



Outreach Toolkit

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The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness is an international CSO-driven process towards defining a global development effectiveness framework for CSOs. To this end, it will bring together CSOs and other development actors, including governments and official donors, in consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues at country, regional and international levels. A Global Facilitation Group of 25 member CSOs provides leadership to and represents the Open Forum.

The Open Forum was launched in June 2008 by more than 70 representatives from CSO platforms and networks from around the world participating in an exploratory meeting in Paris.

To learn more, visit www.cso-effectiveness.org.

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PREFACE

What is the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness?

The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness is an international CSO-driven process towards defining a global development effectiveness framework for CSOs. To this end, it will bring together, between mid-2009 and mid-2011, CSOs and other development actors, including governments and official donors, in consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues at country, regional and international levels.

What are the objectives of the Open Forum?

The Open Forum will facilitate a global consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue process at country, regional, and international level to

1. enable CSOs to reach consensus on a global CSO development effectiveness framework, to include a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions.
2. provide a learning space, based on mutual trust, where CSOs can discuss issues and challenges relevant to their work and relationships as development actors.
3. build understanding and support among official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders for an enabling environment for CSOs.

Who is involved in the Open Forum?

A Global Facilitation Group (GFG) of 25 member CSOs acts as governance body, providing leadership to and representing the Open Forum. The GFG meets regularly to monitor and draw lessons from the consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues, and to set directions for the future agenda. See annex 3 for a list of members.

The GFG has delegated the day-to-day work on the Open Forum to a Consortium of six supporting CSOs (see annex 2).

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

This toolkit is a resource to support the Open Forum's consultations. It should inform discussions on CSO development effectiveness and guide contributions of CSOs operating at local, country, regional and international levels, North and South, as well as globally, towards defining the elements for a global development effectiveness framework.

Who is this toolkit for?

The toolkit is targeted at:

- CSO networks and platforms tasked with facilitating national discussions on CSO development effectiveness.
- CSOs participating in national, regional or thematic/sectoral consultations on CSO development effectiveness.
- CSOs participating in the Open Forum's Global Assemblies.
- Other development actors participating in the consultations.

How can it be used?

- To provide essential background information: Sections 1 and 2 provide essential background information on the Open Forum and the consultation process, including information on parallel donor-led processes and other CSO-

focused initiatives. These sections are primarily aimed at participants in consultations, but should also underpin the work of organisers and facilitators of consultations.

- To inform and guide the discussion: Section 3 provides an exploration of key issues in CSO development effectiveness and poses some fundamental questions in order to stimulate and guide the discussion.
- To set up, structure, run and record consultation workshops: Section 4 is primarily directed at consultation organisers and facilitators, mostly from national CSO platforms and networks. It includes useful ideas, recommendations and tools to assist them in setting up, structuring, running and recording the outcomes of national consultation workshops. In annex 1, a template for recording the outcomes of consultation workshops is provided.

Where can I find more information on the Open Forum?

Visit www.cso-effectiveness.org, the main communication channel of the Open Forum. All information pertaining to the Open Forum including updates, resources, reports, and the outcomes of all consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues will be posted on this website.

SECTION 1: SETTING THE CONTEXT

This section provides fundamental information on the background, the origins and the objectives of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. It includes an overview of international processes that have re-shaped the international aid architecture, and it addresses some key questions around the current debate on aid and development effectiveness.

From aid effectiveness to development effectiveness: Situating the debate

Over the past decade a series of international summits, High-Level Forums and meetings have brought donors, governments and other development actors, including CSOs, together to re-shape the global architecture for international aid, reform aid practices, and provide focus to international cooperation for development. Diagram 1 (below) is an overview of the cornerstones that have forged today's discussions on aid and development effectiveness.

Your questions answered

What is the international aid architecture?

The aid architecture comprises key stakeholders including governments (Northern and Southern), bilateral and multilateral donors, the European Commission, international financial institutions (e.g. World Bank and International Monetary Fund), international organisations (e.g. United Nations and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) at the OECD), specialised funds (e.g. Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), private foundations, and CSOs from the North and the South. The term architecture also refers to aid delivery mechanisms, channels and procedures, that is, the terms and ways in which aid resources are transferred from donors to recipients.

What is the role of CSOs in development and the international aid architecture?

As stakeholders in international development, as aid recipients for development activities and also, in some instances, as donors themselves, CSOs play a very important part in the international aid architecture. The role and importance of CSOs as development actors in their own right has only recently been recognised by donors and governments at the 2008 Accra High-Level Forum¹.

CSOs are important donors, channels and recipients of aid. It is estimated that, in 2006, CSOs raised \$20-\$25 billion on their own in addition to ODA of \$104 billion, and acted as channels of about 10 percent of ODA flows to developing countries². However, CSOs consider that their contributions to development are not only defined by their roles in aid delivery and implementation, but by a much wider set of roles, including, but not limited to³

¹ In paragraph 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action, donors and governments refer to CSOs as "development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector".

² See AG-CS Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, August 2008, page 9

³ Taken from the Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations of the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (available online at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>)

- mobilising grassroots communities and poor or marginalised people;
- monitoring the policies and practices of governments and donors and reinforcing the accountability of government and donor bodies through the application of local knowledge;
- engaging in research and policy dialogue;
- delivering services and programmes;
- building coalitions and networks for enhanced CSO coordination and impact;
- mobilising additional financial and human aid resources; and
- educating the public, and helping to shape social values of solidarity and social justice.

What is aid effectiveness?

Aid effectiveness can be defined as the extent to which aid resources, in particular ODA, succeed in producing sustainable development results for poor people. The emphasis by donors and governments has however been primarily on issues in aid delivery and its management,

CSOs argue that a more holistic approach must be adopted in defining aid effectiveness. This approach would put more emphasis on outcomes and impact for the rights of the poor and marginalised. CSOs aim to deepen and broaden reforms for aid effectiveness, and seek to shift the debate to development effectiveness (see definition below).

What is the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD) was agreed in March 2005 at the Second High Level Forum in Paris⁴. It was a landmark achievement for setting out an agreement between donors and recipient governments on five principles and shared commitments to improve aid effectiveness. The PD established these commitments for both donor and recipient countries' actions between 2005 and 2010.

The intention is to reform the delivery and management of aid in order to improve its effectiveness. The reforms are intended to "increase the impact of aid [...] in reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating the achievement of the MDGs". The PD outlines five principles, which should shape aid delivery:

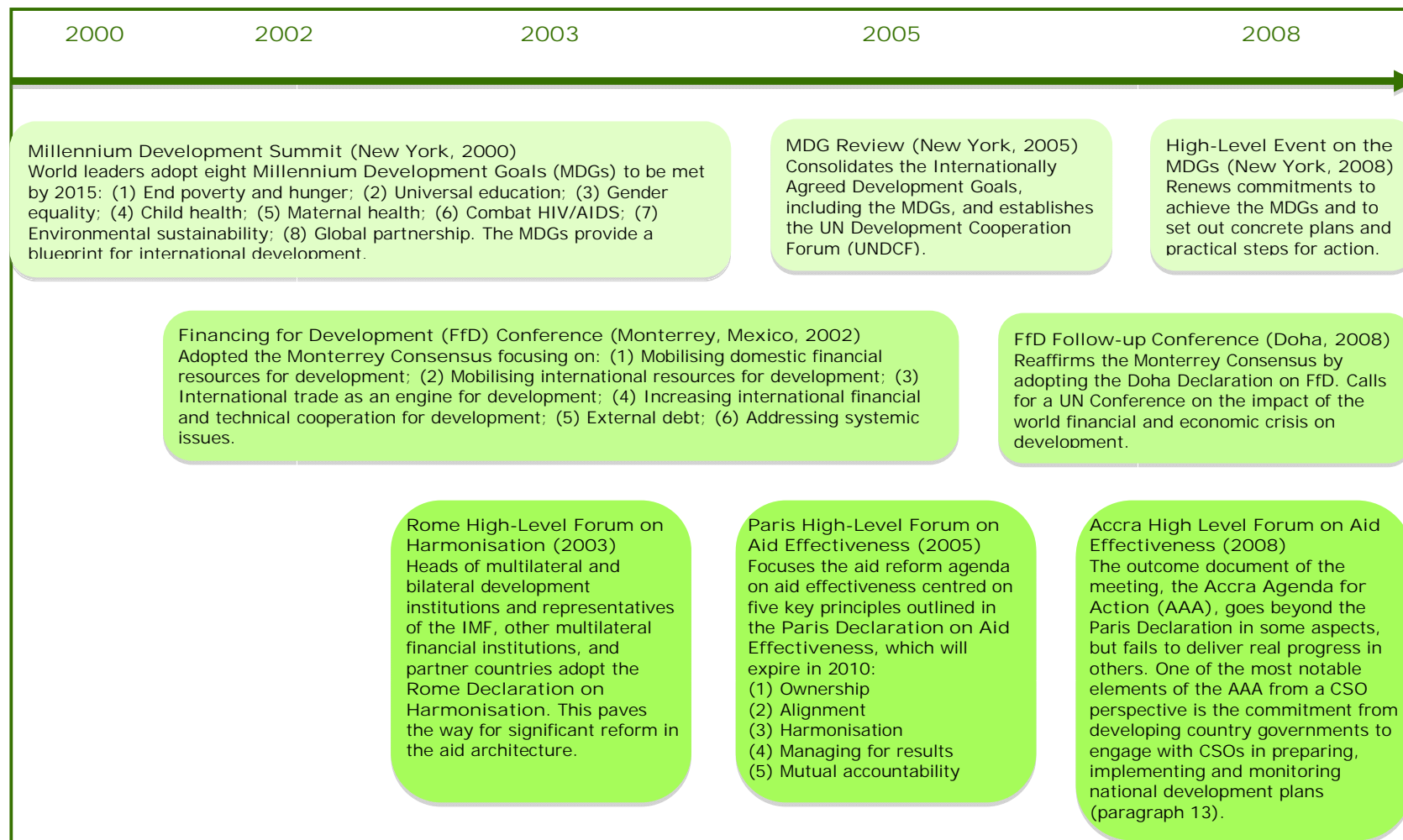
1. **Ownership:** Developing countries will exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies, and will coordinate development actions;
2. **Alignment:** Donor countries will base their overall support on recipient countries' national development strategies, institutions, and procedures;
3. **Harmonisation:** Donor countries will work so that their actions are more harmonised, transparent, and collectively effective;
4. **Managing for Results:** All countries will manage resources and improve decision-making for results; and
5. **Mutual Accountability:** Donor and developing countries pledge that they will be mutually accountable for development results.

Signatories include governments from 141 developing and developed countries, the European Commission and 27 international organisations. While many CSOs acknowledge the importance of the principles and the need for reform in official donor/recipient government aid practices, CSOs are not signatories to the PD.

The PD specifies indicators, timetables and targets for actions by donors and recipient governments and has an evolving agenda for implementation and monitoring progress, up to 2010.

⁴ The Paris Declaration is available online at www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness

Diagram 1: From the Millennium Summit to Accra: Reshaping the international aid architecture



Can the Paris Declaration principles be applied to CSOs?

CSOs are not signatories to the PD and were not officially part of the process that led to the agreement of the Declaration. While commending the intention of donors and governments to improve the management and technical dimensions of their aid effectiveness, CSOs do not consider the Declaration applicable to them.

Why can the Paris Declaration not be applied to CSOs?

The PD frames aid effectiveness from the perspective of donors, recipients and channels of international aid resources. CSOs, however, argue that their place in the aid architecture comes not so much from their roles as donors or recipients of aid, but from a variety of socio-economic roles in development, all based on the defining attribute of social solidarity. These range from mobilising grassroots communities to monitoring government policy and practice; from delivering services and programmes to educating the public and helping to shape social values of solidarity and social justice. Besides not reflecting these roles, the PD focuses on aid delivery and management, which CSOs believe is not the measure of their effectiveness.

How can CSOs measure their effectiveness?

Compared with official donors and governments, whose focus in the Paris Declaration was largely the efficient delivery of aid (aid effectiveness), CSOs seek to assess their effectiveness by their relationships with and impacts upon the rights and lives of poor and marginalised populations (development effectiveness). Principles for CSO development effectiveness include, but are not limited to, human rights obligations and standards, accountability to people and mutual accountability in partnerships, equality, trust and shared vision in partnerships, gender equality, transparency, social justice and solidarity, empowerment, diversity and autonomy, stewardship, and learning and knowledge-sharing. See below for the Open Forum's working definition of development effectiveness and issue paper 2.

What is development effectiveness?

Following the HLF-3, the focus for international dialogue on effectiveness has begun to shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness, in line with the argument put forward by CSOs that effective development requires more than "just" effective institutional aid. Enshrined in a human rights framework, CSOs argue that development effectiveness is about the impact of the actions of development actors, including donors and governments, on improving the lives of the poor and marginalised. It promotes sustainable positive change that addresses, within a democratic framework, the root causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalisation (see also issue paper 2).

The concept of development effectiveness emphasises the necessary diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors to achieve development impact, for the benefit of the poor and marginalised.

The goals of development effectiveness are centred on the realisation of human rights and sustainable development. It gives particular attention to the rights of women, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the right to development for developing countries. Achieving development effectiveness and sustainable impacts should be the overarching concern of all development actors – donors, country governments, CSOs and communities.

How does development effectiveness apply to CSOs?

Development effectiveness is a holistic framework that should affect all aspects of CSOs' development relationships and ways of working with their partners and

beneficiary populations, from their identity as CSOs, their ethics, their visions and mandates, through to the ways they define their work and operate on the ground, to the way they relate to and are accountable to their constituents.

CSO development effectiveness is not only affected by internal CSO issues, but also by the policies and practices of other development actors, for example, by the terms and conditions of donor support and operations as well as by the legal frameworks established by donor and recipient country governments (enabling environment, see issue paper 8).

A number of individual CSOs and CSOs networks in the development and humanitarian sectors have developed and are implementing specific mechanisms and principles relating to different aspects of CSO development effectiveness, such as accountability and equal partnership.

What is the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)?

The AAA⁵ is the outcome document of the third High Level Forum (HLF-3) on Aid Effectiveness that took place in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008. The objective of this HLF was to assess progress on the commitments and targets of the Paris Declaration.

However, the agenda for the HLF-3 went beyond the PD to begin to introduce new issues into the debate on aid effectiveness, such as for instance democratic space, division of labour, South/South co-operation, CSOs as development actors, and conditionality.

The AAA was negotiated between donors, multilateral organisations and recipient governments. Unlike at the HLF-2 in Paris, CSOs played significant roles in advocating for deepening the aid effectiveness agenda and were permitted 80 full participants in the HLF-3. These CSO delegates were guided by a parallel CSO Forum attended by more than 600 CSOs.

Why is the Accra Agenda for Action important for CSOs?

Paragraph 20 of the AAA is a landmark achievement for the recognition of the roles and voices of CSOs as development actors (see box 1 below).

BOX 1: Paragraph 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action

We [official donors and governments] will deepen our engagement with CSOs as independent development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector. We share an interest in ensuring that CSO contributions to development reach their full potential. To this end:

- a. We invite CSOs to reflect on how they can apply the Paris principles of aid effectiveness from a CSO perspective.
- b. We welcome the CSOs' proposal to engage with them in a CSO-led multistakeholder process to promote CSO development effectiveness. As part of that process, we will seek to i) improve co-ordination of CSO efforts with government programmes, ii) enhance CSO accountability for results, and iii) improve information on CSO activities.
- c. We will work with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximises their contributions to development.

⁵ The Accra Agenda for Action is available online on www.accrahlhf.net

What next for the development effectiveness policy agenda?

The Paris Declaration is due to expire in 2010 and the next High-Level Forum will take place in the last quarter of 2011 in Seoul. The challenge post-Accra is to secure the deepening of aid reforms and to renew the aid architecture to put considerations of development effectiveness and human rights, rather than aid effectiveness, at its heart. Civil society globally must be at the forefront of expanding and elaborating the concept of development effectiveness, including CSO development effectiveness, aiming to engage with donors and recipient governments in a more ambitious level of dialogue, with equal participation by all, in the run up to the Seoul HLF.

In 2009, CSOs have obtained full membership in the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness which will define the issues and agenda for the Seoul HLF.

What is the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF)?

The WP-EFF was created in 2005 to bring together donors, multilateral organisations and recipient governments to assess progress in implementing the Paris Declaration and to develop the agendas for subsequent High-Level Forums. The WP-EFF is housed at the OECD DAC (but is not a DAC body) and the DAC secretariat provides support to the WP-EFF.

In 2009 its membership has been expanded to include CSOs, foundations, parliamentary associations and local governments. CSO representation in the WP-EFF is ensured by the Coordinating Group of the Better Aid Platform (BACG).

For more on the WP-EFF, visit www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness.

What is the Better Aid Platform?

Established in January 2007, the Better Aid Platform brings together CSOs engaged in development cooperation that are seeking opportunities to influence aid related public policy formulation processes and to deepen collective efforts to achieve aid and development effectiveness. Its purpose is to contribute to a meaningful implementation⁶ of the Paris Declaration and the AAA and to move the aid effectiveness agenda to address development effectiveness by advocating for appropriate reforms of the international aid architecture and practices.

The Better Aid Platform is coordinated by a Coordinating Group (BACG)⁷, made up of 29 CSO networks and INGOs, with the mandate to coordinate CSO engagement on the implementation of the PD, the AAA and the preparations for the HLF-4. The Better Aid Platform is a member of the WP-EFF and will participate in the preparatory work for the HLF-4. It will also make links to the UN Development Cooperation Forum and the work on South-South Cooperation in 2010.

For more on the Better Aid Platform, please visit www.betteraid.org.

What is the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS)?

The AG-CS was a multi-stakeholder group comprised of CSOs, donors and governments. It was created in January 2007 in reaction to growing interest among CSOs to engage with donors and developing country governments on issues of aid effectiveness. Created to advise the WP-EFF, its aim was to seize the opportunity of the Accra HLF in September 2008 to engage civil society in the international aid effectiveness debate and consensus-building process.

Operating until October 2008, the AG-CS has helped enrich the aid effectiveness debate from a CSO perspective and was instrumental in achieving paragraph 20 of the AAA. It has produced an important set of findings and recommendations⁸.

⁶ Meaningful implementation refers to significant multi-stakeholder participation, including donors, governments, CSOs, media and parliaments.

⁷ Up to February 2009, the BACG was called International CSO Steering Group (ISG).

⁸ Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

What are the origins and the rationale of the Open Forum?

BOX 2: Key events preceding and following the creation of the Open Forum

2005	March	<p>Governments and official donors adopt the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness at the second High-Level Forum.</p> <p>Donors, recipient governments and multilateral organisations establish the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) to monitor progress on implementing the commitments of the Paris Declaration and to prepare subsequent HLFs. The WP-EFF is housed at the OECD DAC in Paris and is supported by the DAC secretariat.</p>
2007	January	<p>The WP-EFF establishes the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS): CSOs are invited to contribute to the integration of issues relating to civil society as development actors into the aid effectiveness agenda through a series of regional and international consultations. Operating until October 2008, the AG-CS was a multi-stakeholder body with equal participation of donors, governments, Northern CSOs and Southern CSOs. The AG-CS was instrumental in achieving paragraph 20 in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action that recognises CSOs as development actors in their own right.</p> <p>Several Northern and Southern coalitions, networks and INGOs meet in Nairobi at the World Social Forum to launch an International Steering Group (ISG, now called Coordinating Group) that coordinates CSO advocacy in the run-up to the Accra High-Level Forum, working with a Ghanaian CSO facilitating group organising a Parallel Forum prior to the HLF. The Better Aid Platform results from these CSO initiatives.</p>
2008	February	<p>The International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, Ottawa/Gatineau concludes the AG-CS consultation process. Participating CSOs, governments and donors agree on proposals to strengthen aid effectiveness through the inclusion of CSOs as independent development actors in the agenda.</p> <p>During informal talks, CSO representatives resolved to start a dedicated process to establish a global CSO development effectiveness framework that takes due account of the roles and responsibilities of CSOs as development actors.</p>

	June	Over 70 CSO representatives gather in Paris for the Exploratory Meeting on CSO Effectiveness to launch the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, a global CSO-led process towards agreeing on a CSO development effectiveness framework.
	September	In the Accra Agenda for Action, official donors and governments "welcome the CSOs' proposal to engage with them in a CSO-led multi-stakeholder process to promote CSO development effectiveness".
2009	February	CSOs become full members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

CSOs have a crucial role in the development process as innovative agents of change and social transformation. As people's organisations they are well situated to understand the needs and claims of the poor and marginalised and to build multiple relationships with communities that are the agents of development efforts. CSOs are diverse and critical by nature. They play multiple roles in development, as watchdogs, service providers, mobilisers of citizens, research institutions, etc. Given this, all stakeholders – donors, multilateral organisations, developing country governments, CSOs and communities – have a stake in assuring that CSOs realise their full potential. Globally, CSOs have acknowledged their responsibility to take forward and lead a process to improve their own effectiveness as development actors.

The important role CSOs play in international cooperation, aid and development has long been acknowledged but not well articulated and recognised in international discussions and processes. Through a series of consultations led by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS) in 2007 and 2008, better understanding and recognition of the roles of CSOs as development actors and as part of the international aid architecture was achieved. The findings and recommendations of the AG-CS have significantly enriched the third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra. While not being official signatories, CSOs have made an important contribution to the political outcome document of the HLF-3, the Accra Agenda for Action.

During the AG-CS process, the question of applying the Paris Declaration principles to CSOs arose. It was then that CSOs concluded that the Declaration reflects a specific perspective on aid effectiveness that is based on the roles and institutional realities of official donors and governments, which are different from those of CSOs. Therefore, the Paris Declaration cannot be directly applied to CSOs.

Consequently, CSOs resolved to take on leadership, in a collective manner, on defining and promoting their own development effectiveness framework through a dedicated CSO-led process, and in dialogue with donors and governments. While taking into account the diversity of CSOs in development, this framework will expand the concept of effectiveness from a limited and technical definition to encompass a more holistic view, which goes to the heart of people-centred development (development effectiveness).

It was acknowledged that this challenging task could only be achieved through a dedicated CSO-driven process that is autonomous and independent from governments and official donors: the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, which donors and governments officially recognised (see AAA, paragraph 20), as well as committed to support and engage with.

What are the Open Forum's objectives?

Through the Open Forum, CSOs will be enabled to build consensus on a commonly accepted framework to improve CSO development effectiveness. This framework will be based on CSOs' own development visions, approaches, relationships, institutional realities and the impact of their actions. The framework will duly reflect the roles and responsibilities of CSOs as development actors. The Open Forum will also provide a space for CSOs to learn lessons from and exchange good practices on existing efforts to enhance the impact of CSO actions. Lastly, the Open Forum seeks to facilitate dialogues with official donors and governments to build understanding and support for the conditions needed to provide enabling environments for CSOs.

BOX 3: Expected outcomes of the Open Forum

- 1) A common understanding, shared by CSOs from around the world, of the challenges to realising CSO development effectiveness.
This will be reflected in a global framework for CSO development effectiveness including a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions.
- 2) Increased accountability for principles of CSO development effectiveness.
- 3) Increased awareness and knowledge of existing tools, mechanisms and initiatives to promote and improve CSO development effectiveness at all levels of CSO activity, as well as increased awareness of how they can contribute to realising CSO development effectiveness.
- 4) Strengthened partnerships to promote development effectiveness among CSOs and between CSOs and other development stakeholders, including official donors and governments.
- 5) Understanding and support among official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders for an enabling environment for CSO actions.
This is also aimed at resulting in a multi-stakeholder agreement between all stakeholders, particularly official donors, governments and CSOs, on a set of minimum enabling conditions critical to the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors.

What is the Open Forum's approach?

The Open Forum adopts a holistic approach towards defining and promoting CSO development effectiveness. The Open Forum is holistic in terms of actor involvement, as it seeks to involve all different types of CSOs from the North and the South, regardless of their size, approaches to development or organisational cultures: CSOs engaged in advocacy, service delivery, mobilisation of citizens and communities, policy dialogue and research, to mention just a few. Trade unions, NGOs, community-based organisations, social movements of landless people etc. will be given an opportunity to contribute to the Open Forum agenda.

The Open Forum is also holistic in terms of the agenda it seeks to address, as it is interested not only in the efficient management of aid, but in a number of issues that affect CSOs' capacities and abilities to bring about positive sustainable change in the lives of the poor and marginalised (development effectiveness not aid effectiveness). This also includes those conditions affecting the work of CSOs that are determined by official donors, governments and other development actors (enabling environment). These actors must be included in the Open Forum through multi-stakeholder dialogues.

What are the elements of a CSO development effectiveness framework?

1. A set of key principles capturing CSOs' development visions, programmatic approaches, relationships and impact of actions. These principles should integrate human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability and decent work as key concepts for development effectiveness.
2. Indicators for each principle to validate the extent to which it has been achieved in a given country, thematic/sectoral or organisational context.
3. Implementation guidelines to give directions and indications as to how a given principle can be implemented in a specific country, thematic/sectoral or organisational context.
4. Good practices for accountability mechanisms through which implementation and/or accountability for agreed principles can be ensured in specific country, thematic/sectoral or organisational contexts. Mechanisms can include, but are not limited to, self assessments, peer reviews, integration of principles into existing platform standards and codes of conduct, independent assessments by third parties, donor evaluations etc.
5. Minimum standards for an enabling environment to define recommendations for good practices in government regulation, legal frameworks, donor funding models, policy dialogues, North-South CSO relationships etc. that promote CSO development effectiveness.

How does the Open Forum work?

Between now and mid-2011, the Open Forum will organise and facilitate CSO consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues at country, regional, thematic/sectoral and international levels (see section 2 for more details).

A Global Facilitation Group (GFG), a representative group of 25 CSO networks and platforms from around the world, acts as the governing body for the Open Forum and engages with donors and governments (see annex 3 for a list of members). A consortium of supporting organisations (see annex 2) will provide day-to-day support to the process and facilitate the consultation process.

In order to actively involve the widest range possible of CSOs from around the world, CSO networks and national platforms will be mobilised to take active part in and lead outreach, communication, awareness raising and national consultations in their respective countries and regions.

Why are multi-stakeholder dialogues essential to reach the Open Forum's objectives?

Donors, governments and other development actors affect conditions that encourage or discourage CSO development effectiveness. These include, inter alia, mechanisms to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights to free expression, peaceful assembly and access to information, CSO-specific policies such as CSO legislation and taxation regulations (tax deductibility of donations and other measures to promote philanthropy), regulations and norms to promote CSO transparency and accountability to their constituencies etc. Through the terms and conditions by which official donors provide their financial support to CSOs, they

have an important influence on how CSOs structure and organise themselves internally. Therefore, CSOs cannot contribute effectively to development unless donors, governments and other stakeholders provide an enabling environment for CSOs and take into account the needs and realities of CSOs.

Whom does the Open Forum seek to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues?

Multi-stakeholder dialogues will take place at multiple levels:

- At country level, multi-stakeholder dialogues will be organised, where national conditions are favourable, directly following CSO-only consultations. Government representatives, donors and possibly other development actors (private sector, media etc.) will be invited to participate in these dialogues.
- At the regional level, the region's members of the GFG will seek to engage in dialogues with relevant development actors as appropriate.
- At the international level, the GFG will engage with the OECD DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and the UN Development Cooperation Forum. A multi-stakeholder Working Group on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, linked to the WP-EFF and including CSOs and donors and governments from the North and South, has been created.

Will the Open Forum propose a global code of conduct?

CSOs are too numerous and diverse in terms of their approaches, missions, visions and expertise to be subject to a "one-size-fits-all"-approach. The Open Forum does not intend to impose a global code of conduct or another mechanism on CSOs. Rather, it seeks to facilitate the integration of the proposed CSO development effectiveness framework into the many existing accountability mechanisms or the establishment of such mechanisms at appropriate levels (platforms, networks, coalitions of like-minded CSOs).

What is the difference between the Open Forum and Better Aid?

Better Aid and the Open Forum are two distinct and complementary CSO-led processes. While the Open Forum focuses on how CSOs can improve their own effectiveness as development actors (including by improving the environment that is provided by donors and governments), Better Aid aims to monitor and influence the implementation of the AAA (with a focus on democratic ownership), while broadening the agenda to development effectiveness and addressing this within the reform of the international aid architecture. Their agendas overlap partly when it comes to issues related to the enabling environment which forms part of the Open Forum agenda and the Better Aid work on democratic ownership.

Both processes build on CSO-led consultations and dialogues with donors and governments. However, they will include different people in their work:

- The Better Aid consultations will target policy and advocacy specialists that can effectively dialogue and work with (inter)governmental bodies on aid and development effectiveness issues. They seek a dialogue with representatives that can influence their governments' aid policies, including aid and development effectiveness policies.
- The Open Forum will draw from the expertise of a wider mix of different roles within civil society, including programme officers, monitoring and evaluation officers, senior managers etc. The key interlocutors for the Open Forum process are government representatives that have a say over their governments' policies towards civil society.

SECTION 2: OUTLINING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Towards a global CSO development effectiveness framework

This section outlines the consultative process that will be carried out over the period 2009-2011 under the auspices of the Open Forum. It provides answers to some key questions concerning the consultation workshops at the national and regional levels.

Overview

The Open Forum's global consultation process will focus on elaborating a global CSO development effectiveness framework including a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions.

The Open Forum also seeks to promote a learning environment on CSO development effectiveness and to facilitate dialogues between CSOs, official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders to elaborate an agreement on minimum standards for enabling conditions for multi-stakeholder endorsement at the High-Level Forum in 2011. Multi-stakeholder dialogues will be organised at country level – depending on national conditions - as well as at international and regional levels.

The Open Forum seeks to finance a minimum number of 50 country, 4 thematic/sectoral, 5 regional and 2 international CSO consultations. CSO platforms and network that can raise their own funds for consultations are also invited to contribute to the Open Forum.

BOX 4: Overview of CSO consultations

These numbers include only consultations financed centrally by the Open Forum. They do not include the many consultations, in particular in OECD countries, that are funded outside the Open Forum by funds raised from other or own sources.

50 country consultations: 15 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 17 in Asia and Northern Africa, 4 in Eastern Europe, 2 in the Pacific, 12 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

International thematic/sectoral consultations in the following priority areas: CSOs in situations of conflict, gender and women's rights, social movements of the most marginalised (urban and rural poor, landless populations) and trade unions.

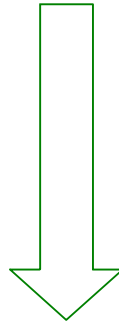
5 regional workshops in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America.

2 international CSO consultations (Global Assemblies) in 2010 and 2011.

Diagram 2: The Open Forum's consultative process

2009

Start of the process
*Regional preparatory
workshops to facilitate process*



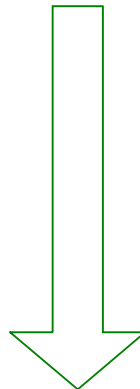
*Country-level and
thematic/sectoral consultations, as
well as outreach at all levels*

Political dialogue at all levels

*In some regions: regional
workshops to wrap up consultation
process*

2010

First Global Assembly
*To take stock of consultations and political
dialogues and prepare a draft CSO
development effectiveness framework*

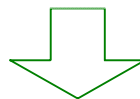


*Consensus building and outreach to
build support for the proposed CSO
development effectiveness framework*

Political dialogue at all levels

2011

Second Global Assembly
*To finalise consensus-building on the
proposed CSO development
effectiveness framework and to mobilise
CSOs for the 4th High-Level Forum*



4th High-Level Forum in Seoul

All consultations will be synthesised and analysed to inform the first Global Assembly of the Open Forum in mid-2010 (see diagram 2). This Global Assembly will bring together CSO representatives to take stock of the consultation process and to prepare a draft CSO development effectiveness framework.

After the Global Assembly, the Open Forum, under the leadership of the GFG, will continue to reach out to and build support for the proposed draft CSO development effectiveness framework which will be submitted for final endorsement at the second Global Assembly in 2011. This Global Assembly will revisit the consultation outcomes with a view to developing recommendations for CSOs, donors and government and for the fourth High Level Forum in the last quarter of 2011.

Your questions answered

Why are country consultations being held?

The strength and legitimacy of the outcomes of the Open Forum depend upon maximum CSO participation. The Open Forum facilitates consultations at the country level in order to allow the largest possible number of local and national CSOs to actively explore, discuss and define CSO development effectiveness. By this, the legitimacy and relevance of the proposed CSO development effectiveness framework will be ensured. Country-level consultations are also held because national level engagement with governments and donors is key to CSO development effectiveness, as they have a strong influence over conditions that enable good CSO practices.

Who will be organising consultations?

At the country level, the Open Forum will invite national platforms or other strong CSO networks to take a lead in organising consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues. At thematic/sectoral level, the Open Forum will work through and with strong international CSO networks that have a strong capacity, track record and/or interest in the proposed theme/sector. The regional and international consultations and workshops will be organised directly by a consortium of six CSOs that provide support to the Open Forum (see annex 2 for members).

Who will provide support for organising country and thematic/sectoral consultations?

A consortium of six CSOs was mandated by the Global Facilitation Group to support the organisation of consultations. Each consortium member takes care of a specific world region:

- Sub-Saharan Africa: All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
- Asia and North Africa: Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)
- Europe: European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)
- North America and the Pacific: InterAction
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Latin American Association of Development Organisations (ALOP)
- International NGOs not affiliated to a specific world region: CIVICUS

What support will the Open Forum offer for running consultations?

Organisers that have been invited to carry out an Open Forum consultation can turn to the consortium member in charge of their region to seek support for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of their consultation. The type of support (financial, content-wise, human resources) that can be provided will be determined on a case-by-case basis. An important element will be the regional

preparatory workshops that are intended to prepare the ground for consultations and to familiarise organisers with the Open Forum agenda.

When will consultations be held?

The consultation process will take place between now and mid-2011 and include country-level and thematic/sectoral consultations. In some regions, regional workshops will be held to prepare CSOs for consultations. In other regions, regional workshops may also be organised upon conclusion of country consultations to wrap-up and to take stock of the process. All consultation results will feed directly into the Global Assemblies of the Open Forum in 2010 and 2011.

What is the role of regional consultations?

Regional consultations will be organised by the consortium member organisations to familiarise consultation organisers with the Open Forum agenda and to prepare the ground for the consultation process. Some regions are planning a regional workshop upon conclusion of country consultations to bring together the outcomes of national consultations and to prepare for the first Global Assembly.

What is the topic of the consultations?

Consultations are supposed to provide a learning space for CSOs, with a view to identifying key elements for a shared CSO development effectiveness framework. CSOs should agree on a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. Some examples of these principles can be found in section 3 of this toolkit (issue paper 2 on principles for CSO development effectiveness), and examples for guidelines can be found in issue paper 3. Where conditions permit, multi-stakeholder dialogues will be organised directly after CSO-consultations to address conditions enabling or disabling CSOs to contribute effectively to development.

Why is this relevant to CSOs?

The Open Forum is based on the recognition that CSOs themselves, as development actors in their own right, have a responsibility to take forward and lead a process to improve their own effectiveness. The outcomes of the Open Forum will deepen the effectiveness of all CSOs by providing a global framework that can be an internationally acknowledged reference point that will implicate and be relevant to all development partners. The framework is intended to provide pointers for all CSOs, but in particular for small-scale CSOs that often lack the capacity to develop their own mechanisms and tools for framing and promoting their effectiveness.

Through dialogue with CSO colleagues, the Open Forum will also increase CSOs' understanding and awareness of ways to realise their full potential as innovative agents of change and social transformation in their own environments, including essential factors and guidelines that address North/South CSO relations. By bringing together a big diversity of CSOs, the Open Forum consultations will help build bridges and synergies between CSOs and across civil society.

The Open Forum will also contribute to catalyse national debates on development effectiveness and further the agenda with other development actors including governments and donors. This will be all the more important, as CSO development effectiveness is also shaped by the framework and the overall environment that is provided by donors and governments. Multi-stakeholder dialogue at all levels, including at country-level, will therefore be an indispensable component of the process.

Where will funding for the Open Forum's consultations come from?

The GFG has asked a range of donors to contribute to a pooled fund that will provide the resources for a minimum number of consultations (see box 4). It is hoped that a number of national partner organisations wishing to contribute to the Open Forum agenda will be able to complement financial resources provided by the Open Forum by raising funds from own or other sources.

Who is invited to participate in the consultations?

The legitimacy of national consultations will require the participation of a diversity of CSOs active in development in each national context. It is expected that inclusion of CSOs will go beyond the membership of the leading CSO network/platform in charge of organising the national workshop. In the run-up to the consultation, outreach to all different types of CSOs (trade unions, NGOs, social movements, community-based organisations, CSOs from rural areas etc.) will be crucial. See section 4 for recommendations and more details.

How much time should be allocated to the consultations?

It is recommended that CSO-only consultations should be carried out over two days at minimum. If a multi-stakeholder dialogue is envisaged as part of the workshop, a third day should be added to the agenda.

What will be done with the output of the consultations?

The outcomes of each consultation workshop will be recorded in a narrative report as well as in a shared template to enable an overall synthesis report (see annex 1). Additional means of reporting, including by video, can be chosen by organisers. The feedback from consultations will inform a global consensus-building process, under the overall leadership of the GFG, to establish a global CSO development effectiveness framework at the Global Assemblies of the Open Forum in 2010 and 2011.

How will sectoral/thematic consultations be organised?

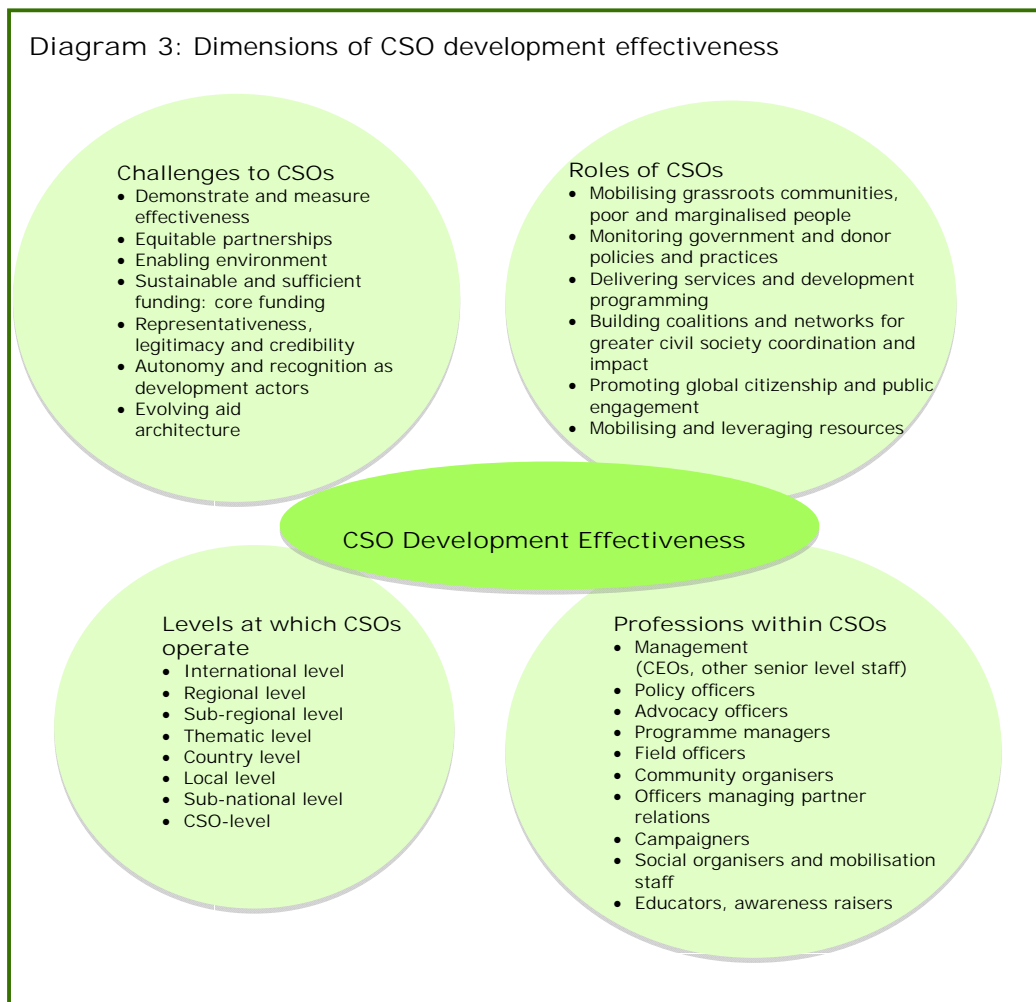
The Open Forum also aims at facilitating international-level thematic or sectoral consultations on CSO development effectiveness in the following priority areas: CSOs in situations of conflict, gender and women's rights, social movements of the most marginalised (urban and rural poor, landless populations) and trade unions. It is expected that these sectors/themes will be able to make a special contribution to the overall discussions on CSO development effectiveness. These consultations should bring together CSO representatives working in a specific context or sector or interested in a specific topic.

For each theme/sector, the GFG will invite a global thematic/sectoral network with a strong position and/or expertise in a certain sector/theme to prepare and carry out the consultation.

SECTION 3: EXPLORING CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Building on section 1, this section explores the concept of development effectiveness in depth from a CSO angle. It provides essential information and questions in order to inform and orient discussions on principles and guidelines for CSO development effectiveness.

Dimensions of CSO development effectiveness



Development effectiveness as applied to civil society actors has many different dimensions. An understanding and appreciation of CSO roles and relationships is an essential starting point for exploring CSO development effectiveness. Diagram 3 (above) provides an overview of the many different perspectives on CSO development effectiveness.

When discussing CSO development effectiveness it might also be useful to consider the following relationships that affect CSOs' identity and operations:

- Between CSOs and their primary constituents (the people they serve or represent)
- Between and among CSOs at country level and beyond
- Between Northern and Southern CSOs specifically
- Between CSOs and governments, especially in developing countries
- Between donors and CSOs

The intended CSO development effectiveness framework must take into account all these different dimensions affecting the work and identity of CSOs. Consultations must therefore must take due account of this multitude of perspectives.

Issue papers

Issue papers are intended to be a resource for the consultations. They provide essential information on key elements of CSO development effectiveness in a succinct and accessible way. They provide a synthesis of some key discussion points, providing basic definitions of essential terms as well as a series of probing questions to stimulate further thinking and debate. They also provide additional resources and references for further reading and preparation. The issue papers can contribute to the preparations for consultation workshops. They can easily be used as hand-outs to workshop participants or as prompt sheets to be used by workshop organisers and facilitators.

ISSUE PAPER 1	CSOs as development actors in their own right
ISSUE PAPER 2	Principles of CSO development effectiveness
ISSUE PAPER 3	Guidelines for implementing CSO development effectiveness principles
ISSUE PAPER 4	Legitimacy and accountability of CSOs
ISSUE PAPER 5	Rights-based approach and CSO development effectiveness
ISSUE PAPER 6	Gender equality and development effectiveness
ISSUE PAPER 7	North/South and South/South CSO relations
ISSUE PAPER 8	Enabling environment

ISSUE PAPER 1

CSOs AS DEVELOPMENT ACTORS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

DEFINITIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CSOs can be defined to include all non-market and non-state organisations in which people organise themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain. They cover a wide range of organisations that include membership-based CSOs, cause-based CSOs, and service-oriented CSOs. Examples include community-based organisations and village associations, environmental groups, women's rights groups, farmers' associations, faith-based organisations, labour unions, cooperatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes, and the not-for-profit media.

(Advisory Group Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, August 2008)

Civil society organisations are highly diverse expressions of active citizenship in their society and are development actors in their own right. CSOs promote people's participation and democratic action and reflect the values of socio-economic justice and solidarity as global citizens.

(Reality Check, August 2008)

CSOs are autonomous membership-based, cause-oriented, or service-oriented organisations, which share a common defining identity – social solidarity with the people in society they serve or represent.

(A Synthesis of Advisory Group Regional Consultations and Related Processes, January 2008)

DEVELOPMENT

Development is the process through which societal changes are achieved to ensure people lead lives of dignity and are able to meet their daily needs and to reach their highest potential through addressing societal challenges such as poverty, injustices and imbalance of power.

Development is a process of societal and economic change requiring human organising, resource mobilisation, service provision, understanding and claiming of human rights. Governments and donors have international legal obligations to work with other stakeholders, including CSOs, to make maximum efforts and progress on the reduction of poverty and inequalities. The achievement of women's rights and gender equality are essential to making development progress.

Outlining the issue

CSOs actors have come to be recognised as a key force in enhancing citizens' participation in development. They are essential organisations for increasing peoples' demands for progressive realisation of human rights, for ensuring accountability of governments and for engagement and monitoring implementation of development change. CSOs are also widely seen as expressions of the rights to peaceful assembly, free association and free speech, as embedded in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They facilitate peoples' claim to their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

CSOs in development have many roles, sometimes within one organisation. The range of roles includes but is not limited to, mobilising grassroots communities, poor and marginalised people to claim their rights; monitoring government and donor policies and practices; holding national and multilateral development

agencies to account through local knowledge, research, advocacy, and alternative policies; delivering services and innovative development programming; building coalitions and networks for greater civil society coordination and impact; and mobilising and leveraging Northern financial and human resources in North/South and South/South CSO partnerships.

Social solidarity between citizens forms the basis for the relations of CSOs with their constituencies as well as with other social actors – government, donors and the private sector. In addition to voting in periodic elections, social solidarity is also an essential expression of democracy, by organising and sustaining citizens' diverse interests in public policy and peoples' welfare.

Some guiding questions

1. What are the most important principles that can best strengthen ways of working for CSOs/networks/platforms that are essential for CSOs to:
 - Achieve their intended objectives (e.g. poverty reduction, promotion of human rights, gender equality and sustainable development)?
 - Strengthen their accountability to their constituencies and stakeholders?
 - Increase the visibility and voice of CSOs?
 - Promote social solidarity and active citizenship?
2. What are some guidelines (for CSOs, for donors, for government) to implement these principles:
 - Within your own CSO and its relation to constituencies?
 - In the country and regional context in which you and other CSOs work?
 - In your global external relations with other CSOs, donors or multilateral institutions?
3. What is the added value of CSOs as development actors?
4. What are the common elements of the identity of development CSOs that are relevant to the debate on development effectiveness?
5. What are key inhibiting factors that prevent CSOs from realising their full potential in development?
 - In relations with donors, governments and other development actors?
 - In relations with partner CSOs?
 - In relations with primary constituencies?

Useful Resources

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Issues paper", September 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations", August 2008. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Report of the "North-South Civil Society Dialogue", sponsored by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, Nairobi, November 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Report of the "CSO Northern Regional Workshop", sponsored by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, Brussels, October 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Reality Check, "Civil Society and Development Effectiveness: Another View", August 2008. Available at http://realityofaid.org/downloads/realitycheck_aug2008.pdf

ISSUE PAPER 2

PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

DEFINITIONS

DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Development effectiveness is promoting sustainable positive change, within a democratic framework, that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalisation, through the diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors.

PRINCIPLES OF CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Underlying values and qualities of social and organisational relationships that promote development in which those living in poverty, the vulnerable and marginalised populations, may more ably claim their rights.

Outlining the issue

The Open Forum aspires to generate consensus on key principles of CSO development effectiveness. They should define fundamental standards or values conditioning and permeating CSOs' identity as development actors. They should capture CSOs' development visions, relationships and impact of actions.

BOX 5: Principles of CSO development effectiveness as identified by participants in the Northern Regional Workshop on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, held in Brussels in October 2007:

- CSO actions are people-centred: they strive to empower individuals and communities, strengthen democratic ownership and participation.
- CSO actions are poverty-focused: solidarity with people claiming their rights.
- CSO actions are based on human rights and social justice.
- CSO actions are based on genuine and long term partnerships, respect and dialogue, acknowledging diversity.
- CSO actions are striving for sustainable impact and results, based on social processes and mutual learning.
- CSO ensure their effectiveness through continuous enhancement of their transparency, accountability in all its dimensions (to rights-holders, governments, donors, peers, the public), autonomy from states and coordination.

Effectiveness can have different meanings for different actors, in different contexts and on different levels. As evident from the North-South Civil Society Dialogue held in Nairobi in November 2007, effectiveness may have different interpretations by Southern and Northern CSOs as well as in different sectoral, thematic and cultural contexts (see box 6 below).

While the Open Forum process is intended to identify principles relevant to CSO development effectiveness in many different country contexts, the principles outlined in boxes 5 and 6 may provide a useful starting point for these consultations.

BOX 6: Another set of principles was developed by participants in the North-South Civil Society Dialogue, held in Nairobi in November 2007. The workshop divided into Northern and Southern participants to identify key principles.

Principles of Northern CSOs:	Principles of Southern CSOs:
Development not aid effectiveness	Bias for poorest, more marginalised
Partnership by equality	Social justice
Mutual accountability – human rights	Transparency
Shared vision - trust	Social solidarity
Social justice – transparency - dialogue	Equality
Commitment - diversity	Democracy
Solidarity – empowerment - autonomy	Gender equality
Common values	Traceability of finances
	Solidarity
	Participation
	Inclusion
	Mutual respect and accountability
	Learning and sharing
	Independence from political mainstreaming

It is important that all principles are grounded in an appreciation of challenges facing CSOs if they are to genuinely guide their ways of working and contribute to improvements in practice. Some possible CSO challenges are outlined below.

- Demonstrating legitimacy, safeguarding autonomy and representativeness: Any principles will need to reflect the complex multi-dimensional nature of CSO legitimacy and representativeness. They will also have to be based on the recognition that CSOs are development actors in their own right.
- Working to realise CSO goals as development actors within an external enabling environment: Recommendations on minimum standards for an enabling environment for CSOs should set the benchmark for multi-stakeholder dialogues in the run up to the fourth High-Level Forum in 2011.
- Recognising that CSOs are political agents for social change and the centrality of human rights in understanding development effectiveness: Principles of CSO development effectiveness will have to capture the political dimension of CSO work in development as well as take into account the diversity of CSOs.
- Mainstreaming women's rights and gender equality: Realising gender equality and women's rights are preconditions for development effectiveness.
- The centrality of genuine and equitable partnerships based on mutual accountability and social solidarity: These core CSO values must continue to guide CSO partnerships, particularly between Northern and Southern CSOs. Any principles will have to reflect these values. But the principles should also address different relationships in CSO development interventions, whether at local, country or global level.
- Clarifying and developing accountability mechanisms responsive to CSO primary constituencies: CSOs should demonstrate their effectiveness primarily to poor and marginalised populations. The challenge is to develop mechanisms that may engage these primary constituents in assessing development results as well as holding donors, governments and CSOs alike to account.
- Making funding sustainable for local and democratic ownership: Discussions on CSO development effectiveness principles will necessarily have to take into account the roles of CSOs as donors, recipients and channels of aid.

- Engaging with other development actors within a changing aid architecture: This essential aspect of the nature of CSO work must be reflected in development effectiveness principles as well as in discussions on minimum standards for an enabling environment.

There is no right or wrong way to go about defining principles on CSO development effectiveness. If there are to be principles that are widely applicable they need to make use of inclusive, simple, accessible and encompassing language. A distinction of three different types of principles may be useful:

- Aspirational: These principles focus on what civil society actors want the world to become through their development actions. They capture their development visions and their mandate.
- Operational: These principles focus on how CSOs must operate, guiding their day-to-day work on the ground, guiding partnerships and relations with other CSOs, other stakeholders and constituents.
- Impact-related: These principles can define the impact that CSOs seek to bring about in people's lives according to their mandate, in terms of empowerment, realising human rights and sustainable change.

It is essential that, while being aspirational, principles can be translated into indicators against which CSOs can develop guidelines and to which CSOs can hold themselves accountable. In support of the goal of the Open Forum to reach consensus on guiding principles, it will be important that principles identified during consultation workshops be ranked by participants in order to clearly show their level of importance.

Some guiding questions

1. Taking account of the draft principles outlined above, what are the values and principles (aspirational, operational and impact-related) underpinning the work of your organisation and/or the CSOs in your country/region/sector? How do they relate to your organisation's mission statement and/or mandate?
2. What words would you use to define your organisation's effectiveness?
3. How are your values and principles translated down into the organisation in terms of its day-to-day operations and relationships?
4. How do the most important principles identified in your consultation address the impact of external actors conditioning CSO development effectiveness?

Useful Resources

Lenneberg C., 2008, "Update on issues and principles for CSO effectiveness". Available at http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/Conny_Lenneberg.pdf

Reality Check, "Civil Society and Development Effectiveness: Another View", August 2008. Available at http://realityofaid.org/downloads/realitycheck_aug2008.pdf

Report of the North-South Civil Society Dialogue, Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, November 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Report of the Northern Regional Workshop sponsored by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, Brussels, October 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

For resources in Spanish go to <http://www.alop.or.cr/trabajo/publicaciones/>

Kindornay S., Morton B., September 2009, "Development effectiveness: towards new understandings". Available at <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/english/pdf/Issues%20Brief%20Sept.pdf>

ISSUE PAPER 3

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS PRINCIPLES

DEFINITIONS

GUIDELINE

A recommendation indicating how something should be done or what sort of action should be taken in a particular circumstance or to attain a particular standard or principle.

INDICATOR

Observable signals or proxies of status or change that are intended to provide a credible means of verifying this status or change (either quantitatively or qualitatively). Indicators should be defined in agreement with all stakeholders and need to be valid, practical, clear, and measurable. While important for documenting improvements in CSO development effectiveness, assessing indicators is not a substitute for periodic participatory analysis of outcomes conditioned by the intended changes.

MECHANISM

Mechanisms are the context-specific means to implement and/or demonstrate compliance with and accountability to agreed principles, standards and guidelines. Some examples could be regular dialogue between partners, core funding with multiple year commitments to Southern CSOs, a common CSO charter, a declaration or codes of conduct/ethics shared by all CSOs in a given context.

Outlining the issue

Internationally, there have been various initiatives to enhance development CSOs' accountability, effectiveness and impact. Today, a large number of standards, codes of conduct or ethics, accountability frameworks or other mechanisms and tools exist within civil society. Examples include, among others, the CIVICUS Civil Society Index, the International NGOs Accountability Charter or the Sphere project described below.

The aim of the Open Forum is not to duplicate existing processes to burden CSOs with new tools and reporting mechanisms. Acknowledging the diversity of CSO experience and the importance of existing mechanisms, the Open Forum seeks to deepen the understanding of existing tools and how they can contribute to enhanced CSO development effectiveness.

Globally-agreed CSO development effectiveness principles defined through the Open Forum will have to be interpreted and applied locally through context-relevant and specific guidelines, indicators and mechanisms.

For example, if we look at the principle of "strengthening local ownership of Southern CSOs over development directions", possible guidelines for implementation, within the framework of North/South CSO relations, could be: (a) Northern CSOs must develop long-term relationships with Southern counterparts; (b) Northern CSOs must strengthen their understanding of the mandate, programme priorities and rationale of these counterparts, and situate their own priorities within the former, not the reverse. The mechanisms are the means to

achieve these guidelines. For instance: (a) regular partnership meetings involving different levels of CSOs from the North and the South; (b) provision of core funding, with multiple year commitments etc.

While the focus for the Open Forum is on CSO development initiatives, it may be useful to point to a practical example from the humanitarian sector, the Sphere project, in order to understand the inter-play between principles, guidelines and indicators as applied in the humanitarian sector.

Example: the Sphere project⁹

Sphere offers an operational framework comprising a set of Minimum Standards and key indicators, outlined in the Sphere Handbook, that inform different areas of CSO humanitarian action, from initial assessment to coordination and advocacy. Developed by a broad network of practitioners, most of the standards and their accompanying indicators were not new, but consolidated and adapted existing knowledge and practice.

Minimum Standards are general statements that define the minimum level to be attained in a given context. They are based on the principle that disaster-affected populations have the right to live in dignity. They are qualitative in nature and are meant to be universal and applicable in any operating environment. Eight areas were identified for the Sphere Minimum Standards: (1) Participation; (2) Initial assessment; (3) Response; (4) Targeting; (5) Monitoring; (6) Evaluation; (7) Aid worker competencies and responsibilities; and (8) Supervision, management and support of personnel.

Key indicators act as signals that determine whether or not a standard has been attained. As measures to standards, indicators can be qualitative or quantitative in nature. They function as tools to measure the impact of processes used and programmes implemented¹⁰.

Let's take the area of participation (standard 1) as an example. The standard is defined as follows: "The disaster-affected population actively participates in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the assistance programme." Key indicators (which could also be read as guidelines) for this standard are:

- Women and men of all ages from the disaster-affected and wider local populations, including vulnerable groups, receive information about the assistance programme and are given the opportunity to comment to the assistance agency during all stages of the project cycle.
- Written assistance programme objectives and plans should reflect the needs, concerns and values of disaster-affected people, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups, and contribute to their protection.
- Programming is designed to maximise the use of local skills and capacities.

Sphere is implemented on the ground through its two main mechanisms, namely the Humanitarian Charter and the Minimum Standards. The Humanitarian Charter is based on the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law,

⁹ Launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, Sphere framed a Humanitarian Charter and identified Minimum Standards to be attained in disaster assistance in five key sectors (water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and health services).

¹⁰ The Sphere handbook also provides guidance notes to the implementation of standards and indicators. These include specific points to consider when applying the standards and indicators in different situations, guidance on tackling practical difficulties and advice on priority issues. They may also include critical issues relating to the standards or indicators and describe dilemmas, controversies or gaps in current knowledge.

international human rights law, refugee law and the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. The Charter outlines the core principles of Sphere. It also points out the legal duties and responsibilities of states and warring parties to guarantee the right to protection and assistance.

Taken together, the Humanitarian Charter and the Minimum Standards contribute to an operational framework for accountability in disaster assistance efforts. Adherence to the Charter is voluntary, primarily because Sphere has no means for monitoring implementation. Thus the initiative is effectively self-regulatory.

However, since it was launched in 1997, Sphere has been successfully institutionalised into policies for disaster response. The Minimum Standards have been mainstreamed into tools, procedures, and training programmes on applying Sphere have been conducted globally both with CSOs and with other development actors, including governments, donors and multi-lateral agencies.

Some guiding questions

1. What guidelines are relevant for the implementation of principles for CSO development effectiveness related to the context in which you work as a CSO?
2. What are appropriate guidelines for your organisation, for CSOs to which you relate, for donors and governments that affect your environment for achieving development effectiveness?
3. How might CSOs, donors and governments implement guidelines to apply CSO development effectiveness principles?
4. Can you identify any cases of good practice in compliance to CSO development effectiveness and accountability processes in your context?

Useful Resources

More information on the CIVICUS Civil Society Index can be obtained at www.civicus.org/csi.

For the INGOs Accountability Charter go to www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org.

For more information on Sphere go to www.sphereproject.org.

One World Trust: database on CSO self-regulatory initiatives:
<http://www.oneworldtrust.org/csoproject/>

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "An Exploration of Experience and Good Practice", August 2008. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness Case Book", August 2008. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

ISSUE PAPER 4

LEGITIMACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF CSOs

DEFINITIONS

LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy refers to perceptions by key stakeholders that the existence, activities and impacts of CSOs are justifiable and appropriate in terms of central social values and institutions. Legitimacy is grounded in the perceptions of stakeholders in the larger environment in which the organisation is embedded.

(L. David Brown and Jagadanada, January 2007)

Legitimacy is “the right to be and do something in society — a sense that an organisation is lawful, admissible, and justified in its chosen course of action.

(Edwards 2000)

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is “a responsibility to answer for particular performance expectations to specific stakeholders.”

(L. David Brown and Jagadanada, January 2007)

The concept of accountability describes the rights and responsibilities that exist between people and the institutions that affect their lives, including governments, civil society and market actors. Accountability is not the only means through which individuals and organisations are held responsible for their decisions and actions, but also the means by which they take internal responsibility for shaping their organisational mission and values, for opening themselves to external scrutiny and for assessing performance in relation to goals.

(Charles Mutasa)

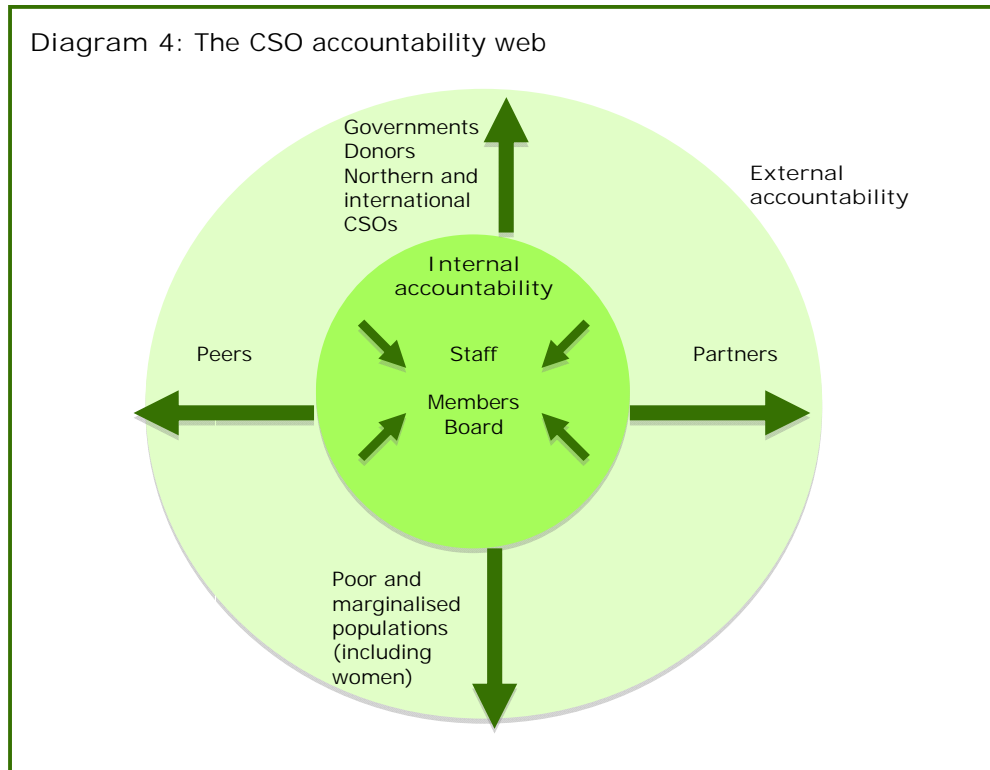
Outlining the issue

Strengthening the role and voice of civil society and improving CSO development effectiveness relate directly to issues of legitimacy and accountability. If CSOs leave questions about their legitimacy and accountability unanswered, they risk undermining organisational identities and capacities that depend on values and voluntary commitments.

There are different dimensions that determine CSO legitimacy: (a) official legitimacy as determined through legislation and government recognition; (b) democratic legitimacy is determined in relation to CSO primary constituencies and the public at large; and (c) legitimacy of purpose is determined by expertise and value added in particular in policy and programme areas.

Accountability in CSOs is very complex and multi-dimensional. CSOs are usually not accountable to any one set of clearly defined stakeholders. As diagram 4 (below) shows, CSOs face a web of accountability. Moreover, accountability claims often compete with each other, with upwards accountability (to donors for funding received) often prevailing over downwards accountability (to beneficiaries).

CSO accountability lines run in four directions: upwards to donors, governments and foundations, downwards to their primary constituents – poor and marginalised populations –, inwards to the organisation's staff, members and Board, and horizontally to peers and partners.



A number of issues and questions may arise from the distinctly complex nature of CSO accountability:

- Full accountability is impossible: Dealing with all the different accountability claims may be extremely difficult, and where stakeholders have different or contradictory interests, being fully accountable to all of them is impossible.
- Loose downward accountability: Rather than being grounded in contract or law, CSOs' accountability to their constituencies is often shaped by a moral obligation that is generally rooted in their organisational mission and values. A moral obligation provides significant scope for organisational choice and interpretation. As a result, the degree to which CSOs are accountable to their constituencies and the quality of the mechanisms they use to ensure this varies considerably from organisation to organisation.
- Upward accountability bias: Accountability may be skewed upwards, that is towards the most powerful stakeholders – mostly governments and donors –, which weakens downward accountability towards constituents. As a result of this, the legitimacy and accountability of CSOs may become disconnected from its democratic base.
- Accountability in North/South CSO relations, and especially the need for Northern CSOs to be accountable to Southern CSOs, is also an area of concern.

Northern CSOs should demonstrate that they are demand-driven and responding to the needs and capacities of their Southern counterparts. Relationships should be grounded in fundamental principles of good governance and human rights with an emphasis on inclusion, accountability, partnership, freedom to advocate, and effective participation as agents of development. Southern CSOs should guard against dependency and upward accountability towards the funding partner at the expense of horizontal and downward accountability.

Accountability within civil society should be understood as a positive enabler rather than as a matter of formal compliance with externally imposed obligations. Ultimately, the Open Forum's vision of development effectiveness must be based on a broad understanding of accountability where all development actors should be held accountable for results benefiting poor and marginalised populations. It should also address the question of how to fully engage CSOs' primary constituencies in holding governments, donors and CSOs to account for development effectiveness.

Some guiding questions

1. What elements do you think form the basis of legitimacy of your CSO as a development actor?
2. Can you describe the web of accountability for your CSO as well as the power dynamics that shape tensions within this web?
3. What guidelines could you suggest for CSOs, for governments, for donors, that would strengthen the most important forms of accountability to ensure CSO development effectiveness?
4. What should a CSO be accountable for? To whom? How?

Useful Resources

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Issues paper", September 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations", August 2008. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Brown D. and Jagadananda, 2007, "Civil Society Legitimacy and Accountability: Issues and Challenges". Available at http://www.civicus.org/new/media/LTA_ScopingPaper.pdf

Blagescu M., de Las Casas L., Lloyd R., "Pathways to accountability – The GAP Framework", 2005. Available at www.oneworldtrust.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&qid=210&Itemid=59

Report of the North-South Civil Society Dialogue, sponsored by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, Nairobi, November 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Lessons learned from NGOs in Colombia: <http://www.ongporlatransparencia.org.co/>

ISSUE PAPER 5

RIGHTS-BASED DEVELOPMENT AND CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

DEFINITIONS

RIGHTS-BASED DEVELOPMENT

A rights-based approach to development aims to transform the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of poverty, disempowerment and conflict into a virtuous cycle in which all people, rights holders, can demand accountability from states as duty-bearers, and where duty bearers have both the willingness and capacity to fulfill, protect, and promote people's human rights. A rights-based approach rejects the notion that people living in poverty can only meet their basic needs as passive recipients of charity. People are the active subjects of their own development, as they seek to claim and realise their rights. Development actors, including the state, should seek to build people's capabilities to do so by guaranteeing their rights to the essentials of a decent life.

(Green 2008)

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

At an individual level, active citizenship means developing self-confidence and overcoming a feeling of powerlessness that has been internalised. In relation to other people, it means developing the ability to negotiate and influence decisions. When empowered individuals work together, it means involvement in collective action, be it in the village, in the neighbourhood or more broadly. It includes, but it is not confined to, political activism. It basically comprises any individual action with social consequences, which may include participation in faith groups or neighbourhood associations, 'social entrepreneurship' (directing business activities to social ends), and a variety of other social organisations, if their benefits extend beyond the personal or the familial. Ultimately, active citizenship means engaging with the political system to build effective states.

(Duncan 2008)

Outlining the issue

Human rights and human development are both about securing basic freedoms. A rights-based approach to development is based upon the recognition and the realisation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the Right to Development, enshrined in internationally agreed and legally binding human rights instruments. In 2000, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) called for a "rights ethos for aid" that would empower people in the fight against poverty.

As Amartya Sen argues, significant progress in ending poverty will ultimately be achieved when the rights of the vulnerable and the poor are expressed and recognised in the face of highly unequal cultural, social, economic, and political power relations at all levels. With women forming the majority of the poor and vulnerable, issues of gender equality and processes for women to claim their rights are central to poverty reduction.

One of the central implications of using a human rights framework for assessing effectiveness is the recognition that effective and sustainable development change will not take place in the absence of active citizens. Actions to tackle poverty in any society and globally are inherently political.

CSOs as development actors are agents of social change. As such, they are also inherently political. They cannot be separated from the question of active citizenship and people's participation in their own development, and from the related questions of social justice and solidarity.

CSOs may contribute to development by building citizens' awareness of their rights, building citizens' capacities and creating opportunities for them to participate in CSOs, organising local development initiatives, and collaborating with CSOs and social movements to advocate and claim rights nationally and globally. CSOs are a fundamental building block of a democratic political culture. Stepping up efforts by poor and marginalised people to successfully claim their rights is central for realising CSO development effectiveness.

Some guiding questions

1. What are some of the characteristics of a rights-based approach to CSO development interventions? What aspects of CSO operations enhance or limit their ability to directly support efforts by their constituents and other marginalised and poor people to claim their rights?
2. What are some of the ways in which CSOs have organised and structured themselves at country level in order to further a rights-based framework for change?
3. What are the different roles played by Northern (NCSOs) and Southern CSOs (SCSOs) in the promotion of rights-based development? How can NCSOs and SCSOs work together to further this goal? What are positive examples of this collaboration? What needs to improve?
4. How do developing country governments and/or donors influence CSO capacities to implement a rights approach? What are some examples of good practice in upholding a rights-based framework for development by governments or donors? What positive experience do CSOs have of working constructively with elected government bodies to promote and protect rights, at the country level? Internationally?

Useful Resources

UNDP, 2000, "Human Development Report 2000, Human Rights and Human Development". Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/>

Sen A., "Development as Freedom", New York, Random House, 1999

Tujan T., "The Political Context for a CSO-led process on CSO effectiveness", in: Reality Check, August 2008, "Civil Society and Development Effectiveness: Another View". Available at http://realityofaid.org/downloads/realitycheck_aug2008.pdf

Tomlinson B., "Determinants of Civil Society Aid Effectiveness: A CCIC Discussion Paper", Canadian Council for International Cooperation, 2006. Available at http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml#cs_determs

Green D., 2008, "From Poverty to Power: How active citizens and active states can change the world", Oxfam International

ISSUE PAPER 6

GENDER EQUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

DEFINITIONS

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.
(Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies)

GENDER EQUITY

Fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of 13 women. Gender equity denotes an element of interpretation of social justice, usually based on tradition, custom, religion or culture, which is most often to the detriment to women. Such use of equity in relation to the advancement of women is unacceptable.
(Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies)

DISCRIMINATION

Systemic discrimination is caused by policies and practices that are built into the ways that institutions operate, and that have the effect of excluding women and minorities. For example, in societies where the belief is strong that whatever happens within the household is the concern of household member only, the police force and judiciary, organisations within the institution of the state are likely routinely to avoid addressing questions of domestic violence, leading to systemic discrimination against all the women who experience violence within the home.
(Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies)

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

These are the freedoms and entitlements of women and girls of all ages. These rights may or may not be institutionalised, ignored or suppressed by law, local custom, and behavior in a particular society.

Socioeconomic, political, and legal rights for women equal to those of men.

A set of practices and laws that are the continuously evolving product of an international movement to improve the status of women.

Outlining the issue

Women are more likely to live in poverty, simply because they are women. In every country of the world, women are systematically denied their rights and as a result have less power, money, land, protection from violence and access to education and healthcare. Of the world's poor, 70 % are women, as are 60 % of people infected with HIV in Africa (ActionAid 2007).

Women's often too limited access to reproductive health information and services leads to intolerable numbers of pregnancy-related deaths in many countries. In the political arena, women are in most cases least represented in decision-making organs of political parties and in turn in governments and parliaments.

Women's rights are a cross-cutting issue, impacting on all aspects of development. Women's empowerment is a pre-requisite for development, and poverty cannot be tackled unless the rights of women are placed centre stage. Similarly, development cannot be effective unless it tackles this central issue. Women's rights are central to the development effectiveness agenda and should therefore be a main area of focus.

In many countries, women's organisations have played a crucial role by representing, supporting and defending vulnerable groups of women; keeping gender equality and women's rights issues on policymakers' agendas; fighting for women's rights at a legislative level; and holding governments and other stakeholders to account for the implementation of gender-related commitments.

Women's issues were in the past the prerogative of women's organisations but today, many development CSOs have made women's rights and empowerment core areas of their interventions. They have done this by focusing on basic human rights for women (equality before the law; freedom of expression, political participation, religion; freedom from torture and slavery) which are largely mainstreamed gender equality components. Other important women's human rights issues such as violence against women and equality under the law and at home have been pursued successfully through specific (not mainstreamed) women's rights programmes. There are many challenges in making these interventions effective.

Challenges of religious or cultural fundamentalisms of different kinds and increases in violence, conflict and war have been a great threat to women's rights achievements. At the same time, there is a perceived reduction in the focus on gender equality by donors and governments in recent years. All this has increased the importance and role of CSOs in keeping gender equality and women's rights on the political and development agenda.

Guiding questions

1. What strategies best inform CSOs' approaches that promote women's rights and gender equality? Some suggest that promotion of women's rights issues are best dealt with as standalone projects so as to elevate the plight of the women and to make them reach a level playing field, while others promote mainstreaming of women's rights issues. What are the pros and cons of each approach and what lessons can you draw for guidelines for CSO development effectiveness that can really make a difference to women?
2. What guidelines do you suggest to donors and governments to strengthen women-focused CSO development effectiveness?
3. Share some good practices that can be derived from women's rights and empowerment initiatives of CSOs!

Useful Resources

ActionAid International, "Making Aid Accountable and Effective: The challenge for the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness". Available at <http://www.actionaid.org/docs/making%20aid%20accountable%20and%20effective.pdf>

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID): www.awid.org

Women Watch, Information and Resources on Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women. Available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/gender_mainstreaming_10314.htm

Whither EC Aid? Available at <http://weca-ecaid.eu/>

UK Gender and Development Network (UK GAD Network), "Gender Equality, the New Aid Environment and Civil Society Organisations", January 2008. Available at <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/pdfs/Jan08/GAD-Network-Report.pdf>

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, "Glossary of Gender-Related Terms". Available at http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/Gender-Glossary-updated_final.pdf

Women's participation in political processes: <http://www.alop.or.cr/trabajo/publicaciones/>

Resources on gender responsive budgeting are available at http://www.oneworldaction.org/papers_documents_archives/research/just_budgets.htm

ISSUE PAPER 7

NORTH/SOUTH AND SOUTH/SOUTH CSO RELATIONS

DEFINITIONS

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CSOs

Northern and Southern CSOs are distinguished by their place of origin, where Northern CSOs originate from developed countries and Southern CSOs from developing countries. The geographical origin of CSOs may determine and differentiate the type and level of resources available, their foci and modus operandi.

INTERNATIONAL CSOs

International CSOs may be neither Northern nor Southern in that they operate as a global network/partnership, while many still retain a strong identity, operational and financial structure as a Northern CSO donor.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are, understood and mutually enabling, independent interactions with shared intentions.

(Fowler 1997)

Partnership is an important tool in the enhancement of social capital, which brings about a more functional civil society better able to deal with the states and markets at all levels of operation.

(Cornwall, Lucas, Pasteur 2000)

Authentic partnership means a long-term commitment to agreed objectives based on shared values, strategies and information. It is characterised by honest feedback and joint planning, accompaniment, transparency and accountability on both sides, and a genuine openness and sensitivity to the other's needs, feelings, expertise, experience and wisdom. It is based on mutual respect, trust and goodwill.

(The Caritas Partnership Guiding Principles)

Outlining the issue

There are distinctions between Northern and Southern CSOs with regard to the roles that they play in development by virtue of the context in which they operate and their overarching aims. A large number of Northern CSOs exist to support Southern CSOs and act as donors in their own right, channels for official donor funds and social solidarity development actors. These differences in roles and modus operandi between Northern and Southern CSOs have often led to imbalances of power leading to situations where Southern CSOs may be treated more as a client aid recipient than an independent CSO partner, with Northern CSOs passing onto their Southern CSO partners the same kinds of rigid (and criticised) aid delivery conditionalities and requirements that they are subject to from institutional donors.

The relational issues between Northern and Southern CSOs have been subject of many dialogues and reforms in CSO operations and practices. Distinctions are made between Northern CSOs that work in partnership with Southern CSOs, and those that operate their own programmes in developing countries and have their

own affiliates and offices in those countries. The former arrangement is said to have the potential for a better balance of power, while the latter arrangement, it is argued, allows Northern CSOs to better understand the needs of the poor and marginalised.

Effective and equitable North/South CSO partnerships are characterised by traits such as (Fowler 2000; Tomlinson 2006):

- A long-term relationship based on a shared vision derived through dialogue involving each party.
- Agreement on shared development objectives, recognising that each party may have other complementary objectives.
- Responsiveness to Southern CSOs priorities, with increasing programmatic support for these priorities through joint planning.
- Alignment with Southern CSO systems and procedures, including core budgetary support.
- Respect of differences and diversity, in relationships built on honesty, transparency, mutual trust and knowledge sharing.
- Explicit negotiated terms of mutual accountability.

Recent evidence indicates a number of trends in the aid system pushing towards increased power imbalances in North-South CSO relationships that affect the development effectiveness of Southern CSOs:

- Increasingly prescriptive donor funding to Northern CSOs (sector and geographic restrictions on the type of development initiative that donors support or requirements for alignment with government priorities, which notably results in absence of aid for forgotten crises and aid orphan countries).
- Increasingly prescriptive Northern CSO funding to Southern CSOs, based on Northern CSO constituencies' and private donors' interests.
- Increased direct presence of Northern CSOs and international NGOs in Southern countries competing for staff and resources with domestic Southern CSOs.
- Greater emphasis on quick and demonstrable results unrelated to the development context facing Southern counterparts.
- Greater one-way accountability from Southern CSOs to Northern CSOs, centred on the use of funding.

As a number of Northern official donors have started to grant funds directly to Southern CSOs (instead of using Northern CSOs as intermediaries), the recent years also saw the emergence of new opportunities for Southern CSOs. The European Commission, for instance, has decentralised some of its funding mechanisms to its Delegations.

Some countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, shifted from being aid recipients to aid donors, and the CSOs of these countries may offer different perspectives on partnerships with Southern CSOs.

There has also been increased dialogue on South-South cooperation amongst various development actors including CSOs. South-South cooperation has evolved in the context of the common struggle of developing countries to reach development and growth. Based on shared struggles, Southern CSOs in various regions (Latin America, Africa and Asia) seek to increase opportunities for sharing learned lessons and good practices and for tapping into resources in the South. Southern CSOs may need to increasingly define terms of engagement with Northern donors, both official and CSOs, through joint funding mechanisms controlled by Southern CSOs.

Some guiding questions

1. What distinctions need to be made between Northern and Southern CSOs with regard to the roles that they play in development? How do these distinctions affect principles for CSO development effectiveness, guidelines for their implementation, and mechanisms of accountability?
2. How do SCSOs and NCSOs perceive the intermediary role that NCSOs often play in the aid architecture, in particular in terms of their value added?
3. What are some examples of partnership and good practice of NCSO support for CSO development programmes in the South? Consider:
 - handling of resources (human and financial)
 - ownership of programmes and strategies
 - impact for beneficiariesHow can the relationships and imbalance of power between NCSOs and SCSOs be addressed? What principles of operation would enhance the relationships between NCSOs and SCSOs for greater impact?
4. How can SCSOs in different regions enhance their partnerships and share their learning and practices? How can increased Southern cooperation be reflected in CSO development effectiveness principles and guidelines?
5. What reforms would SCSOs like to see in the ways that NCSOs work with them? What are some examples of positive North/South CSO relationships from which lessons could be drawn?
6. How do donors and governments affect the quality of North/South CSO partnerships? What principles, guidelines and practices should define these conditions? What examples of good donor practice in support of international CSO partnerships for equitable social solidarity are there?

Useful Resources

Fowler, A., 1991, "Building Partnerships between Northern and Southern development NGOs: Issues for the 1990s", *Development in Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 1

Fowler A. and James R., 1994, "The Role of Southern NGOs in Development Co-operation", Oxford: INTRAC

Fowler A., 1997, "Striking a Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Governmental Organisations in International Development", London: Earthscan

Ghataoura R. S., "To What Extent Is The Relationship Between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs Based On Partnership and Free From Local and International Agendas?". Available at <http://www.e-ir.info/?p=592>

Marrakesh Declaration on South-South Cooperation. Available at www.g77.org/marrakech/Marrakech-Declaration.htm

Tomlinson B., "Determinants of Civil Society Aid Effectiveness: A CCIC Discussion Paper", November 2006. Available at http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml#cs_determs

ISSUE PAPER 8

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

DEFINITION

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

An enabling environment is a set of interrelated conditions — such as legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural — that impact on the capacity of [...] development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.

(Thindwa cited in Brinkerhoff 2004)

Outlining the issue

A flourishing civil society requires an enabling environment, which depends upon the actions and policies of all development actors, including governments, donors and CSOs. Currently, conditions vary enormously from country to country ranging from what could be defined as a disabling or even oppressive environment in some cases, to restrictive or problematic environments, to what may be considered models of good practice, setting an example for others to follow.

CSO development effectiveness is premised on mutually reinforcing internal and external factors. Internal factors primarily relate to CSOs' capacity, the embodiment of principles of CSO development effectiveness, and collective structures and mechanisms. External factors relate to the recognition of the role and voice of CSOs and the development of an enabling environment for CSOs to operate.

What constitutes an enabling environment is a complex set of conditions:

- CSO recognition
 - a. Political factors and other circumstances influencing CSO recognition and operations. These may include mechanisms to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of expression, peaceful assembly and association and access to information.
 - b. General legal and judicial systems and related mechanisms such as for instance charitable status provisions, CSO legislation and taxation or provisions allowing CSOs or their constituencies to seek legal recourse.
 - c. Administrative factors affecting the way in which a given government deals with CSOs.
- Promotion of CSO voice: Processes, structures and mechanisms creating access, space, and capacity for CSOs to formulate, articulate and convey their voice in consultations and decision-making processes nationally and internationally.
- Promotion of CSO capacity
 - a. Funding mechanisms to promote CSO capacity.
 - b. Regulations and norms to promote CSO transparency and accountability to their constituencies.

- c. Government and other support programmes for developing CSO capacity and effectiveness.
- d. Measures to promote philanthropy and corporate social responsibility.
- CSO external relationships refer to the extent to which CSOs are allowed and enabled to engage in the following relations with other civil society actors:
 - a. North/South relations
 - b. International networking
 - c. National CSO networks and platforms
- Role of external partners and actors in promoting CSO development effectiveness
 - a. Northern and International CSOs
 - b. Donors
 - c. Multilateral institutions

Governments, as the primary regulators and leading national development actors are primarily responsible for most of these conditions, especially those relating to the regulatory framework which conditions the activity and visibility of CSOs as well as the safety of their staff and volunteers.

Also donors have an essential role to play. They do so through the openness that they themselves demonstrate towards CSOs, through their efforts to encourage involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue, and by virtue of the terms and conditions that they impose on CSO recipients. CSOs have identified a number of donor reforms in aid practices and architecture that would enhance CSO development effectiveness (Tomlinson 2006):

- Respecting CSOs as development actors in their own right and their autonomy, even when it might be inconsistent with donor and government priorities, through consistently promoting democratic ownership.
- Prioritising responsive funding for CSO-driven programming priorities fostering CSO diversity and autonomy.
- Assuring long-term funding for institutional strengthening of CSOs, including CSO-determined capacity building activities, networking and coalition building, and policy development and promotion.
- Limiting competition for resources and confining divisive funding mechanisms that encourage competition among CSOs (such as calls for proposals). Donors should give priority to long-term core financial support for broad institutional partnerships with CSOs where possible.
- Engaging with CSOs in dialogue on poverty reduction strategies and priorities. In the Accra Agenda for Action, developing country governments made a clear commitment to engage with CSOs (see AAA, §13a).
- Holding governments to account. Providing support for CSOs to act as watchdogs to hold their governments to account for policies affecting poverty and marginalisation as well as supporting democracy building efforts by CSOs enabling their primary constituents to claim their rights.
- Operational relationships need to be reviewed and simplified with a focus on long-term core and programmatic funding, requirements for accountability, reporting and evaluation.

- Investing more human and financial resources to deepen the engagement with civil society, notably through multiplying efforts to reach out to smaller local and grassroots organisations.

CSOs themselves also play a part in fostering good donorship practices as donors, recipients and as channels of aid funds. Northern CSOs are likely to be engaged as aid actors in all three ways. Southern CSOs are more likely to be recipients, although, in some contexts (for instance in Latin America), Southern CSOs are increasingly becoming donors and channels of aid funds themselves.

Finally, special attention should be given to the enabling environment for CSOs in fragile states or in countries affected by conflict. In these contexts, CSOs may be in particular need of protection and may often be the only vehicles for service delivery or engaging in peace-building and reconstruction processes.

Some guiding questions

1. Describe the extent to which the following factors have hindered or enhanced enabling conditions for CSO development effectiveness, including CSO recognition and voice, in your context:
 - a. legal and regulatory framework
 - b. political and governance factors
 - c. socio-cultural characteristics
 - d. funding conditions
 - e. external partners and actors
2. What are some key minimum standards that governments, donors and CSOs should adopt for an enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness in your national context?
3. What guidelines should be adopted for implementing these minimum standards?

Useful Resources

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Issues paper", September 2007. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, "Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations", August 2008. Available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Advisory-Group-on-Civil-Society-.html>

Tomlinson B., "Determinants of Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: A CCIC Discussion Paper", November 2006. Available at http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml#cs_determs

Brinkerhoff, D. W., 2004, "The Enabling Environment for Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Government Actions to Support NGOs". Available online at http://www.rti.org/pubs/Brinkerhoff_pub.pdf

Villaumé, F., 2009, "Effets de politiques de collaboration entre bailleurs de fonds et Organisations de la Société Civile en Afrique sur l'efficacité des interventions d'aide au développement. Available at http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/Collaboration_bailleurs-OSC_-_Florian_Villaume_-_ISF_Canada_-_Sept_-_2009.pdf

SECTION 4: GUIDANCE FOR NATIONAL CONSULTATION ORGANISERS AND FACILITATORS

This section is solely aimed at consultation organisers and facilitators. It provides useful practical information and guidance on preparing, structuring, running, and recording the outcomes of consultations. A template for recording the consultation outcomes is provided in annex 1 of this toolkit.

Recommended preparations for consultation workshops

The Open Forum will work with national CSO networks and platforms to organise consultations at the country level. Consultations should include a CSO-only segment (2 days recommended) and, where country conditions are favourable to political dialogue with governments and official donors, a multi-stakeholder segment (1 day recommended). In this toolkit, we will focus primarily on providing guidance for the CSO-only workshops.

Preparatory work for the consultations could include one or more of the following, depending on time and capacity, the local context, and what work and research has been undertaken previously. They should be considered suggestions, not requirements. However, organisers should consider ways of informing their CSO constituencies about the purposes of the consultations, issues of concern for the Open Forum, relevant background research and issues on the external enabling or disabling environment influencing the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors.

Introductory seminars for CSOs

Assuming that most of the local and national CSOs will be relatively uninformed about CSO development effectiveness and other related issues, organisers may wish to hold one or more short introductory seminars (could be a one hour long meeting) on key issues in order to build the knowledge base of national constituents prior to the national consultation workshop. Alternatively, these could also be incorporated into the first day of a three-day consultation workshop).

CSO review and mapping

Some prior research and mappings of local and national CSO actors, a review of the sector's strengths and weaknesses, as well as existing mechanisms for CSO development effectiveness (e.g. codes of practice, codes of ethics, rules of engagement with partners, impact evaluation methodologies etc.). This review might also take the form of issue-specific workshops with selected CSO actors to develop a more systematic and owned review of questions for the larger consultation to address.

Appropriate issue focus for your consultation

As is apparent in the issue papers in this toolkit, there is a wide range of issues that potentially informs discussions and multi-stakeholder dialogue on CSO development effectiveness. Organisers should consider in advance those they think will be most important for their two or three day consultation. It is likely that time constraints mean that not all issues can receive the same level of attention.

External environment review

Prior research on context-sensitive information concerning the working environment for CSOs and the role and importance of aid flows, including CSOs as donors, in supporting their work. This will be invaluable when discussing an enabling environment for CSOs.

Regional preparatory workshops

In some regions, regional workshops will be held to prepare national organisers for their country-level consultations. These consultations will be organised by the respective consortium members (see annex 2 for a list of your respective contact person). Workshop organisers and facilitators will be invited to participate in these conferences.

If you are planning on holding a consultation workshop in your country, you may wish to contact the support organisation in charge of your region (see annex 2 for a full list) to enquire about possible support (funding, content-wise, human resources).

Outreach to all types of CSOs

To ensure the representativeness, legitimacy and inclusiveness of the process, the CSO platform and network organising the Open Forum consultation is expected to reach out to and raise awareness on the consultation among the widest possible range of CSOs within its country, including to CSOs from rural areas.

A careful selection process to determine participants

Organisers must seek to invite a representative sample of CSO participants. Participants should reflect the diversity within civil society in the country in terms of types and roles of CSOs, geographical origin (CSOs from rural areas, not only CSOs from the capital), professions within CSOs etc. (see also diagram 3 on page 23 and the section below). At the same time, participants will need to have a minimum level of expertise on issues related to CSO development effectiveness.

As these requirements are not necessarily fully compatible with each other, consultation organisers must seek to strike a context-appropriate balance between representativeness and expertise.

Inclusiveness and representativeness

Who should be included?

- Types of CSOs
Consultation workshops should be open and inclusive. Recalling that the focus is on CSO development effectiveness, local and national civil society actors working in development should be invited to participate:
 - a. Organisers should aim to get good sub-national representation among participating CSOs and particularly seek to reach out to CSOs from rural areas.
 - b. All roles played by CSOs in development should be represented: service delivery, advocacy, mobilisation of grassroots communities, policy dialogue and research, awareness raising etc.
 - c. The diversity within civil society in terms of organisational characteristics should be taken into account: size, formal vs. informal CSOs etc.
 - d. CSOs also differ in terms of the relationships that they have with other development actors, including CSOs, governments and official donors.

The maximum number of participants should be determined by the consultation organisers, depending on available capacity and resources.

International CSOs working in a country should also be invited to participate but, depending on local circumstances, the consultation could be arranged so that local/national CSOs have a dedicated space to express their views among themselves.

- **Individual participants**
Participants of both national and regional consultation workshops should be a good mix of the following roles: (a) programme and project officers; (b) policy officers; (c) quality, impact and M&E experts; (d) senior management of CSOs; (e) social organisers and mobilisation staff. Participants should be representatives of CSOs working in development and should not participate as individuals. Participants in the consultations should be mandated representatives of organisations, unless they are invited as individuals that can contribute a perspective based on a specific experience and expertise.
- **Gender**
Organisers should strive for gender balance in the workshop. Upholding women's rights and ensuring gender equality will be crucial in promoting development effectiveness. It must be ensured that the voice of women is well represented in the workshops.
- **Multi-stakeholder dialogue**
If the workshop will include a part dedicated to multi-stakeholder dialogue, then broad participation by other development actors should be encouraged. These should ideally include representatives from: (a) official donors; (b) governments; (c) private foundations; (d) political foundations; (e) multi-lateral funds; (f) vertical funds; (g) local authorities; (h) academics; (i) private sector etc.
The CSO delegation should reflect the diversity of organised civil society in the country, and include representatives from grassroots organisations, NGOs, farmers' associations, trade unions etc.

Setting the agenda

It is recommended that the workshops be held over two days at minimum in order to allow adequate time and space for participants to understand the Open Forum goals and then to fully explore the issues and draw conclusions and recommendations. If it is envisaged that the workshop will include a part dedicated to multi-stakeholder dialogue, then it is suggested that this should ideally take place after the conclusion of the two-day CSO consultation by adding on a full third day to the meeting.

In order to ensure a significant degree of uniformity in the content of the consultation workshops, an outline agenda is proposed. It will be mandatory for workshops to include essential agenda items. These constitute core elements of the Open Forum consultative process that will ultimately feed into a global CSO development effectiveness framework. On the other hand, discretionary agenda items are only included as guidance for the organisers.

Essential agenda items

1. Background presentations on the Open Forum including:
 - a. Situating the Open Forum within the broader development effectiveness debate
 - b. Rationale and objectives
 - c. Expected outcomes
 - d. Outlining the consultation process
2. Determining key principles of CSO development effectiveness:
 - a. Internal dimensions of CSO effectiveness (i.e. capacity, collective structures and mechanisms)
 - b. External dimensions of CSO effectiveness (i.e. recognition and voice of CSOs and enabling environment)
3. Suggesting guidelines for realising CSO principles and indicators
4. Defining initial minimum standards and guidelines for donors and governments to create an enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness. Minimum standards may also be discussed in multi-stakeholder dialogues with government and donor officials if they are envisaged to take place.
5. Proposing context-relevant good practices for mechanisms to assure accountability in the application of the principles for CSOs development effectiveness.

Discretionary agenda items

1. Background presentations on donor-led effectiveness processes and outcomes (Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action etc.)
2. Presentations on other CSO effectiveness processes (Better Aid and processes that deal with certain aspects of CSO development effectiveness, such as for instance accountability, impact, enabling environment etc.)
3. Multi-stakeholder dialogue, if deemed appropriate.

Indicative agenda

The mock agenda below only provides an indication of how the consultation workshop might be structured over a minimum of two days. While not covered in this toolkit, a follow up meeting could also be considered to deepen aspects of issues/guidelines that were not possible in a two day context.

Suggested Objectives

- To introduce the Open Forum and its consultation process while situating it within the broader development effectiveness debate.
- To build CSO understanding and inform the debate on issues relating to CSO development effectiveness in a national context.
- To define key principles of CSO development effectiveness (relating to internal and external dimensions), implementation guidelines, indicators, minimum standards for enabling conditions and context-specific mechanisms of accountability.

DAY 1 – CSO-ONLY CONSULTATION

Session	Content	Type
Opening session	<p>General overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official launch of the consultation by CSO representatives • Overview of the Open Forum (rationale, objectives and expected outcomes) followed by question and answer session • Presentation outlining the global, regional and national consultation process, followed by question and answer session 	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Plenary</p> <p>Plenary</p>
Session 1	<p>Workshop objectives and set-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of participants' expectations (hopes and fears) • Overview of core workshop objectives • Set ground rules for workshop • Present the resource persons composing the core group in charge of drafting the workshop report 	<p>Buzz groups</p> <p>Plenary</p> <p>Participatory</p> <p>Plenary</p>
Session 2	<p>Exploring dimensions of CSO development effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of internal and external dimensions of CSO development effectiveness (including enabling environment), followed by question and answer session • Exploring dimensions of CSO development effectiveness: (a) internal factors: capacity, collective structures and mechanisms; (b) external factors: CSO voice and recognition and enabling environment • Feedback from groups/roundtables 	<p>Presentation/s in plenary</p> <p>Group work and/or roundtables on two themes</p> <p>Plenary</p>
Session 3	<p>Principles of CSO development effectiveness</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview presentation of examples of principles on CSO development effectiveness, followed by question and answer session • Generation and participatory sorting of principles on CSO development effectiveness 	<p>Presentation in plenary</p> <p>Group work followed by participatory sorting in plenary</p>
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DAY 2 – CSO-ONLY CONSULTATION

Session	Content	Type
Session 1	<p>Validating, sorting and ranking principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of full list (sorted) of principles generated on day 1, followed by clarifications session • Initial structuring and ranking of principles • Identifying the most important principles 	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Participatory scoring in plenary</p>
Session 2	<p>Guidelines for applying the agreed principles and indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview presentation of examples of good practice in implementing principles, identifying relevant guidelines and indicators for CSO accountability and effectiveness, followed by question and answer session • Initial discussions on guidelines and indicators for the agreed principles • Feedback on suggested guidelines 	<p>Presentation in plenary</p> <p>Group work/roundtables organised by principle or issue area.</p> <p>Plenary</p>
Session 3	<p>Enabling environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions on minimum standards for an enabling environment and guidelines 	<p>Group work</p>

	<p>for donors and governments on how to apply these</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting and ranking of recommended minimum standards and guidelines • Feedback by groups and general discussion 	<p>Group work</p> <p>Walk-around feedback session followed by de-brief in plenary.</p>
Closing Session	<p>Reviewing Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summing up of key outcomes and recommendations • What next: (a) input into Open Forum global consultation process; (b) next steps at national and/or regional levels 	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Plenary</p>
Evaluation	<p>It is recommended that a final evaluation of the Consultation workshop be conducted at the end of the meeting (see below for evaluation suggestions).</p>	

DAY 3 - MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION (OPTIONAL)

Suggested objectives:

- To initiate discussion and debate by CSOs, donors, governments and possibly other development actors on CSO proposals for CSO development effectiveness principles and guidelines.
- To strengthen the recognition and voice of CSOs as development actors and to identify the elements of an enabling environment.
- To initiate discussions on a set of minimum standards and guidelines for creating an enabling environment for CSOs.
- To promote the concept of development effectiveness with other development stakeholders.

Session	Content	Type
Opening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official launch by senior government official and CSO representative • Overview presentation on the Open Forum and CSO development effectiveness, followed by question and answer session 	<p>Presentations in plenary</p>

Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of previous two-days' outcomes and recommendations on CSO development effectiveness • Multi-stakeholder presentations on issues in an enabling environment • Feedback to plenary 	Presentation in plenary Presentation followed by group work to have initial dialogue on issues. Plenary
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused dialogue on minimum standards and guidelines for creating an enabling environment for CSOs. Feedback to plenary identifying proposals and areas for follow up • Plan of action for taking agenda further at national/regional level 	Presentation on what are standards and guidelines, followed by small group work Plenary

Facilitating consultation workshops

Participatory decision-making

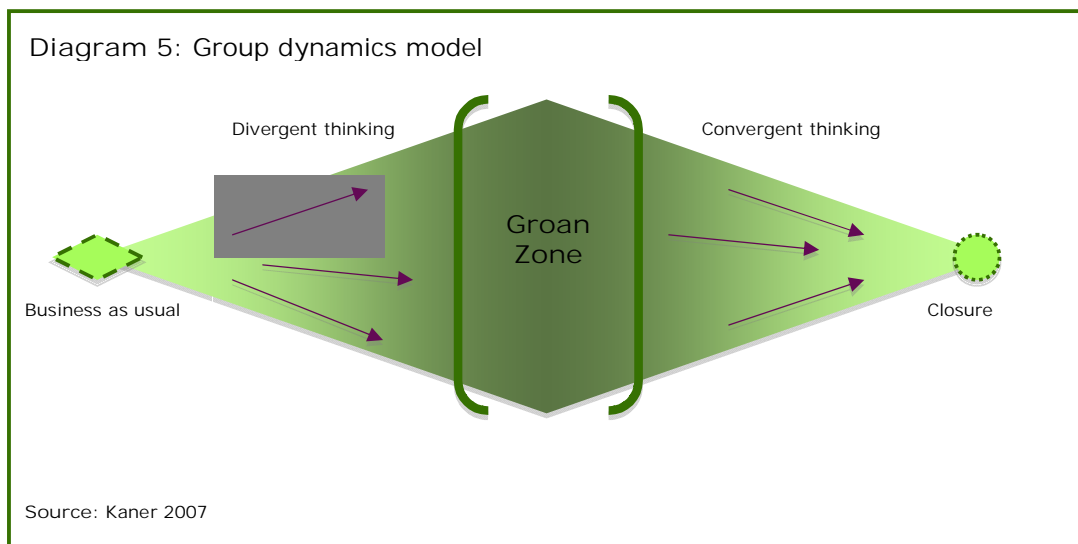
The Open Forum consultations are envisaged to be opportunities for a wide diversity of CSOs to participate in dialogues to identify issues and proposals for improving CSO development effectiveness. Participatory decision-making is essential for a truly inclusive process. This results in greater ownership, stronger individuals, stronger groups and stronger agreements.

Participatory decision-making is based on four core values: full participation, mutual understanding, inclusive solutions, and shared responsibility (Kaner 2007). Facilitating the consultations in an inclusive and participatory way will be fundamental to realising the objectives and aspirations of the Open Forum. The table below illustrates the core values of participatory decision-making and how a facilitator can promote these during the meeting. A facilitator should be a neutral guide who is in charge of managing the consultation process focusing on: (a) what needs to be accomplished, (b) who needs to be involved, (c) design, flow and sequencing of tasks, (d) gauging levels of participation by all participants, and (e) monitoring group dynamics and energy.

Core values	What they mean	The role of the facilitator
Full participation	All members are encouraged to speak and say what's on their minds.	Encourage all to think and contribute freely overcoming self-censorship and criticism.
Mutual understanding	Members need to understand and accept the legitimacy of one another's needs and goals.	Helps members see the value of thinking from each other's points of view.

Inclusive solutions	Inclusive solutions integrate everybody's perspectives and needs.	Encourages the group to generate innovative ideas that incorporate everyone's point of view and fosters consensus building to bring discussions to closure.
Shared responsibility	In participatory groups, ownership of the management and the outcomes of the process are jointly shared by all.	Create a culture of shared responsibility fostering assertiveness and collaboration.

Understanding Group Dynamics



Understanding group dynamics is indispensable for anyone facilitating a participatory decision-making process. The diagram above provides a useful model. When a discussion begins it usually covers safe, familiar territory failing to generate innovative ideas. This is known as “business as usual”.

It is down to the facilitator to push participants beyond their comfort zone breaking out of the narrow band of familiar options in order to explore a wider range of possibilities. This is called “divergent thinking”. This is the fertile ground where innovative ideas are generated. It also leads to the difficult stage where the sheer diversity of views and opinions may lead to the group to struggle if the process is not adequately managed by the facilitator.

However, a period of confusion and frustration is a natural part of group decision-making. This stage may be called the “groan zone” and it is the inevitable consequence of the diversity that exists in any group. Working through any possible misunderstandings and miscommunication is necessary to achieving participatory and sustainable agreements. The role of the facilitator is to get the group safely through the “groan zone” fostering “convergent thinking” by arriving at a shared framework of understanding. This is essential for building consensus in order to realise the expected outcomes of the consultation process.

Ideas for beginning the meeting

Seating arrangements

Seating arrangements have a big influence on any meeting, particularly if the decision-making process is to be participatory. These are some questions that may be useful when deciding how to arrange the room:

- How big is the room and are there any break-out rooms available for group work?
- How many participants are you expecting to come?
- How can you create an egalitarian lay-out in order to encourage active participation by all (e.g. a big circle of chairs where everyone can make contact with everybody else)?
- Is it realistic or feasible to shift chairs and tables for group sessions (e.g. a banquet-style seating arrangement with a series of tables arranged around the room is more conducive to group work)?
- Will participants need a writing surface in order to take notes?
- How can the facilitator make eye contact with everybody?

Breaking the ice

At the start of the workshop it is important to make everyone feel welcome and part of a group. Introductions are very important and should not be regarded lightly. It is critical to get everyone, especially the shy people, involved and talking to one another by breaking any tensions and nervousness there might be at the beginning of the workshop.

In order to create an enabling environment for a participatory process, it is suggested that participants are made to introduce themselves in ways that transcend barriers and hierarchies and encourage a greater sense of equality between them. Any attempt to relax the group and break the ice must offer the group members the following:

- A safe, clear and acceptable structure;
- Conversation subjects which are both interesting and non-threatening;
- Enough scope for making and receiving distinct impressions of each other (but preventing competition);
- Some action, when possible, to relieve tension;
- The possibility for laughter, for the same reason.

BOX 7: The "Meet and Greet" ice-breaker

This is particularly good for workshops with a large number of participants. All walk around greet (often shaking hands, if culturally appropriate) and introduce themselves to everybody else.

- Start with everyone standing in one open space.
- Indicate roughly how long each greeting and introduction should take.
- If anyone is left out or not taking part go and greet them.
- If appropriate, suggest what information (e.g. name, organisation) should be shared. Or each person states their favourite hobby and/or, film star, book, football club, etc.
- Give a time warning shortly before concluding.
- A variant can be to ask participants to only greet and introduce themselves to those not already known.

(Source: Robert Chambers 2007)

Managing expectations

The challenge for facilitators will be managing participants' expectations while achieving the required outputs to contribute to the global Open Forum consultative process. In order to encourage participants to think about what they expect, and to inform the facilitator, it is advisable to encourage them to share their own hopes, fears and expectations. This can be done in pairs or buzz groups of three as part of an ice-breaking activity. It can also be done as a group exercise where each person is asked to write one hope, one fear and one expectation onto a card (one item to one card) when they come in to the workshop and these are then stuck onto a wall or a board. The facilitator should then ask participants to look at the cards together in order to inform a discussion on shared hopes, fears and expectations. These can be explored in parallel to the stated objectives for the workshop addressing, and hopefully resolving, any content and process-related issues at the outset.

Setting ground rules

It is suggested that the consultation workshops are held under the Chatham House rule in order to secure confidentiality and promote freedom of speech. The rule states that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers, nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. Participants are then free to voice their own opinions, without concern for their personal reputation or their official duties and affiliations.

It is also good practice to set ground rules for the meeting. Ground rules are useful: (1) to promote effective group behaviours and establish healthy group norms; (2) to agree on rules for the conduct of the group, including the facilitator. Ground rules can either be chosen by the facilitator before the workshop, or they can be selected at the meeting by participants. They should be clear and direct and no more than six to eight should be chosen. Some examples of ground rules might be:

- Sessions start and end on time.
- No phone calls in or out during scheduled meeting sessions.
- Before judging the idea, listen to it first.
- All ideas are held up for consideration, reflection and inquiry.
- Monitor your own participation for the good of the group.
- It's OK to have fun.

Useful tools for participatory decision-making and consensus building

The following participatory tools may be useful when facilitating consultation workshops:

1. Brainstorming
2. Breakout groups
3. Participatory sorting
4. Participatory ranking and scoring
5. Gauging degrees of consensus

TOOL 1: BRAINSTORMING¹¹

Purpose

To generate a significant quantity of ideas in response to a stated problem or question. This method can be used if you want to get the group to move beyond its comfort zone. Brainstorming could be very useful when generating principles on

¹¹ Source: Kaner 2007

CSO development effectiveness as well as minimum standards for an enabling environment.

Procedure

1. Can be used with any number of participants, either in plenary or in small groups.
2. Go through the basic rules of brainstorming: (a) don't evaluate the idea, defer judgment; (b) the more the better; (c) the most unconventional the better; (d) record each idea verbatim; (e) you can modify the process before it starts or after it ends but not while it's underway.
3. Either use cards for recording each thought/idea on a single card, or ask people to call out their ideas in plenary while the facilitator, or a volunteer scribe, records responses on a flip-chart.

Tips

- Make sure you take time to explain the value of suspending judgement to encourage the free-flow of ideas.
- Don't start the process without clearly setting the time limit.
- Don't give up the first time the group gets stuck! They are probably just thinking.
- Don't rush or pressure the group.

TOOL 2: BREAKOUT GROUPS¹²

Purpose

To enable participants to discuss an issue thoroughly in a smaller group. This may also be useful to break the ice (making it feel safer to participate), keeping the energy up, building relationships and fostering greater commitment to the outcomes of the discussion.

Procedure

1. Give participants clear instructions for the task to be covered in small groups. These should include: (a) an explanation of what the groups have to discuss; (b) expected outcomes of the discussion; (c) how much time they have for the activity; (d) how they are expected to report back (e.g. choose a reporter). Ask for any clarifications.
2. Tell participants how to find partners for their small groups.
3. Announce the time remaining at least ten minutes before the end.
4. Organise feedback session in plenary. Always start by enquiring about the process as well as getting feedback on the outcomes.

Tips

- Be realistic. Do not load too many expectations on the small groups for the time that is available. Ask the groups to summarise key contributions for a focused set of questions.
- Encourage the use of the "group memory". This is the ongoing record of the group's discussion logged on flip charts and made clearly visible to all group members.
- To avoid lengthy feedback sessions, particularly in large workshops, you may wish to organise a "walkaround". Each group's flip charts are mounted on the wall and a timed "browsing" period is given. This can also be done during a coffee or lunch break. All participants are encouraged to go around the room and review all the information. One member of each group can be held back from the browsing to offer explanations of the information that is not self-

¹² Source: Kaner 2007

explanatory. Alternatively, the group could be asked to report back only two or three key points, with others available for browsing later on flip charts.

TOOL 3: PARTICIPATORY SORTING¹³

Purpose

Powerful and versatile technique used to generate, sort and analyse large quantities of qualitative information. Can be used to identify and analyse categories or issues, and to list outcomes of a brainstorm e.g. principles of CSO development effectiveness.

Procedure

1. Individuals or small groups are asked to write on cards (like with the hopes, fears and expectations ice-breaker).
2. Cards are either put on the ground or stuck on a wall or board.
3. Participants sort cards freely into categories. Similar cards can be piled or laid in a line (number of cards shows frequency of mention).
4. When cards are being sorted into categories, new, emerging categories should be written boldly on new cards.
5. Once the sorting is finished, this should be recorded and the results can then be ranked or scored as required (see tool 4 below).

Tips

- Use large pens, large or capital letters and few words.
- Each separate issue (e.g. principle) should be written on a single card.
- Be clear about the time allocated to the group sorting activity.

TOOL 4: PARTICIPATORY RANKING AND SCORING¹⁴

Purpose

To order a previously generated and sorted list of issues (e.g. principles of CSO development effectiveness or minimum standards for an enabling environment) according to agreed criteria.

Procedure

Ranking

1. Following on from a previous card sorting activity, cards are then ranked by relative importance (or any other agreed criteria), or relative scores, always by moving them around on the ground or on a wall.
2. If two different groups are ranking the same list of items, then they can be encouraged to analyse similarities and differences after the activity.

Scoring

1. Once a list of items has been generated and sorted, it can then be scored by participants using stickers, marks or other means (e.g. seeds).
2. Participants are either given a fixed number of stickers (e.g. sticky dots) or told they can assign a total number of marks in order to vote for their preferred items.
3. The items are then ranked according to the scores.

Tips

¹³ Source: Chambers 2007

¹⁴ Source: Chambers 2007; Justice and Jamieson 2006

- Clarify how the marks can be given – whether there is a maximum for one item, or only one per item, or whether any number within the personal limit can be allocated to a single item.
- People should be encouraged to get out of their chair and move around as this can also act as an energising activity for the group.
- This technique can save hours of contentious discussion enabling groups to come to quick, yet participatory, decision-making. It should not however be used as a substitute for meaningful dialogue as it can prematurely oversimplify analysis.

TOOL 5: GAUGING GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT¹⁵

Purpose

This is a consensus-building activity to gauge the various levels of agreement about a proposal or alternatives arising out of a discussion, ranking or scoring exercise. It can also be useful to judge the quality of the decision-making process towards the end of the meeting.

Gradients of agreement:

1. Whole-hearted endorsement: "I really like it"
2. Agreement with a minor point of contention: "Not perfect but it's good enough"
3. Support with reservations: "I can live with it"
4. Abstain: "This issue does not affect me"
5. Stand aside: "I don't do this, but I don't want to hold up the group"
6. Formal disagreement, but willing to go with majority: "I want my disagreement noted in writing, but I don't want to hold up the group"
7. Serious disagreement: "I am not on board with this, don't count me in"
8. Veto: "I block this proposal"

Procedure

Similar method to scoring can be used where participants are asked to mark their gradient of agreement with the proposal or issue being discussed onto a flip chart.

Tips

- Consider using a secret ballot if the issue you are polling participants on is contentious.
- Consider what course of action to take if there is very low agreement on the outcomes of the decision-making process.

Ideas for evaluating and closing the meeting

Allowing adequate space and time for reflection and evaluation during the meeting is essential in a participatory decision-making process. Make sure you factor that in when drafting the agenda. It is good practice to have daily evaluations to gauge the participants' mood, morale, and their views on how the process is going particularly for multi-day workshops like those envisaged under the auspices of the Open Forum. This provides a quick check and feedback to the facilitator as well as an early warning if things are not going as planned and some are dissatisfied. A more complete reflection and evaluation session should take place at the end of the meeting. Some ideas for evaluation are offered below.

Daily monitoring and feedback¹⁶

¹⁵ Source: Justice and Jamieson 2006

¹⁶ Source: Chambers 2007

1. Mood meter: Post up a flip chart in an easily accessible part of the meeting room (e.g. near the entrance). Write the workshop day (or individual sessions during a day) at the top of the chart. Underneath it you can figuratively show "levels of satisfaction" by drawing three faces – a big smile at the top, a straight-line mouth in the middle, and a down-turned mouth at the bottom of the paper. At the end of each day, or session, participants mark with a pen or sticker next to one of the faces to show how they feel. This can easily be done during a break.
2. Evening feedback: A few participants are either selected by the group or volunteer to solicit feedback and suggestions and pass these on to the facilitator and organisers at the end of each day. Problems can then be identified and addressed before the next day. Participants who have been chosen to give feedback should make themselves known to all others (e.g. wear a different colour badge).
3. Morning feedback: A good way to start the day may be to get the group to reflect on highlights of the day before. One or more participants may be selected or volunteer themselves to review the previous day choosing their own feedback method. Different people should be chosen each day.

End of meeting evaluation¹⁷

1. Evaluation wheel: This technique can be used to evaluate different aspects of the workshop. Ideally there should be a group brainstorm on deciding the criteria for evaluating the workshop. This can be based on the list of expectations generated at the beginning of the meeting. Alternatively, the facilitators can come up with their own evaluation criteria. Each participant is asked to draw a wheel with the same number of spokes as the number of evaluation criteria. The spokes should be marked with the various criteria. The spokes represent a scale with low, or zero, at the centre and high, or ten, at the edge. Individuals should then score the workshop according to the various criteria and score each criterion by marking the spoke at the chosen point on the scale. The dots on the spokes can then be joined up round the wheel to create a spider-diagram.
2. Graffiti feedback boards: This provides a good anonymous outlet for participants' reactions and observations. Participants are asked to write down their comments on feedback boards such as flip charts. Headings can be provided by the facilitator: "I liked.....", "I did not like.....", "Suggestions for improving the process", "Suggestions for improving facilitation" etc.

Recording the outcomes of consultation workshops

Your questions answered

Why should a workshop report be produced?

It is fundamental that the outcomes of all national consultation workshops are meticulously recorded and synthesised in order to feed into the broader Open Forum consultative process.

¹⁷ Source: Chambers 2007

What are the requirements for producing a report?

The report should be between three and six pages long and should follow the format provided in the suggested recording template (see annex 1). Reports should be submitted no later than one month after the consultation workshop. Organisers can also submit an additional narrative report. They can also choose other additional means of reporting, such as video.

How can we be sure to capture the outcomes of the workshop?

It is suggested that organisers of all consultation workshops identify a core group of resource persons who are familiar with the Open Forum issue areas. This core group, or task force, can play a role in extracting key discussion points and synthesising these for participants in feedback sessions, as well as for the workshop report. Members of the core group should be prepared to spend time outside the meeting to analyse and elaborate the information generated in the workshop. In order to help this process, breakout groups should also be encouraged to document the conclusions of their discussions using the format provided in the recording template provided (see annex 1).

It is possible for a longer narrative report to be also produced in order to capture the richness of the discussions over the two, or three, days of the consultation. It may be a good idea to get a sound recording of the entire workshop in order to help with writing the narrative report.

Who should the report be sent to?

All workshop reports should be sent to the regional consortium contacts (see annex 2 for your respective contact). The workshop reports will be published on www.cso-effectiveness.org.

Useful Resources

Chambers R., 2007, "Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities", London: Earthscan

Justice T. and Jamieson D., 2006, "The Facilitator's Fieldbook" (Second Edition), HRD Press

Kaner S., 2007, "Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making", PB Printing

Pretty J., Guijt I., Thompson J., Scoones I., 1995, "Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide", IIED Participatory Methodology Series

ANNEX 1: TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING CONSULTATION WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

1. Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Date and venue of consultationb. Name and e-mail of report writerc. Number of participantsd. Participants' list with the following information:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Name of participant– Name of organisation represented– Type of CSO (umbrella organisation, community-based organisation, NGO, INGO, professional association, farmers' association, social movement, faith-based organisation, trade union, non-profit media etc.)– Gender– Position within organisatione. Agenda for the consultation and a list of presentations made (with electronic copies attached)
2. The consultation process and political context
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Briefly describe the political context in which CSOs operate and the key challenges that they are facing.b. Highlight any positive or negative aspect of the consultation, possibly making use of participants' evaluations and comments (please distinguish between the CSO-only part of the consultation and the multi-stakeholder dialogue if applicable)
3. Key issues discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. List the key issues in order of importance that were discussed in the consultation (please distinguish between the CSO-only part of the consultation and the multi-stakeholder dialogue if applicable)b. Summarise particularly important issues that emerged from the discussion (e.g. different views among different types of CSOs, any differing views relating to a gender dimension of CSO development effectiveness, tone of multi-stakeholder dialogue – if applicable - etc.)c. Summary of the most important ideas on CSO development effectiveness from participants in relation to the key issues addressed (please distinguish between the CSO-only part of the consultation and the multi-stakeholder dialogue if applicable)d. Summary of key challenges to realising CSO development effectiveness possibly identified during the consultation workshop (please distinguish between the CSO-only part of the consultation and the multi-stakeholder dialogue if applicable)

4. Analysis and recommendations

- a. Identify the key principles of CSO development effectiveness ranked by importance with a short sentence explaining the principle.
- b. Identify any suggested guidelines for implementing agreed principles of CSO development effectiveness, with a short narrative describing the rationale for the guideline and how it relates to a given principle in the given context.
- c. Suggested indicators for agreed principles if these were identified.
- d. Based on the multi-stakeholder dialogue, identify proposed minimum standards or guidelines for strengthening the enabling external environment for CSOs, with a short explanation of the issue in the enabling environment addressed by the standard (this should also clearly indicate the stakeholder group to which standards or guidelines apply: donors, governments, local authorities etc.)
- e. Proposed good practices for mechanisms that assure CSO accountability and effectiveness or commentary on how to strengthen CSO accountability
- f. Additional information: for instance, areas where common understanding emerged and areas where there were widely divergent views

ANNEX 2: OPEN FORUM CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

A consortium of six CSOs has been mandated by the Global Facilitation Group to support implementation of the Open Forum consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Please contact the Open Forum consortium member of your region to obtain more information about the Open Forum, its consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues. More information is also available at www.cso-effectiveness.org.

Organisation	Region
All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) africa@cso-effectiveness.org	Sub-Saharan Africa
Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN) asia@cso-effectiveness.org	Asia and Northern Africa
European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) europe@cso-effectiveness.org	Europe
InterAction – American Council for Voluntary International Action pacific@cso-effectiveness.org	North America and Pacific
Latin American Association of Development Organisations (ALOP) lac@cso-effectiveness.org	Latin America and the Caribbean
CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation icso@cso-effectiveness.org	International CSOs

ANNEX 3: GLOBAL FACILITATION GROUP

Africa (4)	
Federation of NGO Platforms of Mali (FECONG)	www.fecong.org
African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD)	www.afrodad.org
Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR)	www.cspr.org.zm
Network of National NGO Platforms of Western and Central Africa (REPAOC)	www.repaoc.org
Asia (4)	
South Asian Network for Social and Agricultural Development (SANSAD)	www.sansad.org.in
IBON International (IBON)	international.ibon.org
Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)	www.aprnet.org
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)	www.foodsov.org
Europe (3)	
European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)	www.concordeurope.org
Nordic+ Group	www.kepa.fi
European Union Presidency Group	www.fors.cz
Latin America and the Caribbean (3)	
Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP)	www.alop.or.cr
Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social Bolivia (UNITAS)	www.redunitas.org
Coordinadora Civil de Nicaragua (CC)	www.ccer.org.ni
Middle East and North Africa (1)	
Arab NGOs Network for Development (ANND)	www.annd.org
North America (2)	
InterAction - American Council for Voluntary International Action	www.interaction.org
Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)	www.ccic.ca
Pacific (1)	
Council for International Development (New Zealand)	www.cid.org.nz
International CSO Networks (6)	
Plan International	www.plan-international.org
CARE International	www.care-international.org
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	www.ituc-csi.org
Action by Churches Together (ACT)	www.actdevelopment.org
Caritas Internationalis/International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE)	www.caritas.org www.cidse.org
CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation	www.civicus.org
Women's Organisations (1)	
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APFWLD)	www.apwld.org

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
AG-CS	Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness
BA	Better Aid
BACG	Better Aid Coordinating Group (Better Aid)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FfD	Financing for Development
GFG	Global Facilitation Group (Open Forum)
HLF	High-Level Forum
HLF-1	First High-Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome (2003)
HLF-2	Second High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Paris (2005)
HLF-3	Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra (2008)
HLF-4	Fourth High-Level Forum in Seoul (2011)
ICSO	International civil society organisation
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
ISG	International Steering Group (Better Aid)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCSO	Northern civil society organisation
NGDO	Non-governmental development organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OF	Open Forum
PD	Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
SCSO	Southern civil society organisation
UN	United Nations
UNDCF	United Nations Development Cooperation Forum
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

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