



For the purpose of implementation of the project: **CSOs Networking for Better Local Democracy in the Balkans**, financed by **Balkan Civil Society Development Network**, Grant Contract No.: 09–164/8-2020., **Balkan Network for Local Democracy**, North Macedonia announces:

CALL FOR EXPERTS

Comparative analysis of the national legal frameworks in North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo*, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina for cooperation between local public authorities and civil society, citizens' participation in policy and decision making processes and education for active citizenship

I Objective:

The objective of the Consultancy is to provide expert support to the project coordinator Balkan Network for Local Democracy - BNLD and its members (Local Democracy Agency Central and Southern Serbia, Local Democracy Agency Subotica, Serbia, Local Democracy Agency Kosovo, Local Democracy Agency Montenegro, Local Democracy Agency Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Local Democracy Agency Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici, Bosnia and Herzegovina and ALDA Skopje) in the implementation of the project „**CSOs Networking for Better Local Democracy in the Balkans**”.

The main objective of this 10 - month project is to contribute to a conducive environment for civil society development that enables them to become influential actors in society. Specific objectives are: 1) Strengthen the BNLD capacities to contribute more effectively to regional civic space; 2) Improve regional exchange of experience and skills of BNLD network members on evidence based advocacy and monitoring EU integration and reform agenda in WB countries 3) Create a regional CSOs co-operation and learning resource for advancing active citizenship at local level.

Furthermore, the action aims to address the current status and development perspectives of local democracy in the WB countries. Namely, it tackles the role of civil society and local authorities as relevant stakeholders of the reform process both towards promotion and effective implementation of democratic governance principles, but also within the context of the EU accession process.

The project is designed as a set of comprehensive and interconnected awareness raising, evidence based advocacy and capacity building actions to contribute to a conducive environment for civil society development that enables them to be influential actors in society. The set of proposed activities taking place at regional and local (municipal) level are aimed to improve civic dialogue and the cooperation between civil society and public institutions.

The action proposed is the result of a long standing experience of the BNLD network members and in line with its core mission – promoting local democracy, education for active citizenship and good local governance.

Description of the assignment

The main Work package for achieving the above mentioned set of project objectives and the purpose of this Call for expert(s) is:

WP1: Research and analysis

This component comprises activities which will be taking place both at regional and local level and are aimed **a)** to provide a framework overview in the form of comparative analyses of the present state of legal framework for citizens' participation in policy and decision making on local level in 6 WB countries and **b)** to provide a collection of replicable best practices of local policies and mechanisms of citizens' participation in policy and decision making processes and education for active citizenship in targeted 9 local communities from 6WB countries. At the same time, this WP will provide space for involving a wider scope of local NGO practitioners to contribute to the regional networking and exchange of information and thus create the grounds for future activities of BNLD network members in their respective local communities - host towns and municipalities.

Target groups: BNLD members: Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) and their local networks of partners in Serbia, BiH, Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo* and North Macedonia.; local authorities, local CSOs, local media in Skopje, Nikšić, Vlora, Peja, Knjaževac, Subotica, Mostar, Prijedor, Zavidovići.

1.1 Comparative analysis of the national legal frameworks in North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo*, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina for cooperation between local public authorities and civil society, citizens' participation in policy and decision making processes and education for active citizenship

Within this broader thematic area, three **(3) comparative studies/analyses will** be produced focused on the following topics:

- 1) Decentralisation and Local Democracy in the Balkans – work in progress;
- 2) Co-operation of Civil Society and Local authorities in the Balkans – between legislative framework and practice;
- 3) CSOs and participation in policy / decision making process at local level in the Balkans – challenges and perspectives.

Publication 1. This publication comprises an overview per country of the legal framework and trends related with decentralisation, comparing the degree of decentralization, local government system, scope of powers, assigned to local tier of governance, the quality of local governance across countries, fiscal decentralisation, trends of modernisation and quality of local public service provision, examples of effective and responsive performances of local governments.

Publication 2: This publication comprises an overview per country of policy measures and institutional forms and/or mechanisms in support to co-operation between the government and civil society organisations in different sectors, modalities and transparency of funding of civil society organisations with particular emphasis on local/municipal level, examples of locally funded civil society initiatives.

Publication 3: This publication comprises an overview per country of policy measures and institutional forms of public consultation, participation in policy / decision making, participation of CSOs in public policy development, overseeing and monitoring of implementation of policy measures, practices of information provision, public consultation, and participation procedures and mechanisms, with particular emphasis on local(municipal) level of government.

Comparative study papers (in English) will be published and made available for download in electronic form for all interested on the BNLD platform. This will enable a widest possible dissemination with just easy sharing of links to these publications. In this way the research studies produced will serve as a source of knowledge and a user friendly resource for BNLD members, local CSOs, CSO experts and practitioners promoting the principles of good governance at local level in the WB region and beyond. Furthermore, the key evidence based findings from the comparative study papers will be incorporated into the awareness raising campaign in a way that communicates with citizens in local communities included in the action and to reach general population in all targeted countries.

Expected Outputs: Three (3) regional comparative study papers produced, published, promoted and disseminated;

II Scope of the assignment:

Expert associates will be engaged to:

1. Prepare, design and conduct a regional desk research of legislative and institutional framework relevant for citizens' participation in policy and decision making in 6 WB countries resulting in three (3) comparative studies/analyses focused on the following topics:
 - 1) *Decentralisation and Local Democracy in the Balkans – work in progress*
 - 2) *Co-operation of Civil Society and Local authorities in the Balkans – between legislative framework and practice*
 - 3) *CSOs and participation in policy / decision making process at local level in the Balkans – challenges and perspectives*
2. Cooperate with the local field researchers selected from BNLD members in the 6 Western Balkan countries in order to collect relevant local data to complement the regional comparative desk research,
3. Collect and analyze the collected desk and field research findings and produce the research study that includes relevant country based legislative and institutional framework and local (municipal level) results of research work undertaken,
4. Produce the final comparative analyse study papers on the basis of the reserach,
5. Cooperate and and consult with the lead partner and its network members, regular feedback provision in all stages of the research work,
6. Presentation of the research study findings in the closing project conference

All three research studies must be designed and conducted in a way to provide statistically reliable, verifiable and relevant data. The selected experts will be responsible to the lead aplicant Balkan Network for Local Democracy - BNLD, for the quality information and content produced at the end of the project.

III Period of the engagement:

April 2021 - May 2021

IV Requirements:

- University degree in social/political/economic sciences, advanced degree is an asset
- At least 5 years of experience in the field of research work
- Substantial experience and understanding of public administration reform and local government system in the Balkan region
- Experience in overall context of enabling environment for civil society, current trends in establishing cross-sector cooperation and consultation mechanisms in policy/decision making in the Balkan region
- Good communication skills
- Knowledge of at least one of the local languages of the countries included (preferably a native speaker)
- Excellent knowledge of English (working level)
- Demonstrated analytical and writing skills
- Experience in donor funded projects and working in international environment would be considered as advantage

Application and deadline

Interested candidates should send the application pack containing:

- 1) **Motivation letter,**
- 2) **CV and/or CVs** with min. 3 references relevant for the assignment,
- 3) **Methodology** – description of the assignment for successful execution of activities with reference to the objectives and purpose of the consultancy and outlining the approach to desk research and local research to be conducted in co-operation with local partners, list and sequence of proposed tasks with provisional timetable of activities, proposed inputs and outputs to be produced necessary to achieve the objectives of consultancy.

Budget available

The available budget for the action is 4.500,00 EUR. Candidates are expected to provide an offer for their service, inclusive of all the elements mentioned in the terms of reference. The selected applicants will be paid after completion of the expected tasks and delivering of all the expected outputs.

Submission of application

The application should be sent to the following e mail address: ldasubotica@aldaintranet.org (subject: application for BNLD research) by 26/03/2021 before 23.59.

"This document is prepared within the Project "Protecting Civic Space – Regional Civil Society Development Hub" financed by SIDA and implemented by BCSDN".