



BLACK SEA TRUST FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

USAID Europe/Eurasia

Tasking N004

GS-10F-0033M / 7200AA18M00016

April 2019

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Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) - Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) II Activity
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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government. Limited redactions have been made in accordance with the principled exceptions to the presumption in favor of openness established in OMB Bulletin 12-01, "Guidance on Collection of U.S. Foreign Assistance Data."

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ABSTRACT

This final performance evaluation of the Black Sea Trust (BST) for Regional Cooperation evaluates the effectiveness of BST grantmaking, effective engagement in restrictive environments, harmonization with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission programming, comparative advantage, and encouragement of leverage and sustainability. It concludes that BST’s transnational grantmaking programs had a greater impact than single-country programming, and its operating model facilitated effective engagement in restrictive environments. While duplication was avoided with mission programming, greater direct communication with missions would improve harmonization. BST enjoys its greatest advantages in regional programming and in areas where the implementing partner, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, operates, such as analysis and advocacy. Its rapid-response capacity and openness to new programs are advantages, particularly in single-country grantmaking. While BST does not promote organizational sustainability, it does encourage grantees to leverage funding and could provide more support in this area. This report concludes with 14 recommendations for BST grantmaking and operations.

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ACRONYMS

AOR	Agreement Officer’s Representative
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
BST	Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation
BTM	Balkan Trust for Democracy
CBI	Cross-Border Initiatives
CP	Civic Participation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOS	Department of State
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
E&E	Bureau for Europe and Eurasia
EED	European Endowment for Democracy
EL	Eastern Links
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FY	Fiscal Year
GMF	German Marshall Fund of the United States
IRI	International Republican Institute
KII	Key Informant Interview
LER	Learning, Evaluation, and Research
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORC	National Opinion Research Center
SBU	Sensitive but Unclassified
SI	Social Impact
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TRUSTS	Trusts for Uniting Societies in Transatlantic Space
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contracted Social Impact (SI) to conduct an evaluation of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) in its first 11 years of programming (Fiscal Year [FY] 2008-FY 2018). USAID will use the results of the evaluation to inform specific activities of the new BST program, which began in September 2017. The evaluation will also refine existing monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) Plan indicators and recommend new indicators that effectively measure activity progress at both the outcome and output levels under the new award. Support will be provided in establishing indicator baselines and strengthening data collection instruments and indicator tracking.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

BST was established in October 2007 as a 10-year grantmaking initiative to promote regional cooperation, civil society, and democratic foundations in the wider Black Sea Region with the overall goals of: (1) Building trust in and strengthening the performance of democratic institutions; (2) Improving citizen participation in the democratic process, and; (3) Fostering regional networks and cross-border cooperation. BST was established with initial contributions from the German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ministry of Defense of Latvia, the Government of Romania, and USAID. Operating from GMF's Bucharest office, BST awards small grants to local organizations in nine countries across the region. The initiative was extended for an 11th year in FY 2018. In September 2017, USAID issued a new award to the GMF to continue and expand on the previous work of BST in the region.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- (1) Have some specific interventions or activities proven more effective in achieving their designated objectives compared to others?
- (2) To what extent has BST's assistance and operating model allowed for effective engagement in more restrictive environments?
- (3) Were efforts to communicate and harmonize programs among grantee and bilateral mission-funded activities pursued?
- (4) Given BST's strengths, are there types of programs or specific countries where BST has achieved a comparative advantage over other organizations or programs in delivering grant funding?
- (5) To what extent does BST encourage project and organizational leverage from a diverse range of sources? What steps does BST take to encourage its grantees to focus on and make progress on financial sustainability?

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The Evaluation Team (ET) used a mixed-method iterative process to address the evaluation questions (EQs) which included desk review of BST documents, grantee surveys and key informant interviews (KIIs) with grantees, USAID and implementers, BST/GMF, and other relevant donors. The ET conducted 90 interviews in Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania, Washington, and by phone. The ET noted limitations in BST data for gleaning basic grant profile and result information, selection bias in relation to engagement with restrictive environment KIIs, recall bias for grantees with earlier and multiple grants, and potential response bias for those grantees seeking continued BST support.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

EQ1 FINDINGS

In order to address this EQ given limited report data, the ET devised a three-level approach to define effectiveness of each grant, examining whether the grantee completed all intended outputs, whether the grant achieved expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries, and whether the grant had higher-level outcomes like policy changes or the ability to influence national or international decision-makers. BST reports contain no definition of effectiveness and contain limited information on the results of BST grantmaking, which USAID officials said limited their ability to monitor the effectiveness of grantmaking.

Interviewed grantee organizations successfully achieved anticipated outputs 99 percent of the time, and the online survey found that 91 percent achieved all expected outputs. The ET found no meaningful differences in outputs by country or grant program. The ET found that interviewees realized expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries in all of their 116 grants, and the online survey found that 70 percent achieved their expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries. 16 grants resulted in indirect outcomes.

The ET did not find any difference in effectiveness of grantmaking by country. Key informants stated that two transnational grant programs – Eastern Links (EL) and Cross-Border Initiatives (CBI) -- were more effective than Civic Participation (CP) grants that were limited to one country. USAID and GMF officials said there is often a lack of distinction between the two transnational programs. The ET found that the most effective transnational programs focused on analysis and advocacy or counter-propaganda and counter-disinformation, while the most effective single-country programs were in citizen engagement or investigations and fact-checking.

EQ1 CONCLUSIONS

BST grantees implement their planned activities and achieve results. When looking at grant programs, the relevant distinction is between single-country and transnational grants, and transnational grants had a broader impact at the national and international level, most notably in analysis and advocacy or counter-propaganda and counter-disinformation. The more effective single-country grants supported investigations and fact-checking or citizen engagement and were valued by USAID where mission programming was inadequate, unavailable, or unable to address a country's needs in a timely manner. The ET found no substantial differences in effectiveness by country, and BST and USAID could learn more about BST effectiveness with better reporting.

EQ2 FINDINGS

(Sensitive but Unclassified [SBU]) BST put in place an operating model for restrictive environment grants that focused on secure communication protocols, dynamic and multi-step grant financing, and a slow growth approach of identifying and working with grantees that was flexible and supportive. [END SBU]

Restrictive environment grants all reached project outputs. All interviewed grantees and 90 percent of those surveyed reached some level of project outcomes.

[SBU] The most concrete outcomes were identified for grants supporting financing and development of the civil society organization (CSO) environment in Russia and supporting civic engagement and empowerment in the North Caucasus. Overall two of the 41 grants reviewed during interviews also reached indirect outcomes, one focused on changing garbage collection policies on the local level in the North Caucasus and one analytical study on women engaged in peacemaking in Azerbaijan and Armenia, which served as the baseline for international donors and policy makers. [END SBU]

EQ2 CONCLUSIONS

BST's efforts to adapt and change its operating model for restrictive environment grants succeeded in providing much needed support to CSOs located in or working with partners in restrictive environments. The operating model can be refined, particularly in considering how to further the regional interaction and idea sharing that restrictive-environment grantees seek. Regardless, for practical purposes, BST's operating model for these countries has allowed it to engage with these CSOs and for them to carry out their grants.

These grant results have been surprisingly high despite contextual challenges. Concrete and immediate outcomes are best seen in approaches that train, empower, and connect people within their specific domestic contexts, which can change individual lives and affect local communities. This is particularly true for grants where there have been multiple engagements to support different iterations of the same project.

[SBU] Emergency assistance for human rights defenders in Russia and Azerbaijan also falls in this category. [END SBU]

The knowledge gains, awareness raising, and greater understanding project outcomes identified in this sample suggest that these types of grants also have value and can be effective in the midterm, but that initial outcomes may be modest given the difficult contexts. The challenges of capturing the outcomes of such grants also underscores the need for a refined MEL system for grants being given in restrictive environments.

EQ3 FINDINGS

Communication is irregular between BST staff and the USAID missions in the five BST countries where USAID has a physical presence and usually goes through USAID/Washington. USAID implementing partners reported little to no direct communication with BST staff. USAID staff would like to see greater direct communication between BST and the missions and implementers.

The main method of harmonizing BST grantee and bilateral mission programs is the grant review process, which includes USAID/Washington and the missions. USAID officials said more up-front consultation with missions by BST could better harmonize programs. When USAID missions and BST fund the same grantees, the activities have different purposes, and there have been instances where BST filled gaps in USAID mission funding.

EQ3 CONCLUSIONS

Increasing direct communication between BST and USAID missions and implementers would reduce the time burden for USAID/Washington to play middleman and would improve BST awareness of the situation in those countries and the USAID missions' activities and priorities. Harmonization of BST and mission programming is hampered by a lack of regular direct communication and front-end mission input. Regular meetings between BST staff, mission officials and implementing partners would enable all parties to share their strategic priorities with one another and better harmonize their activities.

EQ4 FINDINGS

Interviewees said BST's key strengths are flexibility, simple application and reporting procedures, responsiveness and support to grantees, openness to new ideas and grantee initiatives, its profile as an international donor, and providing grantees with access to GMF international networks. They overwhelmingly cited regionalism as the primary comparative advantage that BST enjoys, giving BST an advantage in addressing regionwide opportunities or threats, such as Euro-Atlantic integration or Russian propaganda and disinformation.

BST enjoys a comparative advantage in transnational programs that complement other GMF programs, and in single-country grantmaking requiring a rapid response and in experimental, pilot or start-up programs. With its headquarters in Bucharest, BST enjoys a strong relationship with Romanian civil society and synergies with neighboring Moldova.

EQ4 CONCLUSIONS

Regionalism is the key comparative advantage that BST enjoys over other donors, and grantees cite BST's responsiveness, flexibility, and simple application and reporting requirements as its key advantages. The trust's connection with GMF gives it an advantage in analysis and advocacy related to Euro-Atlantic integration and security policy and in countering Russian propaganda and disinformation. Its primary advantages in single-country programming lie in programs requiring a rapid response to events and in increasing citizen participation in civic life. BST enjoys a comparative advantage in Romania and Moldova.

EQ5 FINDINGS

BST data does not provide a complete or clear view on its grant making leverage, and grantee interviews suggested that BST is leveraging funding in a number of ways that are not fully captured in the reporting, such as to expand regional attendance for trainings. The ET found substantial evidence of BST encouraging grantees to find co-funding, but BST only sometimes has directly assisted grantees to find co-funding.

BST's focus is programming, not financial sustainability. However, BST does engage in practices that support and contribute to CSOs' financial sustainability. This includes covering basic project administrative costs, funding start-up or pilot efforts, and exposure to other donors at conferences and events. BST tends to have repeat grantees, which has resulted in a set of organizations having multi-year relationships with BST, but it has limited BST's ability to seek out and encourage new applicants.

[SBU] Multi-year relationships with restrictive environment grantees are common, and this makes up a larger portion of their budgets. BST also has emphasized financial sustainability as a thematic focus for restricted country funding. [END SBU]

EQ5 CONCLUSIONS

BST emphasizes co-funding possibilities as an inherent value of its funding, while not systematically capturing what it is achieving or systematically assisting grantees to achieve co-funding or seek out other donors. BST is mindful of some aspects of financial sustainability, and these are built into its programming sustainability model rather than set apart as a stand-alone emphasis; yet, why some organizations become repeat grantees over others is less clear and raises the question of how such funding may affect such organizations' mid-term financial sustainability. It also raises concerns about the extent to which BST remains open to new grantees with new ideas, a grantmaking approach where BST has historically enjoyed a comparative advantage over other grant makers.

[SBU] The exception is Russia where the intentional multi-year efforts to fund organizations that provide training on alternative domestic funding possibilities to other CSOs seems to be a clear effort towards ensuring financial stability and survivability. [END SBU]

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) BST should improve its reporting.
- (2) BST should focus grantmaking where it enjoys a comparative advantage.
- (3) BST should merge CBI and EL.
- (4) BST should track multi-year grants.
- (5) BST should track restrictive-environment grant results.
- (6) BST should set priorities for restrictive environments.
- (7) BST should improve communication with USAID missions.
- (8) BST should continue to be flexible.
- (9) BST should clarify expectations for grantee reporting.
- (10) BST should refine its leverage tracking system.
- (11) BST should articulate a policy for repeat grantees.
- (12) BST should expand its outreach efforts.
- (13) BST should increase support for CSO alternative funding.
- (14) BST should enhance aid to grantees to leverage funding.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) was established in October 2007 as a 10-year grantmaking initiative to promote regional cooperation, civil society, and democratic foundations in the wider Black Sea Region. BST was established with initial contributions from the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ministry of Defense of Latvia, the Government of Romania, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Operating from GMF's Bucharest office, BST awards small grants to local organizations in nine countries across the region. BST was extended for an 11th year in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018.

The goals of BST are: (1) Building trust in and strengthening the performance of democratic institutions; (2) Improving citizen participation in the democratic process; and (3) Fostering regional networks and cross-border cooperation. BST seeks to achieve these goals through three grant programs: (1) Civic Participation (CP), which provides grants to local and national civil society organizations (CSOs) working to improve democracy, rule of law, citizen engagement with government, monitoring of government performance, and improving citizens' understanding of their rights and responsibilities; (2) Cross-Border Initiatives (CBI), which provides grants to governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civic initiatives, and other institutions to support sub-national and trans-border collaboration working to improve understanding and cooperation throughout the region; and (3) Eastern Links (EL), which provides grants between groups from Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics with their Black Sea counterparts to stimulate linkages to share expertise, experiences, and information¹ essential in promoting the political, social, and economic development necessary for long-term stability in the region.

In September 2017, USAID issued a new award to the GMF to continue and expand on the previous work of BST in the region. The new award, titled the "Trusts for Uniting Societies in Transatlantic Space" (TRUSTS) Activity, provides support for ongoing grantmaking in the Black Sea region, and includes renewed support for the Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD) for cross-border civil society networking. The new award includes two additional components: 1) Increasing the capacity and visibility of young civic and political leaders from the region; and 2) Increasing the relevance of regional civil society development issues in policy making. Both will reinforce TRUSTS' grantmaking initiatives and enhance its effectiveness.

¹ A fourth grant program, Confidence Building, is not funded by USAID and is not a subject for this evaluation.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

EVALUATION PURPOSE

USAID contracted the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and Social Impact (SI) to conduct this evaluation, which has a two-fold purpose:

- (1) Assess the following aspects of BST in its first 11 years of programming (FY 2008-FY 2018):
 - (a) Achievement of the agreement’s core objectives through grantmaking;
 - (b) Complementarity with mission bilateral programming;
 - (c) Comparative advantage over other grantmaking initiatives;
 - (d) Extent to which BST promoted long-term organizational sustainability and financial diversification.
- (2) Strengthen BST monitoring capacity and the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan for the new BST activity, TRUSTS.

The Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) of USAID will use the results of the evaluation to inform specific activities of the new BST program, which began in September 2017. The evaluation will also refine existing MEL Plan indicators and recommend new indicators that effectively measure activity progress at both the outcome and output levels under the new award. Support will be provided in establishing indicator baselines and strengthening data collection instruments and indicator tracking.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- (1) Have some specific interventions or activities proven more effective in achieving their designated objectives compared to others?
- (2) To what extent has BST’s assistance and operating model allowed for effective engagement in more restrictive environments?
- (3) Were efforts to communicate and harmonize programs among grantee and bilateral mission-funded activities pursued?
- (4) Given BST’s strengths, are there types of programs or specific countries where BST has achieved a comparative advantage over other organizations or programs in delivering grant funding?
- (5) To what extent does BST encourage project and organizational leverage from a diverse range of sources? What steps does BST take to encourage its grantees to focus on and make progress on financial sustainability?

METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation Team (ET) used an iterative, mixed-methods (both qualitative and quantitative) approach with three different data collection methods: (1) document review; (2) grantee survey; and (3) key informant interviews (KIIs). The methodology is discussed in more detail in Annex 2.

Following a desk review of 11 years of BST documents, the ET drafted a semi closed-ended question survey for BST grantees from FY 2012-2018 and KII guides for grantees, BST/GMF staff, USAID officials, and other donors and implementers. The online survey was sent to 181 grantees and open from January 28 to February 15, 2019. Sixty-nine grantees (38 percent) responded to the survey from seven Black Sea Region countries.

[SBU] A separate survey was sent to 70 grantees in Azerbaijan and Russia, and 39 responded (56 percent). [END SBU]

Table 1: Number of Survey Respondents

BST Grantees	Grantees Sent Survey	Respondents	Response Rate %
7 BST Countries	181	69	38
Restrictive Environments	70	39	56

In parallel, the ET traveled to Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania from January 28 through February 14 to meet with grantees, USAID, BST staff, and other donors. Interviews in Washington or by telephone were conducted outside this period in January and February. In total the ET held 90 interviews with 97 organizations and 127 individuals. This included 70 grantees.

[SBU] Given security concerns, the ET also had individual meetings in Georgia, Romania, and Washington with grantees operating in restrictive environments. [END SBU]

DATA ANALYSIS

During the fieldwork, the ET took an iterative approach to interpreting and synthesizing data through daily team meetings to share impressions and key points from interviews.

For analyzing data, the ET used content and comparative analyses to identify response categories and patterns as well as emergent themes noted in the KIIs and surveys. The ET also disaggregated survey data through comparisons of the data by BST country and project program.

LIMITATIONS AND BIASES

UNCLEAR AND INCOMPLETE BST REPORTING

The ET spent significant time reviewing BST grantee database information and annual reports to obtain grantee information. Individual grantee information was often incomplete, included under multiple names, or minimally presented. While BST responded to specific information requests, the ET often found itself not “knowing what it did not know” and not always able to request the information it needed before KIIs.

This had several repercussions: the ET did not always identify grantees with multiple grants and had situations where such grantees were part of group interviews which made it difficult to cover all their grants comprehensively; the ET did not always know if a grantee had multiple grants for the same project as the grants were under a different organizational name; and the ET did not know the basic parameters of some restrictive environment grants before meeting with grantees. BST annual reports provide descriptive information of the grants, but not grant results, which meant that the ET did not receive information on grantee outputs or outcomes. In order to answer EQ1 and EQ2, therefore, the ET spent significant time during interviews mapping outputs and outcomes with grantees.

SELECTION BIAS

The ET used purposive sampling by attempting to interview all grantees from 2012 to 2018 from Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania and by sending the survey to all grantees in the seven countries for the years covered.

[SBU] However, given security considerations, such sampling was not possible for restrictive country grantees. BST selected KII grantees operating in restrictive environments and made provisions to bring these grantees to meet with the ET. The ET is grateful to BST's support in identifying grantees and ensuring that these meetings happened, and the ET confirmed that the grantees represent a variety of programming and geographic areas. To partially mitigate this, the survey for restrictive environment grantees was sent to a wider set of partners, and these responses were triangulated with restrictive environment KIIs. [END SBU]

RECALL BIAS

A number of grantees had multiple grants from before and around 2012, and it is likely that they responded to questions the ET posed with answers that blended their experiences into a composite memory. The survey did not allow description of individual grants, and respondents in some cases likely summarized a combination of grant experiences. Additionally, depending on when grantees received BST funding, perceptions of events and their impact may change over time, and the ability to remember specific details may fade. The ET attempted to mitigate this risk by reviewing any grants from 2012-2018 individually with the grantee and by triangulating responses as described above from different sources (e.g. survey responses, desk review information on specific grants) to increase the validity of the evaluation findings.

RESPONSE BIAS

While the ET introduced itself as an external team from SI and noted that all responses were confidential, a number of respondents may have considered the ET as part of BST/GMF. For those interested to continue partnering with BST, this may have influenced their responses. The ET worked to mitigate the risk of response bias in these cases by utilizing data triangulation to note discrepancies in responses through different data sources (desk review, survey) and prepared follow-up questions for informants that encouraged more specific responses.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

FINDINGS FOR EQ1

Have some specific interventions or activities proven more effective in achieving their designated objectives compared to others?

DEFINING EFFECTIVENESS

In order to address this EQ given limited report data, the ET devised a three-level approach to define effectiveness of each grant:

- (1) Did the grantee complete all intended outputs?
- (2) Did the grant achieve the expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries (“direct outcomes”)?
- (3) Did the grant have any higher-level outcomes, such as a change in local or regional policy, influence on national or international decision-makers, or change in national or international policy?

During its interviews with grantees in Ukraine, Georgia and Romania, the ET asked about outputs, direct outcomes, and higher-level outcomes for each grant they received between 2012 and 2018 from the CP, CBI, and EL programs. During the interviews, the ET was able to ask 51 grantee organizations about 116 individual grants (including one grant in Moldova). Similar questions were posed in the online survey that 69 grantees completed. In order to keep the survey length reasonable and to encourage respondents to complete the entire survey, the survey asked grantees, including those who received multiple grants, about their overall experience, rather than requiring them to reply multiple times to the same questions about effectiveness.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

During the evaluation period (2008-2018), the development of political rights and civil liberties in the region varied by country. Some countries, like Ukraine in 2014 and Armenia in 2018, saw revolutions that brought to power governments committed to greater openness and democratic reform.

[SBU] Meanwhile, Azerbaijan, and Russia moved toward more authoritarian rule. [END SBU]

Some public opinion polling during this period by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG)² and the International Republican Institute (IRI) captured public views toward civil society and democratic development in individual countries. It is unclear, however, whether any of these trends can be linked to the work of the BST or the effectiveness of its interventions or activities.

The best time series data on democratic development were found in IRI polling in Moldova. Those surveys found virtually no change in public satisfaction with democratic development during the life of the BST. In March 2007, 26 percent of Moldovans expressed some degree of satisfaction with

² BBG is now known as the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

democratic development, compared to 59 percent who were somewhat or very dissatisfied. In October 2018, 26 percent of those polled in Moldova said they were somewhat or very satisfied with democratic development, and 71 percent expressed some degree of dissatisfaction.

[SBU] The best time series data on civil society came from BBG polling in Russia, an August 2018 BBG poll that found 85 percent of Russians believed an active civil society is essential to Russian society (score of 6-10 on a scale of 1-10), versus nine percent who believed it is not essential (score of 1-5). That compares to a May-June 2015 poll that found 86 percent of Russians believed civil society was essential and seven percent believed it was not essential. [END SBU]

Time series data on civil society and democracy are not available for other BBG and IRI polls, so the following polls offer only snapshots of public opinion:

- A November 2018 IRI poll in Armenia found 46 percent of respondents had a favorable view of CSOs, versus 38 percent negative;
- An April 2018 IRI poll in Georgia found 16 percent of respondents believed CSOs have an impact on government policy;
- A 2016 BBG poll in Ukraine found 88 percent of respondents believed that an active civil society is essential (score of 6-10), versus three percent who said it is not (score of 1-5). That poll also found that 91 percent of Ukrainians believed it is important for their country to be a democracy with political freedoms, compared to four percent who believed it not important;
- A 2015 BBG poll in Moldova found 94 percent of respondents believed that an active civil society is essential, compared to five percent who said it is not essential. That poll also found that 91 percent of Moldovans believed it is important for their country to be a democracy with political freedoms, compared to eight percent who believed it not important.

The annual Freedom House publication *Freedom in the World* showed mixed trends in political rights and civil liberties in the region from 2007 to 2018, based on the 2008 and 2019 editions of the report:

Table 2: Freedom House Ratings, 2007 - 2018 (1-7, 1 is most free and 7 least free)

Country	2018 Political Rights	2007 Political Rights	2018 Civil Liberties	2007 Civil Liberties
Armenia	4	4	4	5
Bulgaria	2	2	2	1
Georgia	3	4	3	4
Moldova	3	4	4	3
Romania	2	2	2	2
Ukraine	3	2	4	3

[SBU] Freedom House data for Russia and Azerbaijan showed clear deterioration in political rights.

Table 3: [SBU] Freedom House Ratings for Restrictive Environments

Country	2018 Political Rights	2007 Political Rights	2018 Civil Liberties	2007 Civil Liberties
Azerbaijan	7	5	6	6
Russia	7	5	6	6

[END SBU]

The Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem) at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden found little change in the regime type of the countries in the region in its *V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018*³:

Table 4: V-Dem Classification of Regime Type, 2007-2017

Country	Regime Type 2017	Regime Type 2007	Improvement/decline
Armenia	Electoral autocracy	Electoral autocracy	
Bulgaria	Electoral democracy	Electoral democracy	
Georgia	Electoral democracy	Electoral democracy	
Moldova	Electoral democracy	Electoral autocracy	Improvement
Romania	Electoral democracy	Electoral democracy	
Ukraine	Electoral autocracy	Electoral democracy	Decline

[SBU] V-Dem found Russia and Azerbaijan were both electoral autocracies in both 2007 and 2017.
[END SBU]

BST REPORTING

The ET found that the annual reports and final report of BST contain no definition of effectiveness, which led the ET to work with the USAID E&E to devise the methodology described above to measure effectiveness. Furthermore, reports contain limited information on the results of BST grantmaking, which USAID officials said limited their ability to monitor the effectiveness of grantmaking. While the annual reports provide summaries of upcoming grants that the trust approved that year, they do not systematically report on the performance of completed grants, and the discussion of completed grants is limited to brief “success story” snapshots of highlighted activities.

“The information that we get in the annual reports is not helpful in terms of demonstrating aggregate grantee results and successes beyond just tallying the number of people reached,” said a USAID/Washington official, adding, “I would like to see a report on each grant: an overall model with overarching analysis that ties it in more with the overall goals of the project.”

BST reports do provide descriptive summary data about past grantmaking, but these are graphics (not figures) that address the characteristics of the grants, such as country, grant program, grant objective, dollar amounts, etc., based on spreadsheets that program officers complete each year. The reports show little understanding of the difference between outputs and outcomes and do not address thematic

³ V-Dem Institute, *Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018*, (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2018), p. 94.

outcomes. While BST does receive final reports from grantees, this information is not synthesized in a systematic way, and those grantee reports are not provided to USAID.

“They need a stronger feedback loop at the end of a grant cycle. I know they have way more data than we see,” a USAID/Washington official said. Another USAID official said, “At the back end, why can’t you do as comprehensive a report as you do at the front end?”

Further constraining analysis is that BST does not track multi-year grant results and does not link grants connected by organizational ties or common personnel. Reports are not organized transparently or coherently by grant program, country, or even alphabetically by grantee. Distinguishing between programs based in national capitals and those in provincial cities was difficult because location was not provided in grant summaries and was often unclear from the grantee spreadsheet. Most troubling, key data in reports are contradictory; for example, consecutive pages in the 2008-2018 final report provide two different figures for the total dollar amount of BST awards and show two different numbers for the percentage of projects that were co-funded.⁴

“It makes me question how accurate the information is,” a USAID/Washington official said.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

OUTPUTS

The ET found in interviews that 51 grantee organizations in Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania successfully achieved anticipated outputs for 114 of 116 grants (99 percent). The online survey found that 91 percent of those who responded to the question on achieving outputs achieved all expected outputs (49 of 54), which was 70 percent of all who returned the survey (49 of 69). The ET found no meaningful differences in outputs by country or grant program.

DIRECT OUTCOMES

The ET found that interviewees realized expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries in all of their 116 grants. The survey found that 70 percent of all who returned the survey (49 of 69) said their organization achieved their expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries.⁵

HIGHER-LEVEL OUTCOMES

In addition to the expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries of BST grants, the ET found cases in which grantees described higher-level outcomes at the local, regional, national or international level, though not all grants were designed to achieve higher-level outcomes. The ET classified these higher-level outcomes into three categories:

- Effecting change in local or regional policies;

⁴ The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, “2008-2018 Reporting Period,” pp. 5-6.

⁵ Nineteen survey respondents skipped the question for unknown reasons, and one respondent reported not achieving all expected outcomes.

- Influencing national or international policy-makers or decision-makers; and
- Effecting change in national or international policies.

Table 5: Higher-Level Outcomes by Country

Country	Higher-Level Outcomes	Number of Grants	%
<i>Ukraine</i>	6	42	14
<i>Georgia</i>	3	18	17
<i>Romania</i>	6	55	11
<i>Moldova</i>	1	1	100
Total	16	116	14

Of 116 grants examined in fieldwork, the ET found 16 (14 percent) had higher-level effects. When analyzed by country, interviewees in Georgia reported a slightly higher percentage of higher-level outcomes than those in Ukraine and Romania.⁶ (See Annex 9 for a list of higher-level outcomes.)

EFFECTIVENESS BY COUNTRY

Respondents to the online survey from Romania and Ukraine reported that they realized expected outcomes for direct beneficiaries near the average rate of 70 percent for all respondents. Grantees from Romania and Ukraine represent the two largest country groups of survey respondents. In Moldova, 89 percent of grantees reported above-average achievement of direct outcomes, while those from Georgia (56 percent) and Armenia (43 percent) reported below-average results; however, all three countries had fewer than 10 respondents, making the data statistically insignificant.

EFFECTIVENESS BY GRANT PROGRAM CATEGORY

DIRECT OUTCOMES

When analyzed by grant program category, direct outcomes were reported by 100 percent of grantees from EL (5 of 5), 93 percent from CP (13 of 14), 73 percent from CBI (11 of 15), and 82 percent of grantees responding to a special call (9 of 11). The remaining respondents were from either the Confidence Building Program, which was not evaluated, or did not know their grant program category. The survey data by grant program category is somewhat unreliable because some organizations received grants from more than one program and at least three Romanian grantees incorrectly reported their program as “Civic Participation,” although that program does not make grants to Romanian organizations.

⁶ In regard to survey data, 87 percent of those answering the question and 67 percent of all survey respondents self-reported policy-level outcomes, a figure that the evaluation team believes may be inflated due to an incorrect grantee understanding. When the team reviewed grantees’ open-ended responses, it found that 42 percent of those answering the question and 32 percent of all respondents could articulate policy-level outcomes.

HIGHER-LEVEL OUTCOMES

In assessing which BST programming might have been more effective than others, the ET relied heavily on qualitative data from interviews with USAID, GMF, USAID implementing partners, and other donors. These provided expert insight into the degree of impact that different types of BST programming have had, and they helped to contextualize the limited quantitative data. For example, the quantitative methodology merely counted higher-level outcomes and did not distinguish, for example, between a change to European Union (EU) security policy and obtaining a mammography machine for a local hospital.

TRANSNATIONAL GRANT PROGRAMS

While USAID asked the ET to examine three grant program categories, the team found that two of those programs – CBI and EL – were very similar and often indistinguishable. CBI was intended to promote connections between two or more countries in the Black Sea region, while EL was intended to connect the Black Sea region to the EU and North America, particularly through the two EU countries in the region (Romania and Bulgaria). The ET found, however, that this distinction was fluid and inconsistent, noting several instances where the same multi-year program would be funded in alternating years by CBI and EL. Grantees in interviews and in surveys often could not identify which grant program category provided their funding.

USAID and GMF staff acknowledged this lack of differentiation between the two transnational programs. “There is a lack of distinction between EL and CBI. The lines get blurred,” a USAID official said. Another USAID official said, “There is some confusion sometimes where a CBI grant could be EL and vice versa.”

Nearly all donors and implementing partners interviewed said that transnational grant programs, whether classified as CBI or EL, were more effective than CP grants that were limited to one country. They repeatedly cited BST’s work across borders as a distinguishing feature of the program and said that the impact of transnational activities was greater than that of grants working in a single country.

“The two cross-border activities are probably more effective,” said a USAID official. “They are more high-profile, they have a larger number of organizations, and they have more high-level activists.” Citing the impact of BST grants, a grantee said, “Very few funders influence government decision-making or policy-making at a higher level.”

Among the reasons cited by donors, implementers and grantees for the importance of the transnational programs were:

- They take advantage of GMF’s network across the region and in the West;
- They have a higher profile and support higher-level activists;
- They help grantees to reach a high-level audience;
- They provide an opportunity for new EU members to share experience with EU aspirants;
- They address common challenges across the region; and

- USAID missions and other donors do not fund transnational initiatives.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

While donors and implementers generally agreed that the transnational grants were more effective, all USAID officials interviewed in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Washington acknowledged the importance of CP grants in specific circumstances. Those USAID officials cited three types of CP grants that were particularly useful for USAID, relative to other civil society programs:

- Rapid response to events;
- Filling gaps or complementing USAID mission programs;
- Experimental, pilot, or start-up programs.

With regard to rapid response, USAID Mission officials cited special calls for proposals that BST issued after the Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine in 2014 and the 2018 Armenian Revolution as important for U.S. efforts to provide support to governments and societies in the wake of dramatic pro-democracy shifts. “They’re able to respond quickly, like they did in Ukraine post-Maidan in 2014 and 2015,” said a USAID/Washington official. BST was able to get grants to organizations in those countries in less than two months, which USAID officials said was dramatically faster than one year for a USAID procurement.

“They were fast in reacting to political developments,” a USAID/Armenia official said. “We were able to get some rapid-response funds for more dramatic political changes.” A GMF official said, “We’re a quick funder. We can turn around a program in a crisis in a matter of weeks.”

A USAID/Washington official said that missions can transfer money to BST to make and administer CSO grants as a bridge between civil society programs. “Starting from scratch would be harder if you needed to restart civil society grants. If you have a few hundred thousand, it can go a long way,” the official said. In Moldova, where the flagship USAID civil society program ended in December 2018, the USAID mission plans to use BST to fill the resultant gap in CSO support. “When we discussed what to do when we ended our flagship program, we thought: Wait. We realized we could use BST to fill any gaps if they were opening up. Knowing BST could cover the gaps gave us confidence not to have an immediate follow-on project,” a USAID/Moldova official said.

USAID/Washington and GMF officials also cited the relatively small size (averaging less than \$30,000) and short duration (maximum 12 months) of BST grants as enabling BST to take chances on innovative pilot programs or new organizations without risking a lot of money or time. “We are a very risk-loving funder,” said a GMF official. “There are only a few other funders who are not afraid to fund new organizations.” A USAID official said, “They are working with smaller amounts of money, so their risk calculation is different. If it doesn’t work, it’s only twenty grand.”

EFFECTIVENESS BY DIRECT OUTCOME CATEGORY

The ET found that direct outcomes described by grantees could be grouped into eight categories, outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Direct Outcome Categories

Categories	Definition	Grant Example	CSO Grantee
Application of learning	Capacity building grant focused on learning of new skills	Empowerment Program “Disabled Voices Online”	Human Rights Foundation, Ukraine
Networking	Connecting citizens and NGO actors to share ideas	Exchanging experience to address common challenges	Resource Centre for Public Participation (CeRe), Romania
Citizen engagement	Encouraging active participation in public life	Promoting citizen participation and responsibility in Ukraine's regions	Lviv Education Foundation, Ukraine
Analysis and advocacy	Policy research and promotion of research findings	Georgia-Turkey Trade Process	Liberal Academy, Georgia
Investigation and fact-checking	Investigative reporting and fact checking initiatives	Black Sea challenges: weapons and crime	Radio France International, Romania
Counter-propaganda and counter-disinformation	Reporting and tracking disinformation trends	Resilience and Response in the Post-Truth World	Global Focus, Ukraine
Piloting and start-ups	New and experimental initiatives thematically broad	Clientelism at your fingertips	Expert Forum, Romania
Understanding and tolerance, particularly in conflict zones	Focus on cross-cultural tolerance and engagement	Black Sea - Eastern Europe Dialogue - Youth for sustainable peace	Caucasian House, Georgia

The ET’s analysis of direct outcomes found that the greatest number of BST grants in Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania were concerned with analysis and advocacy. These analysis and advocacy grants included think tanks that undertook research and analysis; publishing of reports and articles; raising awareness of issues, events or regions; attempts to influence national and international policy and decision-makers; and work to amplify messages to a broader audience. Examples of analysis and advocacy grants include the New Europe Center’s 2016 Foreign Policy Audit and Promotion of Intercultural Cooperation’s Ukraine Analytica magazine; United Nations Association of Georgia’s analytical coverage of Georgia and EU news on its Civil.ge platform; and Expert Forum’s study of clientelism in Romania and the region to examine resource distribution at the local government level.

Table 7: Direct Outcomes by Country

Direct Objectives	UA	GE	RO	MD	Total	%
<i>Application of learning</i>	7	1	7	-	15	13
<i>Networking</i>	2	-	5	-	7	6
<i>Citizen engagement</i>	9	-	2	-	11	9
<i>Analysis and advocacy</i>	19	7	22	1	49	42
<i>Investigations and fact checking</i>	1	3	2	-	6	5
<i>Counter propaganda and disinformation</i>	3	-	6	-	9	8
<i>Piloting/start-ups</i>	1	-	3	-	4	3
<i>Understanding and tolerance</i>	-	7	8	-	15	13
Total	42	18	55	1	116	100

UA: Ukraine, GE: Georgia, RO: Romania, MD: Moldova

A cross tabulation of direct and higher-level outcomes reported by 16 interviewed grantees found that five types of direct outcomes accounted for all higher-level outcomes (see Table 8 below).

Table 8: Higher-Level Outcomes by Type of Direct Outcome

Direct Outcome	Higher-Level Outcomes	Direct Outcomes	%
<i>Application of learning</i>	-	15	0
<i>Networking</i>	1	7	14
<i>Citizen engagement</i>	2	11	18
<i>Analysis and advocacy</i>	4	49	8
<i>Investigations and fact checking</i>	3	6	50
<i>Counter propaganda and disinformation</i>	6	9	67
<i>Piloting/start-ups</i>	-	4	0
<i>Understanding and tolerance</i>	-	15	0
Total	16	116	-

CONCLUSIONS FOR EQI

Based on the high percentage of grantees that reported fulfilling their grant outputs and achieving expected outcomes with direct beneficiaries, the ET can conclude that BST is good at making awards to grantees that implement their activities and achieve their anticipated results. The most effective transnational grants are those that focus on analysis and advocacy or on counter-propaganda and counter-disinformation. The more effective single-country grants supported investigations and fact-checking or citizen engagement. The ET found no substantial differences in effectiveness by country.

When looking at effectiveness of the three different BST grant program categories, the distinction between the CBI and the EL program proved to be somewhat artificial. This distinction was not appreciated by USAID or grantees, and it was not consistently observed by BST. The more relevant distinction is between single-country and transnational grants.

Transnational programming had a broader impact at the national and international level than single-country programming. Single-country grants, however, frequently showed small-scale results and were valued by USAID in specific instances where USAID mission programming was inadequate, unavailable, or unable to address a country's needs in a timely manner.

Given shortcomings in BST reporting to USAID that did not effectively track multi-year grants or location of grantees, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of BST's multi-year funding decisions or whether grants to CSOs located outside of the capital are more or less effective than those inside the capital. BST and USAID could learn more about BST effectiveness with better reporting and with performance indicators that gauge progress toward defined measures of effectiveness.

FINDINGS FOR EQ2

To what extent has BST's assistance and operating model allowed for effective engagement in more restrictive environments?

This question examines BST's operating model for grants in restrictive environments from 2013 onward and based on this examines the effectiveness of BST grantmaking in restrictive environments, as per the ET's definition of effectiveness as described and used in EQ1.

[SBU] RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT OPERATING MODEL

[SBU] The ET identified three notable aspects of BST's operating model in restrictive environments. These include specific security and communication protocols, financing, and grant management.

[SBU] COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

[SBU] Through interviews with grantees and BST staff, the ET found that BST put in place communication protocols for grantees operating in restrictive environments on a timely basis. Grantees focused on Russia described new communication protocols using secure encrypted e-mail and messaging services as BST reacted to enactment of the Foreign Agents Act in 2012. As BST staff described, they sought to ensure that any grantees engaging with Russian actors would be part of this communication system. Similarly, grantees described similar BST communication protocols for Azerbaijan in response to passage of restrictive legislation on foreign funding of CSOs in 2014. Overall survey results for restrictive environment respondents suggest that 87% of Russian and Azerbaijani respondents communicate through secure platforms.

[SBU] Interview grantees from both countries described how BST provided training and support on use of these protocols. This included advice on best practices for storage and transmission of CSO-related information. In some cases, grantees even described receiving computer and phone hardware with the necessary programs already installed and ready for use. In general, grantees found the systems straightforward and appreciated BST's efforts to ensure safe communication.

[SBU] BST reporting suggested and interviewed grantees confirmed that Russia's June 2017 designation of BST as an "undesirable foreign organization" had little additional effect on their cooperation with BST since systems were already in place and most anticipated that BST would receive this designation.

Regardless, grantees noted that BST reached out to them at this time to ensure that they were aware of the situation and to ascertain if they were still interested in cooperation.

[SBU] FINANCING PROTOCOLS

[SBU] The ET found that BST developed multiple financing mechanisms to fund operations in Russia and Azerbaijan. During interviews with grantees and BST staff, the ET identified eight types of funding arrangements, which share the common trait of being multi-stepped to safeguard the identity of funding source and grant recipient. Iterations include:

- (1) [SBU] Organization outside of the countries receives BST funding, and the ultimate CSO recipients travel to get money from the intermediary CSO;
- (2) [SBU] Individuals from CSO have accounts in outside country and travel to get funds from their bank;
- (3) [SBU] CSO registers as a Russian or Azerbaijani commercial entity and receives funds through a third party in a third country;
- (4) [SBU] CSO is part of a Holding Company that is owned by shareholders; i.e., individual CSOs unite to create a commercial entity that can receive international transfers;
- (5) [SBU] CSO is registered outside of Russia in a third country;
- (6) [SBU] Foreign intermediary donor not on undesirable foreign organization list provides funding to the CSO;
- (7) [SBU] CSO actors register as independent business consultants or sign business contracts and then receive payments from a third party; and
- (8) [SBU] Third-country CSO covers direct costs of CSO participants traveling outside of the countries; e.g., purchases airline tickets and pays hotel and per diem costs for conference participants.

[SBU] In some cases, these funding arrangements were already in place when BST began engaging with grantees, but in most cases, BST worked with the grantee to find the optimal way to provide funding. A grantee might use multiple approaches for one grant or for a series of grants given local contexts. BST staff described the situation as constantly dynamic, and BST continues to seek potential third party and alternative approaches to prepare to adapt funding arrangements for grantees. In general, most interviewed grantees felt the financing approaches met their needs; at least one grantee mentioned, however, that this process sometimes lengthened the time for getting funds, which could be challenging if specific dates and events were set for a project.

[SBU] BST has also made use of restrictive-environment funds to support analysis about and engagement with actors in the restrictive environments. For example, BST supported a think tank in Romania focused on generating expert analysis on Russia; it also supported inclusion of restrictive-environment actors in regional project through such funding.

[SBU] MANAGEMENT APPROACH

[SBU] Interview grantees generally gave strong accolades to BST program managers for their engagement and management approach, which focuses on the slow and careful development of a circle

of long-term grantees that refer other trusted organizations. Most grantees highlighted the strong knowledge and support that they received from program staff. Most also commented on the team’s flexibility and availability, with one grantee noting that the team was available “24/7” if they needed them. These views were shared by those surveyed, with all respondents stating that BST was successful (87% completely successful and 13% partially successful) in providing the necessary security, flexibility, and guidance for project implementation.

[SBU] Grantees, particularly the most vulnerable, said they trust BST staff, and the on-the-ground presence of the Azerbaijan country representative was described as particularly critical for support and identifying new opportunities. Grantees from both countries noted BST’s assistance in connecting them with counterparts outside their country and providing them both virtual and real networking opportunities, and several emphasized that they would like more of this BST support. [END SBU]

GRANT EFFECTIVENESS

OUTPUTS

According to survey and KII data, BST grants in restrictive environments reached outputs for nearly all projects. The 39 restrictive environment grantees who responded to the survey said they completed 95% of project activities as anticipated. All grantees interviewed also could describe completion of project activities. In a number of cases, these might have been slightly altered from initial planning due to the need to be flexible.

[SBU] In at least two cases, grantees interviewed describe actually completing more than anticipated planned activities given the favorable dollar-ruble exchange rate, which left them with a slight budget surplus they used to increase activities. [END SBU]

OUTCOMES AND HIGHER-LEVEL OUTCOMES

All interviewed grantees and 90% of those surveyed reported achievement of direct outcomes. To better understand what this meant in practice, the ET relied on grantee KII data.

[SBU] Outcomes reported by interviewees varied broadly by the types of project objectives undertaken. For the 41 grants discussed in these interviews, the ET identified six broad outcome areas. These are shown in the tables below, sorted by grantees from Russia and Azerbaijan, plus restrictive environment funding grantees based in Georgia and Romania that received grants for projects in Russia.

Table 9: [SBU] Restrictive Environment Grant Direct Outcome Areas

Categories	Definition	Grant Example	CSO
CSO support	Providing managerial, financial, and know-how support to CSOs	Regional School of Crowdfunding for non-commercial-organizations	Planeta.ru, Russia

Community engagement and empowerment	Encouraging active citizenship and participation in public life	Mobilization of youth from rural areas of Chechen Republic	DENAL, Russia
Bringing together Russian or Azerbaijani and regional experts	Opportunities for expert sharing of views and information	Georgia between Russia and the EU: Expert Panel Series	Europe House Georgia, Georgia
Expert analysis on Russia or Azerbaijan in the West	Provision of analysis on restrictive environments to Western policymakers	The Role of Russian Civil Society in Foreign Policy Decision Making	Experts for Security and Global Affairs, Romania
Alternative information to domestic audiences	News and analysis disseminated to Russian or Azerbaijani audiences	DAPTAR: Women's space in Northern Caucasus	Kavkaz Monitor, Russia
Human rights defense	Protection of human rights	Integrated security for women human resources development.	Women's Association for Rational Development, Azerbaijan

[SBU] The ET found that grantees describing projects supporting the CSO community in Russia provided the most detailed outcome descriptions; these included grants where objectives were focused on application of learning in the CSO sector and empowerment through social enterprise. Grantees could describe the learning process, and in many situations, application of the skills learned. For example, in relation to social enterprise, a grantee linked her CSO's assistance with beneficiaries' ability to develop enterprises for the disabled related to pottery, sewing, and beauty salons. Similarly, a CSO that taught crowd-funding techniques to 150 CSOs could point to more than 25 active crowdfunding campaigns that CSOs began after training.

Table 10: [SBU] Restrictive Environment Grant Direct Outcome Areas

Direct Outcome Areas	RU	AZ	GE for RU	RO for RU	Total Grants
<i>CSO Support</i>	9	-	1	-	10
<i>Community engagement/empowerment</i>	5	-	3	1	9
<i>Bringing together Russian/Azerbaijani and regional experts</i>	-	2	1	1	4
<i>Expert analysis on Russia/Azerbaijan in the West</i>	-	1	1	6	8
<i>Alternative information to domestic audiences</i>	4	2	-	-	6
<i>Human rights defense</i>	3	1	-	-	4
Total	21	6	6	8	41

RU: Russia, AZ: Azerbaijan, GE: Georgia, RO: Romania

[SBU] BST multi-year support was described by interviewed grantees as particularly important for CSO support initiatives. For example, one CSO received three grants three years in a row to provide support to the CSO sector in Russia. It first focused on developing crisis management tools for non-profits, and it then expanded into applying business management practices to nonprofit work and CSO management.

The second iteration of this grant expanded the curriculum and reach of the programming from established CSOs to youth and volunteers. The CSO said it “shifted the mindset” of beneficiaries who applied these approaches in their work. The grantee suggested that BST support enabled it to develop an approach and become a “trend setter” in its CSO support efforts throughout Russia.

[SBU] Similarly, grants related to individual empowerment through skill training were linked by grantees interviewed to clear outcomes. For example, grantees linked such projects – whether cooking classes or business planning tools – to trainees going on to develop business cooperation with those in their learning groups (across borders in the Caucasus), as well as start their own small businesses.

[SBU] Higher Level Outcomes

- North Caucasus rural district changed garbage collection policy
- Donors used Azerbaijani-generated analysis for programming on peacemaking initiatives between Azerbaijan and Armenia. [END SBU]

[SBU] Grantees interviewed that had grants related to civic engagement also could be linked to outcome effects. Work with youth in the North Caucasus particularly was described as producing short-term outcomes that had a multiplier effect. Youth efforts to improve their communities with construction of sports fields and a garbage collection project were examples. Furthermore, the garbage collection effort

was linked to a higher-level outcome of changing local level policy on trash collection. This was one of the two higher-level outcomes noted for restrictive environment grants.

[SBU] Grant objectives that focused on providing alternative information to domestic audiences in Russia and Azerbaijan also had some straightforward outcomes. Three grantees could identify audiences and viewing rates but could not say whether such information had changed audiences’ views of the issues addressed. For example, one grantee described trying to provide information and shift views on domestic violence in traditional North Caucasus societies through a web portal, noting that it is difficult to know if people are changing their views once they read the site.

[SBU] For grantees focused on bringing expert views on Russia and Azerbaijan to the West, outcomes were also focused on viewership and intended audience exposure. Four grantees described sending their analysis to policy actors and getting the “right policy people” at events. This also included mentions in key Western press and policy discussions. However, beyond this, it was difficult for most to point to specific policy influence outcomes where policy actors used their products. In one case, a CSO in Azerbaijan could point to their analytical mapping of women’s peacebuilding initiatives in Azerbaijan and Armenia as the basis of United Kingdom (UK) policy and other donor efforts. This is linked to a higher-level outcome of influencing international policy actors as the second of the two higher-level outcomes noted for restrictive-environment grants.

[SBU] Three grantees interviewed described similar outcomes for grants bringing together experts from inside restrictive environments and the wider region. Important for several grantees engaged in this effort was to identify and engage with a wide set of Russian experts. Grantees involved in these efforts described key initial outcomes of sharing information and perspectives and building up a small community of actors interested in further engagement, but most noted modest linking and collaboration outcomes given the challenging contexts.

[SBU] Finally, grantees engaged in grants with human rights defense objective outcomes were focused mostly on the individual level. For example, a grantee described a case where defense of a client in the North Caucasus claiming child support rights did result in some level of legal redress. A grantee also described how support of human rights defenders in Azerbaijan helped both individuals and the individuals as a group, but those grants did not attempt or achieve a higher-level outcome effect. [END SBU]

CONCLUSIONS FOR EQ2

BST's efforts to adapt and change its operating model for restrictive environment grants succeeded in providing much needed support to CSOs in, and working with, partners in restrictive environments. Considering how to further the regional interaction and idea sharing that restrictive-environment grantees seek may be one area that BST can further emphasize as is possible. Regardless, for practical purposes, BST's operating model for these countries has allowed it to engage with these CSOs and for them to carry out their grants.

And per the ET's definition of grant effectiveness, these grant results have been surprisingly high despite contextual challenges. Concrete and immediate outcomes are best seen in approaches that train, empower, and connect people within their specific domestic contexts, which can change individual lives and affect local communities. This is particularly true for grants where there have been multiple engagements to support different iterations of the same project.

[SBU] Emergency assistance for human rights defenders in Russia and Azerbaijan also falls in this category. [END SBU]

The knowledge gains, awareness raising, and greater understanding project outcomes identified in this sample suggest that these types of grants also have value and can be effective in the midterm, but that initial outcomes may be modest given the difficult contexts. The challenges of capturing the outcomes of such grants also underscores the need for a refined MEL system for grants being given in restrictive environments.

FINDINGS FOR EQ3

Were efforts to communicate and harmonize programs among grantee and bilateral mission-funded activities pursued?

COMMUNICATION

USAID/Washington and BST staff said that they are in regular communication and enjoy a good working relationship. USAID's agreement officer's representative (AOR) for BST sits on the 19-member grant review committee, which also includes worldwide GMF staff and representatives of other BST donors.

Communication is irregular between BST staff and the USAID missions in the five BST countries where USAID has a physical presence: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. BST and mission staff said communication usually goes through USAID/Washington and occurs most frequently around grant review. USAID/Washington provides missions with grant applications from CSOs in their country

and relays their feedback to BST. A BST staffer said that the AOR “talks to the local missions on the ground for us” and serves as a “bridge” between them, which was corroborated by mission staff.

The extent of direct communication between BST and USAID missions does vary, however. Mission staff in Georgia and Moldova said they rarely communicate directly with BST staff and the majority of their communication with BST is through the AOR. A mission staffer in Armenia said she has “frequent meetings” with BST staff when they are in Yerevan, and mission staff in Ukraine said a BST staffer sometimes participates in bimonthly multilateral donor coordination meetings alongside mission staff.

[SBU] Mission staff in Azerbaijan also reported regular direct contact with BST staff, due to the presence of a BST consultant in Baku, as well as to discuss utilization of the funding that the mission has provided to BST to make and administer grants there. This includes direct coordination with the new implementer of USAID’s anti-corruption programming. [END SBU]

Implementers of USAID civil society programs in Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia reported little to no direct communication with BST staff. Direct communication is infrequent in Ukraine, though the USAID implementer is updated on BST grants through the multilateral donor coordination process. Other donors reported similar experiences in their communication with BST.

USAID staff in Washington and missions said they would like to see greater direct communication between BST and the missions and implementers. “It’s hard to coordinate with multiple parties nine time zones away. Direct contact with BST as they develop their grants would be useful,” a mission official said. An official at another USAID mission added, “It could be better if BST were more engaged with other donors and our implementing partners.”

HARMONIZATION

USAID and BST officials said the main method of harmonizing BST grantee and bilateral mission programs is the grant review process. Before awarding grants, BST sends selected proposals to USAID/Washington, which forwards them to the five missions. This exercise serves two purposes: (1) Vetting the prospective grantees, based on mission staff’s on-the-ground knowledge of CSOs; and (2) Ensuring that BST grants do not duplicate mission grants. “If the mission sees an issue, they will flag it: either concerns about a grantee or ‘We already do this,’” a USAID official said.

Mission officials noted that this consultation comes at the end of the grantmaking process, once BST has selected its prospective grantees and is seeking sign-off on its awards. As a result, mission officials said they do not participate in discussions about BST’s strategy in their countries and do not have a role in ensuring that BST grants advance broader U.S. interests in those AOR countries. Asked about consultations with USAID offices, a BST official acknowledged, “It’s not about aligning our missions; it’s about not stepping on each other’s toes.”

USAID officials said more up-front consultation with missions by BST could better harmonize programs. “It could be better if the missions could help direct the proposal calls,” a USAID/Washington official said. A mission official said, “Direct contact with BST as they develop their grants would be useful,” and

a colleague added, “It would be terrific to know BST’s priorities. ... If we could link on the front end, that would be great.”

When USAID missions and BST fund the same grantees, the activities have different purposes. In Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, BST has provided USAID implementers with grants to carry out specific short-term projects. In another case in Ukraine, the USAID mission provides a CSO with core organizational funding while BST funds a specific project. USAID and GMF officials said BST and USAID missions have succeeded in avoiding duplication.

As noted in the findings for EQ1, there have been several instances where BST filled gaps in USAID mission funding. In Ukraine following the 2014 Euromaidan revolution and in Armenia following the 2018 revolution, BST moved quickly with special calls for proposals for civil society support, awarding grants in about two months compared to the 12 months of a standard USAID procurement process. In Moldova, the USAID mission is relying on BST grants to support civil society during a hiatus in the mission’s civil society programming.

[SBU] In Azerbaijan, the USAID mission in 2013 decided to route its civil society funding through BST, providing \$550,000 in funding for grants over two years to Azerbaijani organizations. Last year, the mission in Azerbaijan again decided to direct funds through BST, providing \$250,000 in FY 2019 and 2020 to supplement the mission’s anti-corruption funding. [END SBU]

CONCLUSIONS FOR EQ3

Direct BST communication with USAID missions in five countries varies by country and over time. Communication is more robust in instances where the mission has provided direct funding to BST to make grants in that country, where BST has responded quickly to events with rapid-reaction grants, or where there is a multilateral donor coordination process in which BST participates. Communication with USAID implementers is limited and occurs mostly in donor coordination meetings. Increasing direct communication between BST and USAID missions and implementers would reduce the time burden for USAID/Washington to play middleman and would improve BST awareness of the situation in those countries and the USAID missions’ activities and priorities.

BST does effectively avoid duplication with USAID mission programs through the grant-review process, which ensures that missions examine proposals before grants are awarded. However, harmonization of BST and mission programming is hampered by a lack of regular direct communication and a lack of front-end mission input. More regular meetings between BST staff, mission officials, and implementing partners would enable all parties to share their strategic priorities with one another and better harmonize their activities.

FINDINGS FOR EQ4

Given BST’s strengths, are there types of programs or specific countries where BST has achieved a comparative advantage over other organizations or programs in delivering grant funding?

BST STRENGTHS

Most BST grantees receive funding from other sources, most notably the EU, European Endowment for Democracy (EED) or National Endowment for Democracy (NED), providing them with a basis on which to assess BST's strengths. The key strengths cited in interviews are:

- Flexibility
- Simple application and reporting procedures
- Responsiveness and support
- Openness to new ideas and grantee initiatives
- Profile as an international donor, rather than an American one
- Access to GMF international networks

Of the 69 grantees surveyed, 63 percent said BST is more flexible than other donors, compared to 2 percent who said other donors are more flexible. (The remainder said there was no difference.) In interviews, grantees noted that BST allowed them to reprogram up to 15 percent of their funds without needing approval and regularly granted extensions to grantees whose activities extended beyond the initial timeframe. For example, one grantee who was able to purchase airline tickets for less than the budgeted amount was told to use the savings on the event, rather than filling out paperwork to return the funding. A BST official summarized this approach as “extreme flexibility, keeping accountability.”

In the online survey, 54 percent of respondents said BST's application process is simpler than others, compared to 4 percent who said other donors' applications were simpler, and 58 percent said BST's reporting process is simpler, compared to 7 percent who said other donors had simpler reporting processes. Grantees cited the rolling application process and the need to submit only a final report, without interim reports, as particularly advantageous.

“The reporting is not burdensome, but you feel like you're held accountable for the money,” one grantee said. “You don't have to invest 40 percent of your budget in filling out 10,000 pages of forms.”

Grantees said BST staff are accessible and responsive, adding that they appreciated being able to reach program officers on the telephone or receive a quick response to an e-mail. In the survey, 37 percent of grantees said BST communicated better than other donors, compared to 11 percent who said other donors were better. The exception came in Ukraine, where several past grantees criticized BST for not providing them with a decision on later grant applications, leaving their staffing and budgeting in limbo.

Some grantees said BST staff had helped them to refine their grant proposals so that BST could approve their ideas, and they cited BST's openness to new ideas as a strength of the program. “BST is one of the few donors that allows you to think of your own priorities and for your own country,” one grantee said. Another grantee said, “BST funding is a rare example of funding for something new. Most donors have a narrow focus of interest. BST is more open to ideas that come directly from civil society upward.”

“Only a few other funders are not afraid to fund new organizations,” a BST official said. “People come to us with crazy ideas other funders don’t care about. If you can make your case to us, we can fund it.” An implementer for another donor said, “They take more risks. We are afraid to give grants to new organizations,” and a USAID mission official cited BST’s “germination for smaller groups” as a niche.

Grantees, BST staff, and USAID officials said that BST is not viewed as an American organization, despite it being implemented by GMF and primarily funded by USAID. A USAID official said, “GMF and BST have an image as an international entity.” USAID and BST staff said this makes BST attractive to some grantees who may be concerned about being associated with the U.S. government and that it allows BST to operate with less concern about bilateral relations than a U.S. government entity. “We’re seen as an unbiased donor, not U.S. government,” a BST staffer said. “We’re not identified with any one country; we’re just us.”

Grantees praised BST’s knowledge of the region and of the key policy influencers and decisionmakers. Grantees and BST and USAID officials said the trust’s connection to the GMF community enabled grantees to establish networks throughout the Black Sea region and with counterparts in the EU and North America. “They helped to amplify the message of local groups,” a USAID official said. “GMF gives a voice to those groups that wouldn’t otherwise have regional or international platforms.”

Grantees and USAID officials said the access to the broader GMF network enabled BST grantees to “activate research for policymaking”; i.e., communicate their research and analysis to policymakers who used that information to make decisions. “It’s what GMF is good at,” a USAID official said. “They are able to attract notable names, and they can reach a high-level, broad audience that I don’t think grantees would have access to otherwise.”

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Interviewees from all groups overwhelmingly cited regionalism as the primary comparative advantage that BST enjoys relative to other organizations or programs in delivering grant funding, with only EED having a similar regional capacity. This was cited with regard to BST’s ability to work across borders, throughout the Black Sea region, and between the region and the EU and North America. Interviewed donors and implementers noted that most donors do not have the flexibility to work beyond the borders of a single country, and they noted BST enjoys a comparative advantage in addressing regionwide opportunities or threats, such as Euro-Atlantic integration or Russian propaganda and disinformation.

“Our uniqueness starts with our regional programming. It’s more important than our in-country programming,” a BST official said. A USAID mission official said, “I think their regional focus is an advantage that we don’t have.” A Georgia-based donor said, “They have a more regional focus. There is not a lot of regional focus by NGOs. These countries with association agreements with the EU have similar experiences and can share what worked and what doesn’t.”

The ET found that BST enjoyed a comparative advantage in programs that took advantage of the other strengths of GMF. Interviewees cited the convening power of GMF; i.e., the fund’s ability to organize international conferences that attract high-level government officials and non-governmental experts, allowing grantees from the Black Sea region to have their ideas heard on the international level and to network with other CSOs from the region, EU countries, and North America. Furthermore, they said that GMF’s leadership programs provide opportunities for young experts from the region to learn from their international peers and to share their ideas with the next generation of Western leaders.

“We organize events and convene with grantees as they come through town,” said a GMF staffer in Washington. “We send them to the Hill for briefings. We give them a venue here.” A Ukraine-based donor said, “They have a network of fellows and event alumni. ... They have access to excellent researchers and decision-makers. It’s an opportunity for people to connect and collaborate directly.” A USAID implementer said, “They did a lot of ‘think and do-policy tank’ work.”

Based on data analysis for EQI above, the ET found that BST enjoys a comparative advantage in transnational programs that complement other GMF programs. BST’s funding for analysis and advocacy complements GMF’s decades of work on Euro-Atlantic integration and security policy. More recently, GMF’s work on countering propaganda and disinformation through its Alliance for Securing Democracy complements BST grantmaking in this area, as documented under EQI.

“We all have the same problems when it comes to Russia,” a BST staffer said. “We never want to produce research just for researchers. Part of our reasoning is having Washington understand that the U.S. faces the same threats as Ukraine.” A Ukraine-based donor said, “BST is extremely useful for foreign policy and security policy funding.”

With regard to its single-country programming, BST enjoys a comparative advantage in grantmaking requiring a rapid response, such as the revolutions in Ukraine and Armenia, and in experimental, pilot or start-up programs, due to the relatively low cost and short-term commitment of BST grants. These are documented under EQI and in the previous subsection. Interviewees said increasing citizen participation in civic life was the most important aspect of BST’s single-country work, and the ET found in its analysis for EQI that BST grants supporting investigations and fact-checking were also effective.

COUNTRIES

While the analysis under EQI was unable to find greater BST success in certain countries, interviewees did cite some places in which BST enjoys a comparative advantage. Due to its ability to announce a special call for proposals and to deliver grant funding in less than two months, BST enjoyed a comparative advantage in Ukraine in 2014 and Armenia in 2018. The advantage of timeliness has disappeared in Ukraine, but USAID and BST officials said BST’s advantages there remain its ability to make grants to new or smaller CSOs that are not large or established enough for other donors and its outreach beyond Kiev to the various regions of Ukraine

Officials in Armenia said BST provided important support to civic participation, whereas other donors were focusing on support to the new government. “They were fast in reacting to political developments,” a USAID/Armenia official said. “We support long-term grantees with large pots of

money; there are few organizations that can apply. BST gives money more frequently and to more organizations over a cycle. Their grants complement what we do.” A BST official said, “We didn’t want to train politicians how to govern. We wanted to stay with the citizens.”

With its headquarters in Romania, BST enjoys a strong relationship with Romanian civil society, according to BST staff and Romanian CSOs. Because USAID has ended its assistance to EU members Bulgaria and Romania, BST grants to those countries are limited to the two transnational programs. With regard to EL, Romania is far and away the largest recipient, receiving 81 of the 155 grants in that program, compared to three for Bulgaria.

One effect has been to create synergies between Romanian CSOs and their counterparts in Moldova. Romania and Moldova share a common language and a long border, so it is convenient for Romanians to travel from Bucharest to Chisinau. In interviews with Romanian grantees, they often described programming that they were undertaking in Moldova, particularly focused on sharing with Moldovans the Romanian experience of fighting corruption and Euro-Atlantic integration. A BST official also noted that it is easy for BST grantees to work in the breakaway Moldovan region of Transnistria. “There are a lot of Romania-Moldova projects,” a BST staffer in Bucharest said. “It’s the same language, and [Moldova] is close.”

[SBU] According to USAID and BST officials and grantees from Russia and Azerbaijan, BST is one of the few donors who are able to work in restrictive environments. The communication and financial protocols and trusted staff described above under EQ2 have given BST both the logistical capacity and grantee confidence needed to make grants in Russia and Azerbaijan, which have restricted CSOs’ ability to receive funding from international donors. The presence of a BST consultant in Baku provides a comparative advantage in identifying and vetting potential new Azerbaijani grant recipients.

[SBU] While BST has successfully made grants in Russia that support the legal and financial operating environment for CSOs, the trust has a particular advantage in the North Caucasus. USAID and BST officials and grantees from that region said BST is the only donor working in that region. Relationships with CSOs in neighboring Georgia offer synergies between organizations on both sides of the Caucasus, and Georgia provides a base where BST can regularly meet with Russian grantees. [END SBU]

CONCLUSIONS FOR EQ4

Regionalism is the key comparative advantage that BST enjoys over other donors. Its two transnational grant programs – CBI and EL – take advantage of this strength more than the single-country CP program.

BST’s responsiveness, flexibility, and simple application and reporting requirements are its key advantages for grantees compared to other donors. BST’s connection with GMF gives it an advantage in analysis and advocacy related to Euro-Atlantic integration and security policy and in countering Russian propaganda and disinformation. Its primary advantages in single-country programming lie in programs requiring a rapid response to events and in increasing citizen participation in civic life.

BST enjoys a comparative advantage in Romania, thanks to its headquarters in Bucharest, and in Moldova, because of the ease for Romanian grantees of working in Moldova due to the common language, proximity, and applicability of the Romanian experience to Moldova. BST’s reliance on Romanian CSOs in its EL programming, however, has resulted in a disparity of funding compared to Bulgaria, the other EU member state in the Black Sea region.

[SBU] BST’s ability to work in restrictive environments gives it a comparative advantage over other donors in Russia, particularly in the North Caucasus, where it is the only donor operating. BST similarly enjoys a comparative advantage in Azerbaijan thanks to an on-the-ground presence. [END SBU]

FINDINGS FOR EQ5

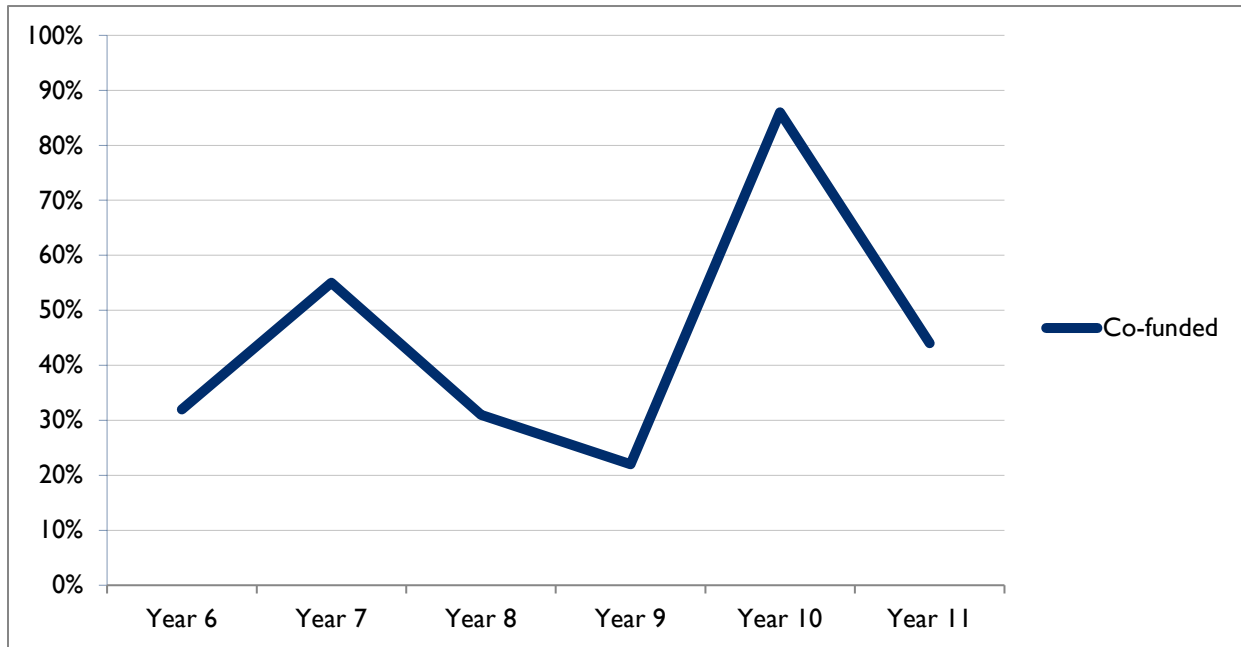
To what extent does BST encourage project and organizational leverage from a diverse range of sources? What steps does BST take to encourage its grantees to focus on and make progress on financial sustainability?

This question first examines how BST leverages its funding efforts. Secondly, it examines how BST encourages sustainability.

LEVERAGE

BST data does not provide a complete or clear view on its grant making leverage. BST annual reports provide a graphic description of annual rates of leverage. Yet, these figures are not compiled together in a way that provides a clear picture of actual leverage. For example, if comparing annual reports with the BST ten-year final report, the leverage trends appear somewhat contradictory. Year-on-year trends suggest significant year-by-year diversity (as per the graph below) rather than a particular trend. While the text of the 10-year report states that the majority (83%) of all grants were co-funded, the accompanying graphic shows only 14 percent of grants having co-funding.⁷

⁷“During its first ten years of grantmaking on the 621 projects reported, 83% of the projects leveraged additional financial support and/or in-kind contributions from other donors.” Please see Black Sea Trust, “2008-2018 Reporting Period,” pp. 5-6.

Figure I: BST Annual Reports Percentage of Activities Co-funded

Similarly, individual grant summaries listed in the reports give project specific leverage data, but it is not clear if this is the full co-funding picture. Other donors are listed as co-funders, and the grantee is also often listed as a co-funder, but it is not clear if grantee co-funding includes both financial and in-kind contributions.

Grantee interviews suggested that BST is leveraging funding in a number of ways that are not fully captured in the reporting, such as to expand regional attendance for trainings or other events that already had primary funding. Similarly, a grantee described having primary funding for a multi-year project where BST provided the media-outreach component. In essence, both relatively modest BST financial contributions were a multiplying effect on other donors' substantial financial inputs, but current reporting is not capturing such leveraging in a clear and accessible way.

Reporting practices aside, the ET found substantial evidence of BST encouraging grantees to find co-funding. This starts with the BST application template, which requests relevant donor funding data and histories and encourages potential grantees to think about co-funding options. Roughly two-thirds of surveyed grantees stated that BST encouraged them to seek out additional funding, a finding confirmed in grantee interviews.⁸

BST only sometimes has directly assisted grantees to find co-funding. A majority of grantees interviewed said they found other funding themselves. This also tracks with survey results suggesting that BST assisted less than one-third of grantees to find co-funding.⁹ A number of grantees said they did not ask for assistance partly due to the fact that they already had co-funding plans. For those that did receive

⁸ 65% of those surveyed in the seven BST countries and 67% of those from restricted countries noted this.

⁹ 30% of those surveyed in the seven BST countries and 26% of those from restricted countries noted this.

BST assistance, they primarily described BST assisting them to identify relevant donors to contact. In a few cases, grantees described BST inviting them to events where other donors were present as a way of matchmaking. BST staff also described helping grantees to seek additional funding on a grant-by-grant basis, but not systematically.

SUSTAINABILITY

BST's focus is programming, not financial sustainability. This can be seen from questions in the BST proposal and reporting templates, which emphasize programming sustainability, not organizational financial sustainability as well as the short-term nature and modest sum of grants. Grantees and BST contrasted BST grants with other donor funds, which specifically provide core support or organization developmental support. "It's not our goal. We don't make an objective of the sustainability of CSO's," a BST official said.

However, BST does engage in practices that support and contribute to CSOs' financial sustainability. First, grantees noted that grants sufficiently cover basic administrative cost. Second, grantees noted that BST funding could be an important step towards building a funding profile with other donors. Several grantees described getting initial funding from BST and, based on completing these grants, being able to attract other donor funds. As one Romanian CSO described, "Our first grant was based on our curriculum vitae; at first (2015) we had 100 percent funding from BST; in 2018, this was down to 50 percent."

Third, grantees noted that BST had invited them to participate in a number of conferences, most notably the annual Black Sea NGO Forum, which sometimes gave them access to other donors. Grantees also noted that attendance at such events heightened their CSO's profile amongst donors and policy-makers, which indirectly could lead to other donor interest and support.

BST also tends to have repeat grantees. Of those CSOs interviewed, three main repeat trends were present: (1) in some cases, a specific event was funded multiple times; for example, the Kyiv or Bucharest Security Forums had funding every year as part of their own donor mix. (2) In other cases, BST funded multiple stages of a project as it developed; for example, BST funded the start-up and several phases for the Propaganda Permeability Index done by the Romanian CSO Global Focus; (3) BST builds relationships with CSOs or their key actors and supported different types of initiatives over several years. In some cases, grantees described receiving funding one year for a project, but the next year not, while at the same time applying for and receiving funding on yet another project. The ET is not clear on the rationale for these different funding trends, but it has resulted in a set of organizations having multi-year relationships with BST. Yet, given BST limited funds and these multi-year relationships, it has limited BST's ability to seek out and encourage new applicants, according to BST staff.

[SBU] Restrictive environment funding tends to have higher percentage of repeat grantees, Survey results for this group of respondents found that 31% had received between \$100,000-250,000 from BST, compared with roughly 15% of those in the other seven countries. According to interviews with restrictive environment grantees, they tend to have a higher proportion of their funding from BST. A number of restrictive-country interviewees said BST contributed 10 to 25 percent of their annual funding, in contrast to grantees in the other countries with more donor options. As one Russian grantee emphasized during her interview, “At this moment it (BST funding) is crucial because this is what gives you the independence.”

[SBU] BST also has emphasized financial sustainability as part of its thematic focus for restricted country funding. Its intentional focus on supporting development and know-how dissemination of CSO funding options such as crowd-funding and social entrepreneurship has provided Russian CSOs with new funding alternatives. Russian grantees highlight the possibilities of achieving some financial stability if not sustainability through such means, in contrast to the primarily domestic government funding options.¹⁰ [END SBU]

[SBU] Funding for One Azerbaijani CSO

“In 2013 we had plenty of funding – 10 projects for example \$400k per year annual budget BST was around 10%.

In 2014-15 donors were waiting to see what happened.

And in 2016 BST was almost one third of our funding.

In 2018, overall budget is about \$150,000 with BST contributing 20% of this.”

CONCLUSIONS FOR EQ5

BST emphasizes co-funding possibilities as an inherent value of its funding, while not systematically capturing what it is achieving or systematically assisting grantees to achieve co-funding or seek out other donors. BST is mindful of some aspects of financial sustainability, and these are built into its programming sustainability model rather than set apart as a stand-alone emphasis; yet, why some organizations become repeat grantees over others is less clear and raises the question of how such funding may affect such organizations’ mid-term financial sustainability. It also raises concerns about the extent to which BST is open to new grantees with new ideas, a grant making approach where BST has historically enjoyed a comparative advantage over other grant makers.

[SBU] The exception is Russia where the intentional multi-year efforts to fund and teach organizations alternative funding possibilities seems to be a clear effort towards ensuring financial stability and survivability. [END SBU]

¹⁰ One of the few alternatives for Russian grantees is the domestic Presidential Grants Foundation. Most have at some time applied for this; and some have also received funds, but for those receiving noted heavy oversight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQ1

RECOMMENDATION 1: BST SHOULD IMPROVE ITS REPORTING

BST annual reports should include summaries of all completed grants and indicator data on their outputs and outcomes. Grant summaries should be clearly organized alphabetically by grant program category, country and grantee organizations; they should include precise figures, not just graphics, on key statistics that are already reported; and they should clearly indicate the city and country where each grantee is located. Once a new MEL plan is adopted, USAID should provide expectations on data BST needs to report in order for USAID to effectively monitor BST grantmaking.

RECOMMENDATION 2: BST SHOULD FOCUS GRANTMAKING FOR GREATER EFFECTIVENESS

BST should concentrate its grantmaking in the areas in which it has demonstrated the greatest effectiveness. Most grantmaking should fall under a combined transnational grants program, which should focus on analysis and advocacy and on addressing pressing cross-border challenges. Grantmaking under the single-country program should continue to focus on civic participation and should be limited to rapid responses to events, filling mission gaps or complementarity with USAID mission programs, and experimental, pilot or start-up programs or grantees.

RECOMMENDATION 3: BST SHOULD MERGE CBI AND EL

Given the overlapping and blurred distinction between the CBI and EL programs, BST should combine the two into a single transnational grant program. Single-country programming should remain under the CP program.

RECOMMENDATION 4: BST SHOULD TRACK MULTI-YEAR GRANTS

As part of its overhaul of its MEL systems, BST should monitor the outcomes of grants made to the same organization over time, in order to understand the effectiveness of multi-year BST funding relative to one-time grants. This will enable BST to understand where repeat grants are more effective than one-time grants, which can help BST determine when to fund repeat grantees and when to fund new grantees. It can also provide insights into the time and effort needed to achieve specific direct outcomes and higher-level outcomes, which will guide BST and grantees in articulating realistic expectations for their projects. In order to implement this recommendation, BST should improve its database of grantees to ensure that organizations are referred to by the same name every time and organizational relationships are noted (in cases of overlapping ownership, common personnel or name changes).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQ2

RECOMMENDATION 5: BST SHOULD TRACK RESTRICTIVE-ENVIRONMENT GRANT RESULTS

Despite the difficult context, grants are performing, and both BST and grantees can learn from more closely tracking grant outcomes. To capture this, BST should put in place a similar if slightly abbreviated output, outcome, and higher-level outcome tracking framework for all types of grants in restrictive

environments. This might include a view of short vs. medium-term timelines, as well as monitoring direct outcomes and higher-level outcomes for one-time and repeat grantees.

RECOMMENDATION 6: BST SHOULD SET PRIORITIES FOR RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

[SBU] BST should focus its Russian grantmaking on organizations that support the national environment for civil society and on local grants in the North Caucasus. With regard to the latter, BST should emphasize grants to support youth and human resources development, particularly grants that operate across borders. Where possible, BST should intensify efforts to help grantees to network with and learn from counterparts from Europe and Eurasia. [END SBU]

RECOMMENDATION FOR EQ3

RECOMMENDATION 7: BST SHOULD IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH USAID MISSIONS

BST should improve its direct communication with USAID missions and with the implementers of USAID civil society programs and decrease its reliance on USAID/Washington as an intermediary (while keeping the AOR in the loop). In particular, BST should initiate conversations early in its grant cycle and at periodic intervals during the year so missions and implementers can share their strategies and BST can discuss its grantmaking priorities, thereby facilitating better harmonization of BST and mission activities. BST should continue to work with missions on special calls for proposals in response to rapidly changing events, and it should continue to fill gaps in mission programming, particularly when mission funding to BST is available. BST representatives should travel to Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine at least annually to meet directly with mission officials, implementing partners, current grantees, and other CSOs. (See also Recommendation 12.)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQ4

RECOMMENDATION 8: BST SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE FLEXIBLE

BST should continue to show flexibility in its grantmaking, with simple application and reporting requirements and receptivity to reprogramming funds and extending deadlines in response to changed circumstances. BST should continue to require only a simple final report from grantees, but that report should include agreed-upon indicators that will allow BST to aggregate results. The trust should incorporate post-activity summaries of all completed grants in its annual reports, in addition to the pre-activity summaries of awarded grants that are already included.

RECOMMENDATION 9: BST SHOULD CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS FOR GRANTEE REPORTING

While keeping its reporting requirements simple, BST should include in those requirements clear explanations for grantees of output and outcome reporting. BST should work with grantees to develop simple indicators to capture project outcomes and higher-level outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQ5

RECOMMENDATION 10: BST SHOULD REFINE ITS LEVERAGE TRACKING SYSTEM

BST should bring together annual and multi-year leveraging data to ensure consistency and to institute leveraging benchmarks. As part of developing benchmarks and targets, BST should develop a more comprehensive reporting system with clear definitions and categories of leverage to capture the full spectrum of leveraging that is taking place.

RECOMMENDATION 11: BST SHOULD ARTICULATE A POLICY FOR REPEAT GRANTEES

BST should articulate and put in place a policy and decision-making process for deciding on repeat grantees and the funding and leveraging expectations connected to these grants. It should also consider the percentage of its grants that should be made to new grantees and ensure a corresponding balance in its funding profile. This should include an outreach policy for identifying and encouraging new grantees. Different guidelines may be appropriate for restrictive environment grantees.

RECOMMENDATION 12: BST SHOULD EXPAND ITS OUTREACH EFFORTS

In order to improve communication and expand its pool of grantees, BST should expand its outreach efforts, particularly in countries with USAID missions. In addition to meeting at regular intervals with USAID mission staff and USAID implementers to discuss harmonization of grant strategies (see Recommendation 7), BST staff should hold regular outreach events in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine for potential new grantees. BST should also expand its outreach in Bulgaria and other newer EU member states to obtain a better balance in its grant portfolio between EU members in the region.

RECOMMENDATION 13: BST SHOULD INCREASE SUPPORT FOR CSO ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

[SBU] BST support for dissemination of knowledge about alternative funding for Russian CSOs helped grantees and beneficiaries to improve their financial stability. BST should continue to expand these efforts in Russia to the extent possible. BST should also examine whether this approach would be applicable in Azerbaijan. [END SBU]

RECOMMENDATION 14: BST SHOULD ENHANCE AID TO GRANTEES TO LEVERAGE FUNDING

BST should institute systematic internal practices to provide guidance to grantees to seek alternative funding options from both domestic and international sources. BST should encourage grantees to seek domestic funding and should provide information about options like crowd-funding, voluntarism, in-kind contributions, social entrepreneurship, membership dues and corporate social responsibility. BST should provide information about other relevant international donors to grantees and should make referrals where appropriate. This could include periodically showcasing grantee work with other relevant donors, putting in place protocols for co-funding with other donors, and developing a list of donors relevant to specific issues and countries.

ANNEXES

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ANNEX 4: PERSONS INTERVIEWED
ANNEX 5: SURVEY ANALYSIS
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ANNEX I: CONCEPT NOTE



DRG LEARNING, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH (DRG-LER) II ACTIVITY

CONCEPT NOTE

TASKING N004

BLACK SEA TRUST FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

Contract No. GS-10F-0033M/7200AA18M00016

October 26, 2018

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DRG LEARNING, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH (DRG-LER) II ACTIVITY

TASKING N004

Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation

(October 2018)

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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

ACRONYMS

BST	The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation
BTD	Balkan Trust for Democracy
ET	Evaluation Team
FCR	Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GMF	German Marshall Fund
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LOE	Level of Effort
MELP	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan
MS	Monitoring Specialist
NORC	National Opinion Research Center (NORC at the University of Chicago)
PII	Personal Identifying Information
SI	Social Impact, Inc.
SOW	Statement of Work
SPPM	Strategic Planning and Performance Management
TRUSTS	Trusts for Uniting Societies in Transatlantic Space
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND

The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) was established in 2007 as a 10-year grantmaking initiative to promote regional cooperation, civil society, and democratic foundations in the wider Black Sea Region. BST was established with initial contributions from the German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the U.S., the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ministry of Defense of Latvia, the Government of Romania and USAID. Operating from GMF's Bucharest office, BST awards small grants to local organizations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The overall goals of BST are: (1) Building trust in and strengthening the performance of democratic institutions; (2) Improving citizen participation in the democratic process, and; (3) Fostering regional networks and cross-border cooperation. The Trust seeks to achieve these goals through three primary objectives: (1) Promoting civic participation; (2) Enhancing cross-border initiatives, and; (3) Improving eastern linkages.

In September 2018, USAID issued a new award to GMF to continue and expand on the previous work of BST in the region. In addition to grantmaking in the Black Sea region, the new award includes renewed support to the Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD) for cross-border civil society networking. The new award also includes two additional components: 1) Increasing the capacity and visibility of young civic and political leaders from the region and 2) Increasing the relevance of regional civil society development issues in policy making. Both of these additional components will reinforce the Trusts grantmaking initiatives and enhance its effectiveness

PURPOSE

The first purpose of the proposed evaluation is for an Evaluation Team (ET) from NORC partner Social Impact (SI) to assess the performance of BST grantmaking in achieving the agreement's core objectives, as well as BST's complementarity to mission bilateral programming. The evaluation also will study the comparative advantages of BST support over other grantmaking initiatives, as well as the extent to which BST has promoted long-term organizational sustainability and financial diversification. The results of the evaluation will inform the specific activities of the new program.

The second purpose of this project will be to strengthen the BST's monitoring capacity and the new program's monitoring, evaluation and learning plan (MELP). The ET will include a monitoring specialist who will work with BST staff to strengthen the MELP's components. This will include refining existing and/or recommending new indicators that effectively measure activity progress at both the outcome and output levels under the new award. Support will also be provided in establishing indicator baselines as well as in strengthening its data collection instruments and indicator tracking tables.

KEY STUDY QUESTIONS

Effectiveness of Grantmaking in Achieving Core BST Objectives:

- **Question 1** – Have some specific interventions or activities proven more effective in achieving their designated objective compared to others?

- **Question 2** – To what extent has BST’s assistance and operating model allowed for effective engagement in more restrictive environments?

Complementarity to Bilateral Programming and BST Comparative Advantage:

- **Question 3** – Were efforts to communicate and harmonize programs among grantee activities and bilateral (mission) funded activities pursued?
- **Question 4** – Given BST’s strengths (flexibility/ access to GMF network/ simplified reporting structures, etc.) are there types of programs or specific countries that BST has achieved a comparative advantage over other organizations or programs in delivering grant funding?

Promoting Long-Term Financial and Organizational Sustainability:

- **Question 5** – To what extent does BST encourage project and organizational leverage from a diverse range of sources? What steps does BST take to encourage its grantees to focus on and make progress on financial sustainability?

RESEARCH APPROACH

The ET will utilize a mixed-methods qualitative and quantitative approach to the BST evaluation that will primarily rely on three data collection methods: a desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs) and a survey of grantees over the life of the project. The ET’s methodology, data collection tools and analytical methods will target the five evaluation questions and will sub-divide its findings wherever appropriate for each question between BST’s three primary objectives. The MELP-support component will also utilize a desk review, as well as a set of facilitated training and feedback sessions with BST and USAID staff to analyze and strengthen targeted components of the new BST-successor project.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Desk Review: All team members will participate in the desk review of relevant documents. These will include the grant database, annual reports, previous evaluations, current/previous MELPs and monitoring materials; and other relevant materials. Key to this desk review will be developing an understanding of the political context and operating conditions for supported grantees in the BST countries over the life of project, which will enable the ET to better identify examples of grantee effectiveness within their respective country environments. The ET will utilize the desk review to ensure that it has sufficient understand of BST’s work in each of its supported countries but will also seek clarification from USAID on the extent of documents to be reviewed for the six BST countries the ET will be not be visiting as part of its fieldwork. Per USAID guidance, the ET will address evaluation questions 3, 4 and 5 solely through its review of the aforementioned materials if it believes these documents provide sufficient data for this purpose.

Key Informant Interviews: KIIs will be conducted with both current/previous grantees, as well as with BST program staff, Mission staff, non-USAID donors and other relevant stakeholders, such as members of the BST Advisory Board and/or its Grant Selection Committee. The ET will develop a KII

protocol with questions derived from the evaluation questions (in keeping with USAID priorities articulated in its SOW, however, the KIs will focus primarily on obtaining data to address the first and second questions, while the desk review will address all five questions).

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The ET will administer an online survey to as many of the 500-600 prior grantees as possible in all BST countries. The ET will request contact information for these organizations from BST.¹¹ SI anticipates a response rate of approximately 20 percent using this method. To improve chances of a response rate at the higher end of this range, the ET will request assistance from BST in the form of an email to grantee contacts under DRG-LER. The email would invite grantees to participate in the survey. A separate smaller-scale survey will be developed and sent to USAID staff who have been involved with implementation of BST grants.

The ET will develop a survey protocol for grantees designed to be completed in approximately 20-25 minutes. A separate protocol will be developed as indicated above for relevant USAID Mission staff in the BST countries, as well as USAID/Washington staff, who are linked to the implementation of BST.

The survey will entail a series of primarily close-ended questions that will seek to measure or assess each grantee's basic information (e.g., staffing, budget), the activities they conducted under the BST, the experience of working with the BST, the outcomes of grantees' activities, the perceived effectiveness of different activity types on achieving objectives, the effectiveness of grantee activities in restrictive environments, BST grantee activities' harmonization with other USAID programming, and the comparative advantage of BST funding, and grantees' abilities to leverage resources and strengthen their sustainability.

MELP DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Desk Review: The ET's monitoring specialist (MS) will participate in the desk review with other ET members, and will focus in particular on documents related to the "Trusts for Uniting Societies in Transatlantic Space" (TRUSTS) Activity that aims to continue and expand on the work of the BST and BTM in the region. Such documents will include the TRUSTS activity's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan, the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) for BST and BTM under the new activity, and the USAID/DRG Strategic Framework. The MS also will analyze BST's specific monitoring practices and tools under the previous BST project to understand how these have evolved from the previous project to the current TRUSTS activity.

Facilitation Sessions: From the desk review, the MS will prepare a set of training modules, exercises and handouts that emphasize specific areas of the MELP targeted for strengthening. These materials will align with USAID's current strategic planning and performance management (SPPM) policies, practices and trainings. The MS will then use these materials to conduct a set of training and feedback sessions with BST and USAID M&E, program management, and other relevant staff in Bucharest (a separate

¹¹ The ET initially anticipated conducting a phone-based survey employing a regional survey firm, but an Expression of Interest sent to regional firms by Social Impact failed to elicit sufficient responses within the proposed budget limits.

session may be held with BST- and USAID-involved staff at GMF headquarters or USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C. if deemed beneficial).

FIELDWORK

The ET will conduct fieldwork for the evaluation in Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania. Fieldwork in Georgia will also include meeting with BST grantee representatives from other countries. Details of the conference timing and grantees in attendance will be considered during work plan development.

Scope and Duration of Fieldwork:

- **Evaluation:** The ET will conduct KIIs on the ground with current and former BST grantee representatives and Mission staff. It is anticipated that the ET will spend approximately one week in each of the two countries but will adjust this schedule to align with Mission preferences, and data collection opportunities and constraints, such as conference timing. TL, DRG Spec (16-18 days).
- **MELP Support:** It is anticipated that the MS will conduct the aforementioned facilitation and training sessions in Bucharest for BST and USAID M&E, program management, and other relevant staff. It is anticipated that the MS will spend approximately one week in country.

Fieldwork Planning: The ET will work with USAID to develop a fieldwork schedule that maximizes the availability of interviewees within each country but will attempt to make Romania its last fieldwork country so it can conduct a final outbrief of its overall initial findings in Bucharest.

Protection of Survey and KII Participants: SI's Institutional Review Board (IRB) will review the survey and KII methodologies, informed consent scripts, and data collection tools to ensure that the evaluation adheres to ethical standards in research and the protection of human subjects participating in the survey or in KIIs for this evaluation. The ET will collect respondents' verbal informed consent prior to proceeding with the survey or interview. Furthermore, the ET will ensure data confidentiality in that only the ET will be privy to respondents' personal identifying information (PII). Raw data and PII will be stored on SI's SharePoint, a password protected and secure data management platform.

DATA ANALYSIS

During its fieldwork, the ET will hold internal working sessions to discuss emerging findings and categorize its analysis and recommendations by evaluation question. These discussions will inform the completion of an internal preliminary Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations (FCR) matrix, which will help ensure that the ET is collecting data that systematically and thoroughly addresses each evaluation question, identify gaps where additional clarification or analysis may be necessary, and ensure that each recommendation is supported by evidence.

For qualitative data, the ET will use content and comparative analyses to identify response categories and patterns and to identify emergent themes among qualitative data. The ET will use these themes to generate a coding structure and systematically code all qualitative data summary notes using a tally sheet structure in Microsoft Excel or qualitative data analysis software such as Dedoose. For quantitative data,

the ET will ensure that its survey results are analyzed through disaggregation and comparisons of the data by BST country, project objective, and project type. Additionally, the ET will triangulate all qualitative and quantitative data (triangulation is a data analysis strategy in which qualitative and quantitative data are first analyzed independently, in parallel, and then cross-verified for validity).

For example, for evaluation question 4, the ET will review as part of its desk study the fourth-year evaluation of BST, among other relevant materials. This evaluation surveyed respondents on whether there were other donors funding activities similar to the one(s) they were receiving funding for from BST, and if they answered affirmatively, to identify the organization(s). A similar question will be asked as part of both the ET’s survey of and its KIIs with BST grantees, thus enabling a comparative analysis between the past and current survey responses, as well as triangulation of responses between two different data collection sources (the survey and KIIs) to identify consistencies (or inconsistencies) in grantees’ answers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Source	Methodology	Data Analysis
<i>Evaluation Question 1: Have some specific interventions or activities proven more effective in achieving their designated objective compared to others?</i>		
(a) Annual reports, database grants, first-year and mid-term evaluations, cooperative agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk Review – e.g., of grants disaggregated by BST country and project objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Content analysis for identifying project successes and challenges ■ Qualitative analysis through thematic organization and coding
(b) BST grantees from Trust-supported countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ KIIs with BST grantees ■ Phone Survey with BST grantees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quantitative analysis through disaggregation and comparisons of survey data by BST country, project objective, and project type.
<i>Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has BST’s assistance and operating model allowed for effective engagement in more restrictive environments?</i>		
(a) Annual reports’ sections and database grants focusing on activities in restrictive environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk Review – e.g., of grants disaggregated by BST country and project objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Content analysis for identifying project successes and challenges ■ Qualitative analysis through thematic organization and coding
(b) BST grantees from Russia, Azerbaijan, other restrictive environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ KIIs with BST grantees, BST and USAID Mission staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quantitative analysis through disaggregation and comparisons of survey data by BST restrictive country, project objective, and project type.
(c) BST and USAID Mission staff from all BST countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Phone Survey with BST grantees, USAID Mission staff 	

Data Source	Methodology	Data Analysis
<i>Evaluation Question 3: Were efforts to communicate and harmonize programs among grantee activities and bilateral (mission) funded activities pursued?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Annual reports, database grants (b) USAID mission staff from all BST countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk Review – e.g., of examples of grantee activities ■ coordination with bilateral mission activities ■ KIIs with USAID Mission staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Qualitative analysis through thematic organization and coding
<i>Evaluation Question 4: Given BST's strengths (flexibility/ access to GMF network/ simplified reporting structures, etc.) are there types of programs or specific countries that BST has achieved a comparative advantage over other organizations or programs in delivering grant funding?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) BST annual reports, database grants; review of documents from non-BST projects (from both AID/other donors) (b) USAID mission staff from all BST countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk review of database grants disaggregated by country and project type ■ KIIs with Mission staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Content analysis for identifying project successes of BST versus non-BST programs ■ Comparative analysis of BST versus non-BST models and project types
<i>Evaluation Question 5: To what extent does BST encourage project and organizational leverage from a diverse range of sources? What steps does BST take to encourage its grantees to focus on and make progress on financial sustainability?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Database grants, grantee documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk review of database grants; annual reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Content analysis to identify examples of BST encouragement for grantees as part of grant/support

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

CONTACTING RELEVANT INDIVIDUALS

The ET may have difficulty reaching relevant individuals for the survey or KIIs who have worked for BST grantees or served as Mission staff over the ten-year life of the project, particularly in its earlier years. Grantee or Mission staff linked to BST grants may have moved onto different positions and contact information may no longer be accurate. The ET will address this issue by seeking USAID and BST support in identifying these individuals and obtaining the most accurate contact information possible. For grantees, the ET also will cast a wide net in its data collection, sending the survey to every single BST grantee and identifying multiple back-up individuals for KIIs who are representative of BST's different grantees focus countries, objectives and project types.

SELECTION BIAS

While random sampling will be used to the extent possible (e.g., by sending the survey to all grantees), there will nevertheless be the possibility of selection bias, especially with regard to selecting grantees for KIIs (e.g., the ET will need to purposively select grantees that are within a specific geographic location or

can meet within a specific timeframe to accommodate the team’s limited time and ability to travel within any of the fieldwork countries). While purposive sampling will be necessary in conducting KIIs, the ET will attempt to mitigate selection bias to some extent by choosing randomly from among available grantees able to meet within a specific location and timeframe. It will also select grantees for KIIs that cover as big a range of selection criteria as possible (e.g., in terms of different BST organizational and project types, BST goals, etc.).

RECALL BIAS

Survey and KII participant answers may be subject to recall bias related to past events or experiences. BST grantees, for example, may respond to questions posed by the ET with answers that blend their experiences into a composite memory. Additionally, depending on when grantees received BST funding, perceptions of events and their impact may change over time, and the ability to remember specific details may fade. The ET will mitigate this risk by asking informants about specific BST grants and by triangulating responses as described above from different sources (e.g. survey responses, desk review information on specific grants) to increase the validity of the evaluation findings.

RESPONSE BIAS

The ET’s evaluation of the BST may evoke response/desirability biases whereby participants may alter their answers due to explicit or implicit expectations. Grantees, for example, may believe that negative evaluation findings could affect their ability to obtain BST grants in the future. The ET will mitigate the risk of response bias by utilizing data triangulation to note discrepancies in responses through different data sources (desk review, survey) and preparing follow-up questions for informants and FGD participants that encourage more specific responses. The ET will also mitigate this risk by clearly noting, as part of the informed consent procedures, that they are independent of BST or USAID. The ET also will also deidentify personal information from grantees and individuals in its report.

TEAM STAFFING

Position	Responsibilities
Team Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall technical and management responsibility for the evaluation. ■ Provides subject matter and country context expertise. ■ Serves as primary technical liaison with BST & USAID ■ Oversees field data collection ■ Leads debriefings with BST, USAID and other stakeholders ■ Leads data analysis and development of all deliverables
Regional DRG Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Serves as subject-matter and regional expert. ■ Works with TL to draft all evaluation deliverables ■ Provides technical input into all evaluation tools ■ Conduct data collection/analysis in collaboration with the TL.

Position	Responsibilities
Mid-Level Evaluation Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supports Evaluation (65%): Desk Study, data collection tools, clean and code data, KII/survey analysis, report drafting); ■ Supports MELP Strengthening (35%): Materials review, supports revisions of current indicators/drafting of new model indicators, helps fill out PIRS [if needed]. ■ Supports development of survey instruments. ■ Launches and monitors survey progress from survey site
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall technical and management responsibility for all MELP-strengthening project deliverables ■ Designs and facilitates all MELP workshops with BST & other stakeholders ■ Revises MELP components as needed, including logic framework, data collection methods, PIRS and PITTs. ■ Drafts final summary report of MELP improvements made.
Local Specialists (Ukraine, Georgia, Romania)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide technical input into all evaluation tools and deliverables. ■ Conduct data collection in collaboration with the TL. ■ Contribute to data analysis and development of deliverables.
Logisticians/Interpreters (Ukraine, Georgia, Romania)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides administrative and logistical support—arrange local travel and lodging, process expense reports, etc. ■ Translate data collection protocol from English into local languages and provide interpretation from local language into English during interviews.
Online Survey Project Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall technical and management responsibility for survey. ■ Primary liaison with team on all survey inputs. ■ Leads development of survey instruments. ■ Oversees/supports analysis of all datasets and development of survey ■ Ensures accurate reporting and integration of survey data within overall evaluation deliverables – e.g., draft and final reports.
Survey Data Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supports design and development of survey instruments. ■ Leads cleaning and analysis of data ■ Leads development of all survey deliverables, including graphs, charts, data sheets, cross-tabulations, etc.

PROPOSED STAFFING

EVALUATION TEAM

John Lis, Team Leader. John Lis is a democracy and governance consultant with two decades of experience in the U.S. Congress and international parliamentary bodies. He led the 2014 USAID assessment of the parliamentary sector in the Kyrgyz Republic and he has evaluated USAID and State Department programs in Iraq, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Burma, Kenya, Ukraine, and the Middle East and North Africa. He made eight visits to the Kyrgyz Republic from 2010-2017 to train Members and staff of the Jogorku Kenesh on behalf of USAID, DFID, and the House Democracy Partnership. From 2003 to 2013, he was a Professional Staff Member for the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, including eight years as Staff Director of House Democracy Partnership, the peer-to-peer legislative strengthening initiative of the U.S. House of Representatives. He worked in Brussels from 1999 through 2002 as Director of the Defense and Security Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly. A former journalist, he has worked at the Congressional Budget Office and

Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Stanford University, a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University, and the Certificate of the Institute on East Central Europe at Columbia.

Kristie Evenson, Regional DRG Expert. Kristie Evenson has more than 20 years of experience in democratic governance and conflict mitigation issues as a researcher and practitioner, primarily in the West Balkans and Europe/Eurasia regions. Her specific evaluation experience focuses on civil society development; policy advocacy efforts; and democratic reform and conflict management interventions. She is experienced in working with USAID and most recently with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (DOS/CSO) on learning evaluations. She also has broad experience in working with the Open Society Foundation and other European and U.S. donors to implement and evaluate strategic programming efforts. She speaks Croatian (Serbo-Croatian) and is based in Croatia. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and international studies from Macalester College, a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University and a Doctor of Social Science degree from the University of Bristol.

Julie Younes, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Julie Younes has over a decade of international development experience, working in conflict and post-conflict contexts in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa. She specializes in program design, M&E, learning and capacity building, with expertise in the peacebuilding, community development, gender, youth development and education sectors. Prior to joining SI, Ms. Younes served as the Director of M&E for the peacebuilding nonprofit PeacePlayers International, where she led the development and implementation of PeacePlayers International's global M&E strategy, encompassing M&E system design, knowledge management, staff training, and use of data for organizational learning. In addition, she has supported the implementation of complex monitoring systems for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy program, a 4-year, \$150 million initiative designed to strengthen resilience and social cohesion in high-conflict contexts. In that role, she conducted several capacity building workshops for UNICEF staff and partners in Pakistan, Uganda, Yemen and Somalia. Ms. Younes holds a bachelor's degree in international studies and French from Dickinson College and a master's in international development from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. A native English speaker, she also speaks and works in French.

Leah Ghoston, Mid-Level Evaluation Specialist. Leah Ghoston brings eleven years of experience in research, coordination and implementation of international development activities. Her skills include qualitative methodological design and analysis, participatory approaches, formative research assessments, and management of global development projects and project evaluations throughout Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. She serves as an evaluation team member, designs evaluation tools including baseline and midline surveys and questionnaires, manages and participates in data collection, analysis, and reporting for USAID and Millennium Challenge Corporation evaluations. She also trains field staff and enumerators on data collection and engages in proposal writing. Ms. Ghoston holds a Master of Public Health in Health Education and Promotion from the University of the West Indies.

Solomiya Borshosh, Local Specialist, Ukraine. Solomiya Borshosh is a civils society and evaluation specialist with ten years of experience working with NGOs in Ukraine. She has served as a strategy

advisor for the Center for Democracy and Rule of Law working with a coalition of NGOs for reinforcement of reforms in Ukraine. She has also conducted evaluations in civil society and democracy sector for donors such as USAID, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Ms. Borshosh holds a Master of Arts in International Relations from Kings College in London, as well as a Master of Law from Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.

Konstantine Peradze, Local Specialist, Georgia. Konstantine Peradze brings a legal background to the development sector, where he has consulted on a range of topics including civil society, minority issues, migration, and conflict stabilization. He has worked as project coordinator for the Civil Society Support Program run by the Open Society Georgia Foundation, managing a USAID-funded project ('Advancing National Integration') and working closely with CSOs and advocacy groups. He has also served as an evaluator on multiple evaluation teams for projects funded by the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Mr. Peradze is fluent in English and Georgian, with professional proficiency in Russian. He is currently working towards a PhD in History/Middle Eastern Studies at Javakishvili State University in Tbilisi, Georgia and holds a Masters in International and Comparative Legal Studies from New York University in New York, United States.

Olga Elena Lupu, Local Specialist/Logistician, Romania. Olga Elena Lupu brings over a decade of research and development experience to serve as the local specialist and logistician for the ET's work in Romania. She has served as program coordinator for two USAID programs in Romania from 1997-2001 (legislative reform and agribusiness development). Recently, she has concentrated on qualitative research, coordinating social science research grants at the University College London and the European University Institute. Ms. Lupu holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University College London in the United Kingdom.

MANAGEMENT TEAM AND APPROACH

The management of the assessment team will be undertaken by SI under the direction of NORC. The SI team will follow USAID principles for DRG assessments while also ensuring adherence to SI's quality control processes and guidelines. This includes SI's proprietary EQUI® (Evaluation Quality, Use, and Impact) system, which enforces rigorous checklists and utilization-focused milestones for quality assurance (QA). During the team's work, the SI's management team will review each deliverable against a series of quality standard checklists and provide feedback. EQUI also has a Dynamic Management Dashboard so that the management team can track evaluation progress in real-time and provide assistance to field teams where needed. The Dashboard updates progress against all quality checkpoints and milestones (report due dates) and tracks the expenditure of level of effort (LOE, the primary driver of cost) to keep projects on target.

Dr. Daniel Sabet, DRG-LER II Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP). Daniel Sabet is a Technical Director at Social Impact, Inc. with more than 15 years of academic, assessment, performance evaluation, and impact evaluation research experience. Dr. Sabet is currently serving as Chief of Party for the USAID supported DRGLER I Project and Deputy Chief of Party for the DRGLER II follow-on, initiatives involving impact and performance evaluations, assessments, and ancillary studies and

knowledge dissemination activities aimed at advancing knowledge on the global advancement of DRG. Dr. Sabet is also a principal investigator on several long-term evaluations, including an evaluation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Compact in Malawi. He is the author of several books and publications including *Understanding Political Science Research Methods* (Routledge 2013, with Barakso and Schaffner), *Police Reform in Mexico* (Stanford University Press 2012; winner of the Herman A. Simon Book Award), and *Nonprofits and their Networks* (Arizona University Press 2008). Dr. Sabet obtained his PhD in Political Science from Indiana University and is a former Fulbright Fellow.

Adam Reisman, Project Director. Adam Reisman is a Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor at Social Impact, Inc. who possesses more than 14 years of experience in the evaluation, monitoring, design, and implementation of democracy and governance, stabilization, political and economic transition, capacity-building, and other country, regional and sector-based programs within the U.S. Department of State (DOS), USAID, the World Bank, and multiple implementing partners. Mr. Reisman's work history includes wide-ranging experience in all stages of evaluations, including developing methodologies (e.g., both quantitative and qualitative data collection and reporting techniques and/or rapid appraisal methods, such as key informant interviews, focus groups, surveys), work plans and data collection tools (e.g., interview/focus group questionnaires, Likert scales, both closed- and open-ended survey instruments); conducting on-the-ground data collection and analysis and local staff training; and drafting evaluation reports as well as presenting findings and recommendations to a range of audiences, including USAID Mission directors and other senior USG staff. He has led evaluations, served on evaluation teams, or provided on-the-ground M&E support to USAID and DOS programs in Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Georgia, Ukraine and Bolivia, among other countries. Mr. Reisman recently served in 2017 as the evaluation specialist on the final performance evaluation of USAID/Bangladesh's Democratic Participation and Reform Project. Mr. Reisman also has extensive, onsite M&E experience with the State Department, having served in technical leadership roles and provided monitoring, evaluation and training support while embedded with both the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and Bureau of Political-Military Affairs from 2014 to 2016. Mr. Reisman holds an M.A. in International Affairs from George Washington University and a BA with honors in Political Science from Union College.

Lisa Anderberg, Project Manager. Lisa Anderberg is a Program Associate at Social Impact, Inc. with more six years of professional experience in the international development sector managing, evaluating, implementing, and conducting research for a variety of programs and donors. She manages a diverse portfolio of performance evaluations for USAID, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), US Department of State, and Humanity United. Her role requires both project management and technical contributions, responsible for meeting contractual and financial requirements, managing personnel, providing technical quality assurance, and overall project management and client relations. Her portfolio consists of evaluations in a wide array of sectors, primary concentrating on democracy, rights, and governance (DRG), youth development, and gender. Before working at Social Impact, Ms. Anderberg worked for a variety of rural development projects and research assignments in Southeast Asia, focusing on the intersections of gender, youth, and agricultural development. Ms. Anderberg holds a master's degree in International Development and Social Change from Clark University and a Bachelor of Arts in Global Development Studies from Seattle Pacific University.

Charity N. Whitehead, Project Assistant. Charity N. Whitehead is a Program Assistant at Social Impact, Inc. who possesses four years of experience serving as research, administrative, logistical and budgetary support on domestic and international projects. She has supported a variety of international development projects for USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and other donors in South Africa, The Gambia, Uganda, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Benin, Liberia, Kenya, Peru, India, Nepal, Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Macedonia, and Kosovo. She regularly works with teams of international consultants and local implementing partners to ensure quality assurance to meet client standards. Ms. Whitehead is currently working on a master’s degree in International Development Studies from George Washington University and holds a bachelor’s degree in Africana Studies and Psychology from the University of Connecticut.

ANNEX 2: METHODOLOGY

The ET used an iterative, mixed-methods (both qualitative and quantitative) approach with three different data collection methods: (1) document review, (2) grantee survey, and (3) key informant interviews (KIIs).

The evaluation was undertaken in two phases. First the ET did a desk review of BST documents to gain a descriptive understanding of BST grantmaking during the past 11 years. Based on this, the ET drafted a semi-closed ended question survey for BST grantees from FY 2012-2018¹² and drafted KII guides for BST grantees, BST/GMF staff, and USAID and other donors. The ET chose to focus its interviews on FY 2012-2018 because BST in 2012 commissioned two local consultants to undertake a midterm evaluation of its first four years of activity. That evaluation, however, focused on the operation of the trust rather than the effectiveness of its grants. The midterm evaluation did draw a few conclusions that mirror those in this report, notably the advantage BST enjoys from flexible and responsive grantmaking. The midterm evaluation, however, did not offer findings that could be incorporated into this final evaluation.

Second, a link to the online survey was directly sent to all BST grantees on January 28. The survey was open until February 15. Sixty-nine grantees, or 38% of the 181 total grantees, responded to the survey for seven countries.

[SBU] There were separate survey and KII guides for grantees in Russia and Azerbaijan. The survey in Russian contained only close-ended questions. BST assisted SI to send the restrictive environment survey through encrypted e-mail, and it was open during the same dates as the online survey. Thirty-seven grantees, or 56% of the 70 grantees, responded for the two restrictive-environment countries. [END SBU]

Table 11: Grantees and Grants by Country

Country	Grantees	Grants
UA	32	42
GE	11	18
RO	17	55
MD	1	1
GE for RU	3	6
RU	6	21
AZ	2	6
RO for RU	3	8
Total	75	157

*UA: Ukraine, GE: Georgia, RO: Romania, MD: Moldova, RU: Russia, AZ: Azerbaijan

¹² The evaluation focus on the FY 2012-2018 time period was selected given that BST had a midterm evaluation for FY 2008-2011. Only after later document review, did the ET conclude that the mid-term evaluation was primarily descriptive in nature and provided little analytical value for understanding grant effectiveness.

In parallel, the ET traveled to the USAID selected countries of Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania from January 28 through February 14 to meet with all FY 2012-2018 grantees in these countries, USAID, BST staff, and other donors. Per the evaluation-sampling plan, ET contacted all BST grantees from the FY 2012-2018 three grant programs in the countries. Generally speaking, the ET had individual meetings with multi-year or multi-project grantees and had group interviews with one-time grantees. SI local consultants conducted phone interviews with grantees in Ukraine and Romania located outside the capitals or unable to meet with the ET, and a team member interviewed a Moldovan grantee in Washington. In total the ET met with 75 grantees. This included 14 grantees from or operating in restrictive environments

[SBU] Given security concerns, the ET also had individual meetings in Georgia, Romania and Washington with all grantees operating in restrictive environments, including six Russian and two Azerbaijani grantees in Georgia and one Russian in Washington. That number also included three Georgian and three Romanian organizations. [END SBU]

Table 12: Key Informant Interviews

Country	Interviews	Organizations	Individuals
Ukraine	32	35	44
Grantees	20	23	29
Grantee by Telephone	9	9	9
Donors/ Implementers	3	3	6
Georgia	22	25	29
Georgian Grantee	8	14	16
Russian Grantee	6	6	6
Azerbaijan Grantee	2	2	2
Donors/ Implementers	4	4	5
Romania	24	26	41
Grantees	22	25	33
Donors/ Implementer	4	1	8
Washington/Phone	12	12	13
Grantees	2	2	2
Donors/ Implementers	10	10	11
TOTALS	90	97	127

The ET endeavored to meet or speak with all USAID missions operating in BST countries and with USAID civil society implementers in these countries. Per USAID request, the ET also identified through USAID and other informant recommendations, key donors in the three countries or working in the region with a similar donor profile. The ET met with USAID missions in Ukraine and Georgia, and spoke by phone with missions in Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. In addition, the ET held two meetings in Washington with officials from the USAID Bureau on Europe and Eurasia. The ET also had meetings

with the USAID civil society implementers in Ukraine and Georgia. The ET met with GMF staff in Washington, conducted a phone interview with the BST representative for Azerbaijan, and interviewed BST staff in Romania. In addition, the ET met with an outside donor in Ukraine and two in Georgia, plus three USAID implementers by phone.

In total the ET held 90 interviews with 97 organizations and 127 individuals. Please see Annex 4 for a list of all meetings.

DATA ANALYSIS

During the fieldwork, the ET took an iterative approach to interpreting and synthesizing data through daily team meetings to share impressions and key points from interviews. This also included an ET working session towards the end of fieldwork with all three local consultants to develop preliminary findings and to inform the Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations (FCR) Matrix.

For analyzing data, ET used content and comparative analyses to identify response categories and patterns as well as emergent themes noted in the KIIs and the surveys. The ET also disaggregated survey through comparisons of the data by BST country and project program. The survey and KII guides included similar questions to allow for greater triangulation across KIIs, GIs, and the survey. This allowed the ET to triangulate all qualitative and quantitative data to identify points of convergence and divergence and the reasons behind these differences.

RECOMMENDATIONS: VALIDATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION

In order to ensure that the evaluation provides USAID/E&E with concise, actionable recommendations, the ET held a validation and operationalization session with USAID staff in March 2019 to review and revise draft recommendations based on the ET’s draft report findings and conclusion. This resulted in a finalized set of recommendations that USAID planned to use for program improvement.

LIMITATIONS AND BIASES

UNCLEAR AND INCOMPLETE BST REPORTING

The ET spent significant time reviewing BST grantee database information and annual reports to obtain grantee information. Individual grantee information was often incomplete, included under multiple names, or minimally presented. While BST responded to specific information requests, the ET often found itself not “knowing what it did not know” and not always able to request the information it needed before KIIs. This had several repercussions: the ET did not always identify grantees with multiple grants and had situations where such grantees were part of group interviews; the ET did not always know if a grantee had multiple grants for the same project as the grants were under a different organizational name; and the ET did not know the basic parameters of some restrictive environment grants before meeting with grantees. BST annual reports provide descriptive information of the grants, but not grant results, which meant that the ET did not receive information on grantee outputs/outcomes. In order to answer EQ1 and EQ2, therefore, the ET spent significant time during interviews mapping outputs and outcomes with grantees.

SELECTION BIAS

The ET used purposive sampling by attempting to interview all grantees from 2012 to 2018 from Ukraine, Georgia, and Romania and by sending the survey to all grantees in the seven countries for the years covered.

[SBU] However, given security considerations, such sampling was not possible for restrictive country grantees. BST selected KII grantees operating in restrictive environments and made provisions to bring these grantees to meet with the ET. The ET is grateful to BST's support in identifying grantees and ensuring that these meetings happened, and the ET confirmed that the grantees represent a variety of programming and geographic areas. To partially mitigate this, the survey for restrictive environment grantees was sent to a wider set of partners, and these responses were triangulated with restrictive environment KIIs. [END SBU]

RECALL BIAS

A number had multiple grants from before and around 2012, and it is likely that they responded to questions posed by the ET with answers that blended their experiences into a composite memory. The survey did not allow description of individual grants, and respondents in some cases likely summarized a combination of grant experiences. Additionally, depending on when grantees received BST funding, perceptions of events and their impact may change over time, and the ability to remember specific details may fade. The ET attempted to mitigate this risk by reviewing any grants from 2012-2018 individually with the grantee and by triangulating responses as described above from different sources (e.g. survey responses, desk review information on specific grants) to increase the validity of the evaluation findings.

RESPONSE BIAS

While the ET introduced itself as an external evaluation team from Social Impact and noted that all responses were confidential, a number of respondents may have considered the ET as part of BST/GMF. For those interested to continue partnering with BST, this may have influenced their responses. The ET worked to mitigate the risk of response bias in these cases by utilizing data triangulation to note discrepancies in responses through different data sources (desk review, survey) and prepared follow-up questions for informants that encouraged more specific responses.

ANNEX 3: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

BST DOCUMENTS

- 2007 Cooperative Agreement
- 2007 Program Description
- 2018 Program Description
- Annual Reports: 2008-2018
- BST EA Reports: 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, Final
- Year One Performance Evaluation
- Midterm Performance Evaluation

BALKAN TRUST FOR DEMOCRACY DOCUMENTS

- FY18 Final Report, plus annexes

TRUSTS PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

- Cooperative Agreement
- BST Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
- BTM Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan
- BST Application Form
- BST Narrative Report Form
- BST Financial Report Form
- BST Timeline

ANNEX 4: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

UKRAINE

Name	Organization
<i>Victoria Marchenko</i>	USAID
<i>Tatyana Siraya</i>	USAID
<i>Oksana Bedenko</i>	USAID
<i>Anna Novak</i>	USAID
<i>Natalia Lynnyk</i>	Committee of Voters of Ukraine
<i>Ramina Shut</i>	Open Ukraine Foundation
<i>Oksana Manchulenko</i>	Open Ukraine Foundation
<i>Oleksandra Skyba</i>	Institute Republica
<i>Vitaliy Hlizhynskyyi</i>	Institute Republica
<i>Sergiy Solodkyy</i>	New Europe Center
<i>Inna Pidluska</i>	Open Society Foundation (International Renaissance Foundation)
<i>Bohdan Maslych</i>	GURT Resource Center for NGO Development
<i>Kateryna Poliakova</i>	GURT Resource Center for NGO Development
<i>Viktor Galkin</i>	GURT Resource Center for NGO Development
<i>Oleksii Zhyvora</i>	Ukraine Crisis Media Center
<i>Tetiana Ogarkova</i>	Ukraine Crisis Media Center
<i>Liubov Tsybulska</i>	Ukraine Crisis Media Center
<i>Eugene Fomin</i>	Human Rights Foundation
<i>Roland Kovats</i>	Pact Inc.
<i>Gregory Frolov</i>	Russian Ukrainian Civil Dialogue
<i>Iryna Sushko</i>	Europe without Barriers
<i>Iryna Zamljana</i>	Institute of Mass Information
<i>Denis Chernikov</i>	Open Society Foundation NGO
<i>Liudmyla Kudina</i>	Youth Alternative
<i>Yaroslav Matyichuk</i>	Group for Strategic and Security studies
<i>Serhiy Herasymchuk</i>	Ukrainian Prism
<i>Levchenko Marta</i>	Chernivtsi Regional Charitable Organization “Future of Ukraine”
<i>Yana Glazova</i>	Foundation for promotion of self-organization
<i>Svitlana Smal</i>	Kherson City Association of Journalists “Pivden”
<i>Yuriy Didula</i>	Lviv Education Foundation
<i>Marta Suprun</i>	Prosvita Institute, Lviv Media Forum NGO

Name	Organization
<i>Oleksandr Kobzarev</i>	Municipal Institution City Institute
<i>Hanna Shelest</i>	Promotion of Intercultural Cooperation
<i>Solomia Savruk</i>	West Ukrainian Resource Centre
<i>Oleksandr Zaslavskiy</i>	Agency for Legislative Initiatives

GEORGIA

Name	Title	Organization
<i>Paata Gapridanshvili</i>	Director	Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS)
<i>Khatuna Ioseleiani</i>	Chief of Party	Open Society Foundation – Georgia
<i>Maia Nikolaishvili</i>	Project Manager	Europe House Georgia
<i>Teona Dalakishvili</i>	Director	Creative Development Center
<i>Tiko Tsomaia</i>	Director	Baltic to Black Sea Alliance-Georgia
<i>Rimma Gelenava</i>	Director	Non-Violence and Disarmament
<i>Tamar Karosanidze</i>	Chief of Party	East West Management
<i>David Aprasidze</i>	Manager	Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
<i>Ana Dvali</i>		International Chisinau University for Conflict Transformation
<i>Maka Tsnobiladze</i>		Building Bridges Through Films
<i>Zurab Bendianishvili</i>		South Caucasus Forum/Coalition for Internal Displacement Rights
<i>Alexander Rusetsky</i>		Independent Civil Minsk Process/ Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Georgian National Committee
<i>Ana Tsikhelashvili</i>		Threats of Russia's Soft and Hard Power Policy in Georgia
<i>Nino Zuriashvili</i>		Investigative Journalism Promoting Human Rights
<i>Otar Kantaria</i>	Executive Director	United Nations Association of Georgia
<i>Keti Emkhvari</i>		Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies

ROMANIA

Name	Title	Organization
<i>Alina Inayeh</i>	Director	Black Sea Trust
<i>Ana Aelenei</i>	Deputy Director	Black Sea Trust
<i>Sergiu Panainte</i>	Senior Program Officer	Black Sea Trust
<i>Tudor Cojocariu</i>	Program Officer	Black Sea Trust

Name	Title	Organization
<i>Mehriban Rahimli</i>	Consultant/ BST Rep for Azerbaijan and Georgia	Black Sea Trust
<i>Dinu Toderascu</i>	Program Officer	Black Sea Trust
<i>Maria Florea</i>	Program Officer	Black Sea Trust
<i>Mihnea Florea</i>	Program Assistant	Black Sea Trust
<i>Sorin Ionita</i>	Policy Analyst	Expert Forum Association
<i>Laura Stefan</i>	Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Coordinator	Expert Forum Association
<i>Nicoleta Popescu</i>	Financial Manager	Expert Forum Association
<i>Cristina Guseth</i>	Director	Freedom House Romania
<i>Oana Preda</i>	Executive Director	Resource Centre for Public Participation
<i>Rodica Burlacu</i>	Co-President	Aspire for Education
<i>Catalin Prisacariu</i>	Journalist, Board Member	Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism
<i>Radu Szucs</i>	Project Manager	Funky Citizens
<i>Laurentiu Garofeanu</i>	Film Director, Black Sea Diaries	Funky Citizens
<i>Cristina Lupu</i>	Executive Director	Centre for Independent Journalism
<i>Florin Buhuceanu</i>	Executive Director	Accept Association
<i>Angela Gramada</i>	President	Experts for Security and Global Affairs
<i>Karina Staicova</i>	President	Pamanteni NGO
<i>Tiberiu Pintilie</i>	Co-Founder	Adventure Diplomacy NGO
<i>Adrian Fako</i>	Executive President	Adventure Diplomacy NGO
<i>Rufin Zamfir</i>	Senior Editor	Foreign Policy Magazine
<i>Bianca Toma</i>	Programme Director, Romania and Moldova	Romanian Centre for European Policies
<i>Alexandru Damian</i>	Researcher	Romanian Centre for European Policies
<i>Oana Popescu</i>	Director	Global Focus
<i>Violeta Alexandru</i>	Director	Institute for Public Policy
<i>Iulian Chifu</i>	President	Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Centre
<i>Adriana Sauliuc</i>	Senior Researcher	Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Centre
<i>Mirela Apostol</i>	Public Programs Officer	Aspen Institute Romania
<i>Karina Cretu</i>	Intern	Aspen Institute Romania
<i>Marian Chiriac</i>	Country Director	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Romania
<i>Mihai Dragomir</i>	President	Mioritics Association

Name	Title	Organization
<i>Ovidiu Nahoi</i>	Editor in Chief	Radio France International
<i>Dan Dungaciu</i>	Director	Black Sea University Foundation and Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Romanian Academy
<i>Nicolae Tibrigan</i>	Researcher	Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Romanian Academy
<i>Ionut Sibian</i>	Executive Director	Foundation for Civil Society Development
<i>Stefan Cibian</i>	Director	Foundation for Youth Involvement
<i>Alexandra Coltos</i>	Programme Manager	Centre of Excellence in Planning

WASHINGTON

Name	Title	Organization
<i>Jonathan Katz</i>	Senior Resident Fellow	German Marshall Fund
<i>Nesti Gjeluçi</i>	Manager, Strategic Partnerships	German Marshall Fund
<i>John P. Alexander</i>	Program Assistant	German Marshall Fund
<i>Stephanie Flamenbaum</i>	Activity Manager	USAID
<i>Kraemer Lovelace</i>	Monitoring Country Progress Analyst	USAID
<i>Erin McCarthy</i>	Activity Manager	USAID
<i>Valeriu Paşa</i>	Project Manager	Watchdog.MD (Moldova)

TELEPHONE/SKYPE

Name	Title	Organization
<i>Scott DePies</i>	Manager, Democracy and Good Governance	USAID/Moldova
<i>Lusine Hakobyan</i>	Development Program Specialist	USAID/Armenia
<i>Anatol Belec</i>	Former Chief of Party, Moldova	Family Health International Development 360
<i>Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan</i>	Chief of Party	Eurasia Partnership Foundation (Armenia)
<i>Gabriela Svarovska</i>	Program Officer	Prague Civil Society Centre
<i>Natalia Bourjaily</i>	Vice President -Eurasia	The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
<i>Timur Onica</i>	Program Officer	European Endowment for Democracy
<i>Parviz Musayev</i>	Program Management Specialist	USAID/Azerbaijan
<i>Mehriban Rahimli</i>	Consultant/ BST Rep for Azerbaijan and Georgia	BSF/GMF

ANNEX 5: SURVEY DATA

SEVEN COUNTRY SURVEY (SURVEY MONKEY)

Q1. Where is your organization located?

<u>Country</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Armenia	8.70%	6
Bulgaria	1.45%	1
Georgia	13.04%	9
Moldova	13.04%	9
Romania	26.09%	18
Turkey	0.00%	0
Ukraine	33.33%	23
Other Central and Eastern Europe	2.90%	2
Western Europe	1.45%	1
North America	0.00%	0
	Answered	-
	Skipped	0

Q2. What years did your organization receive a grant from the Black Sea Trust? Please check all that apply.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
2008	4.92%	3
2009	9.84%	6
2010	8.20%	5
2011	11.48%	7
2012	19.67%	12
2013	13.11%	8
2014	21.31%	13
2015	24.59%	15
2016	27.87%	17
2017	27.87%	17
2018	59.02%	36
	Answered	-
	Skipped	8

Q3. What is the total amount that you have received from BST from all grants?

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Less than \$25,000	45.00%	27
\$25,000-\$50,000	23.33%	14
\$51,000-\$100,000	13.33%	8
\$101,000-\$250,000	15.00%	9
\$251,000- \$1 Million	3.33%	2
More than \$1 Million	0.00%	0
	Answered	-
	Skipped	9

Q4. Which BST programs provided you with grants? (Check all that apply)

<u>Program</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Civic Participation	24.14%	14
Confidence Building	25.86%	15
Cross-Border Initiatives	25.86%	15
Eastern Links	8.62%	5
Special Call for Proposals	18.97%	11
Don't know	27.59%	16
	Answered	58
	Skipped	11

Q5. Did your grant achieve its planned activities and outputs?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes	90.74%	49
Partially	9.26%	5
No	0.00%	0
	Answered	54
	Skipped	15

Q6. How do you know if your grant achieved its planned activities?

Answered 51
Skipped 18

Responses

We managed to achieve all the proposal indicators / results

Internal evaluation of all projects.

A post-evaluation of activities is carried out, as well as ongoing monitoring of progress

To confirm the results we used a series of monitoring tools and means of verification. Mainly: we collected reports from our regional partners (who implemented the activities within the project), we made monitoring visits, we verified and checked the news and articles in media about the project). Also, since we continue our cooperation now (in 2019) it means that the project results were sustainable.

The following activities were achieved.

[Activity descriptions redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Currently we are still implementing the project which have been granted, so it is too early to evaluate the final results. We are strictly following the proposed projects objectives and results, and implementing activities in order to achieve them.

We devised indicators for assessment and all targets were met

We fulfilled all conditions, coped with all tasks and achieved all goals. It is fashionable to see from our narrative and financial reports.

The forum consisting of two round tables and two lecture-master classes were held in Tbilisi.

As was envisaged by the project.

We evaluate the results on the background of the announced goals in the application. Not all the criteria are strictly measurable and clear-cut, but in most of the cases the projects have been delivering on the announced results.

Stated objectives were achieved:

the dialog between civil society representatives took place;

new initiatives were elaborated and launched;

the level of civil society participation in peace processes has increased

The fiscal mediation service was implemented in the Republic of Moldova, thanks to this project.

[Activity registration information redacted to protect respondent privacy.]

Projects approved and targets met

All of the project activities were implemented as provided in the proposals. No significant changes were made during the implementation of projects.

From regular monitorings and evaluations of project activities.

We've realised our goals. There were constant follow ups for each of the projects. Deliverables were usually far more important and visible than assumed in our projects.

M&E system

The activities reached all target audiences. The developed methodology is both valuable as a research tool; as well as easily replicable. The project team also established synergies with existing initiatives and submitted several new project proposals to other (incl. US and Canada-based) donors.

Monitoring site traffic through Google Analytics

This was a short-term, program with 2 major goals and specific activities, which were accomplished as planned.

There were KPI and they were achieved.

Our organization works only the first month in the project with the BST. Therefore, we have not yet achieved the expected results. In the future, we will evaluate the results using the estimated markers of our project.

All short-term activities and their results were measurable.

It essentially involved publishing a certain number of stories on a redesigned website, and all the stories were published on the upgraded platform, as planned

Monitoring plan was developed and used to provide continuous implementation feedback to project coordinator to identify actual or potential successes and problems as early as possible to facilitate timely adjustments to project operation.

Monitoring of implementation provided measurement of the real progress on the original plan of the project and the state of achievement of planned activities.

By indicators and analysis

Based on the initial set M&E framework, we were able to monitor and then to evaluate the results towards the planned outputs.

All the goals have been reached

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy] reduction of tolerance to bribery by 10%

Already, some of the future candidates for the deputies are working in the districts where they are going to be elected - distributing grocery kits, medicines, etc. How do you personally treat this?

Negatively, this is not a help, and I will not take bribery, and "help", and I will not vote for such a candidate. (2012 - 53%) (2014 - 63%)

The program is in progress. But we already have registered results for individual actions. Quantitative and qualitative analyzes are periodically implemented

I participated in all its planned activities.

We performed specific actions and obtained concrete results - analytical articles, online discussions, etc.

All results can be found in our report to BST.

Because the project's indicators where reached or more. And the impact of the projects was met.

First of all, the grant was supposed to cover specific parts of the budget, which it did. We highlighted it in our final report.

And the most important, the grannt was supposed to help us to conduct our main project - Kyiv Security Forum. And we did successfully conducted it.

- Results site articles

- Interest in interviews

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Through evaluation means

We have mentioned in the application the monitoring of the main indicators and the activities implemented within the project. We also had evaluation questionnaires for project beneficiaries.

We had specific KPI (as number of events in different cities, number of published materials, number of participants etc.) and we matched proposed indicators.

All of the activities were duly conducted and documented, in instances where initial locations for events were unavailable alternatives were presented to and accepted by the donor.

All planned outcomes and outputs reached. project received second year granting

All the goals and indicators achieved

We have a monitoring and evaluation department in team with specific indicators which help us to track success. They are both qualitative and quantitative, and short-term and long-term results-oriented;

The outcomes were two books, both very successful: [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

External feedback & evaluation

Evaluation, survey of beneficiaries, their questioning

Monitoring and evaluation plan

Feedback from stakeholders, own analysis

Conducted workshops.

Q7. Did the project achieve its outcome objectives, meaning did the project get the results it anticipated?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes	98.00%	49
No	2.00%	1
	Answered	50
	Skipped	19

Q8. Can you provide any examples of outcome objectives or results achieved?

Answered	49
Skipped	20

Responses

Quantitative results:

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Qualitative results:

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Improved capabilities of the end beneficiaries

Advocacy campaigns won, with specific results for their communities

Experiences meaningfully shared

Professional standards were strengthened in journalistic environment; journalists in practice began to uphold the standards of journalism and fight against the pressure on them by any party. For example, [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

So far, one of the main outcome on which the project team are working on is reducing the information gap and increasing the social knowledge shared by [the population] and stimulating the interest in reciprocal understanding and common projects.

Communicating regional expertise on specific topics to transatlantic partners; deepening regional expertise on essential topics; boosting regional cooperation; creating communities; building a pool of expertise around important matters

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

After the introduction of fiscal mediation, 8 fiscal conflicts between economic agents and the state, which lasted between 6-15 years

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Local CSO networks have been established in six regions of Ukraine.

The analysis and the practical piloting of the methodology contributed to the gained understanding on how to trace and counter anti-Western propaganda and fake news patterns in the media sector through fact-based instrument (the piloted methodology). Through the provision of verbal and written instructions, training at the Sofia event, and the methodology implementation, local partners are now capable of spreading the current project's methodology among grass roots and other youth organisations. The regional report, awareness activities and final event also served to initiate the process of debunking fake news and advancing media literacy in the long term. The methodology is invaluable for the improved policy approaches in recognizing and countering foreign media, economic or political influence. The public events, social media posts and e-mail communication helped for the increased the demand for evidence-based media articles and news.

Developed in the project site is actively used. Medical institutions have developed and implemented a strategy

The program was a study tour with a specific objective to provide first-hand information to politicians, academics, journalists from Europe and USA on the post-revolutionary developments in the political field of [the country]. The objective was achieved, as meetings and discussions were organized with multiple politicians and experts in [the country], representing diverse political interests and coalitions.

We organized international conference and had more participants than expected before.

One of the main goals of our project is to increase the number of youth leaders and initiative groups in our region.

We received feedback from people not related to the project, but those who are the target audience, which demonstrated the impact of the project's products.

We achieved our goal of consolidating our project as a fact-based and trusted source of information alternative to the government discourse

The project participants gradually came to the following conclusions:

- by combining their initiatives they are able to make much more
- all target groups should be engaged in the implementation of the initiatives, therefore, the idea of creating a multinational ethno-center enable the initiative group to attract attention of the whole community, all members of which should live and develop together.

Capacity Building of Women and youth trained and we have established a network of collaboration with the Mayor offices.

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

We published many articles, all our trainings beneficiaries use the new skills, we created a network of journalists in the region witch still working together

The project was aimed at voter bodybuilding. According to the study - tolerance decreased by 10% (2012 - 53%), 2014 (63%)

The program is still in process

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

8 analytical reports on the current realities and prospects of the conflict have been prepared according to the following scheme: one theme - two reports from authors. Each topic was covered from those perspectives that had been set in advance by the project director and the coordinator. Publication of reports and online media articles.

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

According to our survey almost all participants were happy with the schedule and many also managed to find partners for projects

An international expert networking platform with over 250 participants representing different spheres of expertize was established, the urgent topics of security were given proper media attention, the outcomes of the expert discussions were transformed into analytical report in [local] language which was sent to educational institutions, think tanks, governmental organizations, journalists, etc.

Number of CSOs involved in the exchange

We have a more informed public, the level of information about our outputs and research activities within different project increased among our beneficiaries. Also, we have involved young experts in our activities. As a result, now we have some of them as colleagues, working and researching post-soviet space.

Our main goal was to increase the level of awareness about [our country] in the western capitals, especially to make CSOs opinion be heard. And we see now the impact, our concerns and recommendations are taken in account, the analysis released by our CSOs are quoted in international reports etc..

One of the projects aimed at informing experts with security background in several countries, which was achieved. Moreover, this eventually lead to cross-reference to other specialists in the field and provided for future development of the project with serious coverage from media.

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Media content produced, coverage achieved

We engaged 153 young people into volunteering activities and educational program;
 We conducted a school of responsible citizenship which gave practical skills of project management to 42 volunteers;

We have rebuilt homes for 4 vulnerable families;

We have created three public spaces for community gatherings and cultural/educational activities;

Yes, correspondece to [radio] and two books sold out and the books had several editions.

Trained the amount of people we planned to train, got very good feedback from them

The growing interest of young people to participate in politics

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Independent expertise of draft bills influenced their consideration in the committees of Ukrainian Parliament and increased CSOs and business associations attention to the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement implementation

European parliament questioning of Moldovan government based on our briefings.

Q9. Did the activity benefit indirect beneficiaries or contribute to a desired shift in policy or the socio-political environment locally or nationally?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes, local change	24.53%	13
Yes, national change	20.75%	11
Yes, both local and national change	41.51%	22
No change	13.21%	7
Answered	-	53
Skipped	-	16

Q10. If yes, can you provide any examples of such change?

Answered 45

Responses

Most of the students which attended our summer schools are now involved in various ways to change the social, cultural and political situation. For instance, one of them started a similar event in [the region]. Others are very active in debates initiatives or active volunteers for various NGOs.

Mayors/local public administration units become more considerate towards proposal coming from groups of citizens.

Mayors/local administration units took local decisions (eg. refurbishing a park, banning the building of an illegal construction) that would not had taken without citizens advocating for

Journalists became more actively and effectively asserting their violated professional rights, as well as uniting for conducting more objective investigation of violations of their rights, despite often polar editorial policy. [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

We are expecting, to increase the interest of the local/national researchers and experts on the topic of [the region], and as a results, together producing analysis to support national policies in this domain.

[Threats] were acknowledged as key challenges by national authorities and cooperation with civil society and other stakeholders, as well as within civil society, has increased significantly following our efforts to this end [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]; the media, the general public, academia have been increasingly exposed to information and expertise on malign influence and propaganda, as well as instructed to identify it and deal with it

Local voters were better informed about political rivals and in the local mayoral elections the oligarchic forces and representatives of the ruling party did not win.

Journalists who participated in the forum later provided media coverage of the event as a positive platform for communication, reaching broader audiences than forum participants.

[The country] has been better reflected in the public discourse in the countries from which the participants came from. Also, the local officials and opinion leaders who met with the group during the study visit, understood better certain positions of the U.S. and EU, [one leader reflected after the visit].

During the implementation of the project and after its conclusion, participants of the dialogue held consultations and discussions within broad spectrum of civil societies of their respective countries. One of the positive outcomes of these discussions was the establishment, on the initiative of participants of this project, of the [new movement] which was recently announced in the media. Participants of the [city] conferences have decided to engage youth activists in this movement and embark upon a big program on the strengthening of peacemaking capacity among the younger generation.

Tax conflicts solved in several districts of the republic. Functional mediation service in the country.

[The organization] benefits the general public in [the country] by providing it with the fact-based analysis of statements of public figures and different public policy issues on a daily basis.

On the other hand, confidence-building activities contribute to strengthening links between [the countries'] stakeholders and therefore, serves to create a more conducive environment for cooperation. [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Local CSOs became more influential

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Another important change resulting from the project was based on the intensive engagement established with the partner organizations. [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Citizens have the opportunity to learn information about the city's medicine and ask questions on-line

We were discussing national and international security policy. Many insights and opinions were expressed and taken to consideration.

We believe that our activities, among other things, have strengthened the overall picture and have become guides to changing policies and attitudes towards internally displaced persons in the field. What resulted in multiple programs at the local and national levels. We do not sure that this is a direct result of the project's activities, but our project certainly became a part of the actions that were aimed at achieving it.

We believe we set the standard high for fact-checking and analysis journalism in [the country]. We received praise from fellow journalists and experts. Many of our articles were republished by national and local outlets.

The united initiative in two communities of [the region] resulted in creation of ethnographic multinational center to build mutual trust and joint actions

Change of men attitude towards the involvement of women in politics

Changes related to the new law on youth.

Our readers appreciate our articles by considering them more professional

The project was aimed at voter bodybuilding. According to the study - tolerance decreased by 10% (2012 - 53%, 2014 - 63%) [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

There were fewer violations [in the National Assembly] elections in 2018 than in the previous elections.

The [reference model] for consequence management and early recovery in the aftermath of natural and man-made disasters has led to: comprehensive reforms of the relevant national systems and inter-agency mechanisms in participating countries; enhanced regional cooperation in the GBSA both among national and local authorities, and among relevant academics and scientists; stronger involvement of and sounder responsibilities for the civil society, local communities and individual citizens.

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

The articles published online on migration for example. Or anti-propaganda. The steps are small, but still, we have to change the mindset of the people that react in some ways just because they are not informed.

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Better knowledge of the current situation in [the country]

No, not anymore. It's 8 years ago...

The conference boosted the work on the development of new marine doctrine for [the country] on local level it helped to develop expert thinking not only in [the capital] but outside the capital and to unite intellectual capital of the region with regard to defense and security issues

OGP targets adopted by the government

Our project did not intend the impact evaluation, but we think that the project helped to mitigate the following ideas, that supported many speech manipulations:

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Our main goal was to inform the [country] audience about [foreign policy] in the region. We did that and now, our policy papers are read not only in [the country]. Our voice is important in [the country's] public space and abroad.

Best example is the active position of diaspora communities that took part at our project. Especially it is seen during elections.

The projects implemented by our organization had mostly cross-national character. We believe that our activities led to a more serious understanding of security environment in the macro-region among foreign and national specialists. In particular our early activities showcasing [country] experience provided ground for the European discussion on security threats. Additionally, we held local events across the country, affecting how authorities perceive their position in maintaining national security.

[The country's] Embassies abroad, as well as MPs and governmental authorities, like Office of the Vice-Prime-Minister on European integration and Ministry of Information Policy are using our materials and printed journals in their work with foreign partners

In 2018, we observed an important outcome of our 4 year-long activities. The concept of volunteering camps has evolved into a national movement: teams that have been formed during previous years are now uniting and organizing camps by themselves [Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

These two projects provided more understanding of people about the regions [he/she] wrote about.

Many of those trained were involved in the public sector at a national/ local level

The growing interest of young people to participate in politics

A number of draft bills were postponed and amended due to expert position on their non-conformity with the EU law

[The country's] government held accountable in Brussels.

Q11. If your organization is in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, does your organization receive any grants or participate in any programs with the USAID Mission or U.S. Embassy in your home country?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes	40.00%	20
No	34.00%	17
My organization is not in one of these countries	26.00%	13
	Answered	50
	Skipped	19

Q12. Please compare your experience with BST to your experience with the USAID mission or U.S. Embassy

<u>Better Experience with BST</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Ease and clarity of application process	50.00%	10
Communication with implementing organization	21.05%	4
Flexibility during implementation	60.00%	12
Understanding of sector	26.32%	5
Reporting burden	63.16%	12
Timeliness of payments	25.00%	5
Capacity building	21.05%	4
Support in networking with other NGOs	15.00%	3

Q13. Does your organization receive any grants from other international donors, like the EU or embassies, or from private corporations or foundations?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes, receive grant from international donor	80.39%	41
Yes, receive grant from private corporation or foundation	11.76%	6
No, do not receive grants from these sources	7.84%	4
	Answered	51
	Skipped	18

Q14. If yes, please name these other grant sources.

Responses

Erste Bank of Romania (BCR), Transylvania Bank, Schneider, Medlife

CS Mott Foundation
Open Society Foundations
Network of European Foundations

Embassy of Netherlands in Ukraine, IF "Renaissance", Embassy of Germany in Ukraine, UNDP, Foundation "Eastern Europe", the British Embassy in Ukraine, European Union (European Commission), Embassy of Finland in Ukraine, IFES, NED

In 2012 the NGO "South" received (former name: KCAJ "Pivden") grants from:

National Endowment for Democracy
International Renaissance Foundation
US Embassy in Ukraine
The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA
Charitable Foundation for Development of Ukraine

Global Engagement Fund, GIZ (Germany), Open Society Institute

US Embassy in Moldova, NED, USAID through Institutions INTERNEWS and Promolex

UNESCO

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

``The Caucasian network of Cultural Observatories``

Arts and Culture Network Program - OSI, Open Society Institute, Budapest

1. Swedish International Development Agency; 2. PACT/USAID; 3. Ukraine - Jewish Encounter; 4. International Renaissance Foundation, 5. Open Society Foundation

Currently it is funded in an EU-funded program and Polish aid

GRASS's donors include following:

United Nations Development Programme;
USAID;
European Endowment for Democracy;
Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands in Georgia;
International Visegrad Fund;
Open Society Institute;
National Endowment for Democracy;
European Commission;
Lithuanian Embassy in Georgia;
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Swiss Cooperation Office Ukraine
International Renaissance Foundation

We receive grants from international donors - NATO PDD, East-East Soros Foundation, EU structural programs, Embassies in Bucharest, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, NATO SPS, Horizont 2020, research programs of the Romanian Agency, numerous private donors.

Mott, Monsanto, Geberit, Microsoft, SAP

European Commission, Norway Grants, United States Department of State, etc.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

European Commission
Government of Netherlands
UK Government

GIZ, SIDA, Polska pomoc

Open Society Foundation
PASOS

International Renaissance Foundation
SIDA

Our project received grants and contracts from Soros-Moldova Foundation (technically a Moldovan organization that is part of the international OSF network).

Embassy of Germany, Finland, Council of Europe, IOM

Nevipe Foundation established in Netherlands

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

UNFPA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Pestalozzi Foundation

Japanese Embassy in Armenia

The BEARR Trust

European Democracy Foundation

Alert Youth Fund

Freedom House

NED, EU, UK Embassy, German Embassy, Journalism Fund, Norwegian funds etc

EED, OSF, EU, UNDP in Armenia etc

NED, European Commission, European Parliament, US State Department, The Netherlands Embassy in Romania, Knight Foundation, Orange Foundation, OSIFE

NATO, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Pinchuk Foundation

The European Parliament and the European Commission

Danida, Sida and Norwegian government. Before 2011 also from Open Society

Hanns Seidel Foundation

European Commission, OSIFE, Netherlands Embassy, EEA Grants

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

OSF - Armenia

The British Embassy in Yerevan

Prague Civil Society Center

The U.S. Embassy in Armenia

Eurasia Partnership Foundation

etc.

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

[Activity information redacted to protect respondent privacy]

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum re-granting program.

European Endowment for Democracy, Embassy of Netherlands in Bucharest, EU.

Friedrich Ebert Foundation, International Renaissance Foundation, Erasmus+, UK Embassy, etc

European Commission
 Omidyar
 Embassy of France
 Tomson Foundation
 GIZ

European Commission, DG Home, DG Justice, OLAF, DG Regio, US Embassy

United Nations Development Programme, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, US Embassy to Moldova (3 grants), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment (UN Women), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, East Europe Foundation, European Endowment for Democracy, Norwegian Embassy, Eurasia Foundation (2 grants), National Endowment for Democracy, Balkan Trust for Democracy, etc.

EU

European Union

EED, EU

Q15. If you have received other grants, please compare your experience with BST grant to your experience with the other grant sources:

<u>Better Experience with BST</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Ease and clarity of application process	54.35%	25
Communication with implementing organization	36.96%	17
Flexibility during implementation	63.04%	29
Understanding of sector	39.13%	18
Reporting burden	57.78%	26
Timeliness of payments	44.44%	20
Capacity building	23.26%	10
Support in networking with other NGOs	37.78%	17

Q16. Has BST encouraged your organization to seek other funding sources for your programs?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes	65.31%	32
No	34.69%	17
Answered	-	49
Skipped	-	20

Q17. Has BST provided guidance and support to your organization on alternative funding sources?

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Yes	29.79%	14
No	70.21%	33
Answered	-	47
Skipped	-	22

Q18. What guidance and support has been most helpful?

Answered 13

Responses

We received several directions to improve our partnership mainly for content but also for funding opportunities. They sent us lists of similar organizations or events like us.

Help in identifying suited, reliable foreign/regional partners for our endeavours; coordination on how best to match project goals and structure; understanding of the problems at stake and environment

[Two organization] recommendations give us grants

Most helpful were the contacts provided and guidance in terms of which organization / person could be most interested in our ideas / work

All that gave us funding

BST has recommended our organization to different donors and organizations for partnership

Cooperation and co-financing projects, especially big projects, than we can find other partners too.

Alternative funding sources

On BST funding guidelines and policies

The guidance during the implementation process

Make a mission to study needs once a year. Reveal updated strategic directions once a year, make them narrower for each country in the region.

Networking - meetings with other NGOs with similar projects, both on national and international level.

Our program manager helped us to find partners for different grant calls.

Introductions to other donors.

Q19. What percentage of your budget was provided by BST in the year of your grant(s)?

<u>Percentage Range</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
0%	0%	0
1-25%	56%	28
26-50%	20%	10
51-75%	12%	6
76-99%	6%	3
100%	6%	3
	Answered	-
	Skipped	-
		50
		19

Q20. What percentage of your annual budget comes from donors?

<u>Percentage Range</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
0%	0%	0
1-25%	10%	5
26-50%	2%	1
51-75%	16%	8
76-99%	50%	25
100%	22%	11
	Answered	-
	Skipped	-
		50
		19

ANNEX 6: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD), KII INTRODUCTION

The moderator will utilize the following informed consent guide before each FGD or KII:

I. INTRODUCTION

The moderator should first introduce herself or himself, then welcome and thank participant(s) for being there. The moderator should then explain the purpose of the FGD or KII, how participants were selected, any potential benefits or risks to participating in the FGD or KII, and how long it will take.

II. GROUND RULES (FGD)

While the ground rules will vary depending on the FGD, they will generally include the following:

- Everyone is encouraged to share their ideas, and the FGD is stronger if everyone participates.
- There are no wrong answers, and everyone's perspective is equally valued.
- The ideas shared during the FGD should not be shared outside the FGD with non-participants to respect participants' privacy.
- Disagreements about ideas can be valuable and productive, but personal attacks will not be tolerated.

After establishing these ground rules, the moderator should ask if there are any questions or concerns participants have, and these issues should be addressed, and consensus reached as a group before moving on.

III. CONFIDENTIALITY

The moderator should clearly describe how the data collected will be used, including with whom it will be shared, and crucially, whether names or other personal or identifying information will be included with the data. The moderator must be honest about how the data will be used but should also reassure the participants that the data will be treated sensitively and that their privacy will be respected to the greatest degree possible given the needs and purposes of the evaluation.

For the purposes of the BST Final Evaluation, data obtained through FGDs and KIIs will be kept private and anonymous. Quantitative data results will be aggregated to demonstrate overall numbers – e.g., X% of FGD participants were women. The evaluation team will use collected qualitative data to help identify and support evidence of program successes (or failures), and may use non-attributed – i.e., anonymous – quotes from its FGDs, KIIs and the mini-surveys as part of this process. After providing this information, and to ensure the data collected are reliable, the moderator will explain that participation in the FGD or KII is entirely voluntary and that there are no consequences for declining to participate. **After informing participants of this information, the moderator should ask each member to confirm that they consent to participate.**

USAID/GMF

- (1) Looking at the three BST grant programs being evaluated – Civic Participation, Cross-Border Initiatives and Eastern Links – which do you believe have proven most effective, and why? (EQ1)
- (2) Which BST grantmaking priorities or objectives (enhancing citizen participation, good governance, and cooperation of civic groups) have proven most effective, and why? (EQ1)
- (3) In which countries have BST activities proven most effective, and why? (EQ1 – USAID/Washington and GMF only)
- (4) What common traits do you find among the most successful BST activities? (EQ1 – USAID Washington and GMF only)
- (5) To what extent has BST been able to engage with grantees in restrictive environments? (EQ2 – USAID/Washington, USAID/Country B and GMF only)
- (6) To what extent has BST been effective in adapting their model to work in restrictive environments? What has worked well, and what has been more challenging? (EQ2 – USAID/Washington, USAID/Country B and GMF only)
- (7) What efforts were taken to communicate and harmonize programming between BST and USAID bilateral missions? (EQ3)
- (8) How do BST Civic Participation grants complement the Mission’s bilateral programs? (EQ3)
- (9) What other international or private donors also provide civil society grants like BST? (EQ4)
- (10) Where does and doesn’t BST have a comparative advantage in delivering grant funding compared to other donors or implementers, in terms of both flexibility and administration? (EQ4)
- (11) How does BST encourage grantees to seek other funding sources for their programs? (EQ5)
- (12) How does BST help its grantees to become financially sustainable and what have been some of the results? (EQ5)

GRANTEES (UKRAINIAN, GEORGIAN AND ROMANIAN)

- (1) Did you complete your grant activity as you anticipated? Why or why not? (EQ1)
- (2) Did the project lead to the outcomes or effects that you anticipated for the direct beneficiaries? Why or why not? Can you give us an example of this?? (EQ1)
- (3) Did you notice any additional outcomes or effects from this work on the indirect beneficiaries or the broader community? Can you provide an example? (EQ1)
- (4) Were there any challenges in working with BST and in carrying out your project? If yes, can you provide examples? (EQ1)
- (5) Does your organization receive any grants or participate in any programs with the USAID Mission here? (EQ3)
- (6) Can you compare your experience with BST to your experience with USAID here? (EQ3)
- (7) Did BST and USAID here take any steps to coordinate or harmonize your programs with each? (EQ3)
- (8) Does your organization receive any grants from other international donors, like the EU or embassies, or from private corporations or foundations? Which? (EQ4)
- (9) How do you compare the BST grant to the other grants you receive; for example, the application process, support from the grantor or reporting requirements? (EQ4)
- (10) How has BST encouraged you to seek other funding sources for your programs? (EQ5)
- (11) How has BST helped you to become financially sustainable? How would describe your current level of financial sustainability? (EQ5)

[SBU] GRANTEES (RUSSIA AND AZERBAIJAN)

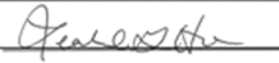
- (1) Tell us how you engaged with BST on your grant. What did BST do to ensure that you could cooperate effectively and carry out your project? (EQ2)
- (2) Could you please describe how the operating environment of your organization has changed since 2013, providing specific examples of difficulties where possible. (EQ2)
- (3) How has BST helped you overcome the difficulties that you just discussed? (EQ2)
- (4) What were the specific challenges you faced in working with BST and carrying out your project? (EQ2)
- (5) (For grantees from Russia) How would you compare your interaction with BST before and after July 2017?
- (6) (For grantee[s] from Azerbaijan who participated in both the regular BST and the restrictive-environment program) How would you compare your interaction with BST in the 2013-2015 grant program with your interaction in later grants? (EQ2)
- (7) Did you complete your grant activity as you anticipated? Why or why not? (EQ1)
- (8) Did the project lead to the outcomes or effects that you anticipated for the direct beneficiaries? Why or why not? Can you give us an example of this? (EQ1)
- (9) Did you notice any additional outcomes or effects from this work on the indirect beneficiaries or the broader community? Can you provide an example? (EQ1)
- (10) Does your organization receive any grants or participate in any programs with USAID? (EQ3 – Azerbaijan only)
- (11) Can you compare your experience with BST to your experience with USAID? (EQ3 – Azerbaijan only)
- (12) Did BST and USAID take any steps to coordinate or harmonize your programs with each other? (EQ3 – Azerbaijan only)
- (13) Does your organization receive any grants from other international donors, like the EU or embassies, or from private corporations or foundations? Which? (EQ4)
- (14) How do you compare the BST grant to the other grants you receive; for example, the application process, support from the grantor or reporting requirements? (EQ4)
- (15) How has BST encouraged you to seek other funding sources for your programs? (EQ5)
- (16) How has BST helped you to become more financially secure? How would describe your current level of financial security? (EQ5) [END SBU]

ANNEX 7: CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Leah A. Ghoston
Title	Evaluation Specialist
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	GS-10F-003M/7200AA18M00016
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Black Sea Trust – AID-OAA-A-17-00032
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	


I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	

Disclosure of Conflict of interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Solomiya Borshosh
Title	Local Evaluation Specialist
Organization	Social Impact, Inc.
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	GS-10F-003M/7200AA18M00016
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Black Sea Trust, AID-OAA-A-17-00032
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.


Signature	
Date	01/09/2019

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Julie Younes
Title	Senior Technical Specialist, Performance Evaluation
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	GS-10F-0033M/7200AA18M00016
USAID Project(s) Evaluated <i>(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Black Sea Trust – AID-OAA-A-17-00032
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> 2. <i>Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.</i> 3. <i>Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.</i> 4. <i>Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> 5. <i>Current or previous work experience with an</i> 	

<p><i>organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</i></p>	
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I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	January 8, 2019

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	John Lis
Title	Consultant
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	GS-10F-0033M/7200AA18M00016
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation Cooperative Agreements REE-A-00-07099941-00 and AID-OAA-A-17-00032
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

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Signature	
Date	January 8, 2019

unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.

- Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
- Preconceived ideas toward individual's, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Laura Olszowka
Title	Local Research Coordinator
Organization	Local Impact
Evaluation Position?	Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	GS-I0F-0033M/7200AA18M00016
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Black Sea Trust (CST) - AIG - OIA - 4 - 14 - 02032
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you answered above, I disclose the following facts:
 Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
- Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization (s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
- Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
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- Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
- Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

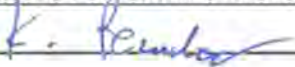
I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Date	9/01/2019

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Konstantine Peradze
Title	Local Evaluation Specialist
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	GS-10F-003M/7200AA18M00016
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Black Sea Trust – AID-OAA-A-17-00032
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation 	

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Signature	
Date	1/8/2019

ANNEX 8: EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS

John Lis, Team Leader. John Lis is a democracy and governance consultant with two decades of experience in the U.S. Congress and international parliamentary bodies. He led the 2017 evaluation of USAID’s Responsible Accountable Democratic Assembly Program in Ukraine, and he has evaluated USAID and State Department programs in Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Kenya, Bangladesh, Burma, Iraq, and the Middle East and North Africa. He made four visits to Georgia and Ukraine from 2005 to 2011 to train parliamentary staff on behalf of the House Democracy Partnership. From 2003 to 2013, he was a Professional Staff Member for the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, including eight years as Staff Director of House Democracy Partnership, the peer-to-peer legislative strengthening initiative of the U.S. House of Representatives. He worked in Brussels from 1999 through 2002 as Director of the Defense and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, where he worked with the parliaments of all nine BST countries and organized meetings in the Romanian and Ukrainian parliaments. He worked previously at the Congressional Budget Office and Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Lis holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Stanford University and a master’s degree in international affairs from Columbia University, where he earned the Certificate of the Institute on East Central Europe.

Kristie Evenson, Regional Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Expert.

Kristie Evenson has more than 20 years of experience in democratic governance and conflict mitigation issues as a researcher and practitioner, primarily in the West Balkans and Europe/Eurasia regions. Her specific evaluation experience focuses on civil society development; policy advocacy efforts; and democratic reform and conflict management interventions. She is experienced in working with USAID and most recently with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (DOS/CSO) on learning evaluations. She also has broad experience in working with the Open Society Foundation and other European and U.S. donors to implement and evaluate strategic programming efforts. She speaks Croatian (Serbo-Croatian) and is based in Croatia. She holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and international studies from Macalester College, a master’s degree in international affairs from Columbia University and a Doctor of Social Science degree from the University of Bristol.

Julie Younes, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Julie Younes has over a decade of international development experience, working in conflict and post-conflict contexts in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa. She specializes in program design, M&E, learning and capacity building, with expertise in the peacebuilding, community development, gender, youth development and education sectors. Prior to joining Social Impact, Ms. Younes served as the Director of M&E for the peacebuilding nonprofit PeacePlayers International, where she led the development and implementation of PeacePlayers International’s global M&E strategy, encompassing M&E system design, knowledge management, staff training, and use of data for organizational learning. In addition, she has supported the implementation of complex monitoring systems for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy program, a 4-year, \$150 million initiative designed to strengthen resilience and social cohesion in high-conflict contexts. In that role, she conducted several capacity building workshops for UNICEF staff and partners in Pakistan, Uganda, Yemen and Somalia. Ms. Younes holds a bachelor’s degree in international studies and French from Dickinson College and a master’s in

international development from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. A native English speaker, she also speaks and works in French.

Leah Ghoston, Mid-Level Evaluation Specialist. Leah Ghoston brings eleven years of experience in research, coordination and implementation of international development activities. Her skills include qualitative methodological design and analysis, participatory approaches, formative research assessments, and management of global development projects and project evaluations throughout Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. She serves as an evaluation team member, designs evaluation tools including baseline and midline surveys and questionnaires, manages and participates in data collection, analysis, and reporting for USAID and the Millen midterm, final and ex-post evaluations. She also trains field staff and enumerators on data collection and engages in proposal writing. Ms. Ghoston holds a Master of Public Health in Health Education and Promotion from the University of the West Indies.

Solomiya Borshosh, Local Specialist, Ukraine. Solomiya Borshosh is a civil society and evaluation specialist with ten years of experience working with NGOs in Ukraine. She has served as a strategy advisor for the Center for Democracy and Rule of Law working with a coalition of NGOs for reinforcement of reforms in Ukraine. She has also conducted evaluations in civil society and democracy sector for donors such as USAID, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Ms. Borshosh holds a Master of Arts in International Relations from Kings College in London, as well as a Master of Law from Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.

Konstantine Peradze, Local Specialist, Georgia. Konstantine Peradze brings a legal background to the development sector, where he has consulted on a range of topics including civil society, minority issues, migration, and conflict stabilization. He has worked as project coordinator for the Civil Society Support Program run by the Open Society Georgia Foundation, managing a USAID-funded project ('Advancing National Integration') and working closely with CSOs and advocacy groups. He has also served as an evaluator on multiple evaluation teams for projects funded by the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Mr. Peradze is currently working towards a PhD in History/Middle Eastern Studies at Javakhishvili State University in Tbilisi, Georgia and holds a master's degree in International and Comparative Legal Studies from New York University in New York, United States.

Olga Elena Lupu, Local Specialist/Logistician, Romania. Olga Elena Lupu brings over a decade of research and development experience to serve as the local specialist and logistician for the ET's work in Romania. She has served as program coordinator for two USAID programs in Romania from 1997-2001 (legislative reform and agribusiness development). Recently, she has concentrated on qualitative research, coordinating social science research grants at the University College London and the European University Institute. Ms. Lupu holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University College London in the United Kingdom.

ANNEX 9: HIGHER-LEVEL OUTCOMES OF BST GRANTS

CHANGES TO LOCAL OR REGIONAL POLICY

- Participants in an Institute Republica project in Ukraine blocked an improper amalgamation of their local communities and helped to establish a successful process;
- Training for bloggers by the Human Rights Foundation in Ukraine facilitated a participant's article that led to installation of a mammography machine in a local hospital;
- The Institute of Mass Information's online platform for publication of local journalists' investigations halted the corrupt decisions of a number of public entities in Ukraine, including fraudulent procurements.
- Georgian Reform Associates produced an online fact-checking platform that made local politicians more responsible and accountable, including a presidential candidate who acknowledged lying to the public after fact-checking was published;
- Studio Monitor journalists in Georgia investigated and publicized three cases that resulted in local action, including a legislative change regulating installation of gas tanks in vehicles, rebid of a rigged defense ministry repair contract, and resolution of a solid-waste disposal issue.

INFLUENCING NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKERS

- The Ukraine Crisis Media Center briefed U.S. Department of Defense officials at the Pentagon about its analysis of Russian propaganda about Western militaries, including video highlighting reports on Russian domestic television news programs about a supposed NATO military threat to Russia;
- Ukrainian Prism's research on organizations who work on the resilience to the Russian disinformation was provided to the Ukrainian Ministry of Information Policy and was also used by IRI and the EU Eastern Partnership;
- Studies published by the Centre for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning on informational warfare are used as textbooks in the National Defense Institute in Romania, have been discussed by intelligence representatives at NATO headquarters, and informed the national security and informational warfare strategies of Moldova;
- Reports on Russian policy issues resulting from dedicated workshops organized by Romania's Experts for Security and Global Affairs were used by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Center for Strategic and International Studies;

- Moldovan grantee Watchdog.MD conducted pre-election briefings in Bucharest, Brussels, London and Washington, meeting with U.S. government officials and providing background to the European Parliament to inform questions at its hearing on Moldova.

CHANGES TO NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

- Discussions at the Lviv Security Forum contributed to the adoption of legislation by the Ukrainian Parliament on the reintegration of occupied territories and improved understanding of Ukrainian security by European and North American experts;
- Recommendations by the Georgia's Liberal Academy resulted in changes to the Georgia-Turkey trade agreement incorporating a liberal approach on customs and trade;
- The Romanian National Anticorruption Department implemented a project on corruption with its Ukrainian counterpart as a result of work on regional cooperation and stability in the judiciary sector by the Romanian Centre for European Policies;
- Research by Romania's Global Focus prompted the Romanian foreign ministry to use its 2019 presidency of the European Council to develop an EU department of strategic communication that includes southeastern and eastern regions
- Work done in Romania by ACCEPT Association to fight religion-based homophobia and discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender groups was presented by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion at the United Nations Geneva and increased awareness of the need for a strategy at the European Union level by the European Commission;
- Discussion at a forum organized by the Foundation for Civil Society Development in Romania helped improve legislation on child protection in Balkan countries and influenced the Black Sea Strategy presented at the European Parliament.

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Washington, D.C. 20004