

## **Guiding principles**

*The following principles guide the Embassy working groups in developing and managing its core support programme.*

### **Principle 1– Provide long-term, flexible core support to a limited number of mission driven CSOs with a strategic reason for collaboration**

The most crucial aspect in a decision to provide core support should always be the strategic reason to collaborate, i.e., the CSO's mission, priorities and the changes in society which it aims to achieve and its commitment toward this.

The Swedish Embassy develops partnerships with such selected mission driven CSOs which are assessed to play strategic roles, be complementary to other contributions within the thematic portfolios and have ability to become catalytic to systemic change. The CSOs are engaged in promoting democratic governance, increased respect for human rights, increased gender equality, rule of law, development of a peaceful society with reduced gender-based violence, anti-corruption and holding decision makers accountable. The CSOs' work influences the developments in the thematic areas and are integrated parts of the portfolios. The Swedish Embassy believes that the effects and power of demonstration of good practices when partnering with a few, well selected mission driven CSOs through a comprehensive and long-term core support are greater than the numbers of CSOs supported.

### **Principle 2 – Support CSOs' ownership of their own agendas and respect their independence while providing guidance through dialogue**

Albanian CSOs need better preconditions for long term work towards a more democratic society. Preference is therefore given to provision of long term, predictable and flexible core funding for the implementation of the CSOs' own missions and strategic plans where the Embassy supports organisations that are committed and willing to change through coaching and dialogue. Progress towards the CSOs' strategic results is the main focus during the implementation. The Swedish Embassy expects reporting on changes – not activities - and nurtures effective results-oriented partnerships, learning from experiences and built on trust and dialogue, while also monitoring collective progress on a programme level.

### **Principle 3 – Support CSOs which can explain their legitimacy**

For a CSO to speak on behalf of a specific group of citizens it needs to be accepted as their representative and legitimate voice. The Swedish Embassy recognizes that legitimacy can be earned in various ways and requests CSOs to explain their legitimacy in the sense of representing citizens' interests, which give them the rights to claim to have a voice to influence public policy, demand accountability and represent groups of citizens.

### **Principle 4 – Strengthen capacities of citizens and duty bearers to interact**

The capacities of citizens and duty bearers at central or local government to interact in inclusive dialogue and thereby building better conditions for developing accountability and trust in society are fundamental. CSOs' playing roles of empowering vulnerable and discriminated groups of men and

women on the one hand and/or strengthening capacities of duty bearers on the other, facilitate such interactions. The principles of participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability should permeate the core supported CSOs' operations.

**Principle 5 – Make efforts to support systemic change at central *and* local levels beyond present partners**

Experiences prove that mobilization and participation of citizens for change at local level is more feasible as issues which affect men and women's lives are more tangible and power-structures to be influenced are within reach. At the same time, building capacities of central duty bearers and affecting national institutions are also pivotal for structural change. Therefore, the Swedish Embassy makes conscious efforts to divide its core support on CSOs working for change at central and local levels. At least half of the core supported CSOs are based in the regions, have local branches and work closely with communities or other CSOs at local levels. The embassy prioritizes CSOs which are not part of other Swedish support.

**Principle 6 – Pay attention to CSOs' governance and internal ethics**

CSOs claiming accountability of duty bearers must be equally accountable to their own constituencies and members. Swedish support aims solely at democratic CSOs which are working in accordance with their statutes and internal systems, have adequate rules and regulations and satisfactorily governance. One-person-organisations are not considered. Requesting a governance structure with division of roles and responsibilities on a general assembly, a independent supervisory board and an executive director is way to support healthy organisations that are able monitor implementation of their own strategies. Specific focus is given to active external boards and internal policies for ethics, codes of conducts, conflict of interests and anti-corruption in accordance with international CSO standards.

**Principle 7 – Integrate analysis and dialogue on poverty, gender equality, conflict sensitivity and care for the environment**

Swedish support aims to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Analysing multidimensional poverty requires understanding of who is living in poverty, how poverty is experienced and what are the underlying causes that keep people in poverty. A poverty perspective is expected by all core supported partners.

Gender equality is a basic democratic right and a fundamental dimension of democracy. Sweden's priority of enhancing gender equality is a permanent dimension in the Swedish Embassy's on-going dialogue with the CSOs. In the more unsecure world with increasing levels of conflict, violence and social tension, applying a conflict sensitive perspective to understand and reduce submerged tensions is a necessity and is also part of the requested analysis and continuous dialogue. The global care for environment, use of natural resources and climate change is also part of the continuous dialogue with all partners where each one needs to find its ways to contribute.

**Principle 8 – Facilitate regular and structured capacity development and peer-learning**

Capacity development and peer learning are integrated parts core support. CSOs plan their own organizational development processes based on defined needs and integrate that into their Strategic

Plans. The Swedish Embassy also facilitates their capacity development through various means e.g., mentoring, trainings, internships and peer exchanges. Exchange of experiences and peer learnings among Albanian CSOs in various stages of the core support cycle is considered a particularly powerful tool for capacity development. The Swedish Embassy is committed to ensure regular and structured facilitation of such exchange and promotion of links between the CSOs in its network for greater impact based on shared goals, values and trust.

**Principle 9 – Be transparent with the Swedish Embassy’s core support**

Swedish core support to CSOs is transparent for anybody. Information about the Swedish Embassy’s core support is accessible and available to all interested parties. The Embassy makes efforts in enhancing coordination, information sharing and transparency within thematic donor groups and ensures that the importance of civil society and the shrinking space is on the agenda in various sector coordination groups. By continuously bringing up the principles of core support in discussions with other donors and finding opportunities for collaborations, the Embassy contributes to gradual improvements of the conditions for support to civil society.