1 What the literature says about civil society and Development Assistance Committee members

This chapter provides a framework for understanding how OECD DAC members work with civil society and civil society organisations (CSOs). It reviews existing OECD guidance, chiefly the 2012 report, *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*, and presents insights from relevant literature and lessons. The chapter first discusses definitions applied to the diverse civil society sector. It then explores existing guidance and remaining challenges around members' policies, objectives, financial support mechanisms, administrative requirements, monitoring, accountability and transparency in their relations with civil society. Throughout, the chapter highlights areas where additional, stronger and more nuanced emphasis can reinforce these important relationships.

1.1. Introduction: Civil society organisations in development co-operation

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have long been part of the domestic landscape of many countries that are OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and where they contribute to social, economic, cultural and democratic development. The economic contribution of CSOs in member countries is estimated at 5% of gross domestic product, a share equal to that of major industries (Salamon, 2010, p. 198[1]).

CSOs have played a role in development co-operation for as long as such co-operation has existed. In 2018, DAC members (hereinafter "members") allocated nearly USD 21 billion for CSOs (OECD, 2020[2]). The share of total bilateral aid that members allocate for CSOs has remained fairly steady. While this share decreased slightly, from 16% in 2010 to 15% in 2018, the USD 21 billion allocated in 2018 is an 11% increase in real terms over 2010 (OECD, 2020[2]).[1] This figure alone shows that CSOs' significance in development co-operation cannot be underestimated.

CSOs also raise considerable financial resources for development. According to OECD figures, CSOs in member countries raised at least USD 42 billion in private contributions to development co-operation in 2018, representing approximately 30% of members' total bilateral aid (OECD, 2020[2]). [2]

The contribution of CSOs to development co-operation is not exclusively a financial one. Civil society and the CSOs in it are important agents of change. They provide a means for people's expression, enable people to claim their rights and promote rights-based approaches, shape and oversee development policies, and provide services complementary to those provided by governments (OECD, 2011, p. 6[3]). Moreover, they are valued for their knowledge, experience and expertise; their agility in responding to changing needs and contexts; and their cost-effectiveness (Hulme and Edwards, 1997[4]). They are seen to be adept at identifying new or longstanding obstacles to development that might otherwise be ignored by governments and at devising strategies to address these (OECD, 2010, p. 27[5]). Their connections to people on the frontlines of poverty, inequality and vulnerability, and their ability to channel these voices into development processes, are considered a critical asset to help meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promise to leave no one behind (Bushan et al., 2018[6]).

Indeed, the 2030 Agenda clearly calls for CSO engagement in implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CSOs, among other actors, are required for the whole-of-society approach to SDG achievement. Their important role is especially embodied in SDG 17, which is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. CSO engagement is also a cornerstone of the peaceful and inclusive societies and accountable and inclusive institutions called for in SDG 16.

CSO engagement in the SDGs requires enabling conditions to be in place. The multi-stakeholder constituency of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), which includes members of the DAC as well as CSOs, has committed to provide such conditions (also referred to as enabling environments for CSOs) and to promote CSOs' own effectiveness and accountability, all as key components of effectiveness.[3]

For these reasons, it is in the interest of members, as well as in the interest of CSOs and the individuals and communities whose lives development co-operation seeks to improve, to ensure that members' work with CSOs enables such organisations to maximise their contribution to development.

1.2. Defining civil society and CSOs

Existing guidance

The OECD (2012[7]) report, *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*, is a reference point for the discussion in this chapter of what the literature says. The guidance draws on peer reviews as well as surveys of and consultations with members and CSOs and presents a number of recommendations for members. Its intent is to guide members in designing and implementing good policies and practices for their work with civil society. Since its publication, *Partnering with Civil Society* has been the singular source of DAC guidance on the subject of working with civil society, complemented by peer reviews.

This study also draws on surveys and consultations undertaken with members and CSOs.[4] Considered together with elements of the OECD guidance, these point to several areas that need continued attention from members, among them definitions of civil society and CSOs, policies, objectives, financial support mechanisms and recipients, dialogue, administrative requirements, monitoring and evaluation, and accountability and transparency.

One of the *Partnering with Civil Society* recommendations (lesson 4) is that members build on current definitions and knowledge of civil society to agree on and use common terminology regarding CSOs and development (OECD, 2012, p. 21[7]). Common terminology can help members identify which among them are working with which CSOs or types of CSOs – important information to help members choose relevant CSOs to partner with. It also fosters greater transparency and comparability across members' work with CSOs.

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

Civil society is often characterised as one of three spheres of action, along with government and the private sector. It has been defined as a "sphere of uncoerced human association" within which individuals implement collective action to address shared needs, ideas and interests that they have identified in common (Edwards, 2011, p. 4[8]). CSOs are a formal manifestation of civil society. Civil society is thus considered to be the collection of CSOs and other semi- or non-formal forms of people associating or of associations, as well as the sphere or space in which these interact with each other and with others (Kohler-Koch and Quittkat, 2009[9]). Reference is also made to the civil society or CSO sector, just as government is referred to as the public sector and business as the private sector.[5]

That said, attempts to define or classify civil society and CSOs have been referred to as akin to "nailing jelly to the wall" (Edwards, 2009, p. 4[10]). Given the diversity of association and organising types within the civil society sector, their sometimes informal and fluid nature, and the growth of hybrid types of associations, defining the sector is not always straightforward.[6]

It is evident from the OECD definition of CSOs (Box 1.1) that they are diverse. In the years since publication of this definition, the range of associational types considered to be CSOs appears to even be expanding. For example, some consider social enterprises, a newer organisational form, to be CSOs even though they are a hybrid form of non-profit and for-profit organisations (Smith, 2010[11]). These provide goods and services in the market but, like more traditional CSO forms, they have some form of social impact as their primary objective (OECD/European Union, 2017, p. 22[12]). Foundations and the growing and varied forms of philanthropic initiatives, particularly at decentralised levels, are an organisational type that might be considered in the CSO category.[7]

Box 1.1. OECD definition of CSOs

The OECD defines CSOs as "non-market and non-state organisations outside of the family in which people organise themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain. They cover a wide range of organisations that include membership-based CSOs, cause-based CSOs and service-oriented CSOs. Examples include community-based organisations and village associations, environmental groups, women's rights groups, farmers' associations, faith-based organisations, labour unions, co-operatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes, and the not-for-profit media" (OECD, 2010, p. 26[5]).

The DAC reporting directives issued to members refer to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), not CSOs (Box 1.2). However, the definition of an NGO used in these directives closely resembles the OECD (2010[5]) definition of a CSO (Box 1.1). In recent years, DAC publications use CSO, the more current term.[8] This study uses the terms CSO and civil society. The term NGO is occasionally used when a member or other source that uses it is cited in the text.

Box 1.2. DAC definition of an NGO

The DAC defines an NGO as "any non-profit entity in which people organise themselves on a local, national or international level to pursue shared objectives and ideals, without significant government-controlled participation or representation. NGOs include foundations, co-operative societies, trade unions, and ad-hoc entities set up to collect funds for a specific purpose. NGO umbrella organisations and NGO networks are also included" (OECD DAC, 2018, pp. 47-48[13]).

For reporting purposes, the DAC distinguishes NGOs by geographic location and specifically as either international (including NGOs that may have a regional rather than international scope), member country-based, or partner country- or developing country-based NGOs (Box 1.3).[9]

Box 1.3. DAC definitions of NGOs by geographic location

Donor country-based NGO: An NGO that is organised at the national level and based and operated either in the donor country or in another developed country, i.e. one that is not eligible to receive official development assistance (ODA).

International NGO: An NGO that is organised on an international level – meaning either an international co-ordinating body facilitates the work of the NGO members on the international level or the NGO has an extensive network of country or regional offices in the field – and has internationally diversified sources of revenue.

Developing country-based NGO: An NGO that is organised at the national level and based and operated in a developing (ODA-eligible) country.

Source: (OECD DAC, 2018, p. 57[13]), *Converged Statistical Reporting Directives for the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the Annual DAC Questionnaire.*

Typically, though not exclusively, member country-based CSOs and international CSOs work in relationships of some form with partner country-based CSOs. These relationships may be ones of mutual support, knowledge exchange and solidarity or they may be more formal partnerships in which the member

country-based or international CSO partner plays the role of intermediary in channelling aid. As such, member country-based CSOs and international CSOs can themselves be donors (OECD, 2010, p. 28[5]).[10]

In sum, CSOs comprise a diverse civil society sector, as evidenced by the various types, sizes, locations, mandates, approaches and governance structures seen in the millions of CSOs and non-formal civil society actors across the globe that represent and work with diverse groups of people. The OECD and DAC definitions of NGOs provide a good starting point towards greater commonality of terminology among members and within the OECD.

1.3. Member CSO and/or civil society policies

Existing guidance

Partnering with Civil Society advises members to have in place a civil society or CSO policy, developed and monitored in consultation with CSOs (lesson 1) (OECD, 2012, p. 9[7]). The GPEDC monitoring framework also considers a comprehensive CSO policy document to be a key component of effectiveness for members' work with CSOs (GPEDC, 2018, pp. 14-15[14]). Such a policy document does not need to be a policy per se. It can be a strategy, principles or guidance, for example. What is important is to have a transparent and evidence-based overarching framework for the member's work with CSOs and civil society. The policy document should lay out the member's understanding of civil society and its contribution to development. To guide planning, implementation and evaluation of the member's work with CSOs, the document should further articulate the member's objectives for working with CSOs and civil society and methods of working to meet these objectives.

The existence of a CSO or civil society policy is increasingly evaluated through DAC peer reviews. The 2019-20 *Peer Review Reference Guide* emphasises that members' policy frameworks now should provide sufficient guidance for decision making on channels and engagements with CSOs. Its inclusive development partnerships component specifies that members are expected to articulate a vision of the roles of different actors, including CSOs; support enabling environments and space for civil society; and engage with CSOs at strategic and operational levels (OECD DAC, 2019, p. 11[15]).

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

Evidence from recent peer reviews suggests that members are adopting CSO policies or policy-like documents. However, there is room for more members to articulate clear visions and normative frameworks for their work with civil society (OECD, 2019[16]).

For example, the 2016 DAC peer review of the Czech Republic called on the country to adopt a vision and policy for its partnerships with civil society and to develop an appropriate mix of funding mechanisms to meet the vision (OECD, 2019, p. 3[16]). Similarly, an independent evaluation of Australia's NGO Cooperation Program in 2015 concluded that greater clarity and common understanding of the programme's objectives, alongside a "complete and internally consistent policy framework", were needed to prevent day-to-day decision making from undermining the programme's principles (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia and Coffey International Development, 2015[17]) . This conclusion provided motivation for the development of Australia's 2015 framework document, *DFAT and NGOs: Effective Development Partners* (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, 2015[18]). In another example, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) developed its 2019 policy-like document, *SDC Guidance for Engagement with CSOs*, based in part on a 2017 evaluation recommendation to clarify the purpose, objectives, target group and modus operandi of its institutional partnerships with CSOs (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2019[19]; IOD PARC, 2017, p. 47[20]).

There is growing recognition of the need for whole-of-government policy coherence on civil society-related issues in addition to CSO policies. This is not addressed in *Partnering with Civil Society*. The importance of integrating civil society considerations, including civic space analysis, across a range of policy realms is gaining attention, especially given the trend of restrictions on civil space and in an environment where member interests are increasingly focused on private sector development, trade and security (Wood, 2019, pp. 414-415, 448-449[21]; Molenaers, Faust and Dellepiane, 2015[22]). These considerations encompass not only development, but also foreign policy and diplomacy and policies on trade and business, security, and technology.[11] Overall, momentum is building to work towards consistency of vision in relation to CSOs' roles and value added and to be explicit about and address competing priorities (CONCORD Sweden, 2018, p. 5[23]; Civil Society Summit, 2019, pp. 6-7[24]; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2018, p. 21[25]).

In sum, absent a policy, members risk that their work with CSOs is ad hoc or guided only by the existence of a CSO budget line, rather than being strategically designed to meet development objectives. A policy can help members to better pursue coherence between objectives and their methods of working with CSOs and civil society. The existence of an up-to-date policy developed in collaboration with civil society helps to ensure the relevance of members' aims and work with the sector. By providing a transparent framework, a policy is a source of common understanding of why and how a member works with CSOs, and it is a source of trust with CSOs. Members' policy visions, as well as policy coherence, can be reinforced through integration of civil society-related issues in broader development co-operation policies and in other policy realms.

1.4. Objectives for working with CSOs and civil society

Existing guidance

Partnering with Civil Society recommends that members clearly articulate in their policies the objective or objectives for working with CSOs and civil society (lesson 1). The guidance effectively addresses two types of objectives in particular. The first type of objective for working with CSOs and civil society is to strengthen a pluralist (i.e. diverse) and independent civil society in partner countries (lesson 2). The second type of objective for working with CSOs and civil society is to help achieve other development objectives besides strengthening civil society in partner countries (lessons 3 and 4) (OECD, 2012, pp. 9, 13, 17, 21[7]).

To help understand the distinction between these two types of objectives, it is useful to consider CSOs and civil society as having both "intrinsic and instrumental value" (UN, 2017, p. 4[26]). Intrinsic value means a strong, pluralist and independent civil society is an asset in and of itself, just as a strong public sector or private sector are valuable assets. Thus, strengthening civil society is an objective worth supporting in its own right (OECD, 2010, pp. 29, 106[5]). Instrumental value centres on CSOs as an instrument – i.e. a means to deliver various other development objectives.

The first type of objective recognises that a strong civil society is an essential prerequisite for any country's social, economic and democratic development. Notably, this first objective flows from statements and commitments made in the context of the aid and development effectiveness agenda. The 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement, for example, commits adherents to enabling CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors in their own right, as does paragraph 11c of the more recent 2016 GPEDC Nairobi Outcome Document (OECD, 2011[3]; GPEDC, 2016[27]). As independent development actors in their own right, CSOs are recognised as having their own priorities and plans and approaches to achieving such priorities. The legitimacy of CSOs as independent actors is derived from varied sources: from their constituents, which may be CSO members or groups or individuals that they serve or represent; from their governance and accountability systems; from their expertise and experience; from the development results they achieve; and from the civic values that guide them (OECD, 2010, p. 27[5]; Van

Rooy, 2004[28]).[12] The ability of CSOs to operate as independent development actors is also embedded in international law, particularly in the right to freedom of association and the principles that flow from it (World Movement for Democracy Secretariat and International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2012[29]).

Partnering with Civil Society calls on members to promote enabling environments for CSOs in partner countries, understood as the "political, financial, legal and policy context" affecting how CSOs carry out their work (lesson 2) (OECD, 2012, p. 13[7]). In recognition of the aid and development effectiveness commitments to promote enabling environments for civil society, the GPEDC monitors and reports on member practice in this regard, most recently in its 2019 progress report (OECD/UNDP, 2019[30]).[13]

The second type of objective recognises that CSOs are important partners in implementing members' programmes in specific sectors or themes (e.g. health, education, democratisation and gender equality) and in raising public awareness about development in member countries.[14] The second type of objective sees CSOs as implementers on behalf of members. As such, they are channels for members' financial support, acting as intermediaries between members, other CSOs, communities and beneficiaries to implement programmes with specific objectives and often objectives defined by the member (OECD, 2010, p. 28[5]).

The second type of objective for working with civil society recognises the important role that civil society can and does play in humanitarian relief. In 2019, members adopted the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, which applies across members' work with civil society and the full spectrum of humanitarian, development and peace actors (OECD DAC, 2019[31]). The Recommendation requires members to strengthen policy and operational coherence between humanitarian, development and peace efforts, with the "aim of effectively reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities, supporting prevention efforts and thus, shifting from delivering humanitarian assistance to ending need" (OECD DAC, 2019[31]). An important aspect of this involves members strengthening their engagement with CSOs across the nexus; ensuring that civil society has the space, resources and capacity to contribute; and drawing on CSOs' proximity to vulnerable populations and their capacity to advocate for and on behalf of vulnerable groups.

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

Once members set out their objectives for working with CSOs and civil society, they need to consider what methods of working with civil society are best suited to meet these objectives. Little in the literature covers members' objectives for working with CSOs and civil society per se. Rather, there is coverage of members' financial support mechanisms and other working methods. The remaining sections of this chapter focus largely on the literature pertaining to such mechanisms and methods.

Insights are available on members' efforts to strengthen civil society in partner countries by promoting enabling environments in those countries. A key finding of the GPEDC 2019 progress report is that in 57% of countries, CSOs reported that development partners "only occasionally include elements of an enabling environment for CSOs in their policy dialogue with partner country governments" (OECD/UNDP, 2019, p. 132[30]). Development partners, however, assess themselves as more frequently promoting enabling environments in policy dialogue with partner country governments, reporting that they do so only occasionally in 30% of countries but more systematically in 40% of countries (OECD/UNDP, 2019, p. 133[11]).

This discrepancy may be attributable to the fact that sometimes members engage in dialogue with partner country governments on issues around the enabling environment using quiet, non-public dialogue and diplomacy tactics of which CSOs would not necessarily be aware. At other times, members may go so far as to condition their government-to-government support on partner country governments' commitments and actions to provide an enabling environment for civil society. Dialogue, quiet or otherwise, is done bilaterally or collaboratively with other members or through multilateral bodies. The Community of

Democracies Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society is one example of collective action in this regard. Comprised of members (and CSOs), the Working Group monitors and disseminates information on the environment for civil society worldwide, encourages its participants to take diplomatic steps when threats arise, and raises awareness about the issue (Community of Democracies, 2016[32]). The Open Government Partnership (OGP), which regards space for civil society (i.e. civic space) as "the fundamental underpinning for open government" that its members must include in their action plans, is another example of collective action to promote enabling environments for civil society (Open Government Partnership, 2019, p. 6[33]). The OGP monitors implementation of its members' action plans so that performance may be improved through dialogue and peer pressure.

The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (2018, p. 4[25]), in *Effective Donor Responses to the Challenge of Closing Civic Space*, suggests that to defend and promote enabling environments, members complement their own dialogue with partner country governments by encouraging dialogue between government, parliaments and civil society as a means of building mutual understanding and potentially countering the mistrust that can fuel partner country governments' disenabling tactics. They can also assist partner country governments in building more enabling environments for civil society, for instance through support to institutions such human rights commissions and bodies responsible for civil society regulation.

Other recent publications detail additional strategies members can pursue to strengthen civil society in partner countries through the promotion of enabling environments. European Funders for Social Change, the Human Rights Funders Network and the European Foundation Centre recommend, among other things, identifying and working with private sector allies to promote civic space, including in the private sector's own practices in partner countries (Ariadne, International Human Rights Funders Group and European Foundation Centre, 2015, pp. 10-11[34]). The B Team has outlined the "business case" for protection and promotion of enabling environments for civil society, linking civic freedoms data to countries' economic performance (Hogg and Hodess, 2018[35]). An OECD policy paper sets out possible actions to address the deleterious impacts of digital transformation on civic space, such as strengthening the international regulation of corporate governance of digital service providers so they are more accountable and responsive to the adverse effects that their products, services and business operations have on users' rights (OECD, 2020[36]).

As the 2019 DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus is rolled out and its implementation monitored, evidence and lessons will become available regarding whether and how members are reflecting the nexus in their objectives for working with civil society.[15]

In sum, members should clearly articulate their objective or objectives for working with CSOs and civil society. One important type of objective is to strengthen a pluralist and independent civil society in partner countries, recognising the intrinsic value of an independent and pluralist civil society for a nation's social, economic and democratic development. A second type of objective for working with CSOs and civil society is to meet other development objectives besides that of strengthening civil society, recognising the instrumental value of CSOs as partners in implementing members' programmes in specific sectors or themes (e.g. health, education, democratisation and gender). Once there is clarity of objectives, methods of working with CSOs can be better designed to meet them.

Where members seek to pursue the objective of strengthening civil society, myriad strategies are available – apart from but complementary to their CSO support – that can be investigated and implemented. Dialogue with partner country governments on enabling environment issues is one such strategy that needs attention. Complementary strategies include promoting dialogue between CSOs and governments, participating in multilateral bodies, investing in partner country government institutions and capacities, and engaging with private sector allies.

When articulating their objectives and the methods to be used to meet the objectives, members should also bear in mind the 2019 DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

Otherwise, the need for humanitarian assistance will continue unabated as the underlying causes of humanitarian crises are not addressed.

1.5. How financial support is provided

Existing guidance

Partnering with Civil Society identifies action points addressing members' mechanisms of financial support for CSOs. First, it proposes that members maintain a mix of financial support mechanisms for CSOs (lesson 7). Having a mix of mechanisms in place helps to make funding available to a range of CSO types and can help members to meet a range of objectives in different contexts. Second, the report also stipulates that members' funding mechanisms should match their stated purpose or objectives for working with CSOs (lesson 7). Third, and relatedly, it states that members should find a balance in their CSO funding mechanisms between the conditions they attach to funding, on one hand, and respect for the role of CSOs as independent development actors with their own mandates and objectives, on the other (lesson 6) (OECD, 2012, pp. 27, 31[7]).

As discussed in Section 1.4, members' funding mechanisms can be designed to meet two types of objectives; these are relevant to lessons 6 and 7. One objective is to strengthen a pluralist (i.e. diverse) and independent civil society in partner countries. The other is to achieve an array of additional, unrelated development objectives (e.g. in health, education, humanitarian assistance, etc.). The funding mechanism most often used to strengthen civil society as an objective in its own right is core support (also referred to as institutional, budget, strategic, unrestricted or unearmarked support). This mechanism comprises support to CSOs "with respect for their independence and right of initiative"; in other words, core support is provided for CSOs to pursue their own missions, objectives, priorities and approaches (Sida, 2019, p. 11[37]). Financial support mechanisms to meet other development objectives are most often provided in the form of project or programme support, wherein CSOs are supported as implementing agents or instruments on behalf of the member. This support tends to come with conditions attached.

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

In DAC terms, the distinction between support *to* CSOs and support *through* CSOs (Box 1.4) is the most readily available source of information to assess members' support for these two broad objectives (strengthening civil society and meeting other member-defined objectives) and, relatedly, the degree to which such support is for CSOs as independent development actors or comes with member conditions. Support *to* CSOs is core support and, as noted, is most conducive to meeting an objective of strengthening an independent and pluralist civil society in partner countries (OECD, 2012, p. 14[7]). In contrast, support flows *through* CSOs when CSOs operate on behalf of the member as implementers of projects or programmes with specific member-defined objectives.

Statistics from the OECD on members' flows *to* and *through* CSOs between 2010 and 2017 show a high level of flows *through* CSOs relative to flows *to* CSOs (Figure 2.5 and Tables B.1 and B.2 in Annex B). This difference suggests that member funding mechanisms are mostly geared to meet objectives other than that of strengthening civil society and come with conditions rather than respecting the role of CSOs as independent actors.

> **Box 1.4. Reporting aid *to* and *through* NGOs/CSOs***
>
> *Aid to NGOs* covers official funds paid over to non-governmental organisations for use at the latter's discretion. Aid *through* NGOs covers official funds made available to NGOs for use on behalf of the official sector, in connection with purposes designated by the official sector, or known to and approved by the official sector.
>
> *Aid to NGOs* means official contributions to programmes and activities which NGOs have developed themselves, and which they implement on their own authority and responsibility. *Aid through NGOs* means payments by the official sector for NGOs to implement projects and programmes which the official sector has developed, and for which it is ultimately responsible. The latter includes "joint financing" schemes where government agencies and NGOs consult about activities, jointly approve them and/or share their funding.
>
> * The DAC reporting directives use the term NGOs and also apply in this study to CSOs.
>
> Source: (OECD DAC, 2018, p. 58[13]), Converged Statistical Reporting Directives for the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the Annual DAC Questionnaire.

That said, OECD statistics on flows *to* and *through* CSOs do not reliably capture the volume of flows for one or the other of the two objectives. Members' *through* support may overlap or straddle different objectives along a spectrum. That is, members' CSO funding either is responsive to and aligns with CSOs' priorities as independent development actors to different degrees or, on the contrary, this funding is conditional (or earmarked) and thus directs or steers CSOs to the member's priorities. The spectrum of directiveness of non-core support is referred to in the multilateral system as involving tightly or strictly earmarked non-core funding or softly earmarked non-core funding (OECD DAC, 2019[38]).

As an illustration of this spectrum, a member may design a project support mechanism via a call for proposals (*through* support) that is focused on a high-level, member-defined objective. If the mechanism is responsive to CSO submissions in line with the CSO's self-defined priorities, the funding could be considered as softly earmarked. The projects and programme support of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) *through* CSOs is one example. ADA co-funds projects and programmes that are initiated by CSOs but match Austria's high-level goals (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019[39]) Another example is where a *through* funding mechanism may be used to support a CSO acting as intermediary between the member and CSOs in partner countries. The objective of the support, however, may be to strengthen the end recipient CSOs and civil society more broadly in partner countries. This is the case with Swedish CSOs that are the member's framework partners and receive what is reported as *through* support while in turn, in some instances, channelling some of the funds they receive to CSOs in partner countries as *to* support (core funding).

These examples suggest that the ratio of members' *to* and *through* financial support does not provide sufficient information to determine whether members' support mechanisms match objectives or assess the balance between their support for CSOs with conditions attached and support to CSOs as independent development actors. The literature on the experience of CSOs with both *to* and *through* support, and on the advantages and disadvantages of each, helps to complement the information that can be gleaned from the data.

A number of literature sources reinforce the prevalence of *through* support that is conditional or earmarked to meet member-defined objectives. The GPEDC 2019 monitoring exercise finds CSOs in 82% of monitored countries reported that the funding priorities and mechanisms of support for CSOs are "driven by development partners' own programming interests or tied directly to implementation of their own

priorities", such that CSOs "consider themselves more as implementers rather than as equal partners and actors in their own right" (OECD/UNDP, 2019, p. 133[11]).[16] This conforms to findings elsewhere that members' support *through* CSOs is experienced as being strongly "donor-driven" (i.e. conditional, directive or earmarked) and designed to meet members' pre-defined objectives (Bushan et al., 2018, p. 162[21]). Some member evaluations attest to the conditional nature of financial support for CSOs while highlighting the pitfalls. For example, an evaluation of civil society support modalities at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) headquarters and Swedish embassies over 2007-13 found that CSOs were mainly used as a means or a tool to implement programming targeting objectives set by Sida and the embassies (Nilsson et al., 2013, pp. 79, 84, 88[40]). The evaluation further noted that rather than strengthening civil society, this instrumental approach "undermine[s] the credibility of CSOs, weakens their accountability to their own stakeholders and shift[s] this towards the donors, make[s] it difficult for CSO [sic] to engage in longer term planning such as for their own policy and capacity development, and make[s] the claims by adversaries that certain CSOs are donor agents more believable among the public" (Nilsson et al., 2013, p. 90[40]) This approach can lead CSOs to deviate from their mandates and strategic plans as they seek to match donors' ever-changing priorities (Sida, 2019, p. 10[37]).

A joint evaluation of member support for civil society engagement in policy dialogue, led by the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), reached a similar conclusion. It found that when members' own agendas dominate the CSO support they provide, civil society's independence and initiatives are threatened and the concept of a vibrant and pluralist civil society as a public good or "an end in itself" is undermined (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, p. 101[41]).[17] Given changing member priorities, this also threatens investment in long-term change processes and can lead to the neglect of some agendas that are worthy of support because they may not fall within member priorities of the moment (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, p. 101[41]).

Funding mechanisms designed to meet "donor-defined" objectives also tend to be for short-term initiatives, with what has been called a growing "projectisation" of members' CSO support (CIVICUS, 2015, pp. 150-151[42]). On one hand, short-term project support is appreciated by small or more nascent CSOs as it tends to have lower barriers to entry and is thus easier to access than core support. On the other hand, its short-term, directive nature means it lacks predictability, so that CSOs struggle to implement the actions necessary for long-term change (results) and to build and maintain their fundamental capacities, expertise and operations (CIVICUS, 2015, pp. 150-152[42]; Haynes, Ireland and Duke, 2019, p. 4[43]). Further, as CSOs "hop from subject to subject" in search of support for one short-term project after another, they are less able to build and maintain the relationships with constituencies and beneficiaries that are a necessary component of local ownership and CSOs' accountability (CIVICUS, 2015, p. 152[42]). A recent study on funding of CSOs and their networks concludes there is a "disconnect between managerialist approaches to civil society funding, characterised by competitive, short-termist and results-driven agendas, and the desire of institutional donors to support a sustainable and thriving civil society through flexible and responsive funding" (Haynes, Ireland and Duke, 2019, p. 4[43]).

These issues are further illustrated in members' efforts to strengthen the coherence of humanitarian, development and peace actions. As noted in a 2017 evaluation of Finnish CSOs, the bifurcation of humanitarian and development financing mechanisms can limit the ability of CSOs to operate in the humanitarian-development nexus, given the separate windows and time frames of members' funding, an absence of flexibility to frame programming around the nexus, and the short duration of humanitarian funding cycles (Brusset et al., 2017, pp. 3, 15, 19[44]). CSOs' own siloed operating modalities and limited long-term consideration of exit strategies in humanitarian programming are a related impediment that, combined with member conditions, results in compartmentalisation rather than the co-ordination and coherence needed to address the nexus (Brusset et al., 2017, pp. 15, 16[44]).

Core funding *to* CSOs averts some of the reported disadvantages of donor-driven, projectised support *through* CSOs. Core funding tends to be relatively long term (five years or more) and thus somewhat predictable, while it is also considered relatively flexible in that it supports a CSO's mission or objectives

rather than a specific project (Wood and Fällman, 2013, p. 147[45]; National Audit Office, 2006, pp. 18-19[46]). Predictability and flexibility are said to enable CSOs to implement the kinds of actions needed for long-term transformative change, address new issues and opportunities arising in changing contexts and innovate, and help to foster collaboration and learning across CSOs (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012[41]; Sida, 2019[37]). Moreover, support of CSOs' own objectives allows them to pursue their work in ways that are locally owned and demand-driven rather than donor-driven. Core funding enables CSOs to focus on implementation of their core work of achieving development results and on their relationships with partner country constituencies. It also means more time and resources are available for CSOs to maintain their day-to-day operations while investing in strengthening their organisational capacities (Staniforth, 2009, p. 9[47]).

Core funding has challenges, however. Members fear that recipient CSOs may become overly reliant on such funding and lose motivation to innovate (Staniforth, 2009, p. 8[47]). The most significant challenge is demonstrating results. Unless objectives for the core funding agreement and associated results and indicators are clearly articulated, CSOs and members that provide core support can find it difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of core funding (National Audit Office, 2006, pp. 18-19[46]; Staniforth, 2009, pp. 8-9[47]).[18] Pressure to demonstrate results was one of the reasons that the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom switched from core-type support for CSOs, under what were called Partnership Programme Agreements, to project support using calls for proposals following its 2016 *Civil Society Partnerships Review*. Its aim, in part, was to be able to better assess CSO proposals on value for money – that is, on development results achieved for money spent (DFID, 2016, p. 11[48]). OECD DAC recommends that members make better use of the recipient's results monitoring and reporting systems to help resolve the challenge around demonstrating results, although this requires acknowledging that results might not be fully attributable to the member's contribution (OECD DAC, 2019, p. 6[38]).

Processes using competitive calls for proposals have been found to have a mixed record as a means of allocating funding *through* CSOs.[19] On one hand, calls for proposals are appreciated for their transparency, as the requirements are open for all to see (Karlstedt et al., 2015, p. 22[49]). On the other hand, calls tend to be donor-driven, given that parameters (conditions) for the competition must be set by the member. In addition, competitive processes "can inhibit or distort co-operation between CSOs operating in the same space for the same goals of leaving no one behind" (Bushan et al., 2018, p. 163[6]). Calls are also found to place a high administrative burden on both members and CSOs due to the need to process many applicants, of which only some are successful (Karlstedt et al., 2015, p. 22[49]). A 2012 evaluation of CSO support provided by Australian Aid (then called AusAID) noted the further challenge that smaller, more nascent CSOs often lack the time, resources and capacity to fulfil the demands of competitive calls and so do not bother to apply, limiting outreach (Howell and Hall, 2012, p. 20[50]).

Notably, core funding shares these challenges of administrative burden and accessibility. There are significant administrative costs in initially identifying appropriate CSOs, taking due diligence steps to screen for systems and other capacity, negotiating terms and outcomes, and building trust (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, p. 88[41]; Karlstedt et al., 2015, p. 22[49]). These are front-end obstacles and costs, however. Over the long term, core support should come with reduced transaction costs as these long-term arrangements with trusted partners require less frequent and more strategic reporting than project/programme support requires (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, p. 88[41]).

Moreover, smaller and less experienced CSOs tend to have difficulty meeting the criteria for programme and financial management capacity and track record and as a result, they cannot access core support (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019, p. 38[39]). Another of the aims of DFID's switch from core-type support to project support following the *Civil Society Partnerships Review* was to make funding available for a broader range of CSOs, including smaller ones that had struggled to meet the Partnership Programme Agreement funding requirements (DFID, 2016, p. 9[48]). Core support mechanisms can be designed to be accessible to smaller and less experienced CSOs, however. Sida, for instance, is actively exploring fresh approaches to core support for smaller CSOs and diverse civil society actors, including by experimenting

with a guarantee instrument to enable financial risk sharing between Sida and its Swedish CSO partners (Sida, 2019, pp. 12, 13[37]).

In sum, the ratio of members' *to* and *through* financial support for CSOs is too blunt an instrument for assessing the degree to which members' financial support is designed to meet the strengthening civil society objective or, in contrast, to meet other, member-defined objectives. Nuanced interpretation is required to better understand the degree to which a member's t*hrough* funding mechanism is more or less conditional and directive.

There is room for both types of financial support mechanisms for CSOs, as each has different advantages and disadvantages. When designing mechanisms and determining the appropriate mechanism mix, members should keep in mind the objective of strengthening a pluralist civil society in partner countries. Ideally, members would have mechanisms that aim to meet this objective. At minimum, they need to ensure that their financial support for CSOs does no harm to CSOs and the civil society sector.

The risk of harm relates to the fact that a reliance on financial support mechanisms *through* CSOs, and in which objectives are defined by members alone, can undercut CSOs' ability to operate in ways that are demand-driven and responsive to the priorities of the CSOs' partners and constituents on the ground, thus hindering local ownership and accountability. Significantly, this in turn can fuel perceptions that CSOs are simply agents of foreign powers – that is, of members. Additionally, reliance on *through* support can make it difficult for CSOs to plan for the long term and respond flexibly to changing contexts. It can hinder CSOs' investment in their institutional capacity. Further, such reliance can lead to gaps in support for civil society actors in partner countries. When these actors are not aligned with member-defined priorities, members may invest in and indeed foster civil society and CSOs that are not sufficiently locally rooted and accountable and do not reflect the real range of civil society actors in partner countries.

On the whole, therefore, working with CSOs solely as a means to reach other, member-defined objectives not only fails to meet the objective of strengthening a pluralist civil society in partner countries. It can undermine this objective. Core support for CSOs can address some of the issues arising from donor-driven *through* support. However, core support also has potential downsides that need to be mitigated, among them the due diligence standards that can make core support less available to a wide swathe of civil society.

1.6. Who receives financial support

Existing guidance

The 2012 *Partnering with Civil Society* guidance does not state outright that there is a need for more direct financing for partner country CSOs. However, this is implied in the call to expand the scope of members' CSO partnerships to better meet objectives, including the objective of strengthening civil society in partner countries (lessons 4 and 7) (OECD, 2012, pp. 21, 31[7]). The need for more direct CSO financing also flows logically from the development effectiveness commitment to local ownership; providing more support and funding tools for local organisations is also a Grand Bargain commitment (workstream 2) (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2020[51]).[20]

Noting the tendency of members to support CSOs they are most familiar with – that is, well-established, international development or rights and democracy CSOs – the guidance also encourages outreach to a broader swathe of civil society (lesson 4) (OECD, 2012, p. 4[7]). Support for and engagement with diverse civil society actors can help members to work with the most appropriate types of actors (formal or otherwise) to reach a given objective in a given context.

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

Members' financial support is largely for member country-based or international CSOs, according to OECD statistics. In 2017, member country CSOs received approximately ten times more member funding than did partner country CSOs. Statistics on flows for different types of CSOs are presented in Figure 2.8 in Chapter 2. Studies show that even where partner country-based CSOs have adopted the professionalised, managerialist practices that help them to meet member requirements (e.g. use of monitoring and evaluation systems), members still tend to prefer to support non-local CSOs (Suarez and Gugerty, 2016, p. 2634[52]).

As noted, member country and international CSOs, for the most part, work with partner country CSOs (or other organisational types) at partner country level, which often involves a capacity development component. In effect, these partner country-based CSOs end up facing challenges like those discussed in Section 1.5 in terms of the necessity to meet member-defined priorities, as these cascade down via member country or international CSOs (OECD/UNDP, 2016, p. 47[53]). Member country and international CSOs have some work to do to change their ways of doing business towards "role sharing and the strengthening of local structures" (Bushan et al., 2018, p. 164[6]). As they also explore how to provide more financial support directly to partner country CSOs, members can ensure that their financial support mechanisms better enable member country and international CSOs to make such changes by addressing some of the challenges discussed in Section 1.5.

Even capacity development efforts by member country or international CSOs produce mixed results for partner country CSOs. Brusset et al. (2017, p. 14[44]), in their evaluation of CSOs receiving programme-based and humanitarian assistance support from Finland, found the relationships of Finnish CSOs with their partner CSOs "are often directive rather than aiming at greater independence of local civil society, as relations with local partners are more sub-contracting than consultative". As a result, capacity development of partner country CSOs is focused on effective project implementation rather than on organisational capacity development or on building accountability at partner country level through constituency feedback mechanisms or other means (Brusset et al., 2017, pp. 45-46[44]). Similarly, a 2018 evaluation of Norway's CSO support found that Norwegian CSOs' capacity development of partner country CSOs has focused more on administration, finance and programme implementation and less on the partners' internal governance or accountability systems (Tjønneland et al., 2018, p. 50[54]). A 2018 evaluation of Icelandic CSOs also concluded that some CSO projects had not invested in organisational capacity development of local partners and, on the whole, had "done little to strengthen the partner CSOs at country level" (Ljungman and Nilsson, 2018, p. 10[55]).

As discussed, members' CSO funding tends to favour better known, formal CSOs, which means that members' support may overlook the varied types of civil society actors, such as traditional forms (e.g. faith-based, trade unions, professional associations, etc.); the growing body of hybrid forms including social enterprises; and other more informal, fluid forms of civil society action that are on the rise (Youngs, 2015[56]). While the CSOs that members are most used to working with may have "high visibility", they may be marginally significant relative to the "wider array of associational life" active in partner countries (Sogge, 2019[57]).

Member evaluations, noting that broadening the reach of their support is a challenge for members, make similar recommendations to those in *Partnering with Civil Society* (OECD, 2012, p. 21[7]). An evaluation of Swedish support, for instance, noted a tendency to favour "large, well-reputed CSOs that can handle large amounts of resources" that is due in part to a shortage of member resources to administer CSO support (Nilsson et al., 2013, p. 88[40]). Members are being urged to identify ways to support informal, sometimes temporary civil society actors, actions and processes (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, pp. 101, 110-111[41]) that occasionally "bypass formal CSOs" (INTRAC, 2013, p. 7[58]). Innovative thinking is needed to address the new challenge of engaging with these varied actors and actions, but looking "beyond the more 'recognisable' types of civil society groups" that are operating in the development field to sometimes more

"enduring institutions that command significant authority and legitimacy in society" can go a long way towards broadening the reach of members' civil society support (Howell and Hall, 2012, pp. 5, 7[50]).

Multi-donor pooled funding has been suggested as one mechanism that can help members increase their direct support for partner country CSOs and potentially broaden members' reach to a greater diversity of civil society actors (INTRAC, 2014, p. 4[59]). For example and despite their modest budgets, some women's funds are able to reach small local women's organisations and movements with limited absorptive capacity. The funds provide modest grants (USD 10 000-30 000) to these civil society actors that members or multilateral donors may be unable to directly support for administrative reasons (Wood and Fällman, 2019, p. 10[60]). Where members are averse to risks that they associate with direct support for partner country CSOs or to less-known civil society actors, pooled funding allows members to share these risks. Further, in partner countries where environments for civil society are less than enabling, multi-donor funds can demonstrate greater solidarity for civil society groups compared to individually funded programmes. If such funds take on an identity separate from the funding sources, this independent image can also help improve the fund's legitimacy.

Nonetheless, there are identified risks with multi-donor pooled funds of unintended consequences, among them displacement of alternative funding opportunities; narrowing of CSO access to interaction with members; their potential for being overly supply-driven, based on member-defined objectives; the crowding out of nascent CSOs; and the possibility such funds may generate competition rather than collaboration among CSOs (INTRAC, 2014, p. 21[59]; CIVICUS, 2015, p. 150[42]). Many of these risks can be mitigated with careful design, ongoing monitoring and member engagement. Specific mitigating strategies are discussed in a *Guidance Note for Danish Missions* developed by the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) and Danida (INTRAC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2014[61]).

In sum, more support should be provided directly to partner country CSOs and support needs to reach a diversity of civil society actors. Both of these actions are appropriate to strengthening civil society in partner countries. While it is commendable to integrate capacity development of partner country CSOs into CSO support, this should be designed to meet local CSO needs and not only programme implementation and monitoring needs. Multi-donor funds are another option, with potential pitfalls that need to be watched for and avoided.

1.7. Dialogue and consultation with CSOs and civil society

Existing guidance

One of the 12 lessons presented in the 2012 guidance, *Partnering with Civil Society*, calls on members to make their policy dialogue and consultations with CSOs more strategic, useful and meaningful (lesson 5) (OECD, 2012, p. 23[7]). Dialogue is mutually beneficial for CSOs and members. It allows members to tap into the knowledge, expertise and experience of CSOs, which can help to make members' policies and programmes more relevant, responsive and likely to achieve sustainable development results. For CSOs, dialogue provides a channel for information gathering and influencing. For both, it is a way to build mutual trust and accountability and to foster and maintain communication and connections beyond the funding relationship.

Engaging in dialogue with civil society is also integral to SDG 16, which addresses the need for responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making. Moreover, the type of multi-stakeholder partnerships called for in SDG 17 need to be grounded in dialogue inclusive of CSOs. Notably, the 2019 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government calls on OECD members to provide "equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted", to engage stakeholders "in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery", and to make specific efforts to reach out to the most "relevant,

vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society" (OECD, 2017[62]). Dialogue is a key transparency tool for members as part of their commitments to open governments.

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

The GPEDC 2019 progress report concludes that there is room for improvement in members' dialogue and consultation with CSOs on the design, implementation and monitoring of members' development co-operation policies and programmes at partner country level.[21] Though CSOs were consulted in the preparation of 75% of development partners' country strategies, multilateral development banks and United Nations (UN) agencies undertook consultations more often than did members (OECD/UNDP, 2016, p. 129[53]). CSOs in partner countries viewed, consultation with members as not systematic but rather episodic and unpredictable (OECD/UNDP, 2019, p. 130[30]). When dialogue does take place, these CSOs reported, the agendas are set by members rather than being jointly defined and inclusiveness is not achieved (OECD/UNDP, 2019, p. 130[30]). Anecdotal evidence also suggests a lack of co-ordination of dialogue with CSOs at partner country level; this can increase transaction costs of dialogue for CSOs and lead to dialogue fatigue (OECD/UNDP, 2019, p. 130[30]).[22]

Recent studies and evaluations point to gaps in the area of dialogue with CSOs at member country level as well. Abrahamson et al. (2019[63]), researchers for the London-based CSO network Bond, argue that DFID, in its relationships with CSOs, has moved away from an interactive partnership approach and towards a more transactional, contractual approach that is tied to funding agreements. This shift, they note, is partly responsible for blocking full implementation of the 2016 *Civil Society Partnership Review* pledge to increase regular, structured policy dialogue with CSOs (Abrahamson et al., 2019[63]; DFID, 2016, pp. 5, 11[48]).[23] A 2016 evaluation of Finland's programme-based support through CSOs noted that CSOs should have more opportunities for dialogue with the broader Ministry for Foreign Affairs beyond the Ministry's Civil Society Unit; this would enable CSOs to share information on the substantive issues they see in their day-to-day work in partner countries including civic space restrictions, which in turn could help to strengthen coherence in the Finnish response and interventions overall (Stage et al., 2016, pp. 20, 24, 26[64]). A generally positive review of the European Commission (EC) Policy Forum for Development (which takes place in Brussels and at partner country level) identified interest in more in-depth dialogue with greater possibility of actually impacting EC policies, and the need for participant selection criteria to ensure appropriate representativity, among other findings (Garcia, 2016, p. 2[65]).

There are numerous resources and examples of good practice in design and implementation of dialogue and in consultation with CSOs. The OECD DAC (2018[66]) Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and Civil Society Organisations, for instance, institutionalises the DAC's CSO consultations and outlines principles, mechanisms and follow-up steps. Also in 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in its *Guidelines for States on the Effective Implementation of the Right to Participate in Public Affairs*, published a series of practical recommendations for institutionalising participation and ensuring meaningful participation at all stages of decision making (UN, 2018[67]). The Task Team's 2019 *Guidance and Good Practice on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment* contains tips on how to make dialogue institutionalised, timely, accessible and inclusive and highlights the need for resourcing and capacity development to support CSO participation (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019[39]). A further example is a 2019 policy brief, developed by the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation and the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, calling for consultation approaches that reflect the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda such as human rights, participation and leaving no one behind, all of which can strengthen inclusivity (Wayne-Nixon et al., 2019[68])).

In sum, dialogue and consultation with CSOs are integral to members' commitments to openness and transparency. They also foster better and potentially more coherent development co-operation, foreign policies and programmes by taking advantage of CSOs' knowledge, expertise and experience including

on civic space challenges. Member dialogue with CSOs needs concerted attention so that it is systematic, predictable and adequately resourced. Aspects of good practice that require attention include joint agenda setting and a process of participant selection that ensures inclusion of varied civil society actors. Absent attention to good practice in dialogue, member policies and programmes risk losing relevance and credibility and members risk being seen as unaccountable to both CSOs and the people they represent.

1.8. Administrative requirements

Existing guidance

Partnering with Civil Society recommends that members work to minimise the administrative burden on themselves and on CSOs that is created by the sometimes onerous procedures and requirements related to proposals, funding applications, reporting and auditing (lesson 8) (OECD, 2012, p. 35[7]). When CSOs are caught up in meeting the varied requirements of multiple members that provide them support, valuable time and resources are not available for CSOs' core work and achievement of development results. The Grand Bargain also recognises the need to better manage the administrative burden associated with humanitarian funding. As delineated in paragraph 1 of workstream 9, dedicated to harmonising and simplifying reporting requirements, Grand Bargain adherents commit to maintain substantive reporting that is of high quality and also "lean enough to allow for the most efficient use of resources to assist people in need" (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2020[69]).

Partnering with Civil Society also urges members to reduce transaction costs, for example by ensuring their procedures are strategic, streamlined and flexible; providing multi-year core or programme-based funding; and adapting requirements to contribution size and risk level. Harmonising requirements across members, including through multi-donor pooled funding, is another strategy. Further, members are encouraged to use CSOs' own formats for proposals and reporting and to accept CSOs' own financial audits, where members have assessed these as adequate. Ideally, requirements would be designed to incorporate responsiveness to the priorities and approaches that CSO applicants have themselves identified with their partners and communities at partner country level. Being responsive to CSOs' priorities and approaches can not only reduce transaction costs but also enhance local ownership (lesson 7) (OECD, 2012, p. 31[7]).

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

Evidence suggests that both CSOs and members face ongoing heavy administrative burdens associated with funding for CSOs. Findings from a CONCORD survey indicate that while the European Union has taken steps to ease some of its procedures and requirements for funding CSOs, these remain "so complex and so numerous that for most organisations they are simply impenetrable" (CONCORD, 2017, p. 20[70]). A recent evaluation of New Zealand's CSO Partnerships Fund found that the process of concept appraisal and contracting was "resource-heavy and lengthy for some partners" (McGillivray et al., 2018, p. 49[71]). As noted by CIVICUS (2015, pp. 144, 152[42]), there is widespread concern that member funding applications and approval processes can be "lengthy and cumbersome" and that the necessity of complying with demanding administrative and reporting requirements drains CSO energies and resources. A CONCORD Sweden (2018, p. 10[23]) report suggests that especially in sensitive environments where civic space is challenged, members should build in flexibility to the requirements they impose on CSOs (e.g. on-site payments versus bank payments, oral versus written follow-up) to allow CSOs to remain focused on their operations and security.

A 2012 study of Norway's civil society support drew attention to the cascading of transaction costs from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) through its Norwegian CSO partners and again through to the partner country-level partners of these Norwegian CSOs (Abuom et al., 2012, pp. 6,

43[72]). European CSOs in the ACT Alliance recently set out to reduce the administrative burden on their counterparts in partner countries by harmonising their own requirements for proposals, reporting and contracts. They found themselves limited by the requirements placed on them by their funders, concluding that "detailed, strict and specific back donor requirements are the main challenge" and "need to be more harmonized" (ACT Alliance, 2019, p. 1[73]).

Members have taken steps towards harmonisation of requirements. Multi-donor pooled funds, for instance, emerged as a response to the aid effectiveness principle of co-ordination and harmonisation among members (OECD, 2010, pp. 111-112[5]). These funds not only can help to expand the reach of members' CSO support. They also are a means to manage administrative costs of CSO support, although they are not always effective in this regard if participating members maintain their own administrative requirements or the fund adopts the requirements of the member with the most rigid requirements (INTRAC, 2014, p. 5[59]; Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, 2014, p. 17[74]).

Beyond pooling, a Sida-led harmonisation initiative involving approximately 15 members sought to reduce transaction costs and promote methods of member support for CSOs that could enhance ownership (Sida, 2019, p. 23[37]). This initiative involved an extensive research process, consultation with CSOs and frank assessment by members of the degree to which harmonisation was possible. It led in 2013 to a Code of Practice on Donor Harmonisation comprised of the Key Principles for Harmonisation and Alignment, a Guideline for Operationalisation of the Key Principles, and a Tool for Commitment and Accountability (Sida, 2019, p. 26[37]). Though participating members appeared prepared to adhere to the Code, the Code continues to lack an institutional home for follow-up.

In sum, heavy administrative requirements are a burden both for members and for CSOs. For CSOs, the day-to-day demands of meeting members' many and varied requirements mean less time, energy and resources are available to dedicate to their core development work. These requirements are a distraction from the achievement of development results that cascade down to CSOs' partners at partner country level. Streamlining of each member's requirements and aligning these where feasible to CSOs' administrative systems can help to addressing the administrative burden for CSOs and members. Harmonisation of member requirements also needs attention, though multi-donor pooled funds are only a partial solution. Work that has already been done, reflected in the Code of Practice on Donor Harmonisation, needs to be revisited.

1.9. Monitoring for results and learning

Existing guidance

Members are under pressure to demonstrate – to their publics, parliaments and other government departments – that their ODA investments deliver development results. This is an understandable and necessary pressure. It is the ability to demonstrate results that helps to maintain buy-in for members' development assistance, whether through CSOs and otherwise. Further, the necessity of showing progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is reinvigorating interest in results management (Vähämäki and Verger, 2019, pp. 25-26[75]).

The 2012 *Partnering with Civil Society* guidance underscores the importance of demonstrating the results of members' funding for CSOs. But it calls for results that are realistic, relevant and useful to the CSO recipients of funding and, related to the Section 1.8 discussion of administrative requirements, it also calls for monitoring and reporting methods that are not overly burdensome (lesson 10) (OECD, 2012, p. 39[7]). Setting objectives and indicators jointly with CSOs, or even relying on CSO-defined indicators, can help to ensure this relevance and ownership. *Partnering with Civil Society* also encourages the use of monitoring, reporting and evaluations by members and by CSOs, not solely as a compliance tool but also for lesson

learning that then together inform the planning and implementation of initiatives (lesson 12) (OECD, 2012, p. 45[7]).

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

Much has been written about how an inflexible application of results-based management (RBM) can impede the effectiveness of members' work with CSOs. Not only can this increase transaction costs for CSOs and members. It also can hinder risk taking and innovation and favour quantitative, relatively quick-win results rather than the more complex and sometimes unpredictable institutional and social transformations needed for long-term sustainable change. See, for example, (Wood and Fällman, 2013, p. 149[45]; Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, pp. 7-8[41]; Vähämäki and Verger, 2019, pp. 5, 22[75]). These types of negative effects are reflected in a recent evaluation of Norad's support for Norwegian CSOs. According to the evaluation, RBM comes with a risk of "crowding out" intangible but possibly transformational results while potentially focusing on results that are less relevant to partner country CSOs and their constituencies and beneficiaries (Tjønneland et al., 2018, p. 55[54]). Elsewhere, rigid application of RBM is seen to risk crowding out more nascent CSOs or diverse civil society actors with limited results management experience (INTRAC, 2013, p. 5[58]). The Norwegian evaluation concluded that the increasing emphasis on delivering and documenting results fosters an instrumental approach by Norwegian CSOs, whereby they use their local CSO partners as programme implementers, rather than an intrinsic partnership approach for strengthening civil society in the long term (Tjønneland et al., 2018, p. 52[54]). According to the CIVICUS *2015 State of Civil Society Report*, new ways of measuring CSOs' contributions to development must be found due to the difficulty of proving results of CSO actions that contribute to structural change over time relative to discrete, measurable deliverables (CIVICUS, 2015, p. 152[42]).

The intended aim of the RBM method has always been to allow for iterative programme planning and implementation, i.e. to generate a process of learning from monitoring and adjusting accordingly throughout the programme cycle. As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (2015, p. 8[76]) outlined in its 2015 guidance to support RBM across the country's development co-operation, the use of information from results monitoring for the purposes of learning and improving performance is one of the RBM principles. However, Vähämäki and Verger (2019, p. 26[75]), in a recent OECD working paper on learning from RBM evaluations and reviews, conclude that members rarely use results information to inform decisions and provide programming direction, a conclusion that can presumably be extended to members' CSO programming.[24] The issue is not so much RBM per se, but how it is implemented (Vähämäki and Verger, 2019, p. 29[75]). An OECD DAC Evaluation Insights Working Paper noted that a "mechanistic" interpretation of RBM leads CSOs to use monitoring simply to tally results rather than as a tool for lessons learning to inform planning (INTRAC, 2013, p. 5[58]). Evidence also points to gaps in CSOs' capacity to develop sound theories of change and thus to monitor, and learn from, the impacts of CSOs' programmes (INTRAC, 2013, p. 4[58]).

Attention is increasingly focused on the need for results management approaches that are appropriate to the complexities of development and on the need for relevant, locally owned results. Theories of change are meant to be one such approach. A theory of change is akin to a logical framework analysis. The primary difference is that a theory of change is less linear, showing varied possible pathways to change and providing more analytical information as to why these pathways are anticipated (Bisits Bullen, 2014[77]). Adaptive management is also getting increased consideration as a new approach to results management. Central to this approach are a strong power analysis to inform planning and implementation; flexibility, adaptation and path adjustment based on learning in changing contexts; and a high level of trust between members and their implementing partners (Vähämäki and Verger, 2019, pp. 30, 32-33[75]).

Guidance and lessons learning on adaptive management approaches are available from varied sources including the Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice and Doing Development Differently, which since 2018 has been associated with a new Global Learning for Adaptive Management initiative.[25]

Lessons from member-funded CSOs seeking to implement adaptive management are also emerging, among them the Oxfam From Poverty to Power blog.[26] A recent open access issue of *The Foundation Review* contains insights on collaborative learning and adaptive management from various foundations' programmes that are applicable to members and the CSOs they support.[27] More generally, INTRAC maintains an online monitoring and evaluation resource, the M&E Universe, where short papers on various monitoring, evaluation and learning-related topics can be found.[28]

In sum, monitoring and evaluation is critically important for both members and CSOs to be able to demonstrate that ODA for CSOs is achieving development results. But when monitoring for results becomes less about assessing how transformative a CSO is and more about its compliance with the terms of an agreement, monitoring for results can have counterproductive effects. Overly rigid use of RBM can undermine the very capabilities members cite as reasons they choose to work with CSOs, such as the ability to innovate and take risks; be flexible and responsive to beneficiaries and constituencies on the ground and to changing contexts; and address complex institutional and social transformations needed for long-term sustainable change. Results management needs to be applied in the iterative, adaptive way it was intended to be used, whereby learning and course correction are integrated throughout. An adaptive management approach, inclusive of co-defined or CSO-defined indicators, has the potential to better assess CSOs' contributions to development that go beyond the kind of discrete, measurable outputs that may not even lead to long-term sustainable results.

As members continue to adjust and improve their results management approaches, drawing from the body of good practice and lessons-sharing resources available, investment in CSOs' capacity will continue to be needed.

1.10. Accountability and transparency of CSOs and members

Existing guidance

Partnering with Civil Society points to the need for increased accountability and transparency from members and CSOs alike, noting that accountability is not a one-way street with accountability required only of CSOs to members (lesson 11) (OECD, 2012, p. 43[7]). Relationships of accountability for results and for the ODA spent to achieve those results include CSO members, the beneficiaries and constituents of CSO programmes, and the publics in both member and partner countries. Transparency is needed in the processes and funding allocations of members and CSOs alike if CSOs are to avoid being seen as opaque or poorly managed.

Insights from the literature: Ongoing challenges and lessons

CSO accountability and perceptions of their accountability are critical to their effectiveness, whether as independent development actors or as implementers for members. Studies show there is disillusionment with CSOs due to actual and perceived accountability shortfalls. For example, the 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer found trust in NGOs dropped from the previous year (Edelman Holdings, 2017[78]).[29] There is a sense that CSOs are overly focused on the pursuit of funding opportunities and are losing touch with publics (Goldsmith, 2015[79]). These perceptions echo those reported in the 2011 Civil Society Index, which found CSOs were increasingly seen as lacking the legitimacy that derives from connection and solidarity with local partners and beneficiaries (CIVICUS, 2011[80]).

In the development co-operation domain, concern has grown over the tendency of CSOs to prioritise their relationship of upward accountability to their funders, which for a vast majority of CSOs are members.[30] Yet to build and maintain the public trust that is so critical to the legitimacy of individual CSOs and of the civil society sector, it is necessary to have effective CSOs that are invested in accountability at the partner country level where they work. This in turn can also strengthen the case against the type of regulatory

restrictions by partner country governments that shrink the space for CSOs to operate.[31] In effect, CSO effectiveness, accountability and transparency can be seen as the "other side of the enabling environment coin" (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019, p. 13[39]).

Members' accountability focus tends to be directed towards home – to their institutions, wider governments and the public. Yet members cannot neglect accountability and transparency at partner country level. Paying attention to accountability and transparency at partner country level should begin with a solid understanding of the fact that how members support and engage with CSOs has the potential to negatively affect CSOs' accountability in partner countries. This study's discussion of members' financial support, administrative and results monitoring requirements, in particular, aims to help build this understanding.

CSOs' accountability needs strengthening in various ways. For example, the GPEDC 2019 progress report highlights the need for more and more inclusive co-ordination among CSOs, which not only helps to foster unity in the sector but can make interface with governments more effective while also reducing duplication (OECD/UNDP, 2019, pp. 67-68[30]). The use of participatory methods, empowerment-focused programming, constituency feedback and means such as human rights-based approaches can help to foster CSOs' accountability at partner country level (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019, pp. 26-34[39]). An important aspect of accountability in the current development landscape relates to prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by CSO staff and volunteers. The 2019 DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance is a framework to support, guide and incentivise governments to take more robust action to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, including in their capacity as donors (OECD DAC, 2019[81]). The Recommendation is intended to assist both members and implementing partners, including CSOs, to align their actions to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. As the Recommendation is implemented and monitored, evidence and lessons will become available as to whether and how members' CSO partners are applying the Recommendation standards.[32]

Self-regulation is another important means for CSOs to address their accountability, individually and collectively. While it is the subject of considerable literature, there is limited member promotion. One resource for effective, self-managed CSO self-regulation is the Task Team's *2019 Guidance and Good Practice on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment*, which includes tips on consultative design, monitoring for compliance and sanctioning of non-compliance (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019, p. 26[39]). Global-level initiatives promoting self-regulation include the Global Standard for CSO Accountability (Global Standard for CSO Accountability, n.d.[82]) and the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness (CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, 2018[83]). Literature that covers specific initiatives from which lessons can be drawn includes, among others, (Sidel, 2010[84]; Gugerty, 2010[85]; CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, 2016[86]) on various countries and (Prakash and Gugerty, 2010[87]) on various countries and sectors.

Members also need to demonstrate transparency at partner country level. The GPEDC 2019 progress report (OECD/UNDP, 2019[30]) shows there is considerable discrepancy between the perspectives of development partners, CSOs and governments on the extent to which development partners make information about their CSO support available to the public and to partner country governments. The perception is that information at the aggregate level of flows is made available more than details on partners, programmes and sectors, for example, with the majority of development partners not seen as making available information on their support for member country or international CSOs available (OECD/UNDP, 2019, pp. 136-137[30]).

These perspectives are echoed in a multi-member evaluation of support for civil society which concludes that detailed information about members' policies and support for CSOs tends to be neither available nor accessible at partner country level (Itad Ltd and COWI, 2012, p. 104[41]). While details on some funding flows should be treated with discretion to avoid placing CSO recipients that may be working on sensitive issues at risk in restrictive environments, greater transparency regarding flows would be beneficial. It could

not only improve perceptions of member accountability and transparency at partner country level but might also lead to more positive perceptions of accountability of the CSOs that members support.

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is sometimes touted as the solution to the transparency challenge. Although the number of CSOs reporting to IATI on the flows they receive from members is increasing, the dataset is currently not easily disaggregated to provide a picture of members' CSO flows, programmes and locations at partner country level (Ceelen, Wood and Huesken, 2019, p. 42[39]).[33]

In sum, implementation of accountability and transparency practices by CSOs and by members, especially focused at partner country level, is not simply the right thing to do but also an important strategy towards countering restrictions on CSOs. Lack of both accountability and of connection to partner country constituencies and publics leaves CSOs vulnerable. Members need to be more fully aware that they share some responsibility with CSOs for CSOs' accountability at partner country level and should ensure that the ways they support and engage with CSOs do no harm to CSOs' partner country-level accountability. Members would benefit from referring to the findings and action points of this study to self-assess whether their policies and practices of CSO support and engagement are as conducive as possible to reinforce CSOs' accountability at partner country level.

Moreover, members can support CSOs in numerous ways to strengthen their accountability, with emphasis on downward accountability at partner country level. These range from promoting CSO co-ordination and investing in CSO self-regulation to implementing standards of the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance.

At the same time, transparency regarding members' country-specific flows for CSOs is a longstanding request of partner country stakeholders and particularly but not exclusively of partner country governments. However, such transparency is not sufficiently developed.

Chapter 2, building on this discussion of ongoing challenges in how members work with civil society, presents findings from the surveys of members and CSO networks conducted between November 2018 and March 2019.

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Notes

[1] These calculations are based on 2017 constant prices.

[2] The OECD figure on private contributions from CSOs is considered to under-represent the total amount of such contributions, as the figures are reported not from CSOs themselves but from DAC members. See (OECD, 2011, p. 10[88]) at http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Final_How_DAC_members_work_with_CSOs ENGLISH.pdf.

[3] These commitments are reflected in the GPEDC monitoring framework Indicator 2: CSOs operate within an environment that maximises their engagement in and contribution to development. See (GPEDC, 2018[93]) at http://effectivecooperation.org/pdf/2018_Monitoring_Guide_National_Coordinator.pdf.

[4] 1Part IAnnex A presents additional information on sources and methods used for this study.

[5] The civil society sector is referred to variously as the non-profit sector, the voluntary sector, the third sector, or the non-governmental organisation or NGO sector.

[6] For additional discussion on informality and fluidity, see Youngs (2015[56]) at https://eba.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Rapport-2015-01-med-framsida_f%C3%B6r_web.pdf. See also Smith (2010[11]) on "hybridization" at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2010.06.003.

[7] See, for example, Franklin (2017[91]) for a summary discussion of the rise of community foundations and philanthropy that mobilise human and financial capital towards improving lives and livelihoods, at https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1382&context=tfr.

[8] See, for example, the OECD (2019[97]) report regarding aid for CSOs at https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-for-CSOs-2019.pdf. Also see the OECD (2018[92]) *Development Co-operation Report* at https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/dcr-2018-en.

[9] The surveys conducted for this study and the study itself use the term "partner country" to denote a country receiving official development assistance. The term "developing country" is occasionally used in this document when a source uses that term. For example, DAC reporting directives refer to developing country-based NGOs.

[10] Partner country-based CSOs can also play this intermediary, donor-type role, although this role is typical for member country-based and international CSOs.

[11] On the issue of civic space and technology, see the OECD (2020[36]) Foresight Policy Paper, "Digital transformation and the futures of civic space to 2030".

[12] It is widely recognised that not all of civil society or all CSOs hold and/or operate by what might be considered positive social values. See, for instance, OECD (2010, p. 26[5]) at https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264056435-en; Edwards (2009, pp. 53-54[10]); and paragraph 3 in Sogge (2019[57]) at https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/is-civic-space-really-shrinking-and-if-so-whos-to-blame/. However, this is often forgotten in the discussion on civil society and CSOs in development co-operation. Legitimacy claims cannot be based on normative values alone.

[13] Note that GPEDC monitoring assesses progress of what it refers to as development partners, which include not only DAC members but also multilateral development banks, UN agencies and other development co-operation providers.

[14] The OECD (2014, p. 39[90]) publication, *Engaging with the Public: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews and the Network of DAC Development Communicators*, encourages members to leverage partnerships to convey development messages, pointing to CSOs as important strategic partners in this task. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/12%20Lessons%20Engaging%20with%20the%20public.pdf.

[15] Monitoring of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus will primarily be undertaken through the existing DAC peer review mechanism and supplemented by case studies and the sharing of good practice through the DAC's subsidiary body, the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (OECD DAC, 2019, p. 11[31]).

[16] This perspective is largely shared by partner country governments, though development partners' inputs paint a different picture of much greater availability of funding that is either core support or is co-defined between CSOs and development partners. See Part II, page 134, of the GPEDC *2019 Progress Report* at https://doi.org/10.1787/26f2638f-en.

[17] This evaluation was initiated by the International Donor Group on Civil Society and was commissioned by three of the group's members: Danida, the Austrian Development Agency and Sida.

[18] This issue is common to core support for institutions other than CSOs. Members have raised similar concerns about core support to multilateral institutions, for instance reporting that with less ability to be directive in their funding for multilaterals, they are less able to measure results achieved. See (OECD DAC, 2019, p. 6[31]) at https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

[19] Calls for proposals are rarely used to administer core support *to* CSOs.

[20] Launched in 2016, the Grand Bargain is an agreement among the largest funders and humanitarian aid organisations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action.

[21] The *Progress Report* is based on submissions from partner country-level actors (e.g. governments, CSOs, members and other official donors including multilateral agencies). Its findings therefore do not reflect what members might be doing to engage CSOs in dialogue in member countries.

[22] The European Union's dialogue to develop civil society roadmaps, discussed in Chapter 3, is an example of dialogue co-ordination.

[23] Abrahamson et al. (2019[63]) cite the United Kingdom government's preoccupation with Brexit as an additional, significant impediment to DFID-CSO dialogue. See https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-documents/bond_ensuring_civil_societys_voice_is_heard-online_april_2019_update.pdf.

[24] Note that the research for the working paper drew not only on member evaluations and reviews but also those of multilateral agencies. See (Vähämäki and Verger, 2019[75]) at http://www.oecd.org/dac/results-development/docs/Results-Workshop-Learning-from-RBM-evaluations-FINAL.pdf.

[25] For information on the Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice, see https://twpcommunity.org. A discussion of the Global Learning for Adaptive Management and Doing Development Differently initiatives is available at https://www.odi.org/projects/2918-global-learning-adaptive-management-initiative-glam.

[26] The Oxfam From Poverty to Power blog is at https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/. See also a report on Christian Aid's experience with adaptive management at https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12387.pdf.

[27] See https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/.

[28] The M&E Universe webpage is at https://embed.kumu.io/4130478e59248ce0f8871377a7fb7c4e#me-universe.

[29] Though NGOs remained the most trusted institution, their trust ranking was virtually the same as that of business and higher than media and government.

[30] See, among others, (Ebrahim, 2003[96]) at https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(03)00014-7; (Burger and Seabe, 2014[94]) at https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-1-4614-8262-8_6; and (Atia and Herrold, 2018[95]) at https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-9953-6.

[31] Issues related to how members' policies and practices affect partner country governments' attitude towards and treatment of CSOs, beyond a discussion of how members support CSOs, are beyond the remit of this study. These issues include the changing geopolitical landscape, and thus the degree of members' policy influence, and increasingly competing priorities such as investment and trade relative to human rights and democratisation. See, for example, (Wood, 2016[89]) at https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2016.1188882 and (Wood, 2019[21]) at https://doi.org/10.22215/etd/2019-m17011.

[32] An Action Plan for such monitoring is under development by the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Team in its work with the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GenderNet). Monitoring will be done with a multi-stakeholder group, the DAC Reference Group on Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. The Action Plan on Monitoring and Learning to Support Implementation of the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance includes a menu of monitoring and learning areas. Among these are peer learning workshops on key pillars, voluntary reviews, a toolkit for reform, regular surveys of member progress, and the existing DAC peer review mechanism. More in-depth and frequent monitoring and review were agreed upon within the first five years following adoption of the Recommendation. The Recommendation is available at https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5020.

[33] According to the IATI dashboard, as of September 2019, more than 670 NGOs were reporting to IATI, approximately 100 more than were reporting in October 2018. See the IATI dashboard Summary Statistics at http://publishingstats.iatistandard.org/summary_stats.html#h_narrative.