



📍 Güniz Sokak No: 32/9 06700 Çankaya Ankara  
☎️ +90 312 428 05 61/62  
📠 +90 312 428 05 63  
✉️ info@sivildusun.eu  
🌐 www.sivildusun.net

## Key Concepts of Sivil Düşün

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## 1. Introduction

European Union Sivil Düşün Programme was launched by the Delegation of the European Union in 2012 to support rights-based activities and organisations contributing to the cooperation and development of civil society in Turkey.

In its current form, Sivil Düşün has evolved over time in line with the feedbacks from Turkish civil society. It still harbours many original concepts, but also differentiates from similar programs due to meanings for which its concepts stand.

For this reason, we have prepared this document explaining the common terms of the Programme, for Sivil Düşün beneficiaries and for people who want to get to know Sivil Düşün better and benefit from the programme. We hope it will be explanatory and helpful.

The Programme reached its current form after various changes and adjustments, running on four main principles, being: participation, flexibility, transparency and inclusion.

## 2. Sivil Düşün Principles

**Participation:** Consultation meetings with civil society during the designing of the Programme can be seen as the starting point of Sivil Düşün's participation principle. After the designing of the Programme, Sivil Düşün has taken its recent form based on feedback from different constituents of civil society. Sivil Düşün beneficiaries contribute to the functioning of the Programme at large scaled meetings such as advisory board and civil society forums with thematic suggestions. The Technical Assistance Team (TAT) also directly engaged with the beneficiaries on the design of these meetings.

**Flexibility:** One of the most important and distinguishing features of the Sivil Düşün Programme is the opportunity to request support at all times, without due dates or deadlines. The characteristics that are characteristic of grant programmes (such as having a legal entity, submitting applications in soft copy and submitting the applications in English) have been removed from the European Union's Sivil Düşün Programme. In line with the simplified Request for Support (RfS) procedures Sivil Düşün could have access to a wider range of civil society actors and the programme allows CSOs and activists to change their approved activities and budgets upon request.

**Transparency:** All request owners have the opportunity to reach the compliance check process and feedbacks via Sivil Düşün Information System (MIS). Information and data regarding the RfS posted on Sivil Düşün website supports the transparency element of the Programme.

**Inclusion:** In order to maintain an inclusive approach in our engagement with civil society, we include activists, networks/platforms, initiatives and organisations without a legal entity as potential



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beneficiaries. There are also no regional restrictions to where our beneficiaries reside; additional informative activities are targeted on previously less-supported thematic areas and in a diversity of cities/regions.

### 3. RfS priorities

**Rights-based approach:** Many rights that are granted by national and international agreements are not known by Turkish society, despite many of these rights forming part of their legal framework. Often times these rights are unknowingly violated. Rights-based approach includes all the conducts and actions focused on the development of rights; from lobbying/advocacy to encouraging the recognition of a right, to emergency action plans for people deprived of an existing right. A prerequisite for individuals and groups to be supported by Sivil Düşün is their actions for which they seek support to be rights-based, or the individuals/organisations seeking support being currently carrying out rights-based actions.

**Civil society contribution:** Another main criterion related to actions supported by Sivil Düşün is for the action to contribute to key aspects of civil society in Turkey, such as: networking, capacity building, raising awareness and experiment sharing. While purely academic or service-based actions' can be important, valuable and highly relevant due to their content, they do not qualify as an action category Sivil Düşün aims to support due to their lack of contribution to civil society.

**Programme's priorities:** European Union Sivil Düşün Programme has certain priorities and the financial support it provides goes to those actions that fall in line with these priorities. These priorities are:

1. Increased CSOs and citizens' advocacy and monitoring skills
2. Increased CSOs organisational and financial capacities
3. Increased CSOs and active citizens' capacities to reach out to citizens through awareness-raising activities
4. Enhanced networking and collaboration among CSOs and active citizens (within Turkey as well as between Turkey, EU, IPA and ENPI countries)
5. Increased visibility and public support of organised citizens and CSOs' right-based initiatives
6. Increase visibility in media and society of the EU support to Civil Society and fundamental rights

**Disadvantaged groups/regions:** Groups and regions that are labelled as "disadvantaged" are often marginalised in society, obstructed from development, or unable to benefit from available opportunities due to their distinctive characteristics. One of the priorities of Sivil Düşün is to provide



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additional opportunities for disadvantaged groups and regions. Certain precautions are taken during the Programme to encourage their participation.

## 4. RfS process

**MIS (Sivil Düşün Management Information System):** Sivil Düşün Management Information System, known shortly as MIS, is an online system through which all the RfS are managed by TAT, compliance check procedures are carried out and correspondence between TAT and request owners takes place. The system is secured and membership is required. Activists or CSO representatives already signed in can apply for support in the categories they need, see the current stage of their RfS, get in touch with the TAT, deliver their questions or requests, or can reach expert feedback regarding their RfS after the compliance check is concluded.

**RfS form:** The RfS form is in MIS and needs to be completed and submitted to RfS. Aside from certain basic information such as the request owner's contact information, it consists of 8 questions in total explaining the subject of the RfS and the requested amount of funds.

**RfS and action:** Up until today, a lot of activists and organisations have conducted their action with the support of Sivil Düşün. Since Sivil Düşün is not a grant scheme programme, and because it provides support in kind, holistic and singular or smaller-scaled actions can apply for financial support. Activities that run within the scope of Sivil Düşün are called "actions" and the financial support acquired from Sivil Düşün is called "support."

**In kind support:** Distinctive from other programmes, Sivil Düşün provides support in kind, instead of support in cash. Therefore, there is no direct money transfer made to an activist or an organisation whose RfS is deemed suitable for financial support; the necessary amount needed for the expense items is paid directly to the supplier by Sivil Düşün TAT. Moreover, there are certain rules for the request owner to follow for the procurement of services which are explained in detail in the Financial Guide.

**Implementation period:** After the compliance check, the implementation process starts for actions which were approved and supported. The implementation period is the time between the end of compliance check procedures of the RfS which marks the beginning of the implementation period, and the end of the implementation of actions with all its activities, budgetary procedures and reports. During the implementation process, it is possible to get in touch with the TAT via MIS and for some changes to be made over the RfS form and the budget.

**Civil society actors (and eligible request owners):** There are many civil society organisations and activists in Turkey with a wide range of experience in civil society, operating on different levels, and within different environments and contexts. A feature of Sivil Düşün that differentiates it from similar



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support programmes is that, thanks to its in-kind support mechanism, it is able to support active individuals in civil society, “activists”, and organisations that are not classified as a legal entity. Hence there are a lot of entities that are able to obtain financial support, including but not limited to: individuals, networks/platforms or initiatives without a legal entity, bar commissions working in different areas, unions, rights-based cooperatives, the units of universities working in different rights areas connected with civil society.

**ACM Hotline:** ACM Hotline is a support mechanism where civil society organisations and activists can find answers to their questions regarding Sivil Düşün. It is possible to make requests to get in touch by e-mail, by phone on specific days and hours of the week, or face to face in the office in order to acquire information and support regarding Sivil Düşün.

## 5. Compliance check

**Compliance check:** Each RfS submitted to Sivil Düşün is checked for compliance to the Programme by an independent expert outside of the TAT as well as by Sivil Düşün TAT itself. There is no comparison and prioritisation in the compliance check procedure. Due to the “first-come first-served” principle, RfS go through the compliance check in chronological order and all the RfS that are compliant can obtain financial support. One can follow via MIS to track the status of their RfS at any point in the process.

**First-come first-served:** In contrast to many other programmes, Sivil Düşün has an open call without any application for RfS deadlines during the whole period of the Programme. Besides, there is no scoring or prioritisation mechanism available either. Therefore, the RfS submitted to Sivil Düşün are listed chronologically and go through the compliance check in the same order.

**Cost-benefit relationship (Value for money):** The cost-benefit relationship points to the efficiency of the budget, expressing how appropriate or sufficient the budget is to reach the targeted outputs. Actions for which a fitting budget is demanded are stronger cost/benefit-wise, whereas actions for which very high budgets are demanded to reach their goal are considered weak. At this point, the aspect to take into consideration is for the budget to be “realistic” instead of being “very low”.

**Applicability:** One of the aspects taken into consideration by compliance check experts is the applicability of the suggested actions. Within the context of applicability, compliance experts pay particular attention to the following:

- How realistic the suggested action is,
- How parallel and coherent the planned activities and expected outputs/results are,
- The activists’/organisations’ capability and implementation capacity to put the action in practice.



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**Sustainability:** Like many other grant scheme and financial support programs, European Union Sivil Düşün Programme aims to make the organisations and actions it supports sustainable over time. Sustainability becomes visible when the organisation is enabled to create its own fund or increases its own financial capacity, acquiring funds for further actions from alternative sources, getting stronger human resources and capacity-wise, etc. Thus, providing support for repetitive actions is not considered as one of the priorities of Sivil Düşün.

## 6. Implementation

**Visibility:** Programme's visibility holds a great importance for Sivil Düşün to expand its reach to more organisations/activists. The Visibility Rules need to be kept in mind at meetings or in printings that are supported by Sivil Düşün. In situations where request owners require flexibility in the RfS rules, the request owners can contact the TAT. Please see [Visibility Guideline](#) for further details.

**Networking and mobility:** One of the most important needs encountered during the development of Sivil Düşün was the importance of networking and mobility to beneficiaries. Networking activities mean conducting mobility activities with the aim of cooperating with other activists/organisations, sharing experience, job shadowing and study visits. Domestic or international visits, or hosting activists/organisations as visitors are basic activities carried out within the framework of mobility.

**Advocacy and lobbying:** Advocacy includes all the actions carried out with the aim of protection, development, advocating for and avoiding the violation of certain rights. Creating public opinion, raising awareness, presenting researches and findings are a few examples of advocacy activities. Lobbying, as a subtopic of advocacy actions, consist of activities aimed at affecting decision mechanisms and decision makers, requiring direct or indirect contact or cooperation with public institutions, including the parliament.

**Mainstreaming:** Mainstreaming aims to raise awareness towards certain rights areas and for more people/organisations to demonstrate sensitivity towards the respective topic. The mainstreaming of gender equality, children's rights, ecological sustainability or animal rights (and many other areas/subjects) means for the actions to be run with these matters in mind.

**Cooperation development:** There are many opportunities for cooperation, which can take place within the context of actions. Cooperation within networks of civil society individuals or groups, with public institutions or with private sector can make the results a lot stronger and more effective:

- **Public-CSO cooperation:** Actions to be carried out with public institutions may include but not be limited to capacity building, mainstreaming, raising awareness and lobbying.



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- **Private sector-CSO cooperation:** Actions to be carried out with private sector may include but not be limited to various actions such as institutional social responsibility, capacity building, fund creation.
- **CSO-CSO cooperation:** Civil society organisations' or activists' actions focused on organising, networking, or establishing a roof organisation, experience sharing, common lobbying can be evaluated within this category. CSO-CSO cooperation which is not limited to only those, stands as an important opportunity for civil society in Turkey to organise within itself.

**Technical Assistance Team (TAT):** This is the team formed to make sure European Union Sivil Düşün Programme runs as efficiently as possible and to support the actions which are in cooperation with civil society organisations and activists. Organisations/activists need to get in touch with the TAT to request support, ask questions about Sivil Düşün, get information regarding an action in process, or to run the implementation process together.

**Grassroots organisations:** Amongst the entities mentioned above, Sivil Düşün's top priority target organisations are grassroots organisations. Organisations that are local, with low capacity, newly established and/or self-organisations can be considered as grassroots. Therefore, while an organisation labelled as grassroots within Sivil Düşün can have one any one of the above elements, an organisation carrying any one of these aspects is not automatically evaluated as grassroots.

**Self-organisation:** Situations in which the addressee is organised for their own rights for any action that has been conducted is evaluated as a self-organisation. As an example, an LGBTI+ association founded by individuals within the LGBTI+ community or by residents of a neighbourhood organised to fight against a violation of a housing right in their neighbourhood, can be classified as self-organisation.



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