

Second CSO Governance Community of Practice Meeting
Consultation on Civil Society Organisation Board Members
26 September, 11:00 – 13:00hrs

The second CSO Governance Community of Practice meeting was organised in the online form with the participation of 27 CSO representatives. The purpose of the second Community of Practice meeting was set as to consult with various CSO representatives including CSO board members on the challenges that CSO boards and their members are facing in their work and to identify ways in which the EU TACSO 3 project can help. The inputs from this meeting will inform the follow-up activities to be undertaken by the EU TACSO 3 project as well as the training programme to be organised on CSO governance. Ensuring sound governance through the establishment of advisory and external structures besides the CSO board in order to make CSOs more inclusive, accountable and transparent; development of an organisational culture that raises questions and assesses the performance of the board; ensuring accountability and transparency within the board and CSO, and being a learning organisation which regularly assess and improve the governance structures are among the important points expressed by the guest speakers and participating CSOs. Below are some highlights from the guest speakers and discussions held during the meeting.

- Either formal or informal organisations need to have a sound governing body and clearly defined roles of the members. Having diversified governance structures (such as an executive board composed of young people, an advisory council composed of experts, supervisory board composed of representatives of CSOs) might be a way to include different actors and expertise in the governance of the CSOs.
- Being a learning organisation and assessing the performance of the board of a CSO through different tools such as self-assessment and developing an organisational culture to raise questions regarding the sound performance of the board are some of the important aspects of good governance and ensuring accountability and transparency.
- One of the difficulties is engaging young people in the governance of CSOs where young people have limited experience in governance and identify criteria that both could apply to big-scale CSOs and small/grassroots/local organisations. Governance of grassroots organisations and local organisations is a challenging issue where many CSOs have limited human capital.
- It is important to encourage mutual learning among CSOs regarding good governance and support small/grassroots/local organisations to help them improve their organisational structures.
- For good governance, it is important to delegate power among the members of a CSO or CSO network and meet more often in order to make decision-making processes more functional. Internal democracy and open membership are some of the important principles of good governance in CSOs and CSO networks.
- Before developing structures for CSO governance, it is important to discuss why governance for a CSO is important. There is always room for the development of internal policies for CSOs, however, the development of internal policies should be considered as a process instead of something to be fulfilled with the requirements of donor organisations.