



LAUNCHING EVENT REPORT: Financial Support to Third Parties Community of Practice 16 MARCH, 2023

BACKGROUND

EU TACSO 3 project organized an online meeting to launch the **Financial Support to Third Parties Community of Practice (FSTP CoP)**. The online event was held on Thursday, 16 March 2023, from 11:00 - 12:00 hrs CET.

The launch is a part of larger project efforts to meet the growing trend of utilization of the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) instrument by the European Commission, in order to reach out to more CSOs with varying levels of managerial, technical, and advocacy capacities.

At the moment, the FSTP is an increasingly used tool throughout the Western Balkans and Turkey region to enhance outreach to a wider range of local beneficiaries, notably in the areas of good governance, gender equality, human rights, and civil society support. However, while FSTP has contributed to developing capacities for FSTP beneficiaries, there are more and more FSTP implementors reporting challenges facing the administration of FSTP requirements and management of the FSTP components of the projects.

In December 2022, the EU TACSO 3 project organised a regional FSTP workshop that gathered 50 FSTP actors from the WBT region, mainly representatives of CSOs and CSO networks from the WBT region. At the event, they shared their FSTP practices and discussed experiences including planning and implementation of the projects, development of technical and managerial capacities, design of the capacity building support, and establishing of selection, monitoring, and reporting procedures.

Further work on strengthening the capacities of CSOs to manage FSTP-related projects but also to foster communication with the contracting authorities, professionals and other CSOs working in the field of FSTP support is among the main recommendations from the FSTP regional workshop mentioned.

To meet the demands from civil society, a **Community of Practice (CoP)** approach is established and facilitated by the EU TACSO 3 project as an online platform that will promote FSTP practices, share updates and information, allow communication among the community members and organise quarterly online events like meetings, capacity-building events etc. As a part of the CoP the EU TACSO 3 project will organise on annual basis large physical events dedicated to the key issues and practices in the FSTP in the region.

A Call for Participation was launched on 09 March to invite CSOs from the WEBT region to register and participate in the launching event. As a result, one-hundred-thirty-three (133) CSOs were registered. In total, sixty-eight (68) representatives of CSOs and other organizations, attended (See detailed list in Annex 2: [List of participants](#)).

INTRODUCTION SESSION

In the beginning, Ms Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 Capacity Building Expert, provided information about the purpose of the event. It was noted that the event is a continuation of a previous event in Belgrade in 2022. Instructions about language, agenda and administrative modalities were provided. The event was held in English and was online.

Mr Daniele Aloisi, Task Manager Programme Manager - Civil Society and Social Inclusion, Western Balkans Regional Programmes, DG NEAR welcomed everyone to the meeting. During the opening remarks, it was noted that from the perspective of DGE NEAR, FSTP is considered as an essential component of the programme and project management. Good practices and knowledge with regards to this instrument should be shared and this is a unique opportunity to share techniques and methodologies that are useful to the CSO community.

Mr Richard Allen, Team Leader, EU TACSO 3, noted that about 230 mil EUR which is an allocation through CSF should be ensured that is used well. FSTP as an instrument that has been around for about eight years and the learning around it is in process. The utilization of FSTP is always subject to new ideas, and it is a valuable instrument for reaching out to small organisations that would not normally receive EU Funding. It was noted that the project CoP is an important project activity to be developed in the upcoming months.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Session 1: FSTP Community of practice (CoP)

This session was composed of two parts: an overview on **“Why FSTP CoP and how it will operate?”**, as well as a presentation of **“FSTP CoP key topics”**.

“Why FSTP CoP and how it will operate?”

Ms Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 Capacity Building Expert shared the work plan for the further steps for activities. The project has set up the FSTP Community of Practice, a [LinkedIn Group](#) for bringing the community together and has received good response and interest from the audience. The idea is to promote the dialogue and presentations and up to three posts per week, that relate to the topics in the interest of the community itself. Additionally, the project activity will foresee onsite and online events to explore topics of interest such as FSTP and gender mainstreaming, direct communications with contracting authorities, etc. For this purpose, the community will be informed on time and will be kept engaged through the FSTP LinkedIn Group.

The project is also now undertaking an E-Library activity and all materials from the project will be

gathered and structured in one place and this will include the FSTP CoP group materials as well. Eventually, due to the need for TACSO to exit strategy this activity, it is foreseen that the group will be handed over to those who are identified as potential managers of group content.

Questions and comments during the session

Question 1: Ms Natasa Dimova, MCIC North Macedonia

Having in mind that with the latest EC regional call for networks, all applicants were obliged to foresee a certain percentage for FSTP. I would like to ask whether you are planning to have/organize separate coordinative meetings with the organization that was awarded for coordinating this effort and avoid duplications.

Ms Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 responded:

The first meeting with the newly awarded with grant beneficiaries will be at the CSO Forum to be organized in June 2023. DG NEAR will be present to explore the support needed and the project will continue its path with CoP group and is focused on organisations that serve as intermediaries and not beneficiaries of FSTP. More information will follow soon.

Comment 1: Mr Bardhi Quku, Albania Journalist Union

The Union is interested to cooperate in the future and is interested to raise the topic for journalists and media in levels outside of Albania.

Question 2: Ms Venera Hajrullahu, Technical Assistance for improving the enabling environment for CSOs in RNM

Did the project undertake an initial assessment in order to specify the topics to be dealt with for FSTP?

Ms Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 responded:

There is no assessment undertaken in this stage. The topics are identified from past events and other practices in FSTP implementation and these include challenges that FSTP implementers are facing.

“FSTP CoP key topics”

Ms Ozge Konuralp, Country Coordinator for Turkiye delivered a detailed presentation on the topic. In views of the TACSO, the FSTP CoP is divided into two groups: **FSTP implementers and sub-grantees**. In the scope of the FSTP implementers capacity development needs relate to: Self-assessment tools developed by re-granting organisations; Financial management of FSTP projects; Equal relationship with the sub-grantees and Adopting a flexible approach in the implementation of FSTP projects. The latter is especially important to disasters and the relevant response related.

In terms of the capacity development of **sub-grantees** areas are: Needs analysis; Good examples of self-assessment tools; Capacity development and mentoring activities as well as Resource hub for the sub-grantees.

For the FSTP implementers planning and implementation are very relevant. In the planning stage of FSTP projects, it is important to note the selection process where examples of simplified guidelines for subgrantees and preparation of accountable and transparent selection criteria are made available.

There should also be a help-desk to provide sound, prompt and continuous help desk support to local CSOs and grassroots organisations.

In the implementation stage, legal assistance to sub-grantees should be considered. This includes different strategies and good practices of legal assistance in terms of eliminating the rights violations that sub-grantees face. Additionally, the promotion of cross-thematic networking between CSOs and CSO networks is also relevant for sharing of experiences.

Finally, during the monitoring and evaluation stage, sharing of monitoring practices, and assessing results and impact is very relevant. In this context, different examples of types of databases developed by re-granting organisations in order to keep their institutional memory, and follow up the financial and activity implementation of the sub-grantees is considered a valuable input to this process.

The speaker notified the audience about an upcoming event on Capacity development training for FSTP implementers on Gender Mainstreaming during the planning, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of FSTP projects.

Questions and comments during the session (continued)

Comment 2: Ms Vaska Cvetanovska, BIRN

BIRN is a regional network of investigative journalism. The organisation is planning to use FSTP and this component is very needed for the organisation's learning process. There is an impact made at the national and regional levels. There will be examples to share, and these will be opportunities to improve the practices. However, the BIRN is having challenges in terms of budget management and different practices at the regional and national/local levels among contracting authorities (EUDs).

Ms Andreja Tonč responded:

Noted that organisations that are in the area of media are very interesting for FSTP. The project will continue responding to these needs by organising more events on this specific topic. Impact and financial management will also be discussed in the upcoming events.

Comment 3: Mr Bardhi Quku, Albania Journalist Union

Noted the challenges for funding of the Union and requested information over potential funding opportunities.

Ms Andreja Tonč responded:

As the project is dealing with capacity-building activities, it was recommended to exchange contacts with National Resource Center in Albania and TACSO Coordinator in Albania in order to follow up on available funding opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

In the last session, it was concluded that the event is marking the inception stage of the multiyear activity. The participants were invited to join the FSTP CoP Group, contribute and stay in touch for further activities. All comments and questions can be sent to TACSO through capacitybuilding@tacso.eu.

Annex 1. Agenda

Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)

Community of Practice (CoP)

LAUNCHING EVENT AGENDA

16 March 2023

Zoom webinar format at the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86093034931?pwd=ROF5Z2hHSkpBMU9wRFNkU3Z3TIRiZz09#success>

16 March 2023	
11:00 – 11:10	<p>Registration of participants</p> <p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Daniele Aloisi, Task Manger, DG NEAR • Mr Richard Allen, Team Leader, EU TACSO 3
11:10 – 11:30	<p>FSTP Community of practice (CoP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why FSTP CoP and how will operate – Ms Andreja Tonč, Capacity Building expert, EU TACSO 3 • FSTP CoP key topics – Ms Ozge Konuralp, Country Coordinator for Türkiye, EU TACSO 3
11:30 – 12:00	<p>Group discussion*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and Answers • Comments, and recommendations for further actions on operating of the CoP <p>Chat moderator: Ms Kanita Kulić, Country Coordinator for BiH, EU TACSO 3</p> <p><i>*Participants will be allowed to ask questions and comment directly on demand</i></p>

Annex 2: List of participants

	Name and Surname	Organisation	Country	Email
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58	Balacan Ayar		Türkiye	-
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Zoom recording of the event:

<https://cloud.gdsi.ie/apps/files/?dir=/Multi-139494-TACSO%203%20project/Implementation/RA1-Capacity/1.3%20Implementation%20of%20CD%20activities/FSTP%20CoP/Zoom%20webinar-16.03.2023.&fileid=634304>

Powepoint of the event:

<https://cloud.gdsi.ie/f/634126>

Social media coverage of the event:

<https://www.facebook.com/TACSO3/posts/pfbid0tKXveaSgbPCWyM3dZwTwFa3ULH541iCAVAbPmv9t5XSixJCiL73ZKy9EeoJMH6wI>