

Plenary Q&A Session: Navigating the Evolving Landscape of NDICI Funding in a Shrinking Civic Space

Target audience:

- member NGO's Acodev & ngo-federatie

Speakers:

- Georgia Papoutsis, Senior Policy and Advocacy Adviser at CONCORD EUROPE
- Amandine Sabourin, Policy Officer at ECDPM

Q&A:

- Is the Team Europe Initiative a new modality or a new branding of an old system?
 - TEI is a new modality, more like a sequel of the joint programming. The Global Gateway will be implemented mainly through TEI. The new novelty is the way of working together and the scale up of the financial modalities.
 - Also read Global Gateway strategy (ppt ECDPM)
- Global calls: Why are these calls so large? There is no room for smaller CSOs, as smaller CSOs do not have the absorption capacity to manage these amounts of money and reporting logistics.
 - One of the reasons is that the commission is understaffed to deal with calls, therefore choices are made to make large calls in order to cover more at once. However this indeed constrains many CSOs to access these proposals.
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Introduce a sub-modality through these large players to finance smaller players, with reduced administrative burdens.
 - Leverage indirect management, as it is the most prevalent stream however unfortunately it is unlikely to change in the near future.
- Lion share's report: did you bring the report to INTPA?
 - Concord has developed an advocacy plan and reached out to relevant units within INTPA.
- How will we tackle the challenges mentioned in the presentation of ECDPM?
 - Key Recommendations (ECDPM):
 - Demonstrate Impact: Showcase how your actions create tangible societal change. Access to and transparency of information are critical. This data can also be advantageous for researchers.
 - Maximize Available Systems: Leverage opportunities presented by initiatives like the Global Gateway, despite associated risks. Use tools like dialogue

platforms and monitoring systems to enhance transparency and connectivity.

- Key Recommendations (Concord):
 - Engage Member States: Be proactive at the national level. Member states co-design EU strategies, and embassies are increasingly pivotal in implementing the Global Gateway. Do not underestimate the role you can play on BE level in Global Gateway.
 - Build Relationships: Connect with embassy representatives to ensure they are aware of your work and value.
- Is there a consideration of lowering the procedures that the EU puts in place? We see that there is a trend in lowering procedures of institutional donors
 - There is a trend among institutional donors to streamline procedures, but this is not a current priority for the European Commission.
 - Potential Changes:
 - Grants may eventually be managed by national agencies, reducing the EU's direct role but creating opportunities for smaller organizations.
 - Example: AFD (French Development Agency) has begun easing procedures and engaging more directly with grassroots organizations.
- Subcontracting can lead to significant overhead costs as funds flow through multiple layers: EU → national agency → CSO → local partners. Thus, subcontracting is CSO friendly however is this efficient (budget wise)?
 - Locally led development remains a priority but requires balancing the absorptive capacity of local organizations.
 - Intermediary NGOs are often essential to manage funds effectively.
 - Conversations are ongoing between Concord and the commission to explore fair and inclusive and equitable funding options across organizational levels.