- Experiential learning exercises
- Group work and presentations

The training was an opportunity to: a) learn and discuss the concept and the values of the M&E as integral part of Performance management; b) Understand the rationale, key elements, and steps required to develop a M&E framework; c) Apply project goals and objectives in developing a M&E framework; d) Develop project monitoring and evaluation questions and indicators and review the issues related to selection of data collection methodologies; e) Review M&E framework implementation issues; and f) Develop and review a M&E framework matrix and timeline.

The logical framework format was used for this purpose as outlined in the common M&E framework format that was developed for this purpose. The framework model used includes a cross examination of both horizontal and vertical logic in designing a project and allows for complex intervention planning and development of an integrated performance monitoring plan.

The training evaluation showed that the training was very useful and improved the knowledge of the training participants in the M&E, and especially in setting up the M&E framework. The training participants reported that more such trainings, and particularly mentoring would be highly beneficial for developing skills and knowledge of NGOs in M&E.

Deliverables:
1. Workshop plan (Annex 2)
2. PowerPoint presentation (Annex 3)
3. M&E Framework (Annex 4**)**
4. Summary of the Training Evaluation (Annex 5)

Annex 1. M&E Needs Assessment Matrices for NGOs.

Annex 2. Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop Plan, Sarajevo, June 7, 2011.

This Monitoring and Evaluation workshop is prepared as integral part of the Technical assistance for capacity Building and guidance towards the improvement of monitoring capacities of the CSOs implementing projects supported under Calls for Proposal: EuropeAid/129053/L/ACT/BA and EC/B&H/CFT/09/002, *Environment and Natural Resources/Support to Environmental NGOs and* EuropeAid/129182/L/ACT/BA and EC/BIH/CFT/09/005, Support to Implementation of the Roma National Action Plans**.**The M&E workshop is organized as a sequenced activity as follows:

> *Workshop 1: Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation*
> *Workshop 2: Developing an* M&E framework

Learning Objectives

The goal of the workshop is to increase participants' capacity to develop and implement comprehensive monitoring and evaluation work plans for specific projects supported by the EC.

At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the concept and the value of the M&E as integral part of Performance management.
- ✓ Understand the rationale, key elements, and steps required to develop a M&E framework
- ✓ Apply project goals and objectives in developing a M&E framework
- ✓ Develop project monitoring and evaluation questions and indicators and review the issues related to selection of data collection methodologies
- ✓ Review M&E framework implementation issues: Who will carry out the work? How will existing data be used?
- ✓ Develop and review a M&E framework matrix and timeline

Workshop schedule

Time	Workshop sessions	Training method
10-10.30	Welcome and introduction	Plenary session
10.30-11.30	**Introduction to M&E** *Main subjects:* What is M&E? What is th difference between Monitoring and evaluation? What is performance monitoring?	Plenary session Facilitator's presentation Discussion
11.30 – 11.45	Break	
11.45 – 13.00	**Introduction to M&E - continuation** *Main subjects*: Roles and timelines for M&E Project management cycle – the role of M&E Project goals, objectives and indicators and baselines as basis for development of	Plenary session Facilitator's presentation Discussion

	a M&E framework The role of baselines and indicators in the good-quality M&E	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 – 15. 30	**Development of an M&E framework** *Main subjects:* The introduction to M&E framework Development of the M&E framework	Facilitator's presentation Discussion Small group activity
15.30 – 15.45	Break	
16.00 – 16.45	**Development of the M&E framework–cont.**	Small group activity
16.45 – 17.00	**Wrap up: Main questions from testing the M&E framework**	Plenary session Discussion

Annex 3. PowerPoint presentation

Annex 4. M&E Framework form

Annex 5. Summary of the Training Evaluations

EVALUATION FORM – PARTICIPANTS

Ten persons submitted the Evaluations.
How would you rate the training?
☐ Excellent, it gave me a lot of information and new knowledge**= 7**
☐ Good, it filled the gaps in my knowledge**= 3**
☐ Not good-not bad, I already knew a lot abut the topics
☐ Bad, I did not acquire any new knowledge
☐ It was boring, and not a learning process.

What was the most interesting/informative?
Knowledge and information about monitoring.
The whole training was interesting (discussions).
It was interesting to grasp the role of monitoring of activities.
The entire M&E subject
Developing the M&E framework
Improvement of monitoring procedures and clarification of some unclear concepts.
To learn more about monitoring.
Everything.
Monitoring vs. evaluation
Everything.

What was the least interesting/informative?
No.
No,
Everything was interesting.
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
Nothing.
Nothing.
Nothing.

What would you change in the training approach?
Nothing.
The next topic should be the work on better definition of results and indicators, for organisations that already have experience.
More exercises.
N/A
Nothing.
N/A
N/A
Nothing.
More practical examples, interaction and much discussion sometimes does not deliver quality.
Nothing.

Do you have any suggestions for improving the training?
More training on this topic.
No.
N/A
More group work.

No.
More trainings like this one.
N/A
No.
No.
No.

What is you perception of the trainer?
☐ Excellent, she was very resourceful and gave me a lot of new information knowledge= 8
☐ Good, she helped to fill in the gaps in my knowledge=2
☐ Not good-not bad
☐ Bad, the workshop was not prepared well
☐ She was boring, the presentations were dry and with no hands-on experience

Do you have any suggestions for improving the work of the trainer?
No.
N/A.
No suggestions, all OK.
N/A
No.
N/A
N/A
No
More realistic examples, more teaching-less discussion.
No.

What are your comments about the venue, food, or administrative arrangements?
Good.
N/A.
The organisational arrangements were good.
N/A
Venue and admin, arrangements were great.
Good.
N/A
Everything was OK.
Excellent.
Everything was OK.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Excellent communication in the group.
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
Everything is super
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A

Regional Office
Potoklinica 16
71 000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
info@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Albania
Rr" Donika Kastrioti" | "Kotoni" Business Centre
K-2 Tirana
Albania
info.al@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Kalesijska 14/3
71 000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
info.ba@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Croatia
Amruševa 10/1
10 000 Zagreb
Croatia
info.hr@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99
Fazli Grajqevci 4/a
10000 Pristina
Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99
info.ko@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
11 Oktomvri 6/1-3
1000 Skopje
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
info.mk@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Montenegro
Dalmatinska 78
20000 Podgorica
Montenegro
info.me@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Serbia
Spanskih boraca 24 - stan broj 3
11070 Novi Beograd
Serbia
info.rs@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Turkey
Gulden Sk. 2/2
Kavaklidere 06690
Ankara

Yenicarsi Caddesi No.34
34425 Beyoglu
Istanbul
Turkey
info.tr@tacso.org

TACSO

Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations • www.tacso.org

SIPU International AB Sweden • Civil Society Promotion Centre Bosnia and Herzegovina
Human Resource Development Foundation Turkey • Foundation in Support of Local Democracy Poland
Partners Foundation for Local Development Romania