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Impact Assessment of the Civil Society Development Plan

A SHORT SUMMARY • JUNE 2019 •

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The initiator and contracting authority was the Ministry of the Interior of Estonia

The study was carried out by Tallinn University, Institute of Baltic Studies, Turu-uuringute AS

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Introduction

From autumn 2018 to spring 2019, an analysis of the impact of the “Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020” implementation was undertaken. The analysis consists of two parts: a survey of NGOs and qualitative analysis. This short summary provides an overview of the main results of the impact analysis and the most recent trends in Estonian civil society. In addition, we outline the main changes in the operational capacities of NGOs during the last ten years. The short summary concludes with recommendations for addressing the current problems in Estonian civil society.

Civil society development in Estonia is supported and directed by the “Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020”. An analysis of the Development Plan was commissioned by the Government Office Strategy Unit. Results of the analysis enable a better understanding of the processes in civil society and the efficiency of the measures designed for civil society development. The impact assessment was funded from the Cohesion Fund 2014-2020 Operational Programme, “Administrative Capacity”, measure 12.2, “Developing the quality of policy making”. The commissioner and main partner of the impact assessment was the Ministry of the Interior of Estonia.

The study group comprised experts from Tallinn University, the Institute of Baltic Studies and Turu-uuringute AS and included (in alphabetical order): Maarja Käger, Nastja Pertsjonok, Erle Rikmann, Merit Tatar, Vaike Vainu, Tanel Vallimäe, and Peeter Vihma. Martin Aidnik, Aivar Joorik, Margarita Kazjulja, Jelena Malõgina, Tea Pohl, Koidu Saia, Luke Stange, and Karl Viilmann contributed to the study or helped to prepare the report.

1. Overview of the survey

The target group of the NGO survey were the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) registered in Estonia. Foundations, housing associations, horticultural and community cooperatives were not included in the survey.

The survey was conducted from 7 November until 6 December (2018). Data was collected using an online survey (phone calls were made where necessary). The sample was formed as a stratified sample – all registered NGOs regionally stratified and in each stratum a random selection was made. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 4,992 NGOs, and 1,121 participated (the participation rate was therefore 22,5%).

The current situation of NGOs

The non-profit sector in Estonia is sustainable. This is made clear by a relative lack of changes in the number of NGOs founded before 2005. 2005-2009 was the time period when the highest number of new NGOs were founded (the period of economic boom, subsequently followed by crisis). NGOs founded during these years have been the most unstable and short-term. NGOs founded during the last four years make up one fifth of the total number of NGOs.

The NGOs’ main fields of activity have remained the same during the last eight years. The most widespread are leisure, recreation, sport and arts/culture.

Fifteen per cent of NGOs operate exclusively at the local level, 23% more broadly (but not at the national level); 22% of NGOs operate at the national level and 36% internationally. NGOs that operate at the national or international level are larger, with a long history, with either a high number of members or staff.

Both the number of employed staff and the ability to mobilize volunteers are among the measures that are most indicative of an NGOs' operational capacity. If earlier studies showed a decrease in the percentage of NGOs with employed staff (in the period between 2004-2014 the percentage dropped from 28 to 21%), then in 2018, this trend stopped – 23% of NGOs have employed staff. The percentage of NGOs with volunteers has dropped compared to the last study – from 68% down to 53%.

Membership of NGOs and the internal functioning of organizations

Similarly to other European countries, Estonian NGOs' memberships are decreasing. According to the survey, the recently founded NGOs have a smaller membership compared to eight years ago. The membership of older organizations is also decreasing. Active members make up on average 50% of the membership (40% in the two earlier studies). Recently founded NGOs have a somewhat higher number of active members.

Women continue to be more represented than men in the field of non-governmental organizations. Forty-five per cent of NGOs have more active female members than male members; 28% have more active male members; and 26% of NGOs have a balanced active membership in terms of gender. Health care and representation of social groups are the two most female dominated fields of activity, while fishing and hunting are the two most male dominated fields.

The interest of NGOs to recruit new members has declined – 41% of NGOs do not look for new members. Twenty-five per cent of NGOs were not engaged in recruiting new members in the two previous studies. This trend can be partly explained by a growth in the number of NGOs with a small membership. It can also mean that a large membership is not seen as a priority, or that possibilities to expand an organization's activities are seen as limited.

Similar to 2014, more than half of NGOs have two or three members on the board; and in more than 90% of NGOs, board members are not paid for their work.

Looking at the three previous studies, the number of NGOs with a written development plan has been steadily in decline. This is partly the case because of the increasing number of small NGOs (few such NGOs have a development plan), but NGOs with an average size display a similar tendency as well.

Advice and non-material support

Sixty-eight per cent of NGOs have received advice and non-material support during the last four years. Twenty-eight per cent have not needed advice; and 4% have not found advice or support. Friends and other NGOs have been the most frequent source of advice.

Fifteen per cent of NGOs have received advice from consultants at the County Development Centers (CDC). Ninety-two per cent of those who were advised at the Centers considered it useful. There are three main reasons for turning down this service: half due to a lack of need, a third due to a lack of knowledge of the services offered; and one-fifth due to a preconception or negative attitude towards the County Development Centers.

Compared to 2014, NGOs need less help with writing projects. There is, however, an increased need for support and advice when it comes to developing an organization's activities. Almost two-thirds of those who responded felt no need for training and support services.

Networking and work relations

Networking and cooperation between NGOs have decreased in the last eight years. The percentage of NGOs that are part of umbrella organizations has dropped from 46% to 39%; and the percentage of NGOs with stable cooperation partners has dropped from 89% to 69%.

One factor that explains these changes is the growing number of NGOs with a small membership. On the other hand, the survey indicates that funding has concentrated in the hands of larger NGOs, while smaller NGOs face an increasingly competitive funding situation. Difficulties with funding and cooperation partners have in some cases given rise to passivity and fewer public oriented activities.

The most frequent cooperation partners are the local government and non-governmental organizations. Amongst the most common examples of cooperation are joint projects and sourcing funding from one another. Large NGOs with paid staff are engaged in cooperation the most often. NGOs, where the working language is Russian, tend to have more limited partnerships.

The activities of NGOs in society

Of the activities oriented towards society, NGOs have the most experiences in contributing to local life (66% report such experiences), expressing opinions on issues related to their field of activity in the media (42%), and protecting the interests of members and target groups (38%). A smaller percentage of NGOs have experiences in sectoral policy making (31%) and delivering public services (30% report such experiences and 19% of NGOs delivered public services in 2018).

Looking at the activities included in the survey form, NGOs are the least experienced in organizing campaigns (18%) and initiating a law amendment draft (15%).

Of the NGOs founded before 2015, 44% have changed the services they offer; 38% have developed their services; and 11% have started to offer new services. Twenty-two per cent of NGOs have expanded their range of services; 15% have increased the scale of previously offered services; and 12% have started to offer services to new target groups.

Fifteen per cent of NGOs have come up with new solutions during the last four years — or they have started to offer services that are new in the Estonian context or for their target group. Based on the explanation given in the survey form, it is possible to infer that the number of NGOs engaging in social innovation is somewhat smaller because not all the respondents understood the question in a similar way.

Awareness of the civic initiative documents

Of the civic initiative documents, the document that NGOs are the most aware of is the Estonian Civil Society Development Plan (58%). There is less familiarity with the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept, Good Practice of Engagement, and with the Code of Ethics for Estonian Non-Profit Organizations (47%-48% report familiarity). Even more unfamiliar are the Funding of the Civil Society Organizations and the good practice of collecting donations (39-40% are familiar). Less than half of those

who have heard of these have read them. Few NGOs have drawn on the civic initiative documents in their organizational activities. Awareness of these documents has declined since the 2014 study.

Funding of NGOs

The gross revenue of NGOs has slightly increased compared to the year 2013. Almost half of the NGOs have a turnover that is under EUR 6,500, but the number has dropped from 54% in 2013 to 48%.

The percentage of NGOs with their own income has increased from 49% in 2013 to 57%. Forty-three per cent of NGOs had up to EUR 6,500 in their own revenue in 2017 (it was 38% in 2013), and 14% over EUR 6,500. The main source of revenue was from selling services.

NGOs' views on their economic sustainability are similar to the study done in 2014: 30% regard their economic sustainability good or very good, 50% regard it sufficient and 12% regard it bad or very bad. Approximately one tenth of respondents lack a clear opinion.

The past three studies indicate that the sources of funding for NGOs has become more limited. State funds, foundations and government agencies are the sources of revenue that have decreased the most since the 2013 study. Twenty-nine per cent of NGOs received all their funding from one source in 2017, 23% from two sources and 33% from three or more sources (16% lacked income in 2017). Membership fees were considered the most important source of funding for 30% of NGOs that had an income in 2017; the second was economic activity (20%), support from local government (19%), support from government agencies (10%) and support from state funds and foundations (8%). The number of NGOs that have economic activity as their main source of income has increased since 2014.

Half of NGOs have received help or support from local government during the last four years, whilst government agencies have assisted 37%. Compared to 2014, the share of NGOs applying for funding has decreased. (The only exception being the Ministry of Culture – its share has not changed compared to four years ago). Views on funding opportunities from the state were generally more favourable than in 2014. For instance, respondents noted there was more clarity about 'funding purposes', as well as believing there to be a more equal treatment of applicants.

Eighty-eight per cent of NGOs have heard of the National Foundation of Civil Society (NFCS), compared to 90% in 2014. Nineteen per cent of NGOs have submitted a funding application (compared to 20% in 2014).

Russian-speaking NGOs

Eight per cent of NGOs have Russian as their main working language (6% in 2014). Compared to Estonian speaking NGOs, these organizations have fewer cooperative relationships and they apply for funding less frequently. Their income base is more limited as well. This is partly explained by the fields of activity of Russian speaking NGOs; but it also has to do with their lack of information and low expectations of applications. A lack of information or translations in Russian is likely to be a factor for this. Representatives of these NGOs are more pessimistic when speaking about the economic prospects of their organizations. In addition, Russian-speaking NGOs have been less active in developing services, recruiting volunteers and spreading written information among its members.

2. Overview of the KODAR implementation plan analysis

The Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020 (KODAR) aims to strengthen civic associations and promote a socially active populace. It contributes to governance aims in “[d]eveloping civic initiative and participatory democracy through the partnership of public power and civic associations”.¹ With a further three sub-aims, there are nine measures to be implemented, with a budget of EUR 22 802 225 13 million to be spent between 2015-2022. Additional contributions will be made from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, “Integrating Estonia 2020”, “Administrative Capacity”. **The intervention logic of KODAR 2015-2020 is described in its implementation plan.**

This assessment investigated **the impact of the activities of KODAR with a keen eye on its aims**. Its aims, measures and activities were considered, and the suitability of planned activities were assessed. Different measures and activities were analysed in order to find out which of them have been more successful in achieving its aims and sub-aims.

The **first sub-aim** of KODAR 2015-2020 is to diversify participation and cooperation. Moreover, improving involvement and strategic cooperation, along with developing supportive attitudes in civic education are stated as objectives. This assessment indicated the contribution of KODAR to achieving the sub-aim 1 measures to be rather marginal. It is difficult to quantify given the activities of sub-aim 1 depend almost entirely on the realization of other state development plans and programmes. This is not necessarily a problem because cooperation between developers has been generally good; but it entails continuing cooperation and shared responsibility between ministries. All the aim 1 measures and activities should be continued. Furthermore, the capacity for local governments to develop civil society should be prioritized.

The second sub-aim contributes to social innovation and awareness of social entrepreneurship. This is achieved by increasing the ability of NGOs to raise their own revenue — improving their sustainability and organizational capacity. A bureaucratic environment more conducive to NGOs is also declared to be necessary for the realization of this sub-aim. Considering the activities, one can infer that KODAR’s contribution to achieving the measures of sub-aim 2 is more significant compared to sub-aim 1. Most of its **budget is administered by the National Foundation of Civil Society and is spent on the social innovation competition.**

The third sub-goal is developing support services and development programmes which support the influence and development of NGOs. This includes the aim to increase the financial position of NGOs, giving them greater capacity to recruit workers and volunteers. This is most expensive sub-aim — capacity and environment measures in particular can be costly. Most of the funding for measures is administered by the National Foundation of Civil Society.

Based on the chapters 4.1-4.3 in the full report, it is evident that the measures and sub-aims of KODAR support the realization of its general aim. **However, the progress of the sub-aims has not been as fast as expected**, even if most of the activities have been completed or in progress. KODAR received some criticism. Various respondents noted that **the activities could be more productive, but they should be continued for the sake of the development of civil society**. There was a perceived lack of coordination and cohesion between different activities, opportunities and involvement. There

¹ The Ministry of the Interior. (2015). The Development Plan of Estonian Civil Society 2015-2020. Accessible at: https://www.siseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/dokumendid/Arengukavad/kodanikuuhiskonna_arengukava_2015-2020_0.pdf.

was a suggestion that KODAR lacked awareness of NGOs and civil society more generally. Concerns were raised about social innovation, the availability of funding and transparency. There was consensus that several aspects of the work environment of NGOs have improved since 2015. **Most of the activities of KODAR are viewed as necessary.** The assessment mapped development needs both in measures and planned activities which would help to achieve the general aim of KODAR; it is recommended that these are also considered in the Civil Society Programme 2021-2030.

The assessment made clear that KODAR's sub-aims consist of many detailed activities which at times duplicate each other and require responsibility from different parties. The implementation plan of KODAR ought to have a clearer structure and focus. Themes, for which there are no financial resources, should be articulated more generally. **In order to avoid duplication in the future and achieve the aims, indicators and activities should be mapped out with greater clarity in KODAR.** It is necessary to identify what resources are required to address the most pressing challenges to meeting its objectives. There needs to be a provision of plans with detailed steps that still has the flexibility to deal with a wide range of situations. To bring greater clarity in the KODAR implementation plan reports, activities and indicators need to be more closely aligned. Avoiding activities with zero costs would also be helpful in this regard. Such activities are confusing in the plan: they raise questions about the feasibility of activities as well as about how responsibility is shared.

When putting together a new civil society programme, it is recommended that similar activities are **drawn together**, including planning. The measures in the 2018 KODAR implementation plan entail arranging development activities, putting together programmes, undertaking analyses, proposing amendments for the operational environment, as well as activities that stem from these amendments. **These reforms would help to track activities and ensure there is clear accountability for activities.** On the other hand, it expands the scope of the implementation plan and spreads responsibility. As measures and indicators can contribute to more than one sub-aim, there needs to be much greater clarity in order to **avoid duplication and fragmented delegation of responsibility.** Beyond KODAR, these issues are common to other development plans, as well as in the operations of structural funds.

The new civil society programme ought to include feasible and well thought through indicators. If possible, the indicators should be connected to the existing registers. Even if in the future, larger sets of register data become available, periodic studies remain relevant in order to map the developments in the field. The results and suggestions of the assessment are elaborated on in the KODAR implementation plan impact assessment report.

3. Overview of the roles of NGOs in Estonia

In the qualitative study, interviews were conducted with state and local government officials and with representatives of NGOs and experts. They were asked about the roles that NGOs have in society. The respondents do not consider one role to be more important than others; they do, however, state that **civic education and advocacy** are particularly important roles of NGOs.

The following critical issues can be raised when discussing the NGOs roles in Estonia.

The Estonian state could strengthen NGOs by offering more **advocacy training** and counselling services. More NGOs need to be **made aware of the importance** of these issues. Increasing the capacity

of state institutions in these areas could greatly **improve their cooperation in policy-making** with the NGO sector.

Local governments should have a better understanding of the **additional value** that NGOs can offer in providing public services in certain fields. The ability of NGOs themselves to explain the value of what they offer is limited. Their **image as service providers** needs to improve as well.

It is necessary to consider what **lifelong learning means in civic education** and how it should be facilitated at the state level. In addition, the state should give greater support to activities that strengthen **local democracy** — this includes greater financial support.

NGOs and foundations have recently gained wider attention due to taking on a leading role in public campaigns. However, some rhetoric can be unhelpful and even inflammatory. There ought to be greater emphasis on the need for measured, **rational debate**. To support vulnerable NGOs that may be caught up in fractured debate, relevant training and counselling should be provided by the state.

NGOs have gradually become an increasingly **credible partner to the state**. In light of this fact, the study has the following recommendations: attention needs to be devoted to **internal democracy** of NGOs involved in policy-making; the work of umbrella organizations and representative bodies needs to become more **transparent**. Strategic partners need to have mechanisms with which to obtain and prove **legitimacy** in terms of having a stable relationship with a target group, their own members and NGOs working in other fields.

4. Overview of the role of County NGO consultants

The Network of County Development Centres was founded in 2003. It is a network of county organizations which offer support services to NGOs. In addition, it offers civic initiatives as well as counselling to new businesses and local governments. Our analysis showed that the influence of County NGO consultants on civil society is positive. **The desired target level of client satisfaction and problem solving has been achieved**. Both target groups (NGOs) and service providers are satisfied with the arrangement and management of service.

NGOs consultants are currently important for county level NGOs which contribute to regional development, as well as for new NGOs. Their work currently has no parallel, so it plays a vital role. The challenge is to provide similar services for more established NGOs. The service funding has stayed the same for a long period of time, and consultants have had to reduce their workload. **Consultants working with Russian-speaking NGOs are especially overburdened**. The service should be developed with new forms of counselling — coaching and co-visioning training. Consultants ought to be offered professional training and given more funding. In addition, the basic skills of consultants need attention. There is no formal authority providing qualification to consultants in Estonia.

The administrative reform has created new challenges in the organization of work which needs to be addressed by the state. In order to find an appropriate solution, different parties — local governments, the Network of County Development Centres, the Estonian Village Movement, Leader — need to come together and engage in a dialogue.

5. Analysis of the activities of the National Foundation of Civil Society

Part of the study involved an analysis of the National Foundation of Civil Society's (NFCS) activities. The Foundation is one of the main implementors of KODAR and administers a majority of the funding in the field. The aims of the NFCS and the Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020 (KODAR) support and complement each other. Both are based on the Development Conception of Estonian Civil Society. The main aim of the NFCS is to improve the operational capacity of NGOs; the main aims of KODAR are to foster vibrant NGOs with a strong operational capacity and socially active citizens.

Our analysis shows that people are familiar with the NFCS, and that it is an important organization for NGOs. The NFCS is regarded highly. The activities included in KODAR, which are connected to the NFCS, have all been carried out and mostly with considerable success. The NFCS is also regarded highly as a provider of funds. NGOs expect that funds available to them would be allocated by different funders on a similar basis or through the NFCS. Participants in our study expect similar trust from other funding bodies and local governments. Respondents claimed that local governments need to provide funding for the development of NGOs themselves — not just for funding events and activities.

NGOs that receive support from the NFCS are comparatively more advanced in terms of their operational capacity. It is, however, not possible to determine within the parameters of this study, whether it is the NFCS support that determines the difference in the operational capacity. It is likely that NGOs which turn to the NFCS for support are already more advanced. Our qualitative study shows that the NFCS is inaccessible to NGOs which are either smaller, operate at a local level or are at an early stage of their development. Such NGOs struggle with other funding bodies as well. Lack of flexibility in funding is seen as a problem by larger NGOs, too. If a greater social influence mediated by innovation is desirable, then NGOs with a certain level of development need support that provides a future outlook. Funding is considered to be the biggest problem of the NFCS: its funding budget has not changed despite inflation. All interview participants declared that the NFCS should have more funding. This would enable either more NGOs to access the NFCS funding or would guarantee more funding for long-term activities which are deemed a priority.

Extra funding opportunities for the NFCS should be determined in the new Civil Society Programme 2021-2030. The NFCS should stand for the diversity of civil society. This includes supporting NGOs of different sizes and levels of development. Focusing exclusively on advanced NGOs is not in line with the aims of KODAR. The NFCS does engage with smaller NGOs as a coordinator of the Network of County Development Centres. However, here the division of roles and the intended aims are not always very clear. If the NFCS continues with advanced NGOs, then the development centres need to have the means to engage with grassroots level organizations. As a coordinator of the network, the NFCS needs to focus more on network development. It is a priority to work on improving the operational capacity of NGOs. Such work ought to have positive consequences for the main activities of the NGOs, as well as for the quality of the services that they provide. Russian-speaking NGOs need more support with writing their applications. In addition, they need assistance which would help them cooperate more with each other as well as with Estonian speaking NGOs. The NFCS itself needs work on its operational capacity. In particular, its impact assessment system should be improved. The first steps have been taken in this direction.

The complete analysis of the NFCS, together with suggestions, can be found in the final report in the chapter, "Analysis of the activities of [the] National Foundation of Civil Society".

Main development needs of Estonian civil society and some recommendations

The complete version of the report detailing the development needs and recommendations can be found in the full report.

1. There is a lack of clarity as to the roles played by stakeholders in influencing the development of civil society

Proposals

- To map the actors active in the field, including formal and informal networks, their aims, tasks and competences. Roles of different parties ought to be clearly determined and, when necessary, resources for tasks provided should be allocated.
- To oversee that adequate (financial) resources are available to parties in different roles, as well as foster opportunities for cooperation. Furthermore, a good balance should be kept between providing operating grants and other growth/development opportunities.
- Ensure support for the diversity of NGOs.

2. NGOs lack of human resources and limited cooperation

Proposals

- The role of the Ministry of the Interior should be more clearly determined with respect to supporting and instructing networks.
- To offer NGOs more public recognition.
- To support the creation of “NGO houses”.
- To support the growth of NGOs’ operational capacity in involving volunteers through counselling, mentoring, coaching and training.

3. Civic education and local democracy

Proposals

- To place greater emphasis on the value of civic education.
- To include more media channels and different forms of activity for the purpose of raising awareness and/or increase the support for the awareness raising efforts of strategic partners.
- To support activities that foster the idea of participatory local democracy, including cooperation between NGOs and the public sector outside larger cities.

4. The advocacy capacity of NGOs

Proposals

- To offer greater state funding and support for NGOs who provide advocacy in the form of coaching, training, etc.
- To improve the involvement capacity and efficiency of advocacy of umbrella organizations

5. The capacity of the state to support advocacy groups

Proposals

- To continue collaborative events.
- To raise the efficiency of collaboration coordinators' work and to strengthen their role in ministries; to encourage coordinators to take more initiative.
- To introduce simple forms of involvement (for instance surveys, citizen forums, brainstorming events) which are suitable for local or less professional NGOs.
- To continue local government level involvement projects and share the results of successful projects with other local governments.

6. Tools which help participation and involvement in policy making

Proposals

- To raise awareness of participation in NGOs, local governments as well as government institutions.
- To provide adequate training to ensure NGOs are as effective as possible
- To guarantee the sustainability of environment (for example: Rahvaalgatus.ee).
- To support and develop the digital capacity of NGOs, including the capacity to use and develop new participation tools.
- Supporting co-creation entails greater transparency of the influence and results of activities. More widespread use of early impact assessment (including social impact) should be undertaken. In addition, ex-post impact assessment is also relevant – including giving feedback to participants.
- To prioritise the involvement of NGOs whose working language is not Estonian. These NGOs are much less experienced in sectoral policy making than Estonian-speaking NGOs.

7. Strategic partnership

Proposals

- Reduce funding bureaucracy.
- To raise the capacity of strategic partners to be active participants and initiate debate through training, development programmes and joint events.
- To determine with greater clarity what the principles of partnerships are. There ought to be a shared responsibility, with a common understanding, of partnership priorities.

8. Promotion of public services, social innovation and social entrepreneurship

Proposals

- Maintain support for communication activities and development programmes. The same applies to creating new support measures and working towards a better work environment.
- The reputation of NGOs as service providers needs to improve. NGOs can provide services at a high level. This needs to be more widely recognised. Their reputation should not be limited to the perception of lower prices.

- NGOs operational capacity needs continuing work in terms of improving their social innovation, social entrepreneurship and public services provision skills.
- Developing social entrepreneurship cannot come at the cost of social innovation. Their development calls for understanding of the social and civic impact which is expected of both.

9. Availability, transparency and organisation of funding

Proposals

- The role and responsibility of local governments in supporting NGOs need to be formulated with greater clarity in the new KODAR.
- Conducting further analysis in order to map changes in the state/local government funding of NGOs is advisable.
- Local governments should be made more aware of the manual “Funding guide for non-profits” and how it can be applied. Support should also be offered to assist NGOs through the application process. Ensuring Russian-speakers with translations may be particularly important.
- To guarantee clarity and transparency of funding and ensure that the principles of funding provision are the same for everyone.
- To consider additional low threshold funding for small regional level NGOs.

10. Counselling and the County Development Centres (CDC)

Proposals

- To raise awareness of the services and opportunities offered by the CDC; and to provide the service to more communities.
- To raise the counselling skills of the CDC’s consultants — so that their support is maximised.
- To ensure that the CDC’s consultants would be familiar with the legal framework within which NGOs operate.
- To expand counselling in Russian (due to the high workload of Russian-speaking consultants).

11. Russian-speaking NGOs

Proposals

- To expand the CDC’s Russian-speaking counselling service by recruiting more consultants or increasing the working hours of current staff (funding full-time positions).
- To support Russian-speaking NGOs in their cooperation with sectoral umbrella organizations.
- To find opportunities to support Russian speaking NGOs obtain funding. If possible, for local governments to also provide counselling/information in Russian.

12. The NFCS as NGO’s support organisation

Proposals

- To look for possibilities to increase the funding of the NFCS in the new Civil Society Programme 2021-2030. This would support the aims of the Development Plan.

- Rather than focusing exclusively on larger NGOs, the NFCS should work towards contributing to a diverse civil society more broadly.
- Ministries should have a well thought through approach to supporting the strategic partners of KODAR. The NFCS has aided the strategic partners of KODAR in activities (for example support activities) that further strategic partnerships through support activities and calls for proposals. In these calls for proposals, strategic partners and umbrella organizations compete with their target groups and members on the same basis. Activities with which a strategic partner can exert a significant influence should be included in the strategic partnership agreement. In other words, activities which are conducive to furthering the capacity of partners should be included in the strategic partnership agreement.
- The impact assessment system of the NFCS ought to be further developed, including prioritising greater use of mixed indicators. It is advisable that the impact assessment system is completed with technical and automatic solutions.
- The NFCS's own organizational capacity needs improvement. In addition to the solutions for improving the impact assessment system, this includes developing an e-application system.

13. The structure and indicators of the KODAR implementation plan

Proposals

- To indicate that KODAR supports the activities of the other action plans. The implementation plan should focus on concrete additional tasks which can complement currently existing activities.
- To review the activities which are part of different measures, including duplication and distribution of responsibility.
- To survey what expectations people have of networks and the factors that influence the impact of networks. A review is needed to determine the adequacy of funding and the work that ministries have done in order to empower networks.
- To review existing indicators. Due to the complexity of KODAR's themes, both qualitative and quantitative indicators ought to be used. The appropriateness of calculating indicators based on a narrow target group, which size changes over time, ought to be assessed (for example 1.2.2, 2.3 and 3.2.2). If possible, quantitative indicators ought to be replaced with indicators based on register data. It is advisable to consider the frequency and type of studies which are undertaken. Furthermore, one should have a clear understanding of the function of indicators which are the object of study.
- The Ministry of the Interior has a responsibility to undertake research and development which focuses on civil society. It is important that funding is available for research on civil society. Given that an increase of funding is planned for research in ministries' areas of responsibility, we advise to measure the indicators which hitherto have not been measured.