

Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN)

Technical Aspects of the EU Accession Process:
Improving the Knowledge base on Scope and Opportunities for Civil Society Involvement

20-21 November 2014, Podgorica



ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMA REGIONAL NETWORK FOR ACCESSION - ECRAN

TRAINING REPORT (Training module 1)

Activity No. 1.1.

Environment and Climate Forum –

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE EU ACCESSION PROCES: IMPROVING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE ON SCOPE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT 20-21 NOVEMBER 2014

Place: Premier Best Western Hotel Conference Centre, Podgorica, Montenegro





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LIST OF ABRI	LIST OF ABREVIATIONS				
AM	Annual Meeting				
CSO	Civil Society Organisation				
EC	European Commission				
ECF	Environment and Climate Forum				
ECRAN	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network				
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation				
PM	Preparatory Meeting				
TM	Training Module				
WP	Work Plan				





I. Background/Rationale

Starting in October 2013, the NGOs Environment and Climate Forum (ECF) is part of the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) project, covering environment and climate policy areas. Following the call for interest published in January 2014, in total 21 NGOs were selected for participation in the ECF. These organisations represent civil society from Croatia and the EU candidate countries (Formal Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey) and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹). Capacity development and improvement of knowledge base of the civil society organisations in the West Balkan and Turkey was identified as one of the obstacles in better and more productive of involvement of NGOs into the accession process.

The EU accession process provide wide-ranging opportunities for civil society involvement, but there is often lack of complex understanding of the process and missing technical knowledge and know-how in many areas of the environmental and climate acquis. There is also relatively high fluctuation of the people in the NGOs and many newcomers lack understanding of the scope and opportunities for the civil society involvement.

To address this problem, the project team works closely with EF NGOs in designing and implementation of the capacity building programme. The list of up to 10 priority areas and topics relevant for the NGOs in the region, and in this stage of the development, was identified early in 2014.

Based on the list, the ECF prepared Training Needs Assessment (TNA) questionnaire and subsequently conducted in depth assessment of the training needs under the ten most prior topics and areas based on which the NGOs *Specific Regional Training Plan* is prepared. The NGOs Specific Regional Training Plan contains up to two regional trainings per year (in total up to 6 NGO specific regional trainings). The Training Needs Assessment identified as one of the priorities lack of complex knowledge on scope, details and opportunities in the procedures towards future EU membership.

Based on this, Training module 1 is designed and developed, aiming to increase key NGOs capacities in the technical aspects of the EU accession process and to improve the knowledge base on scope and opportunities for civil society involvement.

^{*} This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.







II. Objectives of the training

Key objectives:

- (i) To progress with implementation of regional capacity building programme, test methodology adopted and set up system of cooperation among the project team, trainers and beneficiaries;
- (ii) To explain and provide holistic picture on the general guiding principles in the EU accession process, discuss role and responsibilities of the key actors and identify opportunities for the civil society involvement;
- (iii) To improve the knowledge, know-how and skill of the civil society representatives in technical aspects of negotiations, key policies and steps;
- (iv) To support better implementation of legislation, better information sharing and public involvement through professional non-state actors' participation in process.

Expected Results of the training:

- Strengthening the knowledge base of ECF NGOs on the EU and national bodies involved in the EU accession process, in-depth understanding of actors and potential conflicts, opportunities and threats, understanding of accession to EU and Negotiation with EU (Chapter 27) and what are differences and steps;
- Complex understanding of the goals and objectives Progress Reports (chapter 27: Environment and Climate Change), understanding of the process leading to the preparation, and scale of opportunities for the NGOs involvement;
- In-depth understanding of possibilities and potential challenges for non-state actors and how to monitor and participate in the EU enlargement process;
- Identification of the phases of Chapter 27 negotiation process: what are the potential issues for negotiation?

Methodology:

- Workshop/Experts presentation (about 1/3);
- Case studies (about 1/3);
- Discussion and experience sharing (about 1/3).

(With utilising of hands-on experience and group exercise).

Participants were representatives of Western Balkan and Turkey NGOs, representative(s) of the European Commission Delegation, ECF Support Team, internal (ECRAN-ECF) and external experts. Presenters were: Richard Filcak, ECRAN ECF Expert, Mihail Dimovski, ECRAN Team Leader, Andjelka Mihajlov, ECRAN ECF expert, Alberto Cammarata, Head of Political Section in the EU Delegation to Montenegro, Ivana Vojinovic, ECRAN Focal Point /Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro Fedor Cerne, ex member of negotiation team for Slovenia, Zeljka Leljak Gracin, Green Action Croatia. Olivera Kujundzic, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro, Natasa Kovacevic – Green Home Montenegro, Nadya Boneva, ECRAN Expert and Lidija Zivcic, FOCUS Slovenia.







III. Agenda and sessions

Day 1: November 21, 2014.

Opening Session - The EU enlargement and the civil society

The opening session started with welcome, agenda presentation and basic introduction of ECRAN and its Environment and Climate Forum (ECF) component. Richard Filcak, ECRAN ECF Expert, who was also the moderator for the morning session, introduced the project and its goals in area of capacity building and in the opening the EU accession process to the public. The presentation was followed by introduction of participants and keynote speakers.

Ivana Vojinovic, ECRAN Focal Point and assistant minister/Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro attended the opening of the training workshop. In her opening speech she presented reflections on the EU enlargement progress in Montenegro and described governmental perspectives on the role and involvement of the civil society.

The session continued with presentation of Alberto Cammarata, Head of Political Section in the EU Delegation to Montenegro. In his remarks he reflected EU and EUD perspectives on the on the EU enlargement process and involvement of the civil society. He described EU enlargement process as a "window of opportunity" to strengthens decision - making processes and build civil society involved in the politics and public debates.

Mihail Dimovski, ECRAN Team Leader, then delivered the keynote presentation. In this session was the workshop focused on situation and challenges for the West Balkan countries and Turkey. He introduced ECRAN experience from progress monitoring and project activities concentrating on the situation, challenges and opportunities for public participation. He specifically discussed with participants what is potential for NGO inputs into the annual Progress reports and how to get concerns and points from other stakeholders into the high level EU – MS dialogue.

Opening session set framework for the overall training module goals, provided NGOs with broader framework of the EU enlargement and identified key areas, where NGOs could focus their work and activities in promoting better quality of the public dialogue.

Second part of the forenoon programme focused on NGOs opportunities to contribute to country EU accession process. Andjelka Mihajlov, ECRAN ECF expert introduced to the participants matrix of accession to the EU and to the negotiation with the EU (Chapter 27). She targeted 3 key areas: 1. Accession steps; 2. Progress Monitoring; and 3. Negotiation.

Afternoon sessions started with focus on the recent experience with EU enlargement in new MS. Fedor Cerne, ex - member of negotiation team for Slovenia presented his experience from the enlargement process in Slovenia, described challenges and bottlenecks in the process and mapped out individual steps in the negotiations from the perspective of public involvement. His presentation was followed by more recent experience of the EU enlargement in Croatia, the newest member state of the EU. Zeljka Leljak Gracin from Green Action Croatia presented NGO perspective on the EU enlargement in







the country and lessons learned. She presented several NGO campaigns and activities during negotiations and what were the concerns of civil society during individual stages of the process.

The first day programme concluded with focus on the host country and its experience and lessons learned. The approach was based on comprehensive "two sides of the same coin" exercise on negotiations and public involvement – country experience Montenegro. Olivera Kujundzic shared Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro position and experience. Natasa Kovacevic, Green Home Montenegro, then followed the same topic from her NGO experience. The debate revealed often-contradictory perception what is appropriate level of the public involvement, where to focus and what is "optimal" mechanism in opening individual work groups to the public.

The programme concluded with closing remarks by Richard Filcak, ECRAN Expert. Wrap up of key points was done and issues identified for the 2nd day presented.

Day 2: November 22, 2014.

Opening - Strategic Planning and public involvement

The opening session started with summary of topics discussed on day 1, and goals of the day 2. The second day was partly focused on capacity building as a start-up for group work and NGO session. The intention behind was, that knowledge and know-how from the module sessions provide inputs for planning of further work and activities at the national level.

Nadya Boneva, ECRAN Expert, delivered the keynote lecture. In her presentation she focused on the main needs in the approximation process, role of strategic planning in organising approximation process, experience from old and new Member States, and Candidate Countries. She specifically discussed the most important planning documents for the approximation process and explored with participants opportunities for public involvement in various stages of planning processes.

Training session: Group work on Advocacy and the EU enlargement.

The main part of the 2nd day was dedicated to training for NGOs how to practically utilise knowledge and know-how from the presentations and lectures, and how to improve quality of public participation in the EU enlargement process.

The training session started by instruction by Lidija Zivcic, FOCUS Slovenia. She described basic principles of NGO work in advocacy and campaigning. Main concepts and approaches were presented on practical examples of NGO campaigns and work.

After short intro *Group Work* was organised (focused to the future), moderated by Richard Filcak and Lidija Zivcic from FOCUS Slovenia. The training started from SWOT analyses of the NGO capacities/resources for the work in areas identified as important in the EU enlargement process. The groups worked as country teams, where SWOT analyses provided assessment of the current situation in the respective courtiers and help to identify targets for work and potential for cooperation.







In the second part of the exercise were NGOs identifying key issues and challenges for their work and they outlined strategic plans for the upcoming period, vis-a-vis presenting their strategies reflecting inputs from the training.

The training module concluded with general discussion on the future steps in the EU accession, role of ECRAN/Environment and Climate Forum in stimulating and supporting work of the NGOs and debating work plan for the upcoming period. The training was closed with revisiting key issues, discussion on drivers, barriers and challenges and future of the EU accession process.





IV. Highlights from the training

The trainings objectives were met and as the evaluation (chapter V. of the report) indicates, prevailing number of the participants was satisfied with the program, individual sessions and presentations. There are however several points to be taken into account for the future planning and trainings.

Sessions at this training provided up-to-date information and knowledge related to EU enlargement process, Chapter 27, as well as clear guidance for possible NGOs involvement. Yet, experience, level of work and focus of activities is much diversified among the ECF participating NGOs, which makes focus of lectures and trainings complicated. In the same time, NGOs increasingly see number of opportunities for their participation in the enlargement process but lack key competencies and staff.

Transfer of knowledge and know-how between NGOs from the member states (and especially from the new MS) seems to be a good approach how to stimulate practical work and provide examples that work. The ECF team will consider options (for the other upcoming trainings) how and to what extend involve also international NGO networks and Brussels based NGOs, which could provide additional perspectives to the regional and national projects and campaigns.

This training also reveals strong needs for professional work and knowledge based approaches. Positive outcome is in strengthening the knowledge base of ECF NGOs, and especially in better understanding of the NGOs opportunities how to contribute to country accession process.

The bases for non-state-actors involvement should be knowledge and expertise, which is prerequisite for legitimisation of NGOs as partners in the negotiations. The training module provided key step in the ECF training programme implementation, but it requires further initiatives and combination of the ECF work with other on-going projects, networks and activities in the region and beyond.

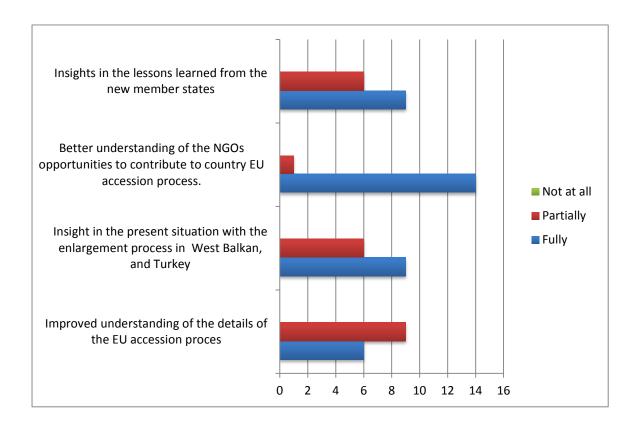




V. Evaluation

The training evaluation report results from analysis of the evaluation questionnaires fulfilled by the module's participants. Total number of collected questionnaires was 18 (while total number of NGO participants was 21). While overall evolution of the meeting is positive, there are specific comments/points on individual parts and sessions, as well as suggestions for next training modules. The report follows them in 3 parts: (i) The meeting participants and their expectations; (ii) Workshop and presentation; and (iii) Open questions.

<u>Part 1. The meeting participants and their expectations:</u> Participants indicated to what extent specific expectations were met, or not met during the meeting.





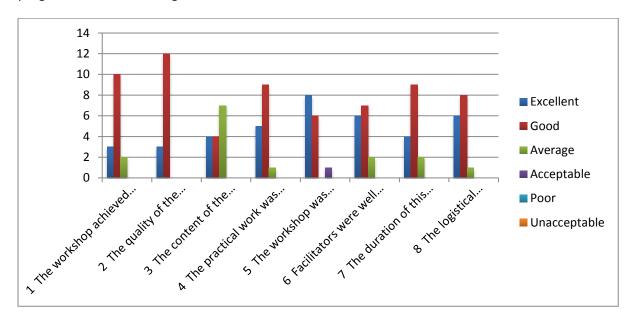
Human Dynamics Consortium



your expectations		My expectations were met			
	Fully	Partially	Not at all		
Improved understanding of the details of the EU accession proces	6		9		
Insight in the present situation with the enlargement process in West Balkan, and Turkey	9		6		
Better understanding of the NGOs opportunities to contribute to country EU accession process.	14		1		
Insights in the lessons learned from the new member states	g)	6		

Outcomes: The first part of the evaluation was focused on the overall evaluation of the training. Outcomes of the evaluation indicate high satisfaction, where "not at all: option was not used in any of the evaluation forms and in 3 categories there are more respondents who were full satisfied that party satisfied. Positive outcome is especially in question about better understanding of the NGO opportunities to contribute to country accession process (14 respondents fully satisfied, 1 partially satisfied). The only question, where number of partially satisfied respondents overcome number of full satisfied is the one, about improved understanding of the details of the EU accession process (9 responses, respectively 6).

<u>Part 2. Workshop and Presentation:</u> Participants were invited to rate the 9 statements in respect of programme of this training module:



aspect of workshop	Excellent	Good	Average	Acceptable	Poor	Unacceptable
1 The workshop achieved the objectives set	3	10	2			
2 The quality of the workshop was of a high standard	3	12				
3 The content of the workshop was well suited to my level of understanding and						
experience	4	4	7			
4 The practical work was relevant and informative	5	9	1			
5 The workshop was interactive	8	6		1		
6 Facilitators were well prepared and knowledgeable on the subject matter	6	7	2			
7 The duration of this workshop was neither too long nor too short	4	9	2			
8 The logistical arrangements (venue, refreshments, equipment) were satisfactory	6	8	1			
9 Attending this workshop was time well spent	10	5				

Outcomes: Evaluation of the training module focused here on 9 aspects, from perceived reaching of the meeting objectives, quality of the workshop, content, content of the workshop was well suited to







my level of understanding and experience, quality of the workshop was of a high standard delivery of the lectures and discussion to duration, logistics and general perception of the workshop usefulness. In most of the 9 aspects was prevailing evaluation "good" - with the exemption of inter-activeness of the event and general question about attending the training, where "excellent" was the most represented response. On average, most of the respondents were satisfied with the meeting, while data indicate that people would prefer longer meeting, and more focus on discussions.

<u>Part 3. (Open Questions):</u> In addition to evaluation based on pre-defined scales, participants had opportunity to provide comments/suggestion on the training in open questions. The text below summarises opinion/suggestions from the questions.

- What would you enhance in the program: more time to hear the experiences from other countries EU/accession, some presentation at the training should be more concrete and less general, some sessions were too long compared to others and facilitators should have been briefed better, would be good to have more case studies on negotiation process, some workshops were too detailed and was below our level of knowledge
- Facilitators/Speakers: Combination and selection of speakers was good, although some speakers lacked presentation skills that made it hard to follow their sessions; would be good for next time to have on the site experts from the EC.
- Logistics: Logistics and back up of the meeting were good, nice venue, more space for workgroup next time.



Day 1 - Thursday, 20 November 2014, Podgorica

Start	Finish	Topic	Facilitator/Speaker	Sub topic/Content		
08:30	09:00	Registration and coffee				
9.00	09.10	Opening	Richard Filcak, ECRAN ECF Expert	Welcome/agenda ECRAN and civil society involvement Introduction of the participants and keynote speakers		
09.10	09.30	Address by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Ivana Vojinovic, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Reflections on the progress of Montenegro in the EU enlargement process and role and involvement of the civil society		
9.30	10.00	The EU enlargement and the civil society	Alberto Cammarata, Head of Political Section in the EU Delegation to Montenegro	The EU enlargement process and involvement of the civil society: goals and experience		
10.00	West Balkan, Turkey and the enlargement process West Balkan, Turkey and the enlargement process Mihail Dimovski, ECRAN Team Leader		·	ECRAN experience from progress monitoring and project activities: Situation, challenges and opportunities for public participation		
11.00	11.30	Coffee Break				
11.30	12.30	NGOs opportunities to contribute to country EU accession process	Andjelka Mihajlov, ECRAN ECF expert	Accession to the EU and Negotiation with the EU (Chapter 27): 1. Accession steps, 2. Progress Monitoring, and 3. Negotiation		
12.30	13.30	Lunch				
13.30	14.15	Civil society and the enlargement –	Fedor Cerne, ex member of negotiation team for Slovenia	The EU accessions and civil society involvement: Slovenian experience		





Start	Finish	Topic	Facilitator/Speaker	Sub topic/Content	
		new member state experience			
14.15	15.00	EU accession and Croatia: NGO perspective	Zeljka Leljak Gracin, Green Action Croatia	NGO perspective on the most recent EU enlargement: Lessons learned	
15.00	15.30	Coffee Break			
15.30	16.30	Negotiations and public involvement – Country experience Montenegro	Olivera Kujundzic, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro Natasa Kovacevic – Green Home Montenegro	Experience from the enlargement process in Montenegro: existing models for cooperation with CSOs, challenges and future perspectives	
16.30	17.00	Closing of the day	Richard Filcak, ECRAN Expert	Wrap up of the day, key issues for the 2nd day, AOB	





Day 2 - Friday, 21 November 2014, Podgorica

Start	Finish	Topic	Facilitator/Speaker	Sub topic/Content		
9:00	9:30	Opening	Richard Filcak, ECRAN ECF Expert	Summary of topics discussed day 1, goals of the day 2		
9:30	9:30 10:30 Strategic Planning and public involvement		Nadya Boneva, ECRAN Expert	The main needs of the approximation process, role of strategic planning in organising approximation process, experience from old and new Member States and Candidate Countries, the most important planning documents for the approximation process.		
10.30	11.00	Coffee Break				
11.00	13.00	Advocacy and the EU enlargement – short intro Focusing the future (Group Work)	Lidija Zivcic, FOCUS Slovenia Richard Filcak	Starting from SWOT, groups of NGOs identify key issues and challenges, outline strategic plans for the upcoming period and present their strategies reflecting inputs from the training		
13.00	14.00	Lunch				
14.00	15.00	Civil society and the enlargement process— Panel Discussion	Moderator to be confirmed	Experiences, lessons learned and key messages for the NGO involvement		
15.00	15.30	Wrap up, open issues for the future and evaluation	Richard Filcak, ECRAN Expert	Revisiting key issues, discussion on drivers, barriers and challenges and future of the EU accession process		
15.30		Departure				





ANNEX II – Participants

	names	CSO	Country	contact details
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ANNEX III – Presentations (under separate cover)

Presentations can be downloaded from:

http://www.ecranetwork.org/Files/1st ECF Training CSOs an EU, November 2014, Podgorica.zip



