

**PROJECT DOCUMENT*****Bosnia and Herzegovina*****Project Title:** *Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD2)***Project (Award) Number:** BIH10/00126501, Output ID: 00120547**Implementing Partner:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**Start Date:** 1 January 2021 **End Date:** 31 December 2024 **LPAC Meeting date:** 22 December 2020**Implementation modality:** Direct Implementation Modality**Brief Description**

As a critical component of democratic systems, civil society has been and will continue to be an important actor of reform processes taking place in the Western Balkans. In this context, the European Union (EU) accession agenda in the region promotes the role of civil society in further democratisation, including consultation in decision making, contribution to processes associated with policy and regulatory changes, as well as performing of a watchdog function and promoting of public accountability.

The overall objective of the Action is to strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society and youth to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for CSOs.

The Action is based on previous efforts realised through EU supported initiatives – Reinforcement of Local Democracy Project (LOD, 2009-2016) and a subsequent scale-up Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans (ReLOaD, 2017-2020). ReLOaD2 will be implemented throughout the region, in the following IPA beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, and Serbia.

The specific objective is to strengthen partnerships between local governments and civil society in the Western Balkans by enhancing transparency in funding of CSOs from local government budgets and promoting youth and civic engagement in decision-making and community development.

Working across the region, ReLOaD2 will enhance capacities of local governments and CSOs to engage in productive partnerships and contribute to improved service delivery and realisation of local priorities in line with development strategies. It will incite local governments to use public funding for CSOs in a transparent and development-oriented manner, recognising local needs and embracing a project-based approach. Also, the Action will promote youth engagement and support implementation of youth initiatives and will work on improvement of their economic perspectives in partner localities.

Linkage with SDGs: SDG16

Linkage with EU accession agenda:

Linkage with UNDP Strategic Plan: Outcome 2
Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development ; Signature solution #2
Contributing (UNDAF/CPD 2021-2025): Outcome 4.
By 2025, people contribute to, and benefit from more accountable and transparent governance systems that deliver quality public services and ensure rule of law.

Output/s ID (with gender marker): GEN2

Total resources required:	USD 15,064,061	
Total resources allocated:	UNDP:	USD 403,444
	Donor (EU):	USD 13,531,470
	Government:	USD 1,129,147
Unfunded:	0.00 USD	

Agreed by (signatures):

UNDP
Print Name: Steliana Nedera,
Resident Representative

Date: 12/01/21

¹ For UNDP all references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of the UN Resolution 1244/1999. For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to position on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

I DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

I.1 Wider regional context

In **Albania**, the Government is committed to strengthening cooperation with civil society, recognizing the importance of CSOs role in addressing citizens' needs. In this context, the Government adopted an updated *Roadmap for the Policy towards more Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development*. However, as stated in the *Albania 2020 Report* "the financial sustainability of civil society organisations remains a challenge due to unfavourable fiscal and legal frameworks."² Local governments have limited experience with CSO projects, mainly due to limited financial resources and lack of clear procedures.³ Through ReLOaD1, 12 partner local governments have introduced mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs. Considering the lack of legal framework, this was a breakthrough, indicating strong local governments' interest to adopt relevant bylaws and institutionalise mechanisms for transparent disbursement of funds for CSOs. The position of youth in Albania is similar as in the rest of the region, with young people facing lack of optimism, quality education, high unemployment rates, etc. The recently adopted National Law on Youth No 75/2019,⁴ among other, defines obligatory elements of youth organizations and their functioning including source of funding, etc. The law intends "to protect the rights of young people in a comprehensive manner, create the necessary conditions for the activation, participation and support of young people, determine the functions and competencies of institutions at central and local level, and to cooperate with organizations that exercise activities in the field of youth".⁵ Another important document is the National Youth Action Plan (NYAP) 2015-2020.⁶ The Plan has six general objectives, including youth promotion and participation in democratic processes, employment and education.⁷ Despite recent development of regulatory and strategic framework, the position of youth still needs to be significantly improved in order to reverse negative trends. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** experienced some progress in establishing institutional mechanisms for cooperation between government and CSOs, as well as in public financing of CSOs. These improvements on a local level have been mostly achieved because of the EU-funded interventions LOD and ReLOaD, where 53 out of 145 local governments have institutionalized the methodology for transparent disbursement of funds to CSOs. Despite the achievements, there are remaining challenges to be addressed in order to improve cooperation and enhance partnerships between local authorities and CSOs. *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020 Report* by the European Commission states that "the distribution of public funds is not fully transparent and impartial. Only a few municipalities have regulations for the transparent funding of civil society organisations that are based on clearly defined criteria and require monitoring and evaluation tools. A framework for the transparent funding of civil society is needed across the country."⁸ Local authorities, which account for approximately 50% of domestic public funding for CSOs, often do not publish public calls for grants or apply adequate selection procedures for public calls.⁹ Most of the funding continues to be transferred directly to

² Albania 2020 Report, Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2020, Communication on EU Enlargement Policy (page 13) https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/albania_report_2020.pdf

³ Report on existing financial mechanisms for civil society organisations in Albania, United Nations Development Programme, October 2018, http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/democratic_governance/1--report-on-existing-financial-mechanisms-for-civil-society-org.html, (page 32)

⁴ Law No 75/2019 Date 04.11.2019

⁵ Article 1, Law No 75/2019 Date 04.11.2019

⁶ Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 383 of 06.05.2015

https://www.un.org.al/sites/default/files/plani%20kombetar%20i%20veprimit%20per%20rinine%202015-2020_ENG.pdf

⁷ National Youth Action Plan 2015-2020, p. 9.

https://www.un.org.al/sites/default/files/plani%20kombetar%20i%20veprimit%20per%20rinine%202015-2020_ENG.pdf

⁸ EC report, Commission staff working document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020, Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2020 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy (page 11), https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/bosnia_and_herzegovina_report_2020.pdf

⁹ 2018 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index, available at: <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-csosi-2018-report-europe-eurasia.pdf>, page 52

sport clubs¹⁰ and organizations stemming from the last war (e.g. associations representing war veterans, families of fallen soldiers, etc.).

As for youth-related issues, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a Decision on appointing a working group to develop the Youth Strategy 2021-2025, but ever since there was no progress. On the other side, the other entity, Republika Srpska, has a strategic approach in a form of the Youth Policy of Republika Srpska for 2016-2020 which aims to be implemented in five priority fields that are in line with ReLoaD2 interventions. Youth Strategy of Brčko District is in development process and is coordinated by the Youth Council of Brčko District and Brčko District Government.

In **Kosovo** some progress has been noted in the overall environment for CSO operations with focus on the areas of public consultations in policy making and public funding of CSO programmes and projects; while less progress has been made in the areas of volunteering and improving standards for public service delivery by CSOs.¹¹ The strategic framework for structured cooperation between the government and civil society for the 2019-2023 period has been endorsed in 2019. Based on the strategic framework, a new Government Council for Cooperation with Civil Society was established in July 2019.¹² There is ongoing work to introduce public consultation standards also at municipal level, however, there is still a need for systematic transparency in the disbursement of public funds to NGOs. The allocation of funds for CSOs is defined by the *Regulation on the criteria, standards and procedures for public funding of NGOs* (MF-04/2017) adopted in June 2017, which has established a funding system public for CSOs, including clearly defined rules and transparency both at central and local level.¹³ While this is a very positive step towards the transparency of public funding for CSOs, which was also supported by ReLoaD in five municipalities out of 38, there is still a need for systematic transparency in the disbursement of public funds to CSOs.¹⁴

Kosovo society has established a strong legal base towards a convenient educational, social, cultural, and political conditions for the welfare of young people, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, religion, or culture. There have been some major legal accomplishments in Youth Policy in Kosovo. The Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (2009) promotes the participation of youth in the decision-making processes for the development of a democratic society and the improvement of the quality of life of youth¹⁵. The law also outlines the rights, responsibilities and obligations of governmental authorities and youth organizations.

The climate in which CSOs operate in **North Macedonia** has continued to improve. The *North Macedonia 2020 Report* by the European Commission notes that "Civil society remained active and played a key role in policy and decision-making processes."¹⁶ Some progress was noted in the cooperation between the Government and the civil society by regular functioning of the Council for Cooperation with NGOs.¹⁷ The Government adopted the *2018-2020 Strategy for Collaboration with Civil Society and its Action Plan*,¹⁸ which among others, envisages further support for civil sector development, civil society participation in policy design and implementation, and improved CSO sustainability, including through transparent public funding. CSOs may receive funds from the national and the municipal budgets, as specified in the *Law on Association and Foundations*¹⁹, but according to the 2020 Progress Report "the legal and financial frameworks still need to be improved and implemented in practice"(...) "adequate administrative capacity and proper

¹⁰ Both professional and amateur sport clubs/associations are registered under the same regulatory framework. Consequently, they are financed from the same budget lines foreseen for CSOs. Professional sports clubs gain profit and at the same time receive largest portions of public funding foreseen for CSOs.

¹¹ Available at: http://www.civikos.net/repository/docs/Strategy_eng_291507.pdf Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2019-2023

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ EC Kosovo* Progress Report 2019, page.9, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-kosovo-report.pdf>

¹⁵ https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2009_Youth_Law.pdf

¹⁶ North Macedonia 2020 Report, 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy {COM(2019) 260 final}, page 7, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/>

¹⁸ Government of the FYR of Macedonia. Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society 2018 – 2020 https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/sites/default/files/Strategija%202018%20-%202020%20usvoena%209%2010%202018_0.pdf

¹⁹ Law on Association and Foundations Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"no.52/2010 and 135/2011) https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/7554/file/fYROM_law_associations_foundations_2010_am2011_en.pdf

organisational set-up is needed in the Government unit for NGO Cooperation, including sufficient state funding to ensure proper implementation of the 2018-2020 strategy".²⁰ Generally, public funding for CSOs is limited. Cooperation between local governments and CSOs remains weak and there is no unified system for CSO funding with clearly defined rules and procedures. Also, many local authorities do not have precise information about CSOs operating within their localities.²¹ With the ReLOaD support, four local governments have introduced the mechanism for transparent funds disbursement to CSOs. This has entailed consultations with CSOs, adoption of relevant local regulations, institutional capacity development, as well as learning by doing through pilot calls-for-proposals.

As for youth-related issues, the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies²² was prepared in consultations with the representatives from the youth wings of the largest political parties, several youth CSOs and the Youth Affairs and Policies Club in the Parliament. This is the first legislative act exclusively covering youth, which establishes the concepts of "youth organization", "youth umbrella organization", "National Youth Parliament", "National Advisory Body on Youth Policies" and "local youth councils."

In **Montenegro**, mechanisms for Government's consultation of CSOs are in place, but they need clear rules, and genuine engagement on both sides. The *Montenegro 2020 Report* by the European Commission states that "The rules for public funding of CSOs secure a minimum of 0.5% of the state budget to be allocated to civil society. In 2019, this budget amounted to EUR 3.7 million (compared with EUR 4 million in 2020). While the overall process has become more transparent in recent years with the recruitment of external assessors, concerns over the evaluation process persist."²³ Furthermore, the same report concludes that "CSOs can also access funds at local level under the law on local self-governments, but the majority of municipalities lack transparent procedures." "The national *Strategy for Improvement of the Environment for Work of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for 2018 - 2020*²⁴ was adopted in late 2017, providing some guidance for improving administrative and legal framework for more active CSO participation in policy design and decision making and targeting mostly national level. Ministry for Public Administration is working on the *Programme on public institutions and NGOs cooperation for 2021 – 2023* that should replace the existing Strategy.

However, majority of local governments face challenges with the implementation, including programming of funds, participatory defining of priorities for financing, monitoring and reporting on allocated funds, etc. Moreover, CSO capacities to design and implement projects for the benefit of their target groups remain limited. Through ReLOaD, five local governments have been capacitated to implement transparent procedures for allocation of public funds to CSOs. Capacities of organisations to prepare project proposals and implement projects proved to be very low, although the programme has been working in relatively developed localities.

The Law on youth²⁵ (amended in May 2019) provides for improving the functioning of youth organizations and associations in Montenegro, formal representation in the Council for Youth and for introducing new service at local level – youth clubs/centres, which should be established by local self-governments with co-financing by national government. Both national and local authorities are obliged to adopt policy documents for youth: National Youth Strategy²⁶ with the Action Plan and Local Youth Action Plans (adopted by all municipalities). Ministry of Sports and Youth (in charge for youth policy), Ministry for Education and Employment Agency of Montenegro are leading institutions in funding youth initiatives, programmes and

²⁰ North Macedonia 2020 Report, 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy {COM(2019) 260 final}, page 11, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf

²¹ Jankulovski, Zoran, 2018, Analysis of the LOD Methodology application in the ReLOaD partner municipalities

²² <https://www.pravdiko.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Zakon-za-mladinsko-uchestvo-i-mladinski-politiki-16-01-2020.pdf>

²³ Montenegro 2020 Report, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2020 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/montenegro_report_2020.pdf

²⁴ Strategy for Improvement of the Environment for work of NGOs, <http://www.mju.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=301459&rType=2&file=Strategija%20unapredjenja%20podsticajnog%20okruzenja%20%202018-20120.pdf>

²⁵ Law on Youth, Official Gazzete of Montenegro, No. 025/19 from 30.04.2019, 027/19 from 17.05.2019 <http://www.ms.gov.me/biblioteka/zakoni?alphabet=lat>

²⁶ Youth Strategy 2017 – 2021, Government of Montenegro, <http://www.strategijazamlade.me/>

projects in accordance with the Law, while municipalities have somewhat moderate scale of funding, depending on their financial capacities.

Serbia has in place the regulatory framework that provides for the participation of CSOs in public policy making at both national and local level, as well as for financing of CSOs from public sources, including local government budgets. Amendments to the Regulation on Funds to Support Programmes or Missing Amount of Funds for Programmes of Public Interest implemented by Associations were adopted in 2018, aiming to harmonize the internal legal acts regulating public funding of CSOs, and increase transparency and accountability. In 2019, the Office for cooperation with civil society published an e-calendar of public calls and all public administration bodies were obliged to submit an annual plan as regards public calls for financing CSOs, however, the practice of such annual plans needs to be monitored. Still, the *Serbia 2020 Progress Report* notes that “the criteria for public financial support for CSOs need to be better defined and implemented to ensure overall transparency, especially at local level.” A separate budget line for donations to civil society does not guarantee financing of CSO projects. Local governments tend to favour disbursing smaller grants to a larger number of organizations, while civil society participation in programming and design of calls-for-proposals is rare. The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society has produced “Guidelines for Transparent Financing of Associations and Other Civil Society Organizations from Local Governments’ Budgets” and delivered several training sessions on transparent public funding of CSOs to public institutions at the national level. ReLOaD has capacitated five out of 145 local governments in Serbia to introduce transparent mechanisms for funding CSOs. Following the model set through ReLOaD, other five local self-governments selected under the Sida-funded *Accountable Public Finance Platform* project have committed to adopt/improve local legislation that regulates the financing of CSOs, in line with the Regulation and the LOD methodology. However, further efforts are needed to improve the clarity of funding criteria and introduce robust monitoring and evaluation practices across local governments.

Related to youth, Serbia adopted a framework Law in 2011, however the practice is still not entirely aligned with legislative provisions. The National Youth Strategy²⁷ (for the period from 2015 to 2025) was adopted in 2015, and the actual Action Plan for its implementation was adopted in 2018 for a period of 3 years (2018-2021). The strategy defines nine strategic goals as desirable, changed conditions for young people in areas of their interest.²⁸ The goals are aligned with ReLOaD2.

1.2 Sector-specific analysis

Environment for civil society development in the Western Balkan region

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia (hereinafter: IPA beneficiaries) face challenges when it comes to the cooperation between governments and CSOs, including limitations in the overall environment for CSO operations, lack of structured CSO participation in public affairs and inadequate CSO capacities. CSOs remain largely dependent on financing by foreign donors, which is due to a combination of factors including limitations in public funding and lack of transparent mechanisms for funds disbursement. This clearly undermines the CSO sustainability and independence and represents one of the main obstacles to development and functioning of credible civil society.²⁹

Across the Western Balkans, CSOs are also important actors in the context of local governance. They promote inclusion, activate participation in public affairs, reinforce accountability systems, and contribute to reducing gaps in public service delivery. However, limitations in the environment for CSO work, as well as capacity constraints faced by both CSOs and local governments affect their cooperation efforts. While local governments across the region provide sizeable public funding to CSOs³⁰ they also face transparency and accountability challenges. Public funding disbursement is often not based on clear criteria, reporting by CSOs

²⁷ Official Gazette of RS, 22/15. All strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia are available at <http://www.gs.gov.rs/lat/strategije-vs.html>.

²⁸ National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, p.7.

²⁹ Multi-Country Civil Society Facility and Media Action Document 2014-2015: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/ipa/2015/multi-country/ipa_ii_2014-031-605.01_2015-037-653.01-csf-and-media-multi-country.pdf

³⁰ Based on estimates, around 50% of public spending awarded to CSOs in the region comes from local governments (except for Albania and Montenegro).

on received funding is inadequate, monitoring of awarded funds is not performed, and effects are not measured nor adequately communicated to the public.

Youth engagement in the Western Balkan region

While considered critical for strengthening fragile democracies and promoting broad-based social transformations in the Western Balkans, youth engagement in the region leaves a lot to be desired. Recent surveys have shown that many young people do not consider participation in community or politics-related initiatives and activities as important.³¹ Several studies also show that they are largely dissatisfied with the level of democracy in their countries. Youth are marginalised also due to the limited job opportunities³² and inadequate skills which are a direct consequence of outdated educational systems that fail to respond to the needs of the labour market. Weak incentives to stay in the Western Balkans region have made emigration a popular option, resulting in alarming levels of brain drain. All of the above results in youth alienation and disengagement, limiting prospects for the positive transformation of societies in the region.

1.3 Target groups and their specific needs (was data - including sex-disaggregated - used to understand the needs of target groups and geographic areas?)

The Action tackles a range of target groups and final beneficiaries which all have their role in the context of the Action's objectives and broader civil society objectives. The target groups are:

- Local governments in the Western Balkans region. Local governments are one of the key actors in providing CSOs with financial resources and framework conditions for their functioning. Support to civil society is often a low priority at the local level in the Western Balkans and local governments are often neglecting the importance of this area. The common challenges are the absence of a strategic vision, limited financial resources and limited capacities.
- CSOs in the Western Balkans region. Civil society is somewhat neglected in the Western Balkans, occasionally even deliberately set-aside. This results in a limited performance of CSOs and impact on their target groups. On the other side, CSOs are also struggling in defining their strategic objectives, strengthening linkages with their target groups and positioning themselves in a long-term strategic manner.
- Youth in the Western Balkans region. This group is facing significant challenges due to slow progress and limited perspectives of the region. Approximately half of the youth would be prepared to leave the region for better opportunities abroad (mainly EU) should they have a chance.

The final beneficiaries as understood by this Action are:

- Citizens and communities at the local level which are natural beneficiaries from activities and efforts of CSOs, particularly of grassroots CSOs. A range of activities and themes normally implemented by CSOs provide solutions to the needs of individuals and groups at the local level. In the absence of a systematic policy set up and with internal challenges within CSOs, only limited impact on the final beneficiaries is achieved.

The impact of the Action on target groups and final beneficiaries can be expected at two levels.

The Action will demonstrate clear direct impact on target groups through implementation of support and financing measures. These benefits will be as follows.

- *Local governments. 50 local governments will be directly involved in project activities. The project team and experts will work on advancement of their capacities for transparent implementation of financing for civil society. Though primarily aimed at civil society the support will undoubtedly have positive impact in overall local planning and budgetary context. Local governments will be able to*

³¹ 79% of youth in Southeast Europe do not engage in any unpaid voluntary activity and completely lack this experience and understanding of benefits in community engagement. Lavrič, Milan, et al. "FES Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019." *Youth Studies in Southeast Europe 2018/2019*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Apr. 2019, www.fes-soe.org/features/youth-studies/, page 68.

³² Youth unemployment rates (15 – 29), as a percentage of the labour force, range between 20%-50% in the Western Balkans 6, www.fes-soe.org/features/youth-studies/ page 26.

respond better to the needs of their citizens and civil society since the efficiency of funding will be increased.

- *Civil Society Organisations. At least 300 CSOs will be involved in the project directly through training and mentoring support. The project team will work on increasing their capacities, building of long-term sustainability and perspectives, strategic planning and vision. The Action will also support at least 300 project initiatives through local grant schemes, enabling CSOs to deal with concrete issues at the local level. Participation in the Action will strengthen their position in eyes of their target groups and in relation to local governments.*
- *Youth from the Western Balkans region. Youth from the region will be direct beneficiary of one set of support activities. The Action will work on strengthening their position, providing perspectives in economic sense, improving their community and civic engagement. A proportion of the local grant schemes will be dedicated specifically for support to youth initiatives supporting over 100 youth projects.*
- *Local communities and citizens will improve their situation and resolve concrete challenges at the local level through implementation of local grant schemes. It is expected that at least 40,000 citizens will benefit from the Action. The project team will promote strong connection of CSOs with communities, insisting that the issues tackled by the grant supported projects are planned on bottom-up principle.*

The Action will also demonstrate indirect impact as support for civil society provided by UNDP in ReLOaD2 is equally applicable to any other sectors and segments of socio-economic support at the local level. The Action should result in an overall increase of performance of local governments and thus improved socio-economic situation for all citizens in involved local areas.

1.4 Lessons learnt from previous experiences

Through the implementation of four consecutive phases of the LOD project as well as ReLOaD1, UNDP BiH and other UNDP Western Balkan COs have built extended knowledge about what works and what does not in its approaches to the improvement of cooperation between LGs and CSOs. Some practices are quite universal while some are IPA beneficiary specific.

An effective transfer of skills and knowledge is vital for the sustainability of the learning achievement of trained staff that will allow replication of the Model for transparent funds disbursement in the WB region.

Also it was learned that the adoption of transparent mechanism takes time and LGs must be trained to execute this process in several time periods before it gets fully anchored in their practices.

In addition, one of the most important factors in the Western Balkans is dedication and action of state governments and its bodies, whose rules and regulations scales down and provide legal foundation to local governments to change and improve. Thus, introduction of transparent mechanisms and practices works better in Montenegro and Kosovo, when compared to for instance Albania where these state regulations do not exist.

As for the BiH, it was recognized that the work with partner LGs on development of local priorities and consultation with CSOs was more efficient within partner governments that had previously participated in the UNDP's Integrated Local Development Programme (ILDP). Knowledge gained through ILDP that focused on the introduction of participatory strategic planning at local level (MIPRO methodology), was quite complementary and demonstrated that the former ILDP LGs were better structured and capable to be more precise in defining the priority areas in which they wanted the CSOs to play an active role in service delivery and project implementation.

Also, the condition integrated within the LOD project obliging LGs to allocate certain percentage of available municipal funds for CSOs through public calls they administrate independently to those initiated through the Project itself, turned out to be powerful tool in making a change within local community in shifting LGs stronger towards project-based approach to funding of CSOs. However, in some cases LGs were not ready to quickly change disbursement practices introduced with the adoption of LOD methodology tending to

restrict amount of such funds to minimum. This does not necessarily mean LGs are unwilling or uncooperative but only that the transition is somewhat drastic in their point of view. The conclusion is that it would be desirable to extend the period of cooperation with partner LGs to establish the continuity and assist in gradual transition to project based funding of CSOs.

Within their independent Public calls, LGs tend to allocate small amounts to as many CSOs to meet everybody's expectations. Thus, the link to achieving the development objectives of the LGs is lost and the activities remain invisible to population. The intervention should devise strategies to overcome this common occurrence.

There is a weak civil sector in medium and small-sized LGs which still cannot sufficiently answer to local challenges. Often, public calls for CSOs must be repeated due to insufficient number of good CSO proposals. Stimulating partnership between stronger CSOs experienced in Project Cycle Management (PCM) and grassroots organizations lacking capacities but aware of the local priorities produced good project results and had a positive side effects in activating local scene of CSOs. Very often a local organization that had received coaching from a stronger one became a leader in its area coaching other local CSOs.

It was also learned that mentoring of CSOs during project proposal preparation is a good example to increase quality of project proposals but also capacities of grassroots CSOs.

Partnership with Associations of Cities and Municipalities (ACMs) proved to be a good channel for promotion of the LOD Methodology among LGs in BiH. This has enabled the Methodology to be disseminated to large number of LGs that had no opportunity to participate in any of four phases of LOD and ReLOaD 1. Similar will be promoted throughout the Western Balkans.

The ReLOaD project will require a certain degree of flexibility in adjusting the tools for transparent funds disbursement in each IPA beneficiary including but not limited to criteria and selection of partner LGs and CSO project proposals. This is desirable in order for activities to achieve their maximum impact, and to ensure optimum utilisation of available resources.

Participatory approach leads to empowerment, beneficiaries' capacity building, increase in effectiveness and cost sharing. UNDP, through the LOD and ReLOaD 1 project, and other LG interventions, developed partnership in the municipalities, with CSOs, in collaborative activities to actualize the development needs of the region. There was a multi-dimensional process of conducting needs-based assessments in order to perform tailored programming accordingly. Lessons learned regarding social trust and beneficiary buy-in were generated within the framework of community participation.

Consensus building and inclusiveness in determining local priorities and decision making is an ideal tool to ensure that the stakeholders understand and agree to the process in which they will collectively be involved through the Project's actions. This is important to create a sense of ownership.

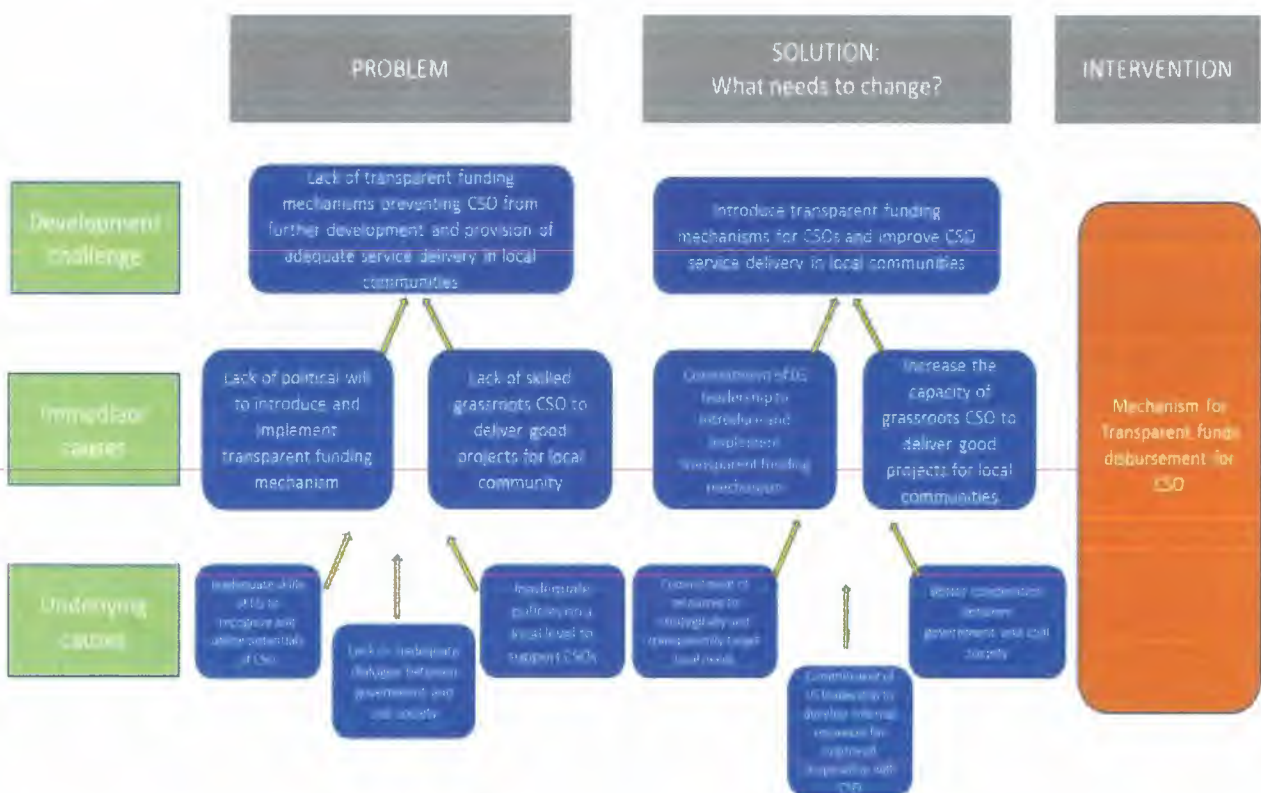
II STRATEGY

II. 1 Impact hypothesis/theory of change

The **Project impact hypothesis** is defined as follows: “The improved capacities of local governments to perform transparent, competitive and inclusive fund disbursement for CSO, based on clear and transparent criteria, will strengthen the work of CSOs, provide better services for citizens in local communities by addressing priorities from local development strategies and plans, and lead to better cooperation between local governments and CSOs, which translates in strengthened participatory democracies in the WB counties and enhanced EU integration process.”

The overall Project goal (objective) is **to strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society.** This leads to improved implementation of development strategies and service delivery at subnational levels as well as strengthened partnerships and networks for sustainable local development in order to decrease the economic, social and territorial disparities by 2019 through coordinated approach by national and subnational actors.

Under the assumption that existing relevant institutional partners responsible for coordination with civil society are engaged pro-actively in the project, and that sufficient number of local governments would apply for participation, including their commitment to introduce and systemically further apply the new CSO funding model, as well as graphically presented outputs have been delivered then, they all strongly contribute to strengthening the **partnerships between local governments and civil society in the WB by continuing to scale a successful model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs from local government budgets towards greater civic engagement in decision-making and improvement of local service delivery.**



II. 2 Relevance to international and national policies/strategies and frameworks

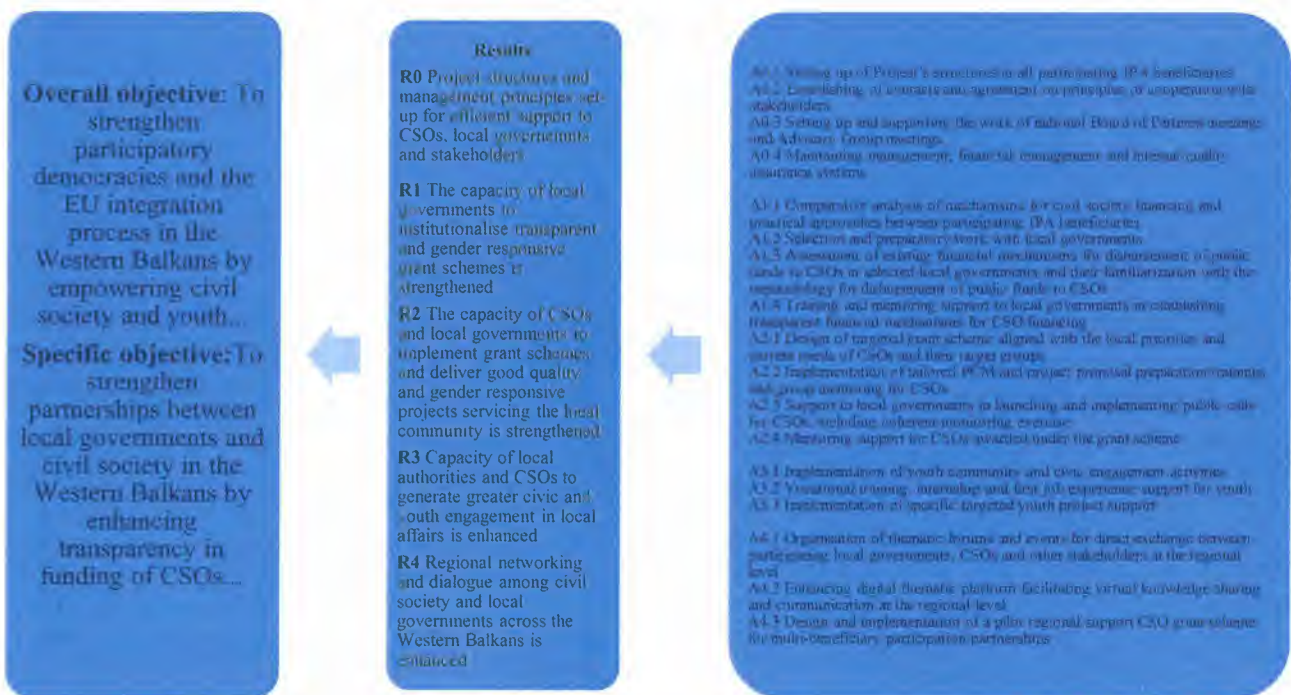
The Action falls under the regional efforts of the EU under the IPA II programme in participating IPA beneficiaries. The Action contributes to the development of democracies in the Western Balkans, in particular to participatory development and functioning of civil society and local governance. The whole context of the Action follows closely the EU objective which is “to promote peace, stability and economic

development in the Western Balkans and open up the prospect of EU integration.”³³ By enhancing government-civil society interactions and empowering civil society, ReLOaD2 efforts would support the EU enlargement processes in the Western Balkans in line with the Enlargement Strategy for the Western Balkans.³⁴ They would contribute to the realisation of priorities set in the 2014-2020 Revised Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper, recognizing civil society as an essential component of any participatory democracy and highlighting the importance of “increased support to CSOs, including capacity building and encouraging the creation of an enabling environment for its development and greater involvement of stakeholders in reforms, including through greater transparency of government action and spending.”³⁵ Furthermore, the Action is in line with the objectives set by the Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020,³⁶ in relation to the enabling financial environment which supports CSO sustainability, CSO-government cooperation mechanisms and CSO capacities.

Alignment with local/central level objectives

In addition to contributing to the fulfilment of EU objectives in the region, strong emphasis is given to the alignment to central and local objectives and strategies in IPA beneficiaries as well as implementation of regulations and plans set in the region. Some of the direct relations between the intervention and the objectives are presented in the *Context in the IPA beneficiaries’* section above. Furthermore, the Action will clearly contribute to the Western Balkans region to achieve the targets set within the **16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Peace, justice and strong institutions** - Peace, stability, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law are important conditions for sustainable development.

➤ II.3 Hierarchy of objectives (including a visual snapshot)



³³ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/168/the-western-balkans>

³⁴ A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Strasbourg, 6/2/2018 COM(2018) 65 final. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf

³⁵ Revised Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper for the period 2014-2020, 31/05/2018, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180817-revised-multi-country-indicative-strategy-paper-2014-2020.pdf>

³⁶ DG Enlargement Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/civil_society/doc_guidelines_cs_support.pdf

III RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

III. 1 Detailed description of output, activities and expected results, project duration

Result 0/Activity 0. Project structures and management principles set-up for efficient support to CSOs, local governments and stakeholders

Sub-activity 0.1 Setting up of Project's structures in all participating IPA beneficiaries

Recruitment of the core project teams in all participating IPA beneficiaries will be implemented immediately after the kick-off of the project. Basic outline of the organisation has already been prepared which will allow efficient and timely recruitment of the project teams.

In the initial phase, the project team will agree on internal procedures for management and reporting. Considering the relatively complex outlay of the activities/results and the involvement of several teams from different IPA beneficiaries, the project management will stipulate standardised and regular flow of internal information. The information will be collected and processed centrally by the Regional office in Sarajevo with contribution from other UNDP Country Offices across the region. The regional office will in principle be responsible for the overall contractual obligations and communication with the Contracting Authority. The project team will also agree on standardised procedures for other administrative and content segments to allow maximum efficiency and comparison between the offices. The segments which will be defined from the beginning, among others, include the following: financial management provisions, maintenance and flow of supporting documentation, public procurement procedures, reporting and internal monitoring procedures.

The kick-off meeting will be organised during the inception period. Depending on the COVID19 situation in the region, the meeting will be organised with physical presence of participants or as an on-line conference call.

The duration of the Action will be 48 months, with a six-month inception period during which the necessary amendments on the DoA will be prepared and submitted along with inception report.

Sub-activity 0.2 Establishing of contacts and agreement on principles of cooperation with stakeholders

Initial meetings with key partners and stakeholders will be organised either by physical presence or on-line, depending on the current epidemiological situation in a relevant IPA beneficiary. The purpose of these initial meetings will be to outline the project intervention, present changes from the previous phase and to examine the current situation, needs and expectations of stakeholders. Specific attention will be given to explore possible contributions by partners and stakeholders (including EU-funded initiatives such as TACSO3, RomActed, Resource centres, etc.) particularly in view of desired creation and maintenance of a long-term sustainable and efficient system of CSOs.

Principles of cooperation and exchange of information with partners/stakeholders will be determined based on typology of each stakeholder, their potential interest and contribution to project activities. The project team will maintain regular contacts with partners and stakeholders through the implementation of specific activities (relevant for these stakeholders) and through participation in the Board of Partners along with other consultative bodies like Advisory Group or similar.

Sub-activity 0.3 Setting up and supporting the work of national Board of Partners meetings and Advisory Group meetings

During the implementation of ReLOaD1, the support of partner and advisory bodies proved extremely important for the implementation process. Involvement of these bodies significantly extended dimension and the reach of the project as well as allowed exchange of experiences, concepts, and knowledge. This best practice will be continued in this Action.

National Boards of Partners were composed of relevant bodies in each of the IPA beneficiaries. The Boards are expected to meet at least twice a year and they will be an important element in the implementation

process. Jointly with the project team, they will assess the progress of the Action and assist in planning further activities. ToR for the Board of Partners in each IPA beneficiary will be adopted.

Advisory Groups were somewhat less active in ReLOaD1 phase. For this reason, more efforts will be invested by the project team to set-up and maintain Advisory Groups or similar advisory bodies suitable for each IPA beneficiary. The bodies will in principle include representatives of academia, civil society but also might include representatives of local governments that participated in ReLOaD1. It is expected that these bodies could contribute with their critical professional opinions and experiences to further increase the quality and the impact of the Action. At least one meeting per year is anticipated. TOR for Advisory Groups, or similar advisory body, in each IPA beneficiary will be adopted.

The Boards of Partners, Advisory Groups, or similar advisory mechanisms are expected to be established and respective ToRs adopted during the inception period. More details on the composition of these bodies is presented further below under 2.1.2. Implementation Approach.

Sub-activity 0.4 Maintaining management, financial management and internal quality assurance systems

Project and financial management will be implemented in line with the contract signed with the EU, applying general rules, provisions and relevant business practice for such type of interventions. Project management part will focus on the coherent implementation of planned activities and delivery of outputs. The functions of project management will include staff management, coordination of efforts among offices in IPA beneficiaries and external relations/contacts. Financial function will ensure transparency and audit trail for all costs incurring in the implementation.

Visibility and promotion activities will be organised for the broader promotion of Action's activities and general awareness raising related to the issues addressed. Region-wide activities will be implemented. More details on the visibility principles are presented under 2.1.2. Implementation Approach.

The project team will set up and maintain an internal monitoring and quality assurance system. The system will allow constant assessment of progress and will thus have important impact on the Action's efficiency and timely implementation. The system will be based on original plans/benchmarks defined in this proposal. More details on the internal information system are presented under 2.1.2. Implementation Approach.

Result 1/Activity 1. The capacity of local governments to institutionalise transparent and gender responsive grant schemes is strengthened

Sub-activity 1.1 Comparative analysis of mechanisms for civil society financing and practical approaches between participating IPA beneficiaries

Due to differences (capacity level, different approaches, etc.) within the Western Balkans, an analysis of existing financing mechanisms for CSOs will be conducted for each IPA beneficiary. It will include the review of central and local policies and practices, gaps and shortcomings and their influence the overall public transfers to CSOs. Experiences and best practices will be collected in terms of application of transparent financial mechanisms including capacities of institutional players.

Comparative analysis would enable transfer of experiences between IPA beneficiaries and enable mutual learning process and resolution of specific needs/gaps. The principle of exchange will be identification of gap → review of similar cases in other IPA beneficiaries (participating local governments) → checking the relevance of identified solutions with original gap/challenge → transfer of experiences to resolve the issues. The activity will not only resolve concrete issues but will also open possibilities for increased exchange and cooperation at institutional level between IPA beneficiaries.

Sub-activity 1.2 Selection and preparatory work with local governments

Partner local governments will be selected through a transparent process in all participating IPA beneficiaries. Call for participation, including a predefined set of criteria, will be published in each IPA beneficiary. The aim of the selection process is to select ca. 50 local governments. Considering specifics of each IPA beneficiary, the selection of local governments will include a combination of new local governments

and some from the previous phase (e.g. in Serbia only new local governments will be selected as partners, while at least two local governments from the previous phase will be involved as a mentoring support). It could also include clusters of municipalities (two or more municipalities grouped in a cluster – in Montenegro), or take regional approach to municipal selection (North Macedonia) – all with purpose to maximise the results of the Action across the region. The selection process will be adjusted accordingly in line with specifics of each IPA beneficiary.

The first step in the selection process will be the development and agreement of criteria for selection. The general outline of selection criteria will be adjusted for all participating IPA beneficiaries considering specifics. Selection criteria³⁷ for competitive selection will be divided into two groups: obligatory and additional criteria.

Obligatory criteria will be as follows:

- Local government is willing to initiate and formalize a project-based funding of CSO (or have already done so in previous phase of the ReLOaD),
- Local government is willing to co-finance CSOs projects with a minimum of 20% of the total funding it receives through the Action framework,
- Local government will continue with publishing its own public calls for CSOs (public funds) regularly.

Additional criteria could include the following:

- Existence of active civil society organizations in a territory of the local government,
- Experience of a local government and/or its readiness to allocate funding for CSOs within a separate budget line using project-based approach,
- Geographical distribution of local governments,
- Local government has a record of interaction, cooperation, and partnership with civil society,
- Local government has an adopted community development plan/strategy where local socio-economic development priorities are identified in a participatory manner with CSOs.

Other criteria for selection such as combination of urban and rural local governments or a regional selection, development level and similar might be taken into consideration. Final criteria for the selection of local governments will be tailored for each IPA beneficiary based on the specifics and inputs provided by key stakeholders. Although there are significant differences across the IPA beneficiaries in local governance structures and history of cooperation with civil society, the intention is to keep obligatory criteria identical for all participating IPA beneficiaries and to tailor additional criteria according to the local context, so to select the most suitable candidates. The aim is to attract larger local governments but also to give a chance to smaller and/or less prominent ones that demonstrate strong willingness towards more transparency, have democratic potential and determination to make a change. The final criteria will be tailored and specified for each IPA beneficiary, and approved by the Board of Partners. Where applicable, partner local governments from ReLOaD1 would be encouraged to present and transfer the knowledge gained earlier and provide mentoring role to the newly selected local governments.

Public calls for selection will be announced and promoted using various communication channels and partners' networks (newspapers/internet portals, associations of cities and municipalities, governance platforms, social platforms etc.). Open days will be organized within a public call in each participating IPA beneficiary and will serve to inform and guide interested local governments to prepare their applications.

The selection procedure will be implemented in an open and transparent manner. In each IPA beneficiary a dedicated selection committee will be nominated which will implement the evaluation and selection process. The selection committees will consist of project team/experts with potential participation of others

³⁷ Selection criteria stated here are not final and will be subject of change in line with IPA beneficiaries' specifics. They are stated here to provide overall idea about the selection process.

as observers. All the proceedings will be registered in written form in standardised evaluation reports. The final selection will be approved by the Board of Partners in each IPA beneficiary.

Preparatory meetings with the selected local governments will be organised to define the operational aspects of the Action's implementation and examine concrete needs and expectations from the Action.

Sub-activity 1.3 Assessment of existing financial mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs in selected local governments and their familiarization with the methodology for disbursement of public funds to CSOs

Implementation of this activity will consider that some of participating local governments have already adopted transparent mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs based on LOD methodology.

Assessment of existing financial mechanisms will be conducted for new partner local governments, and where needed, of the previous participants. For new local governments a thorough assessment will be implemented including the analysis of current budgetary rules and practices (from planning to implementation and monitoring provisions). The principle of needs-based preparation of budget (in this case a budget line for civil society) will be specifically examined. Past practices show that the budgets for specific sectors have often been planned on ad-hoc basis without strong connection to real needs and planning (strategic) documents. The baseline assessment will serve as a starting point for further discussions with local authorities. For local governments that already participated in earlier stage of ReLOaD, the assessment will focus on verifying their adopted procedures and examining further possibilities for improvement.

Awareness raising and presentation of benefits will be done through bilateral meetings with representatives of local governments and where possible CSOs. The meetings would ideally bring together the decision-making level in local governments as well as specialists dealing with civil society and budget. The meetings will focus on the presentation of benefits of the LOD methodology. Some of the motivation factors are: more efficient use of public funds, targeted use of funds enable addressing of concrete needs, fair competition enhances trust in government, etc.

Design of a joint workplan with partner local governments is relevant for verifying all relevant steps for this activity and reconfirming local governments' leadership commitment in relation to the mainstreaming of the methodology for disbursement of public funds to CSOs.

Sub-activity 1.4 Training and mentoring support to local governments in establishing transparent financial mechanisms for CSO financing

Same as in previous sub-activity, it will be considered that some of participating local governments have already adopted transparent financial mechanisms while newly selected ones must undergo the whole process of setting-up and implementation.

Training and mentoring support in development of financial mechanisms will focus on practical aspects of new procedures including ensuring consistency with local strategic planning. Assistance will be delivered in targeted and tailor-made manner. The project experts and local government representatives will review corrective measures which need to be taken in each step of the implementation of financial mechanisms at the local level. When necessary written procedures and instructions will be prepared.

Civil servants that are often reserved towards changes will be provided with tailored trainings related to understanding key elements of projects cycle management, participatory budgeting and all necessary steps related to implementation of the transparent financial mechanisms for funds disbursement. When and where necessary, written procedures and instructions will be prepared.

In addition, trainings will be in coherence with principles of local planning and monitoring. The experiences and the results from ReLOaD1 and LOD initiatives showed that implementation of financial mechanisms as such cannot be successful unless closely integrated into strategic and planning framework and monitoring. The financial mechanisms should be observed in a broader context, considering their alignment with the needs of final beneficiaries and overall local development plans.

Mentoring will be organised with local governments in a form of regular visits to local practitioners prior to implementation of key activities such as budget preparation, alignment with strategic development framework, planning and implementation of public call for CSOs.

In order to establish transparent financial mechanisms in new partner local governments, the Action will initiate necessary administrative procedures for institutionalization of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs. The process will be facilitated within each local government by securing adoption of bylaws by municipal assemblies/councils. The Action presupposes that the process of institutionalization will depend on the development level in each participating local government and will be aligned with the national and local regulations. It is anticipated that some local governments improve their existing formal procedures, while in some cases, greater changes and new procedures will be introduced.

Result 2/Activity 2. The capacity of CSOs and local governments to implement grant schemes and deliver good quality and gender responsive projects servicing the local community is strengthened

Sub-activity 2.1 Design of targeted grant scheme aligned with the local priorities and current needs of CSOs and their target groups

The design of local grant schemes will follow the methodological approach developed by UNDP in earlier initiatives. The local grant scheme will be published in every participating local government or clusters of local governments (Montenegro). Since one of the challenges identified in ReLOaD1 was limited alignment of CSOs' support measures with local priorities and real needs, strong emphasis will be given to this segment.

Review of local priorities, current needs of CSOs and their target groups will define a broader framework of all the grant schemes published under the Action. The process of defining priorities of a call for CSOs in every partner local government or a cluster will be inclusive. The preparation process includes different steps starting with defining local government's priority areas, as per identified strategic priorities (existing local development strategies and other relevant action plans) and needs in each community. Priorities related to the following topics will be mainstreamed throughout the call for CSOs: youth, social cohesion, social inclusion and social services for most vulnerable, gender equality, environmental protection, and human rights issues as well as the rights of minority groups, in particular the Roma.

Design and agreement of the targeted grant schemes at the local level will be done in cooperation with local counterparts. Priority areas for calls for CSO proposals will go through consultative meetings/public hearings with grassroots CSOs and citizens. Public discussions and/or public hearings that will involve civil society (as direct representatives of their constituencies and a voice of citizens) and citizens in targeted localities are essential for transparency of the process and alignment of the priority areas with most urgent needs of the citizens. Other elements of the calls for proposals will follow the proven LOD methodology.

It is foreseen that on average each partner local government/cluster³⁸ receives approximately EUR 70,000 (USD 82,000) from the Action for public call for CSOs. This amount is approximate, since the final amount will depend on the number of partner local governments in an IPA beneficiary, local governments' co-financing, absorptive capacities of targeted local governments, the level of CSO development in a certain locality and the quality of submitted project proposals. Thus, some local governments might absorb more funds/projects than others taking into account all factors.

Where necessary, the project team will organise meetings with prominent CSO representatives and local government representatives to present the plans and agree on the grounds for further cooperation within the Action. This is relevant, because in some localities civil society is not recognised as a service provider or a problem solver or a partner that could contribute to realization of strategic goals in a certain community.

Sub-activity 2.2 Implementation of tailored PCM³⁹ and project proposal preparation trainings and group mentoring for CSOs

³⁸ In case of local governments operating in clusters then, public calls for CSOs will be organised per cluster (Montenegro).

³⁹ Project Cycle Management

Delivery of tailored PCM and project proposal preparation trainings for CSOs will represent the first step in support to CSOs in preparation of their proposals. The overall training cycle⁴⁰ is designed in a logical manner with the themes being structured from basic to more advanced. The basic training will cover the main principles of PCM, present different elements of the projects and the internal logic. This will be followed by more detailed assessment of project elements (objectives, activities, results, indicators), demonstrating their internal dependence and connectivity. One segment of the training will focus on implementing practices and provisions to demonstrate the relations between project proposals and (feasible) implementation process. The trainings will apply practical and targeted approach with usage of concrete real-life examples and where possible, include solutions to the challenges caused by COVID-19 such as inclusion of digital tools in their work, etc.

As a follow-up to the trainings the Action will ensure group mentoring and direct support to the potential CSO applicants. This mechanism represents a continuation of good practice initiated in ReLOaD1. Learning from previous experiences, it was established that before finalisation of their proposals, potential applicant CSOs are facing several concrete questions and issues which later impact the quality of their project proposals. The mentoring support at this stage enables them to resolve these concrete issues and finalise their proposals. During both trainings and group mentoring concrete application forms anticipated in the public calls will be used to ensure familiarity with the methodology and application process.

Where possible the Action will join forces with other EU-funded projects to provide more capacity development assistance to CSOs interested in improving their skills and preparing better project proposals. In particular, both TACSO3 and resource centres will be contacted, and depending on their interests, plans and resources they could get involved to increase CSO capacities.

Sub-activity 2.3 Support to local governments in launching and implementing public calls for CSOs, including coherent monitoring exercise

Grant schemes will be managed by UNDP with strong participation of partner local governments. This approach should allow local governments to understand all details of this process, and by participating in it they should learn how to execute public calls for CSOs independently.

In general, there will be smaller grants in the range of ca. EUR 5,000-10,000⁴¹ (USD 5,900 – 11,700) and largest grants in the range of EUR 10,000 – 35,000 (USD 11,700 – 41,000). Still, the size of grants is to be further determined in each IPA beneficiary respecting national regulations, local governments practices, capacities of CSOs to deliver and previous experience (from ReLOaD1). In this context, it will be necessary to factor in the maximum number of CSO projects that can be feasibly managed and monitored by project teams in each IPA beneficiary. UNDP will provide a basic training on implementation of calls for CSO proposals, basics of project management and evaluation of project proposals. Assistance to the evaluation commissions will focus on procedures in the selection of project proposals by presenting in detail the evaluation criteria and providing practical examples and exercises on evaluation.

Supporting the publication of public calls for CSO proposals and information campaign – partner local governments will be conducting public calls for CSOs that are to be open, on an equal basis to all formally registered CSOs⁴², while the activities of awarded CSOs will be implemented on the territory of the respective locality. The focus of the grant scheme will be on local/grassroots' CSOs. In cases where CSOs' capacities are weak, partnerships between well-established and larger CSOs (from other parts of a country/territory) with local grassroots' CSOs will be promoted. Specifics will be decided on a case-by-case basis for each IPA beneficiary.

The project team will assist in promoting the public calls for CSO proposals. It is anticipated that an Open Day (information session) will accompany each call.

40 Trainings for CSOs in PCM and proposal writing are 2-3 days long, depending on specifics in each IPA beneficiary.

41 A grant scheme for grassroots CSOs (small CSOs) with grants size EUR 2,000-5,000 (USD 2,341 – 5,852) will be organised in Serbia.

42 Decision on CSO eligible to apply for public calls for CSOs in partner local governments will depend on IPA beneficiaries' specifics and endorsed by Board of Partners in IPA beneficiary.

The calls for proposals are expected to be open for 4 weeks as no major increase of interest was noted in ReLOaD1 when the deadlines were extended to 5 or 6 weeks. Still the decision will depend on the practices and experience in each IPA beneficiary.

Upon the closure of the public calls, the project team will provide support to and ensure quality control of the work of the evaluation commission. The selection will be made by the representatives of local governments, ReLOaD2 project team and with the involvement of representatives of the civil society. Arrangements related to the composition of the evaluation commission, especially participation of CSO representative(s)⁴³ will be organised in line with national laws and agreement with the EUDs and other Board of Partner members in each IPA beneficiary to avoid any potential conflict of interest. The evaluation will be implemented in line with the predefined evaluation criteria and an evaluation report will be prepared for each public call for CSOs. The final list of CSOs awarded under the grant scheme will be approved by the Board of Partners before the signing of contracts. A specific training/crash course will be organised for members of evaluation committees. In addition to the general procedure and key steps during evaluation, the criteria will be presented in detail with practical examples and evaluation exercises.

Signing ceremonies for awarded CSOs⁴⁴ will be organised either in each locality or as a joint event in each IPA beneficiary recognising awarded projects and providing visibility to the Action.

Aside of the formal marking of the CSO projects, the project team will organise implementation meetings with the awarded CSOs and provide them with key information related to the key rules related to implementation of their projects such as procurement, reporting, visibility, etc. These sessions will involve local governments representatives as partners in the Action.

Monitoring of grant awarded CSO projects will be carried out as proved extremely relevant and successful in ReLOaD1. Through the monitoring exercise, local government representatives will get additional insights on transparent implementation of local funding mechanisms. By monitoring different aspects of implementation, including financial management, the local governments are achieving higher level of compliance with efficient accounting practices and budgetary rules. In addition, efficient monitoring provides guidance for implementing CSOs as on-the-job coaching. During monitoring field visits CSOs are coached on different issues related to implementation of their projects and/or other challenges they face such as planning, transparent hiring and procurement practices, visibility, etc. The monitoring exercise will be combined with mentoring support to CSOs envisaged during implementation of their projects.

Sub-activity 2.4 Mentoring support for CSOs awarded under the grant scheme

In addition to ensuring that the procedural requirements were respected throughout the implementation, the mentoring is a strong capacity building tool for CSOs. The Action will invest efforts into mentoring of awarded CSOs which will result in larger benefits for CSOs. The benefits are not only related to the efficiency of project implementation and ensuring compliance with procedural requirements, but also to building up internal capacities of CSOs to better respond to the needs of their constituencies.

Selection of the pool of mentors will be based on anticipated needs of the CSOs. All the mentors will have previous experiences in working with CSOs on project management (ideally also financial management). In each of the IPA beneficiaries a dedicated pool of mentors will be activated in line with specific needs.

Mentoring support will be implemented in line with needs of CSOs. CSOs often have relatively limited experiences with the implementation of project initiatives, hence any assistance in this sense will be important. The mentors will work on general capacities of these CSOs aiming to overcome the (earlier

⁴³ Participation of CSO representative(s) in the evaluation commission will be specified for each IPA beneficiary, and confirmed by EUDs and Board of Partners. To avoid potential conflict of interest, participation and the role of CSO representatives will take into consideration, where applicable, national regulations, existing practices as well as project team and Board of Partners' recommendations. In a certain cases (North Macedonia) CSO representatives will have observer role without the possibility to apply to the open calls, while in others, a CSO representative(s) will have same role as other evaluation commission members.

⁴⁴ UNDP will sign a contract (Low Value Grant Agreement – LVGA) with each awarded CSO.

identified) challenge of limited sustainability of grassroots organisations. Thus, the mentors will, in close cooperation with monitoring support, work with CSOs on their daily challenges such as procurement or hiring procedures. In addition, they will also provide support in defining their long-term strategic positions, objectives and their relation to the target groups. The mentoring exercise will be systematically registered as brief reports from mentors will be required. The reports might include: examples of discrepancies within CSOs, mitigation approaches taken by mentors, reviews of good and bad practice examples, etc. As an important factor in building capacities of especially grass-root civil society organization is public relations support for key staff within CSOs. Training will help them to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge on good practices and effective methods of planning, development and implementation of PR strategies and plans within the organization.

Result 3/Activity 3. Capacity of local authorities and CSOs to generate greater civic and youth engagement in local affairs is enhanced

Sub-activity 3.1 Implementation of youth community and civic engagement activities

Despite of general reluctance of young people to involve in civic issues, their propensity for involvement rises with their own community representatives or youth organisations/institutions. While external interventions (outside of a community) can be beneficial as a support, trust within the community seems to be the main motivator for stronger involvement. ReLOaD2 will aim at identifying youth community leaders (organisation and individuals) which will promote engagement and implementation of youth initiatives at the level of their communities.

Selection process of youth community leaders will be based on their position within the community, competencies and gender. Selection will be conducted with a support from local governments, specifically departments dealing with youth. Local youth councils and/or youth associations, where exist, will be encouraged to nominate their representatives. The selection will be facilitated by the partner local governments and the project team. Existence of clear selection criteria including strong involvement of young people is a prerequisite for selection. The project team will ensure fair distribution and selection of youth community leaders respecting the principals of gender equality but also offering equal opportunity to young people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. In some partner localities, where necessary, a preceding step will include an assessment of partner local governments to tailor the intervention to the exact needs and specifics related to community engagement of youth.

The selection process is expected to yield at least one youth community leader in each partner local locality. Community leaders will work (on a voluntary basis) in line with relevant legislation in each IPA beneficiary.

Initial training on their role and facilitation of the forums and discussions will be provided from the Action and subsequent mentoring support will be delivered through the implementation of youth support activities.

Organizing thematic forums to identify issues vital for youth in local communities will encourage the youth to take part in community affairs and work closer with local authorities. Thematic forums will be organised around the issues relevant for a specific community/surrounding. Youth community leaders will be engaged to facilitate forums and discussions along with local government official in charge of cooperation with youth (where available). Since the aim of this task is to engage youth in systematic manner, tools and techniques such as creative thinking, strategic planning and innovative engagement will be promoted. Possible topics for the thematic forums are voluntarism, involvement of youth in local affairs (governance and leadership), integration of and support to vulnerable groups, mechanisms of inter-community support, etc. Forums will be differentiated depending on the list of priorities relevant for that local community and general interest. Specific criteria for selection of any proposed action, or solution to the identified priorities, is high level of community engagement and volunteer work. Additionally, areas that might not be suitable for resolving through this type of community actions will be nominated as specific priority areas under the public call for CSOs. This should boost motivation of participating youth by crating higher confidence in significance of such engagement (see A3.3 for details).

Implementation of concrete youth initiatives will materialise the findings from the thematic forums and discussions in partner localities and it will include at least two initiatives per locality. The project team will, in close cooperation with partner local governments and forum participants, nominate a CSO closely related

to youth, to lead and administrate the implementation of youth initiatives. It is expected concrete youth initiatives to range from refurbishment of youth centres or schools, cleaning local rivers and parks, restoration of playgrounds or similar social areas, support to youth (people) with disabilities, etc. Key principle is massive volunteering and larger voluntary engagement of youth.

Sub-activity 3.2 Vocational training, internship and first job experience support for youth

This activity will be implemented with assistance of external service providers but also include close cooperation with local, and where necessary national actors (employment offices, labour and employment agencies, etc). Close coordination with external service providers will be maintained by the project team. Additionally, given the specifics in each IPA beneficiary, the tasks under this activity will be implemented with different intensity across the region as indicated below.

Further development of youth skills through vocational training and soft skills training aims to enhance youth skills in line with the market needs and enable young people to be more competitive on the market. The execution of this task will depend on local circumstances and thus be adjusted to local needs. For example, in Serbia the training will be streamlined towards the IT industry since it is indicated as the most prosperous for future employment. On the other hand, in Kosovo the training will target disadvantaged youth, in particular young women in rural areas. In the similar manner support in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be directed toward specific needs of youth in partner local governments. The preparation for this task will include the review of situation in partner local governments and consequent tailoring of the intervention. In parallel, service providers will be identified and included in the training process with renowned methodology and training curricula for both vocational training as well as for soft skills training. The vocational training ensures greater employability of youth while soft skills training (e.g. CV/resume writing training and job interview preparations training, etc.) increases youth competitiveness. For each of these activities training plans will be developed and target groups selected in close cooperation with local partners. The approach will be standardised, as much as possible, throughout the region, to enable monitoring and comparison of results.

This activity will be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia. It will not be implemented in Albania, Montenegro or North Macedonia due to overlaps with already existing initiatives or necessity to involve a significant number of new stakeholders at national level which is not realistic given the financial and operational scope of this activity.

Implementation of tailored internship scheme will provide an opportunity for the youth to gain experience in real working environment and gain skills to future jobs and career. Same principles for provision of opportunities for youngsters will be respected while the modality for execution will be adjusted to local specifics in order to achieve higher efficiency. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the activity aims to achieve multiple gains foreseeing to place participants in local government administrations. Besides their regular engagement they would also support ReLOaD2 team in relation to planned youth related activities. Similar approach is planned in Serbia with engagement of youth in local governments, through the national UN Youth Volunteer model.⁴⁵ The scheme will be designed for placement of young men and women in local government institutions. As for Montenegro, the activity will include an assessment of actual and most current needs in target local governments before executing an open call for the internship. The support in Montenegro is intended to be directed toward smaller and more rural local governments and implementation modality will be similar to the one in Serbia. Cooperation with relevant national authorities (Employment offices and agencies, and other UNDP projects⁴⁶ etc) will be introduced with greater intensity level as in Kosovo where the scheme will rely on cooperation with national authorities in this regard in all phases of the intervention. Internship duration⁴⁷ will be aligned to IPA beneficiary specifics (law requirements and practices) and funding. It will be implemented in all IPA beneficiaries except Albania and

⁴⁵ United Nations Volunteers model is already proven through cooperation with the sister agency United Nations Volunteers which already implemented the Youth Internships Program with unique and innovative design.

⁴⁶ UNDP Kosovo- Active Labour Market Programmes for Youth.

⁴⁷ Bosnia and Herzegovina - 12 months, Kosovo - 3 months, Montenegro - 9 months, Serbia – 9 months.

North Macedonia since both have intensive governmental or UNDP and other international interventions in the area where ReLOaD envisages only limited engagement.

Activities related to a first job experience will be executed only in Kosovo as it was identified as the sole location where such intervention, is worthwhile. Young women and men, who graduated with minimum of bachelors' degree, will be given the opportunity to obtain their first job experience by volunteering in the programmes/activities of CSOs, local governments or others depending on the needs. The work will enable them to gain the first job experience and increase their employability. Aside of knowledge and experience gains, their work will be financially compensated in accordance with the relevant regulations and practices.

Selection of young people for any of these activities will, aside of basic criteria for selection, take into consideration gender aspect as well as whether young people belong to the vulnerable groups, especially young people with disabilities, those coming from poor families, minority groups, and similar.

Monitoring of results of training, internship and first job experience has been identified as significant challenge in implementation of similar initiatives financed from central level (example of National Employment Service initiatives in Serbia). In order to improve performance, the project team will promote systematic and standardised monitoring. This will enable comparison between different trainings/practices in IPA beneficiaries. Assessment of progress will also help identifying eventual gaps in the system, thus providing valuable feed-back for future planning of such initiatives.

Sub-activity 3.3 Implementation of specific targeted youth project support

In addition to the activity 3.1, where youth and community engagement activities will be supported directly, the areas that might not be resolved through this type of actions will be nominated as specific priority areas within the Action's grant schemes and public calls for CSOs (as a specific LOT) or within a separate and specific public call for youth.⁴⁸

Rules and procedures will be based on standard methodology with differentiated eligibility and priority areas targeting youth and youth organisations. Eligible youth projects will include wide range of youth activities in line with the priorities defined through the youth community forums and public consultations executed under the 3.1 activity (explained above). Awarded projects will have strong community engagement and volunteering elements.

Evaluation procedure and selection of projects will follow the procedures which generally apply for local CSO grant scheme (following transparent principles and guidance provided in the methodology), with envisaged tailoring to IPA beneficiary specifics. The Action will favour youth projects and it will be opted for 20% ca. of all awarded CSO projects to be committed to youth.

Monitoring and mentoring support in implementation of financed projects will be provided in the same manner as for other funded initiatives. It is nevertheless expected that youth projects would require more support through mentoring and support by the ReLOaD team. It will be respected and thus ensure results that could boost role of youth in local communities and their perception in local communities could be further strengthened.

Result 4/Activity 4. Regional networking and dialogue among civil society and local governments across the Western Balkans is enhanced

Sub-activity 4.1 Organisation of thematic forums and events for direct exchange between participating local governments, CSOs and other stakeholders at the regional level

Regional knowledge sharing events (conferences) aim to bring together practitioners for in-depth, targeted discussions on emerging issues, challenges, innovations, and practices from the Western Balkans. Topics are to be related to the (local) governments - CSO affairs with purpose to enable exchange of experience and lessons learned. The experiences from ReLOaD1 show significant benefits of the regional meetings and forums as well as needs for more specific and technical discussions that would bring together entities and individuals dealing with similar issues. One of the thematic forums could also serve as a thematic event for

⁴⁸ IPA beneficiary specifics will be taken into consideration and the public calls will be tailored to fit all specific requirements.

local governments, their coordinators and awarded CSOs for discussions on existing ReLOaD2 practices, experiences and lessons learned. Also, these events are complementary to the regional (digital) thematic platform which discussions will be aligned.

Selection of themes to be addressed will derive from the challenge's civil society, local governments and other key stakeholders face. The preference will be given to the issues that are common to several or all participating IPA beneficiaries as well as one of the focuses of the Action - youth. The themes will be defined in cooperation with participating bodies and stakeholders and EU.

As a general rule, CSOs, local governments, central level policy makers and institutions, professional organisations, academia and other stakeholders' dealing with specific issues will be invited to participate. In addition, participation of experts in specific area will enable in-depth discussion and provide a possibility for development of concrete conclusions and recommendations. Forums' discussions will be presented in the form of conclusions. If relevant official proposal to policy making level will be done. Regional events will be organised in IPA beneficiaries on rotating principle and convened once a year over the course of the Action.

The Action will specifically consider the issue of COVID-19 and related restrictions. Consequently, the project team will utilise all available tools to respect restrictions related to gatherings in larger groups, traveling, etc. Some of thematic forums and events might be organised online in order to ensure regular flow of information and exchange but also to enable our key stakeholders being in contact and discussing solutions related to supporting civil society in the times of COVID-19 and/or similar challenges.

Sub-activity 4.2 Enhancing digital thematic platform facilitating virtual knowledge sharing and communication at the regional level

Regional knowledge sharing platform was established within ReLOaD1. The mechanism proved efficient for promoting regional coordination and communication, nevertheless more entities should be attracted to participate. Strong attention will therefore be given in this Action to further mainstream the platform by local and central authorities, CSOs and networks, academia, etc. This will add to the quality of exchange and final impact. The digital platform also serves as an interactive repository of information where all interested parties could find regulations, analyses, strategic documents, or regulatory framework related to civil society from IPA beneficiaries. In addition to serving as interactive repository of information, the platform will also feature interactive discussions on specific topics of interest to the members (series of thematic discussions to be agreed among the members), as well as stories providing case studies and hands-on experiences. Identification of thematic priorities and issues will be derived from each IPA beneficiary, collecting inputs from ReLOaD practices, experience and lessons learned, steering and advisory bodies, partner local governments, civil society etc. Special attention will be given to the critical issues of the Western Balkans region such as youth, shrinking of civic space and regional cooperation. Other specific issues will surely be considered depending on the stakeholders' inputs.

Dialogue thematic platform will encourage policy dialogue. By showcasing positive developments throughout the region, some of the conclusions and suggestions would ideally result in incentives for improvement of legislative and/or institutional support to civil society or improvement of existing cooperation between government and civil society.

Nonetheless, the digital platform will be utilised to further present and communicate results of CSO projects awarded through the Action as well as and other cases from partner local governments that are demonstrating positive results from cooperation with civil society.

The project team will facilitate exchange within the key stakeholders in the region. It is planned that each thematic area is given a facilitator. Learning from previous experiences it is crucial that the participating CSOs and local government practitioners are encouraged and regularly supported in their discussion and contributions.

For the purposes of enhancing and multiplying effects of the virtual knowledge sharing, the Action will involve other players and existing platforms such as RYCO and RCC in order to avoid duplication but also to focus on mainstreaming this platform as a space where key information and contacts could be established.

Sub-activity 4.3 Design and implementation of a pilot regional support CSO grant scheme for multi-beneficiary participation/partnerships

To further enhance regional cooperation, the introduction of a new pilot regional support scheme for CSOs is proposed. The scheme would support CSOs and thematic CSO regional networks. Basic eligibility criterium is location of implementation (a minimum of two IPA beneficiaries included) as well as participants from different IPA beneficiaries (basic eligibility criteria). The scheme is complementary to the activities of regional platform and forums for exchange and it provides concrete financial support to joint initiatives.

Design of a pilot regional CSO support scheme will be based on challenges identified for several or all IPA beneficiaries using previous UNDP experience from other regional programmes. Main focus of the regional CSO support grant scheme is youth and its needs. It is anticipated that awarded projects include activities such as: community actions and volunteering, building capacities of youth, awareness raising, experience exchange, informal education, trainings, etc. The final themes will be defined and approved by the Project Board.

Implementation of the regional public call for CSO proposals and evaluation will in principle follow the Action's methodological approach taking into account regional specifics. It remains to be decided whether the call would be fully open or somewhat restricted. In this latter case, a prior short-list of potential CSO or CSOs networks would be drafted and the process would be steered to achieve maximum effect. The evaluation will be implemented based on pre-defined standardised criteria such as: relevance and coherence of the project design, experiences and competencies of candidates, etc.

Monitoring and support to the awarded regional projects will be executed in the similar way as other awarded projects. Awardee projects will be supported in all aspects of implementation.

III. 2 Methodological approach

The overall methodology is based on the previously developed model in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also previous phase of the ReLOaD programme where the principal model has already been tested and altered in line with specifics of IPA beneficiaries across the Western Balkans region. Thus, the methodological approach is rather similar with improvements recognised over the course of ReLOaD1 implementation.

A model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs by local governments or the Methodology for Transparent Allocation of Public Funds to CSOs (known as LOD methodology)⁴⁹ aims to assist local governments to use public funds planned for CSOs in a transparent and development-oriented manner, recognising the local needs and embracing a project-based approach. As said above, the model had already been tested and adjusted to fit the national regulations, practices and other particularities of IPA beneficiaries.

Important factors determining implementation:

- Involvement of IPA beneficiaries that demonstrate different levels of development in regard to civil society including existing regulations and practices on local and central level,
- Complex set of activities with a large number of different partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders targeted,
- Political situation in the region that influences enabling environment for civil society and in general slows down democratisation processes,
- Fiscal impact of COVID19 to local governments resulting with cutting public spending for civil society and focusing on new urgencies.

The Action embraces six IPA beneficiaries of the Western Balkans region and Turkey (participating in exchange of knowledge and regional forums).

⁴⁹ Methodology for Allocation of Funds to Civil Society Organizations for the full practical guide see the following link: http://www.ba.undp.org/content/bosnia_and_herzegovina/en/home/library/poverty/lod-methodology-for-allocation-of-funds-to-civil-society-organiz.html

Implementation of activities will be adapted to the concrete needs and in particular to the level of capacities at the local level. This specifically relates to:

- i. policy and regulatory framework that differs across the Western Balkans region, where some of the participating IPA beneficiaries have significantly advanced their regulatory frameworks⁵⁰ for civil society on a central level and their implementation at the local level;
- ii. different approach to selection of partner local governments - IPA beneficiaries might apply somewhat different approach in selection of participant local governments and other procedural steps, depending on the requirements from EU Delegations and other circumstances such as geographical (regional) dispersion, etc.. The methodology of work will be adapted to these different preferences and specifics while the key obligatory criteria will remain.
- iii. type and intensity of other relevant interventions funded by EU and other donors - the Action will deploy its support considering other initiatives and will ensure synergies where possible.

The Action will continue to create conditions for competitive project-based approach to local government funds disbursement in line with the replication model and existing regulations, while at the same time, motivating CSOs to professionalize and become better service providers when competing for these funds. Besides, anchoring the transparent project-based funds disbursement approach and mainstreaming the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, it will improve utilization and transparency of local governments' grant schemes. Experiences from ReLOaD1 will be fully utilised especially in terms of supporting capacities and partnerships between local governments and CSOs.

The Action will continue to seek, as much as possible, to involve participating local governments and their communities to ensure: i) tailoring of the assistance to the specific circumstances and needs, ii) stimulating local government-CSO collaboration within targeted localities and maximizing usage of municipal funds for meeting local priorities by applying a competitive project-based approach, iii) promotion of regional networking and exchange of practices across the targeted countries and specific localities.

Mechanisms for disbursement of funds foreseen for CSO project-based activities must be inclusive for civil society and the citizens and fully aligned with local service needs and strategic priorities. Capacity building and technical assistance will be provided to partner local governments and CSOs in accordance with results of conducted needs assessments. It will include, among others, training, on-the-job coaching, formal and informal exchange of lessons learned, as well as legal advice in developing regulatory framework for transparent mechanism for CSO funding. Capacity assistance will include new modalities such as mentoring to both civil society but also local government practitioners. Also, local governments will, through the Action's grant scheme not only learn by doing about the benefits of this approach, but also be trained for the full implementation and management of the grant scheme.

The Action will take into consideration how the gender equality and social inclusion, especially people with disabilities and their rights are promoted and provide additional efforts to promote the importance of these topics within local communities. Important focus will be youth, their position, involvement and needs and they will have special attention of the Action in all IPA beneficiaries.

While working primarily at the local level, the Action will seek to establish sound linkages with strategic and legislative frameworks of higher government levels that deal with CSOs. The Action will build up potentials for scalability through the national counterparts. Already established partnerships with central authorities, offices for collaboration with civil society, the Associations of Cities and Municipalities, civil society networks and resource centres and prominent CSOs, will be remain and where possible extended to anchoring transparency in public spending and further promotion of the Methodology for Transparent Allocation of Public Funds for CSOs.

Regular experience and lessons learned sharing activities will be an integral part of the regional component ensuring information flow and exchange of practices within the Western Balkans countries. Furthermore, to

⁵⁰ Kosovo and Montenegro developed quite comprehensive regulations (regulator or law) adopted on a central level regulating funding to civil society and other issues.

increase the impact of the Action, close synergies will be ensured with other EU-funded and UNDP-implemented interventions in the field of civil society, local governance and local development.

III. 3 Target groups, beneficiaries

The Action tackles a range of target groups and final beneficiaries which all have their role in the context of the Action's objectives and broader civil society objectives. The target groups are:

- **Local governments in the Western Balkans region.** Local governments are one of the key actors in providing CSOs with financial resources and framework conditions for their functioning. Support to civil society is often a low priority at the local level in the Western Balkans and local governments are often neglecting the importance of this area. The common challenges are the absence of a strategic vision, limited financial resources and limited capacities.
- **CSOs in the Western Balkans region.** Civil society is somewhat neglected in the Western Balkans, occasionally even deliberately set-aside. This results in a limited performance of CSOs and impact on their target groups. On the other side, CSOs are also struggling in defining their strategic objectives, strengthening linkages with their target groups and positioning themselves in a long-term strategic manner.
- **Youth in the Western Balkans region.** This group is facing significant challenges due to slow progress and limited perspectives of the region. Approximately half of the youth would be prepared to leave the region for better opportunities abroad (mainly EU) should they have a chance.

The final beneficiaries as understood by this Action are:

- **Citizens and communities at the local level** which are natural beneficiaries from activities and efforts of CSOs, particularly of grassroots CSOs. A range of activities and themes normally implemented by CSOs provide solutions to the needs of individuals and groups at the local level. In the absence of a systematic policy set up and with internal challenges within CSOs, only limited impact on the final beneficiaries is achieved.

The following table presents the relation between specific needs and constraints of target groups, final beneficiaries, and the planned Action's interventions.

III. 4 Geographical area of intervention and territorial demarcation with other relevant interventions (if relevant, particularly for local/regional/area-based programmes)

This Action builds on and scales up the experiences of the ReLOAD1 supported by the EU. As a regional initiative, the Action is implemented throughout the WB:Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

III.5 Resources Required to Achieve the Expected Results

The total budget of the Action is USD 15,064,060.98 where requested **EU financing** amounts to USD 13,531,470.01 (89.83% of the total budget) and **co-financing by UNDP and local governments** stands at USD 1,582,590.98. Direct eligible attributable to the EU costs of the Action are at USD 12,646,233.65 while indirect costs of 7% amounts to USD 885,236.35. Indirect costs of the total budget also include 5% of indirect costs against local governments contributions.

Financial resources allocated for programmatic activities amount to approximately 73.71 % of the Action budget at USD 11,104,111.52 with following distribution along the six Action results:

- Result 0 – approximately 5.07 %
- Result 1 – approximately 4.55 %
- Result 2 – approximately 37.72 %
- Result 3 – approximately 22.25 %
- Result 4 – approximately 4.12 %

Detailed activity-based budget of the Project is enclosed in **Annex 1**.

III. 6 Partnerships (stakeholders' engagement)

Action anticipates and requires involvement of a broad range of stakeholders. They include local governments, central bodies, professional institutions, civil society, other EU-funded interventions, etc. Stakeholders' involvement will be ensured through their participation in activities and also partners' and advisory bodies.

Partner LGs will be selected through a competitive and transparent process in all participating IPA beneficiary. Open call for participation, including predefined and specific set of criteria, will be published in each IPA beneficiary. Selection criteria will be developed based on the principal model used under the ReLOaD and the particular experiences and existing local governance interventions implemented by the UNDP Country Offices in the Western Balkans region.

Apart from partnering with LGs, the Action will further utilise cooperation with relevant state and other institutions in each IPA beneficiary. Some of these institutes include ministries with the portfolio in human rights, justice, local administration, civil society, EU integration etc. but also Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia or entity Associations of Municipalities and Cities in BiH.

III. 7 Transversal themes: gender equality, social inclusion, human rights, disaster risk reduction

Gender equality

The Project will seek to ensure that **women and men are equally included** in and benefit from its activities. It will track changes by collecting data for **sex-disaggregated indicators** where possible and relevant. The Project will make efforts to voice, engage and support women leaders at all government levels and CSO levels. The Project will facilitate and promote equal participation of women and men in all activities ensuring equal benefits for male and female from improved government and CSO cooperation and public services.

Social inclusion

Recognising that inclusive societies are more likely to be peaceful and stable, the Project will seek to enhance social inclusion in all relevant activities, paying particular attention on ensuring social-sensitivity in service delivery. In the specific Project context, priorities related to the following topics will be mainstreamed throughout the call for CSOs: youth, social cohesion, social inclusion and social services for most vulnerable, gender equality, environmental protection, and human rights issues as well as the rights of minority groups, in particular the Roma.

Resilience to natural disaster shocks and crisis

By encouraging and supporting cooperation between local governments and CSOs, as well as overall shift of funds disbursement by using transparent financing mechanism the Project will contribute to more effective addressing the issues in local communities and **monitoring and more coordinated and timely response** to natural disasters and crisis (such as, for example, floods, the COVID-19, fires, etc.), including from view of the most vulnerable population groups.

III. 8 Innovation and untraditional approaches, as well as potential link with the Accelerator Lab

Project will build upon results achieved in ReLOaD 1 in BiH. Most importantly, project will expand the number of LGs included in Go Green application (first application in BiH that locates green islands, connects citizens with the authorities, educate young people and scans waste). Go Green application was developed within the framework ReLOaD 1 and so far 14 LGs are included in this application and will contribute to digital transformation and ecological education of citizens and local authorities.

Furthermore, the project will explore innovative solutions to engage citizens and local authorities in building effective communication and cooperation. Depending on the needs of the final beneficiaries, the project will provide necessary and available digital tools for meeting those needs.

At local level the project will further support all processes of innovation and modernization and increase digitalization process wherever applicable with civil society organization as well as with local governments. Accelerator lab will be involved to provide necessary inputs.

III. 9 Synergies with other on-going or planned interventions

The Action will further utilise cooperation with other regional interventions but will explore relevant intervention on the level of each IPA Beneficiary. However, due to its regional format ReLOaD2 will invest highest effort into synergising and regional initiatives active in the Western Balkans region. The areas covered by the Action were recognised by the EU and other donors as very important for further development of Western Balkans region, therefore other initiatives are either active in the moment or are planned in the future. UNDP has implemented close review of current and planned initiatives to identify potential synergies with the ReLOaD2. The key principle of coordination work will be establishment of contacts with all relevant (regional and central) initiatives in the inception period and preparation of proposal for joint conduct. The exchange of information and coordination will continue through the implementation period. The overview of complementary regional initiatives is presented in continuation.

Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey (TACSO3) is a regional project funded by the EU that improves capacities and strengthens the role of civil society organizations. The project assists CSOs to actively take part in democratic processes in the region, and it also stimulates an enabling environment for civil society and pluralistic media development. TACSO is, like ReLOaD2, part of the Civil Society Facility (CSF) and provides support to CSOs in similar geographical area. TACSO holds strong role in creating coherent support to civil society development in the region through services and assistance provided. Thus, mutual indirect cooperation is expected with TACSO. ReLOAD1 also strongly cooperated and coordinated with TACSO thus TACSO3 will be invited to assume different roles in ReLOaD partner or advisory bodies. They are more policy oriented with work on higher government levels than ReLOaD2 and thus it seems to be significant possibilities for cooperation and joint initiatives or mutual support. Direct potential synergies are also seen in work with policy making level and building of capacities of stakeholders.

Further to general cooperation with TACSO ReLOaD 2 will maintain cooperation with **Resource Centres for Civil Society Organisations** that has been set-up in IPA beneficiaries. The Centres were designed with the aim of improving the capacities of civil society organizations and informal groups in IPA beneficiaries. The Centres serve as information and networking tool for CSOs. Potential synergies with Resource Centres will be explored specifically for each IPA beneficiary as typology of their work differs slightly. Segments where cooperation can be expected are above all information campaigns and strengthening capacities of CSOs (for participation in ReLOaD2 funding initiatives).

Dialogue for the Future: Fostering Dialogue and Social Cohesion in, and between, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Republic of Serbia. The overall goal of the joint regional programme, Dialogue for the Future (DFF), is to help create more spaces for constructive dialogue between various communities, between citizens and their highest elected leaders, thus promoting peaceful coexistence, increased trust and genuine respect for diversity. This peacebuilding initiative was launched in 2014 in BiH and second phase was developed as regional initiative (2019-2021), the United Nations Country Teams in BiH, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia, are working with institutional and civil society stakeholders. The most significant field of cooperation with ReLOaD is related to DFF goals 2 (empower adolescents and youth for constructive engagement and leadership) and 4 (empowering young girls and women for greater social activism) thus possible fields of cooperation will be explored in the elements of ReLOaD supporting youth.

ROMACTED – “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level”, is a Joint Programme between the European Union (DG NEAR) and the Council of Europe. The programme is implemented by the Council of Europe’s Roma and Travellers Team and the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey, for the period from May 2017 until the end of 2020 (with likely extension). When extended programme will have a significant possibility for synergies with the ReLOaD2, in particularly in the segment of work with local governments, community, minority rights and youth engagement.

Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Platform (WBYP) is a grassroots regional youth platform implemented by Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI), together with the umbrella youth organizations of the six Western Balkans participants National Youth Congress of Albania, National Youth Council of Macedonia, National Youth Council of Serbia, High School Students Union of Montenegro, Central Youth Action Council of Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for United Nations with the support of Hans Seidel Foundation. The platform enables youth to design and implement joint initiatives, exchange ideas, consult a youth library, and built and carry outreach and lobbying action. WBYP is designed to function as a resource centre for youth in the Western Balkans. In line with WBYP mandate there will be a strong possibility for cooperation in the field of youth support and especially community engagement actions.

The **Youth Education Cooperation Fund** is a grant scheme established by The Balkan Forum, with support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which aims to foster regional cooperation and dialogue between young people in the Western Balkans, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The areas covered by the grant scheme include: education, energy, tourism, human capital and labour market. The Youth education cooperation fund supports youth with microgrants but in line with thematic areas supported ReLOaD2 will explore possibility for cooperation and synergies relevant for actions grant scheme and grant scheme for youth.

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the Western Balkans 6 participants: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs. RYCO is working on support to specific initiatives (including through financing calls for proposals), networking and building of capacities throughout the region. Through exchange of information ReLOaD2 will explore synergetic possibilities and will lesion with the RYCO team regarding youth activities.

The **Western Balkans Youth Lab Project** is the three-year EU funded and RCC implemented Western Balkans Youth Lab Project that kicked-off in January 2020 aims to provide opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making. The project is covering Western Balkans Six economies: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia strives to create a longer-term structured regional dialogue between youth organisations and national administrations focused on jointly devising policies which will increase youth participation in decision-making, to improve the overall socio-economic environment for and mobility of youth in the Western Balkans economies through different types of activities. Thus, ReLOaD2 will explore possibilities for cooperation in relation to youth community engagement.

III.10 Risks and Assumptions

This section provides an overview of potential risks that might occur during the implementation, defining them from the perspective of **probability of occurrence** and **potential impact on the Action**.

The key principles for elimination of eventual risks will be early detection through the internal monitoring system and implementation of corrective measures, based on pre-defined scenarios.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation measures
Continuation of COVID-19 influencing ability of the project team to maintain physical and direct contacts with stakeholders (Physical)	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintenance of regular contacts with stakeholders on on-line basis ✓ Adjustment to online mode for project activities, wherever possible
Political changes influencing readiness of stakeholders to contribute in the project (Political)	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotion of practical, professional and apolitical nature of proposed changes and support ✓ Maintenance of regular contacts with policy level also in situation of changes
Changes in priorities and focus of stakeholders due to potential economic crisis, following COVID-19 (Economic and Social)	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Action by definition promotes more efficient use of public funds and this assumption will be repeatedly presented ✓ Possible alignment of some of the local priorities (call priorities) to issues newly opened by health and economic crisis
Limited interest and commitment by the local governments to participate in the project (political)	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear and intensive promotion of benefits brought by the Action to any local government ✓ Extended selection pool – initial review of more candidates to select the best ones through the process
Limited interest by local governments to promote transparent mechanisms for financing and support to CSOs (political) as well as to institutionalize transparent model for funding of CSOs	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stressing through contacts with local governments the benefits of the new system ✓ Stressing the increased efficiency of funding
Personal fluctuations in local governments are lowering overall capacities; individuals that have previously passed the trainings are leaving local governments (economic and social)	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project team will promote the principle of “organisational capacities” rather than personal capacities ✓ Participant local governments will be encouraged to involve a broader scope of employees in trainings and other activities ✓ Usage of written procedures which will be available to eventual new employees will be encouraged
Inability of local governments to co-finance grant schemes due to limited budget resources (economic)	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project team will promote strategic and sustainable planning of local finances, thus giving local governments possibility for planning CSOs financing ✓ The co-financing principles will be negotiated with each local government separately (minimum 20%), considering their financial capabilities
Low interest of urban local governments to participate in the Action, specifically in	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project Team and “old” ReLOaD municipalities (from phase 1) would provide mentoring support to “new” municipalities,

cluster of municipalities/local governments (Montenegro)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cluster municipalities would be requested to sign Memorandum of Cooperation; ✓ Certain percentage of an awarded NGO/CSO project activities to be implemented within the territories of each cluster member (local government/municipality).
CSOs participating in the project do not achieve long-term sustainability (economic and social)	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project team will work on promotion of more systematic set-up of CSOs, also building their capacities for strategic planning ✓ A good proportion of the Action will be aimed at strengthening the linkages between CSOs and their target groups, which represent the basis for their sustainability.
Limited capacities for preparation and implementation of projects due to lack of seriousness and commitment (ad-hoc or voluntary based organisations) (social)	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Action will provide CSOs with a series of support trainings, including basic PCM and project preparation training ✓ Mentoring support and advice will be provided in the process of project preparation ✓ Mentoring support will be provided in the process of project implementation
Violation of procedures and consequential lack of transparency in evaluation commissions for grant projects (social)	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Action will define precise proceedings for evaluation commission, including for selection of the evaluating members ✓ Thorough monitoring of the work of evaluation commissions will be ensured from the Action
Limited interest and general reluctance of youth to participate in the Action's activities (social)	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project team will in the first instance identify community leaders and opinion makers which will promote project benefits ✓ A series of information and motivation workshops will be implemented at the start of activities ✓ The project team will develop innovative and creative tools which will attract youth
Changed regional relations limiting possibilities for regional cooperation (political)	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotion of Action's benefit at the policy level through the duration of the project ✓ Promotion of elements which are integrative rather than divisive
Continuous COVID19 preventing travel and meetings of regional stakeholders	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implementation of activities on on-line basis ✓ Development of innovative approaches to cooperation which will make the best use of available on-line possibilities
Differences in opinions or priorities between different participating IPA beneficiaries prevent efficient dialogue and implementation of joint initiatives	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project team will define in advance the areas which are of common interest for regional stakeholders and will build cooperation around them

III. 11 South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSC/TrC)

Due to ReLOaD a total of 50 partner local governments across the six participating IPA beneficiaries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) will pilot and introduce

transparent CSO financing mechanisms initiating and/or strengthening and improving the instrument of a public call for CSOs and coordinated public funds disbursement according to priority needs.

The Project is a continuation of the previous intervention and it is designed to ensure broader dissemination of similar practices through networking structures and additional utilization of the UNDP's regional resources offered by the Istanbul Regional Hub.

III. 11 Knowledge management

Since the LOD Project in BiH and ReLOaD1 have introduced significant novelties in local governance spending by developing a model for transparent municipal funding for CSOs, this approach opened space for CSOs to be recognized as service providers and, at the same time, enabled municipalities to enhance their knowledge on how to outsource different services to civil society. Vertical and horizontal integration of the mechanism for transparent funding have been initiated in both entities (Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska) in BiH.

A model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs by local governments or **the Methodology for Transparent Allocation of Public Funds to CSOs** in BiH (also known as LOD methodology) aims to assist local governments to use public funds planned for CSOs in a transparent and development-oriented manner, recognising the local needs and embracing a project-based approach.⁵¹

An interactive platform will be further utilised for purposes of **facilitating virtual knowledge sharing, advocacy and communications among members** on dialogue between local governments and CSOs, transparency and public service delivery issues/approaches.

Regular experience and lessons learned sharing activities will be an integral part of the regional networking with purposes of ensuring information flow and exchange of practices within the WB countries. Furthermore, to increase the impact of the Action, close synergies will be ensured with other UNDP-implemented interventions in the field of local governance and local development.

III.12 Use of existing country systems, mechanisms and frameworks

ReLOaD is fully embedded within the local governance system and as such, directly supports its structures, functions and strategic commitments. In this context, the Project will utilise the existing local strategic frameworks, legitimate participatory bodies, as well as the existing state partners for further enhancement.

III 13 Sustainability and Scaling Up

Sustainability of the Action will be guaranteed by the coherent design of the initial proposal and efficient implementation by competent and experienced project team. The project management part of the Action has in-built control mechanisms, such as internal monitoring system and evaluations, which will help in achieving set objectives.

Based on previous experiences UNDP has set two main assumptions related to sustainability.

- Civil Society Organisations at the local level (especially grassroots organisations) face significant challenges in achieving long-term sustainability due to limitation of capacities, lack of financing, fluctuations etc.
- Local Governments struggle with sustainability of their efforts due to ever-changing political climate and changes in perception and expectations of local population.

These two assumptions will be addressed throughout the implementation of the Action in the following manner.

Financial sustainability

Local governments are constantly facing the challenge of limited resources as they are not able to answer all the needs at the local level. In addition to that the allocations of funds are not always following systematic, strategic and transparent principles what results in decrease of efficiency and loss of funds.

The ReLOaD2 will work on systematisation and increase of transparency in local funding. In addition to that it will strongly promote the principles of regular examination of real, current needs of communities and citizens, as well as monitoring of the impact of funding. Participating local governments will through more

⁵¹ For more details on the Methodology for Transparent Allocation of Public Funds to CSOs please see section 1.3.

systematic and transparent funding be able to achieve more for the given funds. Once such principles are expanded to other areas of local financing, significant saving and better impact of local financing can be expected.

CSOs are on the other hand facing constant deficiency of funds for their operating and services. While the local grant schemes supported from the Action will not resolve long-term funding challenges, some immediate effects will surely be visible. By promoting transparent and system funding from local governments' budgets CSOs can ideally expect support in more regular and long-term basis.

Institutional sustainability

Institutional sustainability will be firstly built on introduction of transparent and efficient mechanisms for local financing (of civil society). The local governments which have adapted the LOD principles at earlier stages report significant improvement of performance and also increase in satisfaction rate from applicants and civil servants. With continuation of such approach more local governments will embrace these principles and long-term benefits provided by them.

Institutional sustainability will also be achieved through strengthening the contacts and networks within the Action. UNDP will work even stronger than previously on strengthening regional networks and contacts. Within ReLOaD2 specific funding will be provided for joint regional initiatives and also cooperation at the central level will be strongly encouraged. The Action anticipate involvement of a broader range of stakeholders which will be specifically considered and motivated to contribute to institutional sustainability of the results.

UNDP and the project team will during the implementation process try to identify local partners which might continue some of the Action's activities and efforts after the conclusion of the Action.

Policy level sustainability

Significant results were achieved within ReLOaD1 project in respect to policy level support and measures. In several cases (BiH, Kosovo) ReLOaD1 team has supported preparation and adaption of central level legislation related to CSOs or supported alignment and putting into practice these policies and their financial support. Such approach will continue in this Action, where it is planned to deliver assistance in more targeted and tailor-made manner. One specific activity of the Action is anticipating gap-assessment of central level legislation, regulation, practices, and provision of support measures in filling these gaps.

IV PROJECT MANAGEMENT

IV.1 Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

ReLOaD2 will deploy numerous measures to achieve cost effectiveness. In terms of procurement, outsourcing of services will be based on a transparent and competitive process, as well as on the value-for-money principle.

Training and capacity development assistance, where possible, will be delivered by clustering partner local governments, to ensure economy of scale. The Action will seek to utilize in-kind contribution from partners in the form of hosting venue, hospitality and transport costs for events and training. For further cost efficiency, the Action will make use of existing relevant training programmes, thus reduce cost for training. Also, the Project will constantly seek to pair up its effort and activities with other UNDP implemented intervention to increase efficiency and achieve better results.

The Action will specifically consider the issue of COVID-19 and related restrictions. Consequently, the project team will utilise all available tools to respect restrictions related to gatherings in larger groups, traveling, etc. Some of thematic forums and events might be organised online in order to ensure regular flow of information and exchange but also to enable our key stakeholders being in contact and discussing solutions related to supporting civil society in the times of COVID-19 and/or similar challenges.

IV 2 Project Management

Internal organisation

The organisational principles and structure will follow the logic of the ReLOaD1 which proved coherent and efficient in relation to the project objectives/activities/results. The organisational structure in the previous phase allowed implementation of even broader scope of support as initially anticipated. In most cases these extended efforts were aimed at monitoring of the larger number of CSOs' projects than anticipated.

The organisational structure will cover all the participating IPA beneficiaries in direct and tailor-made manor. This will be allowed by setting-up specific office in each IPA beneficiary. The offices will be able to respond to concrete needs in their environment in timely and efficient manner.

Scheme: Basic outlay of institutional organisation



Regional office will maintain overall coordination over the project activities. It will ensure efficient flow of information, knowledge and concepts between the local offices, local beneficiaries and regional context. The

Regional office/ coordinator will at the same time provide support to local offices in any specific matters and activities. The aim of the UNDP is to create **standardised, systematised and aligned support** in all IPA beneficiaries. Such approach will be important for efficient implementation as well as for efficient follow-up monitoring and evaluation (as comparison in performance and achievements will be possible).

IV 3 Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring

The Action will be monitored through the following:

Within the annual cycle

- A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed to map all essential steps and tools in assessing and reporting progress towards achieving project objectives.
- On a quarterly basis, a quality assessment shall record progress towards the completion of key results.
- Based on the initial risk analysis, a risk log shall regularly be updated by reviewing the external environment that may affect the project implementation.
- A project Lesson-learned log shall be activated and regularly updated to ensure on-going learning and adaptation within the organization, and to facilitate the preparation of the Lessons-learned Report at the end of the project.
- The Action will also conduct independent final evaluation.

Reporting

- **Inception Report** will be prepared following the 4-month inception phase.
- **Annual Narrative and Financial Reports** shall be prepared by the Project Manager and shared with the Project Board.
- **Annual Project Review.** Based on the above report, an annual project review shall be conducted during the fourth quarter of the year or soon after, to assess the performance of the project and appraise the Annual Work Plan (AWP) for the following year.
- **Final Report** will also be prepared and submitted to the Project Board at the end of the Action, incorporating the findings of the final independent evaluation.

IV.4 Visibility and communication

Visibility and promotion will represent an important part of the Action, since the activities anticipate involvement of a broad range of beneficiaries and stakeholders which need to be properly and regularly informed about the Action's proceedings. In addition, the visibility and promotion will aim at raising awareness about the issues of civil society with a broader public. UNDP and the project team will use the following channels for promotion of the Action:

- Announcements in electronic and printed media through the region,
- Paid adverts in case of calls for proposals and other announcement,
- Participation at live shows and debates on national, regional and local TV/Radio,
- Promotion through electronic and social media,
- Direct contacts with representatives of target groups, stakeholders and final beneficiaries.

The Action will ensure visibility according to the Joint Visibility Guidelines for EU – United Nations Actions in the field.⁵² The visibility activities will be executed in close cooperation between the UNDP and EU focusing

⁵² Document available at:

https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/rome/documents/eu_united_nations/ec_un_joint_visibility_guidelines_en.pdf

on outputs and the impact of the Action's results. Visibility strategy and communication plan will be basis for promoting project objectives and results. Visibility and Communication Plan is included as *Annex VI* of the EU-UNDP Contribution Agreement.

Intended Outcome as stated in the UNDAF/Country [or Global/Regional] Programme Results and Resource Framework:										
Outcome 4. By 2025, people contribute to, and benefit from more accountable and transparent governance systems that deliver quality public services and ensure rule of law.										
Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme [or Global/Regional] Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:										
Indicator 2.2f: Number of people with improved access to quality public services										
Baseline (2019): 478,791 (175,735 women).										
Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan: 1.1.2 Marginalized groups, particularly the poor, women, and people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access to basic services and financial and non-financial assets to build productive capacities and benefit from sustainable livelihoods and jobs										
Project title and Atlas Project Number: Reg onal Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD2) -Award ID: BIH10/00126501, output 00120547										
EXPECTED OUTPUT	OUTPUT INDICATORS ⁵⁴	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)					DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	FINAL	
Output To strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society and youth to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for CSOs.	1. Quality of mechanisms ⁵⁵ in place for cooperation between civil society organizations (CSC) and local governments	Project records Municipal records on execution of grant schemes for CSOs, meeting minutes, monitoring reports, CSO reports, media coverage	Baseline: Ad-hoc non-transparent, non-inclusive mechanisms for cooperation between CSOs and selected local governments exist across Western Balkans countries	2019	2 = very partially	3 - partially	3 - partially	4 – largely	Target: Harmonized, participatory, standardized and institutionalized mechanisms for public funds disbursement, exist at the local government level in each participating WB country. (2019)	Field visits Sufficient number of CSOs willing to participate in interventions of the Action. Continuing political commitment to development of civil society.
	2. Extent to which women's groups have strengthened capacity to engage in critical development and crisis related issues		2 = very partially	2019	2 = very partially	3 - partially	3 - partially	4 – largely		
	3. Extent to which youth groups have strengthened capacity to engage in critical development and crisis related issues		1 = Not adequately	2019	2 = very partially	3 - partially	3 - partially	4 – largely		

VI MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring plan

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
Track results progress	Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.	UNDP	
Monitor and Manage Risk	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken.	UNDP	
Learn	Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	At least annually	Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions.	UNDP through monitoring	
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project.	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.	UNDP	
Review and Make Course Corrections	Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.	Quarterly	Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections.	UNDP Project Team	
Project Report	A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk log with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.	Annually, and at the end of the project (final report)		UNDP, Project Team	

Project Review (Project Board)	The project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences.	Annually	Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.	UNDP, Project Board	
Total costs for monitoring already included in the Budget (5%)					753, 203

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans: [Note: monitoring and evaluation plans should be adapted to project context, as needed]

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Title	Partners (if joint)	Related Strategic Plan Output	UNDAF/CPD Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Key Evaluation Stakeholders	Cost and Source of Funding
Evaluation	UNDP	SP Outputs	UNDAF Outcome 4	2024	EU, local governments	USD 53,649

VII. MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN ⁵⁶⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Cost definitions and classifications for programme and development effectiveness costs to be charged to the project are defined in the Executive Board decision DP/2010/32

⁵⁷ Changes to a project budget affecting the scope (outputs), completion date, or total estimated project costs require a formal budget revision that must be signed by the project board. In other cases, the UNDP programme manager alone may sign the revision provided the other signatories have no objection. This procedure may be applied for example when the purpose of the revision is only to re-phase activities among years.

EXPECTED OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES	PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year				RESP. PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
			Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount (USD)
<p>OUTPUT: To strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society and youth to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for CSOs. Gender marker: GEN1</p>	<p>Activity 0 Project structures and management principles set-up for efficient support to CSOs, local governments and stakeholders</p>	<p><i>0.1 Sub-activity</i> Setting up of Project's structures in all participating IPA beneficiaries</p>	12,637	-	-	-	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	12,637
		<p><i>0.2 Sub-activity</i> Establishing of contacts and agreement on principles of cooperation with stakeholders</p>	9,565	14,130	12,658	7,819	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	44,171
		<p><i>0.3 Sub-activity</i> Setting up and supporting the work of national Board of Partners meetings and Advisory Group meetings</p>	-	-	-	-	UNDP	-	-	-
		<p><i>0.4 Sub-activity</i> Maintaining management, financial management and internal quality assurance systems</p>	174,384	181,897	182,612	169,496	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	708,388
		<p><i>MONITORING</i></p>					UNDP			
	Sub-Total for Activity 0									
	<p>Activity 1 The capacity of local governments to institutionalise transparent and gender responsive grant schemes is strengthened</p>	<p><i>1.1 Sub-activity</i> Comparative analysis of mechanisms for civil society financing and practical approaches between participating IPA beneficiaries</p>	-	59,610	-	-	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	59,610
<p><i>1.2 Sub-activity</i> Selection and preparatory work with local governments</p>		-	-	-	-	UNDP	-	-	-	

		<i>1.3 Sub-activity</i> Assessment of existing financial mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs in selected local governments and their familiarization with the methodology for disbursement of public funds to CSOs	23,641	-	-	-	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB- ACTIVITIES	26,641
		<i>1.4 Sub-activity</i> Training and mentoring support to local governments in establishing transparent financial mechanisms for CSO financing	205,607	215,567	145,518	36,195	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB- ACTIVITIES	602,887
		<i>MONITORING</i>					UNDP			
		Sub-Total for Activity 1								
	Activity 2 The capacity of CSOs and local governments to implement grant schemes and deliver good quality and gender responsive projects servicing the local community is strengthened	<i>2.1 Sub-activity</i> Design of targeted grant scheme aligned with the local priorities and current needs of CSOs and their target groups	-	-	-	-	UNDP	-	-	-
		<i>2.2 Sub-activity</i> Implementation of tailored PCM and project proposal preparation trainings and group mentoring for CSOs	58,938	150,390	136,505	4,769	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB- ACTIVITIES	350,602
		<i>2.3 Sub-activity</i> Support to local governments in launching and implementing public calls for CSOs, including coherent monitoring exercise	1,231,975	1,558,978	1,433,698	529,355	UNDP	30079/ 30071	Same as PLANNED SUB- ACTIVITIES	4,754,005

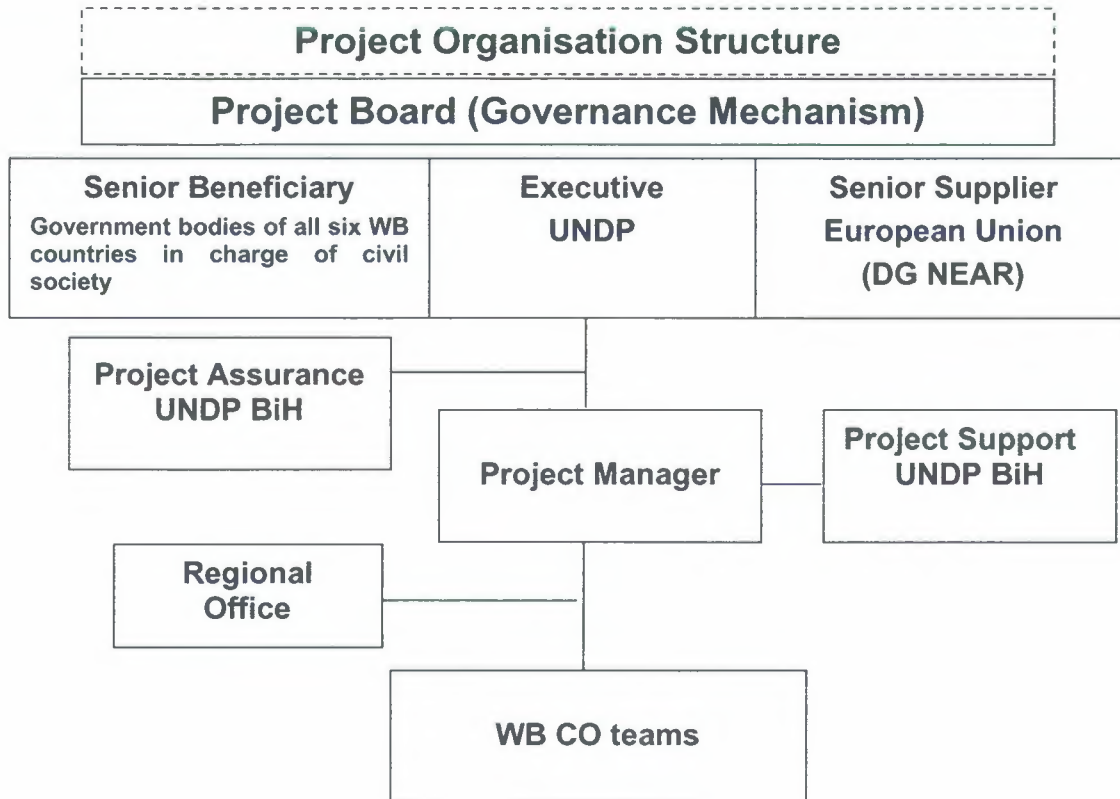
		<i>2.4 Sub-activity</i> Mentoring support for CSOs awarded under the grant scheme	3,577	192,596	199,267	182,914	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	578,354
		<i>MONITORING</i>					UNDP			
		Sub-Total for Activity 2								
	Activity 3 Capacity of local authorities and CSOs to generate greater civic and youth engagement in local affairs is enhanced	<i>3.1 Sub-activity</i> Implementation of youth community and civic engagement activities	32,189	144,289	187,208	44,564	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	408,251
		<i>3.2 Sub-activity</i> Vocational training, internship and first job experience support for youth	-	450,312	512,364	326,209	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	1,288,885
		<i>3.3 Sub-activity</i> Implementation of specific targeted youth project support	15,952	571,467	650,827	412,749	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	1,650,994
		<i>MONITORING</i>					UNDP			
		Sub-Total for Activity 3								
	Activity 4 Regional networking and dialogue among civil society and local governments across the Western Balkans is enhanced	<i>4.1 Sub-activity</i> Organisation of thematic forums and events for direct exchange between participating local governments, CSOs and other stakeholders at the regional level	57,941	67,955	137,818	82,619	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	346,334

		4.2 Sub-activity Enhancing digital thematic platform facilitating virtual knowledge sharing and communication at the regional level	5,055	13,400	13,400	5,055	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	36,911
		4.3 Sub-activity Design and implementation of a pilot regional support CSO grant scheme for multi-beneficiary participation/partnerships	59,610	59,610	59,610	59,610	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	238,440
		MONITORING					UNDP			
		Sub-Total for Activity 4								
	Evaluation (as relevant)	EVALUATION	-	-	53,649	-	UNDP	30079	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	53,649
	Activity 5 Project teams and project offices	Project Management, travel, equipment, local office and other costs	731,905	752,569	751,497	731,325	UNDP	30079/ 30084/ 4000	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	2,964,297.
	General Management Support		174,370	294,682	297,597	172,356	UNDP	30079/ 30084/ 4000	Same as PLANNED SUB-ACTIVITIES	939,005
	TOTAL									

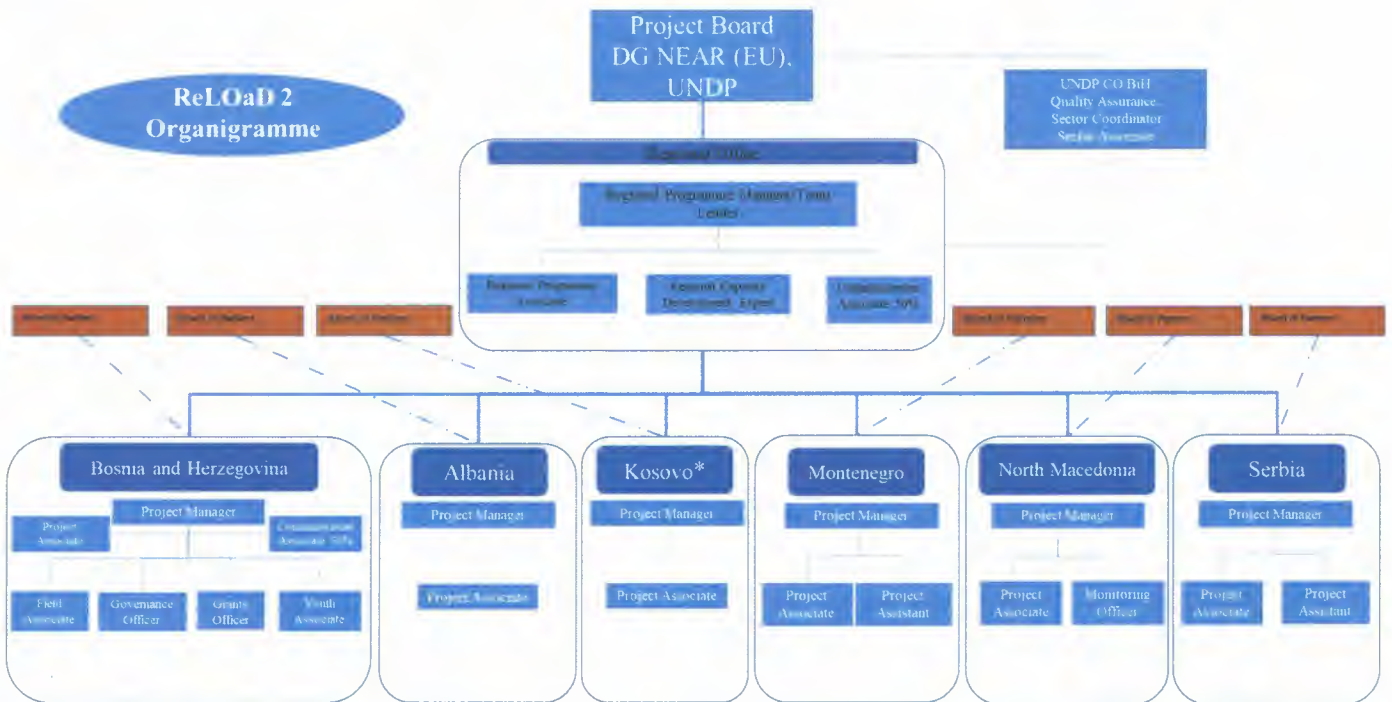
VIII. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

➤ Management arrangements

UNDP will assume full responsibility and accountability for the overall management of the Project, including monitoring and evaluation of interventions, achieving of the objectives and specified results, and the efficient and effective use of resources.



Organizational chart (organigramme):



The Action institutional structure comprises the **Project Board**, the **Board of Partners**, the **Advisory Group** (or similar advisory bodies suitable for each IPA beneficiary), the **Project Assurance**, and the **Project Team**.

The **Project Board** will be the group responsible for making, by consensus, management decisions for the Action. It will be formed immediately upon start of the Action. The Project Board meets at least once a year, or more often based on needs. The Project Board's scope of work will include project oversight, as well as regular review of work plans and reports. In addition to overseeing the Action implementation progress, the Project Board will provide strategic guidance, as well as give final approval to milestone strategic and operational matters. The Project Board ensures that required resources are committed and arbitrates on any conflicts within the Action or negotiates a solution to any problems between the Action and external bodies. The Project Board members are DG NEAR (European Union) and UNDP representatives. Furthermore, the extended **Project Board forum**, constituting the members of all Board of Partners and acting as a regional coordination function (see the details in the following section about constitution of the Board of Partners in each participating IPA beneficiary) will meet at least once a year and provide their inputs relevant for the Action strategic guidance.

Board of Partners will be established in each participating IPA beneficiary providing operational and advisory guidance to project teams.⁵⁸ The Board of Partners will provide advice to the Project Board related to project plans as well as recommendations for alterations, ensuring that all interested parties' views are considered. Members of the Board of Partners will be representatives of relevant ministry and/or other government institution in charge of cooperation with civil society, representatives of Associations of Cities and Municipalities from each participating IPA beneficiary, EU Delegation and UNDP Country Office from participating IPA beneficiaries as well as similar EU-funded initiatives such as TACSO3. Furthermore, the members of Boards of Partners from each IPA beneficiary will participate in the meetings of the **Project Board forum** at least once a year and provide their inputs relevant for project strategic guidance.

Envisaged structure of the Board of Partners:

Albania: Office of Minister of Local Issues (designated Ministry representative), Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM), Agency for Support of Civil Society, Association of Local Autonomy (ALA), EU

⁵⁸ Matters to be reviewed by the Board of Partners include (among others): approval of final criteria for selection of partner local governments, final approval of results of calls for CSO project proposals in each IPA beneficiary, etc.

Delegation to Albania, UNDP, civil society representative(s) (mandated by Advisory Group) and TACSO Albania -in the capacity of observer (non-voting member).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina (central level), Ministry of Justice⁵⁹ of the Entity of FBiH (entity level), Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Government of the Entity of RS60 (entity level), Associations of Cities and Municipalities⁶¹ of FBiH and RS, European Union Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP, civil society representative(s) (mandated by Advisory Group) and TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina - in the capacity of observer (non-voting member).

Kosovo: The Office of Good Governance of the Office of Prime Minister, Ministry of Local Government Administration, Association of Kosovo Municipalities, CiviKos62), European Union Office in Kosovo, UNDP, civil society representative(s) (mandated by Advisory Group) and TACSO Kosovo in the capacity of observer (non-voting member).

Montenegro: Ministry for Public Administration (Directorate for local self-governance and Directorate for good governance), Ministry for Sports and Youth (central level), Union of Municipalities of Montenegro, Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, UNDP, civil society representative(s) and TACSO Montenegro - in the capacity of observer (non-voting member).

North Macedonia: Ministry of Local Self-Government (central level), Association of Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Delegation of the European Union to North Macedonia, UNDP, civil society representative(s) (mandated by Advisory Group), and TACSO North Macedonia - in the capacity of observer (non-voting member).

Serbia: Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Government of the Republic of Serbia (central level), Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, UNDP, civil society representative(s) (mandated by Advisory Group), and TACSO Serbia - in the capacity of observer (non-voting member).

The **Advisory Group** (or similar advisory bodies suitable for each IPA beneficiary) will be employed in each IPA beneficiary with a purpose of providing advisory support to the **Board of Partners** ensuring regular feedback vis-à-vis the implementation of the Action and its effects on civil society and local governments. It will also share information about other relevant developments in the field of civil society and/or local governance that might influence the implementation of the Action as well as to provide other advisory services to the Board of Partners on an ad hoc basis.

Lessons learned ReLOaD1 – Board of Partner and Advisory Group

During the first phase of ReLOaD Programme it was noted that the Boards of Partners had very pro-active and supportive role in implementation. The outlay of their participation will be therefore transferred to ReLOaD2 with possible additional engagement. The Advisory Groups were somewhat less active and their members showed certain reluctance to participate in Project activities. The role of Advisory Groups will be therefore altered in the ReLOaD2, giving them more responsibility and possibility for larger involvement. Also, where applicable, more efficient alternate consultative groups instead of Advisory groups that were operational during ReLOaD1.

59 Note: this is an entity (not state) Ministry of Justice organized within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina entity. For details about the structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina please consult the following link: <https://www.oecd.org/countries/bosniaandherzegovina/46817943.pdf> (page 95).

60 Note: this is an entity (not state) Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of Republika Srpska organized within the Republika Srpska entity. For details about the structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina please consult the following link: <https://www.oecd.org/countries/bosniaandherzegovina/46817943.pdf> (page 95).

61 Considering additional foreseen activities for BiH, the role of the Associations of Cities and Municipalities of FBiH and RS will be confirmed in the inception period.

62 CiviKos Platform is a voluntary union of civil society organizations, committed to the development of a favourable environment for cooperation between Civil Society and Public Authorities.

The **Project Assurance** role supports the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent Action oversight and monitoring functions, in order to ensure the set milestones are managed and completed. The Project Assurance role is delegated by the Project Board, but it cannot be delegated to the Project Manager since the Project Assurance and Project Management roles must be separated. The Project Assurance will be performed by the **UNDP Rural and Regional Development Sector Leader in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, supported by **the Sector Associate**. The Project Assurance will ensure that the following aspects have been addressed throughout the project implementation: thorough liaison between the members of the Project Board is maintained; beneficiary needs and expectations are being met or managed; risks are being controlled; project goals and activities remain viable and fit well with the overall UNDP Country Programmes; applicable UNDP rules and regulations are being observed, as well as any legislative constraints; relevant monitoring and reporting requirements and standards are being observed; quality management procedures are properly followed; Project Board's decisions are followed and revisions are managed in line with the required procedures, etc. Additional support (quality assurance) services for Serbia and Kosovo that also include technical inputs and direction to the project team, shall be provided by assigned Portfolio Manager and Programme Coordinator.

➤ **Project team**

The **Project Team** consists of 23 staff, including the Regional Project Team and Project Teams operating in each Western Balkans IPA beneficiary. Based on the experience from ReLOaD1 and the findings from the external evaluation, composition of the project team was altered, and the team expended to manage a heavy workload and all foreseen activities.

The **Regional Project Team** (3.5 team members) will comprise the Regional Programme Manager/Team Leader, Regional Capacity Development Expert, Regional Programme Associate and Communication Associate (half-time).

Composition of national Project Teams vary depending on the size of available funds per IPA beneficiary and work distribution (number of partner municipalities).

Concretely, Project Teams in **Albania and Kosovo** will consist of a Project Manager (full-time post 48 months) and a Project Associate (full-time post 48 months) while the teams in **Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia**, based on their specifics will extend the team with additional position - Project Assistant (full-time post 48 months) in Montenegro and Serbia, and Monitoring Officer in North Macedonia.

IX. LEGAL CONTEXT

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNDP, signed on 07 December 1995. All references in the SBAA to “Executing Agency” shall be deemed to refer to “Implementing Partner.”

Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021 – 2025 endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 16 December 2020, as well as the UNDP Country Programme Document 2021-2025, endorsed by the UNDP Executive Board on 5 July 2020, represent the basis for the activities of UNDP in the country.

This project will be implemented by UNDP (“Implementing Partner”) in accordance with its financial regulations, rules, practices and procedures only to the extent that they do not contravene the principles of the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP.

X. RISK MANAGEMENT

UNDP (DIM)

1. *UNDP as the Implementing Partner will comply with the policies, procedures and practices of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS.)*
2. *UNDP as the Implementing Partner will undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the [project funds]⁶³ [UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document]⁶⁴ are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism and that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). The list can be accessed via http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aa_sanctions_list.shtml. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.*
3. *Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (<http://www.undp.org/ses>) and related Accountability Mechanism (<http://www.undp.org/secu-srm>).*
4. *UNDP as the Implementing Partner will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.*
5. *In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, UNDP as the Implementing Partner will handle any sexual exploitation and abuse ("SEA") and sexual harassment ("SH") allegations in accordance with its regulations, rules, policies and procedures.*
6. *All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.*
7. *UNDP as the Implementing Partner will ensure that the following obligations are binding on each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient:*
 - a. *Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA [or the Supplemental Provisions to the Project Document], the responsibility for the safety and security of each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and its personnel and property, and of UNDP's property in such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's custody, rests with such responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient. To this end, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall:*

⁶³ To be used where UNDP is the Implementing Partner.

⁶⁴ To be used where the UN, a UN fund/programme or a specialized agency is the Implementing Partner.

- i. *put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried;*
 - ii. *assume all risks and liabilities related to such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.*
- b. *UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.*
- c. *In the performance of the activities under this Project, UNDP as the Implementing Partner shall ensure, with respect to the activities of any of its responsible parties, sub-recipients and other entities engaged under the Project, either as contractors or subcontractors, their personnel and any individuals performing services for them, that those entities have in place adequate and proper procedures, processes and policies to prevent and/or address SEA and SH.*
- d. *Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud or corruption, by its officials, consultants, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or programme or using the UNDP funds. It will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.*
- e. *The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices and (b) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at www.undp.org.*
- f. *In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP will conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP programmes and projects. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to its (and its consultants', subcontractors' and sub-recipients') premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with it to find a solution.*
- g. *Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will promptly inform UNDP as the Implementing Partner in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud or corruption with due confidentiality.*

Where it becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI). It will provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.

- h. *UNDP will be entitled to a refund from the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient of any funds provided that have been used inappropriately, including through fraud or corruption, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Project Document. Such amount may be deducted by UNDP from any payment due to the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient under this or any other agreement. Recovery of such amount by UNDP shall not diminish or curtail any responsible party's, subcontractor's or sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.*

Where such funds have not been refunded to UNDP, the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities under this Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud or corruption, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Note: The term "Project Document" as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients.

- i. *Each contract issued by the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from it shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.*
- j. *Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project or programme, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.*
- k. *Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled "Risk Management" are passed on to its subcontractors and sub-recipients and that all the clauses under this section entitled "Risk Management Standard Clauses" are adequately reflected, mutatis mutandis, in all its sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.*

XI ANNEXES

1. **Project Quality Assurance Report - obligatory**

2. Social and Environmental Screening Template [English], including additional Social and Environmental Assessments or Management Plans as relevant. (NOTE: The SES Screening is not required for projects in which UNDP is Administrative Agent only and/or projects comprised solely of reports, coordination of events, trainings, workshops, meetings, conferences, preparation of communication materials, strengthening capacities of partners to participate in international negotiations and conferences, partnership coordination and management of networks, or global/regional projects with no country level activities) - **obligatory**

3. **Risk Analysis.** Use the standard Risk Log template. Please refer to the Deliverable Description of the Risk Log for instructions

4. **Project Board Terms of Reference and TORs of key management positions – important (once the project is awarded please also fill in Project Board membership in the link <https://stream.undp.org/oversight/project/country/BIH>)**

Annex 2. Social and Environmental Screening Template

The completed template, which constitutes the Social and Environmental Screening Report, must be included as an annex to the Project Document at the design stage. Note: this template will be converted into an online tool. The online version will guide users through the process and will embed relevant guidance.

Project Information

Project Information	
1. Project Title	Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD2)
2. Project Number (i.e. Atlas project ID, PIMS+)	001265001
3. Location (Global/Region/Country)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia
4. Project stage (Design or Implementation)	Design
5. Date	January 2021

Part A. Integrating Programming Principles to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability

QUESTION 1: How Does the Project Integrate the Programming Principles in Order to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability?

Briefly describe in the space below how the project mainstreams the human rights-based approach

The project will clearly contribute to the Western Balkans region to achieve the targets set within the **16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Peace, justice and strong institutions** - Peace, stability, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law are important conditions for sustainable development. Human right issues as well as the rights of minority groups, in particular the Roma are envisaged to be one of main topic which will be mainstreamed throughout the call for CSO. The other topic youth, social cohesion, social inclusion and social services for most vulnerable, gender equality, environmental protection

The project will work on taking inconsideration people with disabilities and their rights are promoted and provide additional efforts to promote the importance of these topics within local communities.

Briefly describe in the space below how the project is likely to improve gender equality and women's empowerment

Project will take into consideration how the gender equality as well as women's empowerment are promoted throughout the activities , additional efforts will be provided to promote the importance of these topics within local communities. Important focus will be given to promote gender equality as well as women's empowerment within youth, their position, involvement and needs

* For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to position on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. For UNDP all references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of the UN Resolution 1244/1999.

Briefly describe in the space below how the project mainstreams sustainability and resilience

The impact of the project on target groups and final beneficiaries can be expected at two levels. The project will demonstrate clear direct impact on target groups through implementation of support and financing measures. 50 local governments will be able to respond better to the needs of their citizens and civil society since the efficiency of funding will be increased. At least 300 CSOs will be involved in the project directly through training and mentoring support. The project team will work on increasing their capacities, building of long-term sustainability and perspectives, strategic planning and vision. all of this is in line with the objectives set by the Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020, in relation to the enabling financial environment which supports CSO sustainability, CSO-government cooperation mechanisms and CSO capacities.

Resilience to natural disaster shocks and crisis

By encouraging and supporting cooperation between local governments and CSOs , as well as overall shift of funds disbursement by using transparent financing mechanism the Project will contribute to more effective addressing the issues in local communities and **monitoring and more coordinated and timely response** to natural disasters and crisis (such as, for example, floods, the COVID-19, fires, etc.), including from view of the most vulnerable population groups.

Briefly describe in the space below how the project strengthens accountability to stakeholders

External bodies such as national Board of Partners and Advisory Groups will contribute to the Action and increase sustainability. The support of partner and advisory bodies proved extremely important for the implementation process. Involvement of these bodies significantly extended dimension and the reach of the project as well as allowed exchange of experiences, concepts, and knowledge. This best practice will be continued in this project. UNDP will inform its stakeholders that it has established the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) to ensure accountability to individuals and communities which responds to eventual complaints that UNDP may not be meeting its social and environmental commitments.

Part B. Identifying and Managing Social and Environmental Risks

QUESTION 2: What are the Potential Social and Environmental Risks? <i>Note: Complete SESP Attachment 1 before responding to Question 2.</i>		QUESTION 3: What is the level of significance of the potential social and environmental risks? <i>Note: Respond to Questions 4 and 5 below before proceeding to Question 5</i>		QUESTION 6: Describe the assessment and management measures for each risk rated Moderate, Substantial or High
<i>Risk Description (broken down by event, cause, impact)</i>	<i>Impact and Likelihood (1-5)</i>	<i>Significance (Low, Moderate, Substantial, High)</i>	<i>Comments (optional)</i>	<i>Description of assessment and management measures for risks rated as Moderate, Substantial or High</i>
Risk 1: ... There is a risk that representatives of local governments not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the project	I = 2 L = 2	low		The project team will promote the principle of "organisational capacities" rather than personal capacities

				Participant local governments will be encouraged to involve a broader scope of employees in trainings and other activities Usage of written procedures which will be available to eventual new employees will be encouraged
Risk 2: ... Exclusion of any potentially affected CSO stakeholders, in particular marginalized groups and excluded individuals (including persons with disabilities), from fully participating in decisions that may affect them?	I = 2 L = 2	low		Priority areas for calls for CSO proposals will go through consultative meetings/public hearings with grassroots CSOs and citizens. Public discussions and/or public hearings that will involve civil society (as direct representatives of their constituencies and a voice of citizens) and citizens in targeted localities are essential for transparency of the process and alignment of the priority areas with most urgent needs of the citizens.
QUESTION 4: What is the overall project risk categorization?				
		Low Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Potential low risks associated with Human Rights and Gender Equality principles
		Moderate Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Substantial Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		High Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	
QUESTION 5: Based on the identified risks and risk categorization, what requirements of the SES are triggered? (check all that apply)				
Question only required for Moderate, Substantial and High Risk projects.				
		<u>Is assessment required? (check if "yes")</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Status? (completed, planned)
		<i>if yes, indicate overall type and status</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Targeted assessment(s)
			<input type="checkbox"/>	ESIA (Environmental and Social Impact Assessment)
			<input type="checkbox"/>	SESA (Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment)
		Are management plans required? (check if "yes")	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	<i>If yes, indicate overall type</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Targeted management plans (e.g. Indigenous Peoples Plan, Resettlement Action Plan, others)	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	ESMP (Environmental and Social Management Plan)	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	ESMF (Environmental and Social Management Framework)	
	Based on identified risks, which Principles/Project-level Standards triggered?		Comments (not required)	
	Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind			
	Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	1. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	2. Climate Change and Disaster Risks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	3. Community Health, Safety and Security	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	4. Cultural Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	5. Displacement and Resettlement	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6. Indigenous Peoples	<input type="checkbox"/>			
7. Labour and Working Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>			
8. Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Final Sign Off

Final Screening at the design-stage is not complete until the following signatures are included

Signature	Date	Description
QA Assessor		Amra Zorlak, Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst
QA Approver		Adela Pozder Čengić, Rural and Regional Sector Leader
PAC Chair		Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov, Deputy Resident Representative

SESP Attachment 1. Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist

Checklist Potential Social and Environmental Risks		
INSTRUCTIONS: The risk screening checklist will assist in answering Questions 2-6 of the Screening Template. Answers to the checklist questions help to (1) identify potential risks, (2) determine the overall risk categorization of the project, and (3) determine required level of assessment and management measures. Refer to the <u>SES toolkit</u> for further guidance on addressing screening questions.		
Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind		Answer (Yes/No)
Human Rights		
P.1	Have local communities or individuals raised human rights concerns regarding the project (e.g. during the stakeholder engagement process, grievance processes, public statements)?	No
P.2	Is there a risk that duty-bearers (e.g. government agencies) do not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the project?	yes
P.3	Is there a risk that rights-holders (e.g. project-affected persons) do not have the capacity to claim their rights?	No
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
P.4	adverse impacts on enjoyment of the human rights (civil, political, economic, social or cultural) of the affected population and particularly of marginalized groups?	No
P.5	inequitable or discriminatory impacts on affected populations, particularly people living in poverty or marginalized or excluded individuals or groups, including persons with disabilities? ⁶⁵	No
P.6	restrictions in availability, quality of and/or access to resources or basic services, in particular to marginalized individuals or groups, including persons with disabilities?	No
P.7	exacerbation of conflicts among and/or the risk of violence to project-affected communities and individuals?	No
Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment		
P.8	Have women’s groups/leaders raised gender equality concerns regarding the project, (e.g. during the stakeholder engagement process, grievance processes, public statements)?	No
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
P.9	adverse impacts on gender equality and/or the situation of women and girls?	No
P.10	reproducing discriminations against women based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities and benefits?	No
P.11	limitations on women’s ability to use, develop and protect natural resources, taking into account different roles and positions of women and men in accessing environmental goods and services? <i>For example, activities that could lead to natural resources degradation or depletion in communities who depend on these resources for their livelihoods and well being</i>	No
P.12	exacerbation of risks of gender-based violence? <i>For example, through the influx of workers to a community, changes in community and household power dynamics, increased exposure to unsafe public places and/or transport, etc.</i>	No
Sustainability and Resilience: Screening questions regarding risks associated with sustainability and resilience are encompassed by the Standard-specific questions below		
Accountability		

⁶⁵ Prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, ethnicity, sex, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographical origin, property, birth or other status including as an indigenous person or as a member of a minority. References to “women and men” or similar is understood to include women and men, boys and girls, and other groups discriminated against based on their gender identities, such as transgender and transsexual people.

<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
P.13	exclusion of any potentially affected stakeholders, in particular marginalized groups and excluded individuals (including persons with disabilities), from fully participating in decisions that may affect them?	Yes
P.14	grievances or objections from potentially affected stakeholders?	No
P.15	risks of retaliation or reprisals against stakeholders who express concerns or grievances, or who seek to participate in or to obtain information on the project?	No
Project-Level Standards		
Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management		
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
1.1	adverse impacts to habitats (e.g. modified, natural, and critical habitats) and/or ecosystems and ecosystem services? <i>For example, through habitat loss, conversion or degradation, fragmentation, hydrological changes</i>	No
1.2	activities within or adjacent to critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, including (but not limited to) legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserve, national park), areas proposed for protection, or recognized as such by authoritative sources and/or indigenous peoples or local communities?	No
1.3	changes to the use of lands and resources that may have adverse impacts on habitats, ecosystems, and/or livelihoods? (Note: if restrictions and/or limitations of access to lands would apply, refer to Standard 5)	No
1.4	risks to endangered species (e.g. reduction, encroachment on habitat)?	No
1.5	exacerbation of illegal wildlife trade?	No
1.6	introduction of invasive alien species?	No
1.7	adverse impacts on soils?	No
1.8	harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, or reforestation?	No
1.9	significant agricultural production?	No
1.10	animal husbandry or harvesting of fish populations or other aquatic species?	No
1.11	significant extraction, diversion or containment of surface or ground water? <i>For example, construction of dams, reservoirs, river basin developments, groundwater extraction</i>	No
1.12	handling or utilization of genetically modified organisms/living modified organisms? ⁶⁶	No
1.13	utilization of genetic resources? (e.g. collection and/or harvesting, commercial development) ⁶⁷	No
1.14	adverse transboundary or global environmental concerns?	No
Standard 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks		
<i>Would the potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
2.1	areas subject to hazards such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, severe winds, storm surges, tsunami or volcanic eruptions?	No
2.2	outputs and outcomes sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change? <i>For example, through increased precipitation, drought, temperature, salinity, extreme events</i>	No

⁶⁶ See the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and its [Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](#).

⁶⁷ See the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and its [Nagoya Protocol](#) on access and benefit sharing from use of genetic resources.

2.3	direct or indirect increases in vulnerability to climate change impacts or disasters now or in the future (also known as maladaptive practices)? <i>For example, changes to land use planning may encourage further development of floodplains, potentially increasing the population's vulnerability to climate change, specifically flooding</i>	No
2.4	increases of greenhouse gas emissions, black carbon emissions or other drivers of climate change?	No
Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security		
<i>Would the potentially involve or lead to:</i>		No
3.1	construction and/or infrastructure development (e.g. roads, buildings, dams)? (Note: the GEF does not finance projects that would involve the construction or rehabilitation of large or complex dams)	No
3.2	air pollution, noise, vibration, traffic, injuries, physical hazards, poor surface water quality due to runoff, erosion, sanitation?	No
3.3	harm or losses due to failure of structural elements of the project (e.g. collapse of buildings or infrastructure)?	No
3.4	risks of water-borne or other vector-borne diseases (e.g. temporary breeding habitats), communicable and noncommunicable diseases, nutritional disorders, mental health?	No
3.4	transport, storage, and use and/or disposal of hazardous or dangerous materials (e.g. explosives, fuel and other chemicals during construction and operation)?	No
3.8	adverse impacts on ecosystems and ecosystem services relevant to communities' health (e.g. food, surface water purification, natural buffers from flooding)?	No
3.2	influx of project workers to project areas?	No
3.3	engagement of security personnel to protect facilities and property, or to support project activities?	No
Standard 4: Cultural Heritage		
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
4.1	activities adjacent to or within a Cultural Heritage site?	No
4.2	significant excavations, demolitions, movement of earth, flooding or other environmental changes?	No
4.3	adverse impacts to sites, structures, or objects with historical, cultural, artistic, traditional or religious values or intangible forms of culture (e.g. knowledge, innovations, practices)? (Note: projects intended to protect and conserve Cultural Heritage may also have inadvertent adverse impacts)	No
4.4	alterations to landscapes and natural features with cultural significance?	No
4.5	utilization of tangible and/or intangible forms (e.g. practices, traditional knowledge) of Cultural Heritage for commercial or other purposes?	No
Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement		
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
5.1	temporary or permanent and full or partial physical displacement (including people without legally recognizable claims to land)?	No
5.2	economic displacement (e.g. loss of assets or access to resources due to land acquisition or access restrictions – even in the absence of physical relocation)?	No

5.3	risk of forced evictions? ⁶⁸	No
5.4	impacts on or changes to land tenure arrangements and/or community based property rights/customary rights to land, territories and/or resources?	No
Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples		
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		
6.1	areas where indigenous peoples are present (including project area of influence)?	No
6.2	activities located on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?	No
6.3	impacts (positive or negative) to the human rights, lands, natural resources, territories, and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples (regardless of whether indigenous peoples possess the legal titles to such areas, whether the project is located within or outside of the lands and territories inhabited by the affected peoples, or whether the indigenous peoples are recognized as indigenous peoples by the country in question)? <i>If the answer to screening question 6.3 is "yes", then the potential risk impacts are considered significant and the project would be categorized as either Substantial Risk or High Risk</i>	No
6.4	the absence of culturally appropriate consultations carried out with the objective of achieving FPIC on matters that may affect the rights and interests, lands, resources, territories and traditional livelihoods of the indigenous peoples concerned?	No
6.5	the utilization and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?	No
6.6	forced eviction or the whole or partial physical or economic displacement of indigenous peoples, including through access restrictions to lands, territories, and resources? <i>Consider, and where appropriate ensure, consistency with the answers under Standard 5 above.</i>	No
6.7	adverse impacts on the development priorities of indigenous peoples as defined by them?	No
6.8	risks to the physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples?	No
6.9	impacts on the Cultural Heritage of indigenous peoples, including through the commercialization or use of their traditional knowledge and practices? <i>Consider, and where appropriate ensure, consistency with the answers under Standard 4 above.</i>	No
Standard 7: Labour and Working Conditions		
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to: (note: applies to project and contractor workers)</i>		No
7.1	working conditions that do not meet national labour laws and international commitments?	No
7.2	working conditions that may deny freedom of association and collective bargaining?	No
7.3	use of child labour?	No
7.4	use of forced labour?	No
7.5	discriminatory working conditions and/or lack of equal opportunity?	No
7.6	occupational health and safety risks due to physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial hazards (including violence and harassment) throughout the project life-cycle?	No
Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency		
<i>Would the project potentially involve or lead to:</i>		

⁶⁸ Forced eviction is defined here as the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection. Forced evictions constitute gross violations of a range of internationally recognized human rights.

8.1	the release of pollutants to the environment due to routine or non-routine circumstances with the potential for adverse local, regional, and/or transboundary impacts?	No
8.2	the generation of waste (both hazardous and non-hazardous)?	No
8.3	the manufacture, trade, release, and/or use of hazardous materials and/or chemicals?	No
8.4	the use of chemicals or materials subject to international bans or phase-outs? <i>For example, DDT, PCBs and other chemicals listed in international conventions such as the Montreal Protocol, Minamata Convention, Basel Convention, Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention</i>	No
8.5	the application of pesticides that may have a negative effect on the environment or human health?	No
8.6	significant consumption of raw materials, energy, and/or water?	No