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Contents of the Final Report

INTRODUCTION	4
Project management.....	5
Project Outcome.....	5
MARKET ANALYSIS	6
Lessons learnt throughout this process	6
LOCALISATION AND IT DEVELOPMENT.....	9
Striving for a European standard in CSO reporting.....	9
GuideStar Common Technology Platform development.....	11
Infrastructure.....	13
DEPLOYMENT PLAN.....	14
Data acquisition	14
Data availability	14
National and central development	15
Business plan	16
GUIDESTAR EUROPE - Next Steps.....	18
The key points of the regional deployment model.....	18
GuideStar Europe: Possible Next Steps, a country by country analysis.....	19
Appendix	21

Executive summary

The GuideStar Europe project (April 2007 - October 2008) has assessed the feasibility of implementing GuideStar systems for four European countries, as well as for a pan-European portal site. Coordinated by GuideStar International, the project has included partners with a track record in voluntary sector research, capacity building, and transparency development: these partners are DZI and Maecenata Institute (Germany); NIOK (Hungary); CBF (Netherlands); and ICTR (Ireland). The project was co-funded by the European Commission under its eTEN programme, and also by government, private sector and philanthropy sources in several member countries.

This is the final report that concludes the results of the project, which the Consortium believes to have been successful.

Project Outcome

- **Market analyses** were conducted in the first months of the project; they identified a substantial need for the service, especially at the country level. This exercise also established that information sourced from government filings is limited in most EU member states, but that CSOs themselves are willing to provide additional information via online self-reporting.
- **Localisation, User and Market Testing** using GuideStar International's Common Technology Platform, have together informed the adaptation of technology, data acquisition, and stakeholder engagement strategies.
- **Deployment plans**, focusing on data acquisition and business operations, have been drafted in each of the four countries as well as for the pan-European initiative. All four country programmes intend to continue to work towards the launch of a GuideStar service in their respective countries. These nationally owned, operated and governed systems will serve as the backbone of an eventual European search facility. GuideStar International will continue to develop additional country-based programmes along with the pan-European system.
- **Continuous stakeholder engagement and communications** initiated during the project will continue to be an important element in promoting CSO transparency and accountability, and will determine the role of GuideStar in enabling a more robust third sector across Europe.

The **project output** is a plan to use the GuideStar system as a service tool for tackling the issue of CSO transparency in Europe, with particular focus on Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands and Ireland.

Expected milestones of deployment

2009-2010: At least six country GuideStars operating in Europe, catalogue data from an additional five countries and feasibility processes in place in another six countries.

The critical European audience is aware of the initiative and uses it in its national and regional development.

2013: All European CSOs are present in GuideStar Europe, which, collectively through national websites and the pan-European website, serves 10 million European users per year.

INTRODUCTION

A GuideStar system provides an online, highly searchable catalogue of reports on the civil society organisations (CSOs) operating in a country. These systems enable organisations to communicate their work effectively and easily to national and international audiences. The GuideStar Europe project (April 2007 - October 2008) has assessed the feasibility of implementing GuideStar systems for four European countries, as well as for a pan-European portal site. Coordinated by GuideStar International, the project has included partners with a track record in voluntary sector research, capacity building, and transparency development: these partners are DZI and Maecenata Institute (Germany); NIOK (Hungary); CBF (Netherlands); and ICTR (Ireland). The project was co-funded by the European Commission under its eTEN programme, and also by government, private sector and philanthropy sources in several member countries.

The objective of this report is to conclude the results of the project, with the contribution of all Consortium members as well as external expertise.

The GuideStar Europe initiative is modelled on pre-existing GuideStar systems in the United Kingdom and the US. GuideStar US (www.guidestar.org) is the de facto public database for the US non-profit sector, with information on over 1.5 million charities. GuideStar UK (www.guidestar.org.uk) was set up in 2003 to provide a single, easily accessible source of detailed information about every charity and voluntary organisation in England and Wales. The base information about each charity is provided from the frequently updated records of the Charity Commission - and subsequently maintained by the charities themselves using online editing tools that we provide.

GuideStar International (GSI), earlier known as Civil Society Systems, is the coordinator of the GuideStar Europe project; its principle founded both GuideStar US and GuideStar UK. GSI has built and tested a Common Technology Platform to enable the implementation of additional GuideStars in Europe and around the globe. The Platform consists of a Global Reporting Framework that allows organisations to report directly on their work; it has a Search and Display Interface that allows web users to identify specific CSOs in the database and to view information and documents of interest to them. The Platform is customisable with respect to language, look-and-feel, static content and database fields. It is designed to serve multiple country GuideStar sites from a centrally hosted platform, therefore significantly decreasing the start-up and ongoing costs and technological risks that would normally be associated with a web-based service of this type.

The GuideStar Europe project has involved countries with a variety of preconditions regarding the legal status of their sectors, their transparency requirements and the existence and availability of relevant data. This variation has meant it has been necessary to consider the most appropriate strategies for both implementing each individual country system, and also for deploying the European-wide service. What unites the Consortium is

its shared vision that a comprehensive trans-European database, founded on a common standard for reporting, would significantly improve the transparency of the non-profit sector across Europe. It is anticipated that the proposed solution would provide each country with a customisable system that also preserves the critical common features, thereby providing cross-border benefits and significant cost savings. GuideStar Europe will also serve as a vital resource to CSOs themselves. Regardless of their size or location, CSOs will have a free forum through which to explain their work to their peers, grant makers, governmental agencies and the general public. This information will support efficient user interactions, foster a more effective and generous distribution of society's resources, enable effective benchmarking and provide an open platform upon which intermediaries can build a wide range of services.

Project management

The GuideStar Europe project (April 2007 - October 2008) had been planned to assess the feasibility of implementing GuideStar systems for four European countries, as well as for a pan-European portal site. However, it has done more than that. It has also generated discourse on a very acute issue in Europe, namely, the transparency of civil society organisations.

Coordinated by GuideStar International, the project has been structured to:

- conduct market analysis
- prepare customisation of the reporting framework
- test amongst civil society organisations and other stakeholders
- monitor, evaluate and adopt the lessons learnt
- draft deployment plans (with specific focus on data acquisition and business plans) for future implementation
- communicate the experience among, and beyond, the project stakeholders (by participating at different events, running a project website www.guidestareurope.org and generating news on the issue of transparency and the value of the GuideStar system).
- provide a framework to be used for the purpose of peer learning¹ and policy discussion, by participating institutions and experts, as well as by GuideStar UK.

Project Outcome

- **Market analyses** were conducted in the first months of the project; they identified a substantial need for the service, especially at the country level. This exercise also established that information sourced from government filings is limited in most EU member states, but that CSOs themselves are willing to provide additional information via online self-reporting.
- **Localisation, User and Market Testing** using GuideStar International's Common Technology Platform, have together informed the adaptation of technology, data acquisition, and stakeholder engagement strategies.

¹ the workshops during the project (in Budapest, London, Dublin, Amsterdam and the mid term review in Brussels) as well as bilateral peer support and the discussion groups and phone calls have all assisted the exchange of information and the development process for and beyond the project.

- **Deployment plans**, focusing on data acquisition and business operations, have been drafted in each of the four countries as well as for the pan-European initiative. All four country programmes intend to continue to work towards the launch of a GuideStar service in their respective countries. These nationally owned, operated and governed systems will serve as the backbone of an eventual European search facility. GuideStar International will continue to develop additional country-based programmes along with the pan-European system.
- **Continuous stakeholder engagement and communications** initiated during the project will continue to be an important element in promoting CSO transparency and accountability, and will determine the role of GuideStar in enabling a more robust third sector across Europe.

The **project output** is a plan to use the GuideStar system as a service tool for tackling the issue of CSO transparency in Europe, with particular focus on Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands and Ireland.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The market analysis was undertaken firstly to determine if a GuideStar system would be appropriate and workable in these new countries. Secondly, the project gathered requirements for, and tested the feasibility of, developing a standardised service that would allow web users to perform a common search, offering comprehensive information on national CSOs through individual country websites and for European CSOs through the GuideStar Europe portal. Also within the market analysis, Consortium members have analysed and reported on the nature of civil society in each participating country. This analysis has outlined the regulatory and legal framework for CSOs; identified available infrastructure services; mapped potential data sources; and identified relevant stakeholders and competitors. This information has informed the national and European deployment plans of the current GuideStar Europe project and it is anticipated that this information will also be useful to future development generations.

Lessons learnt throughout this process

The lessons learnt in this process can be summarised by the following points:

Clear and present need

The GuideStar Europe project has identified a clear need for a CSO database to serve the four countries of the Consortium, as well as Europe as a whole. The project has also received strong feedback that only a reliable database can adequately serve the current stakeholder interest.

Serious stakeholding interests

While doing the market research, a substantial amount of market education has taken place as the service is so new that often its potential use needed to be elaborated. The GuideStar Europe proposition is appealing to a variety of audiences; however, so far, its

potential benefits are easier to visualise at the country level. The information provided by GuideStar has a large and varied audience. The general public can easily identify organisations, increasing the growth of, and public confidence in, philanthropy. CSOs are able to increase their visibility and therefore establish their transparency and accountability. Through GuideStar they can also identify funders and establish relationships regionally and globally. Donors are able to identify organisations whose work matches their own values and objectives. Government agencies can identify, track and compare CSOs and promote improved reporting and best practices. A GuideStar system will also help streamline the acquisition of this information whilst reducing the reporting burden for CSOs. Researchers and policy makers can track trends in philanthropy and civic action. Third party service providers, such as online giving systems and accreditation agencies, use GuideStar information to identify and compare CSOs and to build further services for the sector and general public.

Scope of the database: civil society organisations

The fact that the European Union has no common terminology for the CSO sector has made conceptualising the scope of the project difficult in terms of deciding which entities should be included in the database. Member states of the EU have very different conceptual models, very different legal understandings and also various different legal definitions and entities working simultaneously. The project has decided to use the term “civil society”; it is reasoned that this broad term will have some resonance to each country. Although this decision limits the GuideStar Europe project by preventing scientific comparisons across Europe, it does reflect on the national differences while not imposing any external/foreign concept on any country. It is also hoped that using the broad concept of civil society will enforce the trend towards the (re)discovery of this civil society, underlining the social fabric of society with emphasis on social trust and civic engagement.

Legal definitions vary

As a result of unresolved conceptual and definitional differences; legal entities take very different forms in different EU countries. A major limitation identified by the project is the fact that EU laws effecting civil society have not yet been harmonised. This means that the development of the project will only be possible if steps are taken on a country-by-country basis, with a thorough examination of the legal context in each given country.

Limited amount of publicly available information on CSOs

Currently, it is hard to find comprehensive, legitimate information on CSOs in most of the countries in Europe. The snapshot synopsis of our research has provided assurance that the legitimate population of CSOs can be established in almost all of the EU member states, based on files of different national state institutions. While it remains the case that there is a lack of legitimate information, the project will focus on providing a flexible framework that encompasses the different legal systems of Europe, while still taking a country-by-country approach.

Mandatory reports are scarce

It has been discovered that CSO reporting is rarely mandatory under law and therefore

such reports are scarcely made available (the main exception is reports that are submitted for taxation purposes, but these are not public). Unfortunately this means that, beyond registry level data, there is a very limited amount of validated reporting-based information available from legitimate sources in Europe (with the minimal exception of countries like Denmark, Ireland and the U.K.). Even when reports are available, they are paper-based and are not in a standard format. This lack of consistent reporting is a potential limitation of the GuideStar Europe project.

Databases containing self-reported information are available

Self-reported, voluntary databases of CSOs are available on an issue-specific or geographic basis but are limited in their validity, scope and in terms of how up-to-date they are. While identifying the benefits of the GuideStar model, it was acknowledged that other issue-specific directories do exist, although most of the data is collected for a single purpose (e.g. mailings, research, membership), without any attempt to assure the legitimacy of participating entities.

Legally feasible proposition

A European GuideStar database, providing an online, highly searchable catalogue of basic data on CSOs in one or more of the participating countries in Europe, is legally feasible. However, freedom of information, data protection and copyright laws in member states determine the extent to which data can be obtained and used by GuideStar.

Needed: Social investor

A large number of both users and beneficiaries have been reviewed; the biggest issue identified among stakeholders was who should pay for the development of the service. It is not clear if sufficient financial “investment” could be generated at a country as well as a European level to fund the start-up phase of the project. However, there is also potential interest regarding services that could be built upon a GuideStar system at the country and regional level.

No real competitors

Analysis of related initiatives at European level has identified great potential for collaboration, rather than competition. At a country level the picture is similar, i.e. user groups already exist and there are numerous opportunities for collaboration. Even at a country level, the market is limited to databases of voluntarily disclosed information which do not aim to be comprehensive or to establish the legitimate population of the given sector. The role of the state varies from country to country, but it is generally true that the sharing of resources for the public good is likely to be the dominating character of future relationships.

Certain attributes are a must in order to be a market leader CSO database

Based on stakeholder analysis, the following attributes have been identified as the most important attributes of a market leading CSO database: inclusivity, legitimate CSO population, direct reporting by CSOs, accuracy and timeliness, neutrality, transparency, global reporting elements, and that it must be accessible to GSI’s cross-border search.

Not all of the desired attributes can be achieved across Europe

Our research has proved that not all of the above attributes can be satisfied to a full extent in each of the participating countries. The role of the data acquisition and business plan is to present creative solutions to challenges identified, in order to satisfy stakeholder needs.

Growth potential

On a macroeconomic level, the social economy in Europe is important in both human and economic terms (e.g. the sector employs over 11 million people, which is equivalent to 6.7% of the wage-earning population of the EU). The rise of the sector is being recognised in political and legal circles, both national and European. Equally high on the public agenda is the issue of transparency and accountability across all sectors of society; therefore CSO transparency should be a top policy issue in Europe, and certain steps should be taken to make this happen. It is anticipated that these trends will influence the sector and its policy makers in Europe, placing transparency firmly on the agenda. The GuideStar service is of course already a proven tool in the UK and the deployment plan is available for a GuideStar Europe service.

The lessons learned in the market analysis for the GuideStar Europe project have been fully utilised in the compilation of deployment plans for the four countries, as well as a wider plan for GuideStar Europe.

LOCALISATION AND IT DEVELOPMENT

The system being tested was the first full version of GSI's Common Technology Platform, built with a set of assumptions informed mostly by GSI executives' experiences in building and operating GuideStar US and GuideStar UK. The focus was primarily on the functionality of the system, rather than on its display and user experience features. GSI was concerned with the data itself more than its delivery, but the testing has indicated that the latter is equally, if not more, important to the success of the system.

To facilitate the testing phase of the project, GSI provided support material to Consortium members and collaborated with them in local design. It was agreed in the Consortium that this exercise should aim to identify the most suitable ways of getting enough useful input for the development. Assumptions about the necessary degree of customisation per country also proved to be off target. Adaptability to specific country environments, both in terms of the look-and-feel and the specific data fields required, is critical to ensure partner confidence in the system and its ultimate public usability. Unless the platform can offer exactly what countries need, then the danger is that it will not be considered worth adopting.

Striving for a European standard in CSO reporting

Much of the user testing and documentation throughout the project involved defining the reporting framework and fields that would be most appropriate in each country. Part of GSI's mission is to increase the quality of CSO reporting by encouraging CSOs to view

the planning/reporting cycle as a central part of any successful organisation. The basic outline of the Global Reporting Framework (GRF) reflects the key elements of non-profit practice (including mission, programmes, governance and finance). As GSI entered the eTEN project, the expectation was that the GSI framework could be adapted to meet the needs of every country. This assumption was proven to be true but customisation required significantly more effort than had been expected. This is partly a technical challenge, partly due to the complexity of reporting, and partly the lack of standardised reports or a CSO transparency culture.

Needs that the system could not fully accommodate were documented throughout the project and have already informed a development policy for the CSO Reporting Framework, as well as the next version of the Common Technology Platform. Given the importance of GRF data, we felt it imperative that the GRF be much more flexible in accommodating country-level localisation requirements, and indeed in meeting the needs of potentially paying grantmaker customers.

While GSI will continue to adapt the reporting framework to meet country-specific requirements, it is also supportive of agenda of introducing minimum standards of CSO reporting both across Europe and globally. We believe that advancing this agenda will further streamline global philanthropy and make the searching, comparison, and engagement of CSOs much easier for all users of the system.

At this time, the GRF is comprised of three main sections: the basic report, which is common across all countries and at the central portal; the advanced report, which can be modified per country; and finally, the country-unique report that captures those fields that are found only in one country. Whenever data is available from a valid source it is used in the framework.

We envision a GuideStar Alliance reporting framework committee to guide the evolution of the reporting framework, including common classification, translation, and presentation standards.

The user testing indicated a broad consensus on the value of a GuideStar system and on the willingness of CSOs to provide information for such a database. In many ways, these reactions were the most critical ones. Technical issues can be addressed, and these test results have been incorporated into the next version of the platform. Had users not recognised the basic value of such a system, we would have been forced to re-evaluate our basic objectives.

Thankfully, we concluded that the main issues faced were technical, and have addressed those issues in the development of the next version of the CTP. This new version offers a much more robust tool for managing content and layout, ultimate customisation of both narrative and financial fields, and a more intuitive and easy-to-use reporting framework for CSOs.

GuideStar Common Technology Platform development

GuideStar Common Technology Platform

The Global Common Technology Platform is a Web-based reporting and presentation framework developed by GuideStar International. We believe that the ability to present a low cost, turn-key technology solution to new member countries is critical, if we are to meet our objectives for a rapid rollout of the GuideStar concept around the world. Version 3 of the Common Technology Platform (CTPv3) is a culmination of three years of work, with the latest edition combining the best features from the proven GuideStar UK platform and the former Common Technology Platform v1.

With the success of the GuideStar UK website and with many years of extensive research and development, we have created a system that is flexible and robust enough to power GuideStar programmes across the world in a variety of languages and reporting schemas. In essence, CTPv3 is a highly advanced technological masterpiece, informed by institutions worldwide and built around national reporting frameworks; it will now provide a solid foundation for member countries to build a national GuideStar portal. The platform is adaptable for any language, and site administrators will have direct control over static display content on their sites. Upon deployment, users will be able to both input data through a simple yet robust interface and search the database using various search criteria. Search results and display pages will present both narrative and financial information on the activities of specific CSOs.

Comparison of Features

Features	CTP v1	GSUK	CTP v3
Accessibility	×	Basic (Same site)	Full (Separate site)
Analytics - Profile Statistics	×	Cumalitive	Individual Charity Visits
API (allow for bolt-ons)	×	×	✓
Charting	×	×	Finances, Reports & Statistics
Content Management	✓	×	Advanced
Customisable theme	✓	×	✓Comprehensive
Database Schema	GRF v1 (2006)	GSUK	GRF + (2008)
- Flexible	×	×	Highly
- Max no of Databases	1	1	Unlimited
- Backward Compatibility	×	×	✓
Optimised for Web	×	×	✓Personalised
Internationalisation (i18n) & Localisation		×	✓ Full
Mobile Compatibility	×	Incompatible	Full (Separate Site)
Search Engine - Intelligent Clustering	×	✓	✓

Basic Description of main Features

a. Powerful Search Engine

A Powerful Search Engine delivering intelligent results, with a customisable algorithm.

b. Optimised for Search Engines

Architected to perform well with Search Engines, critical for delivering a successful service.

c. Multilingual capability

A single website will now have the ability to display content in multiple languages.

d. Fully Internationalised and Localised

Enabling all languages, character sets, currencies and labels to be display in the correct localised format.

e. Content Management System

Will allow the site administrator to update content of the website live without the need of a Web Developer.

f. Mobile Interface

Low bandwidth version for mobile devices, enabling users to get the information they need on the run.

g. Site and Profile Analytics

An impact report on how the site and CSO's profile is performing.

h. Charting (Graphical Depiction of Data)

Financial data will be shown in graphical format to provide a comprehensive breakdown of the CSO's finances.

i. Visually Impaired Interface

Non-graphical, low bandwidth version to accommodate the Visually Impaired and low bandwidth connections.

j. Application Program Interface

Allow a link between the platform and external Bolt-Ons either developed by/for the Partner or a known source (i.e. Tags, Widgets, RSS / XML feeds, Maps)

Infrastructure

The centralised platform includes all necessary network infrastructure and database development. This configuration will host individual member Web sites, including a data capture interface, search engine, and display pages. GSI will provide all hosting and maintenance services for the network infrastructure and database.

The system is adaptable to any language, and individual countries will have direct control over static display content on their sites. Upon deployment, users will be able to both input data through a simple yet robust interface and search the database using various

search criteria. Search results and display pages will present both narrative and financial information on the activities of specific CSOs.

Important attributes of the new GuideStar Common Technology Platform Service include: **portant attributes of the new Common Technology Platform Service include**

- Core system configuration and reporting and presentation frameworks flexible enough to satisfy the differing needs of many countries
- Only a marginal amount of customisation will be required to deploy it effectively in a new country
- Hosting and maintenance will be conducted from a central service centre, greatly reducing these costs on a per-country basis
- Copies of the system can be produced to port to the servers of any members upon their request.

GuideStar International is confident that the problems documented in the user tests have been addressed and the new version will enable the "GuideStar movement" to reach its goals related to country GuideStar deployment and launch of a European portal in the months to come.

DEPLOYMENT PLAN

During the GuideStar Europe project critical background information has been generated to inform the national and European deployment plans, as well as to inform future development generations.

Data acquisition

As there is no single source of information about CSOs available in Europe, data acquisition for the GuideStar Europe project can only take place on a country-by-country basis. Registry and reporting data was researched in the four consortium countries as well as in the rest of the EU.

Data availability

In those countries that have similar legal and regulatory environments to the UK, where regular reporting is mandatory for CSOs and the reports are considered to be public documents, one can expect government filings to form the basis of the database. Ireland is a good example of such a case. The project in Ireland was able to identify a source of extensive annual government reporting documents that were mandatorily provided, publicly available and rich in content. For this reason, the Irish system will automatically include data on more than 5,000 organisations; this data is renewed annually and serves as the only source such data on the Internet within Ireland. Unfortunately, this level of accessible, public data on CSOs does not exist in the other three Consortium countries. Additional research conducted by GSI suggests that the UK and Irish CSO reporting

systems are rare and therefore a similar data acquisition strategy is hardly replicable in Europe. At the same time, user testing and the competitive environment in all countries indicated that establishing the validity of the GuideStar database records, or at least establishing the legitimate population of the database, would be an attribute critical to its success.

So, from the standpoint of establishing validity, we considered a basic government register as the next most desirable source on which to build each system. The Netherlands and Hungary each took a slightly different approach based upon the opportunities and constraints in each country, but both are able to start with an established legitimate population of CSOs derived from a basic state list, from which to build their systems. This may only be registry level information, but it was felt that this would be of sufficient value to users. It could serve as a basic due diligence step for donors, grantmakers, volunteers, regulators, etc., while also establishing a basic valid record to which CSOs could contribute additional information directly online.

In addition to the four countries involved in the project, GSI also surveyed the remaining EU member states to determine the level of valid state data available and therefore gauge the “GuideStar Readiness” of each country. From the snapshot synopsis of findings and prospects for data availability in the 27 EU countries, it can be asserted that in most of the countries in Europe, the legitimate population of CSOs can be established by obtaining valid, legitimate, sources of data (registry or reporting). It should be noted however, that the content and size of these datasets vary across the different countries.

The project has concluded that as long as the legitimate CSO population can be established, additional information can be obtained from third parties (e.g. the well established database of CBF) or generated through self reporting (especially at the national level), to enrich the information base of the database.

National and central development

Ideally, each member state would have an institution that is responsible for running a country GuideStar and feeding in best quality data into the European system. Over the course of the eTEN project, GSI’s viewpoint on the role of country partners enabling the cross-border search has changed, mainly due to the various environments encountered. Country GuideStar programmes will always be a key focus of our activities, but we have also identified an alternative to building the cross-border service. In those countries that have accessible registry data but lack the other components necessary to undertake a full-scale GuideStar development programme, we have adopted an interim strategy for acquiring and displaying that data in the central database. These two strategies can run in parallel and are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs:

Country Programmes: the building blocks of GuideStar Europe

As a result of our positive eTEN experience, GSI has determined that a GuideStar development programme should always be launched in partnership with a well-

established institutional partner, preferably one whose own mission overlaps with that of GSI. Once a feasible data acquisition strategy has been defined, GSI will continue its support in the process of developing GuideStar systems and ultimately, launching a GuideStar system. This will lead to membership in the GuideStar Alliance; this trade association provides many benefits to its members, but also ensures that GSI has access to the data within each member's database in order to power the GuideStar Europe cross-border search, details of which will be discussed later in this document. The true value of the partnership lies in the direct relationship with the in-country stakeholders that generate up-to-date data and facilitate the use of this information to serve the stakeholders in the given country.

The GuideStar Europe Catalogue: A new approach to data acquisition

To further our work both in developing a European network of national GuideStar systems, and in providing a European cross-border search portal, GSI is exploring the potential for gathering directory level information from government registries throughout Europe for inclusion in the central system. If we are able to accumulate reasonable directory level data from a significant number of countries, they could be presented in the central website without having an in-country institution for GuideStar.

Should CSO reports from national GuideStars and directory level data from the "catalogue" program coexist within a common European search, it will be incumbent upon GSI to ensure that such a service clearly distinguishes CSO reports with respect to either their national GuideStar or 'catalogue-only' provenance.

Business plan

With respect to GuideStar Europe's institutional attainments, by 2013, we expect to

- operate the de facto official reporting and information Web service supporting European civil society;
- maintain registry level data records from all of Europe's CSOs
- attract extensive information by 30% of European CSOs who choose to report directly online to GuideStar Europe;
- achieve significant progress in the effort to help pan-European bodies, national government offices, substantial private funders and principal CSO advocacy agencies harmonise their reporting requirement/standards/practices;
- have launched fully functioning and sustainable national GuideStars in at least 8 countries;
- have demonstrated GuideStar Europe's public utility sufficiently to ensure sustainable support for its ongoing operations from a combination of EC, national and private sources; and
- take advantage of GuideStar Europe's success as a model for development of CSO information services in other regions of the world.

Objectives for 2009-10

For 2009 the main focus of our work will be to complete the development and launch of the four eTEN country programmes. Each country has its own challenges, mostly involving funding, but all are hopeful that domestic funding can be secured to ensure the

continuation of the programme. In addition to securing launches in these four countries, the programme's objectives for 2009-2010 will be:

- Initiating development programmes in an additional four countries. Based on initial "GuideStar Readiness" mapping, likely candidates include Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, and Malta, with Poland, Romania and Slovenia also representing opportunities for development. GSI will remain flexible to consider working with countries that express serious commitment and have the necessary characteristics for GuideStar Readiness even if they may not be present on the GSI priority list.
- Launch at least two GuideStar Web sites from new development programmes.
- Acquire catalogue information from government sources from at least five countries. Focus will be given to Denmark, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
- Secure funding to cover central programme expenditures, from a combination of sources including private and state grants, social enterprise investment, and fees for services.
- Enable thousands of CSOs to report via the GRF to GuideStar Europe.
- Support users of the site and reach half a million in two years time.

The chart below summarises the business plan of the GuideStar Europe central operations

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Active Country Development Programs	2	2	2	2	2
Launched Country GuideStars	4	6	7	8	10
Catalogue Countries	2	5	8	11	15
Total Database Records	300 000	450 000	600 000	750 000	All CSOs
Total Records with additional GRF data	100 000	150 000	200 000	250 000	500 000
Programme Staff	5	5	7	7	9
Budget	£290 000	£304 500	£363 200	£381 360	£447 241
Additional cost	In-country GuideStar operations	In-country GuideStar operations	In-country GuideStar operations	In-country GuideStar operations	In-country GuideStar operations
Total User Visits	100,000	500 000	2,000 000	5,000 000	10 000 000

GUIDESTAR EUROPE - Next Steps

Ultimately, Guidestar Europe will draw together into a single relational database, current and pertinent information about the entire civil society sector in the European Union, enhancing transparency and accountability while creating a knowledge infrastructure for the sector and its stakeholders across Europe.

The next phase of the GuideStar Europe project will include both a roll out of the GuideStar model to more countries and a launch of a pan-European search capability, therefore having lasting consequence for the transparency and roles of CSOs in Europe. The ongoing GuideStar Europe programme will encompass the following activities:

Country GuideStar Development: The success of GuideStar Europe will depend heavily on the success of individual country-based GuideStars. The wide variety of reporting practices, regulatory procedures, stakeholder dynamics, and of course languages found across Europe, will require specific, customised offerings of the service in each country. GSI will support country-based initiatives with our development expertise and with our Common Technology Platform. Version 3 of the CTP, revised chiefly as a result of the GuideStar Europe project experience, is a robust, flexible, and customisable IT solution that will enable GuideStar Web sites to be deployed across the continent at a fraction of the normal cost.

The GuideStar Europe Web portal: GSI will manage the GuideStar Europe Web site, which will allow users to search across all the individual GuideStar databases in Europe. From basic search results, users will be able to link to respective country GuideStar sites.

The European Catalogue: In those countries that are not prepared to launch a full GuideStar Development Programme, GSI will pursue the acquisition of existing national CSO registries from relevant government agencies. These databases will be managed centrally by GSI staff and serve a dual purpose. They will both add breadth to the GuideStar Europe portal and serve to generate interest in expanding the database among national actors.

The key points of the regional deployment model

- **Operation** is to be led by GuideStar International, as one of its principal programs. **Data acquisition** is to be managed by partner organisations in the different EU member states, or, in the case that there is no local institutional partner, it will be managed centrally via local associates.
- **The business model** relies on keeping operating costs to a minimum through the provision of the Common Technology Platform. The country and pan-European sites will begin as free public services funded by grants and social investments from state and private institutions.

- **Branding and technology** are designed to be flexible depending on the needs of partners and depending on the level of cooperation. All national websites will reference their membership in the global GuideStar Alliance to reinforce the public's confidence in their commitment to common principles and values.

GuideStar Europe: Possible Next Steps, a country by country analysis

The deployment model in Germany

- **In-country operation:** In the foreseeable future, in-country operation is planned to be a program of DZI.
- **Data acquisition plan** is building upon DZI data of organisations awarded the seal-of-approval, with additional CSOs voluntarily adding their information.
- **The model** is based on the combination of support from private and public sources (that remain to be secured) as well as a co-ownership structure with other partners and service users.

The deployment model in Hungary

- **In-country operation** is planned to be a program or spin off of NIOK.
- **Data acquisition plan** is based on validated state registry data, combined with voluntary reports of CSOs.
- **The model** is financially feasible only with external funding from public sources (part of which is already secured), however, funding needed from other sources (services fees, advertisement, corporate funding) can also be raised by the end of the third year to 25%.

The deployment model in The Netherlands

- **In-country operation** is designed to be a program of CBF.
- **Data acquisition plan:** Organisations awarded general benefit status by the Dutch Tax Revenue are deemed legitimate, but there will also be a strategy whereby the self reports of organisations enrich the information from the official source..
- **The model** depends on state grants in the first two years, with growing revenues from services, strategic partners and license fees.

The deployment model in Ireland

- **In-country operation:** Subject to up-front funding from public and private sources, in-country operation will be established as a standalone entity, the purpose of which is to develop, manage and promote the system in Ireland.
- **Data acquisition plan:** the database will initially be largely comprised of (but not limited to) entities constituted under Irish company law as limited by guarantee; the core data is to be derived from mandatory annual filings, specifically, updated and augmented information input directly by listed organisations.
- **The model** assumes initial capital funding from governmental and private sources, moving towards self-financing, from fees derived from information and intelligence services to institutional users

The existing model in the UK

- **In-country operation** is run by GuideStar UK, a program of GuideStar International.
- **Data acquisition** is based on official reports from the Charity Commission, combined with updates provided directly by organisations.
- **The model** includes both a free public website for the general public and a wholly-owned for-profit subsidiary that serves institutional users of the extensive GuideStar UK database.

The deployment model in other countries

- **GSI will undertake new GuideStar development** programs in those countries that meet the readiness criteria.

- **Where a full GuideStar Development Program** is not yet feasible, GuideStar International is still capable of acquiring and displaying available public data. This “catalogue” operation will be managed centrally, leveraging a network of associates based in the given country. **Data acquisition plan is based on already** available validated data that can be readily displayed by GuideStar.
- **The model** will be a centrally managed system, supported by external funding.

Expected milestones of development

2009-2010: At least six country GuideStars operating in Europe, catalogue data from an additional five countries and feasibility processes in place in another six countries.

The critical European audience is aware of the initiative and uses it in its national and regional development.

2013: All European CSOs are present in GuideStar Europe, which, collectively through national websites and the pan-European website, serves 10 million European users per year.

Worst case scenario?

The worst case scenario is the status quo, as it can have very negative effect on the role of civil society. The fact that the GuideStar Europe initiative has put the issue of CSO transparency firmly on the agenda is a major step forward. It has become evident that harmonising the process across Europe is the most logical and economical way forward. Beyond that, individual countries can strive for an in-country GuideStar type system, but their work would have limited potential, be much less efficient and not as cost effective. Therefore, the participants of the GuideStar Europe project will do their best to make the plan a reality in their countries, in Europe and also globally.

Appendix

Beyond all the supporters and stakeholders, colleagues and friends who have helped with ideas, input and encouragement, very special thanks go to our most direct help in:

Germany

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Niko Roth (CFO, German Caritas, also representing Diakonisches Werk, the protestant welfare umbrella)

Rupert Graf Strachwitz (Founder and Director of Maecenata Institut),

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*Member Mr Mark Hagen, project coordinator GuideStar Europe for the
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GSI

Lead Project personnel:

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The board of GSI reviews the project at its meetings and makes strategic recommendations regarding the ETEN Project.

*William M. Dietel, retired President of Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Buzz Schmidt,
founder of the GuideStar systems in the United States and the United Kingdom,
Dr. Diana Wells, co-president of Ashoka, Innovators for the Public, Dr. Virginia
Hodgkinson, a Georgetown University professor and leading non profit sector
researcher, Brian Smouha, Director of British Maritime Technology and is a
trustee of the Bulldog Trust and the Institute for Philanthropy, Mathew Cherian,
Chief Executive of Help Age India, Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director of
the King Baudouin Foundation, Lady Hilary Browne-Wilkinson founder of the*

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