



# Needs Assessment Report

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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Technical Assistance for  
Civil Society Organisations  
Macedonian Office



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## **Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations**

### **Needs Assessment Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Final Report**

**Skopje, September 2011**

## INTRODUCTION

This study is one of eight country assessments of civil society capacities conducted as a preliminary activity within the second phase of the EC-funded project Technical Assistance to Civil Society (TACSO) in IPA Countries, implemented by SIPU International, during the period August 2011 – July 2013. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of civil society in Macedonia and the environment that it works in, including its strengths and weaknesses, and its impacts to date and the challenges it faces to its further development. The study is based upon a combination of desk research embracing all relevant documentation, including legal and financial legislation applicable to civil society, previous civil society mappings and evaluations, situation analyses, policy documents and academic literature, and a consultative stakeholder analysis carried out by means of focus groups and interviews with civil society organisations (CSOs), government actors, donor organisations and other institutional players. The study is an integral part of the project inception and it provides the premise for the majority of other project activities by serving as the basis of the development of regional as well as national work plans to be implemented during the project's duration.

In line with the project's Terms of Reference the study understands civil society in the following two complementary ways:

1. All organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens. This definition clearly emphasises the associational character of civil society, while also accentuating its representational role. Civil society would include a variety of organisational types, including, NGOs, mass movements, cooperatives, professional associations, cultural and religious groups, trades unions and grassroots community groups (CBOs), etc.
2. A space for views, policies and action supportive of alternatives to those promoted by government and the private sector. This definition places the emphasis on social inclusion, social and political pluralism and the rights of expression in developing a participatory democracy.

The paper is composed of four sections:

- Section one provides an analysis of the civil society environment, including the legal framework governing CSOs and their work, the current donor opportunities and other sources of civil society funding, the government mechanisms for cooperation with and support of civil society and the policy framework determining government-civil society relations and public perceptions and support for civil society and its activities.
- Section two gives an overview of the main features of civil society: the types of organisation represented and their key organisational characteristics, the types of activity they carry out and their main sectoral interests, their geographical distribution and way they are structured within an overall civil society architecture. CSOs are assessed according to their technical, organisational and institutional capacities, including human resources and technical skills, strategic strengths, analytical capabilities, external relations with other actors including other CSOs, government and the community, and material and financial stability and resilience.
- Section three summarises the main achievements of civil society, noting key milestone achievements and broader social impacts, and also identifies shortfalls in civil society performance in need of strengthening and further development.
- Section four sums up the most important institutional and organisational capacity needs of civil society in the country and identifies key strategic issues for the implementation of the project. By way of conclusion, recommendations are made for both the project's regional work plan and country-specific work plan.

## **1. CIVIL SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT**

### **1.1 Reforms and changes in the institutional framework since August 2009**

The institutional framework relevant to the CSOs has undergone some minor changes in the stated period.

Even though, in June 2011 there were early parliamentary elections, neither radical institutional changes particularly changes in the policies towards CSOs did not occur nor they are expected in the near future. This is due to the victory of the already leading party (VMRO – DPMNE); thus, the prime minister remained the same, and the Government, although with some minor changes in its officials, kept the general course of their policies and the attitude towards the CSOs.

Positive change in the institutional capacities for cooperation with CSOs is the increased staff in the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs from 3 to 12. That generated improved basis and potential for implementation of the ambitious objectives set by the Government within the Strategy for cooperation with the civil sector. The capacity building of the Unit's staff is a further challenge for several projects, EU-funded technical support. Such a project, technical support from the IPA component 1 2007 is "Strengthening the capacities of the General Secretariat – Sector for Policy Analysis and Coordination – Unit for Reform of Public Administration and Unit for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations" which was finalized in the stated period and it facilitated evaluation of the Strategy implementation, development of Code of Good Practices for civil society participation in the policy making process and capacity building of the public administration for implementation of the Law on Associations and Foundations.

Progress in the improvement of the institutional framework regarding motivating civic activism and promoting voluntarism is the establishment of the National Council for Voluntarism Development, with mandate to plan measures for voluntarism promotion. Besides representatives from the relevant ministries and the Government, this Council also comprises representatives from Associations of Units of Local Self-Government (ZELS) and 4 CSOs' representatives.

### **1.2 Planned reforms in the institutional framework**

In the period to follow the Government plans to continue with strengthening the capacities of the Unit for cooperation with NGOs. Accordingly, this year the project "Technical support to the Unit for cooperation with non-governmental organisations within the General Secretariat" (IPA component 1 2008) started. Within this project, it is foreseen to establish management system of grant schemes for CSOs and the project will strengthen the Unit's capacities for this purpose. This is closely related to the plans for implementation of the Decentralised Implementation System (DIS) of EU funds and the Unit's role in managing grant schemes for CSOs.

Having in mind that the current Strategy for cooperation of the Government with CSOs (2007 – 2011) is in the last year of its implementation, notable challenge for the Government in the up-coming period is the development of a new strategy. The abovementioned project has foreseen resources and expertise for this purpose.

The challenge is related to the process of passing the new strategy, its contents and objectives to be set. To be exact, the first Strategy for cooperation of the Government with CSOs has set certain benchmarks regarding participation by involving CSOs in the advisory group that was continuously consulted about the document, as well as a range of public debates with many CSOs that were given opportunity to comment on the document. In addition, there were certain benchmarks also regarding the expertise involved, assessment of the situation and designing the document that addresses the key issues. However the document produced was quite ambitious, which, among other factors, contributed to its incomplete implementation and dissatisfaction among CSOs. This issue will need to be addressed thoroughly in order that the created document obtains feasible approach which takes into account the

capacity of the institutions and facilitates meaningful improvement in the relations between the Government and CSOs. Another significant challenge for the institutions is the establishment and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for implementing the Law on Associations and Foundations, especially having in mind the novelties of this Law (public interest organizations, economic activities of the CSO) which should contribute to the sustainability of CSOs. In that sense, it is expected to be established Commission for granting the status of public interest organizations that need to include 2 representatives of CSOs. Members, representatives of ministries, have already been appointed, and it is expected that the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs will announce call for selection of CSO representatives.

On the local level, there is an increased interest in strengthening the cooperation among municipalities and CSOs. Thus, several projects started aiming at strengthening the institutional mechanisms for cooperation on local level, where municipalities are actively included:

- "Civil dialogue on local level" EU-funded project under the Programme European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) implemented by MCIC in partnership with the Ministry of Local Self-Government, ZELS and the municipalities of Bitola, Debar and Jegunovce. The project aims at increasing influence of CSOs in policy-making at local level. The project activities comprise: a comparative analysis of best practices for cooperation between municipalities and CSOs at the local level in EU countries and the Balkans; preparation of a manual for citizen participation in decision making at the local level, organizing conferences and developing institutional mechanism for cooperation between the municipalities and the civil sector in several municipalities<sup>1</sup>.
- "Strengthening civil society through capacity building: Promotion of local development through better use of EU funds" is a project being implemented by the Institute for Democracy in Skopje and partner Organization European Centre for Development, Tolerance and Cooperation from Gostivar. The project is funded by the European Union Program European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The project aims at developing awareness of the EU's role in the process of democratization of the country and local development, as well as pre-funding opportunities for the candidate countries for EU membership. The project will strive to fulfil the goal by promoting dialogue and strengthening of civil society organizations and local government institutions in policy making and for better absorption of IPA funds<sup>2</sup>.
- Community forum, a project supported by SDC and implemented by CSOs in more than 15 municipalities, which aims at establishment of participatory approaches in communities. The project is implemented by forum sessions (discussions), workshops, training and consultancy about: project planning, project formulation and preparation of budgets and funding and monitoring the implementation of the projects selected in the forums<sup>3</sup>.

Besides the already started projects under IPA Component 1 2010, another project is foreseen, technical assistance for developing strategies for cooperation of units of local self-government with CSOs and participation of CSOs in the creation of local policies and decision making in 8 municipalities / regions.

### **1.3. Legal framework – an analysis of all the relevant laws and financial regulations**

The principal law governing the environment in which the national CSOs operate is the Law on Associations and Foundations which creates favourable frame and overcame a series of weaknesses that the previous relevant law had. The Law achieved particular progress in terms of liberalization of the association, the introduction of the status of public interest organizations and regulating the economic

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<sup>1</sup> [www.mcms.org.mk](http://www.mcms.org.mk)

<sup>2</sup> [www.idscs.org.mk](http://www.idscs.org.mk)

<sup>3</sup> [www.swisscooperation.org.mk](http://www.swisscooperation.org.mk)

activity of CSOs. A key challenge for the next period is the implementation of this law and its harmonization with other laws, especially those relating to the tax frame for CSOs and mobilizing local funds.

### ***Law on Citizens Associations and Foundations***

**Law on Associations and Foundations** passed in April 2010 and replaced the Law on Citizen associational and foundation which was in force since 1998.

The new Law improved the legal frame for operation of the CSOs and ensured many benefits for the organisations and positive changes related to the previous law:

- Increased liberalization of association, since the Law facilitates not only physical and legal entities to establish associations and foundations, but foreigners and under-aged also to associate, which was not the case with the previous law, which prescribed that an association of citizens could be established only by five adult citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.
- The introduction of the status of organisation with public interest should stimulate organisations to act in the field of public interest, under the conditions that they receive certain benefits.
- The Law provides for organisations to earn profit that is to be used for the organisation's purposes, set with the statute, which promotes economic activities of the organisations and contributes for the organisation's sustainability.
- Division of managing from executing functions in the organisations and impossibility for linking these functions, in particular with respect to the organisations of public interest.
- Stressing of the exposure and transparency of the organisation's operation and acting not affiliated to any political party

Yet, the initial step in the Law implementation regarding the re-registration of the active associations illustrated problems encountered due to non-consistent understanding of the provisions of the Law by the offices of the Central Register competent for the registration of associations. Thus, the organisations in certain municipalities were charged for the registration and in other municipalities that were not the case, (the Law stipulates that the re-registration is free of charge); other organisations faced various requirements about changing the name of those organisations etc. All this point to the need for strengthening the institutional capacities for Law implementation, and this in particular refers to the other changes introduced and foreseen provisions of this Law. The effective implementation of the Law requires passing of by-laws, but the set deadlines for their enforcement expired. Ministry of Justice developed Rule book for selection of members of the Committee for organisations of public interest, as well as three other rule books foreseen by the Law regarding keeping registers of organisations (associations, unions, foundations and foreign organisations).

In the future it is expected from the Government to establish Committee for granting status of public interest, and this Committee, in addition to the line ministries representatives, should comprise of two CSO representatives. To this end, it is expected from the Units for cooperation with NGOs to announce a call for selection of CSO representatives.

Still even after the establishment of the institutional mechanisms for implementation of the Law provisions, it is obvious that the Law creates challenges that demand further interventions in the legal frame, i.e. harmonisation with other laws, so that the possibilities foreseen in this Law to become applicable in practice and a reality for CSOs. For instance, the Law does not define clearly the benefits from the status of organisation with public interest, but it only states that the organisations will have additional tax and customs exemptions pursuant to the law. However, these exemptions need to be further regulated by the relevant laws. The same refers to the Law on donations and sponsorship which needs to be adequately amended.

Further challenge in the implementation of the Law is the level of CSOs' familiarity with the Law. To this end, the Government's Unit for cooperation with NGOs organised informative events about the Law,

and further on, several CSOs (Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Local Community Development Foundation) and the TACSO project organised several seminars and workshops.

### ***Tax incentives***

In practice, there are no useful tax benefits available for CSOs, as there is effectively no differentiation in law between CSOs and commercial businesses. Thus, CSOs are liable for the standard business tax on profits, property tax, gift and inheritance tax, VAT on all purchases of goods and services, customs and other import duties.

Under the **Law on Donations and Sponsorships for Public Activities** (adopted in April 2006), a range of tax exemptions and deductions were introduced to give incentives to companies and individuals to support CSOs undertaking activities in the “public interest;” that is of benefit to the public. The Law foresees tax incentives in the area of several types of taxes: 1) personal income tax, 2) profit tax, 3) Value Added Tax and 4) Property tax. The Law prescribes harmonisation of domestic with foreign donors with respect to eligibility for tax exemptions regarding Value Added Tax. Such approach ensures solid basis for utilizing the potential of the local resources in the areas of public interest and for stimulating philanthropic culture in the Republic of Macedonia. The Law is being implemented and part of the beneficiaries managed to enjoy the relevant tax benefits<sup>4</sup>. The Law provisions are reflected in the relevant tax laws, the necessary by-laws are passed. In order to facilitate the process of reporting about donations/sponsorships, the Public Revenue Office (PRO) prepared simple forms. The line ministries and institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, and Public Revenue Office) took over the responsibilities deriving from the Law and implement them adequately. Still, the implementation of the Law in practice cannot demonstrate numerous benefits for the civil society organizations, and the small and medium-sized enterprises and citizens almost do not even use the law<sup>5</sup>. For instance, many enterprises decide not to use the Law since the procedure is too complicated and demands huge engagement of the employees in activity that is not their primary focus and at the same time they are not absolutely sure that they will receive the exemption. Further on, in the case of some taxes, deductions are insignificant thereby militating against applying for them. Deductions against personal income tax for charitable giving are only possible for those people (approximately 10% of those in work) who fill out an annual tax return form, rather than the usual method applying to employees of “pay-as-you-earn.”

The defined challenges in the current implementation of the Law on Donations and Sponsorship do not result from the inadequate implementation of the institutions’ responsibilities but they are due to the actual provisions of the Law and how they are understood and interpreted:

- 1) unclear definition and interpretation of the key terminology and harmonisation with other laws;
- 2) complicated procedure for implementation of the tax exemption and
- 3) increased administration costs due to allocated competences in several institutions<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the Law itself, there is a variety of other factors which impede the effective take up of benefits offered by the law:

- CSOs, companies and individuals may know of the law’s existence, but very few understand its potential benefits
- There is no well developed culture of individual or corporate charitable giving to CSOs.

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<sup>4</sup> “The Law on Donations and Sponsorships for Public Activities, Implementation and major challenges”, Konekt, June 2010

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

- Majority of CSOs remain culturally dependent on international funding sources and are poorly adapted to mobilising local resources, thus, they are not focused on increasing the pressure for changes in this sphere.

### **Voluntarism**

In June 2007 a **Law on Volunteering** was adopted aiming at defining this area of work in relation to paid employment and to define the rights and obligations of volunteers and the entities that organise volunteering. By recognising volunteer practice as valid work experience of value within the paid employment sector, personal tax exemption on the costs related to volunteering as well as maintaining the unemployment rights for unemployed persons that are volunteering, the law aims to encourage voluntarism and is of potentially great benefit to CSOs and the not-for-profit sector. Nonetheless, even besides this stimulating legal frame the surveys and the data exemplify a low level of utilizing volunteering (10% of the population have volunteering experience<sup>7</sup>). Furthermore, the CSOs which are mainly based on voluntary engagement (88.5% act on voluntary basis<sup>8</sup>) insufficiently promote volunteering in the broader community (mainly ask for voluntary engagement from their own members). Having this situation in mind, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia amends the legal frame with other measures which are to create favourable environment for promotion of voluntarism.

- The Strategy for promotion and development of voluntarism, adopted in October 2010, aiming at promoting voluntarism among the broader public, stimulating volunteering culture within the educational system; increasing the level of volunteering in the civil society sector and establishing system for institutional support of volunteering.
- Action plan with specific measures for implementation of the strategy
- Establishment of a National Council for development of volunteering, competent for: promotion and development of volunteering as socially useful activity, planning of more specific measures and monitoring of the development of volunteering. The Council was established at the beginning of 2011. Besides representatives from the ministries and the Government the Council comprises of representative from ZELS and 4 CSOs' representatives.

#### **1.4. Donors and funding opportunities (local and international) today and as predicted in the future**

The vast majority of CSOs in Macedonia continue to be dependent on international donor funds. Collectively, foreign funding streams remain the single largest source of financial support for CSOs. Since Macedonia gained EU candidate country status in December 2005, the context of international donor funding has changed significantly. European donor countries in particular have scaled down their commitment to the country and some have left, or very soon will do so. The EU funds, principally through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), are now the main focus of interest for CSOs.

The only significant domestic source of civil society funding is central government, which targets a broad range of non-government organisations, of which associations and foundations are just one category. Policies for distribution of these funds, as well as transparency improved in the recent years, however further steps should be done particularly regarding the funds distributed through line ministries and lottery funds. Funds provided by the ULSG to CSOs although small are becoming more and more important source for the small grass-root organizations and their sustainability. Practices of individual and corporate giving although now emerging with increasing pace still could not be considered as significant source of founding.

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<sup>7</sup> "Social responsibility of the citizens", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2011

<sup>8</sup> "CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Long road to increased citizens engagement", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, March 2011

## EU IPA and other EU funds

Civil society development and dialogue is defined as one of the major cross-cutting issues under the IPA instrument<sup>9</sup>. Currently there are funds allocated to the support of democratization and civil society development (under the IPA component 1 - institutional building). Part of these are intended for large technical assistance projects for capacity building of state institutions mediating government-civil society relations (Unit for Cooperation in the General Secretariat), and part are intended for direct support of CSOs and their activities. In addition to 0.7 mil. EUR IPA 2008 grant scheme which was disbursed in 2010, to 15 CSOs projects, IPA 2009 provides amount of 1,5 mil. EUR for CSOs' projects.

Further support to CSOs is envisaged in the EC's MIPD under IPA component 4 (Developing Human Resources) for CSOs' projects aiming to enhance social cohesion. Multi-beneficiary IPA funds under Civil Society Facility are also available to CSOs as well as part of the Community programmes.

However current EU funding opportunities are relatively difficult to be accessed by majority of CSOs. Major reasons for this are relatively high thresholds of the available grants, which require proof of high financial management capacities, as well as the level of co-financing that should be provided. In addition, there are concerns within the CSO community in Macedonia that the EC application process is complicated technically and imposes many financial and administrative conditions on organisations and so effectively excludes the greater majority of CSOs.

Current EU funding opportunities include:

### 1. National IPA 2009 Programme

Grant Contracts 1,5 M EUR to be launched during 2011 to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Sector through grant projects in:

- Fight against corruption and organised crime (including fight against trafficking of human beings and fight against illegal substances)
- Strengthening the CSO management and networking, including joint implementation of community based activities and social services, resource mobilisation, mobilising voluntary work, institutional cooperation CSOs/Government.
- Protection of human rights, with a focus on vulnerable groups, victims of family violence, mobilization of the municipalities for prevention of HIV/AIDS/STI amongst the most at risk including activities within the Decade for Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015.

Approximately **20 grants are expected to be signed**, ranging from min 30.000 to max 150.000 Euro.

### 2. European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights - EIDHR

Country-Based Support Scheme with three annual programming approach (2009-2011) in support of human rights and democratisation activities of CSOs. Annual allocation is 600,000 EUR with size of the grants: 50,000 to 90,000 EUR. Specific priorities of the 2010 call for proposals included:

- The pursuit of common agendas for human rights, democratic reform, freedom of expression and independent media based on joint cooperation among civil society organisations and building coalitions across different communities for enhancing the inclusiveness and pluralism notably in the context of the Ohrid Framework Agreement

– Enhancing political representation and participation of civil society in developing and implementing public policies, at different levels of decision-making process, including coalitions building for lobbying and advocacy on legislative reforms throughout a participative dialogue with “political society”, in particularly focused on institutions on local self government level.

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<sup>9</sup> “Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document”, European Commission, 2008

- Promoting non-discrimination, social inclusion and social rights, including minorities and in particular the Roma with explicit mainstreaming on women and children right and rights of persons with disabilities.

**3. Cross-Border Cooperation (IPA 2)** Grants to CSOs and municipalities for a range of socio-economic two-country partnership projects, with all EU and potential EU member countries. Currently tendering or planned during 2011 and/or 2012: Macedonia – Bulgaria, Macedonia – Albania, Macedonia – Greece, Macedonia – Kosovo.

**4. IPA 2010 Civil Society Facility Horizontal Activities** – Partnership actions in the IPA region. IPA Multi-beneficiary Programme 2010:

- "Empowerment of women" (1,65 mil.EUR) Call for proposals: grant contracts with aim to increase awareness on EU gender equality standards in the region; strengthen capacity of CSOs to cooperate and share knowledge with their counterparts in the region and EU and reinforce interaction between CSOs and decision makers.

- "Protection of children from violence" (1,65 mil.EUR) Contribution agreement with UNICEF with aim to enhance monitoring systems and improved capacity of CSOs that work with vulnerable families and children; to raise awareness about the condition of children and courage joint actions through networks and strengthen interaction between CSOs and decision makers.

**5. Other EU funded programs.** Macedonian CSOs may apply to the following **EU Community programmes:**

- **Progress Programme** - programme for employment and social solidarity, set up to provide financial support for the attainment of the European Union's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities as set out in the Social Agenda2, as well as to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Responsible body for the programme in Macedonia is the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

- **Youth in Action (2007-2013)**

- **Europe for Citizens Programme (2007 – 2013)** Responsible body for the programme in Macedonia is: Ministry of Education and Science

- **Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013)– FP7** Responsible body for the programme in Macedonia is the Ministry of Education and Science.

- **Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme** – CIP programme supporting Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Information Communication Technologies Policy Support and Intelligent Energy. Responsible body for the programme in Macedonia is Ministry of economy.

- **Life-long learning programme (2007-2013)** consisting of Comenius programme, Erasmus programme, Leonardo da Vinci programme, Grundtvig programme, Jean Monnet programme. Responsible body for the programme in Macedonia the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, however, in 2010 the programme has been put on hold for Macedonia.

- **Media 2007 (2007-2013)** This programme will be open for Macedonia after the harmonization of the Macedonian legislation with the EU legislation. Responsible body for the programme in Macedonia is: Ministry of Culture

**Other international donors**

**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** has been an important supporter of citizens' participation and civil society development, particular through fostering Community Forums and establishing NGO support centres. In 2009 it launched a new mechanism to support building capacities of CSOs: **Civil Society Support Facility – CIVICA Mobilitas** A three-year programme (2009-2011) implemented by local CSO, the Centre for Institutional Development (CIRa) providing institutional and project grants to assist CSOs to exercise critical oversight of equitable, non-discriminatory and efficient

public service delivery, as well as oversight of budgeting and financial management of public expenditure and private sector practices<sup>10</sup>. The facility's total budget is 2.5 million EUR. The programme is planned to continue in its second phase after 2011.

**USAID** completed its **Civil Society Support Programme** in June 2010, after 5 years' operation. Currently it is tendering for prime implementing partner for its new **Civic Advocacy and Partnership Activity Programme** with total budget of 4 mil. USD that includes grants for CSOs. Objectives of the programme are to stimulate civic activism and participation at national and local levels, to support CSOs to conduct government oversight, advocate, and provide input into public policy and to establish sustainable mechanisms for regular and ad-hoc CSO cooperation -and mobilization on democratic reform issues<sup>11</sup>.

**U.S. Embassy** in Macedonia is running small grants programme whose purpose is to award small grants for specific projects that support the development of democratic institutions in the Republic of Macedonia.

**Soros funds** in Macedonia are implemented through its local foundation Institute for Open Society Macedonia, which lately does not operate as foundation, and rather implement projects itself. So, not many funds are available to local CSOs in form of grants. However, some international programmes<sup>12</sup> are available to CSOs, including:

**1. East-East Programme: Cross-Border Partnership** supports international cooperation between the civil society and NGOs for exchanging experiences, expertise and knowledge in order to internationally enhance the principles of open society.

**2. Think-tank fund** supports independent policy centres that help strengthen democracy by identifying and analyzing policy options, advocating for their adoption, and consulting with governments. The fund provides institutional and project grants in Central and South Eastern Europe. The fund complements its grant making by developing activities to enhance networking among think tanks and to build their capacity to conduct research and use their findings and recommendations in advocacy.

**3. The Human Rights and Governance Grants Program (HRGGP)** focusing on human rights, accountability, and rule of law promotion in Central and Eastern Europe.

**4. Roma Initiatives** grant making to foster and promote the principles of democracy, accountability, human rights, gender equality, and active Roma leadership and participation in public affairs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia.

### **Central government funding sources**

Government may be considered as important source of CSO funding. Over the last five years between 3.8 and 6.2 million EUR were allocated to CSOs annually<sup>13</sup>. However, following the allocations under the budget line aimed to NGOs, one could find that the funds are disbursed not only to associations and foundations, but also to trade unions, religious communities and political parties. Government funds are available through the individual line ministries and state institutions. Having the objective in its Strategy for cooperation with CSOs to provide more favourable conditions for sustainability of the civil society sector including creation of better fiscal frame and state financing for CSO, Government introduced several measures to improve the process of disbursement and management of these funds. In 2007 a Code of Good Practices for the financial support by government of citizens associations and foundations was adopted and set following: basic criteria that should be fulfilled by CSOs in order to receive state funding, obligation of the Government to prepare annual programmes for funding of CSOs and announce the same on the NGO Unit web page, obligation to announce open call and decide on the

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<sup>10</sup> [www.swisscooperation.org.mk](http://www.swisscooperation.org.mk)

<sup>11</sup> <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>

<sup>12</sup> [www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)

<sup>13</sup> "Financing of the CSOs form the state budget", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2010

disbursement within one month after the deadline for application, obligation to prepare contract with the selected CSOs and perform control over the funds spending etc. However, Code of Good Practices is not obligatory act for state bodies, thus government institutions rarely allocate support to CSOs in a transparent manner according to clear and equitable criteria. Very often funds are allocated to arbitrarily pre-selected beneficiary organisations and only a very few state institutions distribute funds through open calls to tender. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Agency for Youth and Sport are some of the rare positive examples that apply the Code and announce open calls<sup>14</sup>. In the last 3 years a proportion of the Central Government civil society allocation (around 10% of the total state funds) has been subject to a more transparent procedure, following the guidelines set out in the Code of Good Practices. In 2009, this allocation was designated a Programme for financing of programme activities of associations and foundations alone, worth 15,000,000 MKD (approx 245,000 Euro), and is now disbursed according to five priority objectives. By ensuring programme criteria and transparent procedures, including clearly defined scoring of applications, the programme is a major step forward in ensuring transparency and standards in the allocation process and also the targeting of funding to increase its effectiveness. However, what is still missing in the process is monitoring of the projects implementation and evaluation of the results. In addition, many CSOs still claim that political parties and affiliation of CSOs with the authorities have significant influence to the decisions.

Situation is worse in the case of distribution of the lottery funds where lack of transparency appears to be particularly acute. There is neither open call nor criteria for applying for these funds. The greater part of these resources is shared between a very small number of predetermined beneficiaries. Furthermore, even besides the legal provision 50% of the revenue from lottery to be allocated to CSOs, the allocated amounts during the period 2002-2008 were significantly lower i.e. 7%-15.2%<sup>15</sup>.

### **Local government funding sources**

The Law on Units of Local Self-Government provides for allocation of portion of the municipal budget for support of CSOs. Pursuant to this, in practice majority municipalities have budget line for CSOs. Nonetheless, in most cases the amount is not more than 1% of the municipal budget<sup>16</sup>. Although relatively small in quantity the financial support for CSOs by municipalities may be considered as very important for sustainability of small grass-root CSOs and more importantly as impetus for more close cooperation of LSG and CSOs in addressing community problems.

The allocation of funds for CSOs is made on various ways – open call, but also direct initiative and upon request sent to the Mayor or the municipal Council, and the Council reaches a decision. Generally, there is no unified system, application procedure and clearly defined criteria for allocating funds to CSOs from the municipal budget. Recent analysis<sup>17</sup> conducted in 25 municipalities reveal that 67% of the municipalities announce open call and have criteria for allocation of funds. It seems that in the past several years there is a trend of increasing the number of municipalities that allocate funds competitively via open call, although there are still CSOs' reactions about lack of transparency, partiality, and political affiliation in the allocation of funds.

In addition to funds allocated via open calls, some municipalities allocate funds for CSOs for co-financing projects obtained from other donors. This model is not fully practiced (there is familiar that only two municipalities use the model: Bitola and Skopje) and insufficiently promoted (few organisations requested to use this opportunity). Yet, it seems that it has significant potential in surpassing one of the

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<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> "Cooperation of the Local Self-Government Units and CSOs", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, July 2011

<sup>17</sup> ibid

key threats for the local CSOs when they applying for funds (particularly EU funds) and have to ensure certain amount for co-financing the project.

### **Private and corporate giving**

Due to the poor economic situation in the country, as well as due to the underdeveloped culture for giving, the support to CSOs from individual donors can be assessed as modest. The periodical research Social responsibility of citizens (MCIC) in the past years did not show changes in the trends of giving, whereas, the last survey in 2011 even illustrated 5% decrease in number of citizens that gave in the past 12 months. This is not encouraging information for CSOs which should continue to work on raising the awareness and culture for giving. Perhaps, instead of being focused on stimulating donations in cash, CSOs should focus more on donations in time and promotion of volunteering. According to this research, organisations working in the area of health, humanitarian support, disabled, and children have higher likelihood to mobilize individual donations.

According to the data from the Central Register for businesses that informed about donations and sponsorship the total amount on annual level in the past three years is approximately 7 million Euros. Herewith, it needs to be taken into consideration the fact that this amount also includes sponsorship (more preferred by companies), support to individuals, as well as the support for sports clubs. The corporate giving and the amount that companies allocate for CSOs to great extent depend on the demand the on the CSOs. This is illustrated also with the analysis published in Citizens' practices No.13 (Nikica Kusinikova, 2011) where it is stated that many enterprises donate ad-hoc upon certain request for donation. Further on, it is emphasised that significant portion of enterprises have not been approached at all and asked to donate (only 63% of enterprises were asked to donate). This points out that enterprises are willing to donate, but that potential is not fully utilized. Preferred areas for donations are: health (one quarter of enterprises that donated), disabled (16%) and children and their protection (14%). This analysis shows that enterprises give regardless of their size, but the size is important for the level/amount of donations. Although enterprises are open to providing one-time donations, small percentage of enterprises (only 14%) is prepared to ensure long-term support. Principle cause for this is the insufficient budget for such purposes and the lack of tax incentives. Having in mind these data, CSOs need to build their skills how to approach corporations and generate resources locally. However, changes to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships for Public Activities are necessary to provide more incentives to the businesses to donate.

### **1.5. Government mechanisms for civil society – government cooperation and the policy framework that determines government-civil society relations;**

A single government office, the Unit for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations, is responsible for facilitating government cooperation with civil society. The Unit has developed a Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs in 2007. The Strategy, which is rather ambitious, and the adoption process which considerably included the CSOs, significantly increase the expectations of CSOs from the Unit. Nevertheless, the Unit could not entirely fulfil the expectations due to several reasons: structural/organisational limitations in its operation, insufficient capacity and deficient resources for implementation of the Strategy. This led to partial implementation of the measures planned with the Strategy.

#### **Unit for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations**

The Unit for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organizations was established in November 2004 under the Sector for Policy Analysis and Coordination within the General Secretariat of the Government, and commenced active work in March 2006. According to the Rulebook on internal organisation of the

General Secretariat within the Government the Unit is responsible for: preparation of Government strategy and programme for cooperation with CSOs; maintaining cooperation with CSOs and institutions; preparing a review of the legislation and its continuous updating, proposing initiatives to the Government and relevant ministries in order to instigate drafting of new legislation for the civil society sector; anticipating the allocation of financial resources for partially financing projects of public benefit; mediation of the inter-ministerial cooperation, as well as of other state authorities and civil society sector etc.

Since November 2006, the Unit has undertaken significant capacity-building activities implemented through two TA projects funded by EU. These included study trips abroad and comprehensive trainings in the key areas of civil society, CSO management and social research and analysis. Staff number of the Unit, which now is 12, is considered to be adequate. However, its capacity is not on the expected level despite it having been the subject of (and remains so) considerable technical assistance under EC-funded projects. In addition the Unit appears to be constrained in its ability to carry out its mandate owing to its position under the General Secretariat of the Government. The Unit lacks sufficient autonomy to allow it to work flexibly and take proactive measures towards implementing the Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs, and to establish direct communication with civil society.

The Unit's ability and coordination system to synchronize the work of the Ministries with civil society are not effective enough due to frequent changes of the persons assigned as responsible for cooperation with CSOs, as well as result of the complicated procedure for communication among the Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs and involved government units.

Since 2008, in addition to the abovementioned Unit's responsibilities, the Unit has been responsible for administration and evaluation of project proposals submitted by CSOs at open calls for allocation of part of the budget for CSOs (funds allocated via the General Secretariat of the Government in the amount of approximately 20 million MKD annually), as well as for monitoring of the awarded projects. The Unit is supposed to be given such a role also within the Decentralized implementation system of EU funds regarding grant schemes from the national IPA programme for CSOs. The TACSO project facilitated a study visit of 5 representatives from the Unit to the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of Republic of Croatia (GOfNGOs) on the topic Civil Society Grant Schemes Management. The Unit's capacities, as well as the management system for IPA grand schemes for CSOs will be further developed within the project Technical Support for the Units for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations in the General Secretariat" part of IPA 2008, Component 1.

### **Strategy for cooperation**

The policy framework of the civil society-government relations was set by the first Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society 2007-2011. The Strategy's overall objective is to improve cooperation between government and CSOs. The Strategy was prepared with technical assistance provided to the Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs with financial support from EU. This support enabled the provision of adequate expertise for the preparation of the document as well as the facilitation of wide-ranging civil society consultation on the design, taking in 380 CSOs, and 6 broadly-based public debates. The Strategy embraces seven strategic objectives, which are further elaborated in specific measures together with an action plan that defines deadlines and institutional responsibilities for the implementation of these measures. The objectives are:

- *Upgrading the Legal Framework for Development of the Civil Sector;*
- *Participation of the Civil Sector in the Decision-Making Process;*
- *Maintaining Cross-Institutional Cooperation* by establishment of a functional network contributing to a facilitated communication and coordination of the activities related to the development of the civil sector;

- *Maintaining Inter-Sector Cooperation* by promoting active cooperation between CSOs and the Government on central and local level as well as promoting and implementing long-term strategies for particular areas, projects and other activities of the community;
- *Involvement of the Civil Sector in the Process of EU Integration* through the introduction of mechanisms safeguarding consultations for the civil sector involvement in the drafting, approximation, implementation, monitoring and assessment of political and legal measures, and especially in the process of developing national development plans, operation programmes and similar strategic documents;
- *Provision of More Favourable Conditions for Sustainability of the Civil Society Sector* including creation of better fiscal frame and state financing for CSOs, development of philanthropy and promotion of voluntarism;
- *Continuous Development of the Civil Sector* by development of CSOs outside of the capital and in the rural areas and institutionalisation of the cooperation on the local level.

Given the context of the present state of government – civil society relations and the current level of capacities in the country generally of both public administrations and CSOs, the Strategy is highly ambitious. There are differences in fulfilling different objectives set by the Strategy<sup>18</sup>. Areas where no advancement was achieved are: establishing effective dialogue with civil society and CSOs participation in policy making, particularly in the preparation of the state budget; improving the financial support of CSOs from public funds and development of CSOs in rural areas. Implementation of the Strategy is perceived to proceed quicker when assisted by external finance or when an action is linked to the process of European integration – either in connection with the establishment of European standards or the convergence of Macedonian law to the *Acquis Communautaire*. Incomplete implementation of the measures from the Strategy to certain extent is due to the lack of the foreseen budget for implementation of the activities, as well as the fact that the Unit operates without own programme budget.

Besides the regular annual reporting by the Unit for cooperation with non-governmental organisations about the progress in the Strategy implementation, there are no regular and systematic monitoring of the development of the civil sector and more frequent discussions about the needs and trends facing the civil sector in Macedonia and wider<sup>19</sup>.

However, in view of the fact that the period of Strategy implementation elapses this year (2011), the Unit for cooperation prepared to commence consultation process and drafting of a new strategy. Accordingly, appropriate technical assistance is ensured within the project Technical Assistance for the Unit for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations within the General Secretariat, part of IPA 2008, component 1.

### **Local self-governments**

Institutional capacities of local-self governments vary enormously from municipality to municipality. In general, there is a big difference between urban and rural municipalities. Generally speaking, urban municipalities, with larger administrations and more highly qualified staff, have better capacity. This is reflected in a more structured approach to cooperation with CSOs. Even if policies or strategic documents that refer to cooperation are to be found that is the case only in bigger urban municipalities, such as in the City of Skopje (Strategy for cooperation with NGOs<sup>20</sup>). These municipalities also have units

<sup>18</sup> "Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs", TA Strengthening the Capacity of the General Secretariat, 2010

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> [www.skopje.gov.mk](http://www.skopje.gov.mk)

or responsible persons for cooperation with CSOs. However, majority of the municipalities don't have planned approach to cooperation with CSOs and human capacities allocated to such task. This is confirmed with the analysis<sup>21</sup> of 25 municipalities, which showed that 71% of these municipalities don't have strategy for cooperation with CSOs.

#### **1.6. Government (local and national) institutional capacities for engaging civil society, including influence of factors such as the degree of democratic development or the presence of corruption;**

The basic framework for participation of the CSOs in the policy-making is set out in the Constitution and the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society. One of the Strategy objectives is *Participation of the Civil Sector in the Decision-Making Process*. Having this in mind, the Government started with the implementation of the measures set in the action plan of the Strategy regarding the establishment of mechanisms for increasing the participation of citizens and CSOs in policy creation. The experiences from their implementation are diverse. However, the effects from these measures should be assessed in the future, particularly having in mind that part of them were passed recently and they have not been sufficiently used in practice in order to analyze their impact.

On local level, the further decentralization process of the municipalities raises the awareness on both sides (CSOs-ULSGs) regarding the needs for cooperation. Nonetheless, consistent and planned approaches of cooperation and CSOs' involvement by ULSGs are still rare.

#### **Central government and Ministries**

On the adoption of the Strategy, a number of ministries and departments harmonized their programmes and activities, wherever relevant, with the objectives and measures set out in the Strategy. The few ministries which have made real steps to include civil society in policy dialogue and are better prepared, in terms of capacity, for this task include, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Agency of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Justice, Secretariat for European Affairs<sup>22</sup>.

In addition, number of CSOs cites positive examples of cooperation and dialog with the relevant ministries where CSO representatives have participated in the working groups tasked with drafting the laws or other strategic documents, in particular, such as: Working Group for the Law on Citizens' Associations and Foundations, Working Group for Law on Volunteering, Working Group for the Law on Protection from Discrimination, Working Group to work on changes and amendments to the Law for Donations and Sponsorships for Public Benefit Activities, establishment of National council for voluntary work and involvement of CSOs representatives as members, involvement of CSOs in the National committee for protection of children rights etc. Confirming this, CSOs self-perception survey<sup>23</sup> shows that CSOs themselves think that they are active in influence the public policy (in the areas of human rights and decentralisation process mostly) and 76% were involved in such initiatives and 47% were successful in that. Still, some CSOs claim that formal involvement and agreements of cooperation have rarely resulted in a significant role for CSOs in drafting laws, strategy or policy statements. In many areas, CSO relations with government are informal and continue to rely on personal relations and individual motivations of government officials.

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<sup>21</sup> "Cooperation of the Local Self-Government Units and CSOs", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, July 2011

<sup>22</sup> "Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs", TA Strengthening the Capacity of the General Secretariat, 2010

<sup>23</sup> "CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Long road to increased citizens engagement", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, March 2011

Special area of the Strategy is the CSOs' inclusion in the EU integration process. Mechanism for regular, and particularly, timely and substantial inclusion of the civic sector in preparation and harmonisation of the national development plans, operational programmes and other strategic documents, has not been wholly established. Since 2009, the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) started with timely informing of and consultations with the Civil Society Organisations regarding the priority projects funded from the IPA Component I. As a matter of fact, in 2010 SEA submitted overview of all project fiches from this component and using previously developed form requested opinions and comments to these documents from CSOs. All CSOs that had submitted opinion were invited for a meeting in SEA in order to discuss the proposals. Further on, SEA in coordination with the line institutions for project implementation prepared information about the accepted proposals or explanation for not accepting the proposal. SEA, in their regular practice, organises informative meetings with CSOs. Apart of mutual informing about activities, meetings are also organised to review the updated version of the National programme for adoption of the EU *Acquis Communautaire*.

In addition General Secretariat of the Government organised consultations with CSOs related with IPA 2011 programming of Component I. Ministry of Local Self-Government coordinates IPA Component II for cross-border cooperation. Intensive consultations with the civil society sector were made during the development of the IPA programme for cross-border cooperation with Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Kosovo. In 2008, new practices started for including CSOs. To be more exact, the ministries and other government bodies started to involve CSOs' representatives in the working bodies established for monitoring of the IPA operational programmes (Sectoral committee for monitoring the implementation of the Operational programme for regional development, Sectoral committee for monitoring the operational programme for human resources development, Joint Consultation Committee of the Republic of Macedonia with Economic and Social committee of the European Union).

On the level of the Central Government, in line with the Strategy's Action plan, Rules of Procedures of the Government have been changed (the changes were enforced in January 2009), so that the publishing of by-laws on ministry web sites is obligatory and any suggestions received should be taken into consideration, or an explanation provided if they are dismissed. The research "Transparency and public participation in law making" (OSCE, MCIC and ECNL 2010) illustrated that 40% of CSOs are familiar with this possibility for their involvement in passing laws. There are situations of insufficient regular and proper use of "external" consultations with the stakeholders, even though, on the other hand, the proposals to the laws were published on the web-site of the Single national electronic register of regulations. Ministries implement these rules with different intensity. The CSOs' impressions are that laws are available to the public and to them once they are posted on the web-site of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. According to them, there are no consultations in the phase of drafting the laws, as well as in the phase of collecting opinions from the relevant stakeholders before the text of the law will be adopted by the Government. The lack of transparency in the process is based on the partial implementation of the methodology for assessment of the impact of the regulation. Further on, often the cooperation and the publicity depend on the openness and the recognition of the needs for consultations by the officials in the line ministries, but sometimes from personal acquaintance with those officials<sup>24</sup>.

In May 2010, the Government obliged all ministries to organise regular meetings with CSOs in the relevant areas of that ministry and to inform the Government about that, via the General Secretariat which should summarize the reports in comprehensive information. The information about the

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<sup>24</sup> "Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs", TA Strengthening the Capacity of the General Secretariat, 2010

organised meetings, prepared by the Unit for cooperation with NGOs are published on the Web-site of the Unit ([www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk](http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk)).

The Citizen Charter is functional as a tool for easier access of the citizens to the services provided by the state administration. On the web-sites of all ministries there is special section on Citizen Charter containing information about the procedures of the ministries and the competent persons that should provide information/support. Further on, in all ministries and other bodies of the state administration which have direct communication with citizens contact points are established where forms for evaluation of the operation of the state authority could be found. This is a mechanism for controlling the operation of the Government and other state authorities, which is not sufficiently used by the citizens<sup>25</sup>. The General Secretariat submits to the Government three-month reports about the Citizen Charter, which are published on the web-site for public administration reform.

In addition, in July 2011 Government has adopted and announced Code of good practices for participation of CSOs in policy creation with intention to introduce regular and systematic approach to involvement of CSOs in policy making. The Code foresees 4 forms of CS involvement: informing, consultations, dialog and partnership, which should be implemented through the following instruments: interactive web page; central national electronic registry of regulations available as a web page; FAQ section available at the web page; conferences and public debates; involvement of CSOs representatives in working groups; policy analysis and proposals submitted by CSOs etc. Proposals of the CSOs could be submitted at any period of the year and General Secretariat is obliged to announce the received proposal on the web page of the Government Unit for cooperation with NGOs, provide response of the relevant ministry within 30 days and announce the same on the web page. In addition, according to the Code, General Secretariat during the last week of August each year should announce open call for CSOs to contribute and submit policy proposals that should be taken in consideration for the preparation of the Government work plan for the next year.

### **Local government**

The Law on Local Self-Government foresees several forms of participation in the decision making process on local level: civic initiative, citizens' assembly, referendum, complaints and proposals, public tribunes, surveys and suggestions. Although formally these possibilities exist, in practice this is difference from municipality to municipality. There are positive examples: in several municipalities (Veles, Bitola etc) via public debates, attending of the meetings of the municipal council, participation in committees when drafting documents and in their implementation; established committees on gender issues in 10 municipalities; regular meetings with CSOs (municipality of Tetovo). However, often the positive practices are motivated by external stakeholders (mainly donors) and they are carried out as a one-off event. It is a challenge for them to become systematic and regular practice of the local-self government. Such an example that stimulates these processes are the Community forums implemented in 10 municipalities which facilitate capacity building for participative decision making and inclusion of citizens in deciding about priorities for projects that are implemented by SDC funds, whereas the municipality ensures matching funds.

Apart of the inconsistent practices of participation in decision making, additional problem are the various expectations and perceptions on both sides CSOs-ULSG: the CSOs are not pro-active (ULSG) and ULSG do not create sufficient possibilities for participation or do it only pro-forma (CSOs). The research "Cooperation between LSGU and CSOs" (MCIC, July 2011) illustrates that 47% out of 25 municipalities

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<sup>25</sup> 6.4% of the citizens filled in citizens' journal – "Social responsibility of the citizens", Macedonia Center for International Cooperation, 2011

involved in the research have formal procedures for including CSOs in decision making process, but only 17% of the CSOs in the relevant municipalities are familiar with these possibilities. According to the same research, procedures such as organising public tribunals, conducting surveys or collecting suggestions from the citizens when developing regulations by the municipality, Council or the Mayor are practiced in 88% of the municipalities. However, majority of the surveyed CSOs (67%) consider that such practice does not exist. It is obvious that there is a gap in the perceptions of ULSG and CSOs, where ULSG believe that they create sufficient possibilities for CSO participation, opposite to the CSOs' belief. There is a need for further dialogue for bridging this gap and establishing mechanisms that will facilitate effective and substantial participation in decision making.

### **1.7. Public perceptions and support of civil society and its various segments.**

Public support for, and participation in civil society in Macedonia are still at low levels. The term civil society, still a relatively novel term in Macedonian society, is poorly understood.

A negative perception of the Civil Society Organisations dominates among the citizens. Majority of the citizens (55,9%) consider CSOs as instrument for accomplishing personal goals, whereas 38,8% believe that CSOs are organized and funded by foreign countries and majority of the citizens (51,3%) also believe that the political parties misuse CSOs, i.e. support CSOs when they have political interest, and when they have no political interest they condemn them as affiliated to the other political parties<sup>26</sup>. Even though, the negative image of the CSOs is obvious, it is important to emphasize that this image is created in a common atmosphere of mistrust which generally exists in the society. Still, CSOs enjoy higher trust compared to other sectors, i.e. right behind the international community which is with the highest level of confidence (international community 49,1%, CSOs 48,1%, business sector 46,7%, media 40,4%, state 38,7%, and political parties 23,3%<sup>27</sup>). Further on, in the past two years there is a trend of increased trust in CSOs (48,1% in 2010, compared to 41.7% in 2008<sup>28</sup>). Higher trust in CSOs exists among the youth between 18 and 29 years (56,1%), public sector employees (59,6%) students (58,2%) and citizens with higher education (56%). There is a trend of gradual increase in the trust in trade unions and chambers of commerce, still only minority of the citizens have trust in these groups (25,3% and 28,5% respectively)<sup>29</sup>.

Recognition and approval of civil society is greater when the term is explained by reference to specific CSOs and their activities. The trust in organisations of children youth and students, disabled persons, women and gender issues, environment and sports, hobby and recreation is higher than the general trust in the CSOs. Citizens have smaller trust in organisations active in the area of rural development, democracy and human rights, as well as the professional associations.

One of the reasons for the lack of support to and trust in CSOs is the perception that the civil society proved to be insufficiently effective until now, and it is not considered as adequately influential, thus it is not taken as serious stakeholder in the society. A possible cause for such situation perhaps might be the unsatisfactory effectiveness in the operation of some CSOs and the deficient addressing and resolving of key challenges for the whole society (corruption, poverty). Still, to a great extent, this situation is due to the lack of citizens' familiarity with the results and successes achieved by CSOs. This is a result of the insufficient presence of CSOs in the media. The media often do not consider themes related to CSOs as attractive, but mainly are focused on the daily political issues, and an exception to this is mainly when they need to point out CSOs as negative example or should be criticized.

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<sup>26</sup> "State of trust in Macedonia", Macedonia Centar for International Cooperation, 2010

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

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The problem, however, is perhaps of a more fundamental nature, rooted in some of the more enduring characteristics of the Macedonian socio-political culture. The legacy of a statist culture inherited from the socialist regime of ex-Yugoslavia determines that many Macedonian citizens continue to believe in the absolute authority of the State to cater for all social needs. This effectively absolves the individual of social responsibility and propagates attitudes of dependency and passivity which are antithetical to civic activism and enthusiasm for CSOs. This is supported by the results from the research about social responsibility of citizens (MCIC, 2011) stating that citizens have highest expectations from the state (50,5%), followed by the expectations for joint responsibility of all three sectors (33,4%) whereas, the expectations from the citizens is 7,2% and from the enterprises only 3%. The attitudes are not changed related to the previous research in 2009, 2007 and 2004.

A corollary of this is a deep suspicion of any form of social protest, advocacy campaigning or lobbying on the part of civil society which appears to question the established body of law and social policy. CSOs are very often viewed as lacking both the competence and the legitimacy to engage in such activities. This is the rationale for the undersized citizens' participation in CSOs<sup>30</sup>, low level of non-party political engagement<sup>31</sup> and the minor volunteering engagement in the community<sup>32</sup>.

### **1.8. Official proposals on institutional issues expected to be addressed by TACSO 2**

In its first phase, the TACSO project established remarkably good relations with the beneficiaries – civil society community in Macedonia, as well as government institutions, and in particular the Unit for cooperation with NGOs within the General Secretariat in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The TACSO project built image of a facilitator in the relations between the Government and CSOs, gained trust and credibility on both sides and as such it has excellent position to contribute to the improvement of the institutional frame and the surrounding where CSOs operate. Therefore, the Macedonian office of TACSO in the first phase of the project, via meetings, focus groups with CSOs, LAG meetings, and in particular via this Needs Assessment and the in-depth interviews received many proposals on these topics. The following are the key proposals:

- **Facilitation of process for establishing mixed structure for dialogue between CSOs and Government**

This proposal is a result of several discussions at the LAG meetings, as well as discussions with many stakeholders from the civil society sector and with the Unit for cooperation with NGOs. Besides, the Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs (TA Strengthening the Capacity of the General Secretariat, 2010) in one of the conclusions stated that there is no structure for regular and systematic monitoring of the development of civil society sector and discussions for the civil sector in Macedonia. Apart from that stated need, LAG believes that TACSO should facilitate the process of establishing this structure and process of consultations with the relevant stakeholders. This proposal met with positive reaction and support from the Government officials - members of the LAG and the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs. At its last meeting, LAG prepared a proposal for the whole process, and proposals for the purpose and structure of this body. According to the LAG members the process should be participatory with extensive consultations with CSOs, and government involvement from the outset, and include comparative experiences from other countries, debates and focus groups with CSOs, meetings with the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs and the

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<sup>30</sup> 25% of citizens are members in CSOs ("Social Responsibility of Citizens", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2011)

<sup>31</sup> 36,6% of citizens participated in protests, 25,7% signed petitions and 13,5% practiced boycott ("Social Responsibility of Citizens", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2011)

<sup>32</sup> 21,9% of citizens are engaged in community activities on voluntary base ("Social Responsibility of Citizens", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2011)

General Secretariat and the preparation of a draft document that will be the basis for public debates during the 2012<sup>th</sup>. LAG sees the role of this body for the development of civil society and promotion of the principles of good governance for the purpose of participatory democracy and active citizenship. Its specific tasks would be to monitor and analyze public policies related to or affecting CSOs, to provide opinions to the Government when drafting by-laws that affect the development of CSOs, to propose suitable ways to involve or engage CSOs in discussions, debates, strategies and programs that affect development and functioning of CSOs and cooperation with public and private sectors at national level and beyond, to participate in the planning of priorities for national programs for public financing of programs and projects of CSOs, including analysis of annual reports of ministries and government offices, to support the effective implementation of the strategy for Government cooperation with NGOs etc. It is recommended that the establishment of this structure to be one of the key focuses of TACSO 2 and accordingly the same should be included in the work plan and the necessary resources allocated.

- **Support to the process of harmonization of the tax regulation with the Law on Associations and Foundations**

The adoption of the Law on Associations and Foundations is basis and starting point for other various institutional changes which ought to create favourable environment for CSOs. In order for many of the Law provisions to become applicable and practically realistic to facilitate and support the work of CSOs, despite the adoption of by-laws, it is necessary to make changes and amendments to a number of other laws, especially those pertaining to taxes. This is especially important for organisations that will be granted a status of public interest organizations so that they could effectively experience the benefits of the specific tax alleviations.

The need for these interventions was noted in several interviews with people familiar with the legal framework. The Unit for Cooperation with NGOs proposed to involve TACSO in this process. Further on, this is also result of previous engagements of TACSO in promoting the new Law as well as the possibility to mobilize appropriate expertise for this purpose.

- **Promotion of the possibilities available for CSOs with the Law on Associations and Foundations, support to CSOs and strengthening their capacities for utilizing these possibilities**

Since the adoption of the Law on Associations and Foundations in April 2010, CSOs were mainly focused on the first obligation arising from it, i.e. the re-registration. But the Law prescribes a range of other obligations and opportunities for CSOs that reflect and require different adjustments of official documents, structures, but also CSOs' approaches. In TACSO I, the project took part in the process of promoting the Law and informing CSOs about the Law via seminars and help-desk services, and particularly with the support in the re-registration process. As it was stated in several consultations with CSOs, they will need similar support in the further implementation of the Law, in particular regarding the granting of a status of organisation of public interest and enjoying the benefits from this status.

## 2. CSOs ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITIES

### 2.1. Overview of the civil society community in the country – what are the characteristics?

#### 2.1.1. Types of organisations, size and presence on the ground

The number of registered CSOs in Macedonia according data from Central Registration Office in 2010 was 11,350. New Law on associations and foundations obliged active CSOs to re-register until April 2011. This should further provide the number of active CSOs. Of the registered CSOs sports clubs and cultural associations is estimated to comprise around 40%.

In Macedonia civil society is predominantly located in urban areas. CSOs are poorly represented in rural areas, and organisations here are less well developed organisationally and tend to be less active than those in urban areas. The ratio of urban to rural CSOs is 10:1 indicating that there are approximately five CSOs per 1,000 citizens in the towns, while only 0.5 CSOs per 1,000 citizens in rural areas<sup>33</sup>. A corollary of this uneven distribution is that the many of the poor and socially marginalised are insufficiently represented by civil society.

There is also a clear cleavage within civil society along ethnic lines, with a large proportion of CSOs, even in multi-ethnic localities, mobilising according to ethnicity or national ascription. This reflects one of the dominant social and political divides within Macedonia, particularly between the ethnic Macedonian majority and the main Albanian minority. While there is a number of prominent multi-ethnic CSOs throughout the country, often with mandate for peace building or plural democracy, CSOs representing minorities face serious challenges in integrating with wider civil society, and to take part in broader networks and coalitions.

In common with other Balkan countries, there are only a small number of fully professional CSOs operating at the national level. These are well-developed, non-membership-based NGOs, usually located in the capital, working in the fields of socio-economic development, good governance and civil society strengthening through a range of capacity building activities, advocacy and lobbying. They are larger organisations with high levels of organisational capacities, technical skills and specialist know-how and are well prepared to compete for and manage large grants and service contracts available from international donors, such as the EC.

The greater mass of other CSOs consists of smaller, semi-professional or voluntary membership-based organisations, working at the local level. They cover a wide range of special interests and target groups, and provide services to the community and their members including, in many cases, local-level advocacy on social policy, as well as capacity building by means of education and facilitation.

Trade unions form a distinct type of CSO based on mass membership. There are 3 trade unions active on national level and 8 other registered independent trade unions that are not considered as representative by the Government and thus do not participate in collective bargaining<sup>34</sup>. Functioning of the Trade Unions is continuously accompanied with attempts of the political parties to influence their activities. Public trust in the trade unions is much lower than the trust in CSOs (25,3% versus 42,5% for CSOs)<sup>35</sup>. Concerning the Associations of employers two of them are considered to be most active in the country.

Despite civil society's clear community orientation, it is poorly supported by the public and there is a low level of active participation by citizens in their local CSOs. More spontaneous forms of association and collective voluntary action are less frequent; informal groups are poorly represented in civil society

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<sup>33</sup> "An assessment of Macedonian civil society: 15 years of transition, CIVICUS Civil Society Index", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2006

<sup>34</sup> "Report on mapping the social partner organizations", TA to Support Employment Policy, 2008

<sup>35</sup> "State of trust in Macedonia", Macedonia Centar for International Cooperation, 2010

and, consequently, there are few national federations and unions of self-help groups and other forms of voluntary community-based organisations.

Since recently civil society was well served by several CSO support organisations (Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation-MCIC - [www.mcims.org.mk](http://www.mcims.org.mk); Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia-FOSIM [www.soros.org.mk](http://www.soros.org.mk)) which used to provide CSOs information, capacity building and other services with the aim of strengthening civil society. However, their support has decreased since 2004 as these organizations didn't succeed to ensure funds to finance such activities. The only exception is the Centre for Institutional Development - [www.cira.org.mk](http://www.cira.org.mk) that provides capacity building services to those CSOs which are supported with programme and institutional grants under the programme Civica Mobilitas funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation – SDC. In addition there are 12 CSO resource centres situated in smaller towns outside the capital. These centres were established and supported by FOSIM. After completion of the programme and reduced financial support they become independent CSOs facing same problems of sustainability as most of the CSOs they were serving since recently. Their internal capacities vary a lot and only about five of these are capable to serve other CSOs. Most comprehensive support structure for CSOs currently is offered by the TACSO project.

### **2.1.2. Human resources and technical skills**

The majority of CSOs in Macedonia are insufficiently funded to employ full-time staff, relying mainly on part-time or temporary staff and volunteers, usually engaged to carry out short-term projects. According to organizational survey for the purposes of the CIVICUS Index Report (2011) 88,5% of CSOs operate on voluntary base. Only a very limited number of organizations, including the larger, well-established fully professional CSOs employ staff in full accordance with the Labour Relations Law covering full social insurance and health benefits.

Although majority of CSOs operate on voluntary base, having in mind that only 10% of the citizens volunteer in CSOs<sup>36</sup> it can be concluded that insufficient use is made of volunteer labour, except for certain sectors in which there is a tradition of volunteer mobilisation and mutual solidarity (such as, pensioners, women's organizations, youth and environment). Volunteering is a concept that is still poorly accepted among CSOs. Consequently, few CSOs have taken advantage of the improved framework for managing volunteers offered by the Law on Volunteering to engage volunteers in their work.

Staff competencies, skills and experience within the CSO sector often lie at two extremes. Employees in the more developed, professional organizations generally have high levels of capacity and skills. Those working in the more community-oriented CSO, however, are more likely to have few technical abilities and to possess insufficient specialist knowledge of their field of work.

The consultations carried out for this study revealed areas in which CSOs were agreed that they lacked the required level proficiency: preparation of project applications, especially for EC funds; knowledge of specialist policy areas including: (anti-) discrimination, disability, EU accession); policy dialogue, advocacy and lobbying; research and analytical skills (think-tank skills); financial management and knowledge and understanding of the tax regulations relevant to CSOs.

An area of capacity shortfall which appears to affect the sector more generally is in public relations. Once again, smaller CSOs do not have capacity (human and financial) and knowledge to carry out public relations. On the other hand, CSOs in general agree that they have to improve their image. In most cases, public relations are carried out on an *ad hoc basis* with the framework of short-term projects,

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<sup>36</sup> "Social Responsibility of Citizens", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2011

usually as a response to donor demands for visibility. However, it seems that CSOs are aware of this weakness and show increased interest to build their capacities in this area (in the frame of TACSO national training programme 2 PR training courses for CSOs were organized and 89 CSOs applied to participate).

### **2.1.3. Type of activity (e.g. service delivery, advocacy, self-help etc.) and sector of operation**

Macedonian civil society covers a wide and varied range of target groups and fields of operation. Apart from the numerous sports and cultural clubs, among the most active and visible are women's associations, which commonly work on raising awareness of gender issues and advocating of the mainstream of gender in public policy. Youth associations and human rights organisations are increasing in number and profile, while farmers associations are emerging as an important niche lobby. There is also a new generation of young environmental associations. There is large numbers of organisations working expressly for the benefit of children and those with disabilities, as well as the relatively high numbers of professional associations.

According to the report CIVICUS Civil Society Index (MCIC, 2011), in the last 5 years CSOs have been most active in the field of human rights and equality, and the least active in influencing the national budget.

Regarding activities to influence policy-making, again, highest activeness exists in human rights and equality, then the processes of decentralization and the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

According to public perception, which is examined within the report CIVICUS Civil Society Index (MCIC, 2011), most organizations are working on citizens' empowerment, raising their awareness in various areas and provide services.

### **2.1.4. Strategic strengths; do the organisations have a long-term plan for achieving organisational objectives that takes into account predicted changes in the working environment, as well as organisational strengths and weaknesses?**

Strategic planning is a concept that is not widely understood or accepted by CSOs in Macedonia. Small number of organisations have strategic plans in place in which they define their long-term programme and organisational objectives. Very often, strategic planning is carried out by CSOs in order to fulfil conditions for project funding from donors. Consequently, strategy is often developed in a cursory manner and the resulting documents are not necessarily used to guide the organisation toward achieving its mission.

In place of long-term thinking, both programmatic and organisational, CSOs tend to be more focused on external relations in the here and now, and also on the implementation of activities. In addition, if PCM systems are in place, they are not used as a means of contributing to the broader perspectives of the organization, having focus on proposal writing and implementation, to the detriment of thorough needs analysis and the practice of monitoring and evaluation. From an organisational point of view, owing to the general paucity of human resources, systems are rarely in place for short and long-term planning, monitoring and evaluation, human resource management, etc.

Dependency of the majority of organisations on scarce short-term project funds from nearly all donor agencies and the uncertainty that comes with it, makes it extremely difficult for CSOs to devote energy and resources to mapping out their long-term futures.

One of the factors in low levels of long-term thinking in CSOs in Macedonia is poor strategic leadership. A minority of organisations in Macedonia has a fully functional formal structure in which a governing body provides strategic oversight and holds the organisation to its mission and vision in the long-term.

More often, there is no division of the executive and governing structures, leading to the conflation of daily management and long-term governance and leadership functions. Very often there is a concentration of power in a single person who occupies overlapping positions as head of both the governing and executive body. Many smaller organisations are over-dependent on strong, highly motivated leaders, in many cases the organisation's founder. A related consequence of poor governance is that CSOs are insufficiently transparent and accountable. Obligations in these areas are primarily understood by CSOs as meaning responsibility to donors in the first place and secondly, or not at all, to their constituencies and the general public.

#### **2.1.5. Analytical capacities**

Consultations with CSOs for this study reinforce the impression that analytical capacities among Macedonian CSOs are not developed enough. The ordinary organisation does little in the way of social and economic research for purposes such as mapping constituency need, developing projects or undertaking advocacy campaigns. It also lacks the reflective capabilities necessary for building relevant strategy, advancing responsive approaches to stakeholders and understanding the complexities of organisational development.

There is a small group of professional think tank NGOs which apply qualitative research to policy issues and may be considered as experts in their specific field. The tendency is for these think tanks to work on a broad range of social and economic issues, and although they make use of experienced and trained researchers, competencies for writing policy briefs and studies are in place in only a very few issues. Designing and implementing a training course for writing policy research papers (various formats) for think tanks would increase quality of their outputs.

Organisations engaging in advocacy, which need analysis to support their goals form a larger group of organisations and analytical capacities here correlate closely to their overall organisational development and strengths in other programme fields. Thus, sector-wide there is little effective advocacy taking place, backed up by good quality research. Regardless of the issue of competency in analysis, CSOs rarely have the campaigning skills to undertake advocacy effectively, and often financial dependency on government funds undermines their ability to act independently. To address these it would be useful to design and implement a training course for grassroots CSOs on how to commission the best research to help their own advocacy goals, while for the advanced monitoring and advocacy watchdogs to design and implement a training course on quality of research design and thus link research with advocacy<sup>37</sup>. Another approach could be to motivate think-tank and advocacy organizations in partnership projects, thus utilizing to maximum extent their existing capabilities, as well as motivating sharing and mutual learning.

#### **2.1.6. Relationships with other actors, including inclusion in and strengths of networks and coalitions, social partnership with government, local government and others**

##### ***CSO networks and coalitions***

Structurally, civil society is well organised and internally integrated in Macedonia. A notable facet of Macedonian civil society is the great extent to which CSOs of all types joint together to form networks, many of which are then registered as CSOs in their own right. There are over 200 assorted CSO

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<sup>37</sup> TACSO Training Report: Implementation of national trainings in "Strengthening analytical capacities for watch dog role of CSOs", 2011

networks, umbrella organisations and unions<sup>38</sup>. In most cases, networks are formed around target groups and specific social interests or sectors, such as women, the Environment, Roma etc. However, many of the most active networks exhibit very low levels of activities during last few years. Most often explanation for this is lack of funds, however reasons for passivity of at one time most prominent networks should be further explored, particularly due to the fact that the individual members of these networks are very active organizations and engage intensively in other non-formal partnerships.

In general CSOs in Macedonia increasingly are recognising the advantages of cooperation, especially with regard to their growing interest in advocacy and policy dialogue. There is a trend for CSOs to form programme-oriented coalitions or partnerships around single policy issues, lending expertise and “weight” to a concrete agenda of practical activities. According to the last CIVICUS Civil Society Index report (MCIC, 2011), two thirds of the CSOs are members of networks on national or international level. The CSO interest to become member in networks is due to: opportunity for improved promotion of common interests to third parties, organisations and the state; improved exchange of information; increased awareness of issues of common interest and development of joint projects and stronger project applications.

Coalitions where the expertise of national well-developed CSOs will be maximally exploit and those that are based locally are in their infancy and occur mainly motivated by donor calls that address local issues. This type of cooperation should receive natural flow and partners on both sides should understand the benefits of working together.

### ***CSO – business relationships***

There is little significant cooperation with the private sector, and the two sectors should be considered as being mutually indifferent. According to the analysis „Relations of CSOs with business sector“ Citizens’ practices No. 13 (Nikica Kuisnikova, 2011) cooperation between business and civic sector is based on individual initiatives from several enterprises and associations which understood the mutual benefit and interest from the cooperation. In general, CSOs rarely put pressure on the business sector regarding their influence on the environment and the community and they do not consider themselves as significant actors in the social responsibility in the country. The underdeveloped dialogue is due to lack of awareness of the business sector about the work of CSOs and the lack of strategy and CSOs’ fundraising activities in relation to the enterprises. In the last two years, there was more intense action by some associations to reach out to the corporate sector (Red Cross, SOS Children’s Village, Youth Council of Ohrid, etc.). Besides donations, there are a few examples of more strategic cooperation on concrete projects in the area of social responsibility of some enterprises with CSOs. (One with the Red Cross, Association of persons with physical disability of the Republic of Macedonia, the Union of Blind People of the Republic of Macedonia and the Union of deaf persons of the Republic of Macedonia, EVN Macedonia with Connect, Macedonian Center for Energy Efficiency, the Youth Council of Ohrid, Planetum and Zetva na znaenje etc.).

### ***CSO – media relations***

Within the Media, with a few exceptions, there is little interest in civil society and CSO activities rarely attract much attention from journalists. CSOs should reconsider their PR approaches and particularly relations with media and invest more efforts and time in creating more close relations with media. This is becoming more relevant particularly with the increased interest in advocacy and lobbying and influencing public policies, which wouldn’t be possible without having media as partners and close collaborators. For that reasons TACSO has included the issue of CSOs-media relations in the National

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<sup>38</sup> “CSOs networks and coalitions in Macedonia” Civic Platform of Macedonia, 2007

training programme as well as ensured presence of media at any major event organized within the project. However, further efforts of many stakeholders, including precondition that media are open for cooperation, are needed.

Comment: CSOs' relations with the Government and Units of Local Self-Government analysed in Chapter 1 (1.5 и 1.6)

### **2.1.7. Material and financial stability and resilience**

Even besides the frequent discussions that the majority of CSOs have insufficient resources to maintain a continuous programme of activities, surprises are the data received from the organisational survey for CIVICUS index of CSOs (MCIC, 2011) according to which 70% of the organisations consider themselves to be financially stable. Also the analysis of the revenues of CSOs in 2008 and 2009 indicates that for most organizations the revenue remained unchanged, which may lead to the conclusion that some financial stability has indeed been achieved. CSOs often state that they have multiple sources of funding and rarely one of the sources exceeds more than 80% of total revenues. This suggests that in recent years they are adjusting to pressure from the withdrawal of donors and to some extent managed to diversify their sources of funding. The analysis of the structure of financing shows that CSOs are still largely funded by international donors (63.6% of organizations). This is followed by membership fees which are source of funding for 52% of organizations, 34% of the organizations rely on municipalities, funds from sales and services support 29% of the organizations and the same percentage receive funds from the Government. EU as a donor occurs in 26% of the organizations, and citizens for 21%. Most of the associations and foundations (85%) have an annual budget of up to 100,000 MKD (around 1.600 EUR) (Central Registry, 2011) which leads to the conclusion that the vast majority of CSOs has and operates with very limited funds.

The larger, fully professional CSOs tend to enjoy relatively high levels of financial stability owing to their ability to access funds from multiple international donors. Their high levels of capacity, both technical and financial, place them in a privileged position regarding the increasing amounts of available EU funding. Small organisational size and poor technical skills effectively excludes a majority of CSO in Macedonia competing for EC funds.

Few CSOs own their own premises or are lucky enough to have obtained a rent-free space. Consequently, rent for office space is a major financial burden for many CSOs, especially the smaller and recently founded one. A great many CSOs in Macedonia are also poor equipped with only the most basic, and often aging, ICT appliances. Full range of internet technologies, including the social media and various platforms for e-learning remain largely unexplored by most of Macedonian CSOs. There are totally 666 available active sites registered under the domain org.mk. Of these, only 10% are active on social media<sup>39</sup>.

### **2.1.8. Organisational sustainability**

The various factors of the environment analyzed in chapter 1 have very large impact on the sustainability of civil society as a whole and each individual organisation. However, despite external factors, many CSOs do not fully understand that their internal organization and structure, their management, the approaches used in conducting their activities, their relationships with other stakeholders and the public are directly related to their viability as an organization.

A number of organizations have failed to remain consistent to their mission, to demonstrate their effectiveness and to convince the public that they perform important and relevant matters. Because of frequent changes in mission and policies, which are mostly due to the need to provide donations,

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<sup>39</sup> Civic practices no. 12, Darko Buldioski, Boris Ristovski, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2011

political party influence and personal interests of management, many organizations and their leaders have disputed credibility, which affects their sustainability. Besides that, the public often gets the impression that many CSOs work on abstract, distant and unimportant issues instead of working on real local high priority and everyday problems of ordinary people. Without local support, civil society has little opportunity to become sustainable.

Most organizations have failed to establish systems and procedures related to all organizational aspects, except for processes associated with implementation of project activities where the situation is better. Little emphasis is placed on systems and procedures for improvement, planning and development which significantly affects their sustainability. Therefore, many organizations have failed to ensure operation like a real organization and instead they are just a bunch of projects. Donors, with rare exceptions, supported the situation focusing on their own priorities, considering CSOs as implementers of their ideas and programs and neglecting organizational and institutional support and strengthening of local CSOs. In addition, frequent changes of priorities and sectors in which donors operate, and changes in areas / regions where donors act strongly affects CSOs which although proved as very successful, but due to these changes cannot continue those activities and make a significant impact.

It is expected that the registered downward trend of donors would have positive implications for CSOs (regarding financial sustainability this is already evident because of diversification of sources of funding). Namely, this increases pressure on CSOs to deliver quality services, to exercise relevant influence, and thus strengthen their awareness of the need for long-term planning of organizational sustainability and mobilization of other funds.

Besides financial and social capital, analyzed above, another important factor, critical in the case of Macedonia CSOs is human resources. The almost entire reliance on volunteers, heavy reliance on one person, usually the organisation leader and the lack of paid people constantly threaten the sustainability of human resources in organizations. Therefore they need to have balanced development, i.e. besides encouraging volunteering, there is a need to invest in training and development of a core group in the organization that will be the bearer of its mission, values and strategy.

## **2.2. Definition of strategic issues of relevance to the project.**

Reviewing and analyzing the organizational capacity of CSOs poses more questions that have strategic importance:

**CSO visibility and image of CSOs** is one of the thorny issues where there is almost a consensus among CSOs media and public that it is on a low level. To overcome this, we need to address the reasons for this, but there are more and interrelated reasons: lack of trust, lack of presence of CSOs in the media, insufficient skills of CSOs in PR, limited results achieved by the CSO, a perception that CSOs are politicized and instrument of political parties, contested credibility of part of the leaders of CSOs etc. Having in mind the activities started in the first phase, and with the inclusion of a media representative in LAG, TACSO will be able to define access and undertake further structured activities to support CSOs in building their relations with the media. However, addressing many of these reasons is more complex issue that requires long-term commitment from the organizations themselves.

**EU funds and capacity building for their use** is still relevant question for the project. While, TACSO I provided more trainings on this topic, and help-desk services and guidance for organizations using EU funds, still CSOs are insufficiently prepared to produce high quality applications and afterwards to implement projects in line with the EU rules. Part of the problem is in lack of knowledge about the possibilities for EU funds. Therefore it is desirable that the issue is approached with a full module and a series of trainings that will include training for general introduction to EU funds for CSOs and finding appropriate calls, preparation of applications for those organizations that fail to receive grant support in implementing the same training and reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

**Capacities for long-term and strategic orientation** is the basis for CSOs' sustainability. Most CSOs have a need for strategies for diversification of funds, which, in addition to preparing applications for grants, should include strategies to provide local support from individual and corporate giving, state funding and economic activities. Also CSOs should enhance their capacity to mobilize local resources via trainings and techniques for fundraising and mobilization of resources.

**Capacities for networking and cooperation** While it is obvious that there is high awareness among CSOs of the need for collaboration and networking indicating higher levels of membership in networks, there is a lack of capacity for effective joint operations which is reflected in the reduced scale of activities of several networks. It is particularly important to encourage interaction and support from organisations with developed capacities for grass-roots organisations.

**Issue-oriented capacity building** includes topics as EU accession, antidiscrimination, right-based approach and others. This is an important issue for increasing the effectiveness of CSOs, achieving results and sustainability of CSOs. The strengthening of CSOs in certain thematic areas creates conditions for organizations to become equal partners and to demonstrate that they have expertise and consequently are taken seriously, which will build the trust in them and create conditions for mobilization of local support including financial support.

### **3. CIVIL SOCIETY MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES**

#### **3.1. Type of milestone achievements and impacts generated by CSOs in the country – lessons learned from good examples;**

Civil society is still most influential in empowering of citizens, particularly the marginalized groups and in raising awareness. Most of the results are related to social groups like women, youth and to issues like human rights. Some of the examples include: passing of anti-discrimination law; approval of strategy for fight against domestic violence and established structure to monitor the same; institutionalisation of the Shelter centre for victims of trafficking (previously managed by CSO and with donor support) etc.

Effects of CSOs work in general are perceived as moderate. Report CIVICUS Civil Society Index (MCIC, 2011) shows that 50% of interviewed in the survey about the external perception have considered that CSOs have influence on social problems and the vast majority of 70.8% that have an impact on certain social issues. However, the impact on the issues such as poverty and employment is evaluated as limited. The Civil Society Organisation themselves have an impression that they have the greatest impact in the education which is related with the results achieved in the area of strengthening of the citizens. The external stakeholders also (65,2%) think that the civil society has had an impact on the policy making in Macedonia<sup>40</sup>. Indicators for this are the data that during the proposal of the amendments in the Parliament for the three specific laws there has been a median success – 50% of amendments proposed by CSOs to the Law of Associations and Foundations and the Law for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination were accepted, and more than 50% of the amendments to the Law for Free Access to Public Information<sup>41</sup>.

Most of the success stories are result of three interlinked important factors: values, strong social capital and sufficient available financial support.

Areas where there are indigenous values rooted in the society or values that have been broadly accepted in the society achieved major success. For example strong gender values are followed with strong constituencies. For example pensioners, women and organisations of disabled existed also in the old socialist regime and transition from “old” organizations in the new context was very successful. This resulted in successful empowerment of these groups and their influence on public policies.

Strong social capital is another important precondition for success. Again women sector is characterized with strong networks. Apart of horizontal (CSOs-CSOs) cooperation, success is due to good relations with the other stakeholders (Parliament, Universities, Government).

#### **3.2. Description of challenges faced by the CSO community in the past – which factors have hindered impact?**

Less success has been achieved in the areas of anti-corruption, holding the government accountable, overseeing the budgeting process, holding the private sector accountable. These areas are characterized with small number of active organizations and consequently fewer results.

It is obvious that areas of smaller success are those where CSOs are challenged with their “watch dog” role and should confront their attitudes with the Government. Internal capacities of CSOs to successfully perform such role are lacking. CSOs do not engage much in analytical thinking and research, and thus often lack good background to enter in a sound debate, support their attitudes and engage in evidence based advocacy. Additionally watch dog role of CSOs and holding the state and private sector

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<sup>40</sup> “CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Long road to increased citizens engagement”, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, March 2011

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*

responsible might be avoided by CSOs since it brings great challenge as the civil society is trying to develop positive relations with the state and private sector, including securing funding sources at the same time.

Civil society enjoys public trust of minority of the citizens<sup>42</sup> which hinders the impact significantly. Very often, citizens are reluctant to take part in initiatives, and CSOs still lack skills in determining and addressing critical constituency needs. Even more many CSOs still do not recognize the importance of building constituencies and public support for achieving policy change. CSOs are not doing enough to determine and address key constituency needs, communicate with their potential support base and facilitate community participation in their programming. In addition civil society is perceived as being insufficiently transparent and accountable. This is linked to a general neglect of public relations and attention to publicising civil society values, objectives, activities and achievements. Perception that there are some CSOs related with some political parties and that they are supporting and promoting political parties agendas has also jeopardized the image of civil society and consequently led to number of negative effects including discrediting achievements.

The relations with the other stakeholders (Government, ULSG, business sector) remain a challenge and it is necessary that they be based on consistent dialog and cooperation. It is necessary for the realisation of effective impact on the policies, increase of the awareness for certain issues and increase the pressure for social responsibility of all stakeholders. Only with continuous efforts in this direction CSOs will be understood as serious stakeholders in the society. An important precondition for this is their mutual cooperation and joined efforts.

Foreign donors' agenda has also significantly determined the areas where there is more or less success. In most cases CSOs are not able to present achievements where funding has not been long-term and enough flexible. For some processes longer period is required to achieve sustainable change instead of projects with duration of one or two years, especially when these do not have follow-up and continuous financial support.

Lack of expertise or capacity to mobilize the same in certain specific areas was also the reason why CSOs have avoided some important issues or have weak influence (ex. understanding the budgeting process, anti-discrimination etc.).

### **3.3. Analysis of how to overcome such challenges in the future and how the project could assist in overcoming this. Considerations on TACSO 2 downsizing direct capacity building to individual organisations.**

Building indigenous and sustainable civil society is major challenge. Citizens should really get the feeling of being the owners of the civil society. Gaining public trust and support is necessary. To achieve these CSOs should be effective and should demonstrate achievements. Government, the business sector, and communities should have a positive image of CSOs, including a broad understanding and appreciation of the role that CSOs play in the society. Public awareness and credibility directly affect CSOs' ability to recruit members and volunteers, and encourage indigenous support. CSOs need to further strengthen their skills to promote greater inclusion and representation of their constituencies. Own transparency and accountability are very important steps to achieve this. CSOs should publicize and improve information on civil society success and achievements. Public relations strategies and planned approach is needed to address certain actors, such as the media, state and corporate sector.

Civil society must also demonstrate that it is responding to society needs and should remain highly relevant to the current concerns. In that respect CSOs should play critical role in fight against poverty, unemployment, corruption and in the EU integration processes.

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<sup>42</sup> 48,1% of citizens trust CSOs, "State of trust in Macedonia", Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, 2010

CSOs should further strengthen their human capacities in more areas, and especially their analytical and research capacities, advocacy and lobbying skills. CSOs should develop own expertise in the relevant specific areas/sectors (ex. anti-corruption, EU accession) and retain the same which could become great challenge having in mind: not sufficient funding of CSOs, public administration as more and more attractive employer and trends of increased migration of highly educated people.

CSOs must also address internal weakness like internal democracy, principles of good governance, strategic and long-term planning, creating effective systems and procedures and sound financial management.

CSOs have to invest further in networking, coalition and partnerships building and cooperation not only internally, but also with other actors.

The greatest challenges and key obstacles for CSOs are in the area of environment and framework in which the CSOs function. That is why the primary focus of TACSO 2 phase should be in that direction: improvement of the institutional mechanisms for cooperation of CSOs and government, effective application of the improved legal framework and change of the tax and fiscal framework. However, having in mind the range of internal weaknesses which CSOs find as necessary to address, TACSO 2 should improve on intensive training programme which has been carried out in the first phase and predict also the activities for capacity building while using new effective approaches which will provide multiplication effects and which will mean organisational and institutional strengthening versus approaches focused on individual representatives of CSOs.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1 Summary of strategic issues of relevance to the project in Macedonia**

The TACSO project in the first phase has established especially good relations with the users – the community of CSOs in Macedonia, as well as government institutions, and especially with the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs in the General Secretariat of the Government of RM. The TACSO project has built an image of a good facilitator of the relations between CSOs and Government, gained trust and credibility on both sides and as such it well positioned to contribute for the improvement of institutional framework and environment in which CSOs function. It has been recognized by most stakeholders and that is why they see the key role of the project in exactly that direction, and especially in the process of establishing of mixed structure in the dialog between CSOs and Government.

Of great importance is the effective implementation of the Law on Associations and Foundations and amendments of other relevant laws, especially those related with financial working. Having in mind the previous activities related with these issues (seminars, debates), TACSO has developed a network of expertise and relations with relevant institutions responsible for this issue, thus it has a good possibility to further contribute to these processes.

Low public trust in civil society and CSOs' lack of constituency support are key strategic weaknesses of civil society. In facilitating partnerships, dialogue and institutional processes more generally, the project should particular pay attention to assisting CSOs to address community interests, build constituencies and improve communication with the public

In accordance with recommendations referring to the general level of the project, as well as national it is obvious that the focus will be put on policy issues and institutional frame. The needs also in the area of organisational capacities of CSOs are great and various and cover a whole range of areas: PR, organizational development and strategic planning, building of constituency and stimulating volunteering, fundraising and application for EU funds. Having in mind this, however, it will be necessary for the project to predict a certain scope of activities and resources for a capacity building programme, which will enable an effective and focused addressing of certain key areas for CSOs. As a result, due to the cost-effectiveness it will be necessary that the capacity building efforts be coordinated with the other stakeholders active in this area (ex. Civica Mibilitas). The over-concentration of active CSOs in Skopje and the larger towns, with the apparent scarcity of CSOs in rural areas, presents challenges for the capacity building programme in balancing the need to reach the grassroots across the country, while building on existing capacity. Support in the defining of the capacity building programme itself, i.e. its areas and methodological approaches, is expected by LSG in the phase for development of the working plan.

### **4.2. Needs assessment conclusions**

#### **The civil society environment**

- The legal frame for CSOs has been improved with the adoption of the new Law on Associations and Foundations. The improvements particularly refer to: defining status of organization with public interest; economic activities of CSOs, increased freedom of association. The law implementation is a challenge for the future period.
- The financial and tax framework for CSOs is unfavourable; it provides no significant tax incentives for CSO operations or charitable giving.
- The donor environment is not supportive for CSOs due to limited number of donors providing support to CSOs in the country. This particularly refers to smaller CSOs which in reality have limited

access to EU funds, whereas other programs that offer small implementation grants are almost non-existent.

- The system of financing of CSOs from state funds registered certain improvement with respect to transparency and clear objective-oriented application criteria backed up by consistent policy/strategy behind it, but only for small portion of funds from the budget. Most of the ministries still inconsistently implement the adopted Code of good practices for funding CSOs.
- The Government completes the implementation of the first Strategy for cooperation with CSOs with partial success and enters the process of designing the new strategy.
- The Government improved the framework for participation of CSOs in the decision-making process with several measures, particularly with the Code of good practices for participation of the civil sector in the policy creation process. There is a need for monitoring the effectiveness of its implementation.
- Still, there is no structure for systematic and regular dialogue between CSOs and government about strategic issues related to the development of civil society in the country, although that is registered as a need by all stakeholders.
- At the local level, there is increased awareness of the need for cooperation of ULSG with CSOs and their involvement in decision making and the work of the municipalities. However this has not been accompanied by appropriate strengthening of institutional capacities for cooperation with CSOs at the local level and often lacks a planned approach. More stakeholders and projects are addressing this issue.
- Little significant cooperation of CSOs with other stakeholders (the business community and media) could be recorded.
- Socio-cultural context is unfavourable for civil society, burdened by low levels of trust in general in the society, lack of support and low participation of citizens. Still, in comparison to most of the other stakeholders (Government, media, businesses) CSOs enjoy higher level of trust.
- Particular burden of the socio-cultural context is the public perception of the significant influence of the political parties on CSOs and their division upon partisan lines.

### **CSO organisational capacities**

- Civil society in Macedonia embraces a diversity of organisational types as widely differing stages in organisational development. Thus, CSO capacity-building needs differ greatly.
- Greater number of CSOs has insufficient organisational development. With few exceptions, CSOs lack strategic direction, concentrating on the short-term and project implementation. Other areas of concern include: undeveloped organisational systems, inattention to transparency and accountability, and weak financial management.
- CSOs exhibit particular weakness in their approach to public relations. CSOs are also often poorly supported by the community and their constituencies.
- The majority of CSOs are still dependent on international donors. However, due to the reduced access to donor funds for a longer period, CSOs raised their awareness of the need to look for other funding opportunities and to provide financial sustainability. This resulted with financial stability of many organisations.
- CSOs have insufficient capacities for absorption of the EU funds and use of the possibilities arising from the EU accession processes and different instruments offered to CSOs. It is consequence of more reasons: small budgets with which CSOs operate in general and which do not correspond to the amounts determined for the single EU grants, requirement to ensure certain amount of co-funding, undeveloped project management systems and weak financial capacities and management.

- CSOs working on local and grassroots level comparatively have weaker capacities and are disadvantaged due to even more restricted funding possibilities on local level, unfavorable socio-cultural context, weak cooperation with ULSG and small support from the community.
- Civil society has achieved considerable impact in empowering marginalized groups, by raising public awareness, raising participation, and achieving changes to relevant legislation.
- CSOs rarely promote the public scrutiny of public institutions. In particular anti-corruption activities, holding the government and the private sectors to account, overseeing the budgeting process, and undertaking “watch dogs” are neglected.
- CSOs need issue-oriented capacity building including topics such as EU accession, antidiscrimination, right-based approach etc. This is important for enhancing the effectiveness of CSOs and their impact on the society.

#### **4.3. Recommendations for regional project work plan**

- Organize regional dialogue events at which CSOs from all project countries would meet, discuss common problems and concerns, share experiences and best practices, learn from each other, create partnerships and plan future joined activities and projects.
- Support regional networking and partnership building through various set of approaches: meetings, study visits, internship and mentoring.
- Provide forums involving CSOs and other stakeholders for sharing best practices and experiences concerning different policy issues of concern for civil society, particularly CSO relations with other stakeholders (Government, media, businesses), legal and tax frame etc.
- Further use and involvement of existing local expertise and regional CSOs networks in project activities and further build their capacities to be able to undertake and provide sustainability of the regional aspects of the project when it ends.

#### **4.4. Recommendation for country specific work plan**

##### **Civil society environment**

- Facilitation of participative process of consultations for establishing mixed structure for dialogue between CSOs and Government. This structure comprising CSOs’ representatives and representatives from ministries and Government should work on monitoring and analysis of public policies related to or affecting CSOs, participating in the planning of priorities for national programs for public financing of programs and projects of CSOs, and supporting the effective implementation of the strategy for Government cooperation with NGOs etc.
- Support to the process of harmonization of the tax regulation with the Law on Associations and Foundations. In order for many of the Law provisions to become applicable and practically realistic to facilitate and support the work of CSOs, it is necessary to make changes and amendments to a number of other laws, especially those pertaining to taxes. This is especially important for organisations that will be granted a status of public interest organizations so that they could effectively experience the benefits of the specific tax alleviations.
- Promotion of the possibilities available for CSOs with the Law on Associations and Foundations, support to CSOs and strengthening their capacities for utilizing these possibilities.

##### **CSO organisational capacities**

- Design and implement a set of capacity building measures with CSOs working at the grassroots to assist them to build their constituencies, engage the public in dialogue and planning, and publicise the achievements of civil society in the community in order to build trust and mobilise citizens in

support of civil society. For this purpose, in addition to training, apply other more focused approaches like mentoring, coaching, internships.

- Support CSOs at the national level to generate positive publicity and image for civil society and raise wider public awareness, through the mass media.
- Encourage CSOs to undertake strategic planning and assist CSOs to develop fundraising strategies, and develop their fundraising skills, particularly focusing on local mobilization of funds and engaging volunteers.
- Support CSOs in their efforts to apply for and implement EU funded projects
- Capacity building for networking and cooperation of CSOs, particularly in the process of developing strategic documents and Codes of ethics.

## **Annex 1 Acronyms and abbreviations used in the text**

CSO – Civil society organisation  
CIP - Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme  
CIRa - Centre for Institutional Development  
DIS - Decentralised Implementation System  
EC – European Commission  
EIDHR - European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights  
EU – European Union  
FAQ – Frequently asked questions  
FOSIM – Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia  
GoFNGOs - Unit to the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of Republic of Croatia  
HRGGP - The Human Rights and Governance Grants Program  
IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance  
MCIC – Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation  
MIDP - Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document  
NGOs – Nongovernmental organisation  
OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
PR – Public relations  
PRO - Public Revenue Office  
RM – Republic of Macedonia  
SCD – Swiss Cooperation Development  
SEA - Secretariat for European Affairs  
TA – Technical assistance  
ULSGs – Unit of Local Self Governments  
USAID – United States Agency for International Development  
VAT – Value added tax  
VMRO – DPMNE – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity  
ZELS- Association of Units of Local Self-Government

## **Annex 2 Needs Assessment methodology**

The Needs Assessment exercise was implemented through methodology combining desk research and consultation process of identification of CSOs needs by conducting interviews and focus groups with CSO representatives and other stakeholders.

The Needs Assessment covered the following three areas:

- CSO's environment
- Organisational capacities of CSOs
- Achievements, impact and challenges

The desk research gathered and studied all relevant information, including previous civil society mappings and assessments, evaluations of major civil society – run development programs, situation analysis, policy documents and country specific academic literature.

Consultation process included 20 individual in depth interviews with civil society organizations, government unit for cooperation with CSOs, representatives from several ministries, representatives from the units of the local-self governments, donors, international organisations and media representatives. Interviews were conducted in a structured manner with guidelines developed in advance. Selection of interviewed and contacted organizations secured that data from different clusters of CSOs that have missions aiming at democratic development were represented. The selection took into account a range of organizations, including both national networks, and other organizations with national level activities, down to the locally focused CSO's. Full list of interviewed is presented in the Annex 3.

After the data gathering a set of preliminary findings and conclusions regarding capacities and needs were prepared and presented in three focus groups. The presentation reflected the main challenges and opportunities under each subject area covered by the research. The first focus group was held in Stip and included representatives from CSOs from the eastern part of Macedonia; second focus group was held in Struga and included representatives from local CSOs from the western part of Macedonia (Gostivar, Tetovo, Kicevo, Debar, Ohrid, Struga). The third focus group for consultation with CSOs was held in Skopje and involved LAG members and representatives from other CSOs from the capital. The consultative focus groups provided an opportunity to confirm conclusions drawn as well to modify and complement the outcome of the exercise.

Project team has documented whole consultation process and prepared minutes from each individual interview and each focus group. Based on that the preliminary report was revised and final version was produced.

Based on the Needs Assessment, two years work plan should be developed that corresponds to the project components.

### Annex 3 List of interviews

#### CSOs – national and CSO networks

| No. | Name and Surname          | Organisation /Institution                       | Position                             |
|-----|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Zoran Ilieski             | Coalition SEGA                                  | Executive Director                   |
| 2.  | Vladimir Misev            | Institute for Democracy Civilis                 | President                            |
| 3.  | Petre Mrkev               | All for fair trials                             | President                            |
| 4.  | Fani Karanfilova Panovska | Foundation Open Society Institute               | EU Program Director                  |
| 5.  | Medodija Sazdov           | Macedonian Green Centre                         | President                            |
| 6.  | Gyner Nebiu               | Antiko  | President                            |
| 7.  | Emina Nuredinovska        | Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation | Head of department for civil society |

#### Smaller and regional CSOs

| No. | Name and Surname | Organisation /Institution                            | Position              |
|-----|------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 8.  | Boris Sarkovski  | Foundation for development of local communities STIP | Programme Coordinator |
| 9.  | Lulzim Haziri    | Association for Democratic Initiative                | Program Director      |
| 10. | Ahmet Jasarovski | Roma 2002/Drom                                       | President             |

#### Government institutions

| No. | Name and Surname  | Organisation /Institution                    | Position                   |
|-----|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 11. | Eli Cakar         | Ministry of Local self government            | State Advisor              |
| 12. | Zoran Milkov      | Government unit for cooperation with the CSO | Senior programming officer |
| 13. | Suzana Nikodievik | Government unit for cooperation with the CSO | Head of department         |

#### Local self-governments

| No. | Name and Surname | Organisation /Institution   | Position                          |
|-----|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 14. | Irina Nikolov    | Association of the Units of the local self government of R. Macedonia | Training coordinator/Advisor      |
| 15. | Katica Cadieva   | Municipality of Veles   | Advisor for cooperation with CSOs |

#### Donor community and international organizations

| No. | Name and Surname   | Organisation /Institution                | Position                   |
|-----|--------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 16. | Irena Ivanova      | EC Delegation                            | Task Manager               |
| 17. | Ibrahim Mehmeti    | Swiss development cooperation agency     | National Programme Officer |
| 18. | Tanja Hafner Ademi | Balkan Civil Society Development Network | Executive Director         |

#### Media representatives

| No. | Name and Surname   | Organisation /Institution                  | Position   |
|-----|--------------------|--|--|
| 19. | Tamara Grncaroska  | Association of journalists of R. Macedonia | Member of the Managing Board of Association of Journalist of Macedonia |
| 20. | Slagjana Dimiskova | Nova Makedonija (daily newspaper)          | Journalists /Editor  |

#### Annex 4 List of focus groups participants

|                           | Name and surname       | Organisation   | City         |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>Stip, 27.09.2011</b>   |                        |  |              |
| 1                         | Snezana Cacarova       | Women's organisation Denica                          | Radovis      |
| 2                         | Violeta Karagunova     | Children's Parliament of Stip and Karbinci           | Stip         |
| 3                         | Mirjana Hadzi-Nikolova | Macedonian Croatian Association                      | Stip         |
| 4                         | Katerina Radeva        | MGH International Association                        | Stip         |
| 5                         | Nicolco Kolev          | ZZMK Probistip                                       | Probistip    |
| 6                         | Ljupce Zahariev        | Embassy Poets of the world                           | Sveti Nikole |
| 7                         | Ljubomor Mihajlovski   | Vision – Centre for science fiction of Macedonia     | Veles        |
| 8                         | Snezana Paparova       | Organisation of Consumers of Stip                    | Stip         |
| 9                         | Erol Ademov            | Association of multi-ethnic society for human rights | Stip         |
| 10                        | Dragana Mitrovic       | Youth Club - Stip                                    | Stip         |
| 11                        | Trajce Cefutov         | Svetla vizija  | Stip         |
| 12                        | Izabela Angelova       | Zenska akcija - Radovis                              | Radovis      |
| 13                        | Boris Sarkovski        | Local Community Development Foundation               | Stip         |
| 14                        | Lidija Vasilevska      | EKG  | Stip         |
| <b>Struga, 30.09.2011</b> |                        |  |              |
| 1                         | Gorgi Josevski         | Citizen's Association – Bitola                       | Bitola       |
| 2                         | Hasan Idrizi           | Anglunipe  | Tetovo       |
| 3                         | Diana Dimitrova        | Municipal Red Cross                                  | Bitola       |
| 4                         | Jovan Damjanoski       | Prerodba   | Skopje       |
| 5                         | Brane Poposki          | NGO Centar - Kicevo                                  | Kicevo       |
| 6                         | Jane Poposki           | NGO Centar - Struga                                  | Kicevo       |
| 7                         | Tome Krstevski         | Doser Global   | Bitola       |
| 8                         | Violeta Dimovska       | Akcija zdruzenska                                    | Bitola       |
| 9                         | Jagoda Klenkovska      | Nova zemja   | Struga       |
| 10                        | Milco Jovanovski       | Kult Dam   | Ohrid        |
| 11                        | Filip Mitreski         | Association youth multi-cultural community           | Prilep       |
| 12                        | Ile Koteski            | Mladinski blesok                                     | Probistip    |
| 13                        | Mate Gogoski           | Enhalon  | Struga       |
| 14                        | Urim Kaba              | Vizion - vel   | Struga       |
| 15                        | Blagoj Vrasovski       | Global   | Bitola       |
| <b>Skopje, 04.10.2011</b> |                        |  |              |
| 1                         | Petre Mrkev            | Coalition "All for Fair Trials"                      | Kavadarci    |
| 2                         | Danica Jovanovska      | Antiko   | Skopje       |
| 3                         | Kevsera Memedova       | Antiko   | Skopje       |
| 4                         | Lidija Dimova          | Macedonian Center for European Education             | Skopje       |
| 5                         | Lulzim Haziri          | Civic Platform of Macedonia                          | Gostivar     |
| 6                         | Simona Ognenovska      | Macedonian Center for International Cooperation      | Skopje       |
| 7                         | Svetlana Milenkova     | Center for Institutional Development - CIRa          | Skopje       |
| 8                         | Igor Kostovski         | Center for Institutional Development - CIRa          | Skopje       |
| 9                         | Saso Matovski          | Bela Vista   | Jegunovce    |
| 10                        | Tanja S. Belovska      | Polio Plus   | Skopje       |

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