

Third meeting of the Local Advisory Group

Minutes of the meeting

Date: 15th February 2010

Time: 14:00-16:00

Venue: EU Delegation – Skopje

Present:

LAG members: Ahmet Jasharovski, Zoran Ilieski, Zoran Milkov, Irena Ivanova, Lulzim Haziri, Metodija Sazdov, Petre Mrkev, Fani Karanfilova Pandovska, Eli Chakar

Chair person: Petre Mrkev

Representatives from the TACSO national office: Suncica Sazdovska, Mirjana Pehcevska Pop-Iliev

Absent:

LAG member: Vladimir Misev

List of documents distributed at the meeting:

1. National Action Plan for the period 12.09-12.10

Agenda

1. National Action Plan for the period December 2009 – December 2010
Presentation and discussion
2. Conclusions and next steps

1. Mr. Petre Mrkev, chair person, welcomed all members and presented the meeting's agenda.

Ms. Suncica Sazdovska presented the National Action Plan covering the period December 2009 – December 2010. She presented the project's components with key activities and time frame for which the activities were planned.

Mr. Petre Mrkev raised the issue regarding the database used by TACSO project for distribution of information.

Ms. Sazdovska clarified that the mailing list was created by the project team as well as from the applications received for the Kick-off event and other mailing lists received from networks and organisations with which the project team had established contacts. Further on, it was clarified about the concept and the approach of the Helpdesk operation and its promotion.

With respect to the monitoring of the EU funded projects, it was clarified that even though the word monitoring had been used in the Terms of Reference for the project, at the Istanbul meeting it had been agreed that a focus would be placed on supporting organisations in the implementation of the EU projects, thus, the word guidance should be used instead.

Ms Ivanova elaborated that the largest portion of this activity would be targeted at guidance and support for implementation of EU grant projects; however, one part would be also focused on monitoring of those projects (with focus on regional grant projects) which could be understood more of a "light monitoring".

Mr. Ilieski raised a question about the monitoring and the real need for on-site monitoring to be done by the TACSO project.

Ms. Ivanova clarified that a time period has elapsed from the drafting of the project's TOR until the contracting, whereas, in that time period certain changes had occurred and the dynamics were different, thus, the project adjusted to the real needs but within the frame of the project's TOR.

With respect to the project's Web site, Ms Pehcevska Pop-Iliev listed the pieces of information planned to be published on the Web site and its active operation covering a large portion of the activities of the helpdesk, LAG, regional trainings, concepts, proposals, as well as all other pieces of information to be published and to achieve project's transparency for the CSOs.

Mr. Mrkev added that it was also very important for the activities to be published on the regional Web site regarding the LAG activities, meetings, pictures from the conference and all up-to-date information.

Ms. Ivanova reminded the members that the LAG group was still missing a representative from organisations working on inter-ethnic issues, preferably representative from the Albanian ethnic community and she added that the LAG should have such a member.

Ms. Sazdovska clarified that the TACSO project team has been working on that issue, but the available contacts had not led to that person.

Regarding the part where the partnership events with the Government's Unit for cooperation with NGOs were presented, Mr. Milkov stated that the activities of the Unit were in correlation with the project's activities and the activities of the project for technical assistance to the Unit.

With respect to the regional trainings, Mr. Lulzim Haziri considered that the LAG members should be informed about the selection process, how many candidates had applied and from which organisations. In his view, the LAG members should have clear picture of this issue.

Ms Karanfilova-Panovska raised the issue regarding the selected candidates for the first pilot training on EU Fundraising. She felt that the candidates selected to take part in the training were not the real choice. She stressed that LAG should be informed about the candidates, the selection criteria and asked that the LAG members provide their opinion in the selection process for all future regional trainings in the frame of the project. Further on, she stressed that LAG was a representative sample of the civil society with long working experience in the sector, which gave them legitimacy for ensuring relevant opinion in the selection of representatives from Macedonia on the regional trainings. She asked the project team to submit to LAG information about the selection process for the first regional training, which had taken place in Istanbul and which were the selection criteria.

Ms. Sazdovska clarified that in line with the project's procedures, the national TACSO office was responsible for evaluation and selection of candidates.

Ms. Pehcevska Pop-Iliev added that after the national office had made the evaluation and had selected 5 top candidates, the list was sent to the training coordinator in the regional office where the final selection was made.

Ms. Sazdovska added that all remarks regarding the selection of candidates and LAG participation in the selection would be taken into account, but also emphasized that pursuant to the project's TOR the LAG's role was not to be included in the selection of individual project's beneficiaries but to guide the project on strategic level. Further on, she felt that it was not necessary to know in person all the candidates to be evaluated and selected. Clear criteria were set and all applicants were evaluated according to their CV, letter of interest and recommendations. She pointed out that the LAG's role was not to review 30 CVs and to provide their recommendations. The LAG's role was to provide advice and to guide the project's activities.

Mr. Milkov added that the LAG's opinion should not be obligatory in line with the project's TOR, but in his view that was a positive discussion and it should be taken into consideration that the LAG members should have insight in the selection process.

Mr. Ilieski stated that LAG should receive information about the selected candidates and with that approach the project would have greater legitimacy and taking into account the experience of the

LAG members, these remarks should be taken as positive critics and comments for the project's interest.

Ms. Karanfilova felt that they should provide recommendations about the candidates.

She also emphasized that in her eyes the application for the kick-off event had been long and complex instead of making it appealing for many organisations to take part at the kick-off event. Further on, she mentioned that the sentence construction in the invitation stating that after submitting the filled application the candidates would be informed about their participation at the conference had not been appropriate and according to her information it was not appealing for some organisations that she had been in contact with.

Ms. Pehcevska Pop-Iliev, clarified that similar application had been sent from the CSO Metamorphosis a month ago, further on, if the application had been complex then the outcome would not have been 150 interested applicants for the kick-off event. In addition to that, the information from the application were very valuable for organising and logistically coordinating such an event of 130 persons, but also the information such as E-mail and telephone were used for creation and updating the database of the TACS0 project.

Ms. Eli Cakar felt that the LAG should be informed not only about those trainings but also about all other activities planned and implemented by the project. In her view, if the LAG members were informed about the candidates, perhaps some previous experiences would assist in the selection.

Conclusion

1. Regarding the first component, it was concluded that the project's brochures and other promotional materials should be distributed by the LAG members so that they could distribute the promotional materials at events of the networks and organisations. If needed, each LAG members could take certain number of copies of the promotional materials from the TACS0 office.

With respect to relations and contacts with the media, the project could use the already available resources of the networks representing the LAG members.

It was concluded that the remarks about the National Action Plan should be incorporated in the plan and the updated version should be sent to the LAG members before the final version was sent to the regional office.

Regarding the national trainings planned by the TACS0 team, it was concluded that the topics should be additionally discussed at one of the next LAG meetings.

It was concluded that for the next trainings, the LAG members should be informed about the selection criteria, the number of applicants per training, and they would be consulted in the selection process. LAG would be informed and would have access to all other information regarding the evaluation and pre-selection of candidates.

It was concluded that in the last component, Ministry of Local Self-Government should also take part in the workshop for Units of Local Self-Government and the Association of Units of Local Self-Government.

The informative seminars should be more focused on dialogue between the civil sector and the Government.

The LAG members should sent to the TACS0 office their e-mail list so that information could be disseminated easily and more transparently.

3. Mr. Zoran Ilievski was selected for a chair person for the next meeting.



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The exact date for the next LAG meeting should be determined later on, but in general it would take place after the 15 April.

Minutes taken by
Mirjana Pehcevska Pop-Iliev