



**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS  
DEMOCRACY FUND  
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10**

**EVALUATION REPORT**



**UDF-KAZ-11-451 / Civil Sector Capacity Building Initiative in Kazakhstan**

**Date : 21 March 2016**

Acknowledgements  
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## I. Executive Summary

### (i) Project Data

The Civil Sector Capacity Building Initiative in Kazakhstan project sought to improve the quality of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) services and programs by strengthening their capacity to effectively implement accountability standards with their beneficiaries. Its intended outcomes were: 1) strengthened NGO capacity to implement NGO accountability strategies and tools; 2) strengthened capacity of donor commun







In addition, the team assessed the issues raised by UNDEF:

- x Extent of positive impact on NGOs since the Final Narrative Report commented that some NGOs felt transparency had potentially negative impacts from people trying to interfere with their work;
- x Extent of changes in perception on promoting NGO accountability throughout the project; and,
- x Sustainability of the project and its activities.

### (iii) Development context

Kazakhstan has a large civil society sector with more than 32,000 NGOs registered in 2014.<sup>2</sup> The expansion of NGOs started after independence with more than 900 NGOs being created in the 1990s, mostly focused on rights protection. With international support the number of NGOs diversified and institutionalized. Since 2001 there has been greater recognition of NGOs from the government and public financing mechanisms for NGOs. The government also provided capacity building for NGOs within the framework of social state contracting (contracts from government to provide service to the people) although this was recently ended.

An in depth 2008 - 2010 Civicus study of civil society found it moderately developed and operated within a well-developed framework of infrastructure and resources. However, it was driven by, and dependent on, international donor funding and state social procurements. Most donors only fund programmatic elements, and although NGOs are able to earn funds from the sale of goods, this is insufficient for many. Civicus found the greatest challenge was its lack of sustainable human resources and financial sustainability, and the greatest threat to its legitimacy as the lack of accountability and transparency in their use of public funds.<sup>3</sup>

Most CSOs are new and inexperienced, created to take advantage of the availability of state procurements. That process does not have significant organizational requirements for subcontractors or for the recipients of funds. As a result most NGOs have weak internal structures and usually only do the legally required procedures, such as organizational charters that are needed for registration and contracts for paid staff and subcontractors. Many use service contracts rather than hiring staff as employees to avoid the requirements of being an employer. Many lack strategic planning and work from project to project.<sup>4</sup>

Rural NGOs have more limited access to training, internet and networking platforms. However experienced CSOs h





### III. Project strategy

#### (i) Project approach and strategy

With this project, the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia intended to assist NGOs to become more responsive to the needs of their beneficiaries by strengthening their accountability mechanisms to their beneficiaries. It felt that addressing the lack of downward accountability would strengthen the quality of NGO services and NGO usefulness for their stakeholders. In particular, EFCA intended this project to address the:

- x Weak impact of NGO efforts on the communities and beneficiaries they intended to serve and the limited



## (ii) Logical framework

Strengthened NGO capacity to implement

## IV. Evaluation findings

### (i) Relevance

The project objectives were directly relevant to the mission of the EFCA which seeks to

The training of the accountability coaches through a training of trainers (TOT) effort was done in early November 2013. According to the Project Document, this training was intended to be done by the NGO Expert Center for the regional members of its NGO network. They would then work in their regions as the coaches/trainers



Trainer -of-Trainer Training, Photo: EFCA

The three day M&E training covered two main areas, the first part done by experts on monitoring and indicators, and the second part on the report layout done by media experts. Almost all of the training focused on the production of a better annual report through the use of indicators to demonstrate performance and graphics to increase its visual interest to readers. There was follow up provided by these trainers who subsequently reviewed the subgrantees indicators and layouts for the reports. The M&E trainers seemed competent and professional. They felt more time was needed to cover their topics, especially the M&E portion, which affected W K H W U Effectiveness. They also raised the issue of the selection criteria for the participants, feeling that some of the participants were not interested in the workshops or that they had sent a director instead of the person who would actually be doing the report.



Trainer or trainers workshop Photo: EFCA

The Accountability Index was not done as planned in 2013, reportedly because the accountability expert was recruited late. The Index for 2014 was contracted to a research focused NGO, Sange. It appears to have been a professional effort by an organization with a

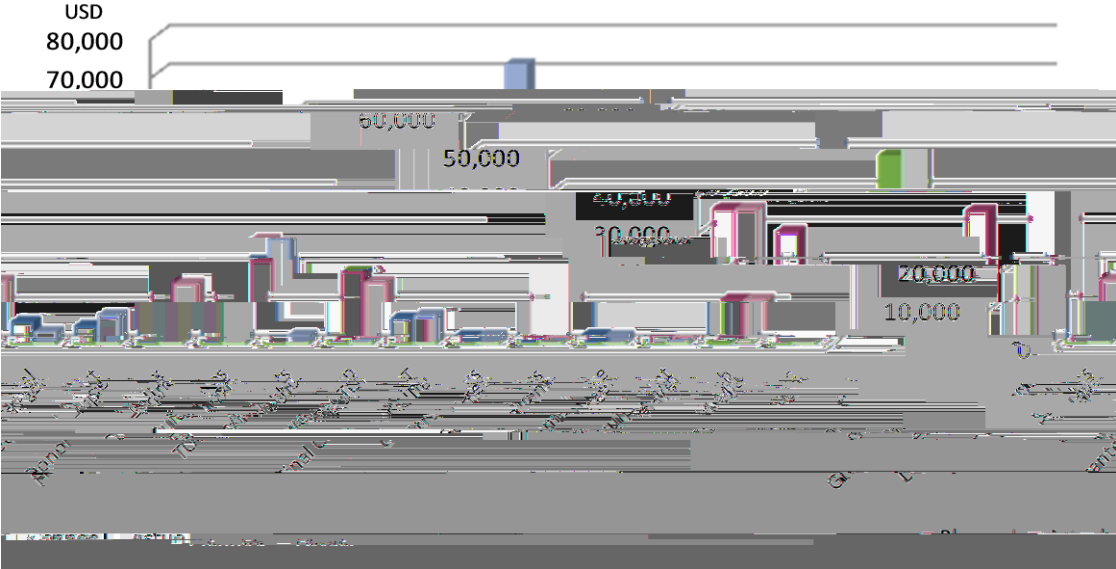


2014 Annual Report ABCK NGO

case however to the programmatic management and monitoring of the project. The project started late, worked in fits and starts and required a four month no-cost time extension to complete. Implementation seemed dependent on the recruitment of an accountability expert. Identification of this person was not started until EFCA had the UNDEF funds in hand. This delayed the holding on the stakeholder summit that was to develop the accountability guidelines and eliminated the 2013 Index which wa V W R V H U Y H D V W K H S U R M H F W ¶ V

The NGO Expert Center, identified in the Project Document as an implementing partner, was not used in the project other than for the project products to be posted on its website. Had it

Figure 3: Project Expenditures





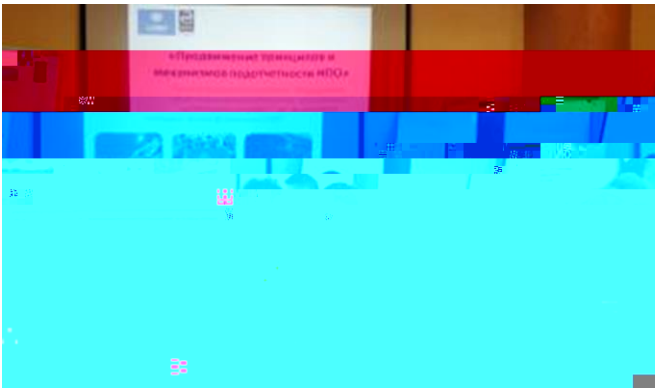
TOT and the cascade trainings. The Center was not part of this project in actual implementation other than having project related items and products posted



Presentation of project at Civil Forum 2013 - Photo: EFCA

expenditures. S

project so was also not repeated afterwards to see what systems and practices had changed as a result of the assistance.



Accountability workshop Aug. 2013 - Photo: EFCA

## IV. Conclusions

Based on the evaluation findings, the team concludes:

- (i) The

## V. Recommendations

To strengthen similar projects in the future, the team recommends:

(i) Continue d focus on accountability in NGO strengthening projects, and especially a s a part of the larger process of accountability that includes clarifying W K H 1 \* 2 ¶ V Y L V L R Q developing its own R a d i o structures and processes, and adopting integrity standards and regular public reporting processes. This recommendation follows conclusions (i), (ii) and (iii).

(ii) Better grounding of projects in the larger development context to ensure it builds on existing efforts, has a good understanding of how its intended beneficiaries operate, targets NGOs that lack accountability, and tests its theory of change as part of its design process. It also needs to be sure it understands the operations and requirements of other intended participants such as donors. This recommendation follows conclusions (ii) and (iii).

(iii) Maintain focus on



## VIII. ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Evaluation questions:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub -questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<p><i>f</i> Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</p> <p><i>f</i> Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</p> <p><i>f</i> Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?</p>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<p><i>f</i> 7 R Z K D W H [ W H Q W K D Y H W K H S U R M H F</p> <p><i>f</i> To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</p> <p><i>f</i> Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives?</p> <p><i>f</i> What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</p>
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<p><i>f</i> Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?</p> <p><i>f</i> Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?</p> <p><i>f</i> Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?</p>
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<p><i>f</i> To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address?</p> <p><i>f</i> Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative?</p> <p><i>f</i></p>

## Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

Almaty Management University, Website, <http://www.almau.edu.kz/>

Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, Website, <http://www.acbk.kz/>

Civicus, Civil Society Index in Kazakhstan, Strengthening Civil Society, CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2008 -



USAID, The 2014 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Washington, DC. 2015

USAID, The 2012 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Washington, DC. 2013



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## Annex 4 : Acronyms

EFCA	Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
USD	United States Dollar