The Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) is in charge of managing the implementation of the CSF II. The TAU operates from its self-contained office, located in the vicinity of the office of the Delegation of the EU to Ethiopia in Bole, Addis Ababa.

The TAU acts as an interface between NGOs, the Government of Ethiopia and the Delegation of the EU to Ethiopia providing services and advice on the basis of linkage and interactions with civil society actors in Ethiopia. It assists the EU Delegation in the daily administration of the Fund and monitoring the implementation of the Programme and its supported projects. Further, the TAU coordinates research, conducts consultations and awareness raising activities, and organizes workshops and other events.
The Civil Society Fund II (CSF II), launched in October 2012, is a joint initiative of the European Union (EU) and the Government of Ethiopia under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) with a total budget of 12 million Euro.

The CSF was designed in response to relevant provisions of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that calls for an increased involvement and participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the development process, not only as implementers of service delivery projects, but also as partners in dialogue and policy elaboration. Accordingly, the programme aims to strengthen the capacity, enhance participation and contributions of Non-State Actors (NSAs) to governance and development in Ethiopia.

The Fund primarily provides grants, but also technical capacity building support through training, coaching and fund management assistance. These activities aim to increase the human, material and technical capacity of NSAs and to improve their operation, sustainability and accountability.

The grant making focuses on Ethiopian NSAs engaged in non-profit areas via a competitive ‘Calls for Proposals (CfP)’ mechanism. Grants are provided for implementation during a maximum period of 2 years and with an average funding size of 175,000 Euro.

The CSF II is a continuation of a similar programme (CSF I) implemented from 2006 to 2012 under the 9th EDF. The CSF I provided grants through several CfPs to implement projects in the governance and capacity building areas and non-grant support by a Technical Assistance Unit in the form of training, mentoring and coaching to CSOs. Over the six years a total of 56 grant contracts have been implemented and over 400 CSOs throughout Ethiopia directly benefited from the capacity building activities provided by the Programme.

“...The CSF resources have significantly enhanced FSS’ institutional capacity by building its material infrastructure and outreach activities. They have also contributed to maintaining a critical factor for sustainability especially under the new regulatory regime.”

From the final report of Forum for Social Studies (FSS) CSF I project - 2011

The CSF resources were used to organise dialogue and dissemination workshops, publication of various policy and research documents and purchase of office equipment. In addition the project contributed to expanding the information and constituency base of FSS and its visibility. FSS is a policy research and capacity strengthening institution providing forum for informed public debate on development issues.

The CSF I projects portfolio showed diverse CSO interventions including enhancement of CSO capacity building and facilitation of networking within civil society, consultations and dialogue with government structures, supporting women and children facing abuse, campaigning for holistic women’s empowerment and popularising alternative dispute resolution.

The Government of Ethiopia and the EU maintain a very close relationship with representatives of CSOs. At cooperation level this is highlighted by the implementation of the Civil Society Fund I, which has been positively evaluated and is regarded as a benchmark for similar initiatives by the stakeholders as highly successful, often referred as a “flagship” of EU-Ethiopia cooperation.

Similar to the previous programme, CSF II enjoys the status of “domestic funding” with regard to the CSO law, hence remains accessible to CSOs working on key governance areas.