

## TACSO BiH

### The First Meeting of the Local Advisory Group (LAG) for the TACSO Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Date:** Wednesday, January 20, 2010

**Place:** Hotel Bosnia, Sarajevo

***Present LAG members:***

Aida Daguda (CPCD),  
Snježana Ivandić (ADI),  
Nada Pejnović (Ministry for Local Governance and Self-Governance in RS),  
Entoni Šeperić (FBiH Ministry of Justice),  
Džemal Hodžić (DEU to BiH),  
Alma Kurtalić instead of Zuhra Talović (Directorate for European Integration),  
Selma Sijerčić (USAID BiH),  
Guest: Sadeta Škaljić (BiH Ministry of Justice, Civil Society Sector)

**TACSO Team:**

Slavica Drašković, Resident Advisor (RA)  
Maja Karić, Administrative and Financial Assitant (AFA)  
Jelena Kuzmanović, Project Officer (PO)

***Absent LAG members:*** Amra Selesković, Vesta

**Agenda and Discussion**

- Introduction; Introducing to each other: LAG and TACSO Team
- TACSO Project; Activities and Results; Questions and Discussion
- Working break with refreshment
- The role of LAG; the way of working, expectations and proposals
- Working lunch

**1. Introduction; Introducing to each other: LAG and BH TACSO Team**

At the beginning of the meeting, a package of materials was distributed to participants, consisted of: Agenda, List of LAG members, Rules and Procedures of LAG functioning, Power point presentation on Project and LAG work, Needs Assessment Report in BiH, TACSO Project itself and its TOR.

In order to get to know each other, participants introduced themselves stating their names, institution/organization they come from, place and their position within institution/organization.

**2. TACSO Project; Activities and Results; Questions and Discussion**

After participants' introduction, TACSO Project was presented, and Work Plan for six months period (Dec '09-May '10), as well as the way of working for LAG foreseen by the Project itself and defined

by the document Procedures and Rules for LAG Functioning, and questions foreseen for discussion during the meeting as well.

Under operational plan for BiH ideas for 3 kick-off events were presented and 4 one-day thematic workshops in area of Logical Framework producing; topic proposals for regional conferences-partnerships events.

LAG members were invited to give their comments to the plan proposed and creative proposals to activities and obligations defined by the Project document, agreement and Project design.

### **Discussion, comments, and suggestions of LAG TO the Project and Work Plan proposed**

Primary LAG recommendation on Work Plan was:

Apart of three Kick Offs planned in Tuzla, Mostar and Banja Luka, it is necessary to organize the same one in Sarajevo as well, since 40 % of registered organizations in FBiH are located in Sarajevo Canton (data from Federal Ministry of Justice source).

LAG supported thematic workshops on Logical Framework. Messages arouse from this discussion were: it is necessary to ensure simple and economical accessibility to events for CSOs, regional coverage and even if there is possibility for organizing these events in smaller or rural areas.

### **Information, opinions and suggestions:**

Following areas/problems which are directly connected to CSOs in BiH were discussed about by LAG members of TACSO BiH Project:

- Existing dialogue between CSOs and BiH authority institutions at all levels doesn't contribute to development of stimulating culture for civil society development.
- Organizations in smaller communities are not at the source of information; they don't have enough capacity developed. Experience of LOD Project showed that CSOs, especially in smaller communities, don't have enough capacity and consequently, there is a need for capacity building in area of project proposals making for EU. There is a need for forking with organizations which applied for, but they didn't have qualitative project. There is an initiative, but not the knowledge.
- TACSO BiH Project can acquire data base of the organizations whose projects are not approved in applying to LOD Project; and work with them on capacity building, since they expressed willingness in participating, but they are not knowledgeable and skilled.
- There is an acute need for education/assistance to CSOs in process of giving data to electronic data base PADOR, which presents one of the conditions for applying to EU projects.
- Undeveloped capacities of power institutions in grants transparent process organizing. (FBiH Ministry of Justice set aside 350.000 KM for CSOs last year)
- Mechanisms of cooperation between government institutions and CSOs should be followed by coordinated donors' communication.

### **3. The role of LAG; the way of working, expectations, proposals**

#### **Discussion, comments and suggestions of LAG on Project and Work Plan proposed**

Resident Advisor, Slavica Drašković, informed about directives for LAG members selection, which are defined by the Project, recommendations by the focus groups participants, and findings obtained during Needs Assessment.

Afterwards, the way of LAG functioning was presented, as well as information on publishing LAG minutes and conclusions on the web page.

TACSO BiH LAG structure makes 3 representatives of CSOs (ADI, CPCD, VESTA), 1 representative of state institution (Directorate for European Integration) and 2 representatives of entity ministries (Ministry for Local Governance and Self-Governance of RS and Federal Ministry of Justice) and 2 representatives of donor community in Bosnia and Herzegovina (DEU and USAID).

Participants agreed upon proposed dynamics – LAG meetings will be held once in six weeks, approximate each 1, 5 months.

Regarding *Procedures and Rules of LAG functioning*, it is suggested to include point 1.7. under point 1., which would read:

1.7. TACSO BiH Project LAG Team should ensure by their work the coordination, synergy, mapping and adjustment of TACSO BiH Project with other projects in BiH which are supported by various donors, in order to avoid overlapping activities, and in the other hand, to enable Project's upgrade.

LAG elected presiding person (Snježana Ivandić, ADI Director) who will perform her duty according to principle: the first among the equal ones. The other members will take other duties which will be rotated within the group.

It is proposed that invitation letter and materials for the future meetings should be delivered no later than 7 days before the meeting take place, and the date for next meeting should be defined at the end of each meeting. It is also proposed to take into consideration the possibility of changing the place of holding the meetings, i.e., not to organize them in Sarajevo always.

#### **Comments of TACSO BiH LAG to concrete Project activities:**

LAG members gave concrete support to the Project through proposals:

- Using proposals of practical policy in civil society strengthening role in process of public policies creation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Policy Paper –Participation of Civil Society in Policy Dialogue in BiH)
- Representative of donor community (USAID BiH) proposed support to Project, in sense of covering travel expenses for seminar's participants which are not included in activities organized by TACSO Project)
- Federal Ministry of Justice representative delegated and open request for help to TACSO Project in sense of capacity strengthening of this Ministry in process of establishing transparent procedures and rules for grant distribution to CSOs, as well as capacity development for dialogue management with CSOs. As a goal, he stated better planning, determining priority areas which should be supported by this Ministry, and incorporation of mechanisms for tracking and corrections which would be of help during future funds planning for CSOs.

DEU representative after this request delegated to TACSO BiH Project, called participants' attention to CIDI Project saying that this kind of support is provided by CIDI Project itself, and this request for this kind of support should be asked from CIDI by Federal Ministry of Justice. DEU representative suggested that TACSO Project should direct its activities towards cantonal authority levels, as well as to give necessary assistance to CSOs in process of registration in PADOR data base.

- One of opinions heard at the meeting, was the presence of non-transparence in grant award within donor community. Donor community should have been more open, and it would be useful to think about the possibility for CSOs inclusion in monitoring and evaluation phase of donor.
- A question of Civil Society Strategy was mention as well, during the discussion.

Try for bringing up this document wasn't supported by the part of CSOs, neither the BiH Council of Ministries. During the discussion on Civil Society Strategy, the participants agreed upon complexity of relationship between donors – CSOs – authority institutions.

It is necessary to have a dialogue that will enable thematic approach which would formalize relationships and enable correspondent answer through long –term, short-term and mid-term goals. (An idea for such cooperation could be joint work on making on BiH Progress Report).

Minutes and conclusions from this meeting will be submitted to LAG members on Monday, January 25, 2010.

As LAG members didn't discuss about the way of reaching the agreement on proposals appeared. Minutes was made in form of suggestions and proposals summary which LAG members had.

Next meeting of TACSO BiH LAG is planned for the week of 1-5 March 2010.

Minutes was made by:  
Jelena Kuzmanovic