



Technical Assistance for  
Civil Society Organisations  
Turkey - Ankara Office



This project is funded  
by the European Union.

## **TACSO Turkey 1. Local Advisory Group (LAG) Meeting 09.02.2010**

Ankara, Gordion Hotel

### **Participants:**

#### Members of the LAG:

EUSG-Başak İlisulu, Ege Erkoçak

Arı Movement- Arda Batu

Delegation of the European Union to Turkey- Lise Pate

Nature Association- Eray Çağlayan

Helsinki Citizens Assembly-Sevgi Özçelik

Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Associations- Mustafa Yardımcı, Şaban Acar, Mesut Aşçı

KADER(Association for the Support and Education of Women Candidates )- Çiğdem Aydın

Civil Society Development Center (CSDC) - Suade Arançlı, Levent Korkut

TOG (Community Volunteers foundation)-Emrah Gürsel

TÜSEV(Third Sector Foundation of Turkey)- Namık Ceylanoğlu

#### Consortium member:

Human Resources Development Foundation-Muhtar Çokar

#### TACSO Project Team:

Ayça Haykır, Neslihan Özgüneş, Ayça Beştepe

#### LAG member who couldn't participate in the meeting:

Prime Ministry, representative from the General Directorate of Foundations

## Documents distributed:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. List of Participants
3. Presentation of TACSO project
4. Overview of main topics
5. LAG rules and procedures

## Meeting Agenda :

1. Opening and members getting acquainted with each other.
2. Presentation of TACSO project + Q/A
3. Presentation of LAG rules & procedures + Q/A
4. Results and planning of the future period

## Opening- Introduction-Expectations

Program of the day began with an opening speech from TACSO Turkey Resident Advisor Ms. Ayça Haykır and introductory speeches from all of the participants. Members of the local advisory group expressed their expectations from the project. Mustafa Yardımcı, President of the Directorate of Associations, stated that sustainability and fundraising skills of the CSOs is important. Çiğdem Aydın, representative of KADER (Association for Support and Education of Women Candidates), emphasized their interest in the multinational nature of the project and their desire to build a connection with the Balkan countries. She also specified that through the LAG, they hope to change the perspective of participating organisations on women's issues. After highlighting the importance of informing CSOs at the local level and promoting relations with other countries, the representatives of EUGS, Başak İlisulu and Ege Erkoçak, explained the work of EUGS. Eray Çağlayan, representative of the Nature Association, stated that, all kinds of work conducted with the purpose of capacity building of the CSOs would be beneficial. Arda Batu from ARI Movement mentioned the importance of building strong relations among the participants (between meetings) of the LAG. Community Volunteers' representative Emrah Gürsel said that they attach importance to improving relations with the CSOs working on youth issues in Balkan countries and sustainability. He pointed out that they hope the local funds would be allocated in a more transparent and equal way with the support of TACSO. He also underlined the importance of accessibility of all project related works/events through the Web site.

It was announced that the general Web site of TACSO was launched ([www.tacso.org](http://www.tacso.org)), and TACSO Turkey Web site is in the process of establishment. Sevgi Özçelik from Helsinki Citizens Assembly said that they aspire to give support to the local CSOs and share their knowledge/experience. The significance of the project announcements to be made efficiently was stressed. Moreover, it was stated that the Web sites of the Directorate of Associations, GD of Foundations and EUSG shall also be utilized for the announcements.

## Presentation of TACSO Project

It was expressed that TACSO project is a technical assistance program for strengthening the CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey which is funded by the European Union within the context of IPA

funds. General objectives (*strengthening CSOs' role in the decision-making process, enhancing the effectiveness and quality of CSOs' services, improving the cooperation between and among CSOs, improving CSOs' visibility and public image*), activity areas (*capacity building, network establishment, technical assistance*) and target group of the project, as well as the main outcomes of the needs assessment that was conducted at the inception phase of the project was presented. It was agreed that improving Public-CSO relations in general, strengthening the capacity of CSOs on topics such as advocacy, strategic planning and cooperation shall be handled with priority.

Subsequently, participants were provided with information about TACSO's planned activities in the coming period. Regional trainings, multinational partnership events, kick offs, national training program and technical assistance desks were mentioned.

LAG members requested to be informed about how the needs assessment was conducted. It was explained that the existing assessments (conducted by TÜSEV -Third Sector Foundation of Turkey-, YADA, CSDC and the one conducted within the context of civil society-Public cooperation project – SKIP-) were analysed, four local meetings were held and more than 100 CSOs were visited.

Upon the question asked about the selection of the participants for trainings, it was stated that gradings were made on the basis of selection criteria (announced in the open call for the training) that are defined for each training. In the following days, each country submits the names of the applicants with the highest scores to the regional office for the final selection to be made (taking into consideration institutional variety and gender balance).

It was clarified that each regional training will have 18 participants and four people out of those 18 will be from Turkey whereas, each national training will have 24 trainees and all expenses of the participants will be covered. It was also underlined that regional trainings will consist of the same topics (fundraising, CSO management, development and management of EU projects, civil participation in the decision making process, advocacy, lobbying) however the subjects of the national trainings can vary depending on the needs assessment.

Further to partnership events, Başak İlisulu, spoke about the meeting on "The new EU Strategy and Turkey's Negotiation Process" (that will be held on 13/ February in Istanbul), with the participation of the Minister of the State, Egemen Bağış. She also declared that, they would like to work in collaboration with TACSO as a part of their Communication strategy on media and civil society.

Şaban Acar, Deputy Director of G. D. of Associations laid emphasis on the benefits of receiving information about the activities of public institutions in other countries. He continued with the argument that some governmental organisations are ineffective in some cities and that it will be beneficial to conduct trainings/activities jointly with the representatives of public bodies and CSOs. He underlined the significance of mutual support to and from the public. He also added that it would be interesting to have a meeting that brings together the LAG members from all TACSO countries.

Many suggestions were made in relation to the kick-offs. Upon the question about the selection process of the cities in which the kick-offs will be held, TACSO team explained that by taking different criteria into account, four cities from the "neglected" regions were selected in addition to İzmir as the metropolitan and Bursa as an active province.

Related to this subject different opinions were debated. Some of the LAG members stated that in order to reach more people, strategically it would be more effective to hold the kick-off meetings in the cities where the CSOs are more active rather than the "neglected" ones. It was suggested that instead of Kars; Ağrı, Urfa or Balıkesir should be considered. It was also expressed that İzmir was particularly ready and open for the kick-off meeting.

As a result, it was concluded that even though the selected cities were right, the selection criteria should be clear. TACSO team affirmed that they will share the criteria with the LAG, and will ask for their support in making the most efficient selection. Representatives of the CSDC asserted that choosing the relatively "neglected" cities where there are a few CSOs, will be more effectual than selecting the cities with no active CSOs. Sevgi Özçelik, from the Helsinki Citizens Assembly said that they could support the activities in Edirne, having carried out many activities there. Representative of TOG, Emrah Gürsel specified that they are organised in three provinces, except for Sinop, and they could be of assistance in announcing the meetings. Mustafa Yardımcı, from G. D. of Associations pointed out that facilities of provincial directorates will be accessible to TACSO for every event. Arda Batu, from ARI Movement offered their support in Kars.

Many members made suggestions about the content of the meetings. The importance of not identifying TACSO as a fund giving or money bringing formation, and the risks of introducing the EU funds within this context were emphasized. It was also suggested that, in addition to project promotion, it will be possible to attract people's attention by organising workshops and meetings on different issues based on the needs of local CSOs. It was agreed upon that the participation of people who can share the "good practices" would be very effective, and the significance of picking the issues in accordance with the project objectives were stressed.

It was recommended that the programs should be dynamic and not overcrowded. Eray Çağlayan stated that these meetings are introductory meetings; therefore it would be more beneficial to arrange small workshops where small scaled CSOs will have the opportunity to express their needs.

It was stated that these kind of kick-offs are organised in the same way in other TACSO countries as well, and the first session consists of a project introduction, which is ensued by other sessions on different subjects, (or activities such as CSO fair).

Regarding the preparatory phase of the kick-offs, it was suggested that the TACSO team should visit the respective provinces before the meeting to contact the CSOs, public body representatives, city councils and municipalities.

It was told that, contacting the local media and publishing announcements in the newspapers would be beneficial. The importance of receiving information on the projects that were implemented before, in the selected cities was underlined.

Representatives of EUGS said that they could provide TACSO with the necessary information about the previous projects and their success level in the respective provinces. It was said that the support of G.D. Of Associations could also be useful on the same issue.

The necessity of giving logistical assistance to the representatives of CSOs from the rural areas was emphasized. It was said that Unions and political parties could also be considered as target groups.

## LAG-Rules and Procedures

After the lunch break, the Procedures and Rules of the LAG were presented. It was highlighted that the LAG is an advisory mechanism consisting of voluntary members. It was clarified that the respective members were selected out of applications made, and seven criteria defined in the open call were taken into consideration during the evaluation and selection process.

It was stated that the LAG has 11 member associations which are entitled to one vote each, whereas other participants are considered as guests (for the first and future meetings) who of course can express opinions, however cannot use votes regarding the suggestions made in the meetings.

Questions were asked about the selection process of the LAG. It was noted that open calls were announced for the LAG and grading was made based on the criteria defined in these announcements. It was accentuated that the TACSO team should be transparent about the selection criteria, which should be clearly defined.

It was found insufficient that the announcements were only published on the Web sites of HRDF and CSDC. It was added that for the reason mentioned above, many people might have not seen the announcement.

The importance of the G.D. Of the Associations' representatives participation were emphasized. TACSO team told that the G.D. Of the Associations were contacted, but they had not replied yet.

It was recommended by the Directorate of Associations that YASADER, Chambers, Turkey Association of Pensioners, State Planning Organisation / Development agencies should also participate. It was mentioned that, the head of the department responsible from Development Agencies, should also be contacted.

TACSO team explained that, apart from the constant members of the LAG, interested CSOs could participate in meetings as guests, provided that the agenda is related to their working area. (Joint resolution of LAG members would be enough for this.)

The importance of working actively with the CSOs, public bodies, local administrations, city councils was stressed.

Namık Ceylanoğlu, representative of TÜSEV, rendered his opinion on the necessity of the participation of the minority associations. In reply, TACSO team explained that they had not received any applications from the minority associations, but added that they could participate in the relevant meetings as guests.

## DECISIONS

- 1. TACSO team will share the criteria about kick-offs, and receive suggestions on the criteria & cities.**
- 2. TACSO team will share the needs assessment, when completed, with the LAG**
- 3. Representatives of the CSOs will act as LAG chairperson on a rotating basis.**
- 4. ARI Movement representative will be the chairperson for the next meeting.**
- 5. Each LAG member will be entitled to one vote.**
- 6. Providing information will be made via e-mail addresses, LAG e-group will be developed in the**



Technical Assistance for  
Civil Society Organisations  
Turkey - Ankara Office



This project is funded  
by the European Union.

**future.**

- 7. LAG members will support the preparations of the kick-offs, also if required, members will accompany TACSO for visiting local CSOs, will assist establishing contacts etc...**
- 8. Nurhan Yentürk from Bilgi University SCO Research and Education Unit will be invited to the next LAG meeting.**
- 9. The next LAG meeting will be held on 29. April 2010, Thursday.**

### **Draft Agenda of the next LAG meeting, 29 April 2010:**

1. Opening speech by the chairperson of the LAG
2. Presentation of the TACSO team about the conducted activities (regional trainings, kick-offs)
3. Discussions about the planned events (national training program, media and civil society conference)
4. Issues related to the CSO- public cooperation
5. Providing information about the EU funds
6. Suggestions-results
7. Determining the date and agenda of the next LAG meeting.