

Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

A process towards defining and promoting a global
development effectiveness framework for CSOs

Project duration: 1 June 2009 – 31 December 2011

Funding Proposal submitted by CONCORD
on behalf of the Global Facilitation Group

CONCORD is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development. It is a registered not-for-profit organisation under Belgian law whose Secretariat is based in Brussels, Belgium. Its membership includes 18 international CSO networks and 22 national platforms which represent more than 1,600 European NGOs engaged in international development. In January 2009, CONCORD was mandated by the Global Facilitation Group to act as financial manager and programme coordinator for the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

For more information about CONCORD please see annex 3.

The Global Facilitation Group is a group of 25 member organisations that were nominated and accepted by more than 70 representatives of CSO platforms and networks from around the world at the Exploratory Meeting on CSO Effectiveness in June 2008 in Paris. It is an international body to provide oversight, coordination, leadership and visibility to the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. It facilitates, monitors and evaluates the Open Forum's consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue process, engages in dialogues with official donors and governments on the issue of enabling environments, and mobilises CSOs from around the world for the Open Forum.

For more information about the GFG please see section 5 of this funding proposal ("Organisation, Staffing, Administration"). For a list of members, please see annex 1.

Table of contents

Table of contents	3
1. Background and Justification.....	4
Background.....	4
Justification.....	5
Approach	7
The Open Forum links with the Better Aid Platform.....	9
2. General and Specific Objectives.....	10
3. Strategies and Activities	10
Strategies	10
Activities.....	14
4. Expected Outcomes and Outputs.....	17
Objective 1: To develop and promote a framework for CSO development effectiveness	17
Objective 2: To promote and facilitate a learning environment on CSO development effectiveness	19
Objective 3: Engage in a political dialogue with donors, governments and other stakeholders to build understanding and support for an enabling environment....	21
Performance framework.....	23
5. Organisation, Staffing, Administration.....	25
Global Facilitation Group	25
Consortium	26
Staffing	27
7. Risk Management	28
8. Monitoring, Evaluation, Audit and Reporting.....	30
Monitoring	30
Evaluation.....	30
Audit	31
Reporting.....	31
Annex 1 – GFG member organisations	32
Annex 2 – Consortium Members.....	33
Annex 3 – Self-assessment of CONCORD’s organisational capacity	34
What is CONCORD?.....	34
Mandate and objectives	34
Activities.....	34
CONCORD’s experience in aid and development effectiveness issues	35
Structure	35
Governance.....	36
Financial turnover and management.....	36
CONCORD’s members.....	36

1. Background and Justification

Background

A series of consultations was held in the lead-up to the third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-3) in Accra in September 2008, led by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS). Through these consultations, better understanding and recognition of the roles of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the development process and as part of the international aid architecture was achieved. In the political outcome document of the HLF-3, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), official donors and governments recognised CSOs as development actors in their own right that complement efforts by official donors and governments¹.

Today, there is wide recognition that CSOs play multiple important roles in the development process. These include mobilisation of grassroots communities and poor and marginalised people; monitoring the policies and practices of official donors and governments; engaging in research and policy dialogue; delivery of services and programmes; building coalitions and networks for coordination and enhanced impact; mobilising additional human and financial resources; and educating the public and helping shape social values². In 2006, CSOs channelled 10 percent of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries and raised US\$ 20 to US\$ 25 billion in addition to ODA expenditure³. Recognising the important contribution of CSOs to international development and aid, CSOs were granted full membership in the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) as of 2009⁴.

Following the International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness in February 2008⁵ and inspired by the outcomes of the AG-CS consultation process, CSOs resolved to come together in a dedicated CSO-led process to collectively define and promote their development effectiveness as a stakeholder group, in dialogue with official donors and governments. The process, called the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, was launched in June 2008 at the Exploratory Meeting on CSO Effectiveness in Paris⁶. This meeting, organised by an interim group of facilitating CSOs, brought together more than 70 representatives of CSO networks and platforms from around the world, to agree on the future directions for the Open Forum. Moreover, a steering group composed of 25 member organisations (Global Facilitation Group, GFG) was formed to provide forward thinking and leadership to the Open Forum.

During the preparatory phase of the Open Forum following the meeting in Paris, the GFG succeeded in creating a global alliance of CSOs to define and promote their development effectiveness, with an agenda and work plan to be implemented between now and the next High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 in Seoul (HLF-4). The GFG has also set up and defined, together with other partners in civil society, its organisational structures and mandate, and started negotiations with official donors on their possible contributions and participation in the process. Meetings of the GFG took place in Kuala Lumpur (January 2009) and Prague (June

¹ See Accra Agenda for Action, paragraph 20

² See AG-CS Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, page 8

³ *ibid.*, page 9

⁴ CSO representation in the WP-EFF is ensured by the Better Aid Platform.

⁵ This forum, held in Gatineau/Ottawa from 3 to 6 February 2008, was the final conference of the AG-CS process.

⁶ Report available on http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/report_paris_EN.pdf

2009)⁷. This preparatory work was financed by CSO contributions and official contributions from the governments of Austria, France, Spain and the United Kingdom.

At the HLF-3, the Open Forum was officially recognised by official donors and governments⁸. The multi-stakeholder round table on the role of CSOs in enhancing aid effectiveness concluded that the “process merits targeted donor and government support”⁹.

Justification

CSOs acknowledge that there are significant challenges to their effectiveness that stem from their unique roles and responsibilities in international development and in the international aid architecture. These challenges are different from those faced by governments and official donors. CSOs participating in the Open Forum consider that they have the responsibility, as development actors in their own right, to collectively address these challenges and improve their effectiveness.¹⁰

CSOs have already developed a multitude of tools, accountability mechanisms and initiatives to promote their development effectiveness at the level of individual organisations, platforms or coalitions. However, while CSOs have been recognised in the AAA as development actors in their own right and have become full members of the WP-EFF, they have not yet defined or assessed their effectiveness as a stakeholder group¹¹.

In the absence of such a global framework for CSO development effectiveness, the question of applying the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to CSOs arose during the AG-CS consultations. Given that the Declaration focuses on aid effectiveness from the perspective of official donors and governments, it responds to the challenges to CSO development effectiveness only partially. This is epitomised by the way that the principles of the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, mutual accountability and managing for results) are defined and operationalised¹².

Consequently, taking into account the specific perspective of CSOs on aid and development effectiveness, the AG-CS recognised the need to deepen the understanding and application of the Paris principles in ways that emphasise local and democratic ownership, social diversity, gender equality and accountability for results of benefit to poor and marginalised populations¹³. This was taken up by the signatories of the AAA in their invitation to CSOs “to reflect on how they can apply the Paris principles of aid effectiveness from a CSO perspective”¹⁴.

⁷ The reports of these meetings are available online on www.cso-effectiveness.org or on request from cso-eff@concordeurope.org.

⁸ See AAA, paragraph 20b

⁹ The report on the round table is available online on www.accralf.net.

¹⁰ See “An Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness: A Progress Report”, July 2008, available online on www.cso-effectiveness.org.

¹¹ It was noted that “there is considerable evidence of CSO effectiveness, though most of what is documented is at the project or programme level. With a few exceptions, there is little in the way of meta-assessment of civil society’s contribution to development and aid”. See “An Exploration of Experience and Good Practice”, Jacqueline Wood and Réal Lavergne, August 2008, page 1

¹² See AG-CS Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, pages 11-16

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ See AAA, paragraph 20a

In terms of CSO development effectiveness, the AG-CS identified three areas for collective action¹⁵:

- **Strengthening the enabling environment:** To maximise their contributions to development, CSOs need an environment that enables them to realise their full potential as development actors. This environment is a complex set of factors that is shaped by the actions and policies of all development actors, including official donors, governments and CSOs themselves. Conditions vary considerably from country to country, ranging from what could better be called a “disabling” environment to cases that might be considered as role models for others.

While the signatories of the AAA commit to work with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximises their contributions to development¹⁶, the AG-CS also recommends a systematic assessment of the enabling conditions required for civil society to meet its potential. This should be done with a view to implementing improved practices by all stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the AG-CS recommends that measures be put in place by all development stakeholders to ensure that CSOs are transparent and accountable first and foremost to their constituencies and target groups, while accounting to donors and governments for the use of public funds.

- **Improving models of donor support (including both official and CSO aid flows):** CSOs are important as donors, recipients and channels of aid flows. The OECD DAC Secretariat estimates that CSOs raised US\$ 20 to US\$ 25 billion on their own in 2006. In addition, CSOs operated as recipients or channels for approximately 10 percent of ODA flows to developing countries in 2006. Donors exert an important influence on CSO development effectiveness, through the terms and conditions of their support and the strategic choices they make in favour of specific CSOs, networks or umbrella organisations.

Different models of donor support exist, and there are questions of whether the balance between these different types of support has to be redressed. The AG-CS recommends that (1) measures be taken to ensure that principles of effective aid are implemented; (2) official donors consider strengthening civil society as an objective worth supporting in its own right; (3) identification and implementation of a range of better coordinated and harmonised support mechanisms; (4) official donors adopt procedures and regulations for channelling funds through Northern CSOs that allow them to take on their responsibilities for ensuring that their aid delivery is effective.

- **CSO partnerships:** The quality of the relationships and partnerships among CSOs and between CSOs and other development actors, at all levels including local, country, regional and international, are crucial to CSOs’ ability to achieve development effectiveness. Building fair and equitable partnerships has become a key priority for a broad range of stakeholders in their quest to ensure accountability to poor and marginalised communities and local ownership. Improving the quality of such partnerships is primarily the responsibility of CSOs themselves. However, official donors and governments can encourage such ventures by providing financial and technical support.

¹⁵ See AG-CS Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, pages 17-20

¹⁶ see AAA, paragraph 20c

The AG-CS recommends that CSOs be supported in their efforts to coordinate their work through umbrella organisations, working groups, networks or coalitions and that Northern and Southern CSOs work together to define their respective areas of comparative advantage and appropriate division of labour.

As a first step to take work in these and other areas forward, the Open Forum has identified, in its Toolkit¹⁷, a number of key issues influencing CSO development effectiveness. These crucial areas include, but are not limited to: CSOs as development actors in their own right, principles for CSO development effectiveness, guidelines for implementing CSO development effectiveness principles, legitimacy and accountability of CSOs, rights-based development, enabling environment and gender equality. A recurring theme that cuts across all of these issues is the question of how to ensure accountability for impact to poor and marginalised communities, taking into account limitations of existing approaches and competing accountability claims.

To bring work in the above-mentioned areas forward, the Open Forum proposes a comprehensive approach to tackling issues related to CSO development effectiveness. In doing this, the Open Forum will provide a platform of coordination and learning for the many tools, mechanisms and initiatives that have already been developed by CSOs in their quest to promote their development effectiveness, many of them in the recent past. These initiatives include self-regulation mechanisms and codes of conduct to promote accountability and transparency, informal working groups to facilitate joint learning, CSO platforms and networks for better coordination and information sharing and impact evaluation methodologies.

The Open Forum will also provide a political context for these initiatives, as it will bring CSOs together as an officially recognised stakeholder group to define and promote collectively their development effectiveness¹⁸. Because CSOs do not operate in a vacuum, the Open Forum will facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues at all levels, to promote enabling environments for CSO actions. By facilitating a global consultative process, it will seek to feed the wealth of CSO expertise and experience into the international aid and development effectiveness debate, and in particular the WP-EFF¹⁹, the HLF-4, and the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (UNDCF). The Open Forum is expected to considerably enrich future debates on aid and development effectiveness.

Approach

The Open Forum provides a holistic approach to defining and promoting CSO development effectiveness, based on an inclusive and broad consultation process. The Open Forum is holistic in the sense that it aims to not only tackle factors affecting development effectiveness internal to CSOs but also factors that are shaped by official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders (enabling environment). Consequently, the Open Forum will also seek to engage these actors in its dialogue.

¹⁷ Available online on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Open-Forum-Outreach-Toolkit,205.html>

¹⁸ In the AAA, official donors and governments refer to CSOs “as independent development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector”. In 2009, CSOs have become fully-fledged members of the OECD-DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

¹⁹ CSO representation in the Working Party is coordinated and organised through the Better Aid Platform. The GFG will seek to inform dialogue with the Working Party in its particular areas of expertise.

Learning from past experiences and harnessing existing expertise will cut across the Open Forum work plan and will be a methodological approach for the consultation process. By this, the Open Forum outputs and outcomes will be informed by the relevant initiatives and tools already existing within CSOs. By this, the Open Forum provides a learning space, based on mutual trust, where CSOs can discuss issues and challenges relevant to their work and relationships as development actors.

For end-2011, the Open Forum's consultation process is aimed at reaching consensus on a global CSO development effectiveness framework, including a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. The proposed framework will have to be flexible, voluntary and easy to adapt to specific organisational, country, thematic and sectoral contexts. It is expected that the framework will be implemented or incorporated into existing mechanisms at appropriate levels by relevant CSOs, taking into account their specific capacities and constraints (principle of subsidiarity).

To ensure the legitimacy and relevance of the intended CSO development effectiveness framework, the consultation process will have to capture the diversity of CSOs as development actors and ensure inclusiveness and representativeness in the consultations. Consultations will be carried out at country (50), thematic/sectoral (4), regional (5) and international (2) levels, involving a broad range of stakeholders from within CSOs, including senior managers, policy and advocacy officers, social mobilisers, programme officers and M&E and impact evaluation staff. The two international level consultations will take place in the form of Global Assemblies. Consultations will also include, where contexts permit, multi-stakeholder dialogues with official donors, governments and possibly other non-CSO stakeholders. In addition, the Open Forum will draw from other on-going processes and initiatives within civil society to inform its outcomes and discussions.

Discussions in the Open Forum will be based on a broad understanding of development effectiveness which will be refined throughout the consultation process. A preliminary working definition of the Open Forum's understanding of development effectiveness is included in its Toolkit²⁰:

"Development effectiveness is promoting sustainable positive change within a democratic framework that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalisation, through the diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors."

The final objective of the Open Forum is to promote CSO development effectiveness, so that CSOs from around the world maximise their contributions to sustainable positive change.

²⁰ See Open Forum Toolkit, page 24, available online on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Open-Forum-Outreach-Toolkit,205.html>

The Open Forum links with the Better Aid Platform

Coming out of Accra, there are two inter-related global and inclusive CSO processes:

- The continuation of the policy and advocacy work of the Better Aid Platform, led by the Better Aid Coordinating Group (BACG), working closely with the Reality of Aid country-level consultations on implementing the AAA, and with the other specific international social movement networks, with a focus on policies and reforms that strengthen the links between aid and development effectiveness for the HLF-4; and
- The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, led by the GFG, to define and promote a global CSO development effectiveness framework, including a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions.

The Better Aid Platform and the Open Forum are two distinct, yet complementary global CSO-led processes. The Open Forum focuses on how CSOs can improve their own effectiveness as development actors (including by improving the environment that is provided by official donors, governments and other development stakeholders for CSOs). The goal of the Better Aid Platform is to monitor and influence the implementation of the AAA (with specific focus on democratic ownership), while broadening the agenda to development effectiveness and addressing this within reform of the international aid architecture.

On the issue of the enabling environment, the Open Forum will explore how the conditions set by official donors, governments and other development stakeholders affect CSO development effectiveness, while the Better Aid Platform will address the enabling environment as part of their focus on democratic ownership. To the extent to which the Open Forum addresses the conditions under which CSOs participate in the development process, it contributes to the Better Aid agenda of democratic ownership. Moreover, it is expected that the Open Forum outcomes and process will enrich the international debates on aid and development effectiveness in the run-up to the HLF-4. However, the Open Forum will not engage in advocacy activities on aid and development effectiveness in the manner in which the Better Aid Platform will.

While both processes are closely linked to the aid and development effectiveness agenda, their mandates, objectives and working methods are distinct and complementary to each other. To reach their goals, both processes will build upon CSO-led consultation processes, at different levels with distinct objectives, and including a coordinated dialogue with official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders. Because of the diversity of CSOs and the distinct mandates, the two processes will often include different sets of CSOs in their work:

- The consultations related to the Better Aid agenda, following an advocacy logic, will gather policy-oriented CSOs to monitor and influence implementation of the AAA and contribute to policy directions for the HLF-4.
- The Open Forum will build on the expertise of a much wider mix of CSOs as development practitioners, policy interveners, social mobilisers and constituency-based organisations, and focus on the enabling conditions within and between CSOs and in official donor and government policies that are determinants in CSOs' development effectiveness.

Every attempt will be made to coordinate these processes to maximise the efficient use of resources and minimise the burdens on all development actors.

2. General and Specific Objectives

The Open Forum is an international, consensus-based CSO process that seeks to address key internal and external factors affecting the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors. Specifically, the Open Forum seeks to:

1. Develop and promote a framework for CSO development effectiveness based on CSO's own development visions, approaches, relationships and impact of actions in order to improve and ensure their own effectiveness. The framework will include a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. To facilitate significant CSO buy-in and utilisation, the framework development process will be open and participatory, reflecting to the maximum extent possible the overall institutional and contextual realities of CSOs.
2. Facilitate a learning environment on CSO development effectiveness that will provide a space for CSOs to discuss issues and challenges relevant to their work as development actors. In addition, a research report on existing CSO effectiveness initiatives and efforts will allow CSOs to leverage existing experiences to learn from each other and avoid duplication of effort.
3. Engage in a political dialogue with donors, governments and other stakeholders to build understanding and support for an enabling environment for CSOs. This engagement is aimed at resulting in an agreement between all stakeholders, particularly official donors, governments and CSOs, on a set of minimum enabling conditions critical to the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors. This engagement is also expected to promote further multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance the development effectiveness agenda.

3. Strategies and Activities

Strategies

- Inclusive and representative CSO consultations: The usefulness and applicability of the Open Forum development effectiveness framework will depend on the extent to which it is considered legitimate and relevant by CSOs to their work and relationships as development actors. The Open Forum must respond to the many different challenges CSOs are facing in international development and the aid architecture and draw on existing experiences and expertise.

For this purpose, inclusive and representative CSO consultations at various levels, including country, regional, thematic/sectoral and international, will be organised. These consultations will capture the diversity of the CSO sector and its wealth of experiences and expertise. They bring together a mix of different CSOs and professions from within CSOs to discuss principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions.

These inclusive and representative consultations will facilitate consensus-building and be fundamental to build ownership of the process among the widest range possible of CSOs, while ensuring the legitimacy and applicability of the intended CSO development effectiveness framework.

To ensure representativeness, participation in consultations must reflect the multi-dimensional diversity of CSOs as development actors:

- Diversity in terms of roles played by CSOs: advocacy and holding governments to account, research and policy, service delivery, building coalitions and networks for coordination, social mobilisation etc.
 - Diversity in terms of professions within CSOs: senior managers, policy officers, advocacy officers, programme officers, social mobilisers, M&E and impact evaluation staff etc.
 - Diversity in terms of organisational characteristics: size, approaches, missions, formal vs. informal CSOs etc.
 - Diversity in terms of the contexts in which CSOs (inter-)act: post-conflict vs. stable political contexts, strong vs. weak economies, CSO-supportive vs. CSO-non-supportive governments, strong vs. weak CSO communities, strong vs. weak INGO presence, rural vs. urban contexts etc.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue and exchange: The Open Forum aims to implement an ambitious political strategy. This strategy has two overarching objectives: (1) to consult with official donors, governments and other development stakeholders on CSO development effectiveness, so as to build the credibility and legitimacy of the Open Forum process and its results; and (2) to engage in a dialogue with official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders to define and promote minimum standards that are essential to the realisation of an enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness.

This will include country, regional and international level engagement. At the international level, the GFG, represented by its two co-chairs, will lead a political dialogue with key stakeholders of the WP-EFF and possibly other fora, such as the UNDCF. The two Global Assemblies of the Open Forum, to be held in mid-2010 and mid-2011, will provide further opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogues on CSO development effectiveness and the enabling environment. It is expected that political engagement at international and regional levels will help create momentum and support for targeted action at country and local levels.

From an Open Forum perspective, the multi-stakeholder Working Group on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment under Cluster A of the WP-EFF, as well as Cluster A task teams on accountability and ownership and, potentially, Cluster C work on transparency are of key interest. While CSO engagement in the WP-EFF is overall organised by the BACG, the GFG will seek to play an active role on those issues that are related to the specific agenda and concerns of the Open Forum, in coordination with the BACG.

Where country conditions permit, the Open Forum's country consultations will include multi-stakeholder dialogues with governments, official donors and possibly other development stakeholders. However, given the difficult relationships within civil society or between CSOs and governments in some countries, this might not always be feasible. Where possible and desirable, the GFG and its Consortium will actively seek to facilitate and encourage multi-

stakeholder dialogues at country-level, inter alia by working through and leveraging governments and official donors particularly supportive of the Open Forum process and outcomes.

- Joint learning from past experiences through research and analysis: There is broad recognition that there is already a wealth of expertise and experience that must be harnessed by the Open Forum to achieve its objectives. This wealth is reflected in the existing tools, mechanisms and initiatives to promote CSO development effectiveness or specific aspects of it.

Learning from past experiences will therefore be a key methodology for the consultations and cut across the whole Open Forum work plan. This will be ensured by making consultations inclusive and representative and by involving a mix of different stakeholders from within CSOs, including senior managers, social mobilisers, policy and advocacy officers, programme officers and M&E and impact evaluation staff.

Moreover, the consultation and political dialogue process will be supported by research on prior frameworks and mechanisms to define and promote CSO development effectiveness. The research outcomes will inform the design of the consultations and be widely disseminated through the Open Forum's web portal and other means of communication.

In addition, six outreach officers will be hired by the Consortium to promote collaboration, joint learning and information sharing among CSOs and other development stakeholders, in the run-up, during and after the consultations. They will also help organise, implement and monitor the consultation process, and ensure that consultations are inclusive, representative and relevant to the Open Forum agenda of defining and promoting CSO development effectiveness.

- Facilitating consensus-building: In order to reach the Open Forum's objectives, buy-in and support from the largest possible number of CSOs must be ensured, both for the process itself and its final outcomes. This will be all the more important, as the Open Forum will propose a framework for voluntary sign-up that needs to be implemented or incorporated into existing mechanisms at appropriate levels (principle of subsidiarity). Consensus building and ownership of the process and its outcomes are therefore essential for the success of the Open Forum.

To facilitate consensus building and ownership, the Open Forum has taken the following measures:

- Involvement of CSO networks and platforms in the organisation of the consultations process: The Open Forum consultations will not be centrally organised, but instead organised by the leading CSO networks and platforms in a given country and/or sector/thematic context, with the support of the Open Forum Consortium and the GFG. This will ensure that discussions on CSO development effectiveness are rooted in and relevant to specific contexts.
- Outreach officers employed by Consortium member organisations will facilitate consensus-building and ownership by monitoring the discussions and consultation processes, providing a focal point for CSO development effectiveness in their region and by raising awareness and sharing information on the issue within civil society.

- GFG members represent specific regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Pacific, North America) or sectors (women’s organisations, international CSO networks including, for instance, trade unions). They will oversee the consultation process, provide leadership to the Open Forum and give direction for the discussions. Where appropriate, GFG members can identify key issues for discussion and act as facilitators in their respective area. The GFG will play a key role in facilitating consensus-building among CSOs in the lead-up to the first Global Assembly in 2010 and afterwards.
 - Global Assemblies of the Open Forum and High-Level Leadership Forum: The Open Forum consultation process will be concluded by Global Assemblies in 2010 and 2011 as well as a High-Level Leadership Forum at the margins of the Global Assembly in 2010. These events will bring together key actors from the consultation process to present and endorse the proposed CSO development effectiveness framework. The High-Level Leadership Forum will focus particularly on senior managers of CSOs, with a view to generating momentum and commitment for the proposed CSO development effectiveness framework.
- Communication and outreach: Proactive and transparent communication and outreach will be essential to achieve the objectives of the Open Forum and to ensure inclusiveness, transparency and accountability to the broader CSO constituency. Communication is a joint responsibility of the Consortium²¹.

The GFG/Consortium will facilitate and manage a global flow of information on CSO development effectiveness which will draw on the Open Forum’s consultation and multi-stakeholder process, and also on other initiatives and processes relevant to the Open Forum’s agenda. Communication and outreach efforts will seek to inform CSOs and other development stakeholders about the process, its progress and results, with a view to building understanding, ensuring transparency and accountability and involving CSOs actively in the process.

Communication and outreach efforts will also aim to support learning and information sharing on CSO development effectiveness among CSOs and other development stakeholders, through gathering and circulating information on relevant tools, mechanisms, initiatives and research, and stimulating debates on the issue.

In order to make the Open Forum inclusive and participatory, outreach activities will be conducted to involve the largest possible number of CSOs at country, regional, thematic/sectoral and international levels. Therefore, the main part of the budget dedicated to human resources is targeted at mobilising and enabling CSOs to engage in the process. Communication and outreach will be a key task of the outreach officers posted in the six members of the Open Forum Consortium.

- Gender equality and women’s rights: Gender equality and women’s rights are essential features of the Open Forum in two ways. Firstly, CSO development effectiveness is based on the recognition that gender equality and women’s rights are crucial to achieve sustainable impact²². It is therefore expected that gender

²¹ The Consortium is a group of six CSO platforms and networks assisting the GFG in implementing the work plan of the Open Forum. See section 5 below.

²² See Open Forum Toolkit, Issue Paper 6 “Gender equality and development effectiveness”, page 36, available online on www.cso-effectiveness.org

equality and women's rights will be key issues for discussion in all Open Forum consultations. The Open Forum Consortium, through its outreach officers, will provide support on this issue to those consultation organisers that have not yet sufficient expertise on the nexus between gender and development effectiveness.

Moreover, there will be a dedicated thematic/sectoral consultation on gender and women's rights that will develop a specific gender perspective on CSO development effectiveness. This perspective will be incorporated in the intended CSO development effectiveness framework.

Lastly, the GFG/Consortium will take measures to ensure gender balance in all consultations, workshops and meetings of the Open Forum. Guidelines for consultation organisers are already included in the Open Forum Toolkit²³.

Activities

Country-level consultations: The Open Forum will finance and facilitate consultations in a minimum of 50 countries in the global South. This is considered to be a minimum number to enable the Open Forum to build a legitimate and relevant framework for CSO development effectiveness. It is, however, expected that there will be a significant number of countries, primarily in the North, in which CSOs can raise further financial resources to carry out additional country-level consultations in their own countries²⁴. Provided that these consultations respect the key principles of the Open Forum as defined at the Exploratory Meeting in Paris (June 2008)²⁵, these consultations will build and inform consensus-building within the Open Forum.

Country-level consultations sponsored by the Open Forum will be implemented, where possible, by national CSO platforms and networks, under the guidance and facilitation of the GFG and the Consortium. Representativeness, capacity, prior work, and interest in CSO development effectiveness issues will inform the choice of the GFG/Consortium to entrust a CSO platform/network to carry out country consultations.

The set of countries for consultations sponsored by the Open Forum will reflect a number of criteria agreed upon by the GFG to ensure a diversity of country contexts and CSO experiences. These criteria include: (a) countries with weak and strong CSO communities; (b) countries with enabling and disabling government-CSO relationships; (c) countries with strong and weak presence of international NGOs; and (d) countries with a diversity of political and economic contexts. The 50 country-level consultations are to be distributed as follows: Africa 15, Asia/Middle East 17, Eastern Europe 4, Latin America and the Caribbean 12, Pacific 2.

Country-level consultations are expected to take place over two days each. Where appropriate, consultations will include a third day for engaging multi-stakeholders on CSO development effectiveness and enabling conditions. Participation in consultations should be as broad-based and participatory as possible and will be

²³ *ibid.*, page 46

²⁴ A number of CSO platforms are planning to carry out consultations or a specific work programme on CSO development effectiveness. FoRS, the Czech platform of development NGOs, has already concluded a broad consultation process within its membership. It is expected that further CSO platforms and networks will follow this example. The outcomes of the FoRS programme are available on www.cso-effectiveness.org or www.fors.cz.

²⁵ The report is available online on http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/report_paris_EN.pdf

closely monitored by the GFG/Consortium. A mechanism to allow stakeholders wishing to raise issues or lodge complaints or recommendations will be instituted.

The consultations are expected to promote dialogue and elicit CSOs' input on the proposed CSO development effectiveness framework, including principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. The outcome of each consultation will be compiled in a common narrative report framework to be sent to the GFG/Consortium.

To prepare country level consultations, capacity building and other support will be provided via three means: (1) a Toolkit²⁶ including definitions and setting out basic concepts and issues, background to the Open Forum process and recommendations; (2) regional preparatory workshops providing country organisers with relevant skills and tools; and (3) provision of further support by GFG/Consortium members as appropriate.

Thematic/sectoral consultations: The Open Forum will finance four international thematic/sectoral consultations that can significantly enrich consensus-building on CSO development effectiveness. It was agreed by the GFG that the priority themes/sectors for these consultations will be: (1) trade unions; (2) gender equality and women's rights; (3) social movements of the most marginalised (rural and landless populations, urban poor); and (4) CSOs in situations of conflict.

The GFG/Consortium will nominate one CSO network/platform for each theme/sector to implement the consultation. The choice of the platform/network will be informed by criteria such as capacity, representativeness and prior work and interest in CSO development effectiveness. Consultations will include both a CSO-only and a multi-stakeholder segment.

Global Assemblies and High-Level Leadership Forum: The Open Forum will organise two Global Assemblies in August 2010 (in conjunction with the CIVICUS World Assembly in Montreal) and in the first half of 2011. A primary purpose of the first Assembly will be to facilitate consensus-building on a draft framework for CSO development effectiveness. The second Global Assembly will finalise consensus-building on the framework, take stock of the Open Forum process and prepare CSOs for the HLF-4. The Global Assemblies will include both a CSO-only and a multi-stakeholder segment.

A High-Level Leadership Forum will be organised back-to-back with the first Global Assembly. This Forum will gather key decision-makers from the CSO sector, with a view to soliciting their contributions and ensuring their ownership of the proposed CSO development effectiveness framework.

Regional preparatory workshops: Five regional preparatory workshops will be organised by the Consortium for the following regions: (Sub-Saharan) Africa, Asia and Middle East, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America and the Pacific. These workshops will gather organisers of country-level consultations to provide them with relevant skills and tools.

²⁶ The Open Forum Toolkit is available online on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Open-Forum-Outreach-Toolkit,205.html>

Multi-stakeholder consultations and exchange: Multi-stakeholder dialogue and exchange on CSO development effectiveness will take place at various levels. At the country-level, consultations will include, where appropriate and depending on the context, multi-stakeholder segments. At regional level, regional GFG members will engage, with the support of their regional Consortium member, in dialogue and exchange with regional organisations. At international level, multi-stakeholder segments during the two Global Assemblies and during thematic/sectoral consultations will be organised.

The Open Forum's dialogue with official donors, governments and other development stakeholders will be organised and coordinated by the GFG and its two co-chairs. It will involve participation and engagement in international fora and conferences such as the WP-EFF, the Working Group on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment or the UNDCF. Further opportunities for dialogue to achieve the Open Forum's objectives will be identified by the GFG throughout the life span of the process.

Meetings of the Global Facilitation Group: The GFG will gather biannually and, when possible, back-to-back with other Open Forum events, to monitor and provide direction for the implementation of the Open Forum work plan and to draw lessons and conclusions from the consultation process. Upon conclusion of the consultations, the GFG will be responsible for ensuring that the consultation results are synthesised to build a commonly owned CSO development effectiveness framework.

Together with the Consortium, the GFG will closely monitor the results and quality of the consultation process, identify and address problem areas and lead a dialogue and exchange process with official donors, governments and other non-CSO development actors at the international level.

Information and dissemination activities: A web site (www.cso-effectiveness.org) will gather reports from all Open Forum sponsored consultations and activities as well as from other relevant initiatives and processes. The web site will be regularly updated by the outreach officers that are based in the member organisations of the Consortium. Furthermore, the Open Forum will publish a regular newsletter to disseminate key information on CSO development effectiveness and on the Open Forum. CSOs will be encouraged to actively contribute to this newsletter, so as to share their experiences and facilitate joint learning.

The GFG/Consortium will also provide presentations and information briefs on the Open Forum and CSO development effectiveness. Communication tools tailored to specific audiences will also be produced and provided through the web site.

Research and analysis on existing mechanisms and frameworks for CSO development effectiveness: There are already many tools, initiatives, mechanisms and frameworks available within CSOs to promote, define and improve CSO development effectiveness. In order to engage in a meaningful dialogue on CSO development effectiveness, it will be essential to map these existing tools and to provide an initial analysis and typology.

Research will be conducted ideally in the lead-up to the consultation process, but is likely to continue throughout this process. Research outputs will inform consultations at country, regional, thematic, sectoral and international level as well as the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Wide dissemination of research outputs as well as the provision of briefing papers, possibly in multiple languages, will be ensured through the web site and possibly other channels.

Analysis and policy formulation: A mix of resources will be needed to analyse and synthesise results from consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues with a view to developing the intended CSO development effectiveness framework and recommendations and positions as appropriate. Analysis and policy formulation will be overseen by the GFG which will revert to staff resources in the Consortium (outreach officers and Consortium coordinator) or to external consultants to carry out specific tasks. The GFG will also harness existing resources within their constituencies to support analysis and policy formulation.

Outreach and consensus-building activities: The GFG and the Consortium will organise meetings with CSOs and other development stakeholders for outreach and consensus-building purposes if needed. They will also attend conferences, seminars and other events in order to promote the Open Forum agenda and objectives, to liaise with other relevant processes and initiatives and to ensure synergies with these.

Monitoring and evaluation: CONCORD in its role as coordinator of the Consortium will develop, in cooperation with its partners in the Consortium, an internal monitoring and evaluation plan consisting of a combination of periodic progress reports and review sessions. Monitoring and evaluation tasks will be integrated in the responsibilities of the outreach officer and the Consortium coordinator.

4. Expected Outcomes and Outputs

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

- Outcome 1.1: A common understanding, shared by CSOs from around the world, of the challenges to realising CSO development effectiveness.

CSOs do not yet have a common understanding of the challenges to realising development effectiveness and of how to tackle them. Yet, CSOs are more and more identified as a specific stakeholder group, with collective responsibilities and rights. They also face demands to formulate joint responses to an increasing number of challenges and issues. The identification of CSOs as a specific stakeholder group was reinforced by the AAA in which CSOs were recognised by official donors and governments as independent development actors in their own right.

Through its consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue process, the Open Forum seeks to build a common understanding of the principles of, and challenges to, realising CSO development effectiveness. This common understanding will be reflected in a shared CSO development effectiveness framework (see outputs below).

- Outcome 1.2: Increased accountability for principles of CSO development effectiveness.

While some general ideas about the principles of CSO development effectiveness exist, consensus and better understanding of these principles is yet to be built. As stated below under outputs, principles of CSO development effectiveness will be an integral part of the intended CSO development effectiveness framework.

Subsequently, identified principles need to be incorporated into accountability mechanisms. While the Open Forum itself will not provide mechanisms to hold CSOs to account for proposed principles, it will promote and facilitate implementation of such accountability mechanisms at appropriate levels, such as for instance thematic networks, regional or national CSO platforms, global CSO networks or coalitions of like-minded CSOs. Through its global consultation process, the Open Forum will create the momentum to incorporate principles of CSO development effectiveness into existing tools and mechanisms for accountability, and raise awareness of these principles.

Moreover, the intended CSO development effectiveness framework will include good practices for mechanisms to hold CSOs to account for their principles (see outputs below). It is expected that these good practices will inform the design of new accountability mechanisms in civil society or the review of existing ones (peer reviews, codes of conduct, exchange of good practices etc.).

- Outputs for objective 1:
 - Output 1: At the second Global Assembly of the Open Forum in 2011, attending CSOs will discuss and endorse a global framework for CSO development effectiveness which will include a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. A preliminary outline of this framework is summarised in the table below.

A global framework for CSO development effectiveness	
Key Principles	Performance Indicators
5 to 10 principles capturing CSOs' development vision, programmatic approaches, relationships and impact of actions (including outputs and outcomes)	3 to 5 dynamic indicators per principle
<p>To focus on both the objectives (sustainable development) and the actors (CSOs)</p> <p>To integrate human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, decent work</p>	
Implementation Guidelines: How can principles be implemented in specific organisational, country, thematic or sectoral contexts?	
Good Practices for Accountability Mechanisms: Self assessment, peer review, integration into existing CSO platform standards and codes of conduct, third party independent assessment,	

donor evaluations etc.
Minimum standards for enabling conditions Government regulations, legal frameworks, donor funding models, North-South CSO relationships

The framework is intended to be a flexible global reference that can be easily adapted to specific thematic, sectoral, country and organisational contexts, and it will be a framework to which CSOs can voluntarily sign up to. The framework will provide pointers for all CSOs, and in particular for small-scale organisations, which represent the vast majority of CSOs that often do not have the capacities and necessary skills to develop their own frameworks and tools.

- Indicators for objective 1:
 - Indicator 1: A robust and appropriate global framework for CSO development effectiveness, to include a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. The framework will be published on the Open Forum and other web sites, promoted via mailing lists, newsletters, seminars and via other channels as appropriate.
 - Indicator 2: Final endorsement of the global framework for CSO development effectiveness at the second Open Forum Global Assembly in 2011. The endorsement will be recorded in the meeting report of this Global Assembly.

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

- Outcome 2.1: Increased awareness and knowledge of existing tools, mechanisms and initiatives to promote and improve CSO development effectiveness at all levels of CSO activity, as well as increased awareness of how they can contribute to realising CSO development effectiveness.

There is considerable expertise and experience available among CSOs on how to frame and promote their development effectiveness. Moreover, a plethora of tools, mechanisms, initiatives and self-regulation has already been developed to promote and improve CSO development effectiveness. However, awareness and knowledge of these tools and mechanisms is often limited, in particular at field level.

The Open Forum consultation process will bring together the diversity of civil society and the diversity of CSO knowledge and expertise from different stakeholder groups (senior management, policy officers, programme officers, M&E staff etc.). This will help increase awareness and knowledge about existing tools and mechanisms and contribute to a joint analysis of how these mechanisms and tools can be harnessed to achieve better development impact.

Moreover, research will be conducted on existing frameworks and mechanisms of CSO effectiveness, in the run-up and parallel to the consultation process.

Research reports will inform the consultation process and be widely disseminated to inform the ongoing debates on CSO development effectiveness.

- Outcome 2.2: Partnerships to promote development effectiveness among CSOs and between CSOs and other development stakeholders, including official donors and governments, are strengthened.

CSO cannot and should not wish to realise development effectiveness in a vacuum and in isolation from other development stakeholders. Deepening and strengthening relationships among CSOs and between CSOs and other development stakeholders are hence preconditions for realising development effectiveness.

The consultation and political dialogue process of the Open Forum is therefore intended to facilitate the enhancement and deepening of relationships and partnerships among CSOs and between CSOs and governments, official donors and other development stakeholders, at all levels, including local, national, regional, global, thematic and sectoral. Consultations will help build bridges between CSOs and help identify common agendas.

- Outputs for objective 2:
 - Output 1: The Open Forum will seek to finance and facilitate a minimum number of 50 country, 5 regional, 4 thematic/sectoral and 2 international consultations (Global Assemblies) between 2009 and 2011. Learning from and discussing existing tools, mechanisms and initiatives will be a cross-cutting approach in these consultations. These consultations are also intended to bring together the widest possible range of stakeholders, so that linkages and partnerships between them can be established or reinforced.
 - Output 2: The Open Forum will conduct a research project on prior frameworks and mechanisms of CSO development effectiveness, so that the consultation process is informed by evidence. The research project will help identify common issues and approaches and help CSOs identify potential partners or approaches to promote their development effectiveness.
- Indicators for objective 2:
 - Indicator 1: 50 country, 5 regional, 4 thematic/sectoral and 2 international consultations that are to be conducted in 2009 and 2010. These consultations will be documented through reports, highlighting the key conclusions and recommendations to inform the global CSO development effectiveness framework. Consultation reports are expected to inform further discussion on CSO development effectiveness as appropriate within and beyond the Open Forum.
 - Indicator 2: One Open Forum sponsored research project on prior frameworks and mechanisms of CSO development effectiveness will be conducted. The final outcome will be widely disseminated to inform the design of and discussions during the consultation process.
 - Indicator 3: 60 initiatives related to CSO development effectiveness acknowledge the contribution of the Open Forum to their processes. The

outreach officers in the Consortium member organisations will gather evidence on this indicator.

- Indicator 4: Positive evaluations of Open Forum consultations by participants against a set of criteria (methodology and criteria are to be defined).

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

- Outcome 3.1: Understanding and support among official donors, governments and possibly other development stakeholders for an enabling environment for CSO actions is built.

CSO development effectiveness is not only affected by internal CSO issues, policies and practices, but also by conditions set by other development actors (terms and conditions of donor support and operations, legal frameworks established by developing country governments etc.). The environment CSOs work in is a complex set of political, cultural, social, economic and environmental factors.

The AG-CS recommends a “systematic assessment of the enabling conditions required for civil society to meet its potential in different countries”²⁷. The Open Forum will provide such an assessment by mobilising CSOs through its country, thematic, sectoral and international level consultations on CSO development effectiveness.

These consultations will include multi-stakeholder dialogues on minimum standards for enabling conditions. In addition, the GFG will engage and participate in various fora and conferences at the international level (notably the WP-EFF, the multi-stakeholder Working Group on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, UNDCF) to facilitate the promotion of enabling environments for CSOs.

This engagement is aimed at resulting in an agreement between all stakeholders, particularly governments and CSOs, on a set of minimum standards for enabling conditions critical to the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors. It is also expected to promote further CSO-government collaboration to advance the development effectiveness agenda.

- Outputs for objective 3:
 - Output 1: A proposal for minimum standards for an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder endorsement at the HLF-4. The CSO consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues of the Open Forum, as well as engagement in the Working Group on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, are expected to permit preparation and consensus-building on such a proposal in a CSO-led multi-stakeholder process. The Open Forum will seek to get endorsement of this document at the HLF-4 and by CSOs.

²⁷ See AG-CS Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, page 18

- Output 2: Engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogues and negotiations in the lead-up to and at the HLF-4 and in other fora that will shape the aid and development effectiveness agenda after 2010.
- Indicators for objective 3:
 - Indicator 1: A proposal for minimum standards for an enabling environment is officially submitted for multi-stakeholder endorsement by the Open Forum to governments and official donors at the HLF-4.
 - Indicator 2: Participation of governments and official donors in at least 50 percent of all Open Forum consultations (multi-stakeholder segments).
 - Indicator 3: The Open Forum is acknowledged by at least 75 percent of the governments and official donors represented in the OECD DAC's Working Party on Aid Effectiveness as a contribution to the implementation of Article 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action.

Performance framework

Specific objective	Indicator	Means of verification	Assumptions and risks
Objective 1: To develop and promote a framework for CSO development effectiveness	<p>A robust and appropriate global framework for CSO development effectiveness, to include a set of principles, indicators, implementation guidelines, good practices for accountability mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions</p> <p>Framework endorsed by the second Open Forum Global Assembly in 2011 that will be attended by representatives from about 130 CSO platforms and networks</p>	<p>Framework published</p> <p>External evaluation reports²⁸</p> <p>Published report from the second Global Assembly of the Open Forum in 2011</p>	<p>The CSOs participating in the Open Forum remain engaged at the country, regional and international levels</p> <p>Sufficient funding and time to carry out an inclusive consultation process is obtained</p> <p>Relevant stakeholders, including CSOs, governments, academia, private donors and multilateral organisations respond to and engage in the consultation process</p>
Objective 2: To promote and facilitate a learning environment on CSO development effectiveness	<p>50 country, 5 regional, 4 thematic/sectoral and 2 international consultations implemented effectively in 2009 and 2010</p> <p>One Open Forum sponsored research project on prior frameworks and mechanisms of CSO development effectiveness conducted</p> <p>60 initiatives related to CSO development effectiveness acknowledge the contribution of the Open Forum to their processes</p>	<p>Reports on multi-stakeholder and CSO consultations and meetings</p> <p>External evaluation reports</p> <p>Research reports produced</p> <p>Activity reports of Consortium</p> <p>External evaluation reports</p>	<p>CSOs continue to prioritise work on defining and promoting their effectiveness as development actors</p> <p>Availability of funding to support Open Forum research project and consultation process</p>

²⁸ These reports will be produced through an independent external ex-post evaluation of the Open Forum, as mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding between donors and CSOs for promoting development effectiveness. This external evaluation will be in addition to internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. See also section "Monitoring and Evaluation" below.

	Positive evaluations of Open Forum consultations by participants against a set of criteria (methodology and criteria are to be defined)	Evaluation reports on multi-stakeholder and CSO consultations and meetings	
Objective 3: Engage in a political dialogue with donors, governments and other stakeholders to build understanding and support for an enabling environment	<p>A proposal for minimum standards for an enabling environment is officially submitted for multi-stakeholder endorsement by the Open Forum to governments and official donors at the HLF-4</p> <p>Participation of governments and official donors in at least 50 percent of all Open Forum consultations (multi-stakeholder segments)</p> <p>The Open Forum is acknowledged by at least 75 percent of the governments and official donors represented in the OECD DAC's Working Party on Aid Effectiveness as a contribution to the implementation of Article 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action</p>	<p>Proposal document published and submitted</p> <p>Reports on multi-stakeholder and CSO consultations and meetings</p> <p>Outcomes of meetings of the WP-EFF and the Task Team on Civil Society and Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment in Cluster A</p> <p>HLF-4 Declaration adopted by governments and donors</p> <p>External evaluation reports</p>	<p>Official donors and governments, in particular from the global South, show an interest in and prioritise dialogue with CSOs on development effectiveness</p> <p>Country contexts conducive to open dialogue between governments, donors and CSOs</p> <p>Governments and official donors carry out a work plan for the Task Team on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, within Cluster A, that enables participation and outcomes from multi-stakeholder processes within the Open Forum</p>

5. Organisation, Staffing, Administration

Global Facilitation Group

Mandate and composition: The Global Facilitation Group is a group of 25 member organisations that were nominated and accepted by more than 70 representatives from CSO platforms and networks from around the world at the Exploratory Meeting on CSO Effectiveness in June 2008 in Paris. It is an international body to provide overview, coordination, leadership and visibility to the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. It facilitates, monitors and evaluates the Open Forum's consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue process, engages in multi-stakeholder dialogues with official donors and governments on the issue of enabling environments, and mobilises CSOs from around the world for the Open Forum²⁹.

Representativeness: To ensure the highest possible degree of representativeness and to capture the diversity of CSO voices, the GFG is composed of a fixed number of CSO networks or platforms per world region and sector: 4 representatives from Africa, 4 from Asia, 3 from Europe, 3 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 2 from North America, 1 from the Pacific region, 1 from the Middle East, 1 CSO network representing women's organisations and 6 CSO networks representing international CSO networks not affiliated with a specific world region. Moreover, GFG membership reflects a wide variety of different types of CSOs, including NGOs, trade unions, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, grass roots organisations and social movements, advocacy CSOs, service delivery CSOs etc. Membership in the GFG is organisational, not individual, and GFG members represent their world region or sector. Should one GFG member step down, the GFG will co-opt, upon consultations, a CSO network or platform from the same sector or world region to replace the initial member.

Capacity: GFG members have been selected with a view to creating a representative body considered legitimate by CSOs to oversee a global CSO-led process and to engage on their behalf in multi-stakeholder dialogues on CSO development effectiveness. Each of the 25 GFG member organisations has shown capacity in at least one of the areas listed below:

- **Mobilisation and outreach:** Most GFG members are networks and platforms of CSOs that can leverage their existing structures and contacts to engage their constituencies in the Open Forum. They have extensive networks with well established communication procedures and can easily reach larger numbers of CSOs, including small-scale CSOs, on the ground.
- **Analysis and policy formulation:** Many GFG members have strong capacities to engage in analysis and policy formulation, backed, in some cases, by a track record of policy engagement in the aid effectiveness agenda. They have the ability to provide substantial input into the debates within the Open Forum, including by articulating the key messages of the constituency that they represent in the GFG.
- **Human or technical resources for operational tasks:** While operational tasks fall overall under the remit of the Consortium, many GFG members have the capacity to provide substantial human or technical resources to carry out specific operations, such as for instance the preparation of draft documents for decision-making or the provision of translations.

²⁹ See the terms of reference of the Global Facilitation Group on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-Groupe-de-facilitation-global-.html>

- Participation in meetings: GFG members have the capacity to appoint their delegates to ensure participation in the biannual GFG meetings, other Open Forum events and other meetings, conferences or seminars as appropriate.

Co-chairs: Deepali Sood (Plan International) and Azra Talat Sayeed (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development) were nominated and accepted as co-chairs by the members of the GFG in April 2009. Their term is limited to one year (renewable). Their mandate is to represent the GFG vis-à-vis non-CSO stakeholders, call for and chair GFG meetings and ensure full accountability of the Consortium to the GFG. They also provide leadership in the multi-stakeholder dialogue with official donors and governments, and have a role in ensuring coordination, coherence and synergies with the Better Aid Platform.

Working methods: The GFG meets biannually, back-to-back with other events when possible. In between meetings, decision-making, information exchange and discussions are organised via conference calls or e-mail exchange.

Consortium

A Consortium of six CSOs was mandated by the Global Facilitation Group at their meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 20 and 21 January 2009 to implement and manage the Open Forum work programme, including fund raising, fund management, outreach and the provision of administrative, technical and logistical support to the GFG. The Consortium includes the following organisations:

- AACC - All Africa Conference of Churches
- APRN - Asia Pacific Research Network
- CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- CONCORD - European NGO Confederation for Development and Relief
- InterAction – American Council for Voluntary International Action
- ALOP - Latin American Association of Development Organisations

Except for All Africa Conference of Churches, these organisations are also members of the GFG. The Consortium is fully accountable to the GFG and its co-chairs, through a combination of periodic progress reports and joint GFG-Consortium meetings.

Relations and responsibilities within the Consortium are guided by a Memorandum of Understanding³⁰ (MOU) that was adopted at a meeting among Consortium members on 16 April 2009 in Washington, D.C. This MOU sets out principles, reporting obligations as well as guidelines for financial and programmatic management.

Together, the six Consortium members cover outreach activities to all types of CSOs working in development around the globe. Each Consortium member, with the exception of CIVICUS, is responsible for a specific world region. CIVICUS, being an international network, will take responsibility for reaching out to the international headquarters of global CSO networks.

Consortium members will work on the following areas within their respective region: (1) support for the consultation processes, (2) outreach to all types of CSOs in development, (3) communication, (4) support of political dialogue efforts, (5) fund raising and fund management, and (6) monitoring and evaluation.

³⁰ Available online on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Consortium-of-supporting,216.html>.

CONCORD acts as the lead organisation of the Consortium and in this capacity coordinates all activities of the Consortium. CONCORD is also responsible for facilitating the full involvement of the GFG co-chairs in the meetings and operations of the Consortium. In addition, CONCORD coordinates fund raising and fund management. Furthermore, CONCORD will be the contracting organisation for CSOs and official donors. When channelling funds to Consortium partners, CONCORD will enter into bilateral agreements with these partners that will set out the purpose of the transfer and reporting requirements.

Staffing

The Open Forum will fund eight full-time staff equivalents between June 2009 and June 2010 and five full-time staff equivalents between July 2010 and December 2011.

Outreach officers: Each Consortium member organisation will have one outreach officer (one staff equivalent), working full-time during the first 12 months of activities (June 2009 to June 2010), and part-time afterwards (June 2010 to December 2011). Outreach officers will manage and support the consultation process in their respective region, help support regional GFG members in their political dialogue with regional organisations on CSO development effectiveness, facilitate information sharing and joint learning among CSOs, contribute to the internal monitoring and evaluation process and be responsible for communication. Outreach officers will be employees of the respective Consortium member, but coordinate their work closely with their colleagues in other Consortium members and in particular the Consortium coordinator.

Consortium Coordinator: The Consortium Coordinator, employed by CONCORD, will enable the Consortium to deliver the work plan, oversee administrative support to the GFG, coordinate the implementation of the Open Forum work plan, raise funds for the Open Forum, assist the GFG in facilitating political dialogue, prepare and monitor contracts with donors, coordinate the internal monitoring and evaluation process and report to donors and stakeholders on the Open Forum.

Financial and administrative officer: CONCORD, as lead agency of the Consortium in charge of fund raising, fund management and financial reporting, will employ a financial manager to ensure the transparent management of funds.

7. Risk Management

Key Risk factors	Corrective measures
Accountability of Consortium members in coordinating and/or carrying out national consultations.	An on-line complaints mechanism will be created. Organisations will be made aware of this mechanism in national consultation documents and through the Open Forum website. Complaints will go directly to the co-chairs of the GFG. As appropriate, co-chairs will bring complaints to the attention of the relevant Consortium member and the members of the GFG. Co-chairs will be responsible for ensuring that complaints are appropriately responded to.
The decision of a Consortium organisation to withdraw from its role.	An MoU signed by all Consortium members and approved by the GFG details the responsibilities of Consortium members. Each Consortium member is therefore made thoroughly aware from the outset of the scope of responsibilities being assumed. Nevertheless, should a Consortium member decide to withdraw from its role then CONCORD, as the Open Forum Secretariat, will take temporary responsibility for the work as well as launch a process to identify a replacement Consortium organisation.
Exchange rate fluctuations that decrease the value of the original amount when it is transferred from one currency to another.	The likelihood of exchange rate fluctuation is inevitable. It is the extent of the fluctuation that is unknown at this point. Resource transfers for operations will be closely monitored to reduce the extent of any decrease in the value of the original amount. The Open Forum will also rely on participant CSOs' in-kind contributions to fill the financial gaps that might result from these transactions. Favourable and unfavourable fluctuations will partly mitigate the overall impact of exchange rate fluctuations.
Non-consensus among CSOs	The diversity of CSOs in terms of their roles, missions and approaches, as well as their big numbers require a careful approach to consensus-building in the Open Forum. Therefore, an inclusive consultation process at various levels, facilitated by a representative Global Facilitation Group, is put in place to involve the biggest number possible of CSOs in the development of the framework right from the start. Moreover, in the run-up to the Global Assemblies in 2010 and 2011, the GFG and the Consortium will facilitate and supervise a global consensus-building process on the framework that is informed by the outcomes of the different consultations.
Insufficient participation of non-CSO stakeholders, including government, academia, private donors, and multi-lateral organisations, in the multi-stakeholder	The Open Forum is purposively considering various policy environments for its national consultations as a way to remain true to the diversity of contexts in which CSOs operate. Outreach efforts to communicate the purpose of the Open Forum and to engage multi-stakeholders in dialogue will begin in advance of national consultations. Outreach to the governments of

<p>processes at the national and global levels.</p>	<p>developing countries will be particularly critical to the dialogue on an enabling environment for CSO operations. Where possible, stakeholders will be encouraged to participate jointly in a multi-stakeholder dialogue as part of the national consultation process, as well as the first Global Assembly in 2010. In national contexts not conducive to joint participation, other approaches to soliciting multi-stakeholder engagement will be considered such as a one-day consultation specifically for non-CSO stakeholders.</p>
<p>Insufficient funding for the Open Forum process.</p>	<p>CSO in-kind contributions and additional fundraising from other sources, including additional government donors, foundations and international CSOs. Should fund raising efforts fail, the Consortium will propose cuts in programme activities that will have to be endorsed by the Global Facilitation Group.</p>

8. Monitoring, Evaluation, Audit and Reporting

Implementation of the Open Forum process is based on eight principles agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Consortium of supporting organisations. These principles are: shared values, joint commitment, equitable power relationships, mutual accountability, shared ownership, mutual respect and trust, balanced flow of information, and operational clarity³¹.

The monitoring and evaluation approach of the Open Forum will include review and discussion sessions on the overall performance of the implementation of the Open Forum's work plan, at both the global and regional levels. Review sessions will be open to members of the GFG and the results of these reviews will be made public. This internal monitoring and evaluation approach will feed into an independent external evaluation of the overall Open Forum work plan for the GFG and all Open Forum donors.

Monitoring

Consortium members, the Consortium management committee and GFG members will oversee the implementation of the Open Forum work plans (individual and collective). Monitoring will be integrated in the tasks of the Consortium coordinator and the outreach officers that will be hired and deployed for the Open Forum.

The process for monitoring will include periodic individual programmatic and financial reports tied to fund disbursement and periodic collective progress reports to the GFG and at Global Assemblies. Throughout the process decisions and actions are subject to review by the GFG. Review and decisions will take place electronically and in bi-annual GFG meetings.

There will also be review and discussion sessions on the overall performance of the implementation of the work plan of the Open Forum at global and regional levels. These review sessions will be open to members of the GFG. The results of these reviews will be made public.

Evaluation

Internal: Consortium members, the Consortium management committee and GFG members will conduct periodic reviews based on compliance with Consortium principles and individual and collective activity schedules. CONCORD, as the lead organisation, will organise these reviews which will take into account outcome assessments as well as stakeholder satisfaction. Evaluation will be integrated in the tasks of the Consortium coordinator and the outreach officers that will be hired and deployed for the Open Forum³².

External: An independent ex-post assessment of the Open Forum objectives, expected results, and commitments to donors will be conducted in line with provisions in the "Memorandum of Understanding between donors and CSOs for promoting development effectiveness: CSO initiatives towards the fourth High-Level

³¹ Memorandum of Understanding is available online on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/Consortium-of-supporting,216.html>

³² See Memorandum of Understanding of the Consortium of supporting organisations, paragraph 8

Forum (2011)" (paragraph 47) and the Memorandum of Understanding of the Consortium of supporting organisations (paragraph 8).

Audit

Accounts of all Consortium members will be annually audited according to international standards and in line with the agreed Memorandum of Understanding with donors.

Reporting

The lead organisation, CONCORD, is responsible for producing a consolidated report for all donors on an annual basis in line with the agreed Memorandum of Understanding with donors, and based on the reports from Consortium members.

Annex 1 – GFG member organisations

Africa (4)	
Federation of NGO Platforms of Mali (FECONG)	www.fecong.org
African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD)	www.afrodad.org
Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR)	www.cspr.org.zm
Network of National NGO Platforms of Western and Central Africa (REPAOC)	www.repaoc.org
Asia (4)	
South Asian Network for Social and Agricultural Development (SANSAD)	www.sansad.org.in
IBON International (IBON)	international.ibon.org
Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)	www.aprnet.org
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)	www.foodsov.org
Europe (3)	
European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)	www.concordeurope.org
Nordic+ Group	www.kepa.fi
European Union Presidency Group	www.fors.cz
Latin America and the Caribbean (3)	
Latin American Association of Development Organisations (ALOP)	www.alop.or.cr
Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social Bolivia (UNITAS)	www.redunitas.org
Coordinadora Civil de Nicaragua (CC)	www.ccer.org.ni
Middle East and North Africa (1)	
Arab NGOs Network for Development (ANND)	www.annd.org
North America (2)	
InterAction - American Council for Voluntary International Action	www.interaction.org
Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)	www.ccic.ca
Pacific (1)	
Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)	www.acfid.asn.au
International CSO Networks (6)	
Plan International	www.plan-international.org
CARE International	www.care-international.org
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	www.ituc-csi.org
Action by Churches Together (ACT)	www.actdevelopment.org
Caritas Internationalis - International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE)	www.caritas.org www.cidse.org
CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation	www.civicus.org
Women's Organisations (1)	
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APFWLD)	www.apwld.org

Annex 2 – Consortium Members

Organisation	Remit
All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)	Africa
Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)	Asia
European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)	Europe
InterAction – American Council for Voluntary International Action	North America and Pacific
Latin American Association of Development Organisations (ALOP)	Latin America and the Caribbean
CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation	International NGOs

Annex 3 – Self-assessment of CONCORD's organisational capacity

What is CONCORD?

CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development, is a registered non-profit organisation under Belgian law whose Secretariat is based at 10 square Ambiorix, in 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Founded by 28 NGO networks and platforms in January 2003, its membership has since risen to 40, including 18 international NGO networks and 22 national NGOs (see list below), representing more than 1,600 NGOs engaged in international development.

Mandate and objectives

CONCORD's mandate and objectives are defined by its statutes³³ and strategic framework. The latest strategic framework, including a strategic plan accompanied by medium-term priorities for each area of work, was endorsed by CONCORD's General Assembly in November 2008 and covers the period between 2009 and 2015³⁴. Based on these strategic orientations, annual action plans are developed and implemented. Being a membership-driven organisation, CONCORD's mandate, objectives and priorities are continuously reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, by the General Assembly, CONCORD's highest decision-making body (see below).

CONCORD's mandate is to provide a platform for joint policy analysis and formulation in areas relevant to the European Institutions and NGOs in Europe; to ensure the effective representation of its membership towards the European Institutions; to promote the quality of NGO work and help improve their legitimacy as a strategic partner of the EU in development cooperation; to help coordinate European NGOs; and to contribute to capacity building at NGO level. CONCORD has also a mandate to represent its membership in international processes, such as the Open Forum and the Better Aid Platform.

The strategic plan 2009-2015 identifies two overarching objectives for the Confederation:

- To influence the EU's policies and practices so that the Union and its member states enhance social justice, equality and human rights throughout the world.
- To promote the rights and responsibilities of citizens, development NGOs and, where relevant to CONCORD's influencing agenda, civil society as a whole to act in solidarity with those living in poverty.

Activities

Since its establishment in January 2003, CONCORD has successfully established itself as a key interlocutor for the European Commission and other EU Institutions. Its legitimacy to represent European NGOs and its capacity in policy analysis and formulation are widely acknowledged. Recent CONCORD activities include the High-Level Leadership Forum in March 2009 in Brussels, attended by European Commission President Barroso and Chief Executive Officers of over a hundred of the largest European NGOs and the publication of the annual AidWatch report in May

³³ Available online at <http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=59>

³⁴ Available online at <http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=27061>

2009 which analyses flows of official development assistance of all 27 EU Member States and the European Commission.

CONCORD is also engaged in a number of international-level processes and campaigns, including the Better Aid Platform, the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, the International Forum of NGO Platforms and the Global Call for Action against Poverty. CONCORD also works with partner platforms outside of Europe, including InterAction and the Network of National Platforms in West and Central Africa (REPAOC). It is also part of the EU Civil Society Contact Group ([CSCG](#)), a CSO platform which gathers stakeholders from eight different sectors to work on common European dossiers. Moreover, CONCORD hosts and works with two European-wide initiatives, including the Development Education in Europe Exchange Project (DEEEP) and TRIALOG, an initiative to provide capacity building for NGO platforms in new EU Member States.

CONCORD's experience in aid and development effectiveness issues

Advocating for and improving the quality of official development assistance and NGO work is at the heart of CONCORD's work. As early as 2004, CONCORD co-organised with the European commission a seminar on impact assessment of NGO work. In January 2007, CONCORD became a founding member of the International Steering Group (now Coordinating Group) of the Better Aid Platform, and has since been an active member in its policy work.

At the European level, CONCORD coordinates the pan-European AidWatch initiative which provides comprehensive analysis of flows of official development assistance of all EU member states and the European Commission. CONCORD has a working group on CSO development effectiveness that is currently co-chaired by two of its member organisations (Blandine Bouniol from Caritas and Jean Reynaert from the Belgian platform Coprogram).

Since early 2008, CONCORD has played a leading role in the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness and has provided administrative and technical services for this process. In January 2009, the Global Facilitation Group of the Open Forum mandated CONCORD to act as financial manager and programme coordinator of the Open Forum.

Structure

Being a membership-driven organisation, CONCORD implements its activities under the oversight of a Board comprised of 10 representatives from member organisations, through working groups and a Secretariat that is based in Brussels:

- Working groups bring together CONCORD members and, where appropriate, other stakeholders, to develop policy positions and analysis and engage in dialogue with the European Institutions. There are currently five core working groups (funding for development and relief, development education, CSO development effectiveness, AidWatch and the CONCORD Policy Forum) and a number of thematic working groups including on gender, food security and trade to mention just a few.
- The Secretariat, led by a Director (currently Olivier Consolo), has a total of 12 staff members. It has undergone a recent internal evaluation whose recommendations are currently being implemented to adapt and improve its structures. The Secretariat plays a facilitating role for the Confederation and its

working groups, by providing administrative and technical support, facilitating communication and coordination, providing trainings and ensuring financial and programmatic management.

Governance

Governance is ensured by two statutory bodies:

- The General Assembly meets twice per year and is composed of at least one delegate per member organisation. It determines the main strategic orientations and priorities, elects the Board and the President and ensures budget oversight.
- The Board of CONCORD has 10 members, including the President, and is responsible for ensuring that the decisions taken by the General Assembly are implemented. It has delegated the day-to-day work of the Confederation to the Secretariat based in Brussels that is headed by a Director.

CONCORD's statutes were modified and approved by the General Assembly in 2008. CONCORD has a strategic framework for the period 2009-2015 and annual action plans.

CONCORD's current president is Justin Kilcullen, Director of the Irish NGO Trócaire.

Financial turnover and management

Since its establishment in 2003, the Confederation's financial turnover has risen steadily from slightly above € 800,000 in 2003 to around € 1.4 million in 2008. CONCORD's budget is financed by the European Commission (around 50 percent in 2008) and membership fees (around 30 percent in 2008). Moreover, CONCORD raises funds from official and private donors for specific projects and programmes. In 2008, funds for such activities were received from the Open Society Institute (for AidWatch) and the Austrian Development Cooperation, the French Development Agency and the Spanish International Development Cooperation Agency (for the Open Forum). CONCORD's accounts are audited annually, in line with the auditing standards set by the European Commission.

CONCORD's accounts, which are stated in Euros, are kept following the cost-basis principle, in line with general accounting standards which are based on Belgian accounting rules and legislation on associations. In parallel, CONCORD keeps detailed analytical accounts for its budgets and financing lines following clear rules for assessment and for financial and administrative management which are regularly adjusted and reinforced every year. CONCORD manages different budgets which may be analysed by type of costs or by activity, depending on requirements by donors and members.

A Board member (currently Jake Bharier from Skillshare) supervises CONCORD's financial management.

CONCORD's members

National associations
Belgian Platform of NGOs for Relief and Development (11.11.11; ACODEV; CNCND/11.11.11; COPROGRAM)
BOND – UK platform of development NGOs
Cercle de Coopération des ONG de développement au Luxembourg

CONCORD Sverige - Swedish platform of development NGOs
CoNgDe - Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo (Spain)
Coordination SUD – French platform of development NGOs
Danish EU-NGO Platform
Dóchas - The Irish Association of Development NGOs
FoRS - Czech Forum for Development Co-operation
Global Responsibility - Austrian platform of development NGOs
Grupa Zagranica – Polish platform of development NGOs
HAND - Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid
Hellenic Committee of Development NGOs
Kehys ry - The Finnish Development NGO Platform to the EU
LAPAS - Latvian platform of development NGOs
MVRO – Slovakian platform of development NGOs
ONG italiane
Partos – Dutch platform of development NGOs
Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD
SKOP – Maltese platform of development NGOs
SLOGA - Slovenian platform of development NGOs
VENRO - Association of German Development NGOs
International NGO networks
ActionAid International
ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency
Aprodev – Association of World Council of Churches Related Development Organisations in Europe
CARE International
Caritas Europa
CBM International – Christoffel Blind Mission
CIDSE - International Alliance of Catholic Development Agencies
EU-CORD
Eurodad - European Network on Debt and Development
Eurostep - European Solidarity Towards Equal Participation of People
International Federation Terre des Hommes
International Planned Parenthood Federation - European Network
Oxfam International
Plan Europe
Save the Children
Solidar
Women in Development Europe (WIDE)
World Vision

