

Position document

1. Introduction

European Union pays serious attention to development of Civil Society Sector in Eastern Partnership (EaP) Countries and is widely supporting farther development of civil society organization (CSO). Local CSPs, together with international organizations actively participated in the EU tenders and have jointly implemented many development projects in Eap countries. For instance during the EMPARD I 4 different consortiums and UNDP with total number of 17 NGOs (5 international and 12 local) were implementing this project and it was an outstanding case, when these consortiums, rather than being in competition, instead established a strong cooperation, conducted joint activities and shared the good practices among them. Also, during the project implementation, local CSOs equated with EU experience, learn modern management standards and methodology from European NGOs, which they further used for capacity building of their organization and of the entire CSO sector in the country. Additionally is to mention that such cooperation has its overall strong positive impact on the networking between the local CSO organization and NGOs from EU countries.

1. Problem description

From 2015, European Commission has changed its strategy and based on memorandum between the EU and United Nations Agencies (UN) Agencies, without of any tendering, has handed over the implementation of major part of the ENPARD programs to UN Agencies - UNDP, FAO and IOM. As a result, large number of international NGOs and local CSOs were excluded from implementation of such projects. This decision negatively was reflected on the international NGOs and especially on the local CSOs. Practically, international NGOs and local CSOs have lost any chances to compete in open tenders with UN Agencies and are virtually excluded from the implementation processes of development cooperation in the country. UN Agencies, for implementation of their development project are mainly using individual experts (local and international) and only in seldom cases announce small tenders for local organizations, among them for CSOs. Actually, such strategy had a negative effect on the CSO sector development in the country, because many local CSOs have been deprived of opportunity to obtain the several years’ guaranteed financing and many qualified local experts/consultants who worked in those CSOs, have moved to UN Agencies (as private experts) which of course negatively affects the institutional development of local CSOs.

We have discussed above situation with the representative of EU Delegation in Georgia and they explained and justified the abovementioned decision (contracting of UN Agencies) by such arguments as the increased number of EU project in Georgia and limited human resources in EU Delegation, which determines the difficulty of monitoring and evaluation of the increased number of projects by the limited staff of EU Delegation. However for us, this argument is not quite clear to accept it, because if EU delegation has shortage of own staff who should monitor the projects, they simply can outsource these services and through the open tenders, select the relevant organizations who will be responsible for permanent monitoring and evaluation of EU projects in Georgia. Also, we are far from the idea, that EU Delegation is not really providing the monitoring of the projects which are implemented by the UN Agencies.

1. Possible scenarios for problem solving

In order to improve the current situation the appropriate short term and long term strategies can be applied. The short term strategy implies reducing the number of contracted individuals by the UN Agencies and outsourcing these services to local CSOs.

The medium term strategy should be to come back to open tender system, through which any organization could apply and engage in fair competition under the same rules and conditions.

1. Positive results of more involvement of CSO sector in the EU Funded projects

Due to moving of significant funds to UN Agencies and their strategy to hire private expert instead of contracting organizations, which has already negatively affected local CSO sector, many particular CSOs, especially those operating in the regions, are experiencing strong shortage of financial resources and some of them are under the risk that the most of their qualified staff will move on to work for UN Agencies. If the above proposed short and medium term strategies will be implemented, many CSOs will regain their chances to survive, increase their capacities and become strong players within their respective regions.

5. Conclusion

We strongly believe that promotion of fair competition, establishment of same rules for everybody, application of sound and smart strategies for the country development, among them for the sustainable and successful development of local CSO sector, implementation and dissemination of European values and equal rights will ensure quick and tangible progress in Georgia.