Civil society forum on drugs

communications plan

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# INTRODUCTION

This document is the communications plan for the Civil Society Forum on Drugs (hereinafter ‘CSFD’ or ‘the forum’). It sets out in detail how the CSFD and the EC-supported project to support it, the Civil Society Forum on Drugs Project (hereinafter ‘CSFDP’ or ‘the project’) interact with each other and with external stakeholders over the course of the period November 2017 to October 2019, the duration of the project.

This is version 2.1 of this document, and has been updated following the first CSFD plenary session in Brussels on July 4/5 2018. An updated version will be prepared following the CSFD plenary in November 2018.

# THE CSFD

## Overview

The Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD) is an expert group to the European Commission. Its membership comprises c.45 civil society organisations coming from across Europe and representing a variety of fields of drug policy, and a variety of stances within those fields. Its purpose is to provide a broad platform for a structured dialogue between the Commission and the European civil society which supports drug policy formulation and implementation through practical advice. The momentum for the CSFD’s formation can be traced back to the [Green Paper on the Role of Civil Society in Drugs Policy in the European Union](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1418917957799&uri=CELEX:52006DC0316).

## History and structure

There have been a number of iterations of the CSFD to date. The current iteration comprises members that were selected through a process in early 2018, and the first plenary session of the new CSFD was held in early July 2018. The CSFD currently organizes itself into four working groups on broad thematic areas as follows:

* Working group on the *EU Action Plan on Drugs*
* Working group on *Relations with International Institutions*
* Working group on *Civil Society Involvement with National Drug Policies*
* Working group on *Minimum Quality Standards*

Each working group is chaired by a member of the CSFD who was elected at the 2018 plenary. Each working group has its own terms of reference, and a process is currently ongoing with the EC to ensure these terms are appropriately included in the new rules for the operation of expert groups.

Overall, the CSFD is governed by a core group, comprising the four Chairs of the working groups, along with a Chair and Vice-Chair of the forum itself. Again, the current Chair and Vice-Chair were elected at the July 2018 plenary.

As this is the inaugural year of the new mandate, it is planned to have two plenary sessions in 2018 – in July and November. In 2019 and 2020, there will likely be one annual plenary session. Plenary meetings take place in Brussels, and the core group also has one face to face meeting *per annum* outside the plenary. Outside this, supports are available to the workgroups of the CSFD to carry out its mandate through the CSFD project, details of which are set out below.

The CSFD’s mandate is currently refreshed every three years. Consequently, the current members will be members until the mandate is renewed in 2021. Existing members will retain their mandate until the letters appointing new members have been sent by the European Commission and the members of the core group will, provided they continue to be members of the CSFD, retain their mandate until a new core group is elected at the first plenary meeting of the CSFD in 2021.

## Funding

An EC budget supports the plenary meeting of the CSFD and one additional core group meeting *per annum*. Beyond this, work has been carried out by the core group and by members of the forum through the work groups on a voluntary basis. Understandably, this has been a limiting factor on the productivity of the CSFD, and the members have sought to enhance the forum’s capacity to produce work in line with its structure and mandate. For this reason, the CSFD mandated a group of members to make an application under the [call for supporting initiatives in the field of drug policy in 2016](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/just/topics/just-2016-ag-drug.html). Happily, this application was successful, leading to the establishment of the CSFD project.

# THE CSFD PROJECT

## Overview

As noted above, the CSFD Project is a project supported under the EC’s 2016 call for supporting initiatives in the field of drug policy. The project consortium, who have responsibility for delivering on the project’s work packages are all members of the previous and current CSFD. They were selected through an open call and mandated by the CSFD at the 2016 plenary to proceed with an application to the call.

The CSFD Project runs from November 2017 to end October 2019, and this is something to bear in mind as the current CSFD moves forward – the resources and supports under the project will not be available post-2019. It’s overall aim is ***to support and enhance the work of the CSFD***. In order to achieve this, it has 5 work packages (WPs) – one on coordination and one each aligned to each of the working groups of the CSFD. Specifically, the work packages and the respective coordinators are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Work Package** | **Work Package Coordinator** |
| WP0 – Management and Coordination | Ana Liffey Drug Project (ALDP) (Ireland) |
| WP1 - Engaging in the evaluation of the  2013-2016 action plan and developing  recommendations for the 2016 – 2019  action plan on drugs | Rights Reporter Foundation (RRF) (Hungary) |
| WP2 - Models of meaningful engagement with EU institutions on international drug policy issues | Union Espanola de Asociaciones y entidades de atencion al Drogodependiente (UNAD) (Spain) |
| WP3 - Assessing and strengthening national level civil society engagement for organisations working in the field of drugs | Stichting de Regenboog Groep (FRG / Correlation) (Netherlands) |
| WP4 - Minimum quality standards – from consensus to practice | Instituto Europeo de Estudios en  Prevencion (IREFREA) (Spain) (Co-beneficiary: Institut za Raziskave in Razvoj UTRIP Zavod (UTRIP) (Slovenia) ) |

## Activities and deliverables

Each WP includes a number of activities (things that are going to be undertaken as part of the work), as well as a number of deliverables (concrete things which will be produced as a result of the work). The following tables provide a reference guide, setting out the key activity areas and deliverables under each work package, along with a note explaining each. It is important to note that it is likely that the deliverables are not the only concrete things that will be produced during the period. Rather, they are what the project is required to deliver under the grant agreement.

### WP0 – Management and Coordination

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **#** | **Deliverable** | **#** | **Note** |
| Project set up | 1 | Communications Plan | 0.1 | The first part of this work was to organize and hold kick off meetings with the project partners and CSFD members. This took place at the last plenary session of the previous CSFD which took place in Brussels in November 2017. The deliverable out of these activities is this document, the communications plan, which is updated as we progress.. |
| Support to CG/WGs | 2 | Minutes of CG/WG meetings | 0.2 | The bulk of the work in this WP is in providing supports to the core group and the work groups of the forum. This takes the following forms:   * The organisation, hosting and minuting of one face to face core group meeting per year * The organisation , hosting and minuting of c.20 conference calls *per annum* – one per quarter for each of the working groups and the core group * Additional secretariat support limited to 12 days *per annum* *per workgroup* to the CSFD workgroup / chairs * Financial support limited to a maximum of 10 days *per annum* for the chair / vice chair of the forum, payable to their employer. * The hosting and management of a centralized system for all documents and information related to the CSFD’s work. Rather than having parallel systems, this will take the form of a secure members’ area on the CSFD website which has been developed by FRG under WP3.   The key deliverables from this activity will be the minutes of WG and CG meetings. |
| General Management | 3 | Midterm progress report | 0.3 | This work package also has reporting obligations to the EC in relation to the project management. The deliverable during the project is a midterm progress report. |

### WP1 – Engagement with The EU Action Plans on Drugs

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **#** | **Deliverable** | **#** | **Note** |
| Evaluation of EU Action Plan implementation | 4 | Report | 1.1 | The aim is to produce a questionnaire to evaluate the implementation of the action plan from the perspective of civil society. The key deliverable will be a report with recommendations. A draft report has been developed and will be presented at the plenary meeting in July 2018. |
| Follow up advocacy tools | 5 | Video  Case studies | 1.2  1.3 | Building on the report, WP1 will also produce two distinct advocacy resources, both of which are project deliverables. First, a video resource to communicate the findings and recommendations of the report to non-expert audiences. Second, four case studies highlighting successes, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the EU plan at national/local levels. These case studies will be linked to which will be developed under activity 9 in WP 3, and a call for participants will be circulated to members at the plenary session in July 2018. |
| Workgroup meeting | 6 |  |  | There will be a working meeting in Budapest for 10 workgroup members to progress the workgroup’s activities under the project. |

### WP2 – Engagement with the Institutions

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **#** | **Deliverable** | **#** | **Note** |
| Development of policy papers and advocacy notes | 7 | Policy papers and advocacy notes | 2.1 | The project provides resources to develop policy papers and advocacy notes targeted at HDG and other EU actors with the objective of providing inputs and recommendations on key aspects of global drug policy. The deliverable is an unspecified number of papers and notes. There have already been a number of these completed. |
| Attendance at HDG meetings | 8 |  |  | There is a budget for 2 CFSD members to attend a number EU/HDG meetings in Brussels. The objective is to bring forward recommendations of CSFD through face to face engagement. There is no specified deliverable under this activity, but the CSFD representatives attending should feedback to the working group and forum. |
| Seminar | 9 | Policy paper for seminar  Report from seminar | 2.2  2.3 | This work package will also hold a seminar with attendance from 40 forum members and 30 representatives of EU institutions. There are two deliverables under this activity – a policy paper produced before the seminar and to feed into it, and a report from the seminar itself. Both of these issues will be discussed at the plenary session in July 2018. |
| Support to WG Chair |  |  |  | Financial support limited to a maximum of 10 days *per annum* for the chair of the relevant work package, payable to their employer. |

### WP3 – Civil Society Engagement

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **#** | **Deliverable** | **#** | **Note** |
| Briefing paper linking EU action plan to CS engagement at national level | 10 | Briefing paper | 3.1 | A briefing paper on how the EU action plan and recommendations for civil society engagement at national level will be produced and disseminated. A draft of this paper has been produced and will be circulated for approval by members at the plenary in July 2018. |
| Support development and implementation of national actions in 4 countries | 11 | Report on National Action Plans | 3.2 | Building on the report, this WP will support the implementation of actions plans in 4 countries. This activity will be allied with the 4 case studies under activity 5 in WP 1, and a call for participants will be circulated to members at the plenary session in July 2018 |
| Organise and facilitate a training event for CSOs | 12 |  |  | This WP will also organize and facilitate a training event for CSOs. This event will take place in 2019 and the specific content and programme will be decided following the formation of the new CSFD in 2018. |
| Establish and maintain website | 13 | Website | 3.3 | This WP has also developed a website for the CSFD. This can act as a focus for CS organisations operating around Europe, and will also house a secure members’ area for forum documents, such as that envisaged under activity 2. Guidelines on using the website will be incorporated into this document in due course. |

### WP4 – Minimum Quality Standards

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **#** | **Deliverable** | **#** | **Note** |
| Assessment of implementation of Council conclusions | 13 | Assessment tool | 4.1 | This WP will develop a tool which can be used to assess the extent to which the Council Conclusions on minimum quality standards have been implemented in practice. A version of this tool will be presented for approval at the plenary meeting of July 2018. |
| Feasibility study | 14 | Study Report | 4.2 | The WP will also undertake a study on the feasibility of NGOs implementing the quality standards and what the main challenges to this are in practice. |
| Guidelines | 15 | Written Guidelines | 4.3 | Building on the feasibility study and assessment tool, the WP will also develop user friendly guidelines for NGOs on how to implement quality standards in practice. |
| Support to WG Chair |  |  |  | Financial support limited to a maximum of 10 days *per annum* for the chair of the relevant work package, payable to their employer. |

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS

## Overview

Prior to setting out a detailed timeline of activities over the duration of the project, it is important to note some key considerations in relation to the work. These are as follows.

## Governance

The forum and the project are not the same thing. The CSFD Project is a funded project of the EC, and the project partners have obligations to deliver on the project independent of the forum. As such, the project partners have specific governance obligations in relation to the work which other CSFD members do not have. Thus, it is not the case that the CSFD can demand that a particular activity is carried out in a specific way – the legal responsibility for delivering on any particular action lies with the lead project partner for that action, and not with CSFD as a whole.

That said, the project’s aim is to support the work of the forum, and the focus should be on ensuring that the CSFD, in as much as is possible, shapes the specific parameters of each activity under the project to ensure it best reflects its goals. As can be seen from the previous section on Activities and Deliverables, the project provides resources to support the activities of the working groups, and the resourcing of deliverables. However, the content of what is delivered is a matter for the working groups, not for the project. It is critical to ensure that the relationships between the forum’s workgroups and the project’s work packages are strongly linked. This communications strategy is one way of doing this, and in the detailed activities timeline, specific reference is made to how particular activities should be carried out.

## The Core Group and the Project Partners

The two groups with governance responsibilities are the core group (in respect of the CSFD) and the project partners (in respect of the project). As noted above, it is crucial that there are strong links between these groups. Currently, there is significant crossover between the two groups, with two members of the core group also having roles as project partners as shown by the following table.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Core Group** | **Project Partner** | **Note** |
| Laurene Collard | Yes (Chair) | No |  |
| Thanasis Apostolou | Yes (Vice Chair) | No |  |
| Iga Jeziorska | Yes (Chair, WG 1) | No | WG 1 is chaired by Iga Kender-Jeziorska; the corresponding WP under the project is coordinated by Peter Sarosi (RRF). |
| Marie Nougier | Yes (Chair WG2) | No | WG2 is chaired by Marie Nougier; the corresponding WP under the project is coordinated by Lola Capdepon (UNAD). |
| Katrin Prins-Schiffer | Yes (Chair, WG3) | Yes | WG3 is chaired by Katrin Schiffer (FRG / Correlation), who also coordinates the corresponding WP. |
| Matej Košir | Yes (Chair, WG4) | Yes | WG4 is chaired by Matej Kosir; the corresponding WP under the project is coordinated by Mariangels Duch (IREFREA). |
| Lola Capdepon | No | Yes (WP2) | Jorge Ollero (F-ENLACE) will also provide support to WP2 |
| Mariangels Duch | No | Yes (WP4) |  |
| Peter Sarosi | No | Yes (WG1) |  |

It is helpful to note some key points on which the core group and project partners agree and which form the basis of the relationship between them. These are:

* The core group recognizes the specific governance responsibilities which the project partners have in relation to the project.
* The project consortium recognizes the specific governance responsibilities which the core group has in relation to the forum.
* Both groups recognize the importance of the core group and the project partners being in close contact to facilitate the successful delivery of the project to the benefit of the forum. To achieve this, they agree that:
  + In general, the work groups of the forum should direct the *content*, but not the *form*, of the project activities. As an example, consider the activity under WP3 of producing and disseminating a briefing paper on linking the EU action plan and recommendations for civil society engagement at national level. In this case, the input for the paper should be generated through the relevant work group of the CSFD – this group should inform the broad structure of the paper, what content should be included, what the CSFD recommendations are, and so on. The WP lead in the project will then use project resources to lead the work around production and dissemination. What is ultimately produced should be the work of the CSFD (or a workgroup thereof), not of the project. Thus, the CSFD defines the content of the outputs - however, it cannot change the form of the deliverable – for example, by deciding that a social media campaign should be produced instead of a briefing paper, as the project partner has already committed to delivering a paper. Similarly, budgetary control for the activities rest always with the project partners.
  + In terms of calls and meetings:
    - Members of the core group can, if they wish, join any scheduled project partners call to do with project activities
    - Members of the project consortium will not join core group calls, but may be invited to give input on their work package if the core group wishes
    - The WG chair and the WP lead for the associated work under the project will work together to produce a detailed workplan with clear responsibilities. Both the work group chair and the project partner responsible for the activities for that work package under the project will participate in work group calls
    - The project resources both internal project partners meetings and core group meetings. In organizing these meetings, thought will be given to maximizing communication between the two groups.

## Reallocation of resources

In the event that there is money saved for a budgeted project activity, there may be a possibility to reallocate that funding elsewhere in the project. If this is the case, the project partners will work with the core group with a view to establishing where any reallocated funding could be best used to support the work of the forum. In doing so, it must be remembered that:

1. any changes to the work packages and resourcing will need to be discussed and agreed by the EC,
2. any reallocation between work packages necessarily requires the consent of the organisations coordinating those work packages, particularly in the context of co-funding requirements

# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

## Overview

This section sets out a communications plan for the duration of the project. It covers the 24 months of the project’s duration (November 2017 – October 2019), and seeks to identify, on a month by month basis, what activities will be ongoing and where thought will need to be given to how the products of those activities can be communicated both internally (to members of the CSFD) and externally (to third parties).

## Infrastructure

### WEBSITE

The project has established a website for the CSFD, which can be accessed at **[INSERT ADDRESS].**

The website has a members’ area. Access to the members’ area is restricted to members of the CFSD. The members’ area has a discussion forum and a resources area.

The discussion forum should be used for as much CSFD related communication as possible, including discussions around draft documents, project activities, etc. The reason that the discussion forum should be prioritized over other communication methods such as email is simple – although members of the CSFD will change from time to time, the CSFD itself will continue. Thus, any information (such as emails) which reside solely with a member or members of the CSFD will be lost if they cease to become a member. By keeping CSFD communications within the discussion forum, a record of past discussions will be retained, thereby creating an institutional memory for CSFD.

All documents created under the CSFD will be accessed via the resources area. This will include call records, project documents and so forth.

### CONFERENCE CALLING

The project has also provided a [conference call system](http://www.gotomeeting.com), through which all work group calls are organized, hosted and recorded. The system permits screen sharing , so workgroup members can watch presentations or markup documents in real time.

### ACCESS AND USER GUIDEs

Queries about access and user guides for either website or conference call system should be directed to [jacqueline.kenny@aldp.ie](mailto:jacqueline.kenny@aldp.ie)

## Activity planning

Under the project, project partners are resourced to carry out the activities. However, the respective workgroups of the CSFD need to provide the input and guidance to the project partners to enable them to do so. Under the project, the chair of each workgroup can claim financial assistance up to 10 days work from the coordinator of the corresponding work package. This ensures that the employers of workgroup chairs can be recompensed for the cost of chairing the workgroups. Thus, it is expected that the chairs of each workgroup will be instrumental in moving the work forward. WP0 also has resources to provide a limited amount of administrative support to each workgroup chair and this can be used to assist with WG communications both internally and externally. It should also be noted that some of the activities under the project require a selection process for CSFD members with regard to who should attend a particular event. Selection for attendance at such events should be made through CSFD structures, supported by the project. So, for example, if a project activity provides for the attendance at an event of a number of members of a work group, the decision as to who those members should be should be taken by the work group, not by the project partner, whose role is to deliver the activity. The obvious caveat is that the project partner will always attend events which they themselves are organizing, such as training programmes, etc.

## Table of activities

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month #** | **Month Date** | **Activities Ongoing (WP)** | **Expected Deliverables** | **Note** |
| 1-2 | November/December 2017 | Kick Off Meetings (WP0) | Communications Plan (WP0) | At the end of 2017, the kick off meeting was held and the initial version of this communications plan was developed. It will continue to be updated as appropriate throughout the course of the project |
| 3-5 | January/March 2018 | Scheduling of WG calls (WP0)  Activities related to first plenary | Minutes (0.2, WP0) | In the early part of the year, the following activities were carried out:   * Establishment of the conference call system (WP0) * First workgroup and core group planning calls hosted under the project. (WP0) Such calls go on throughout the project period. * Attendance of 2 CSFD members at HDG (WP2)   Workgroup activities focused on creating final reports for the 2015-2017 CSFD and working on activities relevant to the CSFD project. |
| 6-8 | April - June 2018 | Call for new CSFD members  Establishment of Website (WP3)  Project Partners / Core Group Meeting (WP0)  Preparation of Handover Documents  Activities related to the first plenary | Website (3.3, WP3)  Minutes (0.2, WP0) | In the second quarter, the focus was on preparing for the handover to the new CSFD. This included working on the website, holding a core group /project partners meeting and continuing to develop work package activities so that these could be presented at the plenary session in July. |
| 9 | July 2018 | 1st CSFD Plenary  Outline evaluation report (WP1)Policy papers and seminar (WP2)  Outline briefing paper (WP3)  Outline assessment tool (WP4) |  | The first CSFD Plenary of 2018 took place on July 3/4 in Brussels. At this meeting the new core group was elected, the workgroups were reconstituted and a mandate given by each workgroup to pursuing the activities under the project.  Following the meeting, the core group and project partners liaised to develop a detailed spreadsheet to track activity.  This spreadsheet is circulated with this version of the communications plan. |
| 10- 11 | August / September 2018 | Evaluation Report (WP1)  Briefing Paper (WP3)  Assessment Tool (WP 4) | Evaluation Report (1.1, WP1)  Briefing Paper (3.1, WP3)  Assessment Tool (4.1, WP4 | Apart from any advocacy notes under deliverable 2.1, the first real outputs of the project which will require external engagement will be developed and delivered in August and September2018, and occur under WPs 1, 3 and 4. The workgroups should consider who the key stakeholders are for these pieces of work and how they should be communicated to external stakeholders for best effect. |
| 12 | October 2018 | Video (WP1)  Policy Paper (WP2)  2nd CSFD Plenary | Videos (1.2, WP1)  Policy Paper (2.2, WP2) | In the final quarter of 2018, we will be moving towards the second plenary session, which will take place in early November. There will be a lot of activity around this time which will need to be planned for. Videos are due (deliverable 1.2), and the policy paper (deliverable 2.2) which will inform the seminar (deliverable 2.3) will need the input of the working groups and forum to finalise. The training action under WP3 should also be discussed and planning undertaken to hold this event in 2019. As with the previous deliverables, these will be important pieces of work for the CSFD, and the workgroups should consider who the key stakeholders are for these pieces of work and how they should be communicated to external stakeholders for best effect. |
| 13-14 | November/December 2018 | Mid Term Report (WP0) | Mid Term Report (0.3, WP0) | The second pleanary session of 2018 is scheduled for early November 2018. This has been set to coincide with a conference on Civil Society Involvement in Drug Policy, as well as a sitting of the other EC CSF, on HIV+.  The mid term project report to EC is also due towards the end of 2018. |
| 15 | January 2019 |  |  | There is nothing specifically scheduled for January 2019 . However, there will need to be a lot of work going on in the workgroups at this point. Notably, the national action plans under WP3 should be in their early stages at this point. Also, work should be ongoing in relation to the development of case studies under WP1. WP2 is likely to be busy also as the high level segment in Vienna takes place in March, and this is the topic of the seminar.. |
| 16 | February 2019 | Seminar Report  Feasibility Study | Seminar Report (2.3, WP2)  Feasibility Study (4.2, WP4) | Building on the policy paper developed, a seminar will be held on the ministerial segment with 40 CSFD members and 30 EU representatives. The deliverable from this activity is a seminar report, which is currently due in February 2019.  Under WP4, the feasibility study into NGO implementation of quality standards is also due in February 2019.  Careful consideration will need to be given to how both these events are communicated to external stakeholders to ensure maximum impact. The seminar report completes the currently scheduled activities under WP2. |
| 17 | March 2019 |  |  | The high level segment in Vienna takes place in 2019. The work groups and core group should give consideration to CSFD representation at this event. |
| 18 | April 2019 | Case studies (WP1) | Case studies (1.3, WP1) | The case studies under WP 1 are due in April 2019. This completes the currently scheduled activities under WP1. Again, thought will need to be given at the time to who key audiences are for these deliverables. |
| 19-22 | May- August 2019 | National Action Plans (WP3) | Report (3.2, WP 3) | The reports on national action plan implementation completes the currently scheduled activities under WP3 in August 2019. Again, thought will need to be given at the time to who key audiences are for these deliverables. |
| 23-24 | September/ October 2019 | Guidelines (WP4) | Guidelines (4.3, WP4) | The production of guidelines on for NGOs on how to implement quality standards in practice completes the currently scheduled activities under WP4 in October 2019, and of the project in general, save for final reporting. Again, thought will need to be given at the time to who key audiences are for these deliverables |