

Standard Summary Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes
(Regional / Horizontal programmes; centralised National programmes)

1. Basic information

- 1.1 CRIS Number: 2007/19322**
- 1.2 Title: Strengthening Serbia – EU Civil Society Dialogue**
- 1.3 ELARG Statistical code: 05.10**
- 1.4 Location: Belgrade**

Implementing arrangements:

1.5 Contracting Authority (EC)

The Contracting Authority is the European Commission, EC Delegation, on behalf of the Republic of Serbia

1.6 Implementing Agency: N/A

1.7 Beneficiary (including details of project manager): Civil society organisations in Serbia

Financing:

1.8 Overall cost: EUR 2 Million

1.9 EU contribution: EUR 2 Million

1.10 Final date for contracting: 3 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement

1.11 Final date for execution of contracts: 5 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement

1.12 Final date for disbursements: 6 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective:

The overall objective is to develop a sustainable civil society dialogue between Serbia and EU Member states

2.2 Project purpose:

Project purpose is to strengthen cooperation between the professional organisations in Serbia and the EU

2.3 Link with AP/NPAA / EP/ SAA

Reference to the European Partnership 2006:

The project addresses EP priorities to “further encourage the development of civil society organisations financially and otherwise.”

Reference to the Progress Report 2006:

According to the Progress Report the civil society sector in Serbia is well developed and active. “The authorities have made efforts to take the opinions of the civil sector on board, notably in the area of poverty reduction. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are allowed to attend sessions in Parliament. The Serbian Office for European Integration has

signed a special memorandum of cooperation with NGOs. However, the administration continues to show insufficient understanding of the appropriate role of NGOs in a democratic society. NGO activities that imply criticism of the government and in particular those that draw attention to sensitive, often unpopular issues such as war crimes are publicly denigrated. The legal situation of civil society organisations remains precarious due to the continued lack of adequate legislation. This has a consequent effect on financial sustainability”.

2.4 Link with MIPD

MIPD states that Civil Society will be supported by the European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy and the IPA financed framework. Civil Society is understood including employer's organisations, trade unions, associations of local self-governments as well as non-governmental organisations etc. Depending on project maturity and on the outcome of projects under ongoing programmes, assistance may be provided in the following areas: build capacities of civil society institutions and partnerships with government to promote human rights, European standards and values and the engagement of civil society actors into policy design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of governmental programs.

The role of civil society in the democratic stabilisation and the economic and social development of the country should be consolidated through mainstreaming civil society issues in all programmes and supported also by other components of EC assistance.

2.5 Link with National Development Plan (where applicable)

N/A

2.6 Link with national/ sectoral investment plans(where applicable)

N/A

3. Description of project

3.1 Background and justification:

In its Communication dated 29 June 2005 concerning Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Candidate Countries, the Commission stated that “any future enlargement of the EU needs to be supported by a strong, deep and sustained dialogue between the societies of the candidate countries and in the EU member States, as well as with the EU institutions”. In this context, it is noted that civil society should play the most important role to bridge the information gap, achieve better mutual knowledge and bring citizens and different cultures, political and economic systems closer together.

The Thessalonica Summit held in June 2003 confirmed that EU membership is the outcome of the Stabilisation and Association process for the Western Balkan countries once they meet established accession criteria. The Annex of the Council conclusions “The Thessalonica Agenda for Western Balkans” aims at further intensifying relations between the EU and the region, building on a set of measures similar to those applied in the new EU Member States and the remaining candidate countries. In its communication on “The Western Balkans on the road to the EU”, the Commission proposed to extend the civil society dialogue to all Western Balkan countries with particular focus on the dialogue between Western Balkans societies. A

special effort should be undertaken to encourage civil society development in each country and a culture of civil society consultations.

As defined in the above Communication concerning Civil Society Dialogue and MIPD financed under IPA framework, the Civil Society includes the labour market actors, i.e. social partners (trade unions and employers federations), associations of local self-governments, organisation representing social and economic players at large, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisation. All society structures outside of government and public administration are encouraged to participate in the dialogue, Chamber of Commerce, local communities and municipalities, while education, media and culture sectors are also expected to play a key role.

In Serbia the civil society sector has been continually strengthening since the political changes in October 2000. Although positive changes gradually take place, an enabling legal framework, as the basic precondition for the sustainable sector development, has not yet been created. The draft Law on Citizens' Associations has been sitting in the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia since December 2001 and it has undergone re-drafting at various stages. The call for extraordinary parliamentary elections and delays in forming of the new Government after the elections further postponed the adoption of the Law. Other related legislation (i.e. Law on endowments and foundations) and regulatory issues are also unresolved and these include fiscal issues – i.e. possible tax relief, as well as issues relating to implementation of the free access to information law.

The latest research carried out in September 2006 at the request of the Serbian Integration Office indicated that almost 70% of Serbian citizens consider EU membership as a normal fact, and 55% believe that it will improve their quality life. Individually, Serbian citizens see European Union membership as an opportunity to travel abroad, better perspective for young people and better employment perspectives. Almost one fifth is afraid that the country may lose its cultural identity. One of the most striking finding of this research is the low level of information on European Union itself and on integration efforts of the country. Only 25% of the citizens believe that they are well informed on EU integration.

As a response to these needs, the project shall therefore strengthen the contacts and mutual exchange of experience between professional organisations in Serbia and the EU countries thus allowing for a better awareness of the opportunities and challenges of future enlargement.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact (where applicable)

The proposed project will initiate a broad civil society dialogue between Serbia and the EU, involving business community, professional organisations and social partners from both sides. Social dialogue can form an important basis for future competitiveness of the Serbian economy. This has been demonstrated in other smaller European countries where the social partnership process informs National Development Planning. This project will also complement on-going actions under the Cross Border Cooperation Programme which encourages joint actions between Serbian and neighbouring civil society actors.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators:

Expected results and measurable indicators:

Expected results include:

- New partnerships and networks of Serbian professional organisations such as bar associations and other legal professions, business associations, research, cultural and education sector, health organisations with their European and regional counterparts are established according to their field of activity initiating dialogue, exchange knowledge, information and best practices related to the EU integration process
- Increased mutual knowledge and understanding between EU, Western Balkans and Serbia, facilitating long-term cooperation

Measurable indicators for reviewing progress include:

- The Project Management Unit established to implement the project
- Need analysis on priorities and target groups delivered
- Call for Proposals launched
- Maximum 10 projects are selected and contracted
- Contacts between Serbia and EU countries are established

3.4 Activities:

The project will be implemented through a Call for Proposals. The fund of EUR 2 million will be available to support partnership projects between Serbian and EU professional organisations. A strong Implementing Partner contractor should be selected for the management of the project through a service contract. The Implementing Partner would be responsible for:

- (1) Carrying out an in depth analysis of the situation of the priority target groups; identify a priority list of the organisations concerned together with their priority needs;
- (2) Organise one Call for proposals, including wide information campaign before the call and administrative assistance to the Evaluation Committee.
- (3) TA to the grantees including training (project management and project implementation), daily assistance in implementing different project activities, monitoring and approving of all procurements, initial approval of final project reports.
- (4) Reporting to the EAR on monthly progress of the project's grantees.

Eligible activities will include:

- Support long-term partnerships between Serbian professional organisations and their EU and regional counterparts.
- Develop exchanges between EU and Serbian counterparts particularly in areas such as the judiciary and other legal professions, health, education, research, culture and their respective associations, particularly on subjects where there is a need for common advocacy or where, on the contrary, there is a perception of competitive challenges between the counterparts.

This project will be implemented via a service contract and call for proposals.

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing:

- Civil society organisations need to demonstrate their willingness to cooperate both amongst themselves and civil society organisations in the EU. Likewise, adequate EU institutions have to be willing to participate in the joint projects and engage in social dialogue with local civil society organisations
- CSOs and professional institutions need to have capacity to carry out joint projects and produce quality project proposals
- Call for proposals should encourage participation of relevant stakeholders such as the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs, Socio-Economic Council, etc. in the selection process
- Grants for civil society projects require 10% co-financing

3.6 Linked activities

Civil society – Capacity Building- EU Funding: €2,500,000

In 2002, the EU has supported civil society by strengthening selected NGOs and other civil society organisations targeting 50 municipalities in the socially and economically deprived regions in Eastern and Western Serbia. In order to increase their efficiency and effectiveness the programme included training of NGOs, procurement of basic office equipment and supplies for selected NGOs, joint workshops and seminars for NGOs and local administrations and provision of grants (up to € 50,000) for selected NGO/local administration projects.

Civil Society – Policy Dialogue with Government- EU Funding: €9,400,000

The 2003 CARDS Programme for Serbia focused on the participation of civil society organisations in the consultative and preparatory process of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) through setting up the Civil Society Advisory Committee, which brought together a number of prominent NGOs. Furthermore, EU funds were used to support the establishment of a Management Unit for the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) with the Ministry of Social Affairs (now the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy) in order to enable the implementation of innovative projects presented jointly by public centres for social work and NGOs providing social services. This program was designed to target vulnerable groups, foster relations between government and non-governmental organizations and encouraging a joint strategy towards the vulnerable groups.

In 2004 and 2005 further support was provided to the Social Innovation Fund, this time both for the SIF Management Unit and for the grants aimed at civil society-public partnerships in the area of social service provision. Following a Call for Proposals, 51 grants have been awarded to support partnership projects between the institutions of social welfare system, NGOs, associations of citizens and professional associations aimed at the provision of social services for youth, elderly, women, Roma and internally displaced population in Serbia. The

EU also contributed to civil society Monitoring Units in order to assess the impact of the SIF projects implemented throughout Serbia.

The 2006 CARDS Programme will further support the Social Innovation Fund focusing on the issue of decentralization of social protection services. The programme also intends to strengthen civil society organizations and links between them so that they can (a) hold Government accountable for poverty reduction through monitoring strategy and policy implementation and (b) effectively advocate for civil society organizations enabling environment.

To facilitate a dialogue between Government and civil society on gender issues, a separate component of the programme will focus on capacity building of relevant actors to create partnerships in support for gender equality agenda as an important part of social inclusion.

Civil Society – Direct support to NGOs- EU Funding: €5,000,000

In 2004, EU assistance targeted the Fund to support Civil aimed at improving the legislative and financial environments and to increase NGOs' capacities for planning and implementing local community development projects. Special attention was given to projects supporting environmental protection. The €1.9M fund supported 23 projects which are now implemented throughout Serbia.

In the framework of the European Integration Programme, the EAR supported 45 projects through the European Integration Fund. An amount of €1.6M has been allocated to support workshops, seminars and other activities related to EU integration and regional cooperation, as well as for the support of the publication of supplements, brochures and other forms of information dissemination. The Fund is open to both NGOs and Public bodies. A new call was launched in May 2007 with a total budget of €1,6M.

3.7 Lessons learned

Serbian society still needs to build an efficient consensus on EU accession. In a situation where Serbian society still has diverse attitudes toward EU integration, it is important to try to improve knowledge and skills concerning the European integration primarily by increasing exchange and partnership with EU counterparts, concerning challenges of future enlargement.

Civil society can play an important role in the policy making process in Serbia. This is a key lesson from the preparation of the national poverty reduction strategy (PRSP), the only national strategic social and economic development document that has been prepared according to IFI (World Bank, IMF) and EU standard social dialogue. Building on these lessons new partnership opportunities with the Government should be identified to allow a greater policy making impact by the Civil Society.

In the previous call for proposals launched within the European Integration Fund and Civil Society Fund, Serbian Trade Unions, Professional Associations and the Business Community were already listed among the target groups of the project. However, they offered a very limited response to the call. Building on these lessons new partnership opportunities should be encourage. The objective of the EU-Serbia Civil Society Dialogue project should be to focus the priority target groups among social partners, business and professional associations. It would be the task of the Implementing Partner to propose a limited list of actors and to identify precisely their priority needs.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in million €)

Activities	TOTAL COST	SOURCES OF FUNDING										
		EU CONTRIBUTION				NATIONAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION				PRIVATE		
		Total	% *	IB	INV	Total	% *	Central	Regional	IFIs	Total	% *
Activity Component call for proposals	2.0 Million	1.5	75									
contract 1.1												
Activity Component TA	0.5	0.5	25									
contract 2.1												
.....												
TOTAL	2.0	2.0	100									

* expressed in % of the Total Cost

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule

Contracts	Start of Tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Contract 1.1	T+1Q	T+3Q	T+9Q
Contract 2.1	T+4Q	T+6Q	T+12Q

All projects should in principle be ready for tendering in the 1ST Quarter following the signature of the FA.

The duration of the project will be 36 months.

6. Cross cutting issues (where applicable)

The Fund is aimed at encouraging debate on a wide range of EU-related topics and future enlargement. The social partners and vulnerable sections of society, including minorities and female groups, are encouraged to participate in order to highlight the inclusive nature of the European integration process. This reflects the fundamental EU funding principles based upon protection of human rights, gender equality and environment.

ANNEX I: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Fiche	Programme name and number	
Strengthening Serbia – EU Civil Society Dialogue	Contracting period expires 5 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement	Disbursement period expires 6 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
	Total budget : 2 million Euros	IPA budget: 2 million Euros

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
The overall objective is to develop a sustainable civil society dialogue between Serbia and EU Member states	Partnerships between local and EU civil society organisations established and developed	SAP, Council of Europe, OSCE reports	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Project purpose is to strengthen cooperation between the professional organisations in Serbia and the EU	<p>Social dialogue improved</p> <p>Increased participation by civil society organisations in Government policy development</p> <p>Improved central-local administrative relations</p> <p>Improved implementation of Government policies</p>	<p>Beneficiaries' progress reports</p> <p>Reports from Monitoring unit</p> <p>Steering Committee Meetings</p>	<p>Political and social stability</p> <p>Civil society organisations are willing to cooperate both amongst themselves and civil society organisations in the EU</p>
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New partnerships and networks of Serbian professional organisations such as bar associations and other legal professions, business associations, research, cultural and education sector, health organisations with their European and regional counterparts are established according to their field of activity initiating dialogue, exchange knowledge, information and best practices related to the EU integration process Increased mutual knowledge and understanding between EU, Western Balkans and Serbia, facilitating long-term cooperation 	<p>The Project Management Unit established to implement the project</p> <p>Needs analysis on priorities and target groups delivered</p> <p>Call for Proposals launched</p> <p>Maximum 10 projects are selected and contracted</p> <p>Contacts between Serbia and EU countries are established</p>	<p>Beneficiaries' progress reports</p> <p>Reports from Monitoring unit</p> <p>Steering Committee Meetings</p>	<p>CSOs and professional institutions interested and have capacity in carrying out joint projects</p> <p>Adequate EU institutions willing to participate in the joint projects and engage in social dialogue with local civil society organisations</p>
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out an in depth analysis of the situation of the priority target groups; identify a priority list of the organisations concerned together with their priority needs; Organise one Call for proposals, including wide information campaign before the call and administrative assistance to the Evaluation Committee. TA to the grantees including training (project management and project implementation), daily assistance in implementing different project activities, monitoring and approving of all procurements, initial approval of final project reports. Reporting to the EAR on monthly progress of the project's grantees. 	<p>Fund for civil society organisations (call for proposals)</p> <p>TA for management of the fund</p>	2 million Euros	<p>Sufficient capacity in civil society organisation to produce quality project proposals</p>

ANNEX II: amounts (in €) Contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q12	Q13
Contract 1.1		0.5										
Contract 1.2				1.5								
Contract 1.3												
Contract 1.4												
.....												
Cumulated		0.5		2.0								
Disbursed												
Contract 1.1		0.3								0.2		
Contract 1.2												
Contract 1.3												
Contract 1.4												
.....												
Cumulated												

Note: For the grant scheme (Contract 1.2) it is not possible at this stage to determine precise number of contracts due to the open call for proposals system. Therefore, it is also not possible to determine disbursement schedule

ANNEX III

Description of Institutional Framework

There is no ministry in the Serbian government specifically dealing with civil society organisations and issues per se. Professional organisations that will be targeted by this programme belong to a wide variety of sectors, therefore it is not feasible to identify only one counterpart on the Government side.

Moreover, the Serbian Socio-Economic Council is in charge of promoting and increasing social dialogue between various stakeholders in the country (the Government, professional associations, NGOs, trade unions, etc). The Socio-Economical Council is a tri-partite advisory body consisting of the representatives of the Government, professional associations and trade unions. Its work and authorisations are set out in the Law on Socio-Economic Council (adopted on November 15, 2004, OG RS 125/04). The Law also envisages establishment of province and local Councils.

ANNEX IV

Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:

Reference list of relevant laws and regulations

Key laws, regulations and strategic documents in the area of civil society and social dialogue:

General:

- Constitution of the Republic of Serbia
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- Law for the Implementation of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia
- National Strategy for Serbia and Montenegro's Accession to the European Union
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Partnership

Civil society, social dialogue:

- Law on Citizens' Associations
- Law on Socio-Economic Council
- Law on endowments and foundations

Reference to AP /NPAA / EP / SAA

Reference to the European Partnership 2006:

The project addresses EP priorities to "further encourage the development of civil society organisations financially and otherwise."

Reference to the Progress Report 2006:

According to the Progress Report the civil society sector in Serbia is well developed and active. "The authorities have made efforts to take the opinions of the civil sector on board, notably in the area of poverty reduction. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are allowed to attend sessions in Parliament. The Serbian Office for European Integration has signed a special memorandum of cooperation with NGOs. However, the administration continues to show insufficient understanding of the appropriate role of NGOs in a democratic society. NGO activities that imply criticism of the government and in particular those that

draw attention to sensitive, often unpopular issues such as war crimes are publicly denigrated. The legal situation of civil society organisations remains precarious due to the continued lack of adequate legislation. This has a consequent effect on financial sustainability”.

Reference to MIPD

MIPD states that Civil Society will be supported by the European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy and the IPA financed framework. Civil Society is understood including employer's organisations, trade unions, associations of local self-governments as well as non-governmental organisations etc. Depending on project maturity and on the outcome of projects under ongoing programmes, assistance may be provided in the following areas: build capacities of civil society institutions and partnerships with government to promote human rights, European standards and values and the engagement of civil society actors into policy design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of governmental programs.

The role of civil society in the democratic stabilisation and the economic and social development of the country should be consolidated through mainstreaming civil society issues in all programmes and supported also by other components of EC assistance.

Reference to National Development Plan

N/A

Reference to national / sectoral investment plans

N/A

ANNEX V

Details per EU funded contract (*) where applicable:

A strong implementing partner should be selected for the management of the project. This selection could take place either through a service contract or a grant. The implementing partner would be responsible for:

- carrying out an in-depth analysis of the situation of the priority target groups; identifying a priority list of the organisations concerned together with their priority needs;
- organise one or more calls for proposals, including wide information campaign before the call and administrative assistance to the Evaluation Committee;
- TA to the grantees including training (project management and project implementation), daily assistance in implementing different project activities, monitoring and approving of all procurements, initial approval of final project reports;
- reporting to the EAR on monthly progress of the project's grantees.