



Civil Society Participation in the Mid-Term Review of the 10th European Development Fund

A Short Overview

Since its creation in 1959, the European Development Fund (EDF) has been the main instrument of the European Community (EC) for the provision of official development aid to its partner countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group. Currently, the 10th EDF (2008-2013) is in place and covers an overall budget of EUR 22.7 billion. It is implementing the so-called "Cotonou Agreement" of 2000 between the ACP group on the one hand, and the EC and the EU Member States on the other hand.

In 2009/2010, the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the 10th EDF takes place in Brussels and in the ACP countries.

Next to regional strategy papers and the intra-ACP strategy, the European Commission is reviewing the national Country Strategy Papers (CSP) together with each of their ACP partners. As a first phase of the MTR, the European Commission delegations together with the National Authorizing Officer (NAO) of the national governments were holding the in-country review from July to November 2009. According to the EC guidelines on the MTR, relevant stakeholders - in addition to the national government - should be systematically involved, and input from Non-State Actors should be actively sought from an early stage throughout the process.

This Fast Fact is based on a survey among Reproductive Health (RH) organizations that the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) has conducted in November 2009. Based on a questionnaire of 20 questions, RH organizations in six countries (Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Burkina Faso) were asked to assess the consultations with the EC delegations in their countries. The purpose of the DSW survey was to provide a selection of indicators on the availability of background information, civil society involvement during the MTR consultation process and the assessment of the usefulness of their involvement, which depict whether the CSO participation within the MTR process in these six countries was carried out sufficiently. In addition, a series of questions were addressed to assess the prominence of SRHR issues during the MTR consultations.

Insufficient Access to Background Information

As a first step, the DSW questionnaire assessed the quantity, and more importantly the quality, of the MTR's background information that was made available to the partner organizations in the six countries, to find out how the partner organizations initially became aware of the MTR process in-country.

Each response highlighted that it was civil society partners in the North who were the most proactive in providing key documentation in preparation of the MTR to the Southern partners, rather than the EC delegations, and it was also often them who helped to initially set this consultation process in motion.

- Information most frequently disseminated to the Southern partners were background documents, i.e. the EC guidelines on the MTR, the national Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), and Joint Annual Reviews.
- Direct mailing was the most utilized and effective mode of dissemination to partners in-country.
- The majority of the country responses did not indicate any major problems with understanding the EC guidelines, except for the Ugandan partner organization which did not receive any guidelines.
- The EC delegations did provide contact persons to supply a portion of this information to the partners, but this contact



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with the EC delegations was facilitated by prior relationships between them and the RH organizations.

- Despite the MTR not being the first opportunity for many of the RH organizations to establish contact with their EC delegations, many of the Southern partners noted a certain unwillingness and lateness from the EC delegations to disseminate relevant information.

CSO Involvement within the Consultation Process

Despite civil society involvement at MTR meetings, a general consensus existed amongst the polled organizations, that CSO participation in the general MTR process was insufficient.

- Bilateral meetings with selected stakeholders and written requests were the dominant forms of interaction for the six sample countries.
- Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda all specified little or no CSO representation in the MTR consultations and all countries would have liked to have seen an increased integration of CSOs within the process.
- Lack of available information was a key issue for the six sample countries.
- In Kenya, the EC delegation felt that CSOs were partly to blame for a disrupted flow of communication by not accepting their invitations. However, due to the EC often being late with communication, the Kenyan partner organisation advised to work together through NGO networks to establish a more harmonized dialogue.
- In Rwanda, the EC delegation met initially with the RH partner – in this case representing a NGO consortium – in the framework of a bilateral meeting. As a result of their advocacy efforts for greater involvement of RH civil society in the MTR process during that meeting, subsequently two Rwandan organizations were invited to a more general EC-MTR workshop to represent their NGO network.

Future Gains from the MTR Process?

The MTR process provided advocacy entry points and an opportunity for the partner organizations to strengthen their ties with the EC delegations by:

- Leading to an increased dialogue between CSO and EC delegations, and also leading to changes in Country Strategy Papers.
- In Kenya, CSOs were promised to be consulted during the next round of developing guidelines for the calls for proposals, where this opportunity will be seized to identify health issues.
- Four out of the six sample partner organizations which attempted or succeeded to contact the relevant MTR decision-makers, found the response of the EC delegation to be cooperative and felt that their input was taken seriously.
- After contact with the EC delegation, there has been a regular communication flow on the MTR process, which has provided a good starting point for increased future engagement.
- However, requests were made for civil society partners in the North to provide further guidance on how to facilitate the process of approaching EC delegations.

Sexual and Reproductive Health in the MTR Process

Despite Reproductive Health not having been a priority area in the MTR process for some of the EC delegations in the six sample countries, significant steps were made during the consultation processes in Burkina-Faso and Rwanda.

- In Burkina-Faso, prior to the organization of the MTR bilateral meetings held there, a previously-formed coalition presented a petition to the EC delegation and the Government requesting them to include Reproductive Health in the Country Strategy Paper. Consequently, the EC delegation incorporated this information into the MTR meeting, where they highlighted the importance of implementing an efficient development plan for SRHR and also shared this information in their exchange with the Ministry of Health.
- In Rwanda, the current CSP indicates that there is no direct expenditure on SRHR activities. Prior to the MTR meetings, a previously-formed NGO consortium also made significant advocacy efforts by jointly preparing a position paper which was then presented to and discussed with the EC delegation in relation to the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.



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DSW Questionnaire

- 1) How did you hear about the Mid-Term Review?
- 2) Who started the consultation process?
- 3) What kind of information did you get for this consultation?
- 4) How was the information distributed?
- 5) When was this information made available?
- 6) Did you receive enough and adequate information?
- 7) How did you get the Mid-Term Review guidelines?
- 8) Were the guidelines easy to understand?
- 9) What form did the consultation process take?
 - 9.1) How many meetings/forums were organised?
 - 9.2) Who participated in these meetings?
 - 9.3) Which topics were discussed?
 - 9.4) How sufficiently was Reproductive Health addressed in these meetings?
 - 9.5) Are minutes of these meetings available?
 - 9.6) Is a follow-up process established?
- 10) Did you provide written or online contributions to the European Commission Delegations?
 - 10.1) If yes: were the written/online contributions guided by a questionnaire?
- 11) Has a summary of the written contributions been published?
- 12) Was the Mid-Term Review process the first opportunity to get in contact with the European Commission Delegation?
- 13) Did you try to contact the relevant decision-makers (EC delegation focal point for Civil Society, National Authorising Officer) in the Mid-Term Review process? Or did you have at least the possibility to do so?
 - 13.1) If yes, who?
 - 13.2) How was the response?
 - 13.3) After having contacted the EC delegations, have you regularly been informed about the Mid-Term Review process?
 - 13.4) Do you feel your input was taken seriously?
- 14) Do you feel this process will lead to a more regular dialogue between Civil Society Organisations and European Commission/National Authorising Officer?
- 15) In your opinion, will Mid-Term Review lead to changes in Country Strategy Papers?
 - 15.1) If yes, will civil society inputs lead to changes in Country Strategy Papers?
- 16) According to you, what was THE major problem you encountered during this consultation process?
- 17) Did you have the opportunity to discuss Budget support with the EC Delegation during this consultation?
- 18) During the Mid-Term Review consultation, have you been in contact with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, other Ministries?
 - 18.1) If yes, could you provide some information on the cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance?
- 19) Did you receive enough and adequate information from your northern Civil Society partner(s)?
- 20) What could have been improved from your partners' side to help you with the Mid-Term Review?

