

MALTESE NGOS, LOCAL COUNCILS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



Maltese NGOs, Local Councils
&
International Development
Cooperation





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This publication has been written by Dominik Kalweit, in collaboration with Mario Gerada, Angie Farrugia and William Grech, on behalf of the Maltese non-governmental development organisation KOPIN (Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali - Malta) and SKOP – The National Platform of Maltese NGOs.

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1. Introduction

In his opening statement¹ at the training workshop on “Capacity Building Schemes”², Honourable Dr Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that

*“our commitment to ODA is at the heart of what I like to call our partnering policy. In brief, **the government has taken on the role of policy planner** leaving the implementation to other stakeholders. Society has changed and government has had to change with it. **We embrace the involvement of civil society in government policy making and are more than pleased to transfer the executive side of our development policy to those who do it the best – the Non-Governmental and Development Organisations.**”*

(...)

*“We recognise that we have international obligations under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as well as a duty as Members of the European Union. **We are looking for strong partnerships with Maltese NGOs with an aim to implementing our development policy effectively and in a timely and transparent manner.** Rest assured we are committed to the highest standards of quality and accountability. Good practice will be rewarded and best practices showcased.”*

According to the Concord AidWatch Report 2010³, Malta had an Official Development Aid (ODA) budget of approximately €11 million in 2009, which is equivalent to 0.20 per cent of Malta's Gross National Income (GNI)⁴. A shortfall of 14 per cent or approximately €1 million is to be expected for the current year⁵.

At this stage it is pertinent to point out that Malta is the only member state of the European Union that to date does not publish a detailed breakdown of its ODA spending – hence the *approximation* in figures.

Of the expected €10 million, however, only €330,000 is being allocated to Maltese non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs). According to Government, these funds could only be spent on development projects implemented directly in the *Majority World*.⁶ This means that only 3.3 per cent of Malta's total ODA for 2010 is being channelled through NGDOs - the implementing body of Malta's Overseas Development Policy (ODA) -, none of which is spent on the development of the NGOs' capacities, nor on Global Education or awareness raising projects in Malta.

In reality, a mere €256,310 has been made available to a total of 16 Maltese NGDOs, which equals 2.56 per cent of Malta's total ODA budget.⁷

Whilst the author shares the opinion of a number of Maltese Development NGO activists in welcoming the importance the Ministry places on Maltese civil society, a number of concerns and questions arise. Concerns like the disproportionate allocation of ODA funds to Maltese civil society, which does by no means reflect the importance given to NGOs; like the lack of transparent ODA figures, which would allow civil society to conduct a proper analysis on the basis of which it could criticise and provide constructive advice to Government; like the discrepancy between the allocated €330,000 and the spent €256,000; like the fact that Government regards Malta's NGDOs as *the* players for ODP implementation, but then does not cater for capacity building and awareness raising needs. And questions like is Malta's civil society prepared to fulfil the role of key stakeholder in implementing Malta's ODP? What are the needs of Maltese development NGOs? Do the priorities of Malta's Overseas Development Policy tally with those of Maltese civil society? Are Maltese NGDOs the *only* stakeholders that can be considered for implementing Malta's ODP?

With regards to the latter question, it is important to point out that Maltese civil society organisations, like most other social actors, are not solely embedded in the national context, but are increasingly active at the European and international levels, as well.

Looking at Europe, since a few years, the European Commission (EC) is placing high importance on what is called a multi-stakeholder,

1 Vide http://www.doi.gov.mt/en/press_releases/2010/06/pr1073.asp.

2 The training workshop was organised by the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission and held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Malta's capital Valletta on 9 June 2010.

3 Concord (2010). Penalty against Poverty: More and better Aid can score against Millennium Development Goals. AidWatch Report 2010. Available online: http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/1_extranetdocumentsENG/NavigationSecondaire/WorkingGroups/Aidwatch/Aidwatch2010/report2010/CONCORD_report_light.zip. The AidWatch Working Group of Malta's national NGDO platform, SKOP, has contributed the information on Malta to this report.

4 Vide *ibid*, pp.9.

5 *Ibid*.

6 Vide http://www.doi.gov.mt/en/press_releases/2010/06/pr1073.asp.

7 Vide <http://www.foreign.gov.mt/default.aspx?MDIS=482&NWID=1087>.

participatory approach to development cooperation. Particularly the collaboration between civil society and local authorities is emphasised, *exempli gratia* in a number of project calls issued by the EC.

*“While it is partner country governments who determine their country cooperation strategies together with the Community, **the complementary role of non-state actors and local authorities is recognised as a fundamental principle of EC development policy.** The most wide-ranging participation of all segments of society must be encouraged. **The EU supports participatory approaches** to ensure ownership of the development strategies by the populations and to promote in-country dialogue on good governance.”⁸*

Focusing at the national level, however, one realises that Maltese local councils (LCs), which are the second level of governance after the national government, have only very limited financial and human resources. This means that their level of engagement must be restricted, too, with a need to focus on core issues relevant for the communities served by the councils.

Hence, it can be questioned whether Maltese LCs would have the capacities, or even an interest, to invest time and energy on projects and activities related to international development cooperation (IDC).

Matters concerning migration, partnerships with cities or towns in developing countries or the (passive) participation in Global Education school activities are fields that are somewhat related to IDC, which might be considerable for the councils.

However, until to date, there is no data with regards to the level of knowledge and engagement of Maltese local councils in development issues.

The research presented in the following pages tries to provide some answers, or at least indications, to the concerns and questions raised in this introduction.

8 Vide European Commission (2006). Thematic programme - Non-state actors and local authorities in development. Strategy paper 2007-2010. P.3. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/civil-society/documents/nsa_la_strategy_paper_2007_2010_en.pdf.

2. Aim and Remit of this Study

Within the frame of the project “MEDEVNET - *Capacity and synergy building for Development among non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) and Local Authorities (LAs) in Greece, Cyprus and Malta*”, research was conducted on issues related to knowledge and opinion about development of Maltese non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) and local councils (LCs).

The aim was to obtain information from Maltese CSOs which are active on issues related to development (global poverty issues, at large) and/or migration, and from local councils, about organisational structures, focus areas of work, knowledge about development policies and their opinions about related matters.

The gathered information should then serve to develop a picture of Maltese development NGOs’ work, obstacles and priorities, and of LCs in terms of the extent they are already involved in development cooperation, if at all. Furthermore, the acquired knowledge would also be utilised to develop training programmes for CSOs and LCs on development and migration.⁹

The overall objective of MEDEVNET is to increase the knowledge and expertise of civil society and local authorities in development cooperation issues concerning the European Union and matters relevant to the participants, as identified in the project’s research phase, and to strengthen both the capacities and the networking opportunities of actors engaged in development actions, development policy and those originating from developing countries, as well as in matters related to the protection of asylum seekers. Furthermore, the collaboration and coordination across development organisations, local authorities, relevant government bodies and EU institutions and networks shall be fostered.

In Malta, the international project is being implemented by KOPIN¹⁰ in collaboration with its partner, the Local Council of Valletta¹¹, and the associate partners SKOP, the National Platform of Maltese NGDOs¹², and the Migrants’ Solidarity Movement¹³. In the other implementing countries, namely Greece and Cyprus, similar research was conducted, and the results will be made available on the project’s website.

⁹ In fact, a first training took place in Malta between 26 and 30 July 2010, at the InterContinental Hotel, St Julians (see KOPIN’s website).

¹⁰ <http://www.kopin.org>.

¹¹ <http://www.cityofvalletta.org>.

¹² <http://skopmalta.org>.

¹³ <http://www.migrantsmalta.org>.

3. Methodology – In-depth interview and questionnaire

In early May, the Maltese research team, made up of a KOPIN representative and the secretariat of SKOP, developed a list of the research target groups, whilst also working on the country-specific research design, based on the research framework agreed upon among the international project partners.

Between 14 May and mid-June, an online questionnaire was made available on the project's website <http://www.medevnet.org>¹⁴, for which Angie Farrugia (SKOP) had sent out invitations to a total of 36 recipient institutions.

Of these, 27 or three-quarters were Maltese civil society organisations whilst nine (i.e. one out of four) were local councils. The questionnaire was rather extensive, and it was expected that respondents would need on average 15 to 20 minutes for its completion.

Nevertheless, the return rate was very satisfactory: of 36 requests, 25 were answered, which equals nearly 70 per cent. In two NGOs, the questionnaire was answered by two respondents, respectively; the analysis is taking this into account whenever appropriate, and a distinction is being made between *respondents*, *responding individuals*, *NGO representatives* or the like (considering all 22 responding NGO activists, irrespective of their institution) and *responding NGOs or organisations* (considering 20 NGOs). When this text refers to *institution*, it means both NGOs and LCs.

Of the 23 responding institutions (which still reflects a response rate of 64 per cent, which is above standard average), only three were local councils. The institutional ratio (NGOs/LCs) is therefore 87/13 per cent.

Moreover, nine in-depth interviews were conducted by Mario Gerada (SKOP) and Dominik Kalweit (KOPIN). "Interview as a tool of research is here to be understood as a methodical approach with a scientific objective target in which the subject of examination, i.e. the person interviewed, shall be motivated to provide verbal information through a range of specific questions or communicated stimuli."¹⁵

The interviews were semi-guided, i.e. a set of questions had been developed in advance, which could then be expanded or converted in the course of the interview, depending on the development of the discussion. One-on-one Interviews took place in an environment that was comfortable to the interviewees, who were informed that questions could be left unanswered in case they would feel uncomfortable to respond.

All respondents were allowed to speak in the language most comfortable to them, Maltese or English. The interviews were recorded, and crucial information was then transcribed by the interviewers. It is pertinent to point out that the interviewers were knowledgeable on the organisations they interviewed, which facilitated the communication.

This methodology was chosen to create an environment which encouraged the respondents to provide sufficient information and express their opinion freely and openly.

The questions of both questionnaire and in-depth interview can be found in the appendix of this paper.

14 The questionnaire was made accessible on <http://195.47.208.46/mrIWeb/mrIWeb.dll?L.Project=MEDEVNET>, a site which was linked to [medevnet.org](http://www.medevnet.org).

15 Vide Scheuch, Erwin K. (1973). *Das Interview in der Sozialforschung*. In: König, René (ed.). *Handbuch der empirischen Sozialforschung*. 3rd edition. Vol. 2. Enke Verlag, Stuttgart. Pp. 70. (NB: translated by the author.)

4. Questionnaires and In-depth Interviews - *Outcomes*

4.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRES:

4.1.1 THE RESPONDENTS- INSTITUTIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The questionnaire was answered by a total of 25 individuals, representing 20 civil society organisations and three local councils.

CONCORD, the European NGOs Confederation for Relief and Development, defines CSOs as having, “[...] four main characteristics: they are established voluntarily by citizens seeking to promote their concerns, values or identities; they are organised around the promotion of an issue or the interests of a particular section of society; they are autonomous from the state; and they do not aim at optimising profits.”¹⁶

All but two CSOs defined themselves as NGOs; one organisation defined itself as *Voluntary Organisation*, another specified to be a *Cooperative*. The author is aware, however, that both organisations are also considered to be non-governmental organisations, for which they are being accounted for within this group.

SKOP, the National Platform of Maltese NGDOs, is a network of (currently 22) Development NGOs; it is included in the NGO – group, as well. At the time of response collection, 14 of the answering institutions were members of SKOP, which equals nearly 64 per cent of all NGO responses.

WHAT ARE NGDOs?

“NGDOs are voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental organisations working within the framework of International Development Cooperation. They are concerned with poverty reduction, social justice, human rights, and the problems of marginalisation within society, especially with regards to women. Some characteristics of NGDOs are:

- They are not established for and cannot distribute any surplus they generate as a profit to owners or staff;
- They are not required nor prevented from existing by law, but result from people’s self-chosen voluntary initiative to pursue a shared interest or concern;
- Formed by private initiative, they are independent, in that they are not part of government nor controlled by a public body;
- Within the terms of whatever legislation they choose to register themselves, they also govern themselves;
- They are legitimised by the existence of the world’s poor and powerless and by the circumstances and injustices they experience;
- By and large, NGDOs act as intermediaries, providing support to those who legitimise them; they are not mutual benefit organisations or associations;
- They retain voluntary values and principles as the primary force in their way of working”¹⁷

In the analysis of the questionnaires, the main distinction is being made between the two groups of respondents - NGO and LC representatives.

16 Vide CONCORD (2002). A CONCORD Response to the European Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on “Participation of Non-State Actors in the EC Development Policy”. P.5. Ref.6. Available online: http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/internetdocumentsENG/3_Topics/Topics/16_Non_State_Actors/1_CONCORD_documents/A_CONCORD_Response_to_the_Communication_of_the_Commission_on_Civil_Society_Participation_in_European_Development_Policy_August_2003.pdf

17 Vide <http://www.kopin.org/About/WorkingDefinitionofNGDOs/tabid/1226/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>. Adapted from Fowler, Alan (1997). *Striking a Balance - A guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Governmental Organisations in International Development*. Earthscan Publications. London.

INFORMATION ABOUT MALTESE LOCAL COUNCILS

“Local Government was established in 1993 following the Maltese Parliament’s approval of the Local Councils Act (Chapter 363 of the Laws of Malta) on 30 June 1993. This law set up Local Councils in 67 localities (later increased to 68). Furthermore, it now serves as a regulatory mechanism for Local Councils’ operations.

The Local Councils Act was modelled on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Council of Europe), which the Maltese Government had signed and ratified. According to this Act, a Local Council ‘shall be a statutory local government authority having a distinct legal personality and capable of entering into contracts, of suing and being sued, and of doing all such things and entering into such transactions as are incidental or conducive to the exercise and performance of its functions as are allowed under the Act.’

Today, Malta has 68 Local Councils – 54 in Malta and 14 in Gozo. The Local Councils Act was revised considerably by the Local Councils (Amendment) Act 1999 (Act No. XXI of 1999) published on 21 December 1999 and Act No. XVI of 2009 as part of the Local Government Reform 2009.

Another important step taken to consolidate Local Government in Malta was when the system of local government was entrenched in the Constitution of Malta. In fact, on 24 April 2001, Act No. XIII of 2001 established that: ‘The State shall adopt a system of local government whereby the territory of Malta shall be divided into such number of localities as may by law be from time to time determined, each locality to be administered by a Local Council elected by the residents of the locality and established and operating in terms of such law as may from time to time be in force.’¹⁸

In terms of **geographical distinction**, it is interesting to note that one Gozitan NGO and one Gozitan local council responded to the questionnaire. Thus, whilst the Gozitan CSO accounts for only 4.5 per cent of NGO responses, the LC’s response makes up one-third of all councils’ replies.

Position of the respondents within their institution

60 per cent of the respondent individuals belong to the institutional directorate, being members of the board of directors, chairperson or, as was mentioned, “member of the core team”. Seven respondents (28%) declared to be “administrative staff / assistant / officer”. Only two respondents are volunteers, whilst one (4%) is “scientific / technical staff” member.

This means that a majority of respondents has decision making power regarding the strategic and political direction of their respective institution, whereas another large group of respondents is actively involved in the day-to-day running of their organisation or council.

Institutional size

Most institutions are, in comparison with central European organisations, small in terms of members: ten NGO representatives and two LCs (of Valletta and Dingli) state to have less than ten members. One representative of SKOP has included the members of member organisations of the network in the response (stating SKOP has more than 50 members); one of the two respondents of CFJ replies the organisation has less than ten members, the other estimates it to have between 11 and 20 members. Five other NGO representatives state this number, as well. Only two NGOs and, surprisingly, the Local Council of Nadur, Gozo, declare to have between 21 and 50 members. And besides SKOP (see above), three other organisations are large in size with more than 50 members. In other words, more than 70 per cent of Maltese NGOs have a maximum of 20 members, respectively.

18 Vide <https://secure2.gov.mt/localgovernment/home?l=1>.

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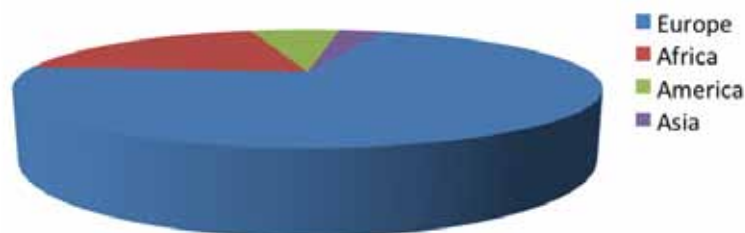
However, 12 NGOs and all local councils are in existence for over seven years (60%). Whereas two NGOs exist for one to three years and two NGOs for four to seven years, only three respondent organisations are younger than twelve months: GetUp! StandUp!, Stand4Palestine and the Aid2Autonomous Foundation (of which *Missjoni Etijopja* is part). The latter are also small in size and operate through volunteering.

A question which arises when comparing age and size of many NGOs is what kept the organisations from growing? The in-depth interviews revealed that one of the biggest problems of Maltese NGDOs is the lack of financial resources, which interrelates to a lack of capacity, of paid staff, and of time to engage in visioning and strategizing exercises.

Geographical level of activity

Two out of three local councils are active only at the local level; the Valletta LC, of Malta's capital city, is also active at the national and the international level. *In fact, Valletta's LC is the only council which employs an EU officer.*

Half of the NGOs are operating internationally, whilst 54.5 per cent work nationally. Eight respondents stated their organisation works locally, whereas only one replied her or his organisation would also be active regionally¹⁹.



Most Maltese NGOs are active in Europe (according to 22 of 25 respondents), six on the African continent, two in America and only one, namely CAM Youths, in Asia. One of the organisations that stated it is not active in Europe, Mission Fund, one of the strongest

¹⁹ It is not clear – and it was not specifiable in the questionnaire – which regions are being referred to (such as Malta and Gozo, South and North of Malta, etc).

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NGOs in Malta, stated it is active in America and Africa. Four NGOs, the biggest group of organisations working on more than one continent, are active in both Europe and Africa. The author is aware (from his own background as well as from the in-depth interviews), that being active in Europe means, by and large, being active in Malta or implementing European (EC funded) projects together with European partner organisations. Only few organisations, such as Third World Group, offer volunteers' services to impoverished communities in Europe, e.g. Naples.

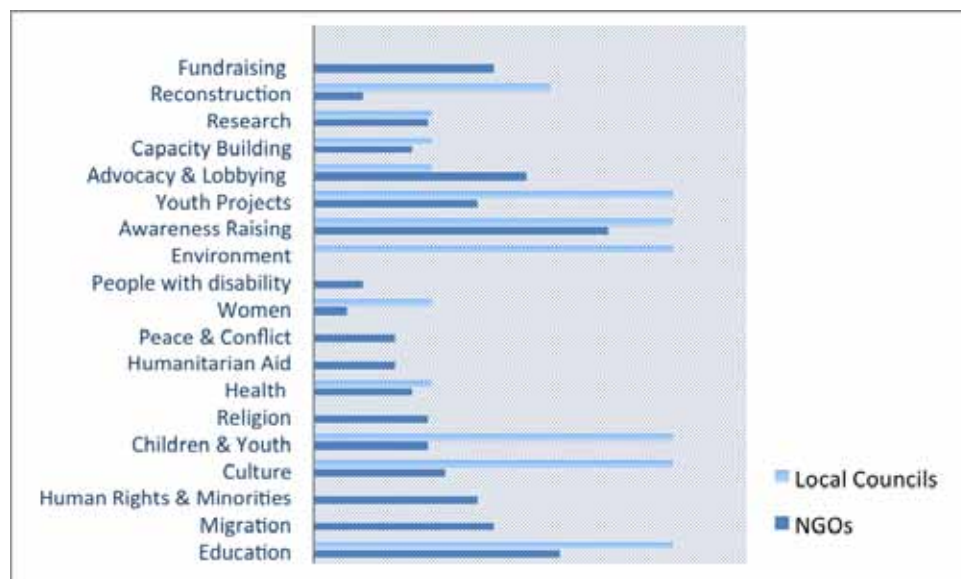
Areas of intervention

In terms of areas of intervention, a good number of NGOs is active in education (68.2%), the field of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (50%), human rights and minorities (45.5%, respectively). Over one third of NGOs, namely 36.4 per cent, work in the cultural field, nearly one third (31.8%) work in the field of children and youth, as well as religion, respectively; more than one fourth (27.3%) work in health, more than one fifth (22.7%) are active in humanitarian aid and issues related to peace and conflict.

Less popular is the work in the fields of women and people with disabilities, with 9.1 and 13.6 per cent, respectively. Single organisations also mentioned other fields, such as networking, poverty, fair trade, marginalised people and development.

It is clear that many areas are interlinked, such as the provision of education to refugees and other minorities, or the provision of health access perceived as a fundamental human right.

With regards to local councils, it is important to keep in mind that two out of three operate only locally, and that their responses in this field are therefore most probably not related to global poverty issues, but to services offered to the respective local population, which can include refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. All three stated they are active in the following fields: education, environment, children & youth and culture. Two of the three, excluding Valletta's LC, also stated to be active in the areas *health* and *women*.



All local councils engage in awareness raising (AR) and youth projects. Whereas, unlike Nadur and Dingli, Valletta's LC does not engage in reconstruction, Valletta is the only council active in advocacy and lobbying, in capacity building and in research.

18 of 22 NGOs (81.8%) are active in AR, 13 in advocacy and lobbying (59.1%). Half of the responding organisations engage in fundraising activities, 45.5 per cent in youth projects. Nearly one third (31%) of the NGOs conduct research, six organisations (27.3%) provide capacity building activities, only three organisations (13.6%) engage in reconstruction activities overseas. Other types of activities mentioned are networking (9.1%), legal assistance, social work, helping children, fair trade, helping missionaries with their daily work, building dialogue and literature (one respondent organisation, or 4.5%, respectively). One organisation, namely Kare4Kenya, was specific in saying that it provides "education and health to Kenyan children and their families".

Project implementation

60 per cent of all respondents stated that their institution conducted less than five projects over the past three years. Six to ten and 11 to 20 projects, respectively, were realised by 16 per cent of the respondents' institutions. Only the Nadur Local Council (Gozo) states to have accomplished between 21 and 50 projects over the past three years, which is topped only by the NGO Amigos, which

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has worked on more than 50 projects in the same period of time. The latter is also the only organisation which has worked with a budget of over one million Euros.

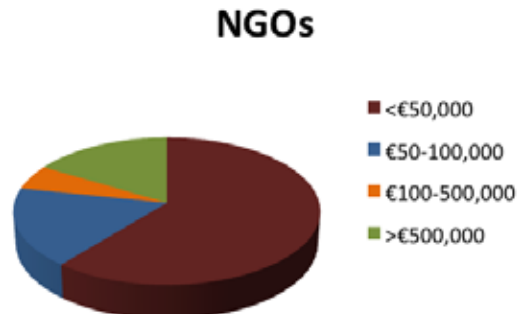
Budget and funding

Most organisations work with a rather limited budget, with either less than 50,000 Euros (56%) or between 50 and 100,000 Euros (16%).

The latter also applies to one of the local councils, whereas the other councils work with a budget of between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Euros, as does the Mission Fund. KOPIN, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the Fair Trade Cooperative (KKG), all of which organisations which exist for more than seven years, operate with a budget between 100 and 500,000 Euros.



Local Councils receive their funds mainly from state authorities; only one respondent, namely the Valletta LC, is financed by the private sector, the European Commission and through self-financing, as well.

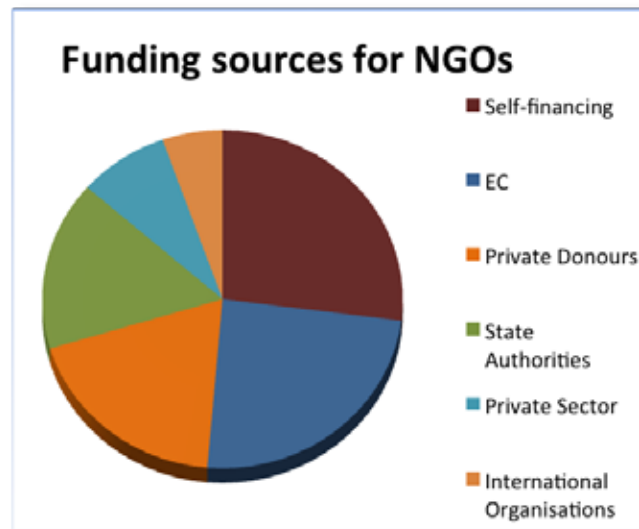


The main funding source for NGOs is self-financing (27%), followed closely by the EC (24.3%). Private donors (18.9%), state authorities (16.2%), funding from the private sector (8.1%) and from international organisations (5.4%), such as the United Nations, play a role, as well. None of the respondent institutions receives any funding from foundations.

Two of the three responding LCs and 55 per cent of the organisations are financed through one single funding source. One-fourth of the NGOs get funds from three different funding sources, whereas 15 per cent stated two sources. Only one organisation, namely the Jesuit Refugee Service, and the LC Valletta managed to obtain finances from four different sources.

The fact that the majority of respondents (an average of nearly 61 per cent) stated that their respective institution is sponsored through one source alone is a clear indicator for the lack of funding diversification, which is often directly related to financial instability, whereby the impact is specifically relevant for NGOs.

This is directly related to the fact that all LCs and 70 per cent of the NGOs claim difficulties in obtaining funding. Unsurprisingly, five of the six organisations stating to have no such problems are relying on self-financing.



The NGO activists describe the difficulties in finding financial support as follows:

"The recognition of the added value that the organisation brings is underestimated."

"General public - Lack of awareness, interest; (and the) relatively low profile of the organisation."

"(...) Development cooperation and Global Education are small sectors in Malta, charity approach rather than structural approach to development, few foundations, lack of funds."

"Projects not approved by Maltese government."

"Difficult to obtain funds, especially because the organisation hasn't been around for too long"

"Application process too cumbersome and bureaucratic."

"We are only having problems applying for grants as we have not formally registered with the voluntary commission. We have had a few setbacks with this process due to bureaucracy."

"When a group is small and young it's difficult to get grants."

"As we concentrate most of our energy on a specific area it is very difficult to explain our work while respecting our clients. Without the juicy details the general public finds it difficult to sympathize with our cause and as such find it more difficult to donate to it. On the other hand, fundraising activities for our projects abroad are more fruitful as it is easier for us to describe our work... Another difficulty we encountered was that of sponsors wanting us to thank them publicly..."

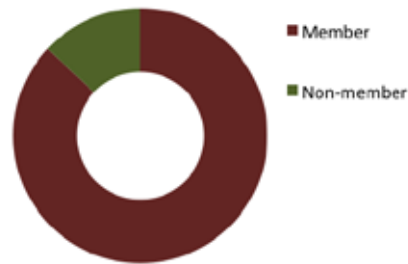
"People working on a voluntary basis cannot always dedicate time to organising fundraisers. Public participation in fundraisers has also decreased."

"Some funders sometimes don't believe in the project being proposed."

Local Council representatives stated that, "when applying for a European project, there is a lot of bureaucracy; and also long awaiting for final results if projects will be approved", and, more simple, "red tape" as main problems to obtain funding.

Only one NGO and one LC believe that the level of information on funding opportunities in Malta is satisfactory. Nine NGOs, seven of which have problems in obtaining or accessing funds, state that the level of information is of average quality, as does one LC. 12 NGO activists are disappointed with the information provided, 67 per cent of which find it difficult to access funding. One of the SKOP representatives forms part of this group, whilst the other declares an average level of information.

4.1.2 NETWORKING



18 of 20 NGOs and two of three LCs state that they are part of a network. Whereas in the case of the LCs, *Cities for Children*, Euromed, city twinning programmes and cultural agreements with other European towns and cities are mentioned, NGOs have listed the following networks: SKOP (mentioned by 12 respondents) (60%), the Forum for Justice and Cooperation (FJC), ENAR Malta and ECRE (10%, respectively), EUROSTEP, the Missionary Pontifical Office, GALXlokk, the Animal Rights Coalition, L-Ikel, JRS Europe, PICUM, World Fair Trade Organisation, CTM Altromercato, Fair Trade Advocacy Office, RAXEN, EAPN (APF), STOPoverty! Neqirdu l-Faqar! Campaign, St Egidio's Community and other Jesuit Faith and Justice centres, CONCORD and the Association of the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean are being mentioned by single NGOs. It is positive to note that the vast majority of the responding institutions is active in networking activities. Moreover, the diversity of networks reflects the one found in the Maltese civil society scene, which, albeit small (due to the size of the country, not in comparison with bigger central European states), are active in varied development and migration related fields, often both nationally and internationally.

The only organisations not members of any network are the *Grupp Missjunarju Ghawdex* (Missionary Group of Gozo) and Amigos. Whilst the former claims that its size and the lack of funds constrain membership, Amigos' representative states that s/he is "not aware, but no specific obstacle". Whilst 13 respondents say that their organisations are members of a national network, ten state they are members of an international network. Six NGOs, all of which SKOP members, and the Nadur LC (Gozo) confirm that they are members of both international and national networks. Four organisations state to be members of local networks (Besides SKOP, which is mentioned three times, GALXlokk, Animal Rights Coalition and the L-Ikel Campaign are listed); it is assumed that *local* is understood as *Maltese* and not referring to a specific Maltese locality. One respondent states membership to a regional network – SKOP – which is the national platform of Maltese NGOs, however, with no local or regional structures in place.

Most respondent NGOs stated they learned about the network either through their work in the field (55%) or through other organisations (45%), or through attending conferences, meetings and the like (35%). Media & the internet and leaflets have no comparable rates, with 15 and ten per cents, respectively. Other options mentioned are Trialog or other, personal contacts. Two organisations mention they are founding members of networks.

When asked about their role within the network they are active in, the answers were diverse and ranged from "chairing" to "not very active; providing support only when asked". Organisations are active at both decision making (chair, board membership) and implementation (organisation of network activities) levels, or participate actively in a vast number of network activities, such as research, AGMs, trainings and conferences, working groups or *ad hoc* activities. Others take a more reserved role, e.g. by forwarding information obtained through the network to own members.

In fact, only a minority believes that his/her participation in the respective network is below average (16%). Nine respondents (36%) tick a moderate "average". Three respondents feel their participation is above average (12%), whilst four persons think their involvement is "very satisfactory" (16%). Five respondents did not reply to the question, three of which do not form part of a network.

Most respondents think positive about the effectiveness of networks: on a scale of 1 to 5, whereas 1 is *not efficient* and 5 is *very efficient*, two respondents answered with 2, five gave an average mark of 3, 11 believe that networks are rather efficient and two respondents believe a network is very efficient (five respondents did not rely to the question).

The most important reason to join a network is the sharing of experiences and information in commonly interested fields and areas, followed by opportunities to start new projects and to build new partnerships. Collaboration and to undertake common strategies and actions and joint advocacy and lobbying are considered more important reasons to participate in a network than to increase funding opportunities, which ranked at the bottom.

In terms of the values most important which a network must hold, a strong commitment (26.8%), mutual trust (21.5%) and a grassroots' approach (15.5%) are the most commonly ones, followed closely by the desire to develop and pursue a common strategy (14.1%). Both transparency and good governance are given lesser importance (11.3%, respectively).

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The question “which do you consider being the main needs / difficulties / problems and challenges that networks face today?” received a multitude of interesting answers, some of which are quoted below:

“Networks suffer from lack of funding as their importance is not widely recognised. The lack of capacities of their members to engage in networking activities that go beyond their day-to-day operations is also a handicap.”

“The inactivity of some members (due to different reasons); the identification of a common ground for all members; and the lack of resources.”

“All organisations may end up focusing on activities that are not so important for the organisation (cf. “First Things First” by Stephen Covey et al.). In networks, the risk is even higher, as maintaining the network (keeping people updated, getting new members, etc.) can take a lot of energy, but by itself does not further the network’s goals.”

“Member organisations already have too much work to cope with.”

“Lack of human resources.”

“Different realities in different localities. (It is) so difficult to meet same needs.”

“I believe that for a network to function at its best potential all member organizations need to get to know each other as friends. Otherwise it is very difficult to find the time and give enough importance to each other.”

“Commitment by people to enter positions of responsibility.”

“Unmotivated members, dominate group over another, lack of common strategy.”

“Time. Members of the member organisations, especially NGOs, are always struggling to find time to network.”

Respondents regarded communication, funding, gaining ground, maintaining independence and time management as major challenges. A critical NGO voice stated that “some (networks) are becoming too technocratic and reflect the system rather than provide an alternative to the system”, whereas a colleague believes that the three main challenges are “(1) members not investing / not committing to the network; (2) being too formal with the members (the actual getting to know other volunteers - not just other member organizations - is not given enough importance); (3) member organisations do not get to know each other.”

Many respondents (two-third of the LC representatives and nearly 41 per cent of the NGO activists) regard *commitment* as the most crucial value for the sustainability of a network. One-third of the respondents from both institutions consider *adaptability and innovation* as vital, as well. Whilst five NGO representatives voted for *trust*, only one vote was given to *leadership*.

4.1.3 COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

For activities organised in Malta, local councils also cooperate with ministries and other local authorities, as well as with NGOs (100%, respectively). One LC also engages with international organisations for local activities.

NGOs engage first and foremost with other NGOs (85%) when organising and conducting activities in Malta. Whilst more than half of the responding organisations also engage with ministries and local authorities (55%), one-third (30%) also works with international organisations. Approximately one in four organisations (23%) collaborates with other actors such as SKOP and other networks, farmer cooperatives, political parties, religious organisations, teachers and educators, foreign embassies, trade unions, university and journalists.

When conducting activities abroad, again, a good number of NGOs (40%) work with other NGOs. One-fifth also works with international organisations, whereas only 15% relate to ministries or local authorities. One-fourth of the respondent NGOs works abroad with institutions such as Concord, Fair Trade organisations and networks, faith-based organisations, Trialog, local missionaries, networks and campaigns and schools.

Only two of the three responding LCs conduct activities abroad, working with ministries and other local authorities, NGOs and, in one case, international organisations.

NGO representatives assess their organisation’s cooperation with Ministries and LCs rather sceptical (18.2%) than positive (13.6%). The majority of respondents judge their respective relation rather indifferent (“average” - 45.5%) (five representatives did not reply to the question).

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On the other hand, LCs regard their relation with other local authorities and ministries as “good” (two-third) or even “excellent” (one-third).

Two non-governmental organisations assess their overall cooperation with other NGOs as “very bad” (9.1%). One of these also believes to have a very bad cooperation with both international organisations and other civil society organisations. Whilst another two state an “average” cooperation with other NGOs, the majority of NGOs believes to have a “good” relation with their counterparts. Three organisations believe their relations with other organisations to be “excellent”. All LCs state to have positive relations with NGOs (two-thirds voting “good”, one-third “excellent”).

Nearly half of all responding NGOs have good or excellent relations with international organisations (45.5%), but only one-fourth thinks to have good relations with other CSOs (27.3%). Seven NGOs (31.8%) are more reserved, describing their collaboration with international organisations and other CSOs, respectively, as “average”. Same applies to two of the three LCs. Two NGOs feel to have bad relations with other CSOs. Only one local council states to have good relations with CSOs, being on excellent collaborative terms with international organisations.

Cooperation between NGOs and LCs

NGOs see a multitude of difficulties which hinder them from cooperating with local authorities, such as the scarce funding opportunities (54.5%), lack of communication (50%), bureaucracy and complicated procedures (50%), lack of on-going consultation (40.9%), limited access to information (40.9%), lack of expertise staff (40.9%) and obstacles in receiving grants (27.3%). One representative considers the “lack of interest in development issues” from the councils’ side as a major obstacle, another is the fact that “local councils are not prepared for development cooperation”.

Local authorities see the main problems in limited access to information, funding and experts as well as the complicated procedures (two-thirds, respectively).

Vice-versa, limited funds are the main obstacle for local councils to engage in cooperation with NGOs, as stated by all LCs, followed by a lack of expertise (67%). One council representative also states as obstacles the lack of communication and of commitment.

NGOs do not collaborate with other NGOs mainly due to the lack of funds (59.1%); similar to the councils, NGOs regard the lacks of commitment (36.4%) and of communication (31.8%) as hurdles for more inter-NGO cooperation. The “lack of time to develop relationships” plays a role, as well as “the voluntary nature of most NGOs”, which “makes progress slow and (one) needs patience”.

4.1.4 VIEWS ON OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT POLICY (ODP) AND OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)

In relation to Maltese ODA provided to achieve the MDG targets, a majority of 55 per cent of the NGOs are concerned, stating they consider Malta’s ODA “below average”; two organisations (10%) find the level of assistance “disappointing”. 30 per cent of the organisations and all LCs think of the ODA level as “average”, whilst only one NGO (5%), rates it as “above average”. Neither an NGO nor a LC were “very satisfied”, the highest response option provided.

Whilst less than one-tenth of Maltese NGOs regard Malta’s ODA mechanisms as “above average” (9.1%), half of the respondents replied negatively, with nearly one-third expressing their disappointment. The local councils are more moderate: whilst one did not respond to the question, two gave an *average* mark, as did 23 per cent of the NGOs.

Likewise at European level, most respondents (all LC representatives and 40.9% of NGO activists) assessed the ODA mechanisms as average. Slightly more than one-fifth of the NGO responses were negative (18.2% - below average, 9.1% - disappointing).

More than half of the respondent NGO activists (54.5%) wish for more grassroots’ knowledge when it comes to assessing current aid mechanisms. A number of NGO respondents (36.4%) and one council representative (33.3%), respectively, deem the mechanisms as inadequate in tackling aid issues, and that the present management thereof is ineffective. One council representative and seven civil society members (31.8%) question the accessibility to aid. Whilst five NGO representatives also criticise aid conditionality, dependency, corruption, the lack of accountability and monitoring mechanisms, only three respondents believe that a lack of cooperation and complementarity are major weaknesses of the present system. Two activists wish for a decrease of bilateral development assistance mechanisms. More general, one NGO activists states firmly that “the whole aid paradigm needs challenging!”, whilst another believes that, “while monitoring is improving, there is not much follow-up on whether the project was successful or not. Measuring success using this method, I believe, would make a difference”.

Nonetheless, half of the NGO respondents and one council respondent are of the opinion that Malta’s situation with regards to development related issues is currently generally improving, whilst nearly 23 per cent of the CS activists and two-thirds of the council representatives believe the situation is stable. However, four NGO exponents (18.2%) suggest that Government’s development work is deteriorating. (Two NGO activists did not respond to the question.)

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Regarding Malta's Overseas Development Policy's focus areas, a good number of NGOs believes that aspects related to education and training, migration and asylum seekers, children and democratisation are particularly relevant for Malta's overall development work. Council representative place likewise importance on education and training, and matters related to children. LC respondents also prioritise information provision, matters related to water and particularly to trade and investment over issues such as health and HIV/Aids.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF MALTA'S OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT POLICY²⁰

According to the introduction of Malta's Overseas Development Policy (ODP), the document "[...] is formulated in furtherance of Strategic Objective 18 of Malta's Foreign Policy which states that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will 'elaborate and action a Policy and Work Programme of humanitarian and development assistance, based on the value of solidarity'" (1.1).

Foreign Policy Objective 18 states:

"Malta will build on the experience it has achieved so far in providing Humanitarian Assistance required in the wake of natural disasters, based on the Maltese people's sense of solidarity and generosity.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to maintain a strong coordinating role in organising humanitarian assistance to distressed areas by setting up crisis centres in the emergency phase, coordinating NGO support and managing the process of selecting development assistance projects aimed at providing long term humanitarian and development assistance. The Ministry will continue to carry out this function in conjunction with the Civil Protection Department, concerned line Ministries and Government Agencies as well as Non-Governmental Organisations as required.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also elaborate a Policy of Humanitarian and Development Assistance to assist the poorest countries, particularly in sub-Saharan and the Horn of Africa, to achieve economic and social progress in these societies torn by structural economic disparities, poverty, unsafe water and poor sanitation.

The Policy of Humanitarian and Development Assistance will be based on the notion of 'combating poverty through development and will envisage contributing towards ongoing initiatives at the international level, particularly of the European Union as the world's largest contributor to development aid. This Policy will also target specific actions and projects wherein Malta will seek to put to international service its particular areas of expertise. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will seek to provide support to local Non-Governmental Organisations dedicated to humanitarian and development assistance. Where appropriate it will also seek collaboration with international Non-Governmental Organisations.

Malta will continue to support its partners in the international community in strengthening the commitments towards increased and more effective development assistance in the coming years."²¹

Principles of Malta's Overseas Development Policy

In terms of principles, ownership and partnership, untied aid, coherence, aid effectiveness and sustainability are emphasised in section 6. Moreover, the overarching references of the Maltese ODP are the notion of *combating poverty through development* (1.2), more specifically through sustainable development (2.1), the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (1.2, Annex A) and Malta's commitment to the latter as well as to international efforts in development. With regards to aid contributions as a new EU member state (NMS), "[...] Malta has undertaken to strive to reach a level of 0.17% ODA/GNI by 2010 within its respective budget allocation processes and endeavour to increase its ODA/GNI ratio to 0.33% by 2015" (2.12) and Malta "[...] is committed to this objective" (2.13).

[Link to EU development policies and strategies](#)

The ODP refers to the *European Consensus for Development* and links to a number of principles that are manifested in EU development policy and strategies, such as:

(a) *Policy Coherence for Development*

20 Vide Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Malta) (Oct. 2007). Overseas Development Policy - An Overseas Development Policy and a Framework for Humanitarian Assistance for Malta. Available online: <http://www.foreign.gov.mt/web/Library/PDF/Malta%27s%20Overseas%20Development%20Policy%20eng.pdf>.

21 Vide <http://www.foreign.gov.mt/web/default.aspx?MDIS=578>.

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“A development policy [...] needs to encompass a holistic view of the development process stretching from, for example, good governance to a fair regulation of international trade, or, from the provision of a social security net for the poor to ensuring sustainability by combating environmental degradation. Furthermore development policy must be guided by such principles as: partnership and full ownership of the process by both donor and recipient, whether in a bilateral or in a multilateral context; coherence between development and other policies including trade policies; sustainability of programmes and initiatives; regulation, transparency and administrative practice that provide an essential framework for foreign direct investment” (2.6). “A coherent national approach to development is a vital element for an effective Overseas Development Policy. Through this policy the Government of Malta will seek, as much as possible, to support the mainstreaming of development issues to other areas of policy” (6.2.1).

(b) *Aid Effectiveness*

“Malta will continue to support its partners in the international community in strengthening the commitments towards increased and more effective development assistance in the coming years” (1.4). “Co-ordination and complementarity of development aid is vital for sound and effective development. Through this development policy Malta is committed to working closely with other donors and the international community in order to ensure the maximisation and effectiveness of its development assistance” (6.3.1). “Through this development policy Malta will continue to seek opportunities to utilise its membership in multilateral *fora* and to actively contribute towards programs that specifically deal with development with a view to enhancing its aid effectiveness” (5.2.1).

(c) *Development Education*

The Global Issues Directorate, which is responsible for international development issues as part of the Political DG within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “[...] will also be responsible for raising local awareness through Development Education. Malta recognises that awareness raising fosters national understanding and ownership of the process of international solidarity, helps create an environment which is conducive to the establishment of intercultural dialogue and understanding, contributes towards the changing of lifestyles in favour of a model of sustainable development for all and increases citizens’ support for further efforts in the public funding of development co-operation and in particular towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals” (7.1.4). “In accordance with Strategic Objective 18 of Malta’s Foreign Policy, Malta will strive to allocate a specific yearly budget for NGDO activities dealing with their own capacity-building as well as local development education, awareness raising and international project implementation” (5.8.3).

Geographic and thematic focus

Section 3 of Malta’s ODP outlines the ten thematic focus areas of Maltese foreign development policy:

- (1) Information and Communications Technologies;
- (2) Democratisation and Good Governance;
- (3) Migration and Asylum;
- (4) Education, Training and Human Capacity Development;
- (5) Health and HIV/AIDS;
- (6) Gender Equality;
- (7) Children;
- (8) Climate Change;
- (9) Trade and Investment;
- (10) Water.

Complementary, the ODP makes reference to the *Foreign Policy Strategic Objectives* 4, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 19, which address the following issues:

- FPSO 4: Geographical focus on the Mediterranean and the Middle East, fostering peace and stability, free trade, the rule of law and democratic values.
- FPSO 7: Addressing *illegal* migration, human trafficking and smuggling, through the provisions of Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement and better border controls.
- FPSO 8: Active participation of Malta in the Commonwealth, especially in the latter’s *Action Plan for the Digital*

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Divide (CAPDD).

- FPSO 13: Prevention of and counter-measures against terrorism
- FPSO 14: Promotion of democracy, rule of law, good governance and the respect for human rights; Malta's role in election monitoring missions.
- FPSO 15: Post-conflict peace building.
- FPSO 17: International commerce and the encouragement of world-wide economic growth
- FPSO 19: The need to address current global issues: energy security and production, climate change, ageing, children and Small States, particularly Small Island States (SISs).

With reference to Objective 4, 7, 8 and 19, the geographical focus of Malta's ODP is set on the Mediterranean region, specifically Palestine and the Middle East, Commonwealth member states, SISs and countries of migration origin, i.e. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular East Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia) (section 4).

National and international Collaboration

According to its ODP, Malta strives to collaborate with the UN, EU, the Commonwealth, international organisations, civil society and NGDOs, and the private sector (section 5).

GAP ANALYSIS

The Maltese ODP states that the Global Issues Directorate "[...] will be responsible for developing and implementing a *Work Plan for Maltese Overseas Development Assistance* emanating from this Overseas Development Policy. This *Work Plan* is to be drawn up through structured dialogue and consultation with Civil Society and NGDO's with the aim of ensuring a focused and effective approach which takes into account current capacities and capacity building in this sector" (7.1.2).

Although the policy clearly states that the Development Unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should develop and implement a Work Plan, this has never materialised. The Development Unit has not been assigned the necessary human and financial resources to live up to the commitments of the ODP. The Unit remains weak and greatly understaffed. Due to the absence of the work plan, the disbursement of funds through civil society is also lacking in transparency and clear criteria. Moreover, any consultation with civil society that has taken place cannot be referred to as structured dialogue.

Whereas the ODP tackles most of the issues that are inherent to EU development policy and strategies (albeit not in-depth), the weakest point of this policy is actually its implementation which lacks any form of medium or long term strategy but also because with the Ministry's short term outlook, any action taken departs from the stated principles that should guide it.

In fact, civil society agents have a good number of suggestions to Government for the amendment of development related operations. Some ask for more collaboration *with* and support *for* civil society: "Increase interest of true partnership with CS"; "Increase ODA channelled through CS"; "Make better use of NGDO expertise and networks"; "Professionalise in Development cooperation, in collaboration with CS" and "Support capacity building activities of Maltese CS."

"ODA stands a better chance of reaching intended beneficiaries if grassroots organisations and small NGOs rather than governments are the beneficiaries.

This is already the case, although it had been mentioned that ODA could be made conditional on efforts to limit/stem the flow of migrants." The Government's work in development "should be inclusive of all NGOs working in development, suggestions taken into consideration and agreed actions (should be) carried out."

"I would like more experienced staff to be handling proposals. I would also like to see co-funding reassessed as most organisation will have good ideas for project but might not be able to raise the rest of the money to carry them out (as the MFA gives 80% of the requested funds)."

Others request more support in capacity building, the availability of "(...) adequate staff to teach NGOs how to obtain funds" and "(...) subsidy to NGOs to have full timers." One NGO exponent requests "more trust and transparency", and that "(...) more collaboration

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and sharing of data and experience” is being implemented. Another is very concrete in requesting “real dialogue! Less political expediency and more commitment to Development. Increase the money available for “right to initiative” and increase the scope of the right to initiative. Treat migrants as people with rights!!!!”

4.1.5 LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

All local councils and 40 per cent of the questioned NGOs believe that their respective institutional knowledge in development issues and policies is good, whereas seven NGOs (35%) declare to have an average knowledge. Five NGOs (one-fourth of the responding NGOs) state to have only a bad such knowledge. It is pertinent to point out that the latter are by and large volunteers’ based.

Similarly, five NGO respondents, representing youth organisations, voluntary organisations or young organisations, think that their knowledge on European Development Policy making processes is bad; one organisation’s representative thinks her knowledge is even worse. Only four NGO representatives (19% of all NGO respondents), but two-thirds of the LC respondents feel to have a good such knowledge, whereas one LC and 11 NGO representatives (52.4% of NGO respondents) state their knowledge on EU Development policies as “average”.

Asked about their familiarity with development related terms - Official Development Assistance, Paris Declaration, MDGs, Aid Conditionality, DAC, the HIPC Initiative and the HDI - the local councils’ representatives were rather reserved. On a scale from 1 - “not at all familiar” to 5 - “very much familiar”, responses rank from 1 to 3. In fact, the Paris Declaration, Aid Conditionality, DAC and the HIPC Initiative were averagely known by two of the three respondents, all respondents are somewhat familiar with the HDI. Surprisingly, two of three LC representatives are not or just marginally familiar with the MDGs.

Even one NGO activist is not at all knowledgeable about the MDGs. On average, nearly 23 per cent of the CSO respondents is not at all or only marginally familiar with the terms in question; only 19 per cent feel that they are over-average familiar or even very much familiar with said terms. Four-fifth of the NGO activists are knowledgeable on the MDGs (nearly 82% gave the mark 4 or 5); half of the respondents are also familiar with the HDI. On the other hand, the Paris Declaration, Aid Conditionality and the HIPC Initiative are not or only marginally known by an average of 58 per cent of the NGO representatives. Interestingly, more than one-third (36%) feel unfamiliar with the term “ODA”, as compared to 45 per cent who state to be familiar or even very familiar with the term.

Information gathering about development issues

The majority of both local council and civil society representatives, namely 66.6 and 77.3 per cent, respectively, inform themselves about development issues via the internet. More than half of the NGO exponents (54.5%) and one council representative also obtain information from other organisations, 50 per cent of the civil society respondents and one LC exponent share such info with their colleagues. Another council worker and nine NGO activists (40.9%) inform themselves on development matters by attending seminars and conferences, whilst only three civil society agents (13.6%) are personally subscribed to relevant journals. Only one organisation seems to provide its members with an internal database on development issues. Personal visits to developing countries (Ethiopia was quoted by one NGO respondent), university, the project Trialog and the European platform Concord were also listed as sources for development news and information.

When asked what kind of work-relevant information is usually most difficult to obtain, respondents listed:

- Up-to-date research, data and statistics (both on development and migration matters)
- Government policies
- Funding opportunities
- Project ‘knowledge’ (logical framework, PCM etc.)
- Expertise staff
- Networking / Networking with the South
- “Who does what?”

With regards to development related information, local councils are particularly interested in matters on environmental sustainability, infrastructure, communication and transport, water and energy, rural development, human development and matters related to social cohesion and employment.

On the other hand, NGO respondents gave little importance to information related to infrastructure, communication and transport, or with regards to conflict prevention in fragile states. This seems to reflect the work field priorities of the responding organisations. Particularly importance is attributed to human development affairs, social cohesion and employment, to governance, democracy and human rights.

4.1.6 NEED FOR TRAINING

Half of the responding NGOs are particularly interested in obtaining capacity building training in funding mechanisms. Others' interests split between networking, project cycle management and training on matters related to development policies. Two respondents also stated that they would require more in-depth information on the Millennium Development Goals and other development related matters. One organisation, which focuses on migration issues (particularly the provision of services to migrant communities), asked for capacity building on "effective lobbying and campaigning", whilst another responding organisation requested more capacity building opportunities in general, and to challenge the concept of "Development" in order to improve effectiveness.



4.2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS:

Interviews were held with representatives of eight NGOs and one local council. All of the eight civil society activists that were interviewed stated to be active members of their organisations, whilst the local council was represented by its mayor. Five of the eight organisations were entirely volunteers' led, whilst two organisations also employed part- and/or full-time staff.

The interviews, all of which were held face-to-face for the duration of 30 minutes to one hour, were semi-guided and focused on six thematic areas, many of which were interconnected: (1) projects and initiatives, (2) networking, (3) funding and funding barriers, (4) capacity building and training, and the need thereof, (5) Malta's Overseas Development Policy, and (6) the future prospects of the institutions.

4.2.1 PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The interviewed CSO representatives provided information on a number of initiatives conducted by their respective organisations. One NGO stated to be "involved in long term campaigning such as about the Palestinian issue, which is on-going. Other issues on which we engage in long-term campaigning about are migration, globalisation, capitalism." Other representatives explained that their organisations are involved in activities such as volunteers' sending, small-scale projects in the majority world (such as Pakistan, Kenya and Ethiopia), participation in Youth in Action programmes, European Voluntary Service, an EC co-financed project on global citizenship education in Maltese schools or the organisation of fundraising activities for members of the organisation to travel in the global south to work as volunteers in poor communities. One organisation stated not to engage in global poverty issues but in the migration field locally, currently implementing small-scale service provision activities such as capacity courses, English language courses or cultural exchanges. The interviewed local council was not involved in any projects but collaborated once with an Italian cultural and artistic NGO in the frame of a project that focused on the daily life of migrants living in the community.

4.2.2 NETWORKING

All of the interviewed NGOs were members of one or more network. Most made explicit reference to SKOP. "From SKOP, we received a lot of direct and indirect help, training through Trialog, seminars which are very helpful for us, we come in touch with other members, we learn."

All NGO representatives remarked about the importance of networks, particularly in terms of information and knowledge sharing and the possibility for practical collaboration. However, as one interviewee put it, "at times, NGOs have same issues at heart but do not manage to work well together. Different methods, sometimes more cooperation is expected and not received."

A number of needs were expressed:

- “Our relationships need to be more sustainable and more frequent. With regards to working relationships, the platform could bring together the resources of the different people and NGOs to be more effective in application of funds for instance, or shared projects.”
- “For best practice we need to be clear about the common aim.”
- “There needs to be more coordination with regards to the activities of the different members.”
- “Biggest problem is time and human & financial resources.”
- “Important is the willingness to work together on common fronts.”

The local council representative made explicit reference to the collaboration - or lack thereof - between LCs and NGOs: “We have no contact as such with NGOs. We, in fact, tend to have more contact with foreign NGOs rather than local. [...] NGOs tend to approach local councils only to ask for funding - which is not possible, anyway.” The interviewee identified the lack of contact and communication between government, NGOs and local councils as one of the main problems. “We have to see and clarify what is the role of NGOs and local councils and their relation to each other. NGOs need to be managed professionally. They have to know where they want to go and what their function is.”

4.2.3 FUNDING

All organisations claimed to find access to funding in general difficult. Only a minority of the NGOs interviewed has engaged in accessing funding from the EC for larger projects. Five organisations have benefitted from the Youth in Action initiative, which, by the time of the interviews, had been suspended by the EC. In fact, one NGO representative said that “we were planning to participate in another project this year, but no funds are available anymore.” Three organisations had obtained funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Maltese ODA funds) for projects in the majority world. As one representative put it, “MFA is there to delegate and administer. Because of this ODA fund we could finalise and carry through our projects. [...] We do not even look at international funding as we have no human resources to access these kinds of funding opportunities. You need full-timers for that.” Some organisations stated they would apply for funding through national art programmes or other small initiatives. Critically, a representative of a youth organisation believes that, “[...] at times, they [funders] enforce us to create structures that we do not necessarily find useful or need, nor are they needed for the project to be successful”, for which his organisation is more reluctant on engaging in seeking funding, especially from the EC. The local council did not receive funds from sources other than the government, and the interviewee stated that the LC would not be in a position to finance any NGO activities.

Funding Barriers

A number of barriers were identified by the interviewed NGO representatives:

- “We have a lack of knowledge on how to access funding and budgets. You need a full-timer and certain capacities to access such funding.”
- “EU applications are complicated and very bureaucratic.”
- “The bureaucracy and the commitment and details required are too heavy for an NGO like ours, where we have a high turnover of volunteers and we are not sure if we can commit to such projects.”
- “Barriers for us are mainly related to the question of what the Maltese government expects from CSOs what to do with the funds and what we expect. There are some fundamental differences. For us, partners in the south are equal, the government is more patronising.”
- “[...] the lack of time.”
- “We need to know more what the specific needs are [need on the ground; assessments; etc]. We’d need more communication and guidance.”

4.2.4 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

The interviewed NGOs had received training mainly by or through the support of SKOP, The National Platform of Maltese NGOs. In fact, the platform has facilitated the participation of NGO representatives in trainings organised by TRIALOG, a support project for NMS platforms and NGOs in which KOPIN is a partner. Other capacity building opportunities were provided by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). KOPIN had also offered training on project applications to one of the interviewed organisations.

An essential problem for a number of organisations was the lack of human resources to attend offered trainings. As one NGO activist stated, “we need to establish structures, based on full-time staff.” Moreover, a number of training needs have not as yet been satisfied: “One training need is how to search for funds and apply. [...] Even though we are interested, our great difficulty is on how to write a project.” For example, “one of our main difficulties we encountered was to fill in the application for the Youth in Action.” Some NGOs also experienced difficulties and expressed their wish to receive “[...] help on how to write and send PRs, build and maintain relations to media.” Another aspect is that of networking: “We need factual workshops where NGOs can learn to work together (both Maltese and European). We need more possibilities to work together. We need more personal relationships and bonding, and less telephone and email contact.”

The interviewed representative of the migration-focused NGO stated that “[...] training is required on proper research on migration. Training on development should help fight stereotypes and the Western superiority complex.” Interviewees also requested more training on:

- Project Cycle Management
- Ethical messaging: Training on the use of images (“We need more discussion about these guidelines.”)
- Creative ideas’ development for campaigning or other initiatives for awareness raising, protests,
- Agriculture (“We plan future projects on agriculture [in Ethiopia]. More training on such issues would be helpful.”)

Whilst no specific training need was mentioned by the interviewed mayor, he stated that “a project liked *MeDevNet* makes sense because you meet, listen and encounter others from other countries, and you exchange ideas.”

4.2.5 VIEWS ON MALTA’S OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Not all NGO representatives were familiar with Malta’s Overseas Development Policy (ODP) and the work of the Maltese government in the field. Whilst one representative stated that the choice of priority countries is a logical one, without elaborating further on the argument, another one stated that, “even though a focus on Africa makes sense, it should not be the logic of a policy to choose priority countries where we receive migrants from. We should see what we can offer, who needs our help and to whom we can give that. We might still select some of those same countries, but decisions should not be taken on where migrants are coming from. That shows a lack of vision.”

Another NGO activist was of the opinion that “much more responsibility and room for manoeuvre should be given to NGOs, who actually run the projects,” and that there was a need for more discussion between the government and CSOs on good practices as opposed to colonialising practices. “Government can help us to become more professional in our work. For those interested, government can be of key help and through that we can be able to get more funds.” In this regard, another organisation’s interviewee felt that the government was “[...] not helping us in a practical way; I also mean financial support.” Criticism also arose with regards to transparency issues in Malta’s development cooperation: “At times one questions how money is allocated, on which criteria, which projects are being promoted. We are still amateurs in this but there is a lot of good will.” One NGO activist was positive about the ODA project funding scheme established by the MFA since 2008 – “The ODA fund helps us to work well.”

4.2.6 FUTURE PROSPECTS

All interviewees had no clear vision of their institutions’ prospect for the coming five years. Whilst some expressed the wish for engaging further in project work and a stronger networking, one representative simply stated that the future plans are “the hands of those active in my organisation”. Two NGO activists stated that their organisation’s respective situation was not stable, neither financially nor in terms of members, for which planning years ahead was close to impossible. “We do see and plan, see where we are going. However, it feels that we need to do this again, to re-think our structures, too.”

The local council representative stated that “we have to plan things, but things that can be implemented today and that we ourselves can enjoy in terms of benefits. Funds need to be given but with more trust. We need to be careful not to replicate work. Local councils should also have a regularity function with regards to NGOs. The local council needs to be also involved in decisions such as the allocation of land to NGOs; this needs to happen in a more transparent manner.”

5. Some Conclusions

In terms of both human resources and financial capacities, most Maltese development NGOs are relatively small in size, which has repercussions vis-à-vis, for example, the establishment of institutional and operational structures, opportunities to build organisational capacities, the ability to engage in medium and large-scaled project work and the potential to plan strategically for at least a medium term.

In fact, most Maltese NGOs are loosely structured, and their operational capacities often depend on the level of engagement and individual abilities of their respective membership. However, it should be positively noted that most NGOs are actually based on volunteering members who are able and willing to invest a considerable amount of their time and energy in their respective organisations.

The will for engagement is expressed in the variety of fields Maltese NGOs are active in, such as education, migration, children and youth, human rights and culture; but also in their involvement in a good number of national and international networks. The latter are considered as important for the exchange of information and knowledge, to establish partnerships and to advocate for joint causes. Limitations to engage in networks are the lack of resources and capacities to process information and to be actively involved, but sometimes also a lack of personal contact as opposed to the exchange through ICT.

The questioned NGOs also engage in means of collaboration with other NGOs, governing institutions and other stakeholders, both at the national and the international levels. However, Maltese organisations find it difficult to engage with local councils, due to, e.g., scarce funding opportunities, a lack of communication and limited information, complicated bureaucracy procedures (50%) and a non-consultative climate.

Despite their members' motivation, many NGOs still lack knowledge, experience and capacities in the field of global poverty eradication. The level knowledge about national matters related to development cooperation is higher than that about international affairs. Most knowledge is being gathered through the internet, other organisations and capacity building opportunities provided by institutions such as SKOP or projects like Trialog.

With regards to building their own capacities, a number of issues were specifically addressed by the interviewees: the prevalent lack of financial and human resources should be tackled by building the organisations' capacities and knowledge to access funding. NGO representatives also asked for training in project development and management, networking, policy and advocacy, or even more specific issues such as agriculture in relation to projects in the majority world.

NGOs have a critical opinion about the Maltese Government's efforts in development. A felt lack of support in terms of finances and capacity building, of consultation and the exchange of information and opinions, of expertise as well as issues related to accountability and transparency were amongst the points of critique. However, half of the activists share a positive outlook when it comes to the future of Maltese international development cooperation. With regards to the focus areas of the Maltese Overseas Development Policy, many NGOs believe that aspects related to education and training, migration and asylum seekers, children and democratisation are particularly relevant for Malta's overall development work.

Likewise, Maltese local councils place importance on education and training, and matters related to children. Besides said areas, LCs themselves also engage in matters of youths, culture and awareness raising, generally not related to international development cooperation, however. In fact, whilst all interviewed council representatives believe to be relatively knowledgeable on development matters, LCs have only very limited capacities to actively engage in development cooperation. Similar to Maltese NGOs, most local councils do not seek diverse funding sources; in fact, by and large, councils are solely state-funded institutions, being the second level of governance in Malta.

Local councils are generally interested and positive about engaging with NGOs; however, their main concerns are usually not related to global poverty but to issues within their own communities. Whilst this might appear to be a rather limiting outlook for NGOs to engage in collaborations with LCs, windows of opportunity could be identified vis-à-vis joint efforts in the fields of education, migration, awareness raising and capacity building.

6. Appendix

6.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A. GENERAL INFO
1) Name of the Organisation
1 b) What is your role in your organisation?
<input type="checkbox"/> Member of the Board of Directors
<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific / Technical staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative staff / Assistant / Officer
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
2) Type of organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> NGO
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please, specify)
3) Activity level of your organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Local
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional
<input type="checkbox"/> National
<input type="checkbox"/> International
3a) Please specify the geographical areas that your organisation has implemented a project during the past three (3) years. (<i>There will be provided analytical list with the countries</i>).
<input type="checkbox"/> Europe
<input type="checkbox"/> Asia
<input type="checkbox"/> Africa
<input type="checkbox"/> America

4) Size of your organisation / institution (*number of staff + volunteers*)

- < 10
 11-20
 21-50
 50 >

5) Areas of intervention

- Humanitarian aid Human Rights Education Environment
 Health Women Children & Youth Peace & Conflicts
 Religion Minorities Cultural People with disabilities
 Asylum seekers / Migrants / Refugees Other (*please, specify*)

6) Type(s) of activities (*please, provide a brief description of the activities of your organisation / institution*)

- Humanitarian Assistance Reconstruction activities Awareness raising
 Advocacy & Lobbying Capacity Building Fundraising
 Youth projects Research Other (*please, specify*)

7) Please, indicate your organisation's years of operation.

- < 1
 1 -3 years
 4 - 7 years
 7 >

8) How many projects have you realised in the past three (3) years?

- < 5
 6 – 10
 11 – 20
 21 – 50
 51 >

9) Please, indicate the estimated overall amount (in thousand Euros) of your projects in the last (years).

- < 50
 50 - 100
 100 – 500
 500 – 1.000
 1.000 >

B) NETWORKING

1) Is your organisation a member of any network?

Yes

No

1a) If no, why?

.....
Did / Do you meet any obstacles in accessing a network? *(please, describe below)*
.....
.....

1a) If yes, please specify the name and the type of this / these network(s)?

Type: Local Regional National International

Name and website (if available) of the network:
.....

(Add more...)

1b) How did you learn about this / these network(s)? *(Choose more than one, if needed)*

Media (internet, etc) Other organisations Through work

Conferences, meetings, etc Leaflets, etc. Other *(please, specify)*

1c) How does your organisation act within this / these network(s)? *(Please, give us a brief description of your participation in the network(s), providing an outline of your role and contribution)*
.....
.....
.....

2) Which of the following do you consider as the most important reason so as to join a network? *(please, assess the following using the scale: 1 = not important, 5 = very important)*

Share experiences and information in commonly interested fields / areas

1 2 3 4 5

Opportunities to start new projects / build new partnerships

1 2 3 4 5

Improving / Building own capacities

1 2 3 4 5

Advocacy & lobbying

1 2 3 4 5

Collaboration / undertake common strategies and actions

1 2 3 4 5

Increase funding opportunities

1 2 3 4 5

C) DEVELOPMENT

PART A / FUNDING MECHANISMS

1) Which are your main sources of funding? *(Choose more than one, if needed)*

- State authorities
Commission
- Private sector
- European Commission
- International organisations (UN, etc.)
- Foundations
- Private donations
- Self-financing

2) Did / Do you face any difficulties in obtaining a grant / funding? Which are the main ones?

.....
.....
.....

3) How would you assess the dissemination and the level of information relating to funding opportunities in your country (Greece / Cyprus / Malta)?

- Satisfactory
- Average
- Needs improvement

4) How would you assess the Official Development Assistance (ODA) amount, provided by your country with regards to the MDG targets (Greece / Cyprus / Malta)?

- Very satisfactory
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Disappointing

PART B / DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

1) Rank the following according to their relevance to the scope of your organisation, beginning from 1=the most relevant to 9= the least relevant.

- Trade & regional integration
- Environmental sustainability
- Infrastructure, communications and transport
- Water & energy
- Rural development
- Governance, democracy and human rights
- Conflict prevention and fragile states
- Human development
- Social cohesion and employment

(We could also add a question relating to our national development priorities – Greece, Cyprus, Malta) –

Greece

2) Rank the following selected intervention areas (International Developmental Cooperation) according to their effectiveness for the developing countries, beginning from 1=the most relevant to 9= the least relevant.

- Socioeconomic investments (construction of schools, ports, hospitals, etc)
- Rural development with emphasis on agricultural production
- Human security with emphasis on actions to combat trafficking
- Environment with focus on climate change, renewable energy and energy saving methods
- Promotion and development of cultural heritage
- Activation of migrants in the destination countries (i.e. Greece), through their participation in programs directed in their countries of origin so as to establish links and “bridges”
- Good governance
- Development education

3) How would you assess your organisation's personnel knowledge on development issues and policies? *(please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent)*

1 2 3 4 5

4) How would you assess your knowledge about the process of European development policy making? *(please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent)*

1 2 3 4 5

5) Tick the following boxes according to your familiarity with the terms *(please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 =not at all 5 = very much).*

Official Development Assistance

1 2 3 4 5

Paris Declaration

1 2 3 4 5

Millennium Development Goals

1 2 3 4 5

Aid conditionality

1 2 3 4 5

Development Assistance Committee

1 2 3 4 5

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative

1 2 3 4 5

Human Development Index

1 2 3 4 5

PART C / DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

1a) With which of the following actors do you cooperate within the framework of your activities?

(ONLY FOR ACTIVITIES ABROAD)

Ministries & Local authorities Organisations NGOs International Organisations

Other CSOs (*please, specify*) n/a Other (*please, specify*)

1b) With which of the following actors do you cooperate within the framework of your activities?

(ONLY FOR ACTIVITIES IN COUNTRY)

Ministries & Local authorities Organisations NGOs International Organisations

Other CSOs (*please, specify*) n/a Other (*please, specify*)

2a) How would you assess your overall cooperation with Ministries and local authorities? (*please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent*)

1 2 3 4 5

2b) How would you assess your overall cooperation with NGOs? (*please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent*)

1 2 3 4 5

2c) How would you assess your overall cooperation with International Organisations? (*please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent*)

1 2 3 4 5

2d) How would you assess your overall cooperation with other CSOs? (*please, give a grade from 1-5 according to the scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent*)

1 2 3 4 5

3a) Which of the following do you consider being the most important difficulties in your cooperation with local authorities, if any?

- Lack of communication
- Limited access to information
- Scarce funding opportunities
- Obstacles in receiving a grant
- Lack of expertise staff
- Bureaucracy / complicated procedures
- Lack of on-going consultation
- Other (*please specify*)
- None of the above

3b) Which of the following do you consider being the most important difficulties in your cooperation with NGOs, if any?

- Lack of communication
- Lack of expertise staff
- Limited funds
- Lack of commitment
- None of the above
- Other (*please specify*)

PART D / AID EFFECTIVENESS

1a) How would you assess the Official Development Assistance (ODA) mechanisms in your country (Greece – Cyprus – Malta)?

- Very satisfactory
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Disappointing
- I don't know

1b) How would you assess the official development mechanisms at the European level?

- Very satisfactory
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Disappointing

2) Which of the following do you consider as the main weaknesses of the current development aid mechanisms, if any? (*choose max. 5 options*)

- Increase of bilateral development assistance
- Inadequate funding mechanisms
- Aid conditionality
- Aid dependency
- Corruption
- Accountability / lack of monitoring mechanisms
- Ineffective management
- Accessibility
- Lack of grassroots knowledge
- Lack of cooperation
- Lack of complementarity
- None of the above
- Other (*please specify*)

- Improving
- Deteriorating
- Stable
- N/A

4) What would you like to change in the way that your National Development Agency operates? *(please, describe)*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your organisation would like to receive more training on *(choose only one answer)*:

- Funding mechanisms
- Networking
- Development policies
- Project Cycle Management
- MDGs / other development issues MDGs – other development issues Other *(please specify)*

How do you typically obtain information on development issues?

- Internet
- Internal databases
- Personal journal subscriptions
- Library or an information centre

- From colleague(s)
- From another organisation / source
- Conferences, seminars, trainings, etc.
- Other (*please specify*)

What type of information required for your work has been most difficult for you to obtain?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What would you expect to find at our project's web site?

- Contact details of other organisations
- Information on development policies
- A forum for the exchange of ideas
- News on conferences, events, etc.
- Consultancy and assistance
- Other (*please specify*)

Add more comments.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6.2 MEDEVNET - IN DEPTH INTERVIEW – GUIDING QUESTIONS

Note to interviewer: Please start off with asking for a description of the interviewee's organisation and her/his role in the organisation (warm-up)

- What are the main Developmental projects that your organisation has implemented so far?
- Do you consider the national and international funding opportunities enough? Are there areas that are not covered by them?
- What are the barriers, if any, that you encountered in order to receive funding?
- What would you change in the way that National Development Agencies are operating?
- What would you consider as positive in their operation?
- Has your organisation received capacity building and training?
- In which fields do you think your organisation requires further training?
- What recommendations do you have for future trainings in development issues?
- What would you change in the Development policy implementation of your NDA/Ministry?
- Is your organisation a member of a network?
- What are the benefits for your organisation to be a member of a network? Which are the things that are working well in this network?
- Which are the things that are not working well in this network?
- Does your organisation cooperate with Local Authorities and other Civil Society Organisations?
- Can you describe this cooperation?
- Which are the things that are working well in this cooperation?
- Which are the things that are not working well in this cooperation?
- What would you consider best practice in this cooperation?
- Where do you see your organisation in a year's time? Where in five years?
- Which recommendations would you give to your government with regards to international development cooperation?



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