**Inception Workshop – Methodology Note**

**“Improving Access to Information of Public Schemes in Backward Districts in India”**

This note is about the workshop methodology of the Inception workshop for the new projects starting under the Call for proposals on “Improving access to information of public schemes in backward districts in India”. Here are some general points:

* Key to the workshop is **direct interaction among participants** to share what you will do, where, how, who with in this new EU-supported project of yours, and to learn the same from other participants;
* Consequently, **plenary and group presentations are reduced to the very minimum**. There will actually be only one, or maybe two plenary presentations, and these will be done by neither the EU nor EU-supported CSOs, but by UN Women and (to be confirmed) by the Department of Electronics and IT;
* We have organised the workshop on the basis of **three core information-sharing blocks**: (i) geographic; (ii) thematic; and (iii) public schemes. All of them are addressed through small table group work, with plenary feedback. For the Group Work 2, we have proposed 4 CSOs to lead a thematic discussion at their table, supported by another CSO for introduction, time management and feedback (Agragamee/Unnati; Action Aid/SAATHII; Pradan/AKRSP; DEF/DCA). Group work 1 is free (no led CSO). Group work 3 will be decided on the day as we collectively decide about the exact schemes to be discussed at each table.
* During each of the three group work sessions, a few staff will be working in **parallel sessions** on “finance and contract issues”. We will propose a few themes for discussion in case you do not know where to start but you will be able to start from and focus on other points, too. You should start from issues that matter to your organisation/project;
* The **EU and DEF** will be working hard on **capturing the most important workshop findings** that may be of use to all or most CSOs and the EU alike. This means that both the EU and DEF will work on documenting key findings. That also means that we will be relying on you to have at least one person of **your organisations** to document key points, too. We will provide a documentation template for this closer to the event. Any organisation who wants to suggest a template, please feel free to send us;
* We will do our best to make the workshop **useful and entertaining**. There may be one or two surprises during the day. This is the formal beginning of a collective journey that is going to last for about 5 years. Again, we would like that journey to be both useful and entertaining;
* We expect **practical points, ideas and decisions** to come about throughout the day and we will document these as we believe they will help shape the 5-year journey meaningfully.

On top of a number of project intervention principles highlighted in the Call for proposals, we would like to highlight here **4 principles of particular relevance**:

IMPROVING ACCESS:

The Call aims at supporting interventions that focus on **“improving” access to information** of public schemes. This includes **improving and/or increasing** access to information in the sense:   
(i) **improving the quality of information** (more/richer information can be understood by a variety of people, particularly marginalised population groups);   
(ii) **improving the accessibility of information** (the new, more qualitative information -as well as the existing information which till date, did not reach certain populations- can now be reached and understood by a larger pool of people, particularly marginalised population groups)  
(iii) to sum up: (a) this is not about providing services but about **helping make services more accessible**, to more people, for better benefits; (b) this is about **trying to ensure** that **more people**, particularly marginalised, **can access better information** about existing public schemes they are entitled to access.

SUO MOTO/PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE:

The Call aims at **supporting government entities**, line ministries and self-government local authorities implement the Right to Information Act (RTI) from a Suo Moto angle, meaning, not a “let us file an application” approach but let us **help make information more accessible to more people**, particularly among marginalised communities. The **suo moto principle**, or **proactive disclosure of public information** relating to government schemes, services, programmes and initiatives is the **key feature** –or approach- of this call.

RESULTS CONTRIBUTION:

Projects are not expected to “attribute” all results to themselves but to **show and demonstrate how they have “contributed” to achieving various results**, including impact-level results. The higher the level of result (impact), the less attribution is expected. The lower the level of result (output), the more attribution is expected. Mid-level results (outcome) are likely to be half-way between higher or lower levels of attribution, or contribution. A well-designed and well-implemented **results documentation** strategy is key to **providing reliable information on relevant results’ achievements**, be it attributable to or only a contribution to. This needs to include an attention to **processes and qualitative elements of results achieved**, hence not a sole focus on quantitative results.

INTERNAL GOOD GOVERNANCE:

All projects look at -from different angles, approaches and operational strategies- helping improve access to information of public schemes and, doing so, helping improve access to relevant public schemes of a certain quality and, ultimately, helping improve the status of poor and/or marginalised communities. Because projects will be looking into (the quality of) government information, information systems, service delivery and schemes’ outcomes, it is critical that all **project contractual beneficiaries and their local partners as well as associates** have the **highest ethical, financial, management and reporting standards**, too, within the context of the organisational capacity and intervention scope.