

Funding Report Form Project Partners

Global Standard for CSO Accountability – Extension Phase 2019/20

SECTION 1: General Information

Name of organisation that received funds: Balkan Civil Society Development Network BCSDN

Project title: Global Standard for CSO Accountability in the Western Balkans

Funding period (start and end date): 01.10.2019 – 30.11.2020

Grant Amount: EUR 25000

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SECTION 2: Achievements and Impact

1. Purpose of funding request:

BCSDN, in the second extension phase of the Global Standard, focused on the relations with national CSOs from the Western Balkans that learned, tested, and implemented dynamic accountability tools. BCSDN provided ad hoc support to organizations and networks to improve their accountability practices in Albania and North Macedonia as countries in focus. By preparing the first accountability review in 2020, BCSDN further developed its internal accountability practices based on the Global Standard and prepared the Accountability Report 2020.

The purpose of the funding request was:

- To create a knowledge pool on the Global Standard;
- To strengthen CSOs capacity to engage with the Global Standard

2. Summary of project accomplishments during grant period

The use of the Global Standard promoted in regional and global context

On the second day of GAW 2020, BCSDN led a session on CSO Accountability in times of COVID- 19. The event was a unique opportunity to discuss the stories of resilience amid the crisis and by sharing examples from India, Argentina, and the Balkans to promote CSOs' accountability practices across the world amid COVID- 19. Following the recommendations provided on the Review Panel 2019 that although CPDE and AGNA accountability events are important, the current level of commitment as offered by BCSDN does not warrant the strategic grant for this budgeted item, BCSDN implemented this activity with no budget costs.



In terms of information sharing, BCSDN published **three (3) quarterly and four (4) thematic Newsletters** and **30 editions of its bi-monthly communication service, the Email Alerts (EMA)**. By disseminating news on Global Standard for CSO Accountability activities and significant regional and international updates on the subject of accountability, BCSDN promoted the Global Standard for CSO Accountability to more than 1800 regional and international subscribers.

Creation of a knowledge pool on the Global Standard for CSOs in Albania

Based on the BCSDN experience and knowledge shared on the Global Standards for CSO accountability, BCSDN member Partners Albania for Change and Development and the National Resource Centre of Partners Albania have further developed the Code of Standards for Albanian CSOs.

More than 200 Albanian CSOs across the country participated in a series of roundtables on the Code of Standard Initiative. With their contribution, around 18 Albanian CSOs became a part of the working group to create the Code of Standards. Also, an online platform for informative and promotional purposes on the Code of Standards was created. PA and NRC have further organized four (4) regional consulting meetings with around 90 CSOs in Albania to introduce them to the Code of Standard principles and engagement.

Through this process, BCSDN directly presented the Code of Conduct and the Global Standard at a national meeting in Tirana, on the NPO Academy. The event aimed at increasing the professionalism of NPO directors and managers. On the webinar dedicated to the Code of Standard in Albania participated Partners Albania's representative (who also attended the training on self-assessment organized in North Macedonia).

BCSDN global efforts on accountability furthered on national level in North Macedonia

Eight (8) representatives of Macedonian networks of CSOs and representatives of BCSDN member, the Macedonian Center for International Organization (MCIC) participated in the **workshop on *How to increase the transparency and accountability of CSO Networks in North Macedonia?*** The participants were introduced to Global Standard work. They learned about CSO accountability, transparency and legitimacy, different self-assessment mechanisms, and tested their internal accountability practices by using the Rendir App, which was translated into [the Macedonian language](#). Five (5) of the trained networks have received funding from the EU to improve their accountability practices and have continued their work with BCSDN and the learning from the Global Standard.

BCSDN and MCIC created a **promotional video** to visually present the Rendir app, encouraging the Macedonian CSOs to use the application, and [with one click to aspire to greater accountability](#).

On the Civica Mobilias Festival "Day of the CSOs," in Skopje, N. Macedonia, MCIC and BCSDN organized a [workshop](#) about the use and the importance of the Rendir app. The event was followed by more than 15 CSO representatives across the country, who tested the accountability practices of their organizations.



3. List of activities during the grant period

| Objective | Activities |
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| <p>To promote the use of the Global Standard</p> | <p>1. Participation on CPDE and AGNA accountability working groups and support and lead the Global Standard promotion and streamline its use in those networks</p> <p>1.2 Promote the use of the Global Standard through BCSDN information sharing tools such as The Email Alerts, the Newsletter and events in the Balkans.</p> | <p>CSOs globally celebrated the Global Accountability Week 2020. On the second day of the GAW 2020, BCSDN led a session on <i>CSO Accountability in times of COVID 19</i>. The event was followed by more than 35 CSO representatives across the world, who exchanged stories on CSOs resilience, amid COVID 19 from Argentina and India to the Balkans. Following the recommendations from the Review Panel 2020, BCSDN implemented this activity with no budget costs.</p> <p>BCSDN coordinates the Europe region in the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), enhancing the information flow between CPDE Global Secretariat and CPDE constituencies in the region. It facilitates constituencies' engagement and gathering input from them to the Global Standard. BCSDN has not been engaged in promoting the Global Standard, as these were the guidelines that BCSDN received on its Proposal on the Review Panel for the Second Extension Phase.</p> <p>During the reporting period, BCSDN published three editions of its quarterly, four editions of its thematic Newsletters and 30 editions of Email Alerts (EMA), its bi-monthly communications service. Covering the main achievements of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability, as well as relevant regional and international news on the subject of civil society accountability, BCSDN, through its two recognized communications services, promoted the Global Standard for CSO Accountability to 1800 international subscribers. In the frame of Global Accountability Week 2019, BCSDN member from North Macedonia- The Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) delivered a video promoting the program “Sustainable Civil Society – State funding for CSOs” and the #BeAccountable initiative. Through an online campaign, BCSDN tested how accountable the network is, sharing our accountability practices. The campaign was included in both the most recent EMA edition and the BCSDN quarterly Newsletter. Through the BCSDN social media accounts, the video was disseminated to the broader public. By delivering one blog post and one article on the topic of CSO Accountability amid COVID-19, BCSDN has also used its Communication services to promote its activities during GAW 2020.</p> |
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| To create a knowledge pool on the Global Standard | 2.1. Use the Global standard as a basis for the efforts of creating a National Code of Conduct in Albania | <p>BCSDN member from Albania, Partners Albania for Change and Development, together with the National Resource Centre for Civil Society, organized the event: <i>Strengthening accountability, transparency, and sustainability of civil society organizations – Code of Standards for CSOs</i> in Tirana. At the People to People event, the speakers and representatives from the Western Balkans and international organizations shared their experience on practices and mechanisms that improve civil society's functioning standard.</p> <p>In collaboration with the NPOs, National Resource Centre Albania established the Code of Implementing structures and created information tools on the Code of Standards for Albanian CSOs. An online platform was created as an informative tool on the Code of Standards and related activities to enhance the standards for CSOs. The platform is designed on successful international examples, including the lessons learnt and the accountability practices on using the Rendir App. BCSDN Executive Director held a webinar for the NPO academy in July 2020, presenting BCSDN work on accountability and the relevance of dynamic accountability in CSOs work.</p> |
| | 2.2. Use the Global Standard as a knowledge resource for the National Ethical Code for CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina | <p>In 2017, the Code of Ethics for NGOs in BiH was developed. This document stems from CSOs' obligations under the Agreement on Cooperation between the Government and CSOs. Several hundred CSOs participated in its development and took part in public debates on the subject. The Code establishes principles to combat distrust and competition between CSOs, limit information exchange and partnerships between them, and increase CSOs' transparency. While BCSDN attempted to provide support to Bosnian CSOs in implementing the National Code, the efforts did not advance due to the relations between CSOs and the Government, and the relations within the sector did not improve. The Code's implementation remained at the signing stage.</p> |



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| <p>To strengthen CSOs capacity to engage with the Global Standard</p> | <p>3.1. Provide support and use the Global standard in the efforts of capacity building for CSOs for the newly established National Accountability Network in North Macedonia</p> <p>3.2 BCSDN uses the self-assessment tool for the first draft review report of BCSDN Code of Conduct and uses the experiences of</p> | <p>BCSDN, through the program "Sustainable Civil Society – State Financing of CSOs," announced a public call for grants for CSO networks in North Macedonia. The EU funded program is implemented by MCIC in partnership with BCSDN and the Center for Information, Cooperation and Development of Civil Society Organizations (CNVOS) from Slovenia during the period 2018-2021. The main objective of the Call is to enable the capacity building of CSO networks for transparent and accountable work. Five (5) networks of CSOs in North Macedonia received grants and started implementing the project activities. At the moment, the CSO networks are in the final stage of the project implementation. Those networks have been directly supported to improve their practices by learning and participating in BCSDN Global Standard activities.</p> <p>In January 2020, BCSDN organized a workshop on How to increase the transparency and accountability of CSO Networks in North Macedonia? Through the knowledge shared by Anabel Cruz, the Global Standard representative, the participants learned about accountability transparency and legitimacy. They were introduced with the Global Standard for CSO accountability, as well as with the various self-regulation approaches and tools. Using the Rendir APP: A Self-Assessment Application to Improve CSOs' Accountability, which was translated and accommodated in Macedonian language, the participants also tested their internal accountability practices.</p> <p>In conjunction with MCIC, BCSDN have created a video in Macedonian to guide CSOs on how to use the Rendir App.</p> <p>On the Civica Mobilitas Festival <i>Day of the CSOs</i>, MCIC and BCSDN organized a workshop to present the use of the Rendir App. The event was followed by more than 15 CSO representatives across the country, who had a chance practically to test their organizations' accountability practices.</p> <p>BCSDN prepared an Accountability Report for 2020 that has to be reviewed by the Code of Conduct Committee according to our Accountability Framework. The Accountability Report 2020, BCSDN is based on the Accountability Survey, BCSDN evaluation by an</p> |
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4. Progress of outcomes (refer to original outcomes proposed in the application)

Outcome 1: Promoted use of the Global Standard at the national, regional and global levels through the established core partnerships of BCSDN

The Global Standard and dynamic accountability were promoted at a workshop on CSO Accountability in Times of COVID 19, led by BCSDN, and organized by AGNA and CIVICUS during the Global Accountability Week 2020. Following the recommendations from the Review Panel 2020, BCSDN implemented this activity with no budget costs.

BCSDN has also been promoting dynamic accountability by delivering articles and blog posts and information sharing and dissemination on its two Communications services- The Email Alerts (EMA) and the BCSDN Quarterly Newsletter, as well as 4 editions of its thematic Newsletter: Solidarity in Times of COVID-19.

Outcome 2: Created knowledge pool on how the Global Standard in the Balkans

Based on the BCSDN experienced and knowledge shared on the Global Standards for CSO accountability, BCSDN member Partners Albania for Change and Development and the National Resource Centre of Partners Albania have further developed the Code of Standards in the country. The Albanian CSOs have been involved in a working group for creating the Code of Standards. Therefore, an online platform for informative and promotional purposes on the Code of Standards was created. PA and NRC have also organized four (4) regional consulting meetings with around 90 CSOs to introduce them to the Code of Standard principles.

Outcome 3: Strengthened CSO capacity at the national level to adapt the Global Standard to their needs and contexts:

Through the Global Standard, BCSDN supported capacity building activities for CSOs for the newly established National Accountability Network in North Macedonia. Together with MCIC, BCSDN organized two workshops to introduce the Macedonian CSOs and networks of CSOs with the 12 commitments of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability, encouraging them by using the Rendir App to improve their internal accountability practices, contributing towards an enhanced environment for civil society development.

5. Who has benefited from this project? Direct and indirect? (please refer to original suggestions proposed in the application)

BCSDN members, the Albanian and Macedonian CSOs, and the Macedonian CSO networks have been the primary beneficiaries of this action in the second extension phase.



Through the Accountability report 2020, BCSDN members determined the network 's short-term and midterm goals for institutional strengthening. Albanian CSOs have been involved and will benefit from implementing the activities related to Objective 2. Through the working groups, they were included in establishing the Code implementing structures led by the National Resource Centre of Partners Albania. They are regularly informed on the Code of Standards for CSOs in the country through an information tool. Following the Workshop in Ohrid and Skopje, Macedonian CSOs and networks were introduced with the Global Standard for CSO Accountability. Using the Rendir App (recently translated into the Macedonian language), they learned more about the accountability mechanisms and tested their internal accountability practices. Citizens in the Balkan countries have also benefited indirectly from the implementation of the project. They are at the core of the dynamic accountability concept. Through the project, the organizations get closer to their constituencies and involve them directly in their work.

6. How did you engage different stakeholders and who were they? (please refer to original suggestions proposed in the application)

BCSDN engaged various stakeholders in the implementation of the project's activities. CSOs in the Balkans (Albanian and Macedonian CSOs in the focus) have been directly involved through project activities and presentations. Through social media, and the BCSDN communication services, citizens have been recognized with the BCSDN activities and the activities of the BCSDN members. Donors have been engaged throughout implementing this action by regular outreach activities that BCSDN is undertaking throughout the year and by integrating the dynamic accountability concept in the organization's work.

7. Which steps have been taken to ensure the sustainability of the project? Do you believe these are sufficient? (please refer to original suggestions proposed in the application)

BCSDN prepared Accountability Report 2020, according to the BCSDN accountability framework, determining the network 's short-term and midterm goals for institutional strengthening. Together with MCIC, BCSDN is implementing a national project that provided grants to national organizations and networks of CSOs to improve their accountability practices. BCSDN aims to use the learning tools developed in the extension phase as a future resource material for the national CSOs and networks. BCSDN has also incorporated the dynamic accountability in the Regional Civil Society Development Hub. Through the Hub, innovative uptakes to the fight for enlarging the civic space will be supported, exploring the collective power of different groups (e.g., young people, women, and vulnerable groups). The Hub provides 2 types of grants: Regional grants, and ad-hoc support grants. The regional grants offer funding to CSOs networks in the Western Balkans to implement activities to strengthen trust in CSOs by introducing accountability standards, such as the Global Standard's dynamic accountability. On the other hand, ad-hoc support is an instrument that provides rapid financing of a CSO's immediate need to promote civic space when there is lacking time to operate through the standard grant award procedure. The ad hoc grants also serve to explore innovation in CSOs' work, such as dynamic accountability. The project also foresees the



development of an agreed methodology for monitoring CSO capacities and accountability in the countries and preparing a report.

8. How were gender-specific objectives achieved in the implementation? What worked well, what did not?

BCSDN Code of Conduct includes gender equality as one of the main principle of BCSDN work. The Code of Conduct is based on practices and principles already existing in the network. Gender equality has always been practiced and promoted in the work of the network, as the three executive directors since its registration are female. BCSDN Board Chairs in the last two mandates have been women and the gender balance has always been respected in all bodies that manage the network. Over 50% of participants on BCSDN events are women, and these practices are reflected in the BCSDN EO structure. BCSDN is one of the CIVICUS working group DIGNA networks, focusing on Diversity and Inclusion. BCSDN has further concluded the Diversity and Inclusion Audit, which is implemented by Europe & Southeast Consultancy. The findings served as a basis for the HR policy and for inputs for the development of BCSDN's new strategy.

9. How did you manage environmental implications of the project? What worked well, what did not?

In addition to the commitments to environmental sustainability with the BCSDN Code of Conduct, BCSDN has improved its environmental sustainability during the implementation of the project. BCSDN Executive Office has continued cooperating with Pakomak, a nonprofit company, whose main activity manages packaging waste. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, BCSDN overseas events have been canceled. BCSDN has continued its activities entirely online. BCSDN relies on online and social media interaction, e-mail communication, and digital conferencing as methods of communication.

10. Identify any risks that did occur during the implementation phase, how you dealt with them and any impact on the organisation and team as well as on the outcomes of the project. Please refer to the risks identified in the project proposal as well as any risks that may came up during the implementation of the project

Shrinking of civic space

The political environment in most Western Balkan countries remained unfavorable, especially towards civil society development. The governments in the region continued with their practice to close the space for civil society operations. The trend of shrinking civic space is ongoing in 2020, considering that the COVID-19 health crisis is being used to gain political control, putting many civic space dimensions under threat. The challenges to democracy have only intensified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the adoption of restrictive measures. By promoting civil society development, BCSDN has demonstrated to be a strong actor in the region's democracy development, creating an enabling environment for civil society development. During the second extension phase of the GS project, CSOs in the region were introduced with



the concept of dynamic accountability as a mean to increase trust in their work and to present a positive narrative of CSO's work.

Lack of interest of national CSOs

The shrinking civic space and deteriorated Government – CSOs relations, and lack of resources have been why CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shifted priorities and did not advance the National Code's work. Even though BCSDN shared information on the Global Standard as a knowledge resource for the National Code for CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019, the actions have been postponed until the environment for CSOs action allows it.

Lack of expertise within the network

Even though there was a risk that BCSDN members will not have sufficient expertise and capacities to advance the concept of dynamic accountability, by their direct involvement with the Global Standard, gained a greater understanding of the topic. On the organized events in Albania and North Macedonia, BCSDN EO, with the experts from Accountable Now and Global Standard for CSO Accountability, contributed to supporting this process.

11. Identify and discuss any challenges related to the project funded and how you dealt with them.

BCSDN Executive Director, who served as the main resource person for this project, finished its three-year mandate as an Executive Director and ten years of working in BCSDN during the last month of implementation. Nevertheless, the network's overall presence and commitment to the debates and presentations of the GS concept on dynamic accountability during Global Accountability Week 2020 and the promotion of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability within CSOs in the Balkans were not affected. BCSDN staff working on the project was actively engaged in the project activities, and the project outcomes were not affected by the end of project implementation.

12. Are you satisfied with the results? What would you do differently in the future? What would you need from the Centre and/or other Project Partners for this?

BCSDN is satisfied with the project results. Through the BCSDN event on the GAW 2020 and the BCSDN Communication services, we have successfully promoted the use of the Global Standard at the national, regional, and global levels. The recent developments on the Code of Standards in Albania show our success in creating a knowledge pool on how the Global Standard in the Balkans. With the interest and the positive practices of Macedonian CSOs and networks on the Global Standard for CSO Accountability and the use of the Rendir App, we have succeeded in strengthening CSO capacity at the national level to adapt the Global Standard to their needs and contexts.

SECTION 3: Financial Reporting

Please provide us with:



- A detailed financial report based on the budget provided with the project proposal and the templates used for the mid-term reporting. Please make sure that if you got budget changes approved, your report reflects those.
- A narrative to the financial report, explaining key changes, challenges or highlights that affected expenditures

SECTION 4: Comments

Please share any additional information you believe is relevant to this grant.