15TH CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPORT

B&S EUROPE

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPORT

18 December 2019, 15:00 – 18:00

EU Programme Support Office, Nicosia

The 15th Civil Society Forum of Civic Space was held at the European Union Programme Support Office (EUPSO) on the 18th of December 2019 with the participation of 31 people from 17 different CSOs. The objective of the 15th Forum was to receive feedback from Civil Society regarding the call for proposals "Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII".

The Forum started with a brief welcoming and introduction note of Mr. Michael Docherty, Head of Section from the European Commission. Mr. Doherty referred to the environment as a field with a highly potential for bilateral and bicommunal cooperation. Indeed, environment is one of the priorities within the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot Community. Mr. Docherty emphasized the importance of the meeting in order to receive substantial feedback of Civil Society.

The forum continued with a brief introduction of the agenda by Ms. Evrim Peker, Team Leader of Civic Space(*Please see Forum Agenda in Annex 1*).

PRESENTATION ON THE CONSULTATION SURVEY FOR THE CYPRIOT CIVIL SOCIETY IN ACTION VII CALL FOR PROPOSALS , BY CIVIC SPACE

Ms. Selen Lermioğlu Yılmaz, Capacity Building Key Expert from Civic Space mentioned that the consultation survey received 45 answers from 43 CSOs. Twenty of these organisations had previously been awarded EU grants, while others had never applied or did not succeeded in obtaining the grant. The majority of the respondent CSOs worked on environmental and nature protection issues followed by culture and arts. The environment appeared as the most important thematic priority in the survey (25 %). This is in line the EU priorities, as mentioned by Mr. Docherty. The environment was followed by Human rights (17%) and Education (15%) as priority topics.

According to the results of the survey, the four most important and urgent needs of CSOs were: financial capacity, institutional capacity, networking with CSOs in the European Union and advocacy capacity. The majority of participants to the survey support the idea that grants should be presented as a combination of medium (30.000 -50.000 Euro) and large (200.000- 250.000 Euro) size grants. The survey also indicated that rights based CSOs, local CSOs and established CSOs with high capacity and experience should be considered as the most important type of organisations to be supported. *(Please see the Presentation on the highlights of the Civil Society in Action VII call for proposals consultation survey in Annex 2.)*

PRESENTATION OF KEY POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED OF THE CYPRIOT CIVIL SOCIETY IN ACTION VII CALL FOR PROPOSALS, BY EU GRANT SUPPORT TEAM

Project Grants Expert, Ms. Çiğdem Aksu from EU Grant Support Team, made a presentation on the key points on the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII call proposals to be discussed. Ms. Aksu provided information about sections of the guidelines and explained the modality; objectives, financial allocations, eligibility criteria of applicants, application procedures, etc. *(please see the Presentation of key points of the Action VII call proposals to be discussed in Annex 3).*

After the presentation, the forum participants gathered into three groups to discuss the key points of the call for proposals and presented their findings.

PRESENTATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GROUP 1:

Modality

-The call should be restricted. Once the Call for Proposals is launched, information meetings should be organised. This will allow experienced CSOs to gather with unexperienced ones.

Objectives

- The call should prioritise seeking to mainstream the rights-based approach, gender equality and environmental issues.
- Objectives should be capacity development/improvement and environmental issues.
- Capacity development will help to strengthen Turkish Cypriot CSOs and, consequently, a reinforced CSO will have positive impacts in the development of society as a whole
- The call should support networking island-wide and within communities, as well as with the EU.
- Projects targeting vulnerable groups should be promoted and prioritised.
- CSOs in the rural areas should be part of the priorities and they should be encouraged to apply to the call.
- There should be a multi-cultural approach (including the use of different languages) rather than a bi-communal approach.

Financial Allocations

- In order to increase the access of grassroots and new actors, newly established CSOs (min. 6 months old) should be able to apply for up-to 30.000€.
- The organisations that successfully established their projects should be given the right to participate in more opportunities/resources, which will enable them to apply for up to 300.000€ of funding.
- The opportunity to accept volunteer support as an in-kind contribution is seen as a very useful and beneficial idea.

Eligibility Criteria

- The funding should also be accessible to newly established organisations and initiatives. The objectives of the projects should be realistic and their outputs should be beneficial for the grassroots.

Application Procedure

-The application process should be shorter.

Evaluation Criteria

- Regarding large grants, CSOs experience should be taken into account at the evaluation stage.
- Mainstreaming environmental concerns should receive extra points.
- Regarding small grants, evaluation criteria should focus on the idea behind the project and the relevance of the project rather than on the management experience or financial capacity.
- New Initiatives as well as newly formed and registered CSOs or co-applications should receive extra points.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GROUP 2:

Modality

-The call should be restricted.

Objectives

-The call should not restrict or prioritise thematic topics. This will give organisations the chance to apply for funding when they need financial support or for a specific issue.

Financial Allocations

- Different amounts for different sizes of CSOs should be available. This should take into account the different needs of CSOs. Three types of funding (small, medium or large) should be considered.
- A "top-up" model should be taken into consideration. This model will allow organisations to request funds on a step by step basis, meaning organisations would be able to request additional funds if they have successfully completed the first step.
- Seed funding opportunities were also mentioned. Especially for student organisations that have no bank account and/or cannot prove their financial capacity.
- In-kind contribution for volunteers as well as free access to should be considered.
- The budget should also allow to make small payments, for example, to cover costs for volunteers (transportation or food).

Eligibility Criteria

-Some organisations, such as students' organisations, are considered ineligible because they are not registered as a CSO. This is due to the current "legislation" preventing them to do so. For example, Voices of International Students -VOIS Cyprus cannot register, since the notion "law association" does not include the possibility for foreigners to establish an association. These forms of organisations need to be considered as eligible. Eligibility criteria should take into account the active work of the organisation rather than the fact the organization is registered or not.

Application Procedure

- A different modality for online applications should be considered. An option would be to fill-in the application form offline and submit/upload it to the system afterwards.
- The absence of an offline application modality could have consequently limit the access to grants of some applicants as the latter might require professional support to apply.
- In PADOR and PROSPECTS, deadlines should take into account local hours and not Brussels time.
- People should be able to apply in Turkish. For organisations with no staff fluent in English, seeking for external support in English represents a financially burden.
- The application form is difficult, bureaucratic and barely understandable.

Evaluation Criteria

- In Cyprus, outreach is particularly important for CSOs. During the evaluation of applications, CSO with outreach activities should get a higher score than the ones possessing a financial capacity.
- Grants should be of medium and large size. For small amounts, organisations should apply through Grow Civic in-kind Support Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GROUP 3

Modality

-The call should be restricted. The first reason being that organisations lacking a financial capacity can spend a large amount of resources preparing the application and not be successful at the end. The second reason being that restricted modalities provide a certain degree of adaptability and flexibility between the concept note and the final application stages. Flexibility is essential in an ever-changing context like Cyprus.

Objectives

- As mainly environmental organisations answered the survey, the results may be misguiding. The three specific objectives of the Civil Society Call VI are still valid and should be introduced as specific objectives of this new call.

- The three important points regarding the objectives of the call should be: capacity building, advocacy and rights -based approach.

- The fact of including children or the fact of mainstreaming gender and human rights approaches in projects should be considered, and allow for additional points.

Financial Allocations

-There should be three lots:

- ✓ **Lot 1**: 100.000 EUR-300.000 EUR
- ✓ **Lot 2**: 30.000 EUR - 100.000 EUR
- ✓ **Lot 3**: 10.000 EUR -30.000 EUR

- Lot 3 should be destined to new CSOs with lower financial capacity. Compared to other lots, the application process should be easier. Minimum supporting documentation should be asked during the application stage. Furthermore, Lot 3 should also provide for an option to apply in Turkish, as members of new CSOs might not be fluent in English. Being able to apply in Turkish can eliminate additional cost such as translation costs. There should also be simpler implementation procedures for new CSOs.
- Volunteerism should be accepted as in-kind support.

Eligibility Criteria

- Regarding the thematic areas, partnership should be promoted with additional points granted for co-applications.

ANNEX I – Agenda

15:00 – 15:15: Registration & Welcome

15:15 – 15:25: Presentation on the consultation survey for the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII call for proposals, by Civic Space

15:25 – 15:35: Presentation of key points to be discussed of the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII call for proposals, by EU Grant Support Team

15:35 – 15:45: Preparations of the working groups

15:45 – 16:45: Working groups

16:45 – 17:00: Coffee Break

17:00 – 17:15: Presentation of the working groups

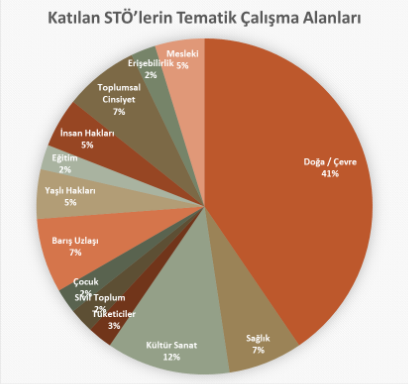
17:15 – 17:55: Plenary discussion

17:55 – 18:00: Closure

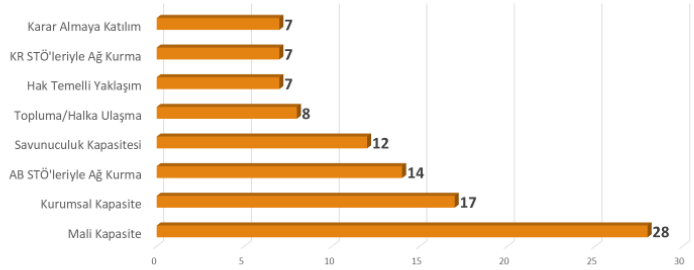
ANNEX 2 – Presentation of the highlights of the Civil Society in Action VII call for proposals consultation survey

Anket – Katılım

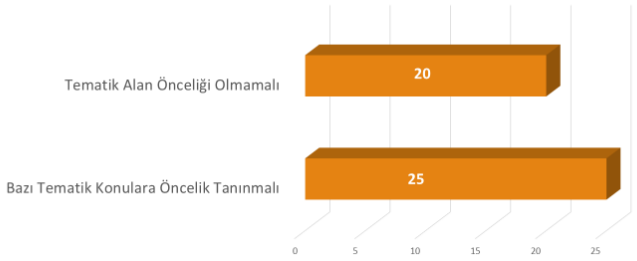
- 43 STÖ'den 45 kişi cevapladı
- 20 STÖ (% 46.5) daha önce hibe aldı
- 23 STÖ (% 53.5) daha önce hibe almadı



Acil ve Önemli STÖ İhtiyaçları



Tematik Öncelikler



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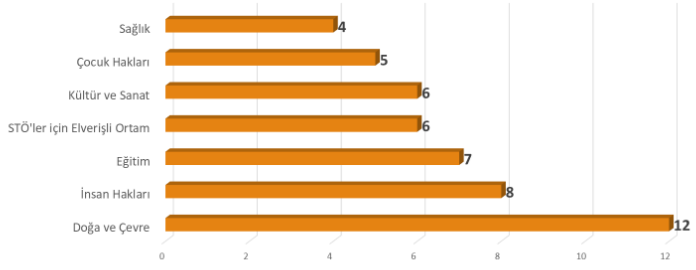
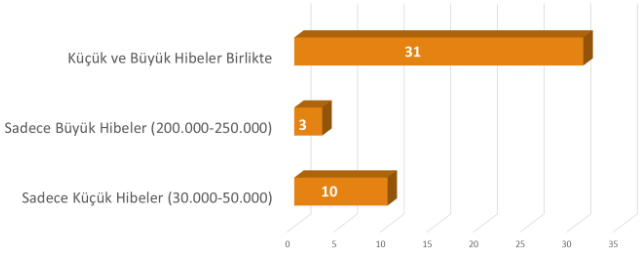


Bu proje Avrupa Birliği tarafından finanse edilmekte ve B&S Europe liderliğindeki konsorsiyum tarafından uygulanmaktadır.

Hibe Büyüklükleri



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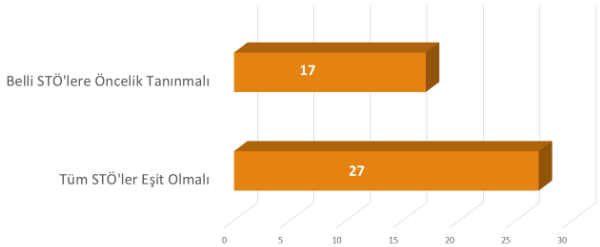
Faydalanacak STÖ'ler



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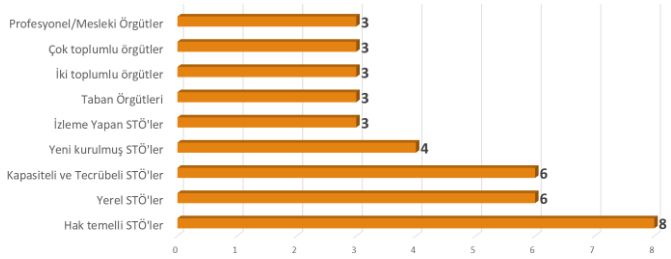
Faydalanacak STÖ'ler



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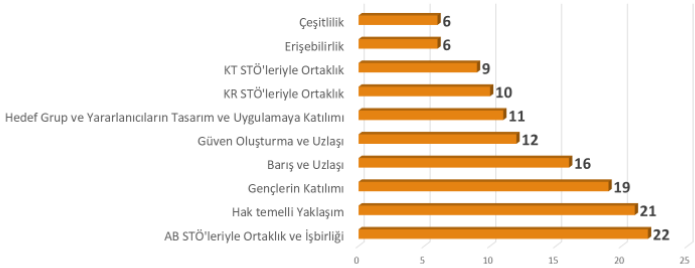
Değer Yaratan Unsurlar



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Thank You! Teşekkürler! Ευχαριστώ!

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ANNEX 3 – Presentation of the key points of the Civil Society in Action VII call proposals to be discussed, by EU Grant Support Team

DISCUSSION SESSION – CIVIL SOCIETY IN ACTION VII

15TH CSO FORUM, 18/12/2019

CONTENTS

- GfA Sections Overview
- Overview of discussion questions

DISCUSSION POINT 2 - OBJECTIVES

Aid regulation – must be compliant

Specific Objectives of the Call? Ideas?

Priorities? (note link to scoring)

DISCUSSION POINT 1 - MODALITY

Restricted or Open?

Pros and cons?

DISCUSSION POINT 2 - OBJECTIVES

Aid regulation – must be compliant

Specific Objectives of the Call? Ideas?

Priorities? (note link to scoring)

FINANCIAL ALOCATIONS

Lots? Any ideas?

Size of grants (min/max)? Suggestions?

In-kind contributions as accepted costs? (Volunteers)

Min and mx % of grants?

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

- Legal entities, non profit making…..established in…..
- Any particular specific types of organizations?
- Any particular specifics for co-applicants?
- International organisations?
- Mandatory partnership?
- Anything additional? (statutes, years of operations..)

ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIONS

- Duration (min, max)?
- Location?
- Types of actions?
- Types of activities?
- Financial support to third parties?
- Number of applications per applicant?

ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

- Simplified cost option?
- Any issues with eligible direct costs?
- Any issues with ineligible costs?

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Any issues with CN, FAF, Budget, LFM?
- Something missing in these formats?
- Something to simplify?
- Info sessions, Q&As?

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- CN evaluation – any suggestions
- FAF evaluation – any suggestions

DISCUSSIONS……..

Civic Space project is funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium led by B&S Europe. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of B&S Europe led consortium and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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