

Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Explanatory Note

May 2010

I. Introduction and Overview of the Open Forum M&E System

The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness is a unique space for CSOs worldwide to engage in *a global and fully participatory process towards defining and introducing a framework of mutually shared development effectiveness principles*. It aims to provide a **learning space**, based on mutual trust, where CSOs can discuss issues and challenges relevant to their work and relationships as development actors.

Through the Open Forum, which will be operating from 2009 until the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, CSOs around the world are striving to **build a consensus** on commonly accepted **principles to improve their development effectiveness** and on **minimum standards for enabling environment** where CSOs can fully apply and strengthen their specific roles in development. This framework will take account of CSO development visions, approaches, relationships, and impacts of their actions. The Open Forum will also facilitate **multi-stakeholder dialogues** with and among CSOs, donors and governments on these issues at country, regional and international levels.

To monitor the Open Forum process and evaluate its success, an M&E system has been established. This system is based on the objectives and activities of the Open Forum – which are set out in the performance framework¹-- and are interconnected towards achieving the mandate of the Open Forum. Several phases of work can be identified, each of which requiring specific monitoring and evaluation approaches:

- **Consultations and information-gathering:** The Open Forum Global Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness will be built upon the content and perspectives collected at more than 50 country and thematic consultations around the world. A transparent, inclusive and high-quality consultation process is essential for developing a robust and appropriate global framework for CSO development effectiveness, and monitoring activities will be undertaken during this crucial information gathering phase. Reports of all of these consultations will be collected by the Open Forum Secretariat and made publicly available on www.cso-effectiveness.org.

¹ The complete funding proposal is available online at http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Funding-proposal-Open-Forum-for_244.html?decoupe_recherche=funding%20proposal&lang=en

In this phase, monitoring focuses on the transparency, inclusiveness and quality of the consultation process. The main tools include standardised evaluation and feedback forms for consultation participants, as well as the participation of external stakeholders as observers (i.e. from the Open Forum Secretariat) in selected consultations. Please see Annexes I, II and III of this explanatory note, to see the feedback forms used in this phase of the process. The results of these evaluation tools will be consolidated and presented at the Open Forum Global Assemblies, and will inform reporting to donors and stakeholders, as well as other forums as appropriate.

- **Analysis and consolidation:** In this second phase of the Open Forum process, consultation results will be analysed and consolidated first into regional reports, and then into one single global framework. The challenge of this phase is to ensure that the diversity of CSO views, as well as their institutional and political realities, will be duly reflected in the draft global framework. In this phase, monitoring will focus on ensuring that the analysis and consolidation of results is done in an unbiased, culturally sensitive and informed way.

To this end, the consolidation process will be led by a multi-cultural team composed of members from diverse backgrounds (outreach officers from the Consortium) to compile the regional reports, as well as a consultant team (composed of both a man and a woman, one from the Global North and one from the Global South) to draft the final global consolidated report. This team will work in close collaboration with the Open Forum Secretariat and a link person in the GFG. The GFG will review the final product, assess its appropriateness, robustness and relevance, and endorse it as a final draft for submission to the first Open Forum Global Assembly, which will then be reviewed and revised as any remaining consultations happen or inputs are offered. The first Global Assembly of the Open Forum will also be a chance for stakeholders to review the draft framework, but also will serve as a consensus-building and awareness-raising opportunity.

The first Global Assembly of the Open Forum will also provide an opportunity to conduct a mid-term self evaluation of how the process has unfolded thus far. At the Global Assembly, there will be an evaluation session dedicated to this topic, as well as evaluation sheets circulated at the end for participants to fill out and return to the Open forum Secretariat. The results of this evaluation will be compiled in a lessons-learned document, and will inform any necessary revisions of the work plan or next steps moving forward into the third phase of the process.

- **Consensus-building and awareness-raising:** In the third phase, after the first Global Assembly of the Open Forum, refinements, additions and amendments will be made to the draft framework so as to accommodate the diversity of views and approaches within civil society. To that end, following the Global Assembly, the Open Forum will be actively promoting the framework within civil society as well as with its external stakeholders. The Open Forum Secretariat and the Consortium partners will gather feedback from civil society partners into reports, which will also inform further content updates and revision of the draft framework.

The second Open Forum Global Assembly in mid-2011 will take stock of this phase of refinement and further consolidation, and will ultimately serve to endorse the final global

framework to be presented at the HLF4. In this phase, the draft framework will be promoted and constantly evaluated by stakeholders in all layers of civil society (from grassroots organisations to big INGO families) and beyond. A strategy to promote the draft framework and to solicit inputs on the document will be developed after the first Global Assembly. This will encompass the dissemination and promotion of the draft framework in the lead up to the second Global Assembly, as well as the promotion and of the final version of the framework after the second Global Assembly.

A final evaluation of the process will be undertaken at the second Global Assembly, the results of which will be compiled, analyzed and provided at the HLF4. The Consortium and donors have also committed to commission an external independent ex-post evaluation of the Open Forum. Terms of reference for this evaluation will be developed in 2011.

- **Multi-stakeholder dialogue:** The multi-stakeholder approach of the Open Forum is mainstreamed throughout the entire process. Donors and governments play an important role in every stage, and are consulted on an on-going basis. Multi-stakeholder dialogue-implemented at country and international level – allow for a joint reflection on CSO development effectiveness and allow for the discussion of issues related to the enabling environment for CSOs.

Monitoring of the multi-stakeholder dialogue theme of the Open Forum focuses on the quality of these interaction and the level of participation from governments and donors. External stakeholders will also be participating in the evaluation of national consultations. There will also be close coordination between donors and the Open Forum Secretariat, and their participation in the process will be encouraged and monitored through attendance lists and presence at other venues such as the Global Assemblies.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is put in place by the Open Forum Secretariat, in cooperation with its partners in the Consortium and the Global Facilitation Group (GFG). Monitoring is ongoing throughout the duration of the Open Forum process, with key milestones being the Global Assemblies of the Open Forum in mid-2010 and mid-2011. As set out below, a combination of tools and mechanisms is used for M&E purposes. Monitoring results will be used to inform decision-making, review objectives and demonstrate accountability to civil society, donors and other stakeholders.

II. Actors in the Open Forum M&E System

- **Global Facilitation Group (GFG):**
 - The GFG is independent from the implementing organisations of the Consortium, and acts as watchdog and guardian of the Open Forum process.
 - The Open Forum Secretariat and the Consortium derive their mandate from the GFG and are accountable to the GFG through a combination of joint progress reports and review sessions. The ground rules for the process that have been set by the GFG are summarised in the Open Forum Outreach Toolkit².

²http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/8_toolkit_april_en.pdf

- The GFG meets biannually and communicates via a mailing list between meetings.
- The Open Forum Secretariat and the Consortium partners liaise closely with the GFG, and individual GFG members are involved in the planning and implementation of various Open Forum activities.
- **Open Forum Secretariat:**
 - The Open Forum Secretariat (based in CONCORD) will coordinate the M&E system implementation.
 - The Secretariat provides the necessary M&E tools, liaises with the GFG and coordinates all reporting to donors, the GFG and other stakeholders.
 - The Secretariat follows the consultation process closely, and brings challenges and issues to the attention of the GFG, Consortium partners, donors or other stakeholders as needed.
 - It also monitors in how far the Consortium partners respect the principles that they have agreed to adhere to in their Memorandum of Understanding.
 - The Open Forum Secretariat also participates in select Open Forum consultations to monitor the quality of the consultation process.
- **Consortium Members and Outreach Officers:**
 - The Open Forum Secretariat works with five regional partners to implement the Open Forum process. Each Consortium partner is responsible for the consultations in their region. Consortium partners have specific responsibilities to ensure that consultations are representative, inclusive, transparent and contribute effectively to the Open Forum agenda.
 - They act as link between the national organisers of the consultations and the Open Forum Secretariat.
 - They work closely with the national organisers, using the tools provided by the Open Forum Secretariat, and based on the guidelines and recommendations from the Open Forum Outreach Toolkit.
 - Consortium partners feedback to the Open Forum Secretariat on the consultations, and are responsible that consultation reports fulfil the standards set in the Open Forum Outreach Toolkit.
- **Donor Coordinating Group (DCG):**
 - The joint meetings between the DCG and the CSO Management Group provide a venue for joint analysis of issues and challenges.
 - Moreover, the DCG provides substantial feedback on reports. This intelligence will be taken into account by the Open Forum Secretariat in the day-to-day decision-making and future planning.
- **Civil Society Actors and other participants in the Open Forum process:**
 - The inputs and opinions of CSO actors and participants will be solicited throughout the Open Forum process

III. How the M&E system responds to the objectives of the Open Forum

Objective 1: To develop and promote a framework for CSO development effectiveness

- The appropriateness and robustness of the proposed framework for CSO development effectiveness will best be judged by the CSO representatives to whom the framework is addressed. Therefore, in addition to all documents being publically available on the Open Forum website (www.cso-effectiveness.org), the Open Forum will organise two Global Assemblies - gathering 150+ CSO representatives and other stakeholders - that will take stock of the Open Forum process and review the proposed framework. The feedback and discussions of the first Global Assembly will be recorded in a report that will be made publicly available, and inform subsequent drafts of the framework.
- Following the first Global Assembly, the framework will be published and actively promoted within civil society (i.e. via www.cso-effectiveness.org). The Open Forum Secretariat and Consortium partners will develop a strategy to promote the framework and to gather inputs. They will also seek evidence for how the framework informs ongoing debates and mechanisms for CSO development effectiveness. The results of this promotion phase will be captured in reports that are made publicly available.
- A final endorsement of the framework is sought at the second Global Assembly in 2011. The proceedings of the second Global Assembly will be made publicly available.

Objective 2: To promote and facilitate a learning environment on CSO development effectiveness

- While all consultation reports will be made publicly available at www.cso-effectiveness.org, the Open Forum Secretariat will also put in place a feedback system to monitor the quality, inclusiveness and representativeness of the consultations. Participants in consultations will be asked to complete evaluation forms. Also national consultation organisers, GFG members and Consortium partners will be asked for their views on the quality of the consultation through standardised feedback forms. These feedback forms will be gathered and analysed by Consortium partners and the Open Forum Secretariat, and will inform reports to the GFG and to donors.
- Consortium partners and the Open Forum Secretariat will gather evidence on the follow-up the country consultations (i.e. on initiatives or new networks that could be built thanks to the consultation). This information will be centralised by the Open Forum Secretariat and inform reports to the GFG and to donors.
- There will also be joint sessions of Consortium partners and the GFG to review the consultation process and its results. The results of these review sessions will be made publicly available at www.cso-effectiveness.org.

Objective 3: Engage in a political dialogue with donors, governments and other stakeholders to build understanding and support for an enabling environment

- The Open Forum strives to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues at country, regional and international levels. Reports on these dialogues will be made publicly available at www.cso-effectiveness.org.
- Joint review sessions with the Task Team on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment as well as with the Donor Coordinating Group can be used to assess the quality and number of multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Cross-cutting mechanisms

- The Open Forum has a strict transparency policy that requires that consultation dates and all meeting and consultation reports are made available at www.cso-effectiveness.org. This allows all civil society actors with access to internet to closely follow and monitor the Open Forum process. Complaints and recommendations can be made via the web site or via e-mail, and the Open Forum Secretariat has a responsibility to ensure that such complaints and recommendations are being taken into account as appropriate.
- The meetings with the Donor Coordinating Group (DCG) allow for a regular review of the process and its results. The DCG provides substantial comments on progress reports that inform decision-making and the on-going adaptation of the process.