

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**CONSULTANT/ RESEARCH EXPERT**

**Research on “Donor-CSO Relationship in the Black Sea Region”**

<b>Project:</b>	“Enhancing Civil Society Role in Development Partnerships Post-2015” implemented globally by CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) and within Europe by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND
<b>Assignment:</b>	Conducting a research on “Donor-CSO Relationship in the Black Sea Region”
<b>Countries to be covered by the research:</b>	Non-EU Black Sea countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine
<b>Type of actors to be covered by the research</b>	Civil society organisations and donors from the Non-EU Black Sea countries
<b>Period of contract:</b>	2 months (15 <sup>th</sup> of February – 15 <sup>th</sup> of April 2018)
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Consultancy contract (payments will be made based on invoices issued by an authorized physical person or a legal entity)
<b>Open to:</b>	Consultants / Research experts
<b>Deadline for submitting applications:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> of February 2018
<b>Submit to:</b>	<a href="mailto:fond.romania@gmail.com">fond.romania@gmail.com</a>

**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

[The Busan Partnership Agreement](#) adopted in 2011 at the 4th High-Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Busan recognized the civil society as a development actor in its own rights, essential to the development process. The commitments made in Busan were translated into a set of [10 indicators](#), out of which indicator no. 2 states that „**civil society operates within an environment which maximises its engagement in and contribution to development**”.

In order to be able to monitor this indicator, the concept of enabling environment for civil society is analysed on 3 dimensions: 1) universally accepted human rights and freedoms affecting CSOs, 2) policy influencing; and 3) donor-CSO relationship. The last dimension is set out to look into CSO funding mechanisms to see if they respond to CSO needs, if they are reliable, transparent, easy to understand, and disbursed impartially, if donors encourage the diversification of CSO funds and if CSOs are included in the process of establishing donor strategies and priorities.

With the adoption of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) in 2015, the efforts to make development more effective were re-affirmed within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

The environment in which civil society operates and its ability to attain financial sustainability are key for an active, genuine and strong civil society that is able to hold governments accountable, advocate for the implementation of the

rule of law, transparent institutions, for the participation of civil society in decision-making process, for open access to public information and for the protection of fundamental freedoms. All these functions of civil society contribute to the achievement of [SDG 16](#) and its targets.

Moreover, without a strong and independent civil society, strong multi-stakeholder partnerships cannot be attained. Again, financial sustainability is one of the key issues without which civil society could not survive. By exploring donor-CSO relationships, how the needs of CSOs are addressed by donor priorities and how their funding programs enable or disable CSOs to grow into strong actors, this research contributes to the core of the [SDG17](#).

At the global level, the [CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness \(CPDE\)](#), a global coalition of CSOs committed to making development more effective, have developed studies assessing the enabling environment for civil society organisations, including the dimension referring to donor-CSO relationship: [„An Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organizations: A Synthesis of evidence of progress since Busan \(2013\) and GPEDC Indicator Two: Civil Society Operates within an environment that maximizes its engagement in and contribution to development. An Assessment of Evidence \(2016\).](#)

As regards the Black Sea Region, in 2015 a [Report on Enabling Environment for Civil Society in the Black Sea Region](#) was conducted by Tanja Hafner Ademi and Milka Ivanovska from the [Balkan Civil Society Development Network](#) and supported by the [Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND](#).

According to the findings in the report, there are several problems in terms of access to foreign funding and donor-CSO relationship in the Black Sea Region:

- Limited access to foreign funding for CSOs in certain countries (e.g.: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia) due to legislation creating a disabling environment for CSOs;
- Limited capacity of smaller, local CSOs to access foreign funding;
- Limited consultations of CSOs with regard to donor strategies and funding priorities (e.g. consultations organised on an ad-hoc basis, participation in consultations only of well-known and large CSOs etc);
- Lack of a permanent and structured dialogue between CSOs and donors with regard to modalities of aid and funding priorities;
- Gap between the funding needs of CSOs and the funding priorities of donors;
- CSOs are mainly supported on a project rather than a multi-year programme basis, with very limited availability of core funding.

Starting from these identified challenges, CSOs in the Black Sea Region included in the above-mentioned report highlighted the need to develop more in-depth research on the access to foreign funding of CSOs, as well as the relationship between donors and CSOs in the Black Sea Region. In addition, if information is available, the current research should also make reference to local funders (donations) and the philanthropy sector.

## **II. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The current call for applications targets consultants / research experts, with the purpose of **conducting a research on “Donor-CSO relationship in the Black Sea Region”** having the following objectives:

1. **Providing a mapping of donors active in the Black Sea Region and their funding programmes** available for civil society organisations (CSOs) in this region (both European, regional or international). Foreign funding will be particularly taken into consideration, as currently this is the main source of funding that allows for the development of an independent civil society. In addition, if information is available, the research should also make reference to local funders (donations) and the philanthropy sector.
2. **Assessing the level of accessibility of the funding for CSOs** in the Black Sea Region, as well as identifying the **main obstacles** CSOs face in accessing funds;

3. **Analysing the donor – CSOs relationships in the Black Sea Region** in terms of (but not limited to): existing consultation mechanisms and their accessibility; taking in consideration CSOs feedback on funding strategies and priorities; degree to which existing funds cover the needs of CSOs; what other needs are not being covered; frequency of project vs. programme-based funding and their influence over the financial sustainability of CSOs; challenges CSOs face when interacting with donors and vice-versa etc.
4. **Gathering recommendations from CSO representatives** on the improvement of the access to funding and developing a balanced relationship between donors and CSOs, in which both are equal actors;
5. Analysing how both an improved access to funding, as well as a balanced donor-CSO relationships can **contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for civil society and lead to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals** (particularly SDG 16 and SDG 17).

### III. TASKS TO BE PERFORMED

The assignment of the consultant / research expert includes the following mandatory activities:

- **Elaborate the research plan and methodology together with the calendar of activities.** These must be developed in accordance with the objectives of the assignment and must include: both quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as minimum 2 field visits made in 2 different countries covered by the assignment for conducting interviews/ focus groups with CSO/donor representatives;
- **Conduct the research** in accordance with the agreed research plan and methodology;
- **Elaborate a report on the state of Donor-CSO Relationship in the Black Sea Region** (a draft version must be finalised by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2018 and the final version must be finalised by the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2018). Both versions of the report must be written in English.

### IV. DELIVERABLES

- **Research plan & proposed methodology together with the calendar of activities**, which should describe in detail the proposed research methods, taking into consideration the objectives of the assignment and timeline for implementing the agreed methodology.
- **Data sets** to include: database of respondents included in the research together with contact details, quantitative data received through surveys/questionnaires, qualitative data received through interviews and focus groups (recordings/transcripts - in English if available).
- **Draft report on “Donor-CSO Relationship in the Black Sea Region” (in English)**, highlighting main findings with regard to the objectives of the assignment;
- **Final report on “Donor-CSO Relationship in the Black Sea Region” (in English)** – full version, addressing all the objectives of the assignment.

### V. TIMELINE

Activity	Deadline
Deadline for receiving applications	5 <sup>th</sup> of February 2018
Selection of the consultant/ research expert	10 <sup>th</sup> of February 2018
Finalising the contracting process	15 <sup>th</sup> of February 2018
Implementing the evaluation according to the agreed plan & methodology	15 <sup>th</sup> of February – 31 <sup>st</sup> of March 2018
Deadline for submitting the draft evaluation report	31 <sup>st</sup> of March 2018
Deadline for final evaluation report	15 <sup>th</sup> of April 2018

## **VI. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Consultant/ Research expert:**

- Develop the research plan and methodology;
- Conduct the research according to the agreed plan, which will include also a calendar of activities;
- Respect the deadlines established in this ToR – 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2018 for the draft report and 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 for submitting the final report to the project team.

### **The Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND (Black Sea NGO Forum - Project team):**

- Support the consultant/ research expert with necessary background documents and information relevant for the research;
- Provide feedback on the documents resulted from this assignment.

## **VII. BUDGET**

The applicant must include a financial offer together with all other requested documents, as part of his/hers application, taking into consideration the objectives of the assignment, the tasks to be performed and deliverables requested. Please note that the financial offer must include all costs related to the field visits mentioned in Section III. Tasks to be performed.

The quality/ price ratio will be taken into consideration in the selection process.

## **VIII. SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES**

### **Required:**

- At least 3 years of experience in relevant research, particularly focused on civil society organisations;
- Proficiency in English;
- Experience of working in multicultural contexts;
- Excellent interpersonal skills;
- Excellent planning and prioritisation skills;
- Proven ability to adapt the methodology to challenges and opportunities emerging during the research;
- Proven ability to multitask and work under tight deadlines.

### **Would be considered an advantage:**

- Knowledge of the context and dynamics specific to the Black Sea Region, experience in working with civil society organisations and/or donors active in the Black Sea Region.

## **IX. APPLICATION PROCESS**

The application procedure consists of two stages:

### 1) Initial selection

**Interested candidates must send the following application documents by e-mail: [fond.romania@gmail.com](mailto:fond.romania@gmail.com), until the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2018, 5:00 PM Romanian time (GMT+2):**

- **CV;**
- **Motivation letter** (in a separate document);
- **Two relevant research samples** (one preferably on a subject related to civil society) – to be used only for the selection process;
- **Research plan & proposed methodology** (including a calendar of activities).

- **Proposed financial offer for the assignment.**

Candidates accepted for the interview stage will be announced the results on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2018.

## 2) Interview

The interviews will take place between **8th and 9th of February 2018**, with the possibility of organising the interviews via skype. At the interview stage, the selected candidates must demonstrate their motivation and commitment for carrying out the assignment, as well as present the research plan together with the calendar of activities to the project team.

## ANNEX 1

### USEFUL RESOURCES:

#### Available online:

Busan Partnership Agreement: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>

Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Monitoring Framework: <http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/GPEDC-Monitoring-Framework-10-Indicators.pdf>

Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, Progress Report 2015-2016: [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/making-development-co-operation-more-effective\\_9789264266261-en#.WmDAZaiWbIW](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/making-development-co-operation-more-effective_9789264266261-en#.WmDAZaiWbIW)

CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, *An Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organizations: A Synthesis of evidence of progress since Busan (2013)*: <http://csopartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CSO-Contribution-to-Indicator-2.pdf>

CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, *GPEDC Indicator Two: Civil Society Operates within an environment that maximizes its engagement in and contribution to development. An Assessment of Evidence (2016)*: <http://csopartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GPEDC-Indicator-Two.pdf>

Development Effectiveness and the Role of Civil Society Organisations (factsheet): [http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Development-Effectiveness\\_The-role-of-civil-society.pdf](http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Development-Effectiveness_The-role-of-civil-society.pdf)

Report on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in the Black Sea Region: Towards a Regional Strategy for Cooperation (2015): [http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Report-Enabling-Environment-for-CSOs-in-the-Black-Sea-Region\\_final.pdf](http://www.blackseango.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Report-Enabling-Environment-for-CSOs-in-the-Black-Sea-Region_final.pdf)

*Should you need any other information related to the current assignment, do not hesitate to contact us at: [fond.romania@gmail.com](mailto:fond.romania@gmail.com).*



*This research is part of the European Regional Work Plan 2017-2018, implemented by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND, with the financial support of CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness – CPDE as part of the project “Enhancing Civil Society Role in Development Partnerships Post-2015”. FOND currently holds the secretariat of the CPDE European Region (comprised of 3 sub-regions - the EU, Black Sea and Balkans) and is a focal point for CSOs in the Black Sea sub-region through the Black Sea NGO Forum.*