

The European Union's Civil Society Facility for Moldova 2015

GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT TO SUB-GRANTEES

Technical Assistance to Support CSO Development in the Republic of Moldova

Project Identification №: EuropeAid/138197/DH/SER/MD-Relaunch Contract №: 2017/388-484



An EU funded project managed by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova



A project implemented by a KMOP led consortium



EuropeAid/138197/DH/SER/MD-Relaunch (Contract No: 2017/388-484)



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List of abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
CA	Contracting Authority
CfP	Call for Proposals
CNA	Capacity Needs Assessment
CSF	Civil Society Facility
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas
EaP CSF	Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
EEF	East Europe Foundation
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GBs	Grant Beneficiaries
GfA	Guidelines for Applicants
JNKE	Junior Non Key Expert
KAS	Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung
KEs	Key Experts
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations





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NKEs	Non Key Experts					
SNKE	Senior Non Key Exert					
Sub-gbs	Sub-grantees					
TA	Technical Assistance					
TAT	Technical Assistance Team					
ToR	Terms of Reference					
ТоТ	Training of Trainers					
WDs	Working Days					







1 Introduction

The present document is developed within the framework of the **Technical Assistance to support CSOs development in the Republic of Moldova**, as a guidance instrument for the Technical assistance team.

The overall objective of the Technical Assistance (TA) contract is to contribute to the development of civil society in becoming a stronger actor, including in actively participating in decision and policy-making and implementation processes of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement with the aim of enhancing domestic accountability and transparency.

One of the components of the TA project, contributing to the achievement of the overall objectives, is Technical Assistance to beneficiaries (GBs) and sub-grantees (sub-gbs) of the call EuropeAid/152768/DH/ACT (hereby referred as grant scheme (GS), financed by EU under the Civil Society Facility.

This Guidelines are prepared as part of **PILLAR 1: Technical Assistance in Grant Scheme implementation/ 1.2 Support in building the capacity of subgrantees**. The activity 1.2 aims to develop the capacity of the beneficiaries of the subgranting mechanisms (sub-grantees), which is established and run for the benefit of small CSOs outside Chisinau under the awarded Grant Actions, funded by the EU Civil Society support to Moldova Call for Proposals.

Purpose of the activity is two folded:

- I. To support the grant beneficiaries (GBs) in building the capacity of the subgrantees in grant management, monitoring and reporting;
- II. To increase the sub-grantees' awareness, knowledge and understanding of EU funding instruments and capacity to effectively seek and manage EU funds in the long run;

The activity is composed of two sub-activities:

III. A 1.2.2.1 - Ad-hoc support to sub-grantees – approach that allows flexibility in delivering of the support services; it may be complemented by other types of support, if and as identified during implementation. Mostly provided based on request and in consultation with the grant beneficiaries, within the limit of available resources.







IV. A 1.2.2.2 Organisation of targeted information and workshop/training sessions (plenary presentation delivered by the trainer followed by group work activities);

The present document is addressed to all experts and personnel in the TA team that are involved in the organisation and deployment of the **Activity 1.2.2.1 Ad-hoc support (help-desk/one to one advice and FAQ) to sub-grantees.**

The purpose of this guide is to provide relevant information on how to implement the activity in order to improve the quality of projects' implementation, as well as the capacity of organizations. It is focused on how to organise and deploy on site missions to sub-grantee's organisations to provide advice and operational support on sub-grants implementation.

2 Background information

The specific objective(s) of the above-mentioned GS (EuropeAid/152768/DH/ACT) are:

• To build partnerships between the government, civil society and other socioeconomic actors in policy dialogue, including contributing to the implementation of the Association Agreement in the fields of good governance, social and economic development and social protection.

• To enhance transparency and accountability of public authorities, especially at local level

The main purpose of the actions financed within the grant scheme is **the provision of financial support to third parties**. Under the rules stated in the Call for Proposals (CfP), eligible recipients of the financial support to third parties are grassroots organisations working outside of Chisinau in any of the areas described in section 2.1.4 of the GfA.

The Call for Proposals was designed in such a way as to allow small, grassroots organisations to cooperate with larger, well-established applicants through the mechanism of financial support to third parties. Grassroots and smaller organisations often lack the capacity to apply directly for EU funding, so the arrangements under the Call gave them access to EU funds, as **sub-grantees**.

The grant scheme is divided in 3 lots, as follows:

✓ Lot 1: Good Governance (project awarded to KAS);







- ✓ Lot 2: Economic and social development (project awarded to Soros);
- ✓ Lot 3: Social Cohesion through an improved social service delivery system (project awarded to Soros);

As per GfA, types of activities eligible for financial support to third parties will be the ones that will cover good governance, socio economic development or social cohesion.

The Contracting authority should have been consulted during the preparation of the call for proposals for the financial support to third parties provided by the grant beneficiaries of successful grantees.

3 Methodological approach

The sub-grants that are provided under the awarded grant actions are a great opportunity for grass-root Moldavian CSOs outside Chisinau not only to benefit from EU funds, but also to be exposed to EC rules and procedures while working in partnership will larger well-established organisations.

Main way to deliver the A 1.2.2.1 is through on-site missions to the location of implementation of the projects (sub-grants) with the purpose to provide operational support for the implementation of the sub-grants.

It is expected that at least the following topics will be addressed during these sessions: financial management, procurement in projects and general principles governing tendering in EU financed projects, reporting, communication, teamwork, legal support, partnership and cooperation with public authorities, development of the logical framework of the project, horizontal aspects (and especially gender mainstreaming).

The activity addresses each beneficiary (sub-grantee) as a single entity (as objectives, circumstances, context, etc.) and addresses the specific implementation needs of each project.

Starting from the problems highlighted by grantees, if any, but especially by the ones signalled by sub-grantees, the JNK TA experts will provide operational support and advice to the experts/implementation team of the sub-grantee organisation on how to approach and solve the highlighted issues, **without acting on behalf of the project** vis-à-vis the authorities (e.g. contracting authority) and without engaging in the activities for which the project is directly responsible.







The TA expert will not engage in the implementation of project activities instead of the beneficiary (sub-grantee), the support being of an **EDUCATIONAL NATURE**, in order to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities.

Particular attention will be paid to improving the knowledge and skills of the people in the selected project participating in each session in a more effective way than in a training course, by providing information and recommendations **tailored to the specific needs of each project.**

General features:

- The session will be *per one project at a time* because the support is intended to be tailored to the specific needs of each project. However, there may be exceptions in the case of entities receiving more than one grant within the grant scheme, but under different lots. A case by case decision will be taken by the TA management team, considering if the implementation teams are different, if there are common implementation challenges for both projects (e.g. avoiding double-financing), etc.
- The place of the session is represented by the place of *implementation of each individual project / sub-grantee's office* (later on to be investigated if it is feasible to held it remotely in case of a second operational support session for the same project, using Internet communication means: not only, for instance, skype, but also some other programmes allowing sharing screens, aso;);
- 3. From the sub-grantee organisation should participate *3 persons: manager, financial responsible, relevant technical expert* in the area in which the project is implemented. While it is true that the core implementation teams are small (around 3 persons), it is to be avoided to deploy sessions with only 1 person participating from the sub-grantee organisations; during the arrangements for setting up the on-site support mission, the expert is requesting to have 3 persons from the implementation team presents at the session;
- 4. In case the sub-grant project it is implemented in partnership, the representatives *of the partner* are encouraged to take part in the session;
- 5. The operational support sessions will be held in *Romanian/Russian* depending on the language of the sub-grantee and of the sub-grant project;
- 6. No of working days needed on average for 1 support session to sub-grantee is estimated at 2 wds depending on the subjects to be discusses and particular issues of each project and the actual duration of each session (including







preparation, travel, the session itself and reporting, participating in meetings TA/GBs/EUD, etc.).¹

4 Target group

Target groups is formed <u>exclusively</u> of recipients of financial support to third party from the grant scheme EuropeAid/152768/DH/ACT.

Lot of GS	No. of sub-grantees estimated	Maximum Duration allowed	Starting Date of implementation
Lot 2	41 (6 CfP)	24 months	Varies between calls – first large batch contracted in Aug 2018, last ones in May 2019
Lot 3	30 (new call underway)	24 months	Contracted in February/ March 2019
Lot 1	150 (call on going) (50 small grants; EUR 1000- 10000; 80 grants of EUR 20000 and 20 grants of EUR 40000)	24 months	End September 2019

5 Preparing and deploying on site operational support sessions

Database with sub-grants

Information on the implementation of the sub-grant projects will be collected and analyzed, namely the territorial coverage, their implementation stage, the CfPs within which they are financed, types of beneficiaries, the size and complexity of the projects and documents presenting information on payment requests, progress reports, etc as far as they are available and further on made available to the TA team by the GBs.

¹ While the duration of each session depends on the needs of each sub-grantee, the estimation of 2 wds is made under the assumption that a session last on average from 4h to 6h;







The information about sub-grants will be analysed and compiled by the TAT into one database with the awarded sub-grants from all 3 projects. It will be updated on going basis, as not all sub-grantees are contracted in the same time. (Annex 1 - Database with the awarded sub-grants from all 3 projects in Excel)

The tables below reflect the status of contracted sub-grants at the end of June 2019.

Sub	Subgrants in implementation and awarded amounts							
Crt	Name of Gb and CfP	Total awarded	No of projects (sub-					
No		amount	grants) in					
			implementation					
1	EEF - Creating and developing Local							
	Partnerships to reduce inequalities							
	and ensure an inclusive labor market							
	at local level	115,895.00	5.00					
2	EEF - Creating Business Hubs	355,000.00	6.00					
3	EEF - Life-long learning and							
	economic security	93,058.00	5.00					
4	EEF - Social Entrepreneurship	441,671.00	15.00					
5	EEF - Youth Entrepreneurship	443,285.00	10.00					
6	LOT 1 Soros	783,698.00	17.00					
7	LOT 2 Soros	549,799.00	13.00					
8	Grand Total	2,782,406.00	71.00					

Subgrants in implementation and awarded amounts

Subgrants according to contracting date

Name of Gb and CfP Q 2	-	-	Quarter	Quarter	Quarter	Quarter	Total
2	2 -	2		Quarter	Quarter	Quarter	TULAI
		3 -	4 -	1 -	2-2019	3-	
2	2018	2018	2018	2019		2019	
EEF - Creating and							
developing Local							
Partnerships to							
reduce inequalities							
and ensure an							
inclusive labor			F				F
market at local level			5				5
EEF - Creating	1	F					c
Business Hubs	T	5					6
EEF - Life-long							
learning and			2		2		-
economic security			3		2		5



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EEF - Social Entrepreneurship			9		6		15
EEF - Youth Entrepreneurship		10					10
LOT 1 Soros				17			17
LOT 2 Soros				13			13
Grand Total	1	15	17	30	8	1	71

Selection criteria of the sub-grant projects to receive support- first come first served;

The preliminary communication process with sub-grantees

The sub-grantees, beneficiaries of the support session are selected in agreement with GBs, based on their judgment of the projects that may face weakness or risks in the implementation.

Introduction of the TA project, of the TA experts and operational support provided to the sub-grantees is made by GBs (each GB to its own sub-grantees through an email).

Each beneficiary will be informed through an email by the corresponding GB providing the financial support that organisation has been selected to attend the ad-hoc support session and that will be contacted directly by the TA expert to arrange the session.

The outcome of the communication between the TA expert and the representative of each selected project, will be properly and operably recorded in a database organized and managed by the TAT. (Annex 2 - 4Plannig and tracking of the ad hoc support sessions template)

Analysis of operational support needs

Another stage of organizing tutorial session is to carry out a brief analysis of the needs of operational support of the sub-grant projects. The sub-grantee organisation will be asked to answer a series of questions regarding the contact details, the implementation status and the difficulties they encounter in implementing the project or to complete the contractual reporting obligations (Annex 3 –Template questionnaire – pre- ad hoc support session).

The response time given to each beneficiary will be maximum 5 days from the date of receipt of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is intended to determine the following:

✓ Relevance for the beneficiaries of each of the themes addressed in the tutorial session;







✓ The need of the beneficiaries (and their project partners, if any) to receive relevant information / operational support to improve the project implementation capacity.

This questionnaire provides the information necessary to focus the information provided by experts on the most relevant aspects from the perspective of the participants.

Providing the on-site ad hoc support to the sub-grantees

a) Preparation of the JNK TA expert

In order to ensure a high-quality standard in the provision of services, the expert will have to analyse the documents related to the GS implementation, as well as individual CfP used to disburse the financial support to third parties, and any other material communicated by the TA management team and/or GBs in working meeting.

An initial informative package was prepared by KE2 and it was made available to the JNKEs. The package is available on-line in a dedicated document repository accessible to entire TA team, and it is updated whenever new information is available.

The answers to the questions addressed to each selected project will allow an outline of the topics of interest, the implementation stage, as well as the details of the problems encountered in implementing the project by the beneficiaries

b) The role of the expert

The role of the expert is to transfer information that will address one or more topics related to the implementation of sub-grant projects, based on the need already expressed by the project and analysed by the TAT.

Addressing the problems raised by the selected projects will take into account all the rules of the CfP (that sub grantees applied to) and sub-granting contract and the current relevant legislation.

Particular attention will be paid to improving the knowledge and skills of the people in the selected sub-grant project participating in each ad-hoc support session in a more effective way than in a course through the provision of information and recommendations tailored to specific needs of each project.

The TA experts will act with impartiality, as well as with discretion, and in particular refrain from any public statements about their work during the support sessions.

c) Deployment of on-site operational support







Starting from the issues highlighted by the sub-grantees, in response to the request for information, the TA's experts will provide operational support to solve them without acting on behalf of the project vis-à-vis the authorities and without engaging in the activities for which the project is directly responsible.

As a general rule, the tutorial sessions will include 1 JNKE from the TA. On selected sessions, the KE may attend as well.

In exceptional cases related to the nature of difficulties and problems raised by the subgrantee, 2 JNKE might provide support in the same support session.

The expert appointed by the TA will go to the project implementation site / subgrantee's office and will work directly with the nominees for the ad-hoc support sessions.

The aspects that JNKE will consider when providing ad-hoc support sessions and default methods are as follows:

- The ad-hoc support sessions will include the presentation of the experts and brief introduction of TA project, participants, followed by setting rules during the tutorial session;
- The participants' engagement mode will involve: identifying expectations; active listening; the widespread use of questions; document analysis for contextualizing the problems expressed by project beneficiaries, etc.);
- Providing confidence to participants will be crucial to addressing the issues faced by participants in the project in question;
- For operational support in implementation, the TA expert will be guided by the rule that a problem has several solutions;
- The experts will involve the participants in the discussions and guide them to solve the problematic issues encountered;
- The experts will ensure that participants achieve consensus on the issues/problems discussed and that the existing capacity/knowledge of the by the participants is enhaced and / or updated;
- The problems encountered by the sub-grantees and the solutions formulated will be collected by the TA's experts, so that they will be a reference for other beneficiaries in the implementation of their projects.
- There will be debriefing meetings at the TA office every 10 to 14 days (the frequency can be amended later on, if necessary);

Important Aspects About the Ad-hoc Support Sessions:







- ✓ Please pay attention to the introductory part of the TA contract Technical Assistance to support CSOs development in the Republic of Moldova, EuropeAid/138197/DH/SER/MD-Relaunch (Contract No: 2017/388-484)
- Please inform the participants that the session ends with the signing of a Minutes (Annex 4 – template minutes) that will contain project and participant identification elements, a summary of the issues addressed, the list of questions and answers, as well as the problematic issues that emerged from the project implementation.
- ✓ The Minutes² will be signed by the participants and will constitute a supporting document of the activity;
- Please complete all sections of the Minutes;
- Please make sure that the questions are formulated as questions and answers are concise and clear. Whenever possible include clear references in the answer (e.g. article in sub-granting contract);
- ✓ If the experts cannot provide on the spot answers to all the questions received on site from the implementing participants, he/she is collecting the questions and include them in the Minutes without an answer.

The main idea behind this system is that on one hand one expert cannot cover all domains, and on the other hand there is specific thematic support provided by each GB (e.g. EEF – business development and Soros – social services provisions and deinstitutionalisation).

If the questions are within the area of support covered by the TA project, the response to the participants will be communicated at a later stage or on the most frequently asked questions and answers list.

✓ The minutes should be ready and uploaded on line no latter than 1 week (5 wds) from the time of the ad-hoc session. Both word version and scan signed versions are uploaded online. If the minutes was not signed on the spot, the signed scanned version may be uploaded in two weeks (10 wds). However, the word version is still uploaded in maximum 5 wds.

d) Record keeping

An online document repository was created to allow easy access to information, and efficient planning and tracking of the ad hoc support sessions for both TA management team and the experts.

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1E8K7msdzsDL8OwR-rKSLBnObw-hDc5fM

² If the conditions on site allow (the expert has access to computer and printer), the minutes can be drafted directly there and signed in original by the participants. The minutes can be also drafted later on by the expert and sent by email to the participants. In the latter case a scan of the signed minutes will be enough







The repository contains the information package for the experts, database with subgrantees, the templates, but also up to date planning and tracking of the ad-hoc support sessions, questionnaires received from sub-grantees and minutes of the session held.

The tracking of the planning and deployment of missions is kept in an Excel file -Planning ad hoc support session.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FjpLETXWvg78QNwNVJf3MI1HAOIZPgTL

Each expert is filling in online the information about the schedule of his/her sessions (columns A to J).

Column K is filled in by the Office Manager when the minutes are uploaded online by the expert.

There is only one single Excel table, available and updated on line, for all sessions and all sub-grantees, no matter whom is the expert performing the session!

The information is to be updated in "real-time" (e.g. after a date for the session is agreed with the sub-grantee, the info should be input into the table in maximum 24h, a.s.o.)

Every expert handling the Excel files are kindly asked to respect the format of each cell!

The office manager will back up the Excel files every week!

Each expert is uploading the questionnaires and minutes from his/her sessions to the online repository in the corresponding folders.

The files will be saved under the following names:

-for the minutes: Lx_yyyymmdd_initials of the experts_shortnameoforganization (no diacritics!), meaning no of lot in GS, the date of the session in the format yyyymmdd, initials of the expert, name/acronym of subgrantee organization (e.g. L3_20190711_NI_Aachen).

-for the questionnaire: Lx_yyyymmdd_shortnameoforganization no of lot in GS, the date when the questionnaire was received in the format yyyymmdd, name/acronym of subgrantee organisation.

STEPS for the JNKEs that performs the operational support sessions

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1. EUD approves the expert and the expert signs the contract with KMOP; 2. The expert receives an initial information package;

3. The TL sends an email to GBs and introduce the ad-hoc support expert (CCing the expert), and also ask each of them to meet the expert individually and provide him/her with a list of sub-grantees (tentatively 10 per GB) that according to their judgment are in need of ad-hoc support;

3. The expert meet the GBs in line with arrangement from above point;

4. The expert contacts sub-grantees and arrange for the on-site ad-hoc support mission, agreeing on a mutual date

The expert asks the sub-grantee organisation to fill in the enclosed questionnaire (Romanian or Russian depending of the main language of the sub-gbs); the questions are about their project and stage of implementation, problems encountered and areas in which they require support; The questionnaire is meant to help the expert to prepare for the session on the subjects indicated by sub-grantee;

The TA is always kept in the loop (i.e, CC-ed in the correspondence, and informed in advance on the planning of the session);

All the expenditures have to be approved in advance by EUD, so after the tentative plan of visits is prepared, it is submitted to TA office and a RAO is prepared by OM/TL; the visits can take place only after the approval is received from EUD.

5. TA expert will go to the project implementation site / sub-grantee's premises and will work directly with the persons/experts nominated for the advice and guidance session;

6. The minutes are gathered and submitted to TA office/ uploaded online.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Database with the awarded sub-grants from all 3 projects in EXCEL; -currently filled in and available on line https://drive.google.com/open?id=1D_fbLhvoxu4y1jFqMokx--Qk26maqazK

Annex 2 - Planning and tracking of the ad hoc support sessions template -currently filled in and available on line https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FjpLETXWvg78QNwNVJf3MI1HAOIZPgTL







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Annex 3 – Template questionnaire – pre- ad hoc support session (Ro/Ru)

Annex 4 – Template minutes (Ro/Ru)

currently available on line

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YQ_09UIcHUBuSbn6ZYJT0EFAUfXE5NHD

the filled in Questionnaire available

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1URyJ-35-YbVvy2sQoMRzk00hgO_7Hx9I

the filled in Minutes

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WjZlIYGTxUNwrTGRcB7p6FPtQC-pIYA_

