**EU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY**

Civil Society Networking in the Western Balkan and Turkey:
Presentation of "Mapping and Needs Assessment of the Regional Networks and Regional CSF Projects" Analysis

Online conference

11 February 2021

AGENDA

Thursday, 11 February 2021	
13:00 – 13:15	**Welcome and introduction:** Objectives, agenda, about EU TACSO 3 • **EU support and promotion of civil society networking in the Western Balkan and Turkey,** *Jlenia Destito,* Programme Manager, Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes, DG NEAR • **EU TACSO 3 contribution to civil society development and networking,** *Tanja Hafner Ademi,* Team Leader, EU TACSO 3
13:15 – 13:40	**Capacities and needs of CSOs regional networks** • **Mapping and assessment of capacities and needs of CSO networks in Western Balkan and Turkey** *(presentation of findings),* Emina Nuredinoska, P2P Manager, EU TACSO 3
13:40 – 13:50	*Break*
13:50 – 14:30	**Experience of regional networking: Benefits, achievements, impact** **Tina Divjak,** Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) **German Filkov,** Balkan Tender Watch **Ruslan Stefanov,** Southeast European Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI) **Giada Negri,** European Civic Forum
14:30 – 15:30	**Discussion**

"Civil society organisations challenge injustice, oppression and brutality all over the world. The tremendous work of NGOs around in the world is needed more than ever today. The Commission will continue to support them in carrying out this crucial work without fear"
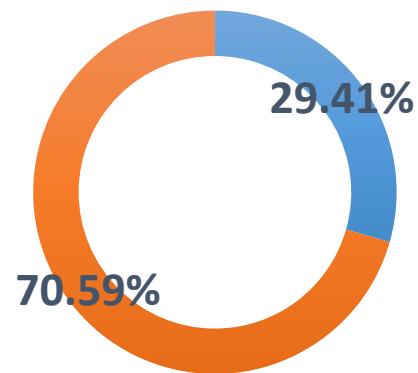
"I want citizens to have their say on the Future of Europe"

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Assessment of networks' actual capacities and their capacity building needs and those of CSOs' for networking *(including specific issues such as EU accession and gender equality)*

Networks involved in the assessment (out of 119 identified)

29.41%

70.59%

■ Responded ■ Did not respond

Questionnaire for identification:

119 identified
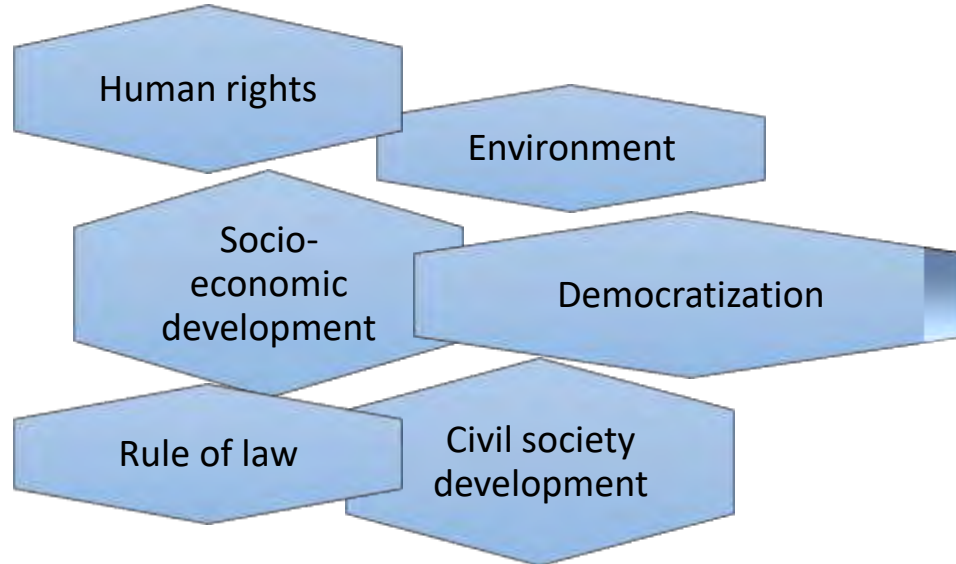
53 answers; 31 networks

Interviews:

12 interviewees

Total sample: 35 regional networks

EU Support

❑ **CSOs in the region are significantly networked**: one organisation member of 1.8 networks.

❑ The EU support through the **regional CSF projects plays an important role in development and operation of CSO networks**.

❑ From 2012 to 2020, the EU has, through five different CSF calls, supported **71 regional projects** that encouraged cooperation and networking of organisations at the regional level.

Areas of operation and role of networks

❑ Most of the networks are focused on issues such as:

Human rights

Environment

Socio-economic development

Democratization

Rule of law

Civil society development
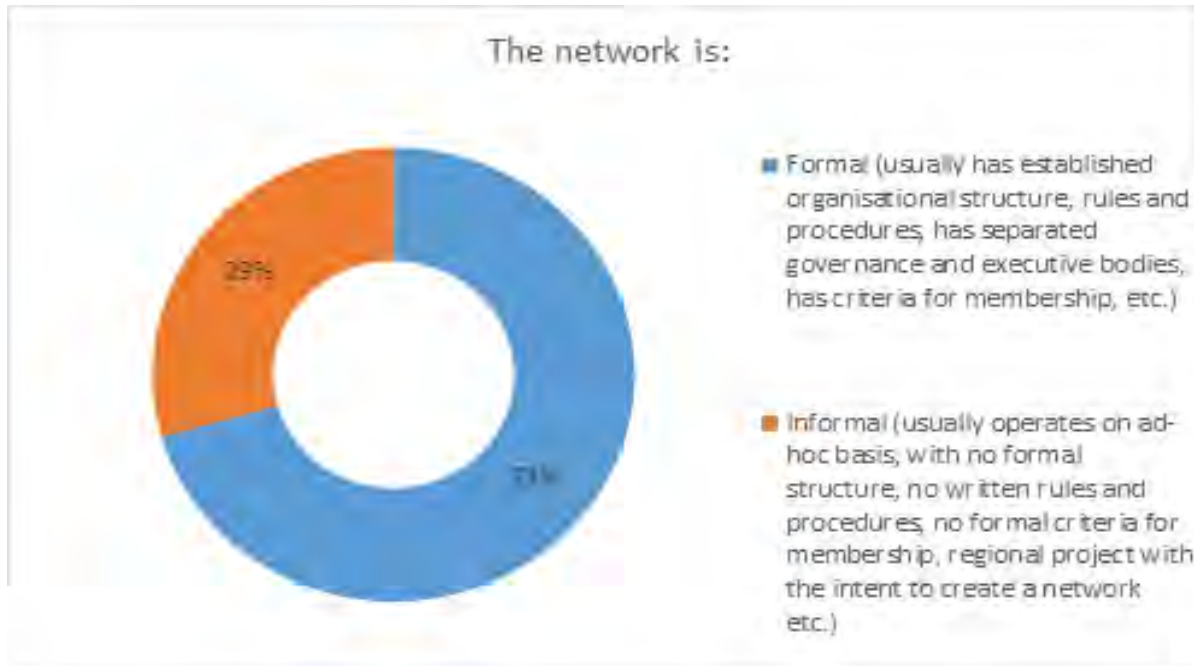
❑ **Most common role** of CSOs networks is
- ❑ implementers of joint projects and programmes
- ❑ implementation of joint advocacy activities

- Organisations' **motives** for networking:
- **advocate** for certain thematic issues

- Greatest **benefits** of networking:
- **access to funding** and **capacity building** in the form of attending events, e.g. conferences, seminars, and trainings

Degree of formality

The network is:

- Formal (usually has established organisational structure, rules and procedures, has separated governance and executive bodies, has criteria for membership, etc.)

- Informal (usually operates on ad-hoc basis, with no formal structure, no written rules and procedures, no formal criteria for membership, regional project with the intent to create a network etc.)

☐ The **formal status does not affect networks' activeness**. There are many formal and structured networks, but also informal, that are extremely active and provide contribution and impact.

Capacity building areas assessed

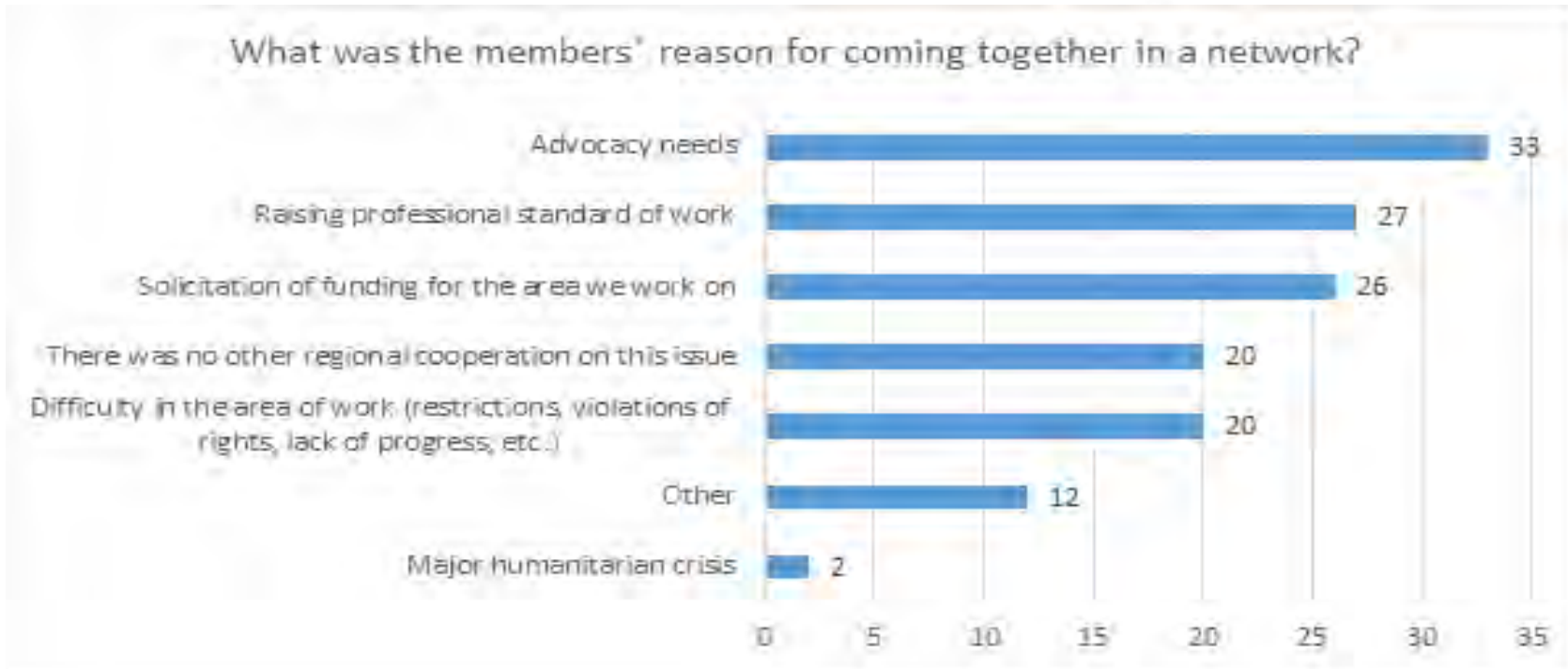|	
Vision, mission and goals	Active network/active members
Network structure, governance and leadership	Secretariat/EO and Network board relations
Network sustainability	Public trust, transparency and accountability

Networks' capacities are soundly developed, but still **dependent on external financial support**.

This is not an exclusive feature of networks in the WBT region, but it is a trend that exists in other regions of the world, including in the European Union.

Vision, mission and goals (VMG)

What was the members' reason for coming together in a network?

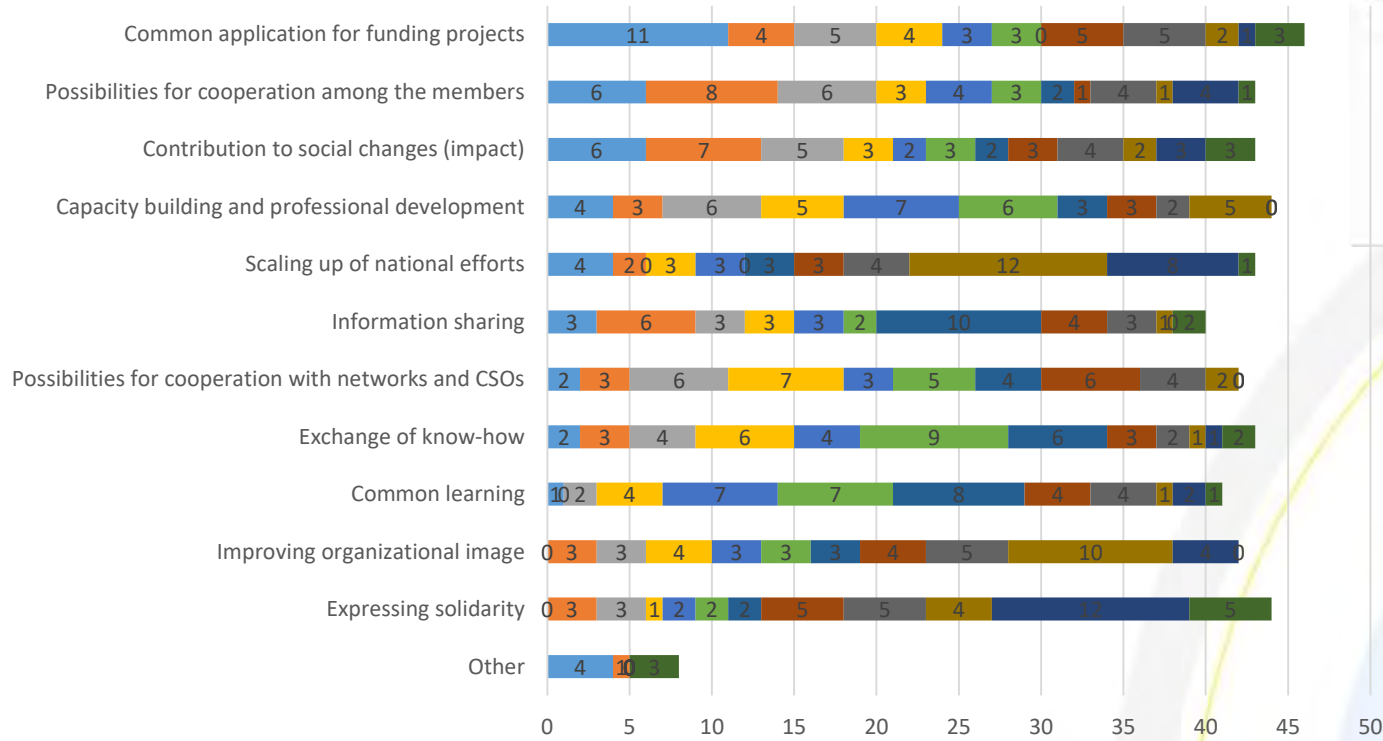| Reason	Value
Advocacy needs	33
Raising professional standard of work	27
Solicitation of funding for the area we work on	26
There was no other regional cooperation on this issue	20
Difficulty in the area of work (restrictions, violations of rights, lack of progress, etc.)	20
Other	12
Major humanitarian crisis	2

Network members are the key actors in defining the vision, mission and goals.

Active network/active members

What types of membership your network practices?

- Full membership: 43
- Associates (without a right to vote/decide): 14
- Other: 11

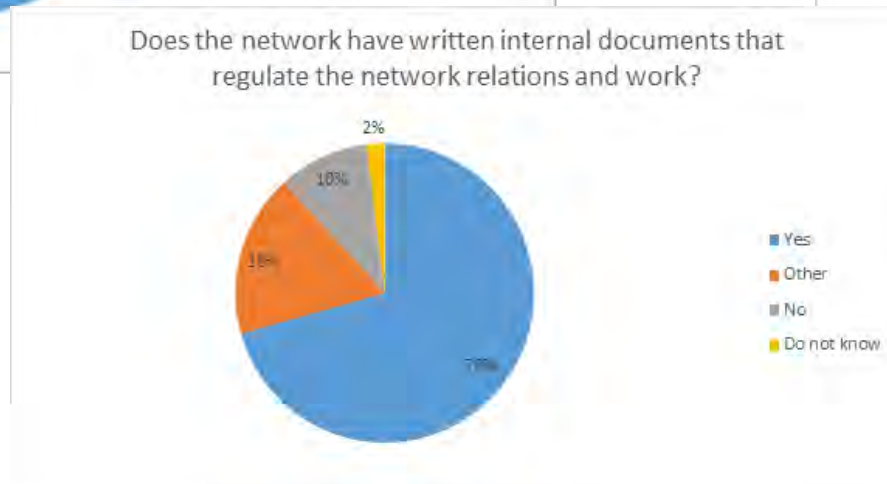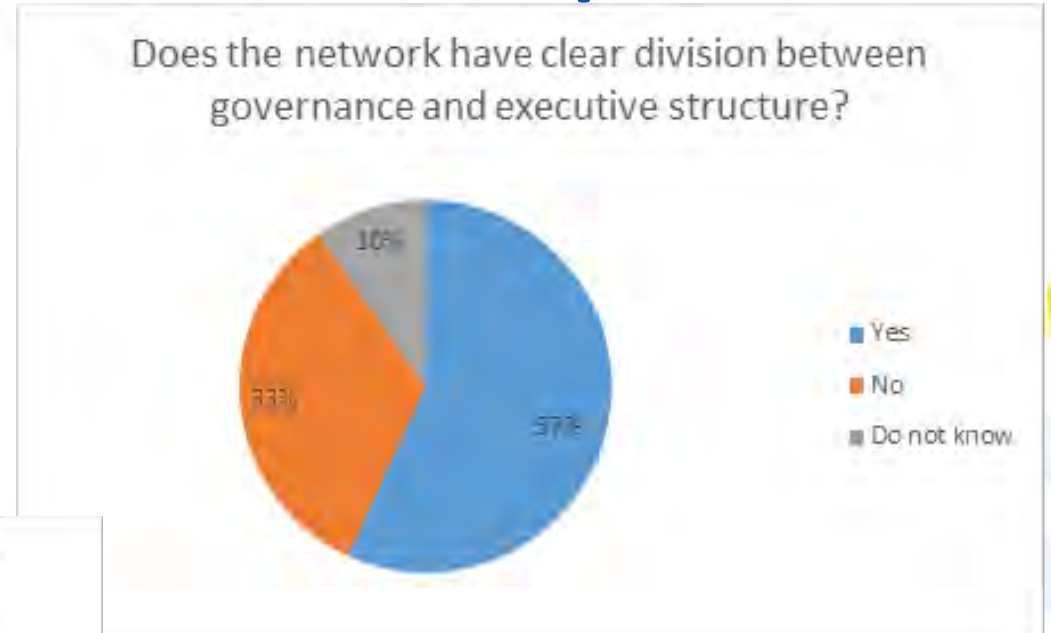**Members are very active** in the work of networks (88 %).

Common application for funding projects: 11, 4, 5, 4, 3, 3, 0, 5, 5, 2, 3
Possibilities for cooperation among the members: 6, 8, 6, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 1, 1, 1
Contribution to social changes (impact): 6, 7, 5, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 2, 1, 3
Capacity building and professional development: 4, 3, 6, 5, 7, 6, 3, 3, 2, 5, 0
Scaling up of national efforts: 4, 2, 0, 3, 3, 0, 3, 3, 4, 12, 1
Information sharing: 3, 6, 3, 3, 3, 2, 10, 4, 3, 1, 0, 2
Possibilities for cooperation with networks and CSOs: 2, 3, 6, 7, 3, 5, 4, 6, 4, 2, 0
Exchange of know-how: 2, 3, 4, 6, 4, 9, 6, 3, 2, 1, 2
Common learning: 10, 2, 4, 7, 7, 8, 4, 4, 1, 2, 1
Improving organizational image: 0, 3, 3, 4, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 10, 0
Expressing solidarity: 0, 3, 3, 1, 2, 2, 2, 5, 5, 4, 12, 5
Other: 4, 1, 0, 3

Network structure, governance and leadership

Does the network have organizational structure?

- 2%
- 16%

■ Yes
■ No
■ Do not know

Does the network have clear division between governance and executive structure?

- 10%

■ Yes
■ No
■ Do not know

Does the network have written internal documents that regulate the network relations and work?

- 2%

■ Yes
■ Other
■ No
■ Do not know

They rarely have a Code of Conduct, gender equality policies and mechanism to resolve conflict of interests.

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Secretariat/EO and Network board relations

What is the primary role of the office/secretariat? (Please select maximum 5 roles)

Role	Value
Information sharing and communication	40
Coordination of the activities	37
Advocate for the interests of the Network	24
Implement the activities of the Network	23
Fundraising	19
Leadership	17
Capacity building of the Network's members	16
No	14
Other	6
None of the above	3
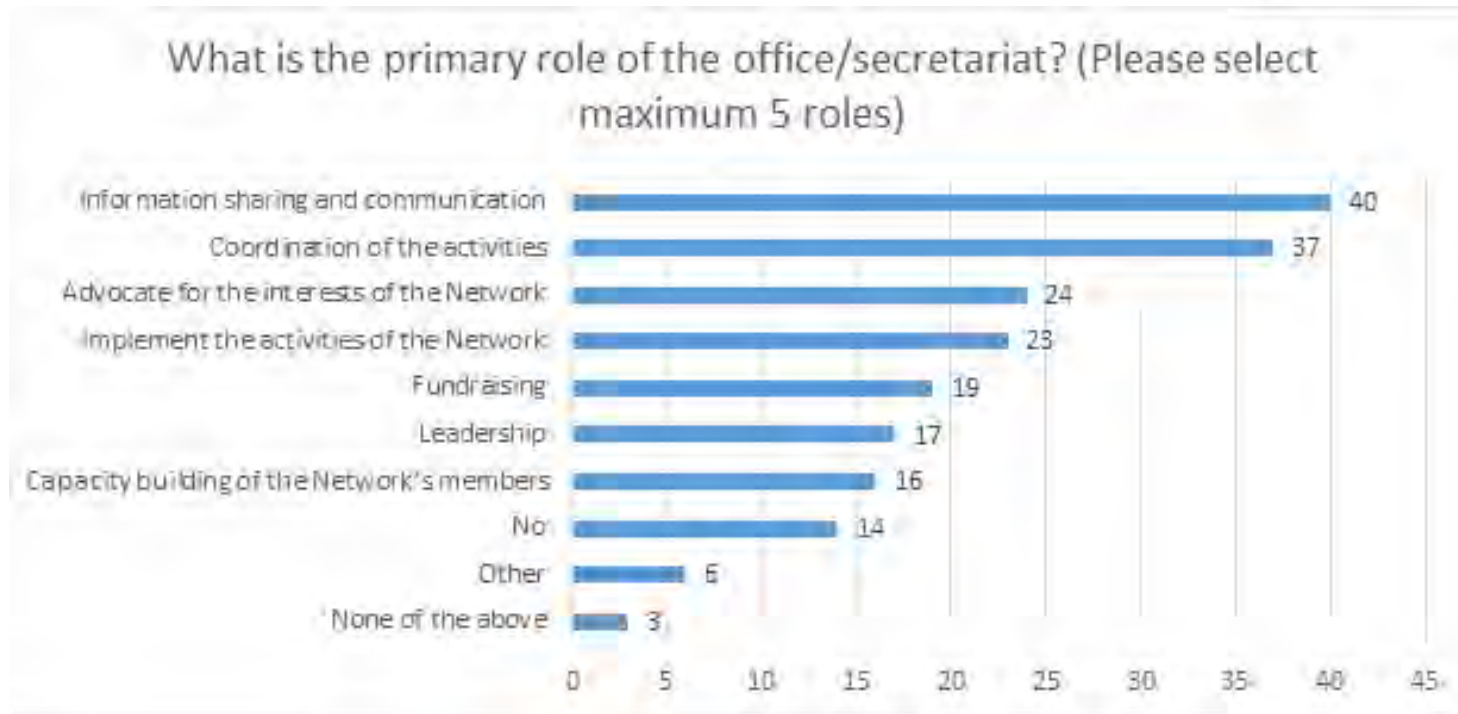
The majority of networks have secretariats or executive offices, although practices differ.

Network sustainability, trust, transparency

Network sustainability

Does the network have sufficient funds to support the activities for the:

	next year	next three years
Yes	44	10
No	7	41

Funding source	Yes	No
EU funds	73%	27%
Other bilateral or multilateral donors (USAID, SIDA, SDC, etc.)	57%	43%
Membership fees	25%	75%
Other	20%	80%
State funding (any state from which network has a member organization)	12%	88%
Economic activities	8%	92%
Individual donations	8%	92%
Corporate donations	4%	96%

Regional networks are **not financially sustainable on the long run.**
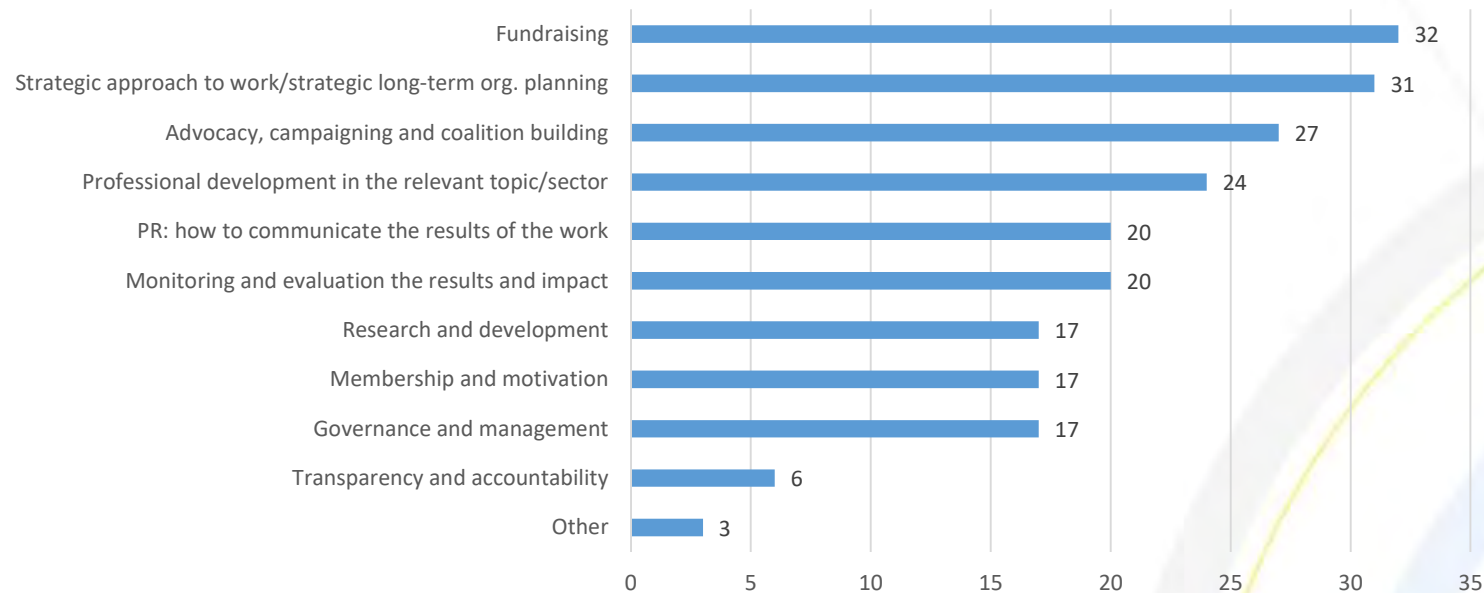
Public trust, transparency and accountability
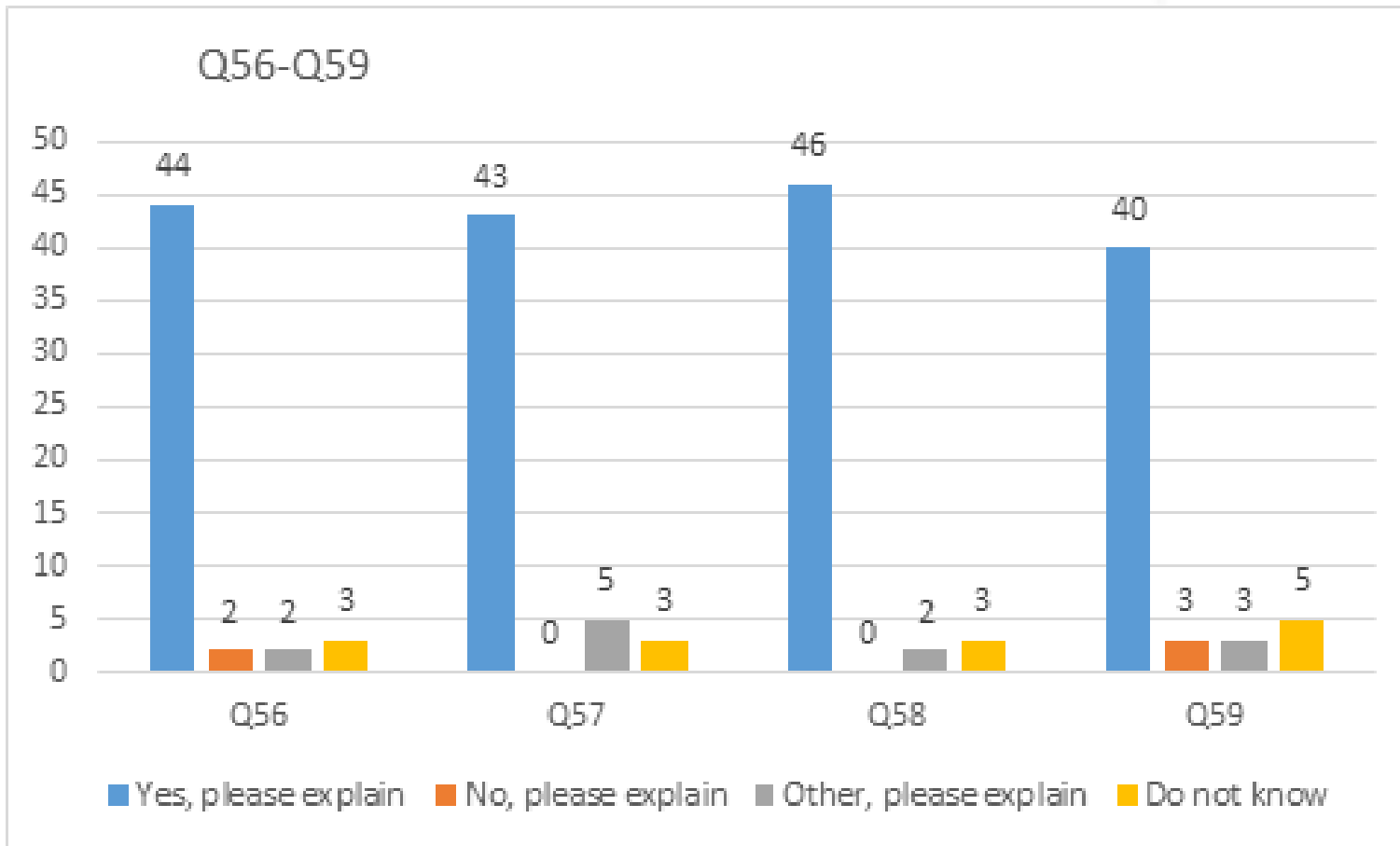
- **Very effective in engaging with external partners and stakeholders** to pursue their mission and goals (Q56).
- The vast majority of networks **receive positive feedback** from target groups and other stakeholders about their programs and services (Q57).
- **Networks are open and transparent in their work**, and information about their organisational structure is available on their websites (Q58).

Capacity building needs

Please consider your priority areas for capacity building

Category	Value
Fundraising	32
Strategic approach to work/strategic long-term org. planning	31
Advocacy, campaigning and coalition building	27
Professional development in the relevant topic/sector	24
PR: how to communicate the results of the work	20
Monitoring and evaluation the results and impact	20
Research and development	17
Membership and motivation	17
Governance and management	17
Transparency and accountability	6
Other	3

Two main outstanding
needs for capacity building:

- Strengthening
fundraising capacities

- **Strategic** long-term
organisational planning

Methods of support

Please select the methods you consider to be most effective

Method	Value
Training	40
Networking with other organisations and networks	32
Mentoring	27
Information and resource materials sharing	21
Peer-to-peer	20
Conferences	10
Webinars	8
Other	3

Most needed **methods** of support:
- **Training**
- **Networking**
- **Mentoring**

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Recommendations – Networks (and CSOs)

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General recommendations:

- Continue to **build relations, linkages** and cooperation among each other in the future;

- To **learn from each other** and take the greatest sources of knowledge and inspiration from each other;

- To **remain in solidarity:** most evident through cross-border cooperation, especially on issues related to fundamental freedoms and rights, civic space, democracy and the rule of law, as well as EU accession as a common aspiration across the region

- To continue to develop their **research capacities and monitoring tools** for evidence based advocacy.

Recommendations – Networks (and CSOs)

Specific recommendations:

- **Guided by networks own, well-defined vision, mission and goals**, and occasionally revise these to make sure they are on the right track.

- **Active members** to become the driving force of networks;

- **Improve internal relations within the networks** (particularly providing distinction between governance and executive bodies);

- Develop funding strategies and improve **financial sustainability**, improve **transparency and accountability** to achieve **improved public image**.

- To increase own **transparency and accountability** and to improve **public image**.

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Recommendations for EU

- **General recommendation:**

- **The European Union** needs to remain primary supporter of regional networks (networks part of the analysis confirmed that their growth and progress is evident after they have received financial support from the EU)

- **Specific recommendations:**

- Build **long-term partnership relations** with regional networks;

- Provide **regular financial support** through operating grants;

- For specific areas, **thematic support** is still needed, as well as **sub-granting** as an important tool to reach out to small-size local organisations.

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Recommendations for EU TACSO 3

General recommendation:

- **Key stakeholder in providing non-financial support** to networks and CSOs in the region.

- To provide **tailored approach** for the networks different from other individual CSOs.

Specific recommendations:

- Provide **tailored support and capacity development approach**:
    - regional annual networking events;
    - annual donors' coordination;
    - mentoring and peer-to-peer learning;
    - basic training on the essence of networking;
    - specific networking analysis;
    - provide **forum for discussion** between DG NEAR and regional networks and maintaining a **database of networks**.

Thank you for your attention!

Authors: Emina Nuredinoska and Simona Ognenovska

Editors: Tanja Hafner Ademi and Tanja Bjelanovic

GROUND RULES

1. **One person at the time!** - Everyone on Mute, except the person that has the floor to speak;

2. **Speak only once** your are **given the floor by the Moderator;**

3. **If during presentation, ask your questions through Chat!** – Write your questions clearly or raise your hand to speak in the Chat section;

4. **Give Comments** – Write your comment clearly or raise your hand to speak in the Chat section;

5. **Priority** will be give to **those that have not had the floor previously;**

6. **Present yourself** – Give your name, organization/institutions;

7. **Brief and to the point (3 min max!)!** – Try to focus on the main point and the subject of the discussion;

8. **Respect of time** – Let's be on time at the beginning and after the breaks;

9. **Use Chat to share** - Send links to your researches, actions; You can also target conversation, respond/comment to specific persons etc. there.

Consultation - next steps

- Recommendations are already taken into account in the EU TACSO 3 CD and P2P Programme Plan for 2021;

- The Report will be available on the EU TACSO 3 website (including all annexes with detail information for each identified network: contacts, description of VMG, members, etc.)