

Seminar for NGDO Platforms of New Member States

26-27 January 2004, Vienna

1. COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Development of the NGDO sector - Main challenges facing NGDOs - Platform priorities for 2004

ESTONIA

By Annika Kool, Open Estonia Foundation

General information on NGDO sector:

- There are no separate development NGOs. NGOs active e.g. in social, environmental or educational affairs have incorporated development cooperation issues in their activities.
- Positive aspect – the NGOs have specific expertise in different fields that can be used in development or development education projects.
- Overall challenge –to keep the development issues on the organisations' agendas (considering that these issues are often not their primary activities).

Development of the NGDO Platform:

Estonian Development Co-operation Roundtable is an open forum of NGOs and qualified individuals for advocacy, public awareness and joint development projects. Currently, 16 organisations are members of the Roundtable and about 60 individuals (including representatives of the MFA) are included in the mailing list (aky@lists.colleduc.ee).

Thus far, the Roundtable has operated without any staff or separate financial resources. However, it has become apparent that in order to increase its capacity to act as a recognised partner in development cooperation issues, there is a need for a part-time coordinator and some resources. A respective project proposal has been submitted to ODACE. Yet, formalisation or joining CONCORD are not on the immediate agenda.

The Roundtable was convened in October 2002 by the Estonian Refugee Council (Riina Kuusik) to discuss the draft of the new Principles of the Estonian Development Cooperation, and submit a joint statement of NGOs to the MFA for consideration. After that, the communication between interested counterparts was sustained via the mailing list. Concrete activities during that period included:

- Gathering contacts (through TRIALOG, CONCORD, etc) information and assessing the possibilities for development cooperation projects abroad.
- A campaign for raising public awareness on Fair Trade was prepared, but it failed due to lack of funding.
- Drawing the attention of Estonian Inter Governmental Conference (IGC) delegation to the issues of concern related to development cooperation in the EU draft Constitutional Treaty.

- A conference on December 4, 2003 was organized in co-operation with Eurostep and the Estonian MFA to discuss the challenges of EU enlargement and the IGC on development co-operation.

The Roundtable had a meeting on January 15, where for the longer-term activities four main priority areas were defined. Currently, the working groups for the priority areas are being set up and strategies for respective activities developed. The four priority areas include:

- Development policy (responsible organisation - the Open Estonia Foundation in the framework of the Estonian Civil Society Contact Group).
- Development education (responsible organisation - Estonian Fund for Nature). A project proposal has been submitted for organising a workshop on development education for the Estonian educators. Additionally, a joint-project of the Roundtable and the Finnish Platform to be submitted to the European Commission is currently in the process of writing.
- Fair Trade (responsible organisation - Estonian Green Movement -FoE) – a proposal has been prepared for a 2-3 years lasting project with the aim of strengthening and facilitating the cooperation of all Estonian organisations interested in Fair Trade issues and educating the general public on Fair trade and development cooperation issues.
- Implementation of EU neighbouring policy (responsible organisation - European Movement Estonia and Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation) – the priority areas include North-West of Russia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine. Several project proposals have been presented to different counterparts.

Questions and Answers:

- Reason why the Fair Trade campaign could not be successfully implemented: The proposal had to pass the government and the MFA. Although, the MFA was in favour of the campaign it had to postpone the decision. Eventually, the planned events were already past and the campaign did not get any funding.
- Budget line (500.000 Euro per year) for NGOs was set up by the MFA but there are no rules/guidelines for the application procedure yet defined (by the end of 2004 guidelines will be clarified).
- Good cooperation with MFA (also attending Roundtable meetings).
- Finnish NGDO Platform continues to be an important partner especially regarding development education.

LATVIA:

By Gunta Berzina, NGO „Strategy“

General information on the NGDO sector:

There are no explicit development NGOs in Latvia. NGOs work in the area of social issues, capacity building, humanitarian issues (within the country) and the strengthening of civil society. NGOs have gained a lot of experience in the past 10 years and share it today with their partners in Russia, Belarus and the Caucasus region (as a next step perhaps also the Balkan region).

Development of the NGDO Platform:

The setting up of an NGDO Platform is at the very beginning. A questionnaire was sent out to about 200 NGOs informing them about the initiative. More than 23 NGOs are interested in the development of a national Platform.

The MFA has only this year approved a budget for bilateral cooperation (80.000 Euro, especially for Iraq).

HUNGARY

By Réka Balogh, Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid

Development of the NGDO Platform:

Since September 2002 CIDA-ODACE has been supporting and assisting the consolidation of a representative body for Hungarian NGOs. From December 2002 several NGOs kept on meeting regularly as an informal association and worked together on issues of common interest. They finally signed a MOU confirming their commitment to cooperate within the Hungarian NGDO Association (officially established in June 2003 and legally registered in November 2003). Hungarian Interchurch Aid and other NGOs laid the groundwork for this Association. Currently there are 12 ordinary members and 5 observers working in the field of humanitarian aid, development of civil society, democracy, environment and culture (secular and faith based organisations). A membership fee system has been put in place. The Platform would like to become member of CONCORD but has problems to raise the membership fee (*TRIALOG offers support to the Platform to find a solution in this matter; furthermore, TRIALOG invites the Platform to participate in the CONCORD WG Enlargement*).

Objectives:

- Becoming a Stakeholder in the national ODA system;
- Promoting common interests, active cooperation, communication and partnership with governmental bodies, the European Union and international organisations;
- Raising public awareness on humanitarian issues, sustainable development and the promotion of volunteer participation in the civil society;
- Fostering partnership assistance (intermediation) and ensuring flow of information.

Activities:

- Information material and website are being prepared;
- Public awareness raising campaign is planned for the near future;
- Coordination of internships, study visits, trainings, conferences provided mainly by the ODACE program;
- Working groups on volunteer sending, environmental issues and development education.

NGO–government relations:

In 2001, the government approved the concept of international development cooperation. At the end of 2002 the responsible department was set up within the Hungarian MFA. The ODA budget has been approved for 2004. Nevertheless, the first call for proposal has been announced only at the end of November 2003.

Although several NGOs were asked for their opinion and submitted position papers, NGDOs feel that they did not have significant impact. There was no direct reaction to the concept papers and the call for proposal itself does not reflect the NGOs' recommendations. The selection procedure of the call for proposal is intransparent and the conditions make it difficult to apply (very short deadline, etc.). NGDO capacity building and development education are not considered in this call. The Platform wants to improve the dialogue and find ways for a real communication (*Jeremy Nagoda, EuropeAid, offers to contact the Hungarian MFA to make sure that basic rules are met but also CONCORD and TRIALOG should be involved to reach a coordinated influence*).

MALTA:

By Vincent Caruana, Maltese NGDO Platform

Development of the NGDO Platform:

Currently the Maltese NGDO Platform has 10 members (increased from 8). The participation of members in the Platform's activities has vitally increased. All NGOs function on a volunteer basis. Projects are implemented e.g. in Kenya, Albania, Ethiopia, Egypt. 2 organisations are focusing on development education, 1 focuses on Fair Trade, 1 is specialising on volunteer sending (mostly to

Africa). According to an evaluation of the needs of the Platform members, trainings on PCM, terminology, development issues, etc. will be organised.

Priorities in 2003 and 2004:

- Internal trainings and sharing information gathered through TRIALOG events;
- Political work at MFA level (until last year there was a fast progress e.g. in designing the official development policy; now the communication with officials is not very satisfactory; conditions for NGO consultation are negotiated; there is no legal framework for NGOs and thus no formal recognition; the Platform has put forward a parliamentary question on this matter).

Challenges:

- Find ways to attract the 10 NGOs that are currently not members of the Platform but would fit into the Platform's scope (they are invited to trainings but have to pay a fee whereas for Platform members the trainings are for free);
- Encouraging members to actively participate in CONCORD Working Groups;
- Lack of human capacity (all volunteers) makes it difficult to realise the action plan.

POLAND:

By Justyna Janiszewska, Zagranica Group, Krzysztof Stanowski, Foundation Education for Democracy, Grzegorz Gruca, Polish Humanitarian Organisation

General information on the NGDO sector:

After 1989 a lot of civil society organisations were founded which re-established the relationship with neighbouring countries. The two main areas in which Polish NGOs are active internationally are democracy building and development assistance. About 150 NGOs are oriented to the former Soviet block, the Balkans, Romania, and Central Asia up to Mongolia. They focus on sharing experience of transformation (democratisation, human rights, free media, elections and strengthening of civil society). These areas are crucial for development. About 30 NGOs focus on development assistance in Africa (e.g. Caritas, ADRA, My Africa), human rights in Tibet, conflict solution in post-war countries (e.g. Kosovo, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq). Some of these NGOs have permanent missions such as Caritas, Polish Humanitarian Organisation, Polish Medical Mission.

Developments of the NGDO Platform:

Closer cooperation between Polish NGOs has started in March 2001. The Platform is still informal but by the end of March 2004 the statutes and the formal recognition should be finalised. 27 member organisations (24 full members, 3 supporting members) participate in the Roundtable meetings (once or twice a month) and are involved in different working groups. There is a membership fee of an average of 300 Euro. The Platform coordinator, Justyna, is paid out of the membership fee. CIDA is financially supporting activities such as the Platform's website www.go2east.ngo.pl.

Main activities:

- Development of the guiding principals (signed by 50 NGOs);
- Strategy paper on "Partnership for Foreign Policy" was submitted to MFA;
- Meeting of the joint NGO-MFA Council on 6 February (strategy of Polish development cooperation was approved last year but not yet implemented);
- Presence of NGOs in Economical Forum in Krynica;
- Production of a CD Rom and an exhibition presenting international activities of Polish NGOs;
- Roundtable of NGDOs working in the global South.

Challenges:

- Formal status
- Cooperation between NGOs working in the South and those working in the East;
- Development education;
- EU Policy through active participation in CONCORD and sharing experience within the CONCORD network.

NGO-government relations:

The dialogue with the MFA is quite good, however the NGOs' input on policies is hardly taken into account. The Platform has had talks with the MFA about its obligations as a member of international organisations. The Platform will make a proposal regarding the policy for Eastern cooperation. There is hardly any funding from the government. NGOs get funds from the private sector, Canadian and US sources as well as some EU pre-accession funds.

CZECH REPUBLIC:

By Jana Krczmarova, INEX – SD

General information on the NGDO sector:

The first NGOs were active in environmental and social issues. In the 90ies NGOs started to focus on development issues. However, there are no separate development NGOs. The NGDO sector is dominated by small NGOs, there are some big NGOs such as Caritas or Adra. NGOs felt a need for cooperation and in June 2002 People in Need took the initiative to set up a Platform. In September 2002 the NGDO Platform FoRS was established (FoRS is member of CONCORD).

Development of the NGDO Platform:

The Czech NGDO Platform FoRS (www.forsz.cz) represents Czech NGDOs vis-à-vis the government, Czech society and European Institutions. Platform members are operating in the field of development cooperation, development education and humanitarian assistance and are active e.g. in training, volunteer sending, Fair Trade, debt. There are church related NGOs (e.g. Caritas, Adra) and large secular NGOs (e.g. People in Need). There are currently 17 members.

Priorities:

- Exchange of experience and information (scholarships, internships, website); publications
- Regional cooperation
- Development education and public awareness raising
- Focus is on trainings through TRIALOG and CONCORD
- Raising public support;
- Lobbying the Development Agency on ODA

The next General Assembly will further work out the activity plan until 2007.

The membership fee of about 20 Euro is not sufficient. ODACE and TRIALOG are supporting the Platform in its activities.

Challenges:

- General public just started to be more interested in development issues;
- Lack of transparency within ODA (different ministries are responsible for different projects and have different procedures and deadlines which makes it difficult to apply);
- The level of ODA is still very low (0.07% of GDP); some funds are open to the private sector and NGOs are disadvantaged.
- Lack of interest by some NGOs to get more involved in the Platform.

IRELAND:

By Hans Zomer, Dóchas

Development of the NGDO Platform:

The Irish NGDO Platform was set up in 1974 as the Irish Association of Non-governmental Development Organisations with the aim to lobby the government and to work on development education (in 1974 the governmental aid programme was formulated and the Liaison Committee (NGDO network prior to CONCORD was established). There was no office and staff at the

beginning. In 1977, the Platform was formalised with an office and one staff member. In 1993, the Platform was called Dóchas and became the one network for the domestic and EU agenda with 17 members.

Today Dóchas has 33 members contributing a membership fee based on their relative size (varies from 25-250 Euro; the budget per year is 200.000 Euro). The structure consists of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, the Secretariat and different Working Groups (which meet at least every 6 weeks). Dóchas focuses on the members and their priorities and has the mandate for policy work but does not have any operations.

Activities:

- Sharing experiences and information, defining priorities, coordinating developing advocacy agendas:

focus on development education, HIV/AIDS, Rights-based approaches to development, EU 2004 Presidency;

- Representation at EU level and domestically:

Irish government: Dialogue mechanisms, funding relations and even representation at UN conferences (since government needed the Platform's input and experience but generally, the cooperation with the government should not get too close and too friendly);

European Union: CONCORD and its Working Groups, Irish MEPs;

Civil Society: Forum on Europe, Civil Society Contact Group, other NGOs and academia.

Priorities:

- Promoting the interests of the South (debt, human rights, trade, HIV/AIDS);
- Increasing ODA quantity & quality (0,7% campaign, EU aid, UN);
- Promoting development education;
- Networking and information sharing (newsletter, website, promote quality standards).

SLOVAK REPUBLIC:

Maria Calfova, MVRO

Development of the NGDO Platform:

The Slovak NGDO Platform MVRO (www.mvro.sk) has 1 staff member, a Board of 6 NGO representatives and 18 member organisations. MVRO was officially registered in March 2003 and is founding member of CONCORD. Slovak NGOs are represented in the CONCORD Working Group on Enlargement, FDR and Development Education.

The activities of the Platform are dealt with in 4 Working Groups (Development Projects, Development Education, Volunteers Sending, Humanitarian Assistance). Another key task is the lobby work towards the government in order to move the humanitarian aid agenda from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Platform was successful in lobbying the government on a budget for development education. Public awareness raising is one of the main objectives of the member NGOs. Among the activities are the Oneworld Film Festival, the Good News Campaign, concerts, cultural and sports events, the global education week, regular media work and others.

Activities in 2003:

- Presentation of the Platform at the OECD Council meeting in Slovakia
- Meeting with Poul Nielson - Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid
- Internal meeting of the members in order to know each other better and to determine a strategy
- Platform registration (as „ an interest association of the legal entities“)
- Official discussion forum with the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Becoming member of CONCORD
- Participation in the CONCORD WGs
- Communication to the members

- Members Assembly
- Board Meetings
- Working Groups meetings
- Mailing list
- Website: <http://www.mvro.sk>

2. THE DEVELOPMENT AND DYNAMICS OF ODA IN THE ACCESSION COUNTRIES

Adam Novak, CIDA-ODACE

Development of the Official Development Assistance:

Adam Novak, from the Canadian-ODACE programme, gave an overview on the developments of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the different New Member States (except Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia). Some of the countries have developed their policies rather late but once it got started the changes and developments were fast. In all countries the main idea for ODA is the transitional experience of their countries. This focus will probably remain for the next 10 years. Key issues are the reform of institutions, legal framework, reform of local government, good governance, promotion of market economy, environment and the new social problems of transition. Not all of these activities can be considered as ODA and there is an increasing pressure from the EU and OECD to do less of these activities. Donors and governments have difficulties to decide if they want to support these activities.

Human rights is another important aspect of ODA in New Member States (NMS). However, businesses got involved in the topic of human rights and this can be quite dangerous regarding the outcome. Where businesses can play an important role is the field of technological education. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) wants to export services and use the private sector to increase their ODA.

Most humanitarian aid is delivered through the UN system because of a lack of capacity. In general, the strategy used is not based on best practises and aid is tied. Several MFAs have tried to involve fire brigade, police, etc. but they are too busy with their own agenda.

All countries are aware that they need to expand their activities abroad. Moldova, South Caucasus and Central Asia are possible regions for strengthening the democratisation process but also for development cooperation. The Middle East and some African countries with a communist background are also possible ODA priority countries for NMS. Since NMS want to reinforce their position in international organisations they are very sensitive to what is prioritised by the international agenda, such as Iraq, Afghanistan or Georgia.

Development education is lacking within the development policies of NMS. ODA is still very low and public support is little. The Czech Republic has the most generous budget. Slovak Republic, Hungary, Estonia and Poland have related to their size very small budgets in absolute terms. In relative terms the money is not as little since soldiers sent to Iraqe also count as ODA according to OECD statistics. The commitment will rise to 0.35% of GDP. Most money will go to bilateral programmes and bilateral funds will be increased by 10% per year in order to meet the national plans.

Regarding the mechanism of delivery, most are opting for an agency outside of the MFA. The UNDP could provide a temporary home to this agency. All countries feel they need a consultative body. This is where they allow other stakeholders such as NGOs to be included. This means that governments rather work on a consultative level with NGOs than on a dynamic system. Governments assure that NGOs are key strategic partners but it does not necessarily translate. In Czech Republic and Lithuania the government picks NGOs very carefully for implementing ODA activities and some of these NGOs do what their government wants them to do.

The funding mechanism for oversea programmes is a simple project-by-project system. In most cases the projects have to be concluded within 1 year. Through the UNDP delivery mechanism long-term projects should be possible. Programm support is clearly needed for a long-term

sustainability. Governments know that they need to move to 2-3 year programmes but so far only Slovakia has established programme funding. The rigid law makes it also difficult to change the project-by-project system.

Some governments have started to finance development education. Others are rather hostile to development education projects, probably because they fear that such projects will be critical towards the government.

NGOs are most able to win government funds since NGOs can provide advice to the ministries. Nevertheless, there is in general a lot of reluctance to NGO-government dialogue. *(In Austria, the budget for 2004 amounts to 70 Mio Euro; a maximum of 45-50% is going through NGOs. 5% of the total ODA is implemented by NGOs).*

The ministries are not opting for co-financing NGO projects since it is easier for them to provide a small budget to a project than having administration work with co-financing procedures.

Opportunities for NGOs in the current situation:

This year and also next year the boundaries are soft and NGOs have the possibility to shape the system on the level of mechanisms and strategies. In general, NGOs have not been very successful in using this opportunity. The NGDO Platforms find it hard to develop a dialogue. NGOs often complain that the government does not respond to their suggestions but NGOs should point out what they disagree with and provide alternative suggestions. They can also refer to the practises in other EU countries. The Slovak NGDO Platform as well as the Polish Platform have produced position papers and made suggestions to the ministries, however, NGDOs from other countries have not done much in this respect. NGOs need to sell themselves better to the ministries. The ministries' staff still does not know which NGO is doing what, where and whether their projects work well.

A Hungarian Platform representative pointed out that it is not the Platform's task to inform the government about EU guidelines. Adam responded that it should be the Platform's task to lobby, negotiate and monitor the government. A Polish representative remarked that the Platform spends a lot of time on lobbying the government. A representative of the Estonian NGDO Roundtable explained that the situation in Estonia is quite different since the ministry approaches the NGOs and there is always a government official present at the Roundtable meetings. Regarding project proposals, Estonian NGOs have to submit a draft which is then discussed with the ministry before it is further elaborated.

3. WORKING GROUPS

I. How to build our national NGDO network and serve our members

The group worked out the crucial points for a membership based platform and summarised them as "TRIALOG principles":

Trust: needs time; the "T" can also sometimes stand for "tension", for example big NGOs versus small NGOs.

Respect and rules: respect of all members, the approach should be bottom up not top down, supporting also smaller ideas of individual NGOs through the network.

Individual interest has to be guaranteed.

Aim and focus: if you cannot agree on a topic then the smaller group that does agree can lobby. Nevertheless, the focus of the entire network has to be clear. And it is not necessary that each member works on all topics. Platforms in NMS should stick to their own agenda even if there is a certain pressure to copy the Platforms in current EU Member States. But perhaps for NMS Platforms other issues are more important.

Legal statutes: it is necessary to set up clear criteria.

Outputs: should be tangible (e.g. newsletter) on the one hand but can be more vague on the other hand (meeting a minister from time to time). Success breeds more success. The goals should be realistic.

Good luck: it is not an easy task but new Platforms should not lose faith.

II. How to influence the MFA

Each country representative explained what works and what does not work when approaching the government. This information can function as a tool box.

Austria: The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) produces reports on the ODA performance of each country. The results of these reports can be used by NGOs for their lobby work. The DAC arranges periodical visits and also meets with NGOs. This is a very good opportunity for NGOs to raise issues of concern. Furthermore, the Austrian Platform uses the expertise of other working groups and networks (e.g. CONCORD Working Groups).

Poland: The dialogue and lobby work is not solely concentrated on the MFA but also on the opposition party since there is a rotation. The focus is rather on the system (e.g. transparency) than on financial aspects. The Polish Platform learned to be patient and does not give up even if the process at governmental level is very slow. If the Platform is well established, NGOs might eventually be called for statements and their expertise.

Malta: The constant change of personnel at governmental level is a fact and the Platform has to face it.

Slovak Republic: The Platform realised that it is important to be a legal body or at least strong movement. Secondly, the Platform has to understand how the system works. ODACE and other stakeholders can help to put pressure on the ministries. It is important to react quickly and to use other countries' experience (e.g. Czech Republic or Poland since they are geographically close but also share a similar historical context). The ability to work at different levels (where to target which part of the system) is also crucial.

Estonia: It is useful to keep the contacts that you built up over the time even if they are not needed at the moment. It is important to work for trust. Good writing skills are essential since position papers should be readable.

Latvia: MFA is interested in the Platform but there is a huge difference between political and development goals.

Hungary: There is a lack of trust and therefore building trust is most important right now. However, some tension can also be healthy. The variety of NGOs can also be seen as a strength and made use of for the lobby work.

4. THE DYNAMICS IN THE EU

Jeremy Nagoda, European Commission/EuropeAid, Brussels

Development Policy and EU Enlargement:

Development has been hitchhiked in terms of migration, stability, etc. Nevertheless, the EU is a substantial donor (Japan, USA, and other rich countries are contributing far less). By being 28 EU Member States, the EU does not become much richer but still there will be more money that needs to be coordinated. The budget planning is done for the next 7 years, thus it is difficult to make changes to the budgets. Enlargement requires a good infrastructure, but at the moment there is no constitution which makes coordination even more complicated.

In the EU Treaty development is dealt with under title 20, regulations regarding NGOs are dealt with under co-financing 1615/98. The DAC list of least developed countries is a criteria where the budget for EU development assistance is spent. In addition, the official relations count. Exceptions are possible (e.g. Burma: officially it is no cooperation country but if NGOs want to work there it can be accepted; another exception can be countries coming from war). Brussels takes the decision which countries are prioritised.

NGO Co-financing:

The principal of call for proposals has undergone a reform with the general EU reform in 1999. This has led to the call-for-tender approach which is rather bureaucratic. There is a lot of competition and therefore the selection procedure has to be very precise. There are very strict guidelines on the formats, the eligibility criteria, etc. – if these guidelines are not met the project proposal will for sure not be considered (administrative compliance and eligibility). The ambition is to select the best quality projects but this is simply not possible due to the great number of proposals.

Regarding the next call for proposals it will most probably be launched at the beginning of April and then open for 90 days. Development education is part of the NGO co-financing budget line 21-02-03 (former B7-6000). CONCORD / TRIALOG will inform NGOs as soon as the call will be launched. The budget of a project ranges between 50.000 and 250.000 Euro (if it is a consortium project it can be more – but the lead NGO must have the capacity and experience to handle a larger budget and a consortium project which is of course more difficult to manage). It makes sense to first concentrate on smaller projects and build up a track record of good projects which will make it easier to win bigger projects in the future. Furthermore, it is convenient to start with countries where the NGO has know-how and experience (e.g. NGOs from NMS might have experience with Vietnam, North Korea, Moldavia, Iraq).

Integration of the operations cycle:

EuropeAid will be decentralised and deconcentrated which means that Brussels decides how much money is given to the EU delegations in the different countries and they, in turn, will launch local calls for proposals, make contracts and will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation (Programming will not be deconcentrated and decentralised). Already now the EU delegations are responsible for monitoring and evaluation and in some budget lines also for local calls for proposals (e.g. EIDHR).

Deconcentration: the competences are given from Brussels to EC Delegations

Decentralisation: the competences are given to a non-EU-actor (e.g. governments).

5. WORKING GROUPS

I. Developing proposals for EU support to NGDO Platforms:

- Internships and study tours to the South (with mixed participants from different sectors, e.g. NGOs, governments, etc.);
- Supporting development education and public awareness raising activities in NMS;
- Influencing national governments on NGO budget guidelines and a transparent performance.

II. Towards future collaboration between NGDO Platforms in NMS after joining the EU:

Aims:

- Present Central and Eastern European perspectives and goals (priorities of NGOs in the EU and NMS);
- Formulate best practices;
- Enhance NMS-NGOs' learning

Means:

- Reinforce lobbying initiatives (CONCORD Presidency Working Group) and facilitate contacts to other fora;
- Bilateral exchanges between Platforms;
- Joining CONCORD and participating in the CONCORD WG on Enlargement (dialogue and sharing of experiences with NGOs from NMS and EU);
- Joint projects between NMS and EU NGOs to share learning, create the space for exchange and promote EU funding;

- Sharing of Development Education/Campaigning Methods, Training of Media, Training of EU NGOs on Transition;
- TRIALOG: brochure on NMS-NGOs; Welcome conference; budget for trainings (PCM, EU development issues, etc.);
- Translate EU documents, funding policies;
- CONCORD visits.

6. ODACE AND TRIALOG PRIORITIES FOR 2004

ODACE priorities:

On governmental level, ODACE' first priority is to increase awareness of governments regarding ODA and stimulate them to get more active in developing strategies. Furthermore, ODACE will work on making mechanisms more transparent and on improving and refining the system that is already in place.

On NGO level, ODACE will continue to support Platforms. In the past, this did not work as well as it was expected. The support was quite strong and even full time coordinators were paid. This should have lead to increased activities and lobbying which was however in some countries not that much the case. It seems that coordinators are overwhelmed with administration and channeling information. In the case of Czech Republic there was a problem of conflict of interest and ODACE decided to stop the support. Now there is a new person employed which will hopefully help to solve the problem and to take up the support once again. The capacity building trainings should eventually replace the ODACE activity. The question is how this can be financed. Therefore, it is the goal of ODACE to make capacity building a part of the ODA system in each country, for instance, regarding volunteer sending.

There is also support for individual NGOs such as the facilitation of NGO consortia that want to implement projects in certain countries. ODACE offers travel possibilities and contacts in the countries which are of interest. ODACE could also offer co-financing if NGOs get funds through EU and MFA calls. Apart from co-financing, ODACE can provide an interim grant mechanism which would fill the budget gap until the funds from official sources arrive.

TRIALOG priorities:

The overall aim of the project phase II is to support full and active membership in CONCORD. TRIALOG wants to strengthen through various activities the capacities of NGOs in NMS but the main tasks are the Working Groups of CONCORD (TRIALOG wants to encourage the participation in the Working Groups) and trainings. In February 2004, the Paper on Challenges for Enlargement will be finalized and we are planning a broad discussion on this issue. The TRIALOG Information Officer will prepare a publication on NGOs in NMS since there is still few information available.

One highlight of the CONCORD Working Group on Enlargement is the "Welcome Conference" in Brussels, with new and old Member States and the newly elected ministers of the European Parliament (MEPs). The TRIALOG Policy Officer will be responsible for the preparation in cooperation with the Working Group Enlargement.

The TRIALOG Capacity Building Officer is carrying out trainings on PCM, project proposal writing, logical framework, reporting, etc. but also any other field such as lobbying can be requested by the NGDO Platforms since TRIALOG has a budget for external trainers as well. NGOs in NMS can of course also propose the trainers. A close cooperation with ODACE is also possible; for example the content and the technical part of the training can be split between ODACE and TRIALOG. So far Poland, Malta and Slovakia have enquired for trainings. *There was a request on a training on best practices. Christine (TRIALOG Capacity Building Officer) said that such a training is of course possible but NGOs should rather elaborate their own projects since best cases depend on so many aspects; what has worked for one NGO does not necessarily mean that it works for another as well.*

7. EUROPEAID CO-FINANCING MECHANISM 21-02-03 (FORMER B7-6000)

Christine Bedoya, TRIALOG Capacity Building Officer

Co-financing with European Development NGOs:

Two possibilities:

1. Awareness raising of Development issues
2. Operations in Developing Countries

Awareness raising projects are taking place in Europe and are projects, programmes or capacity building packages on development issues in the South which draw up the relations between developing countries and industrialised countries. TRIALOG is already facilitating joint projects in this field. Christine gave some information on her current task, namely DEPART (a North-South-East partnership for Development Education projects). About 100 NGOs from old and new Member States as well as from developing countries have sent their application to participate in DEPART which is jointly organised by TRIALOG, DEEEP and CONCORD. About 20 NGOs have been selected to attend a first meeting where partnerships will be set up for joint projects in the field of Fair Trade, Development Education in Schools and Media work. NGOs that have not been selected for this first meeting can of course still set up partnerships on their own (TRIALOG will support the search for a partner NGO) and work out a joint project proposal (Christine as the TRIALOG Capacity Building Officer can be contacted for specific questions on the proposal writing).

At this point Jeremy Nagoda was asked whether project proposals of a consortium of NGOs from EU and NMS would be prioritised at the next call; He said that the selection will depend rather on the kind of project.

Awareness raising projects must have a clearly defined target group and clearly defined and analysed issues. It is important to have a good knowledge of the target group. The project should have at best a European dimension. It is helpful to use the terms and ideas expressed in the call. The proposal language should be English, French, Spanish or Portuguese. Officially it can also be written in Estonian or any other EU language but this is not recommendable. The EC is obliged to give an answer within 60 days but this is only possible if the proposal is written in one of these 4 languages.

Priority is given to awareness raising projects that deal with the interdependence of EU and developing countries, have an equitable North-South relation, are organized in cooperation with other NGOs and leave an active part to NGOs in developing countries. If an NGO does not fulfill the eligibility criteria for a consortium partner it can still become a simple partner of the project (this is only applicable for awareness raising projects).

Operations in developing countries deal with social, human and economic development for the most disadvantaged groups in developing countries. The project has to be aimed at poverty alleviation and should be based on an initiative by local partners. Institutional support and capacity building can also be an aim of the project. The criteria for falling into the category of developing countries is a Human Development Index over 100 and all least developed countries (a list is published on the DAC website). There is also a link of rehabilitation and development and therefore post-crisis or conflict countries can be among the priority countries even if they are not considered as developing countries. Other exceptions are also possible if the NGO has good arguments why the project is important for a specific country. It is important to show that the planned activities result from consultation with the target group.

General eligibility criteria:

- Autonomous, non-profit NGO
- Headquarter in the EU
- Statutes
- Development activities for at least 3 years (balance sheet is a proof)
- Capacity of private financial resources
- Adequate experience in development

Discussion with Jeremy Nagoda:

Since the EC is not financing 100% of the project (in most cases 75%) the NGO has to generate its own funds. These funds can also come from private companies and even bank interest is eligible. The money can also come from sources outside of the EU (e.g. Soros Foundation) as long as it is traceable. In general, donations in good faith and without strings is acceptable. There are companies that are interested and NGOs have to find out who they are. Donations in kind, e.g. flight tickets from airlines, cannot be used to fill the remaining percentage. Of course governments in NMs could fund the remaining percentage and NGOs should make efforts to lobby on that option. If governments would even pay more than the missing percentage then this would reduce the contribution by the EC.

The funds by the EC are advanced money that the EC can reclaim the already transferred money. Only after the final report has been approved by the EC the money is guaranteed for the NGO. Therefore it is very important to be cautious.

It takes about 8 months to get the project approval but the first installment is paid out quickly (about 60 days later).

The "Frequently Asked Questions" section on the EC website can clarify a lot of these kind of details.

The project cycle phases (of a 2-year service contract):

- Programming (analyse situation to identify problems which could be addressed) – 1% of total time
- Identification (identify project ideas and screen them for further study) – 9%
- Formulation (develop relevant project ideas into operational project plans) – 7%
- Financing (EC decides to fund project and agrees on arrangements with beneficiary country) – 23%
- Implementation (mobilise and execute project) – 37% (these are the 2 years of the project duration)
- Evaluation (assess project achievements and identify lessons) – 1%

It is very important to plan the project well in advance of the call and the idea of the project should be based on the NGO's overall activities and strategies.

General facts:

- Budget 2003: 20 Mio Euro for awareness raising projects and 120 Mio for development cooperation projects in the South;
- EC contribution: 75% (if it is a European wide project like TRIALOG then it is 85%).
- NGO funds/private funds: min 10% for awareness raising projects and min 15% for development cooperation projects.
- Other funds: max. 15% for awareness raising and 10% for development cooperation projects.
- Duration of the project: min 24 months and max 60 months for development cooperation; max 36 months for development cooperation.

What is a grant?

- Payment of non-commercial nature
- Promotion of an EU policy aim
- Implementation of an action or functioning of a body
- Project proposed by a potential beneficiary
- Co-financing - % of total eligible costs
- Grant beneficiary is autonomous and owner of action and results
- The grant for a project ranges from 50.000-750.000 Euro, for a consortium project from 250.000-1,5 Mio.

How to award grants?

- Transparency (ex ante and ex post publicity calls for proposals)
- Equal treatment for all NGOs once they have submitted their proposal (collective assessment, evaluation criteria and procedure)
- No cumulative grants
- Sound management (availability of funds, standard documents, record keeping, contract award procedures)

Publicity:

- Call for proposals notice (must be published in the Official Journal and on the internet and in any other appropriate media);
- Guidelines for applicants (published on the internet and hard copy, includes application form and other annexes (standard contract, budget, logical framework), details of the objectives of the programme-priority, themes to be funded and procedures to be followed by applicants). It is crucial to read the guidelines carefully. There are certain key words and it might be helpful to use them in the project proposal.

Eligibility and evaluation criteria:

- The eligibility of the applicant and the partners of the project as well as the costs are scanned by the EC. The selection and award criteria are:
 - management capacity and expertise
 - relevance
 - methodology
 - sustainability
 - budget and cost effectiveness

Submission of proposals:

The proposals must reach the address and the date/time indicated. The submission period is 90 days for international calls for proposals and 60 days for national calls. Additional information can be asked for until 21 days before the deadline, answers have to be given 11 days before the deadline. Applications must be sent by registered mail or express messenger or by hand-delivery. They must contain the original and x copies of the completed application form, annexes and supplementary documents.

Evaluation and notification to successful applicants:

Evaluation report is signed by the Chairman, the Secretary and the voting members. The Committee submits the report and the award proposals to the Contracting Authority (which forwards it to the Delegation for approval). The successful applicant is notified and a standard letter is sent to the unsuccessful applicants informing them that they have not been selected. NGOs can ask why their proposal has been rejected – the EC is obliged to answer.

Impact of enlargement on eligibility:

Until now: Phare, ISP & SAPARD, CARDS, TACIS

With enlargement: access to all EC programmes including

MEDA (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Gaza and the West Bank);

ALA (Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, North Korea, China, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Laos, Macao, Mongolia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and Yemen; Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay and Venezuela);

And others (Human rights, etc.)

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