European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
(EPLO)

Interim Evaluation of the
Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) project

EVALUATION REPORT

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The evaluator wishes to acknowledge the fulsome cooperation and support to this interim evaluation from EPLO as well as EU-institutions. Particular mention should be made of the cooperation provided by EPLO's Executive Director Catherine Woollard and her team for the warm welcome and hospitality as well as for organising meetings and interviews with stakeholders.

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Any errors or misunderstandings arising out of the interviews and documentary reviews are the evaluator's own responsibility.

Executive Summary

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project co-funded by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) as the implementing partner. The project aims at facilitating dialogue on peace-building issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation.

The CSDN project is certainly a success. The project fills a communication gap between civil society in EU member states, in other (European) countries and in countries facing (mainly political) crises on one side, and decision-makers within EU institutions and member states on the other side. As such, the project was and is highly relevant to the needs of both sides. It fulfils to a larger extent the expectations of partners and beneficiaries and contributes significantly towards its objectives.

There is still ongoing (and even increasing) demand for the project's activities and outputs in the short and mid-term future. It is therefore recommended to consider coming up with a similar project (continuation or "Phase II") at the end of the project's lifespan in mid-2013. The general outlines of the project are considered appropriate by key implementers and partners and it is recommended to leave them basically unchanged. In order not to lose the momentum it is important to start design and preparation in a timely manner to ensure there is no gap between the end of the project and its continuation. Nevertheless, the following recommendations are made with regards to a possible "Phase II" in order to improve the efficiency and management approach of the intervention.

"In-country-meetings": CSDN is implementing significantly more activities than originally planned but none of the so called "in-country-meetings" could be done so far for various reasons. Despite all the difficulties it is recommended to find ways to go ahead with implementing at least one or two of these meetings in "easier" countries as pilot initiatives to gain experience in order to decide whether or not (or under which circumstances) considering them in a "Phase II".

The management approach[1]: The project's major strength is the fact that all decisions and activities are based on mutual agreements which leads to a high level of ownership from all partners including the EU institutions. Nevertheless, as discussed in detail under the "efficiency" section of this report, a higher degree of flexibility in some cases (e.g. for "in-country meetings") can be useful in order to allow certain activities to be implemented. Therefore, it is recommended to reconsider (unwritten) management/decision-making approaches and roles in a way such that some activities can go ahead even if there is no clear upfront "100% buy-in" from all sides. In such cases, consider an approach whereby the meeting is organized and partners who may not be entirely excited by the idea are fully informed about the planned activity and kindly invited to participate. In such cases there would be no obligation to participate, or the partner may decide just to come in as observer or at junior level, etc. Of course, if one of the partners (e.g. EU Delegation (DEU) or the geographic desk ("Desk")) strongly opposes such an activity or if there is no clear expression of interest from the Civil Society's side, the activity will not go ahead. Due to the fact that this would only apply in very few cases, the general and usually very successful approach of mutual decision-making would not be jeopardized. Nevertheless, if such an approach is introduced to the CSDN, the project and consequently EU institutions as key project partners would certainly gain from civil society's and NGOs' ability and mandate to "push the limits" and to bring ideas and issues on the table, which were not there and discussed before.

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[1] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1.

The co-funding arrangement: According to the co-funding agreement, project costs are shared (20%/80%) between EPLO and the EU. For reasons discussed in the "Impact" and "Sustainability" sections of this report, this cost-sharing ratio is not entirely adjuvant in the view of optimizing outcomes and impacts & sustainability. There is a need to reconsider the cost-sharing ratio. It is recommended that EPLO's contribution is decreased to 10% or less of total costs.

Staff capacity[2]: Flexibility is one of the strength of the project. Nevertheless, CSDN/EPLO is chronically under-staffed and finds it very difficult to accommodate ad-hoc or short-term proposals for additional activities even if these are considered highly relevant and urgent. It also leads to limited capacity for important work beyond the basic organising of CSDN events, such as follow-up on meetings, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of outcomes and impacts, etc. It is recommended to increase the allocation for staff costs in the budget in order to allow restructuring and increasing the office staff. Additionally, consider ways to streamline the decision-making process in order to facilitate long-term planning and to minimize the number of activities organized at short notice.

The intervention logic[3]: As discussed under "Design", due to the nature of the approach and the need for flexibility, the intervention logic of the current project is slightly vague. Especially, the absence of clear objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) and targets (beyond the to-do-list) makes it difficult to monitor progress and success. Additionally, there seems to be a certain lack of common understanding regarding the nature of CSDN. It is therefore recommended to review the intervention logic (preferable by using the logframe approach or a similar tool) and come up with a set of appropriate OVIs (and targets where appropriate) for objectives and expected results. This could be done at a facilitated workshop including EPLO management and staff, POG members and external stakeholders if appropriate. There is also a need to create in-house capacity for M&E to follow up on these indicators. Finally, this intervention logic should then be shared with stakeholders within EU institutions and beyond in order to create a better common understanding regarding the nature of CSDN.

Project Oversight Group (POG)[4]: Some stakeholders interviewed expressed their opinion that the POG involves itself to a major degree in "micro-management" issues, rather than concentrating on its core-function to discuss and decide on overall policy issues. This evaluation observed that the project is reasonably well-managed by EPLO as the implementing partner and by its project management team. Therefore, it can be suggested that a higher level of trust could be applied and that the POG leaves issues of daily micro-management to EPLO's project management team and concentrate on overall policy decisions.

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[2] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1

[3] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1

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List of abbreviations

CONCORD	Confederation for Cooperation of Relief and Development NGOs
CSDN	Civil Society Dialogue Network
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEU	Delegation of the European Union
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
EU	European Union
IDM	In-country Dialogue Meeting
IfS	Instrument for Stability
LF	Logical Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East, North Africa
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD-DCD-DAC	OECD-Development Co-operation Directorate
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
POG	Project Oversight Group
ROM	Result Oriented Monitoring
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations

Table of Content

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

1.1.1   The "Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN)" project

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation. The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) organises CSDN meetings, which are open to all interested civil society actors and take place in Brussels, EU Member States and conflict-affected countries with EU presence. The CSDN discusses policy, strategic and programming aspects of the Peacebuilding Partnership, transversal thematic issues relating to peace-building and crisis-specific situations.

The CSDN project started mid-2010 and will come to an end in July 2013.

1.1.2   European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)

As stated on its web side[5] EPLO is the platform of European NGOs, NGO networks and think tanks which are committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict.

It aims to influence the EU so that it promotes and implements measures, which lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and which transform and resolve conflicts non-violently. EPLO wants the EU to recognise the crucial connection between peacebuilding, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development worldwide and the crucial role NGOs play in sustainable EU efforts for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and crisis management.

To date EPLO has 33 member organisations from 15 European countries (11 EU Member States plus Kosovo, Norway, Serbia and Switzerland).

1.2   Description of the assignment

1.2.1   Global objective

According to the Terms of Reference[6], the global objective of the assignment was to provide a deep and comprehensive evaluation of the results of the project and lessons to be applied in the final year of the project and in any potential future CSDN project.

1.2.2   Specific objectives

Specific objectives were:

1) to identify the results of the CSDN project so far;
2) to assess the management of the CSDN project by EPLO;
3) to identify challenges in the implementation of the project;
4) to list recommendations for improvement of the CSDN.

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[5] www.eplo.org

[6] ToR are attached in the annex.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 General Approach

As postulated in the ToR, the consultant studied the achievements of the projects so far, its contribution to the objective, and performance in terms of expected results. This was done in accordance with the EU evaluation guidelines based on the five main DAC[7] standard evaluation criteria:

- o Relevance
- o Efficiency
- o Effectiveness
- o Impact
- o Sustainability

Also, lessons learnt and corresponding recommendations for future activities of a similar nature were outlined.

Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM)[8] for the project was done in May/June 2012. The ROM-report provides a solid base for this interim evaluation. The findings of the ROM have been verified and updated where necessary but duplication of efforts was avoided as far as possible and appropriate.

The methodology of the interim evaluation was based on the following main steps and methods, all of which have been applied by the consultant in similar previous assignments and proven most appropriate:

- o Briefing with EPLO;
- o Desk research and review of relevant documents;
- o Meetings/semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders, including:
  - – EU institutions (EEAS, EC, etc.)
  - – EPLO member organisations
  - – Participants in CSDN activities
  - – EPLO staff
  - – Other relevant stakeholders
- o Debriefing with EPLO, presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations, and discussion at the end of the mission;
- o Receiving of comments on the Draft Evaluation Report;
- o Incorporation of comments into report and submission of Final Report.

1.3.2 Key stakeholders

Key stakeholders of this evaluation are:

- o CSDN Project Oversight Group (POG)
- o EPLO Management

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[7] OECD-Development Co-operation Directorate

[8] As part of the pilot project: " *Results Oriented Monitoring system for the Implementation of Projects and Programmes of External Co-operation for the Instrument for Stability"*

- o EU institutions, namely EEAS and the EC
- o EPLO Member Organisations

1.4 Objective and overview of this report

This evaluation report summarises findings, conclusions, observations, "lessons learnt" and recommendations to be applied in the final year of the project and in any potential future CSDN project.

A Draft Evaluation Report was submitted at the end of November 2012 and was shared with key stakeholders including EEAS and FPI as the key-project partners. The comments provided by EEAS & FPI mid December 2012 are very valid and have been incorporated in this final report. The comments on the various recommendations are also attached in the annex of this report.

In any case, it is beyond the mandate and scope of this evaluation to make decisions, solve issues and to find solutions which are fully supported by all sides. An external evaluation is a (usually useful) management tool. The recommendations listed in the report are based on observations and are made in order to draw attention to issues, put these issues on the table and provide a basis and an additional outside view for further discussions within the POG, project partners and beyond. The comments from the EEAS/FPI show that this process has already started or is already ongoing.

It is now up to the POG to discuss the issues further, draw the right conclusions and take mutual decisions.

Structure of the Report

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the background of the CSDN as well as of the assignment, including global and specific objectives, required outputs and deliverables. It also outlines the methodology used for this evaluation. Finally, it provides an overview and structure for this report.

The 2nd chapter emphasises the relevance & design of the project. The relevance was assessed with a view to the demands and expectations of project partners, beneficiaries and target groups. The design was analysed focusing (inter alia) on the project's intervention logic, objectives and expected results.

Chapter 3 describes the efficiency of project implementation and management.

Chapter 4 looks at effectiveness and assesses to what extent the activities lead to the expected results as listed in the project proposal and action fiche.

The 5th chapter analyses what impact these results have and to what extent they are likely to contribute towards reaching the two desired objectives.

Chapter 6 assesses the (potential) sustainability of the activities and project outputs including EPLO as an organisation, as well as the sustainability of the potential impacts.

Chapter 7 describes to what extent cross-cutting issues, mainly gender, (good) governance, and environmental issues, have been considered in the project's planning and implementation.

Chapter 8, finally, provides conclusions and lessons learnt, as well as recommendations for similar interventions in the future.

The Annex includes EEAS comments on the recommendations (in the draft report), a list of persons interviewed and the ToR for this assignment.

2 Relevance & Design

2.1 Relevance:

The CSDN project fills a communication gap between civil society in EU member states, in other (European) countries and in countries facing (mainly political) crisis on one side, and decision-makers within EU institutions and member states on the other side. As such, the project was and is highly relevant to the needs of both sides.

The EC has undertaken efforts to enhance its relations with the civil society sector on peacebuilding issues with the objective of establishing a coherent, balanced and transparent dialogue since early 2008.

EPLO aims to provide a platform for civil society in order influence the EU so that it promotes and implements measures which lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and which transform and resolve conflicts non-violently.

CSDN's ultimate target groups are the populations of conflict-affected countries.

Its direct beneficiaries are:

- o Civil society organizations in Europe and in conflict-affected countries;
- o EU policy-makers, including those in the EU institutions and in EU member states' governments;

It can be firmly said that the project responds to the needs of these target groups and beneficiaries.

The Instrument for Stability (IfS) was chosen to fund CSDN. It is clearly in line with the IfS objective (Article 4(3)) with states[9]: *"Building conflict prevention and crisis response capacities, primarily by supporting in country non-state actors in fragile and conflict-afflicted situations; strengthening dialogue and cooperation between policy-makers and civil society on conflict prevention, crisis preparedness and peace-building; promoting early warning and coherent early action in third countries; enhancing international community's capacities on natural resources and conflict minerals; and reinforcing cooperation with EU Member States on building pre- and post-crisis capacities in third countries."*

The grant was awarded directly to EPLO outside the scope of a call for proposals. This was and is justified due to the fact that there is currently no other organisation or platform in place within EU's periphery[10] with a similar mandate and/or member-base. It was done on the basis of Article 168, par. 1(c,f) of the Financial Regulations

2.2 Design

The project design is based on Action Fiche 1 in the Crisis Preparedness –Annual Action Programme 2010 and related to the "Strategy Paper 2007-2011" and the "Indicative Programme 2009 – 2011" for the IfS.

2.2.1 Intervention Logic:

The project agreement (signed 28/07/2010) does not include a logframe or a similar standard tool. The Project Application lists two objectives:

Objective 1: To promote and develop a robust dialogue mechanism, at a European level, between civil society and the EU institutions on peace-building issues, in order to contribute to strengthening international and regional capacity to anticipate, analyse, prevent and

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[9] Instrument for Stability-Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2012-2013; EC, (2012)

[10] It is understood that there are similar platforms cooperating with UN-agencies based in Geneva and New York. Other platforms such as Brussels-based CONCORDE are concentrating mainly on relief and development issues.

respond to threats to stability and human development posed by violent conflict and natural disasters, as well as to improve international co-operation in post-conflict and post-disaster recovery, and to influence, mentor and monitor dialogue at field level;

Objective 2: To strengthen EPLO in its co-ordination, policy and networking functions at European level and to allow it to develop a Dialogue Network inclusive of all interested non-state actors in the peace-building and related fields;

The main **expected Results** are:

i) the generation of expertise among civil society on the peace-building agenda at European level;
ii) the implementation of dynamic participatory work within the Dialogue Network and the strengthening of capacity;
iii) strengthening of the institutional and policy dialogue between civil society and European level actors/decision-makers;
iv) insuring that the Dialogue Network informs the strategic direction of the peace-building activities of the EU Institutions, including the Commission's efforts on funding the capacity-building of peace-building non-state actors;
v) the elaboration of joint position papers and strategies on issues of common interest to the Network with a view to enriching the policy aspects of the dialogue at European and international level;
vi) the promotion of an EU dimension in the discourse on peace-building issues at an international level;
vii) the facilitation of a better understanding by the European public of peace-building issues and the role of the EU in the world in this regard.

The agreement includes a to-do list indicating the targeted numbers for the various types of meetings within the implementation period, which are the only quantifiable outputs of the project.

Despite its high level of relevance, strictly spoken, CSDN is not a "project"[11] as such, since it neither has a clearly defined baseline-situation to start with nor does it have a clearly defined outcome to aim for. It is rather an ongoing initiative, which is significantly boosted by a co-funding agreement for a given timeframe. The project duration of three years is not designed to finish the task (which is in any case unlikely to be finished ever, since there is always a need for dialogue between civil society and the EU). It is purely administrative, since it is simply the maximum standard length for IfS (article 4.3) initiatives. Consequently, and in the absence of a logframe or a similar tool, the intervention logic is slightly vague. Especially the lack of objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) and targets in the project logic makes it difficult to assess the progress and success of the initiative.

It is understood that the nature of the project and the need for a high level of flexibility make it difficult to develop a logframe and to come up with OVIs, targets and sources of verification for them. Nevertheless, it is recommended that some efforts are invested (e.g. in form of a workshop with project partners, management staff and external stakeholders (if appropriate) facilitated by an logframe specialist to streamline the intervention logic, to come up with OVIs for objectives and expected results as well as to develop a basic internal M&E strategy.

2.2.2 Budget

The total budget of the project is € 2.5 million co-funded by EPLO (20%) and the EU (80%) under the IfS. Even if it is anticipated that there will be some under-spending at the end of the project, the overall size of the budget is considered appropriate by project management and partners, given the demand for and planned number of activities, the absorption and

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[11] Per definition a "project" consists of "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or result". (www.wikipedia.org)

management capacity of CSDN's project partners and EPLO's capacity to contribute matching funds.

3 Efficiency

3.1.1 General implementation issues and observations

The project implementation is guided by an activity schedule (CSDN activity plan). This schedule needs regular updating since many of the meetings are organised ad-hoc and/or on request from one of the partners (EU institutions, EPLO or EPLO members), often reacting to emerging crises, etc. EPLO is very flexible in adapting the schedule to accommodate such needs.

However, there seems to be a certain lack of common understanding among various individual EU staff members interviewed on the general nature of the CSDN intervention. On one extreme, people think that CSDN is based on a grant given to an NGO that can use it independently, according to its own agenda. On the other extreme, people consider EPLO as a service provider for the EU, implementing a service contract paid by the EU. In fact CSDN is based on a grant and co-funding agreement and the current approach for management and decision-making is somewhere in the middle of these two extremes.

The project is well-managed by EPLO's own internal management structure (internal management and EPLO Steering Committee) as well as the Project Oversight Group (POG). As reported from all sides, co-operation and communication between actors is satisfactory.

The Project Oversight Group, composed of representatives from the EU institutions, EPLO as well as EPLO member organisations, decide on the work plans and the meetings to be implemented. Hereby it is good practice to go ahead only with activities which are fully supported from all sides (EPLO, CSOs, EEAS, EC, relevant country and regional "desks", etc.) This leads to a very high level of interest and commitment, especially from the side of EU institutions and their senior representatives.

Seven current and former POG-members have been interviewed in the course of this evaluation. Several interviewees expressed their opinion that the POG involves itself to a significant degree in "micro-management" issues, rather than concentrating on its core function to discuss and decide on overall policy issues[12]. This evaluation observed that the project is reasonably well-managed by EPLO as the implementing partner and by its project management team. Therefore, it can be suggested that a higher level of trust could be applied and that the POG could concentrate predominantly on overall policy decisions.

3.1.2 Activities implemented

CSDN's main outputs are meetings (in different categories) with the aim of promoting dialogue between CSOs and EU institutions. As good as all stakeholders and participants interviewed expressed the opinion that the meetings are "very good" and very well organized, even if they found it difficult to come up with clear and objective quality indicators. The only less positive feedback was given regarding the (lack of) follow-up of meetings. Some participants expressed their view that it would worth investing more efforts in the follow-up of these events to ensure information-flow, dialogue and networking survives beyond the CSDN meeting itself.

The project agreement outlines that the CSDN target is to organize 26 meetings over three years in various categories. At the time of this evaluation, 25 meetings have been done[13]

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[12] EEAS/FPI commented on this issue and the corresponding recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1.

[13] As of October 2012

and CSDN anticipates that a total of 39 meetings are likely to be implemented at the end of the project's lifespan by mid-2013.

Type of meetings	Total number required by contract	Total as of Oct. 2012	Total likely at the end of the project
Geographic Meetings (incl. crisis response meetings)	5	9	15
IfS- Meetings	4	2	4
Policy Meetings	7	7	9
Member State Meetings	4	5	8
Whole-of-EU approach/ In-country Dialogue Meetings	3	0	1
EU Policy Training	3	2	5
Total	26	25	39

Source: EPLO

This means that the CSDN is already overshooting on the number of meetings requested for most categories of meetings or is likely to having done more than requested at the end of the project.

The "Conflict Assessment Workshops" (counted under "Geographic Meetings") were not foreseen in the original work plan but proved to be highly appreciated and successful. Background information provided for these meetings is considered well prepared and highly useful[14].

The only problematic meetings are the "In-country Dialogue Meetings" (IDMs). So far, the CSDN proposed IDMs in the Western Balkan (regional, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina), West Africa (regional, Sierra Leone, Liberia), Middle East & North Africa (MENA) (Morocco, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia), as well as Nepal. At the time of this evaluation, an IDM in Niger was under discussion. Almost everybody interviewed expressed the opinion that such IDMs would be very important and would increase the impact of the project because they would allow a better coverage of CSOs' voices from the crisis-affected countries themselves. Additionally, as one of the interviewees expressed it: "It's important to get the Brussels people out of Brussels and into the field".

In any case, none of these IDMs were done so far. On one hand, organizing IDMs creates (logistical) challenges. Potential problems/issues include (inter alia):

i) Security issues in crisis-affected countries are sometimes unpredictable;
ii) These and other unpredictable factors make the budgeting difficult; cost may get over the top;
iii) Sometimes it may be more appropriate to meet on neutral ground (such as Brussels);
iv) Depending on the political situation, the host country's government may not approve such a meeting (e.g. Zimbabwe);
v) Not so many or hardly any senior/key people from the EU side would attend due to time and budget constraints.

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14 Several stakeholders specifically mentioned the country-background paper for the 'Libya Workshop' as "excellent".

On the other hand, experience shows that it is very difficult to get full support for IDMs upfront from all sides, especially to get mutual support from all relevant EU stakeholders. In most cases, despite of a clear demand for such a meeting from the CSOs' side, either the "Desk" in Brussels or the DEU in the proposed host country is not fully convinced about the potential benefits of such an intervention in "their" country. As a consequence and following the current management approach, the IDM does not get the go-ahead from the POG.

It is therefore highly recommended to reconsider (unwritten) management/decision-making approaches and roles in a way that certain activities can go ahead even if there is no clear upfront "100% buy-in" from all sides. In such a case, consider an approach whereby the meeting is organized and partners who may not be entirely excited by the idea are fully informed about the planned activity and kindly invited to participate. In these cases there would be no obligation to participate, or the partner may decide just to come in as an observer or at junior level, etc. Of course, if one of the partners (e.g. DEU or the "Desk") strongly opposes such an activity or there is no clear expression of interest from the CSO's side, the activity will not go ahead.

Due to the fact that this would only apply in very few pilot cases, the general and usually very successful approach of mutual decision-making would not be jeopardized. Nevertheless, if such an approach is introduced, the project and consequently EU institutions as key project partners would certainly gain from civil society's and NGOs' ability and mandate to "push the limits" and to bring such ideas and issues onto the table, which were not there and discussed before.

3.1.3   Financial and human resource management

A recent audit showed that CSDN's financial execution is satisfactory.

So far, and despite the fact that more meetings than planned are implemented, CSDN is slightly under-spending. The main reasons are that on average meetings/travel costs turned out to be cheaper than anticipated. Additionally the in-country dialogue meetings, which may for various reasons turn out to be more costly than the meetings in Brussels, did not happen so far.

On the other hand, the budget for staff costs appears hardly sufficient. On one hand, flexibility is one of the strength of the project. On the other hand, CSDN/EPLO is chronically under-staffed and finds it very difficult to accommodate ad-hoc or short-term proposals for additional activities even if these are considered highly relevant and urgent. It also leads to limited capacity for important work beyond the basic organising of CSDN events, such as follow-up on meetings, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts, etc.

It is therefore recommended to review the budget allocations (within the given overall budget) and to consider increasing the allocation for staff costs in order to allow restructuring and increasing the office staff.

4   Effectiveness

4.1   Introduction

Chapter 4 looks at the effectiveness and assesses to what extent the activities are leading to the expected results which are:

i)   the generation of expertise among civil society on the peace-building agenda at European level;

ii)   the implementation of dynamic participatory work within the Dialogue Network and the strengthening of capacity;

iii)   strengthening of the institutional and policy dialogue between civil society and European level actors/decision-makers;

iv)   insuring that the Dialogue Network informs the strategic direction of the peace-building activities of the EU Institutions, including the Commission's efforts on funding the capacity-building of peace-building non-state actors;

v)   the elaboration of joint position papers and strategies on issues of common interest to the Network with a view to enriching the policy aspects of the dialogue at European and international level;

vi)   the promotion of an EU dimension in the discourse on peace-building issues at an international level;

vii)   the facilitation of a better understanding by the European public of peace-building issues and the role of the EU in the world in this regard.

4.2   Effectiveness of CSDN Meetings

The various types of meetings (CSDN's main outputs) potentially cover all expected results.

So called "Member-State Meetings" provide a unique opportunity to bring decision-makers from the host member states, EU institutions, CSOs from the host country and from crisis-affected countries around the same table.

The "Training Seminars" are highly appreciated by participating NGOs since they are considered interesting and highly practical.

However, there are no clear indicators to what extent the meetings (individually and as a whole) contribute towards the expected results.

One indicator is the level of attendance whereby the quality/level of people attending is especially crucial. This refers mainly to the number of senior and higher level officials from the EU institutions and from CSOs. In any case, the quality/level of people attending is hard to quantify in practice.

Other indicators are the "right mix of people" and the "quality of discussion". Obviously, to verify these indicators is even more challenging in practice and would require a survey for every meeting organized (which may be possible but hardly feasible given the resources available).

Senior EU officials mentioned "not a waste of time" as an indicator for the usefulness of the meetings (which sounds a bit rude but may be indeed a very appropriate indicator given the fact that time is possibly the most important resource for senior officials). Another indicator mentioned was the openness of discussions. Generally, constructive criticism of EU policy is welcome, given that the objective of CSDN is to allow EU policy-makers to benefit from civil society perspectives. However, in practice such openness is not always equally appreciated by all stakeholders. CSOs may hesitate to express their opinion regarding EU policies openly, since the EU is for many of them by far the most important donor. Indeed, some EU officials consider such criticism as inappropriate (given the fact that this is a EU funded initiative). Additionally, participants may use the opportunity to express complaints with

regard to (the heaviness of) EU procedures. Such criticism is less relevant in the CSDN context, as they are not under the direct scope of the dialogue nor necessarily addressed to the pertinent EU actors. On the other hand, senior EU officials mentioned that they would appreciate more frankness and openness, since too "tame" and gentle meetings would not reflect the real opinions from the CSOs' side and would therefore fall under "waste of time".

The key questions of whether or not and to what extent CSDN meetings do actually influence EU politics and policies in terms of peacebuilding and crisis management in targeted countries cannot be answered satisfactorily in this report.

Overall, the evaluation shows that there is a very high level of trust from the side of participating CSOs and EPLO members that meetings held under the CSDN are useful in terms of getting their voices heard and getting their messages across to the EU institutions. In return, these meetings increase their understanding of EU politics, policies and modus operandi. On the other side, very positive feedback from EU officials interviewed and the high level of participation and buy-in from the side of the EU institutions in general suggests, that CSDN activities enjoy a good reputation and are considered relevant and useful.

5 Impact

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the <u>impact</u> of the results towards reaching the two desired objectives, which are:

Objective 1: To promote and develop a robust dialogue mechanism, at a European level, between civil society and the EU institutions on peace-building issues, in order to contribute to strengthening international and regional capacity to anticipate, analyse, prevent and respond to threats to stability and human development posed by violent conflict and natural disasters, as well as to improve international co-operation in post-conflict and post-disaster recovery, and to influence, mentor and monitor dialogue at field level;

Objective 2: To strengthen EPLO in its co-ordination, policy and networking functions at European level and to allow it to develop a Dialogue Network inclusive of all interested non-state actors in the peace-building and related fields;

Again, the intervention logic does not include objectively verifiable indicators or targets on objectives level.

5.2 Objective 1

The project clearly meets the main objective of filling the communication gap between the relevant EU institutions and the CSOs in Europe as well as crisis-affected countries. Even in (or possibly because of) the absence of indicators, as good as all stakeholders interviewed expressed their view that the project is "achieving its objectives".

There is a broad agreement among stakeholders, that there is a certain impact of CSDN initiatives on the peacebuilding and crisis response policy development of EU institutions and their national counterparts in member states. Equally, there is no doubt that the capacity, effectiveness and self-confidence of CSOs is strengthened significantly when their voices are heard by key decision-makers in EU institutions and beyond. On the other hand, to what extend the project's activities really have an impact on changing/improving EU/EU-member states' policy is not quantifiable and, in any case, beyond the direct influence and mandate of the CSDN.

5.3 Objective 2

Beyond doubt, the project raised the profile and capacity of EPLO as the leading platform for peacebuilding dialogue between the EU institutions and CSOs. Its membership base

increased from 25 to 33 (between 2009 and 2012) and its own funding almost doubled at the same time.

EPLO as well as its member organisations are NGOs and EPLO is proud of its independence.

The question was raised that if EPLO received significant funding from the EU whether or not it can maintain its independence. Most of the interviewed stakeholders from the EPLO side expressed the oppinion that EPLO and its member organisations are very much aware of this potential danger. Nevertheless, everybody confirmed that EPLO's internal management structures are in control and could (thus far) ensure and maintain EPLO's independence. The POG ensures that decisions (e.g. which meeting to organise and which not) are based on consensus. EPLO proves its independence once in a while when it comes up with reports/ strategy papers etc., which often express a very critical view towards EU policies. Such critical contributions are not always well-received by various EU institutions/officials.

However, the project's co-funding conditions may be counterproductive. An equally shared co-funding (50/50), which would suggest equal power-sharing for both project partners, seems not feasible, given the unequal financial capacity of both sides. Therefore, the idea of co-funding has been introduced in order to ensure a high level of ownership and commitment from the project partner's side. In any case, looking at the first 2½ years of project-implementation, there is no doubt that the level of commitment and ownership from the side of EPLO and the majority of its member organisations is satisfactory. The 20% contribution for co-funding of CSDN activities are using up a significant amount of EPLO's funds from membership fees. (External donors usually do not like to co-fund EU projects as junior-partner since visibility is low.) The arrangement hardly leaves any "free" funds for EPLO's own agenda parallel and beyond CSDN (such as policy development, meetings which do not fit under CSDN, etc.) This is jeopardising the achievement of Objective 2, which is aiming at EPLO's own capacity development

6   Sustainability

There are two levels of sustainability to be considered:

- o   Sustainability of EPLO and CSDN initiatives and outputs
- o   Sustainability of the impact

6.1   Sustainability of EPLO and CSDN initiatives and outputs

EPLO as a platform and as an organisation existed before CSDN and is likely to exist after the end of it. It has a broad membership base and is funded by membership fees as well as occasionally by external donors for specific projects/activities. In any case and beyond doubt, the EU funding raised the level of activities significantly. Therefore there is a common understanding that a "Phase II" for CSDN with EPLO will be useful and justified.

The grant was awarded directly to EPLO outside the scope of a call for proposals. This was and is justified due to the fact that there is currently no other organisation or platform in place within the EU with a comparable mandate and/or member base.

Nevertheless, the question was raised whether this ongoing support to EPLO (without going trough a competitive selection process) creates a monopoly for it and its member organisations and whether the agreement discriminates other organisations. The question is valid. However, in this case, the danger of creating a monopoly to the disadvantage of other player is considered marginal at this stage, mainly for the following reasons:

- o   Currently, there is no direct "competitor" to EPLO apparent that could be discriminated against or disadvantaged. It is understood that there are similar platforms cooperating with UN agencies based in Geneva and New York but not

around Brussels and the EU. Other platforms such as Brussels-based CONCORD are mainly concentrating on other sectors such as relief and development issues.

o The current approach and praxis does not exclude non-EPLO members from getting invited and participating in CSDN activities.

o The role and mandate of EPLO and CSDN aims to build capacity within CSOs to deal with EU institutions directly on various issues. Consequently, the more successful EPLO is in this attempt, the less it creates a monopoly for itself as an exclusive hub between CSOs and EU-institutions.

There is no financial /economic phase-out strategy for CSDN. In case the EU-funding comes to an end EPLO will scale down in size and activities to a level which can be maintained with EPLO's own funds or EPLO will look for alternative external funding.

In such a scenario, EPLO would continue with its work and activities (within the frame of the smaller budget). However, the high level of ownership and involvement of EU institutions is likely to phase-out sooner or later, especially when staff within the institutions change and individuals leave.

However, as discussed above CSDN is absorbing almost entirely EPLO's financial and human capacity. Consequently there is a certain danger that EPLO as an independent organisation get eclipsed by CSDN. Therefore, in the interest of sustainability, a revised co-funding agreement (e.g. 10%/90%) as well as providing more staff for CSDN work would free more of EPLO's own resources to work independently outside and beyond CSDN.

6.2 Potential sustainability of the impact

As discussed above, it is difficult to assess to what extend the project's activities really have an impact on changing/improving EU/EU-member states' policy. This is not quantifiable and, in any case beyond the direct influence and mandate of CSDN. Consequently the potential sustainability of this direct impact cannot be anticipated.

What will very likely remain beyond the lifespan of the project is a culture of dialogue between CSOs and EU. On one side, EU institutions will have become used to the idea of using CSOs as an important source of information and local wisdom. On the other side, CSOs will keep on demanding that their voices are heard by national and EU decision-makers and NGOs will have increased their capacity to get access to them.

7 Cross-Cutting Issues

EPLO's and consequently CSDN's core efforts are to a larger extent very closely and directly related to cross-cutting issues such as good governance and human rights. Additionally, CSDN is implementing initiatives to build bridges and networks between peacebuilding and conflict prevention on one side and cross-cutting issues such as gender, development and environmental issues on the other side. The topics of the "Thematic Meetings" are embedded in the current EU policy initiatives (e.g. the EU approach on women, peace and security, on-going actions on Corporate Social Responsibility, etc) as well as in the agenda of CSOs. However, so far several of these thematic meetings have the character of pilot initiatives with mixed success. Currently they appear to a certain extent as stand-alone activities and a clear concept or "Red Line" is not entirely obvious. In any case, they are appreciated by the majority of participants interviewed and it remains to be seen what will be the follow up and long-term character of these initiatives.

8   Overall Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons Learned

8.1   Overall Conclusion:

> ***The CSDN project is certainly a success. It fulfils to a larger extent the expectations of partners and beneficiaries and contributes significantly towards its objectives.***

8.2   Lessons learned, observations and recommendations:

General Observation: The CSDN project is considered a success and a very useful tool by project partners and beneficiaries. There is still ongoing (and even increasing) demand for the project and its activities in the short and mid-term future.

General Recommendation: Consider coming up with a similar project (continuation or "Phase II") at the end of the project's lifespan in mid-2013. The general outlines of the project are considered highly appropriate by key implementers and partners and it is recommended to leave them basically unchanged. In order not to lose the momentum, start design and preparation in a timely manner to ensure there is no gap between the end of the project and its continuation.

Nevertheless, the following recommendations are made with regards to a "Phase II" in order to improve the efficiency and management conditions of the intervention.

Observation regarding "in-country meetings": The project agreement sets a target of 3 "in-country meetings". For several reasons (as discussed under "Efficiency"), none of these has been done so far. Nevertheless, most of the stakeholders interviewed agreed that such in-country meetings would be interesting and worth a try.

Recommendation: Despite all the difficulties, consider ways (see also the recommendation below) to go ahead with implementing at least one or two such meetings in "easier" countries as pilot initiatives to gain experience in order to decide whether or not (or under which circumstances) to consider them in a Phase II.

Observation on the management approach: The project's main strength is the fact that all decision and activities are based on mutual agreements which leads to a high level of ownership from all partners including the EU institutions. Nevertheless, as discussed in detail under the "Efficiency" section of this report, a higher degree of flexibility in some cases (e.g. for in-country meetings) can be useful in order to allow certain activities to be implemented.

Recommendation[15]: Reconsider (unwritten) management/decision-making approaches and roles in a way that certain activities can go ahead even if there is no clear upfront "100% buy-in" from all sides. In such a case, consider an approach whereby partners who may not be entirely excited by the idea are fully informed about the

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[15] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1

planned activity and kindly invited to participate. In such cases there would be no obligation to participate, or the partner may decide just to come in as observer or at junior level, etc. Of course, if one of the partners (e.g. DEU or the "Desk") strongly opposes such an activity or if there is no clear expression of interest from the civil society's side, the activity will not go ahead.

Observation on the co-funding arrangement: According to the co-funding agreement, project costs are shared (20% / 80%) between EPLO and the EU. For reasons discussed in the "Impact" and "Sustainability" sections of this report, this cost-sharing ratio is not entirely adjuvant in the view of optimizing outcomes, impacts and sustainability.

Recommendation: Reconsider the cost-sharing ratio. It is recommended that EPLO's contribution is decreased to 10% or less of total cost.

Observation on staff capacity: Flexibility is one of the strengths of the project. Nevertheless, CSDN/EPLO is chronically under-staffed and finds it very difficult to accommodate ad-hoc or short-term proposals for additional activities even if these are considered highly relevant and urgent. It also leads to limited capacity for important work beyond the basic organising of CSDN events, such as follow-up on meetings, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts, etc.

Recommendations[16]: Consider increasing the allocation for staff costs in the budget in order to allow restructuring and increasing the office staff.

Consider ways to streamline the decision-making process in order to facilitate long-term planning and to minimize the number of activities organized at short notice.

Observation on the intervention logic: As discussed under "Design", due to the nature of the approach and the need for flexibility, the intervention logic of the current project is slightly vague. Especially, the absence of clear objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) and targets (beyond the to-do list) makes it difficult to monitor progress and success.

Additionally, there seems to be a certain lack of common understanding regarding the nature of CSDN.

Recommendations[17]: Consider reviewing the intervention logic (preferable by using the logframe approach or a similar tool) and come up with a set of appropriate OVIs (and targets where appropriate) for objectives and expected results. This could be done at a facilitated workshop including EPLO management and staff, POG members and external stakeholders if appropriate.

Share this intervention logic with stakeholders within EU institutions and beyond in order to create a better common understanding regarding the nature of CSDN.

Create in-house capacity for M&E to follow up on these indicators.

Observation on the POG: some stakeholders interviewed expressed their opinion that the POG involves itself to a major degree in "micro-management" issues, rather than concentrating on its core function to discuss and decide on overall policy issues. This evaluation observed that the project is reasonably well-managed by EPLO as the implementing partner and by its project management team.

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[16] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1
[17] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1

Recommendation[18]: Therefore it can be suggested that a higher level of trust could be applied and that the POG leaves issues of daily "micro-management" to EPLO's project management team and concentrate on overall policy decisions.

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[18] EEAS/FPI commented on this recommendation. The comments are attached as Annex 1

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: **Comments from EEAS/FPI on Recommendations and clarifications/responses from the evaluator**

ANNEX 2: **EPLO/CSDN summary on proposed In-Country Meetings**

ANNEX 3: **List of persons interviewed/consulted**

ANNEX 2: **Terms of Reverence**

ANNEX 1: Comments from EEAS/FPI on Recommendations and clarifications/responses from the evaluator

Recommendation	Comment from EEAS/FPI	Clarification/Response from the evaluator
Recommendation No. 3: "Reconsider (unwritten) management/decision-making approaches and roles in a way that certain activities can go ahead even if there is no clear upfront "100% buy-in" from all sides"	1. Has the potential reputational risk for CSDN of not necessarily ensuring the full buy-in of all relevant EU policy-makers been considered? 2. As mentioned in the report (page19): "The project's major strength is the fact that all decision and activities are based on mutual agreements which lead to a high level of ownership from all partners including the EU-institutions". Is not this added value put in danger if recommendation No. 3 is to be followed?	RE.1. & 2.: These comments are very valid and have been discussed in length with various stakeholders during the evaluation. In any case, this recommendation does not suggest a radical change of the very successful current approach, but to add another tool to the current modus operandi for cases where the current approach is not entirely successful (e.g. in-country dialogue meetings (IDM)). Looking at current numbers of meetings this would apply to about 10% or less of CSDN's activities. If it is done with the necessary sensitivity, the evaluator strongly believes that this approach would not jeopardize the success of the project and the potential risks as mentioned in the EEAS/FPI-comments can be minimised. In any case, it is recommended that the approached is tested in the form of a pilot activity to see how it works and what would be the response of various stakeholders. Potential disadvantages: - As mentioned in the comments above, there is a risk of upsetting partners (mainly within EU institutions) Potential advantages: - Activities (e.g. IDMs), which could not be done so far, could go ahead. - CSDN would widen its horizon and push its limits a bit. - The project, and consequently the EU-institutions as key project partners could take better advantage of the specific nature of NGSs/CSOs (more diversified, less regulated, etc.)
	3. This recommendation refers in particular to the "in-country" meetings and stems from the key observation that the "in-country dialogue meetings (IDM)" have not taken place so far due to a series of logistical reasons and to the lack of "full support…from all relevant EU-stakeholders" (page 13). However, this observation is based on a very limited sample of meeting proposals which have not gone ahead (only 4 IDMs have been proposed to date, of which one, Niger, was cancelled due to security concerns). It does not therefore appear to represent a strong and rigorous basis for the above observation. 4. More generally, the decision for a meeting to go forward is mutually agreed by POG.	RE 3. & 4.: According to information provided by the CSDN-management 11 IDMs have been proposed/discussed so far. In any case, within 2 ½ years and despite all efforts, none of them did go ahead, which confirms that there is an issues and most likely a demand for reviewing the current decision-making approach. *(An EPLO summary on proposed In-Country Meetings is attached in the annex.)*

		The reasons for such a decision may be (and have been) put forward by either civil society or EU POG members.	
Recommendation No. 5: "Consider… to minimize the number of activities organized at short notice"	5.	Is not CSDN's flexibility one of its main comparative advantages in terms of policy-making?	RE 5.: This is generally a valid point. However, the recommendation was not "to minimize the number of activities organized at short notice" but to "Consider **ways to streamline the decision-making process in order to** facilitate long-term planning and to minimize the number of activities organized at short notice." This means that the project should still be flexible in order to accommodate short-term activities following urgent short-term developments and requests. But taking decisions in time should avoid unnecessary stress and work to be done at short notice.
Recommendation No. 6: "Consider reviewing the intervention logic (preferable by using the logframe approach or a similar tool) and come up with a set of appropriate OVIs (and targets where appropriate) for objectives and expected results."	6.	Although it is possible to consider a revision of the intervention logic, as stated in the report itself (pg. 15), it is very hard to use measurable indicators for this type of action: "One indicators is the level of attendance..." but "…is hard to quantify in practice"; "Other indicators are the right mix of people and the quality of discussion…" but " to verify these indicators… is even more challenging…hardly feasible". Due to this reason, the 'Action Plan', included in the CSDN contract (Page 14 Annex I-Action Description), served satisfactorily as a logframe by identifying the timeframe and the output (meetings/trainings), by categories, as much in detail as possible.	RE. 6.: The evaluator seems to be the only one who thinks that the intervention logic is not entirely sufficient. In any case, it is up to the POG to follow this recommendation or not. The evaluator still believes that for a 3-year project it would be worthwhile to invest some time and effort (e.g. a one-day workshop) to think about the intervention logic and related indicators and targets. According to experience this would have the following advantages: • It would provide the bases for improved result oriented monitoring & evaluation (which is hardly done so far) and consequently (most likely) to an improved impact. • CSDN is still to a certain extent seen as a service provision for the EU-institutions rather than a self-standing project. (In reality it is probably something in the middle). A clear, thought-through and agreed intervention logic would probably help to sharpen CSDN's profile as a self-standing project and partnership.
Recommendation No. 7: "Therefore it can be suggested that a higher level of 'trust' could be applied and that the POG leaves issues of daily micro management to EPLO's project management team and concentrate on overall policy decisions"	7.	The original 'description of the action' for CSDN defines the functions of the POG as follows: "review progress towards meeting the objectives of the action and to consider issues arising from its implementation". Consequently some clarification is necessary as to what type of issues are regarded as "micro-management" (and by whom; in spite of the way the text is written, the reference to 'micro-management' is by no means a unanimous view of POG members)	Certainly, not all POG members interviewed mentioned the issue of (too much) micro-management. However, seven current and former POG-members have been interviewed and this has been mentioned by several interviewees. (The content of interviews is confidential, therefore no names can be provided.) In any case, this recommendation is not meant as a criticism but as a suggestion for the future. In almost every project's cycle, the situation is similar. At the beginning of the project, the POG (or steering committee, etc.) gets involved in micro management. However, when the project continues, micro management issues should be handed over to and left with the project management team as much as possible. This is

		especially true in cases (like CSDN) where the project management proved to be efficient and effective and where the management team earned a high level of trust from all sides.
		On the other hand, at such a later stage, the POG is needed to constantly review the project policies and general approaches to learn from experience and to increase long-term impact of the intervention.
		The evaluator believes, at this stage the POG could leave micro management issues to a larger extent to the CSDN management team and should concentrate on "higher-level"-issues, e.g. "how can non-functioning project components such as the In-country-Meeting idea become functional (or should the idea be dropped entirely).
		There is no clear differentiation between "micro-management issues" and "high-level-issues". The POG has to come up with its own common understanding.

ANNEX 2: EPLO summary on proposed In-Country Dialogue Meetings[19]

Region/country	Actions taken	Outcome
Western Balkans – regional, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina	**POG 10/2012** – Kosovo presented as an option **POG 12/2010** EPLO proposes in-country meetings in Western Balkans following civil society interest: *"Two options for the next six months are:* *1/ Western Balkans – geographic or in-country meeting;* *Topics/locations:* • *Bosnia and Herzegovina* • *Kosovo* • *Regional – EU Accession and peacebuilding; Regional – CSDP Missions in the Western Balkans* • *There is interest from civil society.* • *EC will check interest in the Institutions"* **Spring 2011** – EPLO meeting with then Head of Unit for Western Balkans – Pierre Mirel proposing various CSDN meetings **October 2011** – proposal for a meeting on Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue prepared by EPLO and passed to geographic team **Winter 2011** – EPLO discussions with DG Enlargement on CSDN meetings.	Western Balkans staff in Brussels have not seen the added value of CSDN in-country meetings for a variety of reasons: 1/ They believe that there are sufficient mechanisms for consultation of civil society, including meeting to gather input into the Accession reports and the P2P programmes 2/ There were concerns about the sensitivity of involving civil society in discussions on the Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue. 3/ There are ongoing sensitivities related to discussing peacebuilding in connection with the Western Balkans (primarily the risk that it could disrupt the Enlargement process to imply that the region is still affected by conflict).
West Africa – Sierra Leone, Liberia, regional	**POG 02/2011** *"West Africa (possibly in October 2011) - these events could potentially be linked with the dissemination of output from the on-going 'People's Peace-making Perspectives' action, implemented by Conciliation Resources and Saferworld. Conciliation Resources - in the course of a mission to West Africa which will take place shortly - will broach the subject with relevant EU Delegations and - subject to sufficiently encouraging response - the views of the geographical desks will then be sought"*	Some interest in Delegations but not strong enough to drive forward the idea. Three proposals submitted to West Africa Directorate: in the end they decided on meetings in Brussels and Niger in-country meeting.

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[19] This summary was provided by EPLO

	POG 02/2011 – pPPP project leaders discuss ideas with Delegations **Spring 2011** – written proposal sent to geographic desks **POG 07/2011** *"POG remains open to the idea of having a West Africa meeting, possibly in-country, to coincide with the launch of analysis from the PPP (although participation would be broader)."* **POG 01/2012** *"In-country dialogue – West Africa – POG agreed that an in-country dialogue meeting in West Africa (Sierra Leone or Liberia) could be interesting. The decision to go ahead will be conditional on the interest of the geographic desks/Delegations as usual. EPLO will provide a revised concept note on which geographic teams (EEAS desks and delegations; crisis planners) can be consulted."* **POG 03/2012** – <u>"In-country meeting in West Africa</u> <u>*Action*</u>: *a further proposal to be prepared by EPLO (incorporating a back-to-back half-day discussion on a Civil Society Dialogue Network at regional level). Meeting could possibly be held in mid-June 2012."* **04/2012** - New proposal submitted to West Africa Directorate.	
Nepal	November 2011 – Proposal prepared by EPLO sent to EEAS/EC following preliminary discussions with Delegation and civil society interest **POG 01/2011** *"In-country dialogue meeting, Nepal – The meeting will not go ahead due to questions about its utility in the Delegation."*	Proposal dropped as Nepal Delegation question its value – peacebuilding was more relevant to their work 3 or 4 years ago.
Middle East North Africa – Morocco, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia	**December 2011** – Proposal put forward by CSOs during MENA meeting; proposal appears in recommendations of CSDN report **POG 01/2012**– detailed proposal of different possible options sent to geographic staff members in EEAS *"In-country follow-up meetings are under discussion. Of the five countries, the*	No feedback from MENA geographic team.

	prospects for follow-up meetings in Libya and Tunisia are good; for Jordan and Morocco are quite good; for Egypt there are limited prospects. CW has sent civil society analysis of the prospects for follow-up meetings to Alar Olljum. Any in-country meetings would require strong interest from Delegations and/or desks. • *AB will check with Alar to see if there is any news."* **April 2012** – follow up discussions with MENA geographic staff.	
CSDP Missions	Regular discussions with CMPD staff. CSDN presented as an option to CMPD staff members including Walter Stevens, Veronica Cody, Peter Hedling, Marina Vraila, and Hadewych Hazelzet. **POG 10/2011** *"EPLO has received the proposal for a meeting on EUMM and lessons learning. Former Head of Mission would be interested in such a meeting. The POG decided that the meeting could be interesting it took a broader approach, looking at other CSDP Missions and the lessons learning process. Going ahead will be conditional on interest from the relevant staff members in the CMPD. Possibly in country."*	Interest in the CSDN but no specific meetings requested – the first two years of the CSDN coincided with a period of significant change and challenges for the EU's crisis management structures. Many issues related to civil society remain very sensitive for CSDP missions. Staff from these entities have participated in many CSDN meetings in Brussels and EU MS, however.

POG 12/2010

"Possible geographic meetings/in-country meetings

It is difficult to organise complex geographic (Brussels) or in-country meetings during the transition period while appointments to the EEAS are being made."

POG 04/2011

"Geographic meetings – challenges and proposals

The geographic meetings under CSDN and previous civil society consultations on specific conflicts have tended to be ad hoc, taking place in response to requests from civil society or the institutions. Going forward, EPLO will try to establish informal partnerships with departments and officials with geographic responsibilities (e.g. EEAS Directorates, FPI crisis planners, DEVCO Directorates, CMPD, CPCC). EPLO will explain to them that the CSDN runs for another two years and is a tool or facility available for them to use when they need to carry out consultation with civil society. They could, for example, look in advance at points in the policy processes when it would be useful to have input."

ANNEX 3: List of persons interviewed/consulted

Name	Institution/Organisation	
Albani Martin	EU Parliament	*
Banim Guy	EEAS	
Biscaldi Chiara	ICG	*
Blake Oliver	DEVCO	
Byrne Andrew	EEAS	
Colson Aurélien	EPLO	*
De Leon Shirley	Nonviolent Peaceforce	
Deprez Nona	EEAS	
Eckert Herta	ALERT	*
Elbakidze Marina	CIPDD Georgia	☎
Evangelista Gladys	EEAS	
Falasca Santa	International Center for Transitional Justice	
Frauke	ECDPM Netherlands	☎
Gunduz Canan	The MediatEur	☎
Haspeslagh Sophie	EPLO Steering Committee	
Hawley Christina	Crisis Action	
Hosa Joanna	EPLO	
Huber Severin	Crisis Action	
Jaarva Meeri-Maria	CMI	*
Kadletz Florian	EPLO	*
Knagenhjelm Bente	Nansen Centre for Peace & Dialogue	*
Liebl Josephine	EPLO	
Martins Isabel	Crisis Action	
Moore Ben	EPLO	
Pasquinelli Giulia	EPLO	
Penfrat Anna	EPLO	
Pierard Cedric	EEAS	
Popović Tatjana	Nansen Dialogue Centre	*
Potter-Prentice Antonia	EPLO	*
Rossi Alessandro	EC	
Rougy Nicolas	Interpeace	*
Rukhadze Nelly	Kvinna till Kvinna, Georgia	☎
Rusetkaia Elena	Women's Information Centre, Georgia	☎
Samuelsson Tore	Life & Peace Institute	*
Segal Mark	EEAS	
Sherriff Andrew	ECDPM	*
Venturi Bernardo	CSDC	*
Wald Tidhar	Oxfam	*
Wesslau Frederik	EEAS	
Woollard Catherine	EPLO	
Zadi Zadi Patrick	CSDN-Sudan Participant	☎

* interviewed in May 2012 during ROM
☎ interviewed on the phone

ANNEX 2: Terms of Reverence

Terms of Reference: Interim Evaluation – Civil Society Dialogue Network Project

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project funded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation. EPLO organises CSDN meetings, which are open to all interested civil society actors and take place in Brussels, EU Member States and conflict-affected countries with EU presence. The CSDN discusses policy, strategic and programming aspects of the Peacebuilding Partnership, transversal thematic issues relating to peacebuilding and crisis-specific situations.

Purpose of the Interim Evaluation

The CSDN project has been operating for two years; the purpose of the Interim Evaluation is to provide a deep and comprehensive evaluation of the results of the project and lessons to be applied in the final year of the project and in any potential future CSDN project.

Specific objectives:
1) To identify the results of the CSDN project so far
2) To assess the management of the CSDN project by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)
3) To identify challenges in the implementation of the project
4) To list recommendations for improvement of the CSDN

Outputs

The consultant will provide an evaluation report of maximum 20 pages including a one-page executive summary of key findings. The evaluation report should include sections that reflect four objectives listed above, plus any relevant additional sections.

Delivery

The first draft of the report will be provided to EPLO and the European Commission no later than 30 November.

Activities

The evaluator should use the findings of interviews and analysis already carried out in the evaluation of the CSDN project, including interim reports provided to the European Commission, consultations with participants in CSDN events, interviews with key stakeholders, including EU policy-makers and civil society representatives, the findings of the ROM Mission evaluation, and minutes of the Project Oversight Group meetings, including reviews of CSDN activities.

In addition, the evaluator will carry out the following activities:

- In depth interviews with key stakeholders in civil society and EU institutions (week of 19 November)
- Additional interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (civil society and EU policy-makers) not previously interviewed (week of 19 November)
- Analysis of CSDN documents, including official project documents, CSDN reports, and background documents for CSDN meetings.

Terms and Conditions: please see contract. Payment will be provided conditional on timely delivery of the evaluation report.