



Evaluation of the Active Citizens Fund programme for Greece

Deliverable:

D.2 - Final Evaluation Report

(English version translated from Greek)

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Executive Summary

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the overall relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the ACF programme in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the achievements, strengths and weaknesses of the programme and to identify areas for improvement, helping to inform decision-making processes, strategic planning and future programming. It focuses on support for human rights and strengthening the capacity and sustainability of civil society. The ACF programme was implemented under the European Economic Area (EEA) Grants 2014-2021 and was managed in Greece by the Bodossaki Foundation in consortium with SolidarityNow (Fund Operator).

The report is addressed to funders and donors, fund operators/ managers, project promoters/ partners and beneficiaries, policy makers and governmental bodies. It attempts to help, inform decision-making processes, strategic planning and future programming.

The evaluation report answers key questions about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Active Citizens Fund programme. Its key questions are:

- To what extent do the objectives and design of the programme meet the needs, policies and priorities of the beneficiaries, the country, donor countries, Europe and the institutions, and will they continue to do so if circumstances change?
- To what extent did the Programme achieve its planned results, including any differentiated results between the target groups?
- To what extent the Programme is delivering or is likely to deliver results in a cost-effective and timely manner.

The methodological approach responds to the purpose, scope and evaluation questions and incorporates the European Economic Area (EEA) guidelines for programme design, monitoring and evaluation. The collection of material follows a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods and includes the following data collection procedures: desk research, stakeholder consultations, quantitative research, interviews, focus groups and case studies.

The findings of the research were verified from multiple data sources using the "triangulation" method in order to draw valid conclusions and recommendations. The analysis of the results and the response to the evaluation questions are followed by conclusions based on an assessment of the overall relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. Finally, recommendations based on the final conclusions are included.

The tools used to collect the material were sufficient in both quantity and quality to ensure the validity of this report. The response rate is considered to be very satisfactory and did not pose any problems for the sample and the conduct of the survey, despite the voluntary nature of participation. As a result, no particular challenges were encountered in completing the minimum number of participants in both the quantitative survey and the individual interviews. A number of interviews were conducted via teleconferencing, mainly due to the geographical dispersion of the project promoters, with no negative impact on the collection of material.

Relevance. The ACF is the most important financial support programme for CSOs in Greece. Its thematic areas of coverage are at the heart of the project promoters' activities and cover a wide range of areas necessary for their support. The programme is very flexible in its implementation

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and enables CSOs to carry out actions for which there are not many grant opportunities. The Fund Operator worked directly and effectively with the project promoters, supporting them directly and effectively at all stages.

The most important benefit from the financing and implementation of the project was the sustainability of the CSOs, as well as the increase in organizational capacity through the capacity building component (CBC). The component enabled 15% of the total grant for medium and large projects to be channelled to organisational development activities and was perhaps ACF's largest contribution to CSOs.

The programme was highly compatible with the needs of the project promoters/partners, and the thematic areas of the ACF programme covered a wide range of CSO activity. Its content was tailored by the project promoters according to the needs of their target groups. Participation in the ACF has had positive long-term and sustainable results for almost all project promoters, led to an increase in their staff and budget and improved their funding opportunities. The Programme enabled CSOs in Greece to carry out activities within their statutory priorities and planning, without having to move away from the context of their activities in order to be eligible for funding. It has remained very relevant to the social, economic and political landscape in Greece and has retained its relevance over time.

A significant part of the funding was directed to service delivery, training and capacity building activities. Advocacy and enforcement actions were also supported. Combining service delivery with advocacy and litigation is a plausible direction for the future, but there is still a need among CSOs for a more coherent understanding of what advocacy and litigation means and how they can be conducted in order to be effective.

The design of the Programme, particularly under Outcome 5 ("Strengthening the capacity and sustainability of civil society") remained focused on issues of project and human resource management, fundraising and communication. The vision and design of the programme towards other CSO functions was not as clear. Areas that can be further strengthened include further promoting networking and synergies between CSOs, promoting the assertive role of CSOs and their role in decision making, and describing quality objectives of both the Programme and the projects by developing Quality Plans to assess the social footprint of the CSO function for target groups. Particularly under the capacity building component, specific objectives and indicators can be set towards which the Programme wants to promote the development of CSOs in Greece.

Effectiveness. The programme has significantly exceeded most of the outcome indicators foreseen and has also produced results that are not measurable. During project implementation, project promoters mainly emphasized on effective financial management, quantitative results and program visibility. The fund operator carried out risk assessments to avoid cases of non-implementation, drew up a project monitoring plan and monitored results not only through reports but also through visits to project publicity activities.

The programme significantly exceeded most of the projected outcome indicators both in terms of the number of CSOs directly funded and the number of people involved in CSO activities. However, the results of the programmes implemented through the Fund focused mainly on quantitative rather than qualitative objectives.

The capacity building component (CBC) was the most successful ACF component in terms of impact on civil society and registered the highest added value. Although the CBC results focused

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on quantitative targets, the component had a positive impact on the sustainability of CSOs mainly as a result of building the capacity of their staff and increasing their management capacity. Completion of the Capacity Building Map was the main tool for exploring capacity development needs, and then project promoters were free to design the capacity development programme that best responded to their needs. The focus of the CB Map was concentrated on issues of internal organisation, management capacity and communication, giving a corresponding direction to CSOs' capacity development programmes. As a result, areas of CSO activity such as their advocacy role, effectiveness of interventions and evidence-based proposal writing, among others, were generally left out of capacity development programmes.

Although several project promoters faced challenges in designing the capacity building activities under the CBC due to lack of relevant experience, for many the process was crucial towards their transformation into a more professional organisation, helping them to develop a modern management rationale, improve their ability to resource, manage staff, communicate and strategize. In the same direction, the participation in the Social Dynamo activities of the Bodossaki Foundation contributed to the overall capacity building of the organisations and noted high degree of satisfaction among the project promoters.

Similarly, Outcome 5.4 strengthened the beneficiaries' organisational development, and overall, their internal structure and operational functions. The grant added value to the operation, although it did not lack the challenges brought about by the institutional transformation process. Points that need to be considered are the time of implementation, the amount of grant, the need for a more systematic qualitative assessment of the results, and the possibility of specific guidelines in the context of the Programme's vision for CSOs in Greece.

The funding to CSOs also provided important additional opportunities for the implementation of actions to defend and promote human rights. The results significantly exceeded the objectives and, in some cases, brought about sustainable changes. Actions combining field engagement with documentation, producing policy proposals and culminating in advocacy and assertion actions proved to be more successful. In order to increase this effectiveness, the Programme could more actively promote synergies between CSOs and their networking with decision-makers, as well as work towards strengthening their advocacy and assertiveness capacities and developing frameworks to capture the qualitative results and impact of the programmes.

Efficiency. The management of the programme did not pose any particular problems for most of the project promoters, but the management burden for the "small" category of funding were quite disproportionate. The first period of implementation was more demanding, as project promoters needed time to become familiar with the procedures. The Fund operator always provided prompt and efficient support in all cases and there was excellent cooperation with the project promoters.

Project promoters with less experience and organisational capacity faced difficulties, both because of the volume of documents required during the application process and because the other reporting and control requirements. Additionally, the procedures were the same regardless of the amount of the grant.

The project financial reporting proved to be the most demanding part of the management, mainly because of the details required regardless of the amount of expenditure. Challenges and difficulties also arose in collaborative schemes, mainly due to the lack of technical expertise and organisational capacity of the partners.

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Several programmes faced delays, mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and had to adjust their activities due to restrictions on travel and meetings. No particular problems in programme implementation were recorded as a result of these changes, although the impact on access to target groups and the social footprint of the programmes was not assessed.

Despite the excellent support provided by the Fund Operator, the project promoters would benefit from a number of changes and improvements to reduce the administrative costs of the programmes, particularly those in the small project category.

In conclusion, the implementation of the ACF had a high degree of success in all the areas under evaluation. The design of the Programme is in line with the needs of civil society in Greece and covers the focus of their action, while the results far exceeded the initial objectives. The programme was implemented in an efficient manner, significantly exceeding its objectives. Its efficiency was also increased and was reinforced by the excellent support provided by the Fund Operator, although there are areas for improvement, particularly in the case of small projects.

Good management, the broadest possible outreach, as well as the development of CSOs' capacity in terms of organisation, management, communication and fundraising, were the areas where the Programme performed best. Challenges remain regarding specific Programme's orientations, particularly in providing more systematic support for the advocacy role of CSOs, further promoting networking and cooperation, and strengthening CSOs in developing quality standards for their social interventions.

1 Evaluation Reporting Framework

1.1 Description of the project under evaluation

The Active Citizens Fund (ACF) for Greece is supported by a €15 million grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway under the EEA Grants 2014-2021. The ACF is part of the Civil Society thematic area, which aims to develop the sustainability and capacity of the civil society sector in Greece and strengthen its role in promoting and ensuring democratic processes, active citizenship and human rights. The Grant Manager for the ACF in Greece is the Bodossaki Foundation in consortium with SolidarityNow.

The overall objective of the ACF in Greece is to strengthen civil society and the active participation of citizens, as well as the empowerment of vulnerable groups. It is based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The overall objective is sought to be achieved through five Outcomes:

- Outcome 1 "Strengthened civic participation" is achieved through 1 open call for proposals offering grants for the implementation of small, medium and large projects.
- Outcome 2 "Strengthened advocacy and oversight role of civil society" is achieved through 1 open call offering grants for the implementation of small, medium and large projects and 1 pre-defined project (PdP 2).
- Outcome 3 "Promotion of human rights" is achieved through 2 open calls offering grants for the implementation of small, medium and large projects. Outcome 4 "Empowerment of vulnerable groups" is achieved through 1 open call offering grants for the implementation of small, medium and large projects and 1 pre-defined project (PdP 1).
- Outcome 5 "Strategic development of civil society organisations" is achieved through 2 open calls offering grants for the implementation of small, medium and large projects. In addition, this outcome is achieved through the capacity building programme, through the additional capacity building action in all projects (except small projects).

To achieve these expected outcomes, the programme includes the following 7 open calls for project proposals:

1. Empowerment of vulnerable groups (Outcome 4)
2. Strengthened advocacy and supervisory role of civil society (Outcome 2)
3. Enhanced civic participation (Outcome1)
4. Promotion of human rights (Outcome3)
5. Promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence (Outcom3)
6. Development of cooperation networks between civil society organisations (Outcome5)
7. Organisational grants for the strategic development of civil society organisations (Outcome 5)

The project grants to the project promoters were divided into three categories:

- Large projects: 80k - 300k (12-36 months)
- Medium Projects: 5k-80k (6-24 months)

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- Small Projects: 1.000-5.000(1-6 months)

The programme placed particular emphasis on the capacity building and sustainability of CSOs in Greece. Capacity building was achieved through support to potential project applicants, capacity building for CSOs and support to project implementers through the Bodossaki Foundation's Social Dynamo programme, the capacity building component of medium and large projects (15% of total grant), the call for network development, and the call for organisational grants to support institutional development of CSOs.

All project implementers of the Active citizens fund in Greece had the opportunity to access free of charge the special Capacity Building Programme organised through the Bodossaki Foundation's Social Dynamo. The programmes were conducted online due to the measures against the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The programme included a mandatory two-day storytelling workshop to communicate the impact of the projects. This was conducted online.
- 121 out of 128 project promoters (94%) participated in the optional capacity building activities.
- The optional activities gave project promoters the possibility to use **training, consultancy, mentoring and executive coaching** services.

Also, project promoters that implemented projects under medium and large grants were able to channel up to 15% of the grant for capacity building purposes in their organisation. The Capacity Building Component (CBC) was implemented by 97 project promoters.

1.2 Key Objectives of the Evaluation

This is the Evaluation Report of the Active Citizens Fund (ACF) programme for Greece. Overall, the external evaluation of the ACF programme attempts to provide a holistic and insightful understanding of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, focusing on support for human rights and strengthening the capacity and sustainability of civil society. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the programme's achievements, strengths and weaknesses and to identify areas for improvement within the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation will help to inform decision-making processes, strategic planning and future programming. The report is addressed to funders and donors, fund operators, project promoters/partners and beneficiaries, as well as policy makers and governmental bodies.

Outcome	Title	Invitation / Projects
Outcome 3	Promotion of Human Rights	Call #4, 28 projects (5 large, 17 medium and 6 small)
Outcome 5: "Strategic development of civil society organisations"		
Output 5.1	Capacity building of civil society	128 projects
Output 5.2	Organisational capacity and sustainability of civil society	97 projects (38 large and 59 medium)
Output 5.4	Supporting the institutional development of civil society	Call #7, 11 projects (5 large and 6 medium)

Outcome 3: Promotion of human rights / Call for proposals #4 "Promotion of human rights". The objective of this call was to strengthen advocacy and awareness on human rights issues; to monitor human rights violations and support victims; to educate citizens, organizations and public officials on human rights issues; and to strengthen CSOs' cooperation with the media to defend human rights. This call was one of the largest in terms of number of projects but also the most diverse in terms of thematic areas, beneficiaries and geographical location of projects.

Outcome 5: "Civil society capacity and sustainability strengthened". Outcome 5 is a high priority for ACF Greece and was achieved through various forms of support through Outputs, as follows:

- Deliverable 5.1 Strategic development of civil society organisations refers to the capacity building activities provided by the ACF Fund operator for Greece, including workshops to support potential applicants for the programme and the capacity building programme open to all project promoters, including an integrated training programme for organisational development, team coaching, executive coaching and consultancy.
- Deliverable 5.2 Support to organisational capacity and sustainability of CSOs. The activities under the capacity building component (CBC) addressed the weaknesses or areas for improvement identified by the project promoter, with the support of the Fund operator, in terms of organisational capacity and sustainability. In total, 97 ACF project implementers were included in the Additional Actions programme to develop their organisational capacity and sustainability through the capacity development component of their projects.

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- Deliverable 5.4, Call #7 Support to the institutional development of civil society organisations. The objective of this call was to support the institutional development of CSOs through the provision of grants to support the general activities of the organisations based on their own multi-annual strategic plans/work programmes.

2 Methodology

The project was launched online on 14 February 2024. During the initial meeting it was ensured that there was a common understanding of the requirements of the assignment, the final methodological approach (including the list of key questions and sub-questions listed in the ToR, the documents to be reviewed, the stakeholders to be interviewed and the format of the monitoring reports) was agreed, while any risks or issues that may hinder the implementation of the assignment were discussed

The chosen methodological approach responds to the purpose, scope and evaluation questions and incorporates the European Economic Area (EEA) guidelines for programme design, monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluation follows a mixed-methods approach to ensure a comprehensive and reliable result. The methodological approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect a wide range of data and opinions. Our methodological approach includes the following data collection processes:

Office Research: Thorough review of programme documents, guidelines, reports and relevant literature to understand the design, objectives, implementation and outcomes of the ACF program. This includes quantitative outcome data as well as narrative outcome data. **Annex 1** lists the documents to be reviewed.

Stakeholder consultation: five stakeholder meetings were held for the purpose of the investigation. The stakeholders came from the Fund Operator, the National Focal Point and the supervisor of the EEA programmes in Greece. The stakeholders were asked for their views on the strengths, challenges and impact of ACF programmes.

Quantitative Research: An online survey in the form of google forms was administered to all 128 project implementers participating in the ACF programme. The survey was designed to collect quantitative data on the results, effectiveness and efficiency of the projects. This method collected 56 responses, with an initial target of collecting at least 50 responses. **Annex 2** presents the survey questionnaire and **Annex 3** presents the survey results.

Interviews: For the purpose of collecting material through qualitative research methods, twelve interviews were conducted with project implementers. These interviews aimed to provide comprehensive qualitative insights and perspectives on the relevance, impact and sustainability of the ACF programme. The interview process followed the guidelines outlined in the interview guide provided in **Annex 5**. The random sample was weighted to ensure representation of CSOs at national level, but also a balanced distribution between small, medium and large grants. Some interviews were conducted remotely via videoconference due to either geographical distance or the availability of space and time of the interviewees. The use of videoconferencing tools did not have a negative impact on the interview process as it allowed for more complete data capture in a confidential environment.

Focus groups: to promote dialogue and deepen the different aspects on the performance and effectiveness of the ACF programme, focus groups were held with programme implementers. A total of 3 focus groups were conducted with 14 participants. Similar to the interviews, the focus group discussions were conducted via teleconference to allow for participation from different regions of the country and for the convenience of the participants in the focus groups. The focus group process followed the guidelines outlined in the guide for focus groups in **Annex 6**.

Case studies: the evaluation team selected two funded projects to conduct in-depth case studies to examine in detail the outcomes, challenges and contribution of the projects to the target communities. Both projects were among the large-scale projects. For reasons of anonymity and confidentiality, the projects are not listed.

The findings of the research are checked from multiple data sources using the method of triangulation. In this way, valid conclusions and recommendations can be drawn. According to the triangulation method, a hypothesis formulated in the intervention logic can only be confirmed if it is supported by evidence from different types of stakeholders and different data sources.

The triangulation method that was followed includes data source triangulation and method triangulation: under data source triangulation, the views of different interests are compared in order to identify similarities and differences in order to draw more general conclusions. Following triangulation of methods, different types of data collection tools to gather information were used, such as desk research, interviews, questionnaires, stakeholder consultations and case studies.

The analysis of the results and the response to the evaluation questions are followed by conclusions based on an assessment of the overall relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. Finally, recommendations were formed based on the final conclusions.

Limitations of the methods of collecting material

The main limitation of the data collection methods was the voluntary nature of participation in the survey. The voluntary nature created a risk of non-participation which could not be predicted in advance. This carried the risk of not obtaining the minimum number of responses to the quantitative survey, of sample bias in both quantitative and qualitative data collection, and of not covering the desired geographical coverage.

The response from stakeholders and implementers was ultimately quite positive and immediate. Responses to the quantitative online survey exceeded the minimum number of responses and came from project promoters spanning the country. Almost 44% of the project promoters responded to the call and completed the survey. The response of stakeholders and project promoters to the calls for interviews was also high. 5 out of 6 stakeholders responded to the consultation invitations (one case was due to exceptional circumstances), and 15 out of 18 implementers who received an invitation to participate in the individual interviews responded positively. There was a lesser degree of response to the invitations to focus groups, where ultimately 13 of the 28 project promoters invited participated. However, the large number of project promoters and the large pool from which we could draw for the sample did not ultimately create any problems in conducting the focus groups. In conclusion, the response rate is considered to be very satisfactory and did not create any problems in drawing the sample and conducting the survey.

A further limitation was the ability of the research team to visit all the project promoters in order to conduct face-to-face interviews. This was not possible for a number of reasons: project budget constraints, lack of sufficient time for travel, but also due to the preference of several project promoters to conduct interviews via videoconference either because of lack of space for face-to-face meetings or because staff were telecommuting. As a result, a large number of interviews were conducted via videoconferencing. This did not have a negative impact on the collection of material as the videoconferencing facility provided the necessary time and space, as well as confidentiality. It also enabled more staff from the project promoters to participate in the

teleconferences as they were in a telecommuting status with the CSO in which they worked. Therefore, the tools used to collect the material were undoubtedly sufficient in both quantity and quality to ensure the validity of this report.

Questions. The evaluation report was based on the following main questions and answered them. Based on the answers to these questions, supported by the findings, conclusions and specific and implementable recommendations for the possibility of a future relevant programme in Greece are provided at the end:

4.1 Relevance: The extent to which the objectives and design of the programme/fund are responsive to the needs, policies and priorities of the beneficiaries, the country, donor countries, Europe and the institutions, and continue to be responsive to them if circumstances change.

- How well designed is/was the programme/fund?
- How does the programme/fund meet/address the needs of stakeholders (organisations/institutions, target groups)?
- To what extent has the Programme/Fund adapted to the changes in the social, economic and political landscape in Greece in order to maintain its relevance over time?

4.2 Effectiveness: The extent to which the Programme/Fund achieved its planned results, including any differential results between groups.

- To what extent were the outputs and outcomes produced achieved with the desired quality (as opposed to quantity)? What factors influenced the achievement of results (outputs and outcomes)?
- Were any outputs other than those listed in the results framework implemented and did they contribute to the planned result(s)? If so, which ones?
- To what extent has the programme/fund contributed to building the capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations?
- Which intervention methods financed by the Programme/Fund were most effective in the direction of strengthening human rights?

4.3 Efficiency: The extent to which the Programme/Fund is delivering or is likely to deliver results in a cost-effective and timely manner.

- To what extent has the Programme/Fund delivered or is it likely to deliver the planned results (outputs and results in the results framework) in a cost-effective and timely manner?
- Were there any delays in the implementation of the programme/fund? If so, which ones and to what extent did they pose a challenge to the implementation of the programme/fund?
- To what extent could the Programme/Fund provide better support to CSOs during the project implementation phase to optimise their effectiveness?

3 Findings

3.1 Relevance

4.1.1 How well designed is/was the programme/fund?

Finding 1: The ACF is the most important grant programme for supporting civil society in Greece. Its thematic areas of coverage are at the heart of the project promoters' activities and cover a broad scope necessary for their support.

Among the main advantages of the programme are the amount of grant - especially for medium and large projects - the flexibility in implementation, the possibility for organisations to undertake advocacy actions during implementation, the support of the fund operator, and the possibility for 15% of the total funding - for medium and large projects - to be channelled to organisational development actions.

The ACF programme is designed to support Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Greece to become sustainable and independent. At the same time, to strengthen its capacities and role in order to increase its reach and empower it to address the country's major challenges, to support democratic processes, active citizenship and human rights, and to empower vulnerable groups. In this context, the project has sought to maintain its flexibility and to constantly adapt to the needs of the sector in order to remain relevant and maximise its impact.

CSOs in Greece have limited grant opportunities and therefore increased needs. As a result, interest in the Fund was particularly strong, which was reflected in the level of grant applications. The project promoters were selected after their proposals were scored by external evaluators, which resulted in a shortlist. The Selection Committee prepared a recommendation to the Executive Board, which made the final decision on which applications were funded.

The calls of the programme covered a wide range of thematic areas, within which CSOs were able to operate with a considerable degree of flexibility. In addition, the programme offered grants for human rights promotion, advocacy and organisational development, areas for which grant opportunities are scarce.

Finding 2: The most important benefit from the financing and implementation of the project was the sustainability of the CSOs, as well as the increase in organizational capacity through the capacity building component.

Both the capacity building component (CBC), the Social Dynamo actions and the call for institutional development were very important contributions of the ACF and effectively supported CSOs. These grant schemes were innovations of the programme, as on the one hand grant opportunities in this direction are very limited and on the other hand CSOs in Greece do not invest significantly in this area. Indeed, of the CSOs consulted, only one had previously funded an internal capacity building programme, but even in this case the budget was significantly smaller than that received by the organisation through the ACF.

Finding 3: A significant part of the programme was directed towards service delivery, training, empowerment and capacity building activities. The fund operator made efforts to strengthen the advocacy role of CSOs. Most CSOs recognise the need to combine service delivery with advocacy and assertiveness in the future.

ACF has attempted to strengthen CSOs' advocacy and assertiveness through a series of interventions. Indicatively, there was a separate call "Strengthened civil society advocacy and

watchdog role”, the Results Framework of the programmes included indicators to strengthen the advocacy dimension, seminars were held for the CSOs concerned on advocacy skills and information on advocacy was included in the Road Show.

Despite these actions, during the consultations, views were expressed on the need in the future for CSOs in Greece to operate even less in the direction of service provision, as these sectors are an obligation of the state. Service provision, it was stressed, turns CSOs into an alternative to the public sector, and therefore increases the state's control over civil society and undermines its independence and role. Therefore, it was argued that a fund like the ACF should more systematically promote paradigm shift and not fund service delivery programmes.

Project promoters in turn confirmed that most of their activities, regardless of the ACF grant, continue to address gaps in the welfare state and protection institutions. . However, at the same time, they see the role of CSOs as responding to the needs on the ground, and therefore consider it inevitable to operate in the direction of service delivery as these are the areas where most of the shortcomings are identified. As a result, in the current context, several bodies consider that it is unrealistic to limit the provision of services in different directions, as they believe that at the current juncture there are no conditions for the interruption of social services.

There was agreement among CSOs that it is reasonable to try to combine service provision with advocacy and litigation, such as that attempted by the ACF. Service delivery, it was stressed, can give the implementing agency contact with the field and target groups in order to identify and highlight issues for advocacy. Therefore, participants agreed that advocacy can be most effective when it is the result of actions that increase the agency's reach in the field and its contact with target groups. Nevertheless, there remains a need among CSOs for a more coherent understanding of the steps that need to be taken in order to expand the assertive role of CSOs, as well as ways in which advocacy and assertion can be made more effective.

Finding 4: There were views and suggestions on the need to describe a more specific vision of the Programme and the corresponding development of indicators, in the direction of strengthening the advocacy role of CSOs, the effectiveness of their intervention and the qualitative impact.

During the consultation, the issue of the strategic direction and vision of the CSO Programme in Greece was raised. Some participants argued that the ACF's vision focuses on management and quantitative impact issues, without sufficient planning for the development of the advocacy role of CSOs and the effectiveness of their intervention in the field. In this context, it was argued that ACF should develop indicators focused on the advocacy and intervention role of CSOs and that grants should be focused on strengthening these indicators, particularly through CSOs' organizational and institutional development programs.

The design of the Programme, particularly under Outcome 5 ("Strengthened capacity and sustainability of civil society") remained focused on issues of effective programme and human resource management, resourcing and communication. Areas that can be further strengthened are further promotion of synergies between CSOs, documentation for effective advocacy and claiming, and the development of quality plans which describe the qualitative objectives and specify the methods to be used to assess the impact and effectiveness of the programmes for the target groups. Particularly under the capacity building component, specific objectives and indicators can be set towards which the Programme wants to promote the development of CSOs in Greece.

4.1.2 How did the programme respond to the needs of the stakeholders (organisations/institutions, target groups)?

Finding 5: The programme was highly compatible with the needs of the project promoters, and the ACF grant themes covered a wide range of CSO activities.

The programme has shown great flexibility, as its content was tailored by the project promoters according to the needs of the target groups in the context of the open calls. The grant they received from ACF constituted a large proportion of the total budget of the project promoters and contributed significantly to their sustainability. The project enabled CSOs in Greece to carry out activities within their statutory priorities and planning, without having to move away from the context of their activities in order to be eligible for grant. Grant for organisational capacity building was allocated solely on the basis of the CSOs' planning and needs. In very few cases, the addition of actions was recorded for the sole reason of increasing the chances of grant, or conversely the non-addition of actions that were part of the organisation's strategic planning for the same reasons.

The ACF funded a wide range of projects and a wide range of actions. A large proportion was related to service delivery, training and awareness-raising actions for public sector staff, public awareness actions and campaigns, networking actions, as well as advocacy and human rights promotion and protection actions. The project also funded small organisations that had little previous experience with grant programmes, enhancing their expertise. The implementation of the programme was extended to several regions of Greece, but focused on Athens, where most of the project promoters are based, rather than Thessaloniki.

In only a few cases did the implementing bodies have to adjust their organisation's priorities in order to meet the requirements of the calls. The funded projects were driven by the strategic priorities of the Civil Society sector and their assessments of the needs of the target groups.

There have been cases where operators have ended up implementing a smaller programme than they had requested and with a shorter timetable. This occurred in cases where their application was approved by the reserve list at the end of the ACF programme period. In these cases, the operator was asked to adjust the submitted programme both in terms of time and budget to allow for implementation. In other cases, project promoters added actions and deliverables to their proposals without including them in their priorities in order to increase their grant chances. In these few cases, however, the core of the programme funded was an element of the organisation's established action and strategic priorities, and any adjustments were not made in order to meet the requirements of the call, but to increase the chances of grant, at the discretion of the applicant.

Finding 6: Participation in the ACF has had positive long-term and sustainable results for almost all project promoters, has led to an increase in their staff and budget and has improved their grant opportunities.

Several project promoters focused on developing their financial sustainability and were effective in finding new resources. This was done either by hiring new staff specialised in fundraising, or by organising an 'open day' to promote networking and partnerships, while others secured new grant from other funds to continue the actions started through the ACF. For several organisations it is too early to assess the sustainability of the programme.

Finding 7: The project met the needs of the target groups as interpreted by the project promoters and recorded in the grant applications. In only a few cases a systematic needs assessment was carried out.

In a few cases, needs surveys were carried out by the project promoters to explore the needs of the target groups before applying for grant. In the vast majority of cases, the needs of the target groups and the design of the programme were based on the judgement of a professional with relevant previous experience in programme design and implementation. This is a standard procedure for project promoters who consider that in this way the needs of the target groups are adequately captured. In a few cases the programme was designed after internal consultation or even based on the results of previous programmes.

Similarly, the programmes under the capacity building component implemented by the project promoters were usually designed based on the experience of the organisation's manager. In fewer cases, and mainly in organisations with more than five staff, consultations were held between the different departments to identify needs before the capacity development programme was developed.

4.1.3 To what extent has the Programme/Fund adapted to the changes in the social, economic and political landscape in Greece in order to maintain its relevance over time?

Finding 8: The programme has remained very relevant to the social, economic and political landscape in Greece.

There was also universal agreement among the project promoters that the programme maintains its relevance over time. Stakeholders attributed this finding to two main reasons. On the one hand, the programme is very broad in its fields of intervention. It funds a very wide range of themes, which are absolutely key to the interventions of CSOs and the needs on the ground. On the other hand, the CSOs specialise these themes according to individual needs for field interventions. The flexibility shown by the programme, the range not only in terms of themes but also in terms of intervention modes ('deliverables'), as well as the geographical area of intervention of the programmes, which extends over several regions of the country, increases the importance of its intervention and its relevance. The addition of the capacity building component (CBC) in the medium and large programmes, which did not exist in the previous programme period, is also particularly positive.

Finding 9: The programme showed great flexibility in implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The program's flexibility focused on program management, with no changes in program priorities, or changes in deliverables.

One of the major challenges the programme had to face was the Covid-19 pandemic and its containment measures. Both some of the calls for ACF projects and long periods of time for the implementation of the physical scope of many projects coincided with the pandemic period.

The main difficulty faced by the project promoters during the pandemic was the inability to be physically present in the field and to hold meetings. This had implications both where projects needed to be in the field, e.g. to document human rights violations or trainings to actors, and for the implementation of the capacity building component (CBC), as staff meetings were not possible.

The fund operator cooperated promptly and efficiently and showed great flexibility and speed in all cases where adjustments were needed due to the pandemic measures. The project promoters

proposed the changes and in a timely manner the administrator accepted them in order to allow for a smooth continuation of the implementation. The most frequent change made to the projects was the replacement of meetings, trainings and any other action that required physical presence, by conducting them by videoconferencing. Also, project promoters easily took a few months extensions in the implementation of their projects in those cases where anti-pandemic measures and restrictions on travel and meetings delayed implementation.

At the same time, the grant managers created an online survey on the impact of Covid-19 on civil society in May 2020, a few weeks before the start of the pandemic. The survey invited representatives of CSOs to participate in order to capture the challenges and needs associated with the pandemic in order to identify the best ways to support CSOs to continue their activities. Less explored was the impact of Covid-19 on the field and the new needs created for vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to issues of Fundamental Rights protection and access to support services.

3.2 Effectiveness

4.2.1 To what extent were the outputs and outcomes produced achieved with the desired quality (as opposed to quantity)? What factors influenced the achievement of results (outputs and outcomes)?

Finding 10: The results of the programmes implemented through the Fund focused mainly on quantitative and less on qualitative objectives. Project promoters were able to capture their results qualitatively in both the mid-term and final reports of the programmes, but this did not follow specific indicators or systematic methods of investigation.

During the collection of the qualitative material there was agreement among CSOs that the Programme focused on quantitative indicators and there were no specific guidelines, indicators and methods for qualitative assessment of its intervention. The qualitative capture in the periodic and final reports was generally done through empirical assessments by the implementing teams, mainly the programme managers. In some cases, the project promoters optionally carried out satisfaction surveys among the target groups. Even then, however, no standard procedure for processing the results was followed and no changes were made on the basis of the findings, except in exceptional cases.

The financing institution carried out risk assessments in order to avoid cases of non-implementation. At the same time, a project monitoring plan had been drawn up to ensure that implementation would not deviate from the timetable and would be successfully completed. Through visits to project activities, mainly awareness-raising and final actions, the implementing agency attempted to gain an insight into the implementation.

The project promoters mainly emphasised effective management of the financial scope, quantitative results and visibility of the programmes. In those cases where qualitative mapping was carried out as a process chosen by the implementing agency, it was not carried out within specific guidelines, nor was it always followed in a methodologically sound way that was appropriate to the specificities of the field and the target groups concerned.

The emphasis on quantifying results was evident both in the programmes included in the human rights promotion and organisational development call of CSOs and in the activities implemented under the capacity building component (CBC). The indicators of success of the programmes were usually exhausted in the number of hours of training and the numbers of participants in the

training sessions. Qualitative evaluation was usually carried out informally by programme managers based on empirical criteria, often without being recorded.

Finding 11: The data collection process revealed that the project promoters do not have a quality framework for programme implementation or qualified staff (quality developer).

Civil Society stakeholders do not have a common understanding of what quality output means. For some, qualitative evidence was equivalent to measuring the impact of programmes. For others, it was synonymous with conducting satisfaction surveys or measuring attitudinal change, along the lines of European programmes. In any case, it appears that there is scope for further emphasis on the qualitative footprint of the ACF.

During the consultation process, several stakeholders agreed on the need to create a quality framework for the implementation of the programmes. It was stressed that social programmes have a different character from those of humanitarian aid where a quantitative footprint is sufficient. However, the difficulty of agreeing on common indicators was pointed out, due to the specificities of the field and the different methods of intervention. In this regard, it was suggested that in a possible next phase of the Programme, the Fund operators should consult with the CSOs on the form that the qualitative mapping of the programmes could take, the exploration of qualitative indicators that could be applied, etc. Therefore, the fund operator may consider developing common guidelines within which each CSO can establish a framework for the qualitative assessment of programmes.

4.2.2 Were any outputs other than those listed in the results framework implemented and contributed to the planned result(s)? If so, which ones?

Finding 12: The programme significantly exceeded most of the predicted quantitative outcome indicators, while showing unmeasurable results that exceeded initial expectations.

The ACF results framework included two key indicators: 1. Number of CSOs directly funded; 2. Number of people involved in CSO activities.

Regarding indicator 1, in addition to CSOs, partners of the programmes, and therefore recipients of grant, were also university institutions, public entities, private legal entities, social enterprises, informal groups e.t.c. More than 30 such bodies were funded by the programme. This result went beyond the results framework. These actors participated in partnerships with civil society actors, thus contributing to the creation of networks beyond CSOs and improving their footprint and influence.

Concerning indicator 2, the actions of the funded programmes far exceeded the minimum quantitative indicators of responsibility set. As a result, while the initial target was for the programmes financed by the Fund to involve or target 15,000 people, the final figure exceeded 126,000.

A number of other results went beyond what is described in the programme's results framework. The number of people trained on issues related to the objectives of the programme far exceeded the original target of 1700 people. The final trainees from ACF-funded programmes exceeded 18 thousand people. The vast majority received training on human rights issues, a large proportion of whom were public officials. As a result, the programme also exceeded initial projections both in terms of the total number of people who received training on the topic and the total number of public officials who participated in human rights training. The initial estimates were also exceeded by the participation of individuals in economic empowerment trainings, either face-to-

face or online. Finally, the number of CSOs involved in monitoring the decision-making processes of both public officials also exceeded initial targets.

The programme also exceeded the recordings of human rights violations as it surpassed the target of 600 recordings to 1,360, as well as the targets of the CSOs that recorded human rights violations. It has also exceeded the targets of the targets of the NGOs that reported human rights violations.

While 50 awareness-raising actions were foreseen, the total number of awareness-raising actions exceeded 655. Similarly, while 10 advocacy campaigns were foreseen, the final number was 26.

The objectives were also far exceeded in the direction of communication actions through social media. Therefore, with an initial target of 1.5 million views, the final views of the awareness and information actions through social media exceeded 4.32 million views.

Finally, the project promoters signed 74 cooperation agreements with SMEs on human rights issues, far exceeding the initial target of 6.

In addition to quantitative and numerical indicators that exceeded the initial calculations, the programme also had unmeasurable results. It contributed to the sustainability of CSOs, gave them the know-how and experience to apply for further grants, and the Programme's actions had a significant impact. Participation in the Programme has had a number of unquantifiable benefits for CSOs, many of which are now in a better position than at the beginning of their participation in the Programme, with greater management capacity, increased staff, a renewed image and new operational tools.

4.2.3 To what extent has the Programme contributed to building the capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations?

Finding 13: Completing the Capacity Building Map (CB Map) was an important tool for the implementers to identify needs, strengths and gaps. Most developed their capacity development programmes based on the results of the Map. The CB Map remained focused on organisational and internal functioning issues, giving a corresponding direction to the CSOs' capacity development programmes.

The CB Map is an automated self-assessment tool which is available online. The user is asked to answer a questionnaire concerning issues of organisation and operation of the organisation, which based on the answers identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and includes suggestions for next steps towards improvement. This process has been the main tool for identifying the needs of CSOs and has significantly influenced the design of capacity building programmes. All project promoters were required to complete the CB Map. The Map was completed again at the end of each programme so that the actors could see the difference and compare before and after.

Through 32 multiple-choice questions on organisation, management, communication, strategy, financial management, gender equality, the programme automatically issues a report based on the answers which identifies the areas in which the organisation has a high, basic or zero competence. It also identifies the organization's strengths and weaknesses, offering automated recommendations for next steps that can be taken.

CSOs had no previous experience of using such a tool. Particularly for organisations with less experience of managing grant, it was a particularly helpful tool to reflect on a wide range of

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organisational issues and to identify those areas where their organisation needed development. For these organisations, the process highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation and operations. For organisations with more experience, it proved useful as a tool to check and confirm strengths and weaknesses, many of which were already known to the organisation's management. Finally, there were few cases of organisations for which the competence map offered little more, and the capacity development programme was designed entirely around the needs and priorities that the organisation's manager considered most appropriate.

Completing the CB Map also proved to be a useful tool at the end of the implementation of the capacity building component. Most actors saw a significant shift in several indicators and gained insight into the weaknesses that remained and the steps they need to take in the future to further improve their indicators.

Finding 14: More systematic and extensive Guidance and counselling to CSOs would help them to make better use of the results of the CB Map by designing a more effective capacity building programme. .

Despite the fact that the fund operator provided the possibility to support the exploitation of the results of the CB Map through Social Dynamo, few project promoters took advantage of it, while significant needs remained in this direction. Many project promoters would need more expertise and support to develop an effective capacity building programme based on the needs identified in the CB Map, but also networking with providers in order to meet their needs in the best possible way. The effectiveness of the CB Map would be greatly enhanced if its results were the starting point for a more systematic process of consultation with the grant fund operator to clarify both the needs and areas for improvement of CSOs and the specific steps that can be taken to maximise the impact of capacity building programmes.

Deliverable 5.1 Capacity building in CSOs - Support to project promoters

Finding 15: The Civil Society Organizational Capacity Building and Sustainability Programme (Outcome 5.1) through the Bodossaki Foundation's Social Dynamo had a high degree of satisfaction among the project promoters regardless of the amount of grant received.

Participation in the Social Dynamo activities has been a rewarding process for the vast majority of the project promoters. The programme enabled the staff and managers of the institutions to attend communication seminars, talk to a mentor and participate in coaching groups. For several project promoters, particularly of small and medium sized programs, this was the first time they had the opportunity to be offered free coaching and mentoring services. Some organisations had participated in Social Dynamo activities before applying for grant under the ACF, experience that gave them tools for a successful application. Finally, there were cases of CSOs that received large grants where the content of the mandatory Social Dynamo activities was considered more suitable for managers with less experience.

The actors could not always accurately assess the benefits of their participation in Social Dynamo, beyond the general sense of improvement in their capacities and the way they operate. The main benefits mentioned were the findings of the mapping process, training in how to present their organisation, and contact with mentors. In fewer cases, organisations assigned participation in Social Dynamo activities to managers with less experience, therefore either lacking sufficient insight into the results or unable to recall specific elements of the programme.

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Participating stakeholders found the process quite interactive, even though participation was mainly online. The Social Dynamo partners created very positive impressions for their expertise and specialisation. The topics were tailored to the specific needs of each participant and thus enabled the content to be targeted and specific. Most participants recall the mentoring service as being most effective, mainly due to the fact that it was personalised. Conducting the seminars and meetings online was particularly helpful for organisations based outside Athens to participate.

The project promoters benefited from the Social Dynamo activities in different ways. Some improved their skills in writing proposals for funded projects. For others it helped them to gain more knowledge on topics they had not previously focused on, such as advocacy or lobbying. Other high impact topics included time management and conflict management in the workplace. They gained a lot of useful information, especially on issues of operating the organisation, ways of developing strategy, fundraising and thinking strategically. Finally, other project promoters stressed the importance of networking and the benefits of it if it becomes a strategic objective. Some organisations chose to involve people from the management unit of their organisation, for example the Board of Directors (BoD), in the Social Dynamo group activities. In these cases, it helped to make the role of the BoD in an organisation clearer and to reflect the division of responsibilities.

On the other hand, for some project promoters there have been difficulties in participating in the activities of Social Dynamo. These were mainly due to the fact that the activities took place during morning hours, making it difficult for staff to participate. This problem was particularly evident by project promoters offering field services during specific working hours. The variation of the activities' implementation time such as - evening - working hours would provide opportunities for the staff of more CSOs to participate.

Finding 16: The following challenges and suggestions for a possible next programming period emerged from the consultation process with the project promoters:

- In the future, you could include more extensive training on topics related to methods of investigating the needs of target groups, developing qualitative indicators of programme implementation and measuring the impact of programmes, documentation and advocacy, participation in policy decisions.
- It may consider that its group programmes (storytelling, etc.) may have different degrees of specialisation (levels), in order to address both those with less experience and those with more specialised needs.
- It can be further linked to the CB Map and the Capacity Building Component (CBC) in order to support CSOs in their efforts to develop organisational development and capacity building plans for their staff.

Deliverable 5.2 - CBC Capacity Building Component

Finding 17: The capacity building component (CBC) was the most successful ACF activity in terms of impact on civil society and was the most value-added output.

The possibility of using 15% of the grant in medium and large projects for capacity building of the project promoters attempted to ensure the sustainability of the programmes through the organisational development of civil society in Greece and the increase of their management capacity. The project promoters, which were also the target group, had the possibility and

freedom to design the intervention programmes entirely without any specific direction and desired indicators from the Programme. Most project promoters chose actions in the direction of increasing their management capacity, visibility and fundraising capacity.

For the vast majority of the project promoters, the CBC achieved its objective, as the logic of the continuous need for capacity building and strategic planning was integrated into the operation of the organisation. Almost all CSOs recognise the need for capacity building, even those with extensive experience in grant programmes. Almost none of the project promoters had previous capacity to fund organisational development activities. In the few cases where there had been such a possibility in the past, the amount of grant was much smaller.

The vast majority of project promoters have evaluated it very positively, with a very significant impact, even if they have not evaluated the impact in a more systematic way and using qualitative indicators. There was consensus among CSOs on the need to continue this type of grant.

In a few cases the capacity building programme was implemented solely in order to absorb the available grant, without the project promoter considering that the need existed. Even in these cases, the implementation of the programme provided benefits either for the organisation as a whole or for specific partners and was valued positively.

Finding 18: For several project promoters the process has been a key element in their evolution towards a more professional organisation. The process helped several project promoters to develop a modern management logic in their operation, gave them tools for resourcing, staff management, communication and strategy, and allowed them to make purchases of equipment and software.

The organisations implemented a variety of actions under the CBC, as they were able to tailor the programme to their needs. Each project promoter designed the actions included in the CBC itself, without any particular constraints and without having to follow the results of the Mapping exercise. In most cases, the actions were designed by one person, usually the director or programme manager of the organisation. In a few cases actions that were designed were not ultimately included in the grant as they were not considered to meet the objectives of the CBC programme, for example where the beneficiaries of the actions would not be the organisation's staff.

Some of the actions to which the CBC sponsorship was directed were:

- Improving external communication by creating or updating the website.
- Staff training by professionals in marketing, social media, business, fundraising, organisation and management.
- Developing financial sustainability and securing new grants.
- Recruitment of staff in different areas.
- Purchase of logistical equipment, improvement of infrastructure and development of software for administrative and accounting organisation
- Preparation of an operational organisation chart, financial audit or programme and project management guide.
- ISO certification in project management.

Finding 19: The Fund Operator has shown great flexibility to make the necessary adjustments in a short timeframe when required.

As most of the programmes were implemented in 2020-2023, they had to meet the constraints created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The projects that mostly needed adaptation were those that had trainings as deliverables, with the most common change being the conversion of all trainings to staff to online trainings in order to avoid travel and meetings. However, these changes had both positive and negative effects on the development of the programmes. The main positive consequence was that they significantly reduced implementation costs, especially where training was concerned. On the other hand, several implementers lost the possibility of an intensive training involving staff from different levels in the same place, but also opportunities for more extensive personal contact and networking with service providers.

Finding 20: Project promoters faced challenges particularly in the design of the CBC. They had very limited, or no experience in designing capacity building activities, and lacked sufficient knowledge of the relevant service delivery market.

CBC program development was usually done by a CSO partner with knowledge in programme development and based on the findings of the mandatory completion of the CB Map. The Fund Operator did not recommend potential partnerships to implement the activities, as this would potentially discriminate against some partners at the expense of others or promote partners with financial benefits to them. Therefore, CSOs had to develop the programme themselves and find suitable partners for implementation.

Some of the subjects and topics in which the project promoters chose to train their staff did not meet their expectations. In other cases, the providers were selected after an online search and ultimately did not meet expectations. Therefore, based on hindsight, several would make modifications to the programme if they had the opportunity to implement it again.

Finding 21: In a possible next phase of the ACF, the project promoters would have the need for more coaching from the Fund Operator during the design of the capacity building programme. Such a process would improve the footprint of the capacity development component.

While project promoters were given the opportunity to receive advice on designing the CBC, few took this opportunity, and the consultations clearly concluded that a more comprehensive mentoring process to develop an effective capacity building programme and to refine the lessons learned from completing the CB Map would be particularly useful. Implementers would benefit from a mentoring process to both identify their specific needs, prioritise them and identify appropriate ways to improve their competences. Such a mentoring or counselling process could be combined with the services of Social Dynamo and could be optional for the project promoters.

Finding 22: Greater networking by the Fund Operator for CSOs and service providers both within and outside the country would enhance CSOs' efforts to use the funds for capacity building.

Interested providers of capacity development services could join a pool of experts coordinated by the Fund Operator after a certification and quality control process to meet the ACF's logic and quality standards. Project promoters would then have the opportunity to select services from the certified providers.

Finding 23: There is a greater need to adopt qualitative indicators in order to evaluate capacity building activities more extensively by the project promoters, as well as to assess their impact.

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The evaluation of the CBC was mainly based on quantitative indicators and also through the CB Map and informally within each implementing agency. The project promoters were required to maintain sources of verification and documentation for each CBC action in the same logic as the other project actions, such as keeping attendance records at seminars. The reporting of activities was included in the periodic and final reports of the project. In addition, through the completion of the CB Map and the 'score' they received, they could compare their performance before and after the implementation of the CBC project. Finally, there were informal discussions within each organisation to evaluate the project.

Finding 24: CSOs contributed to the consultation with a number of additional suggestions that would further improve the effectiveness of the CBC program.

One suggestion was the possibility that this grant could be used as core funding for beneficiaries, as this would meet their needs holistically and in a more efficient way. Others suggested that project promoters and project partners should be compulsorily included in the CBC scheme when programmes were implemented by more than one CSO.

Several organisations considered it important that CBC actions are implemented at the beginning or during the first months of the implementation of the programmes, both so that the knowledge generated can be used in the rest of the implementation, and so that the implementing organisation has tools and equipment purchased through the CBC at its disposal in time.

The CSOs considered a percentage of 15% of the total amount of grant for capacity building activities to be reasonable. Suggestions were made to allow for some flexibility in the allocation of the percentage for capacity building to allow project promoters to direct funds from other actions to CBC when there are documented difficulties in implementing them due to changes or specificities in the field.

Deliverable 5.4 Supporting the institutional development of CSOs

The objective of output 5.4 was the institutional development of civil society organisations through the provision of organisational grants to finance their general activities based on their own multi-annual strategic plans/work plans. Through the call "Organisational grants to support the institutional development of civil society organisations" a total of 11 projects were funded during the period 2022-2024.

Finding 25: The grant strengthened the organisational development of the project promoters and strengthened their overall organisational structure and operational functions. The grant added value to the operation by increasing the number of people recruited and encouraging CSOs to develop new skills and priorities.

The call proved to be very important for the beneficiaries of the project, as it acted as core funding, a need that exists even for large CSOs in Greece. The programme gave CSOs a great deal of flexibility to move in the direction that each of them deemed necessary, as well as to open up in areas that they had not had the opportunity to do so until then due to the lack of funding,

The organisations used the grant to, among other things, transform their organisation, renew their image, conduct a communication campaign, train existing staff and recruit new ones, find resources, and purchase logistical equipment and software.

For some CSOs the implementation of the project has proved to be a very crucial crossroads, but also a difficult process. It helped them to transform from grassroots organisations to more

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professional organisations. The implementation of the project enabled them to develop an internal professional function by creating an organisational chart, professional guidance and a three-year strategy. As a result, it led to a significant increase in their effectiveness.

At the same time, there have been significant challenges created by the implementation of the project. The change in the operations and culture of the organisations brought about by the project created introversion, internal tensions and conflicts. Strategic planning and the need for implementation, as well as the recruitment of staff in executive roles, often altered internal and entrenched balances. As a result, project implementation often proved to be a particularly challenging process. Nevertheless, even in cases where there was significant inward-looking ness, the project was considered highly successful, and the agencies were very fortunate to have this opportunity to move towards transforming themselves into more professional structures.

Finding 26: The implementation timeline and grant were considered insufficient in relation to the requirements and projections of the programme.

The short duration of the project was one of the main points raised by several stakeholders during the consultation process. Since the possibility to include organisational grants in the ACF programmes was introduced by the EEA Grants Financial Mechanism Office in the middle of the funding period, on a pilot basis, the available implementation period for funded organisational grants projects was short. In most cases the duration of the project was one year, while the strategic plan they were asked to implement was three or five years. As a result, the implementation period was not considered sufficient to allow for the organisational changes envisaged in the project. The project promoters considered it reasonable to increase the duration of the project in a possible next grant period.

The project budget was also considered to be quite limited in relation to the transformation envisaged, particularly for large organisations, which were the main target of the grant. The budget, which averaged around 100 thousand euro per project, was considered small in order to carry out the organisational changes foreseen in the strategic plans of each organisation and to ensure their sustainability.

Finding 27: There is a need for a more systematic qualitative assessment of the programme.

Several implementing bodies stressed the need for the reports of the actions not to be exclusively designed on quantitative indicators, but to integrate the qualitative dimension and capture. The programme's reporting to the Fund Operator followed the same procedures as in all other calls of the programme and were focused on quantitative indicators. However, particularly for an institutional development programme, it was stressed, quantitative indicators do not have the potential to capture the added value, results or impact of the grant in question. As a result, the need was stressed to include qualitative indicators in a possible next grant cycle in order to assess the actions and impact of the programme.

4.2.4 Which intervention methods financed by the Programme/Fund were most effective in the direction of strengthening human rights?

Grants to CSOs have enabled the development of activities to defend and promote human rights, mainly through Call #3 under which a total of 28 projects were funded.

Finding 28: The overall quantitative results of the programmes far exceeded the initial targets and estimates.

For example, more than 1,300 human rights violations were recorded, exceeding the initial target of 600. Similarly, the number of people who received some kind of training on human rights issues approached 14,000, while a number exceeding 3,700 were employees and managers working in public institutions who participated in human rights workshops and capacity building activities. Finally, the number of awareness-raising activities also far exceeded the initial targets, with more than 655 activities taking place against an initial target of just 50. These activities reached a total of around 4.3 million people, mainly due to the fact that they were conducted through social media.

In addition to the quantitative indicators, the project promoters provided their own assessments during the consultation on which actions were most effective in promoting human rights. For example, collecting signatures and simultaneously campaigning on the issues of institutional equality in marriage for members of the LGBTI community was seen as a particularly successful method of intervention. The fact that the campaign was conducted in advance of the parliamentary debate on the issue was seen as a key reason for success, making it particularly timely and having an immediate impact.

Finding 29: A combination of interventions that produces the most results in human rights advocacy includes engagement in the field through targeted service delivery, research and documentation as a result of that engagement, and culminating in advocacy actions.

Several effective actions were in the nature of making policy proposals following a combination of research and documentation on the issue and engagement in the field. One of these actions resulted in the submission of a legislative proposal and a change in legislation to promote the rights of specific vulnerable groups. The advocacy actions that were considered more effective took the form of either sending documents identifying rights violations or filing specific policy proposals through a policy report.

Finding 30: In order to be more effective in promoting and defending human rights, the fund operator could provide greater networking opportunities for CSOs working on similar subjects and more actively promote their contact with decision-makers.

Several project promoters expressed the view that greater cooperation between CSOs could bring about greater results in the defence of human rights. In addition, there was a need for greater contact and networking with decision-makers to enable CSOs to present their findings from their engagement in the field and their recommendations. The fund operator could consider in a possible next programming period the possibility of creating dialogue forums between implementers and decision-makers to promote networking and exchanges between them.

3.3 Efficiency

4.3.1 To what extent has the Programme/Fund delivered or is it likely to deliver the planned results (outputs and results in the results framework) in a cost-effective and timely manner?

Finding 31: The process of applying for grants was simple and expected compared to other grants. Institutions with less experience and organisational capacity experienced difficulties.

The process was the same regardless of the amount of grant. For most project promoters, the process of preparing the proposal involved mainly one person working either alone or in consultation with other people within the organisation. In most cases, the time required to submit the application ranged between one and two person-months. Where the proposal involved several CSOs as partners, the preparation was more complex as many of the partners had no previous experience in applying for grant of a similar size. For others, the process was not particularly challenging as their experiences from other funds are similar if not more demanding. In particular, organisations receiving grant from Greek public sector bodies have experience of much more demanding processes, hence ACF seemed relatively straightforward to them. There was no shortage of organisations that turned to external consultancy firms to write the application.

A particularly positive aspect of the application procedure was the fact that in case there were minor omissions in the supporting documents or the documents to be submitted, the fund operator showed flexibility and gave the opportunity to submit additional documents.

Finding 32: Particularly those receiving small grants found the application requirements disproportionate to the amount of grant and the size of the project they were implementing.

The volume of documents that had to be submitted and the size of the description of the proposed project were particularly demanding. In other cases, difficulties were encountered in working with partners when they were small organisations with little previous experience.

As the application did not vary according to the amount of grant or the duration of implementation, the ratio of man-hours to apply in small grants showed a large cost-benefit disproportion compared to medium and large grants. Nevertheless, several organisations that faced challenges in collecting supporting documents and writing the application saw the process as part of improving their organisational capacity. As such, they valued the experience positively as they felt that they gained expertise that would improve their grant opportunities. For others, the process was a deterrent for the future.

Finding 33: There is scope for improving the cost/benefit ratio in the application process. These could be in two directions: 1. Grading the pre-requisite documents according to the amount of grant and simplifying the process with fewer pre-requisites and more concise texts for at least small grants. 2. Submission of documents by a specific deadline following the selection process and only for the selected entities.

Finding 34: For several implementers, project management was not particularly challenging, and the requirements were considered expected and reasonable. For others, the project management requirements were quite challenging and focused on the area of financial reporting.

The difficulties encountered by the project promoters were different and depended mainly on the type of programme, the design and the expertise of the organisation. There were project promoters that did not face particular management difficulties and the ACF was comparable to,

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or even easier to manage than other funds. Others encountered difficulties that were expected and were easily resolved. In particular, difficulties were reported in operating the online reporting platform, completing the financial reporting tables, and the details and documents that needed to be submitted in the periodic reports in relation to expenditure.

One particularly positive aspect of the implementation process was the fact that the management schedule of the programmes and the requirements of the fund operator were very clear. As a result, the project promoters knew the next steps and were able to plan their operations.

Finding 35: The Fund Operator has always provided prompt and effective support.

Regardless of the degree of difficulty encountered by the project promoters, there was agreement that any problem was solved immediately in cooperation with the grant fund operators. The Fund Operator was always easily accessible, responsive and provided flexible solutions that facilitated implementation.

Finding 36: More systematic guidance during the first weeks of the project start-up would help project promoters to become familiar with the management requirements.

There have been organisations that have struggled at the beginning of the grant implementation process, as they were not familiar with the tools, forms and requirements of the programme. For these operators, the initial guidance they received from the Fund Operator in terms of implementation came at a fairly early stage, well before the project started, and was therefore quite theoretical. The guidance would have been more effective if it had taken place at a later stage, at the start of implementation rather than before.

4.3.2 Have there been delays in the implementation of the Programme? If so, which ones and to what extent did they pose a challenge to the implementation of the programme/fund?

Finding 37: Several projects have experienced delays, but these have not caused major problems in implementation.

The Covid-19 pandemic and containment measures created delays in the implementation of several projects. However, the direct cooperation of the fund operator with the project promoters minimized the impact as many changes as were required were implemented in a short time frame. Several of the projects received short extensions to complete their interventions and were able to complete their interventions.

Another factor that created delays in implementation was the local elections held in October 2023. As the implementation of some projects relied on cooperation with local stakeholders, the elections created delays. As in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, these were also addressed promptly and effectively.

4.3.3 To what extent could the Programme provide better support to CSOs during the project implementation phase to optimise their effectiveness?

Finding 38: The grant fund operator provided direct and effective support to project promoters during project implementation.

Project promoters appeared to be universally satisfied with the support provided by the grant fund operator. This support was described as direct and effective, focused on flexible solutions. The relationship between CSOs and Fund Operator was described as one of trust and cooperation, as all parties were focused on effective project implementation.

Finding 39: Project Promoters would be supported by administrative convenience and changes to the rules for authorising expenditure.

Several project promoters agreed that the adoption of the lump-sum grant model, along the lines of the European Union programmes, would be a good way to ensure that the project is implemented in a sustainable manner. That grant model would significantly help the implementation of projects and reduce financial management. In particular, it was stressed that this model would be particularly helpful for projects funded at the small and medium scale and could also be adopted for lump sums in large scale projects.

Other project promoters emphasised the non-usefulness of timesheets, which were a requirement of the periodic reports. As most employees have the legal status of self-employed and work on deliverables rather than specific hours as employees, this tool was considered to be out of touch with reality.

Finding 40: For most project promoters the rate of advance payment and the frequency of grant disbursement was satisfactory, but for organisations in the small and medium grant categories there were problems.

In several cases, the project promoters had to use part of their cash reserves to cover financial gaps that occurred between the periodic reporting and the approval of the next disbursement cycle. Small financing gaps did not differentiate the ACF from other financing programmes and most CSOs often face this reality.

The advance payment rate and the small financing gaps during implementation did not pose any particular problems for large CSOs as their reserves enabled them to cover any financing gaps without any particular difficulties.

Smaller organisations faced greater problems, as their reserves did not allow them to fill the grant gap. The disbursement of the grant tranches was made on a quarterly basis, following the submission of the periodic report and its approval by the grant fund operator. In order to address any funding gaps, the fund operator has given the possibility to the project promoters to submit ad hoc interim reports. The frequency of reporting proved demanding for project promoters with limited staff who were also actively involved in implementing the programmes and created funding gaps of up to two months that could not be covered by the agency's reserves. In cases of small grants, a larger advance payment or even separation of the financial tranche of grant from the reporting would be particularly helpful to the agencies. A possible adoption of the lump-sum grant model would also be supportive in these cases.

Finding 41: More support in the areas of networking and promoting synergies, communication, and in the design of capacity building programmes would improve the effectiveness of the programmes.

Strengthening networking and cooperation with both domestic and international bodies would enhance the effectiveness of the projects and respond to the needs of CSOs. The ACF provided opportunities for project promoters to develop bilateral relationships with stakeholders in EEA countries. Nevertheless, further networking needs were identified, in particular between CSOs working on related subjects and receiving grants from the Programme on similar themes, in order to achieve a more systematic exchange of good practice and promote cooperation. More exchanges and cooperation would significantly improve the footprint of projects and help the implementation process. It would also be necessary to extend the networking to experts and

mentors outside Greece in order to strengthen the capacity building component, possibly by creating an "expert pool" from which institutions could draw services.

The participants in the consultation proposed a number of supporting actions to promote networking and cooperation with a positive impact on project effectiveness. For example, it was proposed to organise kick-off events for all projects funded by the programme calls separately, where each implementing organisation would be invited to present the project for which it received a grant. Alternatively, online meetings could be organised for all project implementing CSOs to exchange practices and ways of working together. The strengthening of networking and cooperation can also be promoted through the creation of an appropriate online platform for the exchange of practices, views and consultation on possible joint actions. Finally, it may involve the use of additional tools for creating opportunities to get to know and explore cooperation with CSOs from EEA countries active in similar fields.

A more systematic networking and cooperation with government institutions would enhance the effectiveness of the projects. Actions that would enhance the possibilities to present results to decision makers would create the conditions for participation in decision making based on the projects' findings and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the projects. To this end, dialogue platforms could be set up between CSOs and local, regional or national actors.

Finding 42: Different views were recorded on the need for better communication of the Programme.

Implementers and stakeholders agreed that the ACF programme is particularly well known among the CSO sector in Greece. Different views were recorded on whether the communication of the programme to the general population is sufficient, and whether wider communication would help to make implementation more effective. For some, communication through each individual project was effective and sufficient. For others, the general public does not have sufficient knowledge about EEA activities and funding in Greece and about the projects implemented with this grant. Low visibility, it was stressed, has a negative impact on the engagement of political leadership and the impact of the programmes.

4 Conclusions

The implementation of the ACF had a high degree of success in all the areas under evaluation. The design of the Programme is in line with the needs of civil society in Greece and covers the focus of their action, while the results have far exceeded the initial objectives. Challenges remain as the Programme can place greater emphasis on strengthening the advocacy role of CSOs, promoting networking and cooperation, and guiding the CSOs in developing qualitative standards for their social interventions.

The most important contribution of the Programme lies in the field of strategic development of civil society organisations. The Programme's training and capacity building strategy has largely responded to the needs of CSOs and has led to an improvement in their organisational capacity. The Programme's approach of integrating capacity development as a percentage of donor grant proved to be very successful, although project promoters faced challenges in developing successful programmes as they did not always have the relevant experience and needed more guidance. Continuation of the capacity development component is considered necessary, but areas that improve CSOs' capacities in areas such as developing frameworks for qualitative assessment and impact of programmes, documentation, producing policy proposals, and improving the effectiveness of advocacy and assertion activities can be included or increased in the future.

Particularly important for the project promoters was Capacity Building Component (CBC) which largely funded their core functions. There were instances where the transformation process created challenges and introversion, but these were seen as necessary in a period of transformation. In a subsequent period, the timing of implementation, the amount of grant and the quantitative way of valuing projects can be reviewed, with the creation of qualitative frameworks.

The Programme has contributed to the promotion of human rights, significantly exceeding the initial objectives. The actions that combine field engagement with documentation, the production of policy proposals and culminating in advocacy and assertion actions proved to be more successful. In the next phase, the development of effective advocacy and assertion tools, networking with decision-makers, and the creation of frameworks for qualitative documentation of the results and impact of projects would need to be further developed. Individual projects experienced delays which were mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other external factors, rather than organisational weaknesses.

Very important for the success of the programme was the support provided by the fund operator to the project promoters, which was characterised by immediacy, speed, flexibility and trust. However, project promoters of small projects often encountered difficulties, and the requirements were disproportionate to the size of the grant. The programme would benefit from a number of changes and improvements in individual aspects of programme management, in particular for CSOs receiving small grants, with a significant reduction in reporting requirements.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Relevance

1. The capacity building component of the Programme can be considered as good practice and can be retained in future programmes that are relevant and follow a similar logic. Continuing to direct a percentage of funding to capacity building activities would further ensure the sustainability of the practice and would be relevant to the needs of CSOs in Greece.
2. The fund operator in cooperation with the FMO could include in the design of the Programme specific guidelines and standards that would correspond to their vision and targeting for the development of CSOs in Greece. These could include, in addition to the organisational, management, sustainability and communication issues on which the previous period focused, improving the assertive role of CSOs, promoting their participation in decision-making and optimising their social footprint and role. These guidelines could be integrated into the capacity building programme. While maintaining the flexibility and freedom of CSOs to adapt it according to their own needs and priorities, the capacity building programme could set specific guidelines and standards for CSO capacity building that reflect the vision and focus of the grant body and the fund operator for CSOs in Greece.
3. The fund operator in collaboration with the FMO could consider creating a more detailed plan for the Programme to enhance the capacity of CSOs in areas such as advocacy, assertion, participation in decision-making and maximizing the social impact of CSOs. This plan should consider the need that exists in the country for continued service delivery, but combine this with evidence-based, advocacy and assertion.
4. The fund operator may consider developing a more comprehensive communication strategy for the Programme in order to make its actions and intervention more visible to the general public and to improve the impact of the Programme in terms of highlighting the role of CSOs in promoting democratic processes, enhancing citizens' participation in public life and defending human rights.

5.2 Effectiveness

5. The fund operator could establish basic guidelines within which CSOs could develop frameworks for qualitative evaluation of programmes and their impact on target groups. In order to establish the basic guidelines, the CSOs could be consulted beforehand to discuss the form that the way and methods of qualitative assessment of the programmes and the qualitative indicators that could be applied could take.
6. Additional categories and indicators could be added to the Capacity Building Mapping on the basis of which CSOs could monitor their performance. These could relate to the exploration of the needs of target groups, the extent to which the social impact of interventions is measured, the effectiveness of advocacy actions, the development of partnerships and networks and other relevant aspects of the social role of CSOs.
7. The Fund operator could provide more support and coaching to CSOs to both assess the results of the completion of the CB Mapping and to design the capacity building programme. This process could be integrated into the Bodossaki Foundation's Social Dynamo programme. Through such a process it would be possible to examine the specific factors that contributed to low levels of skills in the areas identified through the Map, to reflect the development

priorities within the framework and based on the indicators that the grant body might set, but also to identify the specific steps and actions through which the CSOs' competences in specific areas can be developed.

8. The fund operator in cooperation with the FMO could provide more networking for CSOs under the capacity building component with service providers both within and outside Greece. Such a process would enhance CSOs' efforts to use the funds for capacity building. In the same context, a "pool of experts" could be established by the fund operator following an open call and selection process. This could include partners who meet the overall logic and quality standards of the Programme. Project promoters would be able to select services for capacity building of their organisation from these certified partners.
9. The Fund operator could consider making the first months of the grant period a mandatory timeframe for the implementation of capacity building activities in order to enhance the implementation of the rest of the funded programme.
10. The manager of Social Dynamo could consider giving the group programmes (storytelling, etc.) different degrees of specialisation (levels), so that they can be targeted separately to those with less experience and those with more specialised needs. Also, consideration could be given to the possibility of some of Social Dynamo's services being offered outside of office hours in order to meet the needs and availability of wider CSO staff.
11. In order to be more effective in promoting and defending human rights, the fund operator could go in a number of directions: 1. Include in Social Dynamo more trainings and seminars to improve the impact of advocacy activities; 2. Incentivise increased grant for CSOs to include in their capacity building programme activities that improve their advocacy and assertion capacities; 3. Provide greater opportunities for networking and cooperation among CSOs; 4. Consider the possibility of creating a forum for dialogue between implementers and decision makers.
12. The CSO Organisational Grants call can be considered as a good practice and could be included in future CSO support programmes. The fund operator in cooperation with the grant body could consider changes to the programme in the following directions: 1. Increase the duration of the programme to 3 years; 2. Increase the grant amount; 3. Consultation to create a specific vision and specific guidelines for CSOs in Greece within which the grants will operate, as well as advisory guidance for the development of organisational transformation programmes within the strategic planning of CSOs; 4. Networking with institutions within the European Economic Area where project promoters could request expertise in order to implement the organisational grant programmes; 5. Development by CSOs of frameworks for qualitative assessment of the organisational grant programme and their impact.

5.3 Efficiency

13. The fund operator may consider facilitating the application process. These could be along two lines: 1. graduation of the pre-required documents and the size of the proposal according to the amount of grant in order to simplify the process, in particular for small projects; 2. submission of certain documents at a certain deadline *after* the selection process and only for the selected operators, at least for small and medium-sized projects.
14. The fund operator could provide training and mentoring to the project promoters during the first weeks of the start of the implementation of the project. Such a process would make it

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easier for project promoters to become more directly familiar with the requirements of the program and be more effective in implementation.

15. The fund operator could consider introducing a number of changes to the grant stream and financial reporting requirements, particularly for small and medium sized projects. These changes could be along the following lines: 1. Introduction of the lump-sum grant model in programmes, at least for expenditure up to certain amounts and at least for small projects. 2. Increasing the advance payment rate for small or even medium projects; 3. Abolishing timesheets as they do not correspond to the actual functions of CSOs.

6 Annexes

Annex 1: Desk research

Documents Reviewed

- Programme Implementation Agreement
- Assessment reports
- Evaluation of ACF organisations in relation to the Capacity Building Programme
- Evaluation of the empowerment cycle
- Overview of Project Promoter CSOs in Capacity building activities
- Monitoring/Progress Reports
- Steering Committee Minutes,
- Executive Board Minutes
- Programme implementation agreement,
- List of Project Promoters
- Lists of Project's contact persons
- Projects' documentation
- Financial Booklet directed to project promoters,
- Communication tools directed to project promoters,
- Annual Programme Reports
- Any other relevant documentation

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Annex 2: Survey questionnaire

Attached pdf file.

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Annex 3: Survey results

Attached pdf file.

Annex 4: List of CSO participants in Consultations, Interviews & Focus Groups

Consultations:

- Maria Fola, Supervision of the European Economic Area, Embassy of Norway in Greece, 14.05.24
- Ioanna Tzika, Head of the National Contact Point of the European Economic Area, 15.05.24
- Eleni Karakitsiou, Programme Manager of Active Citizens Fund-Bodossaki Foundation, 17.05.24
- Stavroula Paleologou, Head of the Department of Civil Society Empowerment, Bodossaki Foundation, 22.05.24.
- Jennifer Clarke, Programme Director, Bodossaki Foundation, 11.06.24

Interviews

#	Organization	Person/Rhodes	Date of
1	Association of Liver Patients of Greece Prometheus	Niki Panera/ financial manager	23.05.24
2	S.S.P.I.I.D.A.	Alexis Tzovaras / Chairman of the Board Thodoris Alexiou/project manager	04.06.24
3	Equal Opportunities Society	Dontis Dimitris/Administrator	04.06.24
4	Ladies' Union of Drama	Aliki Tsiamoura/Chairman Chrysa Kelaidi// Program Manager	28.05.24
5	Lighthouse of the World	Skopeliti Christina / Programme Manager	24.05.24
6	Callisto Environmental Organization for Wildlife and Nature	Lucia Argyriadou/project manager	28.05.24
7	Headquarters - Social Cooperative Activities for Vulnerable Groups	Aristea Goutsiou/Strategic communication and fundraising Xanthi Kozaki/ Head of Finance Dimitris Economou/Communications and Programme Management Department	21.05.24
8	VouliWatch	Loukopoulos Stefanos/project manager	07.06.24

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#	Organization	Person/Rhodes	Date of
9	Centre for Special Education of Children & for Children and Adults with Disabilities (K.E.E.E.P.E.A.) "Horizons"	Kaltikopoulos Spyros/ Strategic Planning and Development Coordinator	11.06.24
10	Clinical Skills Research and Education Society	Panagiotis Tsalis/ Administrator	04.06.24
11	Greek Council for Refugees	Marianna Fragou/ coordinator	07.06.24
12	A21 - abolishing injustice in the 21st century	Dimitris Kontoudis/ Trainer, internal communication	13.06.24
13	Child and Adolescent Centre	Konstantinos Kontogeorgos / Economist Chatziioannou Nektaria / Head of Administrative Services.	07.06.24
14	Hellenic Society for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders of Chalkida	Evangelia Angelidou/Chairwoman Kalavri Christina/Programme Coordinator	12.06.24

Focus Groups

#	Organization	Person/Rhodes	Date of
1	Bicycles Youth	Gina Psilyakou/Project Manager	03.06.24
2	black box	Thodoris Tsitsonis/Project Manager	03.06.24
3	Elisa	Emmy Dotsika / supervisor. Contact	03.06.24
4	Hellenic League for Human Rights	Katerina Nubta / Advocacy Officer	03.06.24
5	Doctors of the World	Elli Xenou/Supervisor. Advocacy and Programme Management Anastasios Yfantis/ Operational Director	06.06.24
6	Diogenes-Schedia	Christos Alefantis / Editorial Director & Founder, Ioanna Sakketa/ Director of Development & Partnerships	06.06.24
7	Odyssey AMKE	Iro Baka/Operations Manager	06.06.24

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#	Organization	Person/Rhodes	Date of
8	Consumer Employees Union of Greece	Anastasia Hadjipavlou/ Director	14.06.24
9	Patients' Association of Greece	Zoutsos Zois / Head of Administration & Finance	14.06.24
10	HIGGS	Alexandra Emirza/An. Director	14.06.24
11	WWF Greece	Elias Tziritis/ Coordinator of actions for forest fires Tina Markou/Human Resources Manager	14.06.24
12	European Network Against Violence	Kiki Petroulaki/Chairman of the Board Antonia Tsiriogoti/Project Manager	14.06.24

Annex 5: Interview Guide

Name and type of organisation:

Type of project activities:

Extra funds from the CBC? Yes/No

Participation in the Capacity Building provided to CSO's: Yes/No

Region and city organisation is based:

Name of respondent:

Role:

Date:

Interviewed by:

Introduction (5-10 mins)

- 1 Please briefly introduce yourself, your organisation, and the work that you do.
- 2 What was the project about?
- 3 Apart from the project in question, have you also received EEA grants grant as a participant in a consortium (as a project partner)?
- 4 Which types of activities did/does your grant cover? (*prompt: exchange of good practices, training, analytical and monitoring activities, awareness raising, training, empowerment, advocacy, etc*)
- 5 Did you receive extra grant as part of the Capacity Building Component (CBC)? Which activities did you implement?
- 6 Did you participate at the Capacity Building provided to CSO's?

Relevance (10-15 min)

- 7 What drove your decision to apply for the ACF? Would you re-apply?
 - How well designed is/was the Programme?
- 8 Have you had to adapt what you see as your organisation's priorities in order to fit the requirements of the call?
- 9 Looked at more broadly, do you think that the ACF priorities correspond to the greatest needs in Greece or in your region? (*Prompt for: unmet needs, at the expense of other needs, emerging needs*)
 - To what priorities do they correspond the most? (*Prompt for: beneficiaries', Greece, Donor States', European, CSO's*).
 - Would they continue to do so if circumstances change?

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9 To what extent has the Programme adapted to changes in the social, economic, and political landscape in Greece to maintain its relevance over time?

Effectiveness (15-20 min)

10 What were/are your project objectives?

- Do you believe you achieved or are achieving them?
- What have been/are the challenges, if any?
- What factors have contributed to or hindered your success?
- How did you measure success and progress on your project? (use of specific tools, surveys, etc)

11 To what extent did your project achieved results focused on quality (as opposed to quantity)?

- *For Call 4:* What activities of your project been most effective towards the enhancement of human rights?
- *For call 7:* In what way was the institutional development of your organisation supported?
- *CBC:* Which were the most important results according to your opinion?

12 Which was the planned and which the actual implementation period? Was any divergence? If yes, why?

13 Do you feel that the programme was/is flexible enough to respond to unexpected changes, such as COVID-19, digitalisation, climate phenomena, wars, etc.?

14 Overall, what are/were the main benefits of the grant received? (*prompt: for the organisation, for the beneficiaries, for human rights, other*)

15 Was the capacity building provided to your organisation by the Fund Operator effective?

- Did it help to with the implementation of the specific project?
- Did it help with the implementation of other projects?
- What could be improved?

16 For the CBC programme: Do you believe that activities funded were effective to support the capacity of your organisation? (*prompt: do you believe your organisation used these funds effectively?*)

Efficiency (15-20 min)

17 How did / do you find the reporting requirements? – Are they clear, is the process user-friendly?

- Can you estimate how much of the implementation time was used for reporting?

18 What would you improve, if anything / would you want to see any other simplification efforts?

- Any examples of other funds that are using particular tools or approaches that you feel worked well?

19 Did you face any delays during the implementation of the project? Why was that?

- To which and to what extent has this been a challenge for the successful implementation and the project results?

20 Did you seek for support from the Fund Operator (*Bodossakis Foundation and/or Solidarity*)?

- Did you find it helpful? What could be improved?

21 How did/do you measure success / progress on your project? (Prompt for: monitoring framework for outputs and outcomes, measurement tools used – surveys, social media/web analytics?)

22 Have you seen or are likely to see any *measurable* results? (Prompt for: *If no, why not?*)

23 Do you consider any benefits you might already have achieved or will achieve from the activities funded to be sustainable and to have a longer-term impact? (Prompt for: *why/why not?*)

For the CBC (if not answered above): Are there any long-term impacts from the activities funded? How do you measure monitor this? Do you consider the benefits/impacts sustainable? (Prompt for: *why/why not?*)

24 How would you evaluate the support provided by the Programme to CSOs to during the project implementation phase? What could be improved?

25 Overall, what are/were the main benefits of the grant received?

- Do/did the benefits outweigh the costs/disadvantages? ((Prompt for *administrative burden, monitoring and reporting requirements, etc.*)

26 Any other comments/concluding remarks?

Annex 6: Focus Groups Guide

Date:

Participants in the Focus Group:

Introduction (5-10 mins)

- 1 Please briefly introduce yourself, your organisation, and the work that you do.
- 2 Which types of activities did/does your grant cover? (*prompt: exchange of good practices, training, analytical and monitoring activities, awareness raising, training, empowerment, advocacy, etc*)
- 3 Did you receive extra grant as part of the Capacity Building Component (CBC)? Which activities did you implement?
- 4 Did you participate at the Capacity Building provided to CSO's?

Relevance (10-15 min)

- 5 What drove your decision to apply for the ACF? Would you re-apply?
 - How well designed is/was the Programme?
- 6 To what extent has the Programme adapted to changes in the social, economic, and political landscape in Greece to maintain its relevance over time

Effectiveness (15-20 min)

- 7 To what extent did your project achieved results focused on quality (as opposed to quantity)?
 - *For Call 4:* What activities of your project been most effective towards the enhancement of human rights?
 - *For call 7:* In what way was the institutional development of your organisation supported?
 - *CBC:* Which were the most important results according to your opinion?
- 8 Do you feel that the programme was/is flexible enough to respond to unexpected changes, such as COVID-19, digitalisation, climate phenomena, wars, etc.?
- 9 Overall, what are/were the main benefits of the grant received for project implementation and for the CBC? (*prompt: for the organisation, for the beneficiaries, for human rights, other*)

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10 For the CBC programme: Do you believe that activities funded were effective to support the capacity of your organisation? (*prompt: do you believe your organisation used these funds effectively?*)

Efficiency (15-20 min)

11 How did / do you find the reporting requirements? – Are they clear, is the process user-friendly?

- Can you estimate how much of the implementation time was used for reporting?

12 What would you improve, if anything / would you want to see any other simplification efforts?

- Any examples of other funds that are using particular tools or approaches that you feel worked well?

13 How did/do you measure success / progress on your project? (Prompt for: monitoring framework for outputs and outcomes, measurement tools used – surveys, social media/web analytics?)

14 How would you evaluate the support provided by the Programme to CSOs to during the project implementation phase? What could be improved?

15 Overall, what are/were the main benefits of the grant received?

- Do/did the benefits outweigh the costs/disadvantages? (*Prompt for administrative burden, monitoring and reporting requirements, etc.*)

16 Any other comments/concluding remarks?