

Mid-Term Funding Report Form

Global Standard for CSO Accountability – Extension Phase 2019/20

SECTION 1: General Information

Name of organisation that received funds: Global Standard Secretariat/ Accountable Now

Project title: Resilience Civil Society in Times of Scrutiny, Stream I: Global Standard for CSO Accountability

Funding period (start and end date): 01 July 2019 to 30 September 2020

Grant Amount: € 150,036.42

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SECTION 1: Narrative Reporting

- 1. Please provide an update on how project implementation has developed vis-à-vis the project plan:**

For this second extension phase, the Secretariat and Partners defined a work plan that focuses on activities that further promote the Global Standard and Dynamic Accountability around the globe. In particular, there is a bigger push towards the adaptation and implementation of the standard to each particular context to illustrate the different ways to use it in practice.

Accountable Now (AN) is a Partner and host of the Global Secretariat of the Global Standard. Since April 2018, AN has worked as the Global Secretariat of the GS, which is the body that facilitates and supports the different activities of the partnership.

The Secretariat plays a key role in coordinating efforts and synergies to enhance solidarity and collaboration between the partnership. At the same time, the Secretariat also identifies opportunities in different regions where the GS can help CSOs strengthen their capacity and enable environments for CSOs to build a vibrant and pluralistic civil society worldwide. We do so either by working in close collaboration with GS partners within their region, or by supporting CSOs directly in places where we do not have Partners yet. Therefore, to advance the objectives set out for this phase, the Secretariat focused their efforts on the following activities for each respective goal:



Promote the use and engagement with the Global Standard and Strengthen CSO capacity at the national, regional and international levels to adapt the Global Standard to their needs and contexts:

- **Participated in a meeting organised by Partners Albania**

In September, Partners Albania, a member of BCSDN, organised an event titled “Strengthening accountability, transparency and sustainability of civil society organizations”. This event was held at a critical time in Albania because the government is intending to regulate their civic space. The Secretariat appeared on a panel to speak to CSOs about different types of self-regulation frameworks. Approximately, 50 people representing CSOs, and donors were present. The workshop allowed different stakeholders to consider accountability from different perspectives and approaches. This has sparked a conversation within the sector to adopt a code of conduct.

- **Global Perspectives 2019 Workshop**

On October 31st, the Secretariat carried out a workshop called “Accountability: An Essential Ingredient to Prove Integrity and Build Trust”. In this workshop, we discussed how organisations can use accountability mechanisms to become more effective and rebuild trust, and focused on the 12 commitments of the Global Standard as a tool to embed Dynamic Accountability practices. 25 participants were able to jointly reflect and share what their organisations are doing in regards to each commitment. The Rendir App was used to get participants to undertake a simple self-assessment exercise.

- **Supporting CSOs in Ethiopia.**

Continuing with the strategic relationship built between the GS Secretariat, PHE Ethiopia Consortium and the Ethiopian Civil Society Forum, and taking advantage of the context in Ethiopia where the government has allowed CSOs to engage more in public life, we carried out the following activities:

- In collaboration with PHE and the Forum, we carried out a one-day workshop titled ‘*An Introduction to the Global Standard: How can Ethiopian CSOs become more accountable and to whom?*’. Approximately 40 participating national CSOs were familiarised with the concept of Dynamic Accountability, introduced to the GS as a tool to guide dynamic accountability practices, and reflected on their current practices. Furthermore, the workshop was useful in identifying key roles for CSOs to play and their values to the country’s democratic structure.
- Introducing the Global Standard as a tool to practice dynamic accountability to Ethiopian CSOs proved useful in informing their new National Code of Conduct. After the workshop, the Forum requested support from the Secretariat to review the final version



of their National Code of Conduct before being presented to the government. The Secretariat identified that the Global Standard and Dynamic Accountability could be found throughout the document. Furthermore, we provided suggestions on how to further strengthen the document.

- **Identifying opportunities around the globe**

The Secretariat has been working with the **Zambian Governance Foundation** to co-create workshops for national CSOs to advance their use of the GS. We are currently in the process of redefining our approach, which will most likely involve two workshops (one online and one in-situ, if conditions permit) to assess their practices and to use the GS to develop improvement plans for participants. Additionally, to foster peer exchange within national CSOs, we have begun to identify the CSOs that had expertise on each one of the 12 commitments. Peer learnings will be a key component of the in-situ workshop. This will bolster solidarity among national CSOs while also guaranteeing sustainability.

The Secretariat identified a need and an opportunity for CSOs in Mexico and the Northern Triangle (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) to reclaim or maintain an enabling operating environment since their governments are wanting to introduce new regulatory measures on CSOs that would put them at risk. For this reason, we reached out to the **International Center For Not-For-Profit Law (ICNL)** to identify opportunities for collaboration. Given the Covid-19 crisis, agreeing on a plan has taken longer than expected. However, after several conversations, we have agreed to explore the possibility of carrying out a first workshop in Guatemala with around 70 organisations. We have agreed that Guatemala would be prioritized due to the state of urgency that CSOs are in: the government has introduced a new Development Law that is against freedom of expression and assembly. Given that this work takes place in Latin America, we have engaged Rendir Cuentas. This could become a pilot for the region.

Continuation of the strategic relationship with **Forus by aiding NNNGO** (Nigeria) to use the GS as the foundation for its Code of Conduct.

Visit from Turkish Delegation. Responding to the request made by an EU funded project titled: "Strengthening the Capacity of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services for Public-CSO Cooperation", the GS welcomed a Turkish delegation of approximately 15 participants on the 17th of February. We presented the GS to an audience of CSOs, Turkish representatives to the EU, and Turkish ministerial officials who are working together to strengthen the collaboration between the Turkish government and civil society. This workshop outlined tools and different perspectives on how stakeholder relationships can be carried out in a more engaging way, the importance of putting people at the core of the decision making process, continuous dialogue, and mutual understanding. The presentation was followed by a short Q&A session. The conversation allowed us to highlight the **importance of practicing**



dynamic accountability, and raise awareness among the different stakeholders present, including government agencies, on the importance of **self-regulation in the civic space**. The workshop enabled participants to reflect on their accountability practices, and introduced the GS tools for CSOs to improve organisational processes.

Global Accountability Week 2019

The GS Secretariat also engaged during the Global Accountability Week 2019 in November and made a video that summarises the process of DA and its advantages. The video was viewed 295 times, and made over 3000 impressions on Twitter. Overall, the campaign was successful, with 6 Partners joining in with the campaign, and as a whole, we have been able to reach over 50,000 contacts. On the Global Standard's Twitter platform, we also received over 100 likes and retweets, including those from organisations outside of our network, which demonstrates that we have successfully elevated our profile through this process. **Our campaign served to put accountability as a priority on CSO's agenda**, since it highlighted a different perspective that helped organisations to be more successful by meaningfully engaging stakeholders and **putting people at the core of their actions**.

Accountable Now's Workshop

The Secretariat participated and co-led Accountable Now's Annual Workshop titled "Preparing for a power-shift towards people and communities we work for and with: exploring new ways of working in the donor-grantee relationship". At this year's Annual Workshop, local and international CSOs and donors gathered for a two-day meeting.

The purpose of this workshop was to assess and find solutions for the challenges that our sector is facing in shifting the power, so that advancing development is less top-heavy and more people-driven. This workshop served to **create a safe space** where different actors could gather and **hold honest conversation** on how the sector has not been successful to shift the power to people and why. **Together, we raised awareness** among participants of the different forms of power, and the dynamics created by the interaction of those who hold these powers. Furthermore, we identified **different challenges/problems** that these actors face in shifting the power and reflected on why we haven't been successful. These activities served to create a better **understanding and a holistic picture** of the actual context.

Finally, participants were able to **pose possible solutions** to address the simple, more practical problems and **we kept the door open to continue the conversation to work together and find solutions to the more complex issues**. The Global Standard was able to promote its Community of Practice, and engaged many CSOs and donors alike through its presentation on Dynamic Accountability at this event.

[Inspire and nurture a global community of practice on Dynamic Accountability](#)



Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice

- Pilot phase - our failures and learnings

The Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice (DACoP), which is a collaborative effort between the Global Standard, CIVICUS, Keystone Accountability and Restless Development, carried out consultations among organisations that showed interest in previous forums on the need to create a space where practitioners could exchange knowledge and collaborate. The **consultations** had the goal to **validate the objectives, content and purpose of the Community**. We **kicked off a pilot phase** on Tribe since December 2019 with around 45 people. From January to April 2020, we ran a Happy Friday scheme, where we posted resources on the platform every Friday and proposed questions to be discussed.

However, members would visit the site every Friday, they were reluctant to interact and actively participate with the platform. After a meeting in March 2020, where all the CoP core partners came together to reflect and evaluate our actions, we decided that we needed to change the format of our community. In keeping with dynamic accountability, the core partners collaborated on a **Flog (a failure blog), which includes our own internal reflections and self-evaluations**. This Flog was shared on Tribe and it will also be made available to the public to help other organisations when starting online communities of practices.

From our learnings, we decided to launch the DACoP in two new formats: one being a **newsletter** and the other being a **Google Group**. Since many of our members are interested in receiving resources and are less inclined to share their thoughts - a newsletter would be a good starting point for them to learn about dynamic accountability and its practices. The door to joining the Google Group will always be open, the link will be featured with each issue of the newsletter, and members who feel more comfortable having discussions and asking questions can then join. Google Group members will receive the newsletters as well. Furthermore, the DACoP will continue carrying out **public dialogues** on relevant current topics, always linking it to accountability to enable a common space where practitioners can get together for an open discussion.

- “Accountability in times of COVID-19: An Open Conversation”

As part of the Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice (DACoP), the Global Standard, along with CIVICUS, Keystone Accountability and Restless Development hosted an online event titled “Accountability in Times of COVID-19: An Open Conversation” on 23 April. We had 30 participants from a wide range of countries and civil society backgrounds. (Click [here for invitation](#), and click [here for agenda](#))

Participants expressed the importance of getting together as a sector to talk and share their main takeaways, highlighting the need to clearly communicate with stakeholders, the great pace of acceleration in terms of technology as it brings both innovation and inequity (especially to those who cannot connect), the importance of international cooperation during this time, the need to acknowledge that a common issue does not always equal a common solution, the



difficulties in balancing between changing focus to response to the emergency but also to stay accountable, and lastly the positive ways that the global pandemic has affected the sector - including how it has drastically changed the way we work.

Key takeaways from the conversation will be shared with participants. The plan is to release these documents on the CoP new platforms so more people can continue reflecting on the importance of guaranteeing accountability in this difficult time.

Create a knowledge pool on how the Global Standard enhances the impact and resilience of CSOs

With the information collected through monthly calls with Partners, the Secretariat produced **6 internal newsletter**. These newsletters actively contribute to enhance internal communications, strengthen institutional memory of the partnership, and provide insights for the External Communications team's effort. These newsletters inform partners on each other's activities, and provide a space to identify synergies and opportunities for collaboration. Moreover, they are a useful mutual accountability mechanism since they share how organisations are advancing their project activities. In the future, we seek to add thematic learnings in these newsletter so they can be spaces where partners exchange knowledge.

The Secretariat acts as a **first port of call for Partners seeking further information on GS** case studies and literature within the partnership; we will continue to provide support to partners on how to collect information for telling success stories. We **have also produced blog posts** where we highlight the importance of CSO accountability in challenging environments.

To strengthen the financial and organisational sustainability of the Global Standard, as the Secretariat for the Global Standard, AN has worked on and implemented the following activities:

General coordination of the partnership

The Secretariat has provided **support** to the partnership on **project management** from the inception of the Second Extension Phase until now. During the kick off, we provided support to some partners to design their activities in line with pre-established priorities, and followed up on any further questions that partners had when revising and finalising their proposal.

To further enhance internal communications and facilitate oversight of the project, we set up **monthly calls between the Secretariat and each Partner**. In these calls, we collect Partners' achievements, learn about their context, receive updates on progress and future plans, and track activities outside of the Partnership. Hence, the Secretariat has been able to map out activities, find synergies, capture participation and gather useful information that benefits the partnership.



To evaluate the initiative and the governance bodies, the Secretariat carried out **consultations** in the forms of surveys and conversations. These have been useful in addressing intra-partnership challenges and improving the governance structure to answer to current partnership needs .

Coordinating meetings and administration of the governance body

The Secretariat regularly coordinates bi-monthly ExCo meetings. In these meetings, the strategies and oversight of the initiative are reviewed. They are important tools and channels for mutual accountability. All ExCo meetings are minuted.

Moreover, since the Partnership has evolved, there was a need to revamp its governance structure (ExCo). In this line, the Secretariat worked alongside partners and ExCo members to **revise and adopt new Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee (ExCo)**. The new structure strengthens the relationship between ExCo members and Partners by adding regular consultations between the two parties. Through these consultations, Partners will have a chance to build relationships with ExCo members, input their opinions into ExCo matters, and have their voices heard.

Since the **Global Standard Partners' F2F in Bangkok**, and then in Berlin had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Secretariat decided **to carry out these meetings virtually** to ensure that the strategic planning of the initiative could continue without further delays.

The purpose of these virtual meetings is to strengthen the partnership and carry out a strategic planning exercises to plan for the future of the initiative. For these virtual conversations, we have chosen to schedule conversations in a way that enables partners to look back on the Partnership, setting the ground to evaluate how to move forward ([F2F Agenda](#)). In doing so, we ensure that every Partner has a common understanding of our past, reflects on the initiative and carries out contextual analyses. Partners voiced that they found the Working Group exercise very useful and that they would want to do it more often because it helped them to better know each other's operating environment, challenges, concerns and thinking.

In the near future, the Partners will also address the following topics: Rethinking the Partnership, Fundraising, Outreach, Internal Communications and the Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice. Our aims with these latter topics are to enable strategic planning and long-term goal setting. These conversations are expected to be held in May.

External Communications:

The Secretariat regularly participates in the External Communication Task Force to support the planning of communication efforts. We have also ontributed by submitting communication



outputs (blog posts) to the External Communication Team. Furthermore, through our internal newsletters we provide good sources of information and inputs that help coordinate and complement the Communication Team work. In the same line, we also hold monthly calls with them to coordinate for successful implementation of the communication strategy.

Fundraising activities:

Open Society Foundation. On February 5th, we met with the Open Society Foundations to update them on recent developments of the Global Standard. We also had the opportunity to share our future plans in order to explore possible ways of collaboration. It was a very productive meeting where we were also briefed about the outlines for OSF's new strategy. The strategy meeting was in part co-opted by the COVID-19 crisis situation, and OSF were not able to finalise the strategy just yet, but they hope to do it by the end of September. We will be alerted to the new strategy and will pitch an idea to collaborate with them in the near future.

Ford Foundation. At the beginning of the year, the Secretariat of the Global Standard reached out to follow up on conversations that we started at the end of 2019 with the Ford Foundation. As a result, we have been put in touch with regional offices in India and East Africa. We have requested a call to introduce the Global Standard, our work in each region and to explore possible ways of collaboration, having a positive response with a date to be set up. Unfortunately, this time coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 and we haven't heard anything from them after following up. At the beginning of May the Secretariat is planning to follow up with both country offices again.

Lastly, The Secretariat held a meeting with the **Department for International Development UK (DFID)** with the purpose of talking more about how the Global Standard can support the revision/inform their new code of conduct so he redirect us to the Programme Delivery Lead on Beneficiary Engagement.

2. Please share your key successes, challenges and any unforeseen changes so far.

Key successes:

From our efforts in different areas, we would like to highlight the following outcomes:

- The Secretariat reached out to **around 100 organisations** in different workshops, conversations and events where we talked about the Global Standard and Dynamic accountability.
 - Informed organisations' thinking around how to advance CSOs accountability in **Albania, Ethiopia and Zambia**. Furthermore, we sparked conversations and motivated **organisations around the globe** to evaluate their own accountability practices by using the self-assessment via the Rendir App.



- The Secretariat carried out conversations with other stakeholders such as **donors and government officials** on the use of the Global Standard. These conversations helped to highlight the importance of practicing accountability in a dynamic way, placing this as an item on their agenda.
- The Global Standard **informed** Ethiopia's National **Code of Conduct** for Civil Societies and NNGO in Nigeria's Code of Conduct.
- Established and/or maintained **key partnerships**:
 - For the DACoP we successfully worked in partnership with CIVICUS and Restless Development and on and off with Keystone Accountability to carry out our first pilot and to plan actions going forward
 - We set collaborations with different organisations such as Zambian Governance Foundation, ICNL and Ethiopian Civil Society Organization Forum (ECSF).
- Internal communications mechanisms created more **intra-partnership collaborations**, such as:
 - The Secretariat supported BCSDN in their regional activities by participating in the Partners Albania dialogue.
 - The Secretariat, thanks to ACFID, began conversations with ICVA in Thailand to organise an event on the Global Standard with South East Asian CSOs.
 - VANI was able to use the internal newsletter to inform the basis of its research for success stories around the GS partnership
- We revised the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee (ExCo) in consultation with ExCo and the Partners. The new **Terms of Reference respond to current needs of the partnership, making the governance structure more inclusive and representative**, enhancing relationships and channels of communications within the partnership.

Challenges:

- Regarding the Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice, we were unable to get to the level of engagement intended, visualizing members sharing and exchanging about Dynamic Accountability. Members would view the platform, but did not actively participate. We found that the platform was not intuitive and did not provide the right environment for sharing. This led us to rethink our approach on how we can nurture interactions with participants. In response, we put in place different mechanisms that speak to the diverse needs of members. Doing so will enable us to reach more people and allow for participants to connect on their own terms.



- The evolution of the initiative has put the partnership at a crossroad. In the phase of implementation and institutionalization, new decisions have to be made on how the initiative should move forward. Diversity within the partnership enriches the initiative but also sets a challenge in recognizing the different strengths and the best way to use them to advance it. Having the same overall objective helps to align efforts towards the same goal. The Secretariat will work along with partners on strengthening long-term goals that will serve to guide this process, leveraging the diverse skills within the initiative. As a first step, the Secretariat carried out a strategic planning exercise during the Virtual F2F, that will be followed by subsequent sessions to set the ground for the partners to thrive in the future.
- The current sub-granting process for this Second Extension Phase previously agreed by the partnership presented a set of challenges. Partners were not pleased with the results of the pre-established method of evaluation. Furthermore, unintended consequences were triggered such as competition among partners and lack of ownership of the initiative for those who didn't receive funds. Updating the subgranting processes and recognising different ways that partners are involved and can contribute to the initiative are essential for us to move forward. In response, the Secretariat is encouraging further engagements on these matters within the scope of the Virtual F2F

Unforeseen changes:

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we had to adapt/currently exploring ways to adapt the following activities to a different format or to setting later dates for them

Face to Face Meeting: We had originally planned for the meeting to take place in Bangkok, Thailand for the week 24-28th February, but due to the COVID-19 and taking into consideration health issues, the Partners agreed that the meeting should be rescheduled to a later time and a different place far from the outbreak of the virus.

Therefore, the meeting was rescheduled to take place in Berlin for the week 23-27th March, and arrangements were made accordingly. With the relocation of the meeting, although some of the flights were recoverable, we suffered some lost cost from cancellations and the budget shrank from €13,600 to €8,900.

Due to rapid escalation of the virus, further precautions were taken to avoid international travel as recommended by the WHO, and we had to cancel the replanned F2F meeting in Berlin. We have been able to recover most of the expenses for the rescheduled meeting, except the cost of one plain ticket (approximately € 960) which is still in a pending process to be reimbursed.

To mitigate the repercussions of the unforeseen events, the Secretariat is currently holding a GS Virtual F2F to advance conversations that were meant to be in person for the future



planning of the initiative. Partners are very receptive to the online format and have made big efforts to keep up with an extended period of meetings and time differences, all consequences of the virtual mode. We are also taking into consideration that some of the discussions take longer or are not suitable for virtual dynamics.

Workshops.- The secretariat had planned different workshops that will need to be adapted or delayed as follows:

- The two Zambia workshops with the ZGF are in the replanning stage. The first workshop that was supposed to take place in early May will have to be delayed because of the overwhelming situation of CSOs replanning all their activities. This will be carried out virtually at a later time in coordination with ZGF. We are also considering the possibility of holding the second workshop as a virtual experience for participants if conditions won't allow us to hold it at an alternative time.
- Workshop in Cambodia to support GS Partner CCC in their activities - we are exploring an alternative time in the future to visit CCC in Cambodia.

Outreach and fundraising: OSF, DFID and Ford Foundation have reoriented most of their attention to the current crises, therefore our communications are on hiatus. We will be persisting with our efforts to contact and connect with them in this second period of the grant.

Please note that the overall reprogramming and adapting actions to virtual mode require more staff time and will also slow down our operating capacity, increasing efforts to support the partnership to ensure success in our outcomes as a partnership .

3. Do you have any suggestions or needs for further support and collaboration from or with the Centre and/or other Project Partners?

In an effort to break from the constraints of the project cycle, we want to ask all GS Partners to transition into using the term **GS Partners instead of Project Partners** to refer to the organisations involved in the GS. This change is symbolic but will be beneficial in terms of setting the vision of the partnership long term and outside of the project.

With the current COVID-19 outbreak, we will need to work with Partners and the Centre to submit proposals, readapting activities and reallocating some costs. Since Partners are unsure of when they would be able to resume in-person meetings, we might need **flexibility on how to best respond to this reversal**. In this way, we have collected inputs on how the coronavirus has affected Partners, and hope to be in conversation with the Centre soon to figure out the best way forward. Considering the circumstance, the Secretariat has requested a two months extension so the project for the Global Standard initiative will conclude in November and the reporting period prolonged until the beginning of December, this will guarantee the continuity of our actions and not lose momentum on our achievements.



4. Please share any further information you think would be of interest for the following up and implementing during the remaining project period:

The uncertainty over the duration of the lockdown, and the unknown aftermath consequences of the restriction period globally can affect us in terms of carrying out our outreach activities, workshops and meetings in the future.

SECTION 2: Financial Reporting

Attached you will find our detailed expenditure budgeted for the incurred cost from June 2019 until March 2020. Taking into consideration that we were not able to carry out some of our activities as originally planned we are currently looking at around 14,500 euro that will need to be reallocated.

As mentioned above, adapting the programme will be more intensive on staff time and will require for a longer delivery period. Therefore, we would like to propose to reallocate the majority of this amount towards staff salary in October and November. Doing so will help us to carry out the rest of the project with a possible virtual component and to avoid any gap in between project cycles. Any remaining amount will be assigned towards the outreach budget line.