**BALKAN
CIVIL
SOCIETY
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK**

ANNUAL
REPORT
2014

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VISION & MISSION

Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) is a regional network of local civil society organizations (CSOs) from the Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey).

Its vision is sustainable peace, harmony and prosperity of societies in the region.

Its mission is to empower civil society and influence European and national policies towards more enabling environment for civil society development in order to ensure sustainable and functioning democracies in the Balkans.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BCSDN goals and objectives are:
1. Increased role of civil society by **strengthening its voice in policy**- and **decision-making process** on national, regional and EU level;
2. Promoted **civil dialogue** between civil society actors, state institutions and the European Union in order to influence public policy;
3. Developed **advocacy knowledge** and **skills** of civil society actors as a base for achieving greater impact; and
4. Strengthened **communication**, **coordination** and **cooperation** between civil society actors in the Balkan region.

MID-TERM PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Monitoring EU & national policies on civil society through a common/regional framework on enabling environment for CSDev;
Priority 2: Improving funding policies & procedures for civil society at EU & national level;
Priority 3: Establishing structured dialogue between civil society in the Balkans, national & EU institutions;
Priority 4: Promoting alternative sources & models for supporting civil society;
Priority 5: Increasing opportunities for influencing EU & national policies & programmes for civil society;
Priority 6: Improving communication and increasing involvement throughout the region.

METHODS OF WORK

BCSDN realizes its goals mainly through advocacy and lobbying activities, by:
- Developing joint positions and statements on initiatives and areas of interest common to all member organizations and taking necessary action;
- Coordinating and cooperating with other organizations, networks and other actors on joint positions and initiatives;
- Coordinating cooperation between its members and developing joint projects and initiatives;
- Facilitating exchange of information and experience between its members and national and local state institutions and the EU;
- Coordinating and compiling researches and relevant information;
- Coordinating capacity-building and other events.

BCSDN is a registered foundation under the Macedonian Law on Citizens Associations and Foundations (Official Gazette of RM No. dated 31/98 and 29/2007) as of 30th September 2009 with the Decision no. 3012009172866 of the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia (CRM).
BCSDN identification number: 6524710. Tax identification number: 4057009503419.

NETWORK MEMBERS & ORGANS

BCSDN consists of partner organizations, which are equal in their rights and duties as members of the network. Principle of cooperation, partnership, tolerance, dialogue and respect for others are the main working principles in the network. The network organs consist of the Council, the Board, the Executive Office and the Executive Director.

Members
1. Albanian Civil Society Foundation, Albania;
2. Center for Development of NGO's (CRNVO), Montenegro;
3. Centre for Information Services, Cooperation and Development of NGO's (CNVOS), Slovenia;
4. Center for Promotion of Civil Society (CPCS), Bosnia and Herzegovina;
5. Cenzura Plus, Croatia;
6. Civic Initiatives, Serbia;
7. Diakonia Agapes, Albania;
8. Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO), Serbia;
9. Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Albania;
10. Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF), Kosovo;
11. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Macedonia;
12. Opportunity Associates Romania (OAR), Romania;
13. Partners-Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management, Albania;
14. Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV), Turkey;
15. Vesta Association, Bosnia and Herzegovina[1].

The Council is the highest of BCSDN and is composed of one authorized representative of each organization with   member status. The Council is chaired by the Chairperson of the Council, which is selected on an annual, rotating basis.

The Board is the governing and supervisory organ body of BCSDN. It is composed of 7 members: Chairperson of the Board, Deputy Chairperson of the Board and 5 members. Mandate of the Board members is 3 years. The new Board mandate has started on 19th June, 2014.

Board members (mandate till 2017)
1. Venera Hajrullahu, Kosovo, Chair (elected as of 5th September, 2012) ;
2. Tina Divjak, Slovenia, Deputy-Chair (elected as of 29th August, 2014);
3. Aleksandar Krzalovski, Macedonia;
4. Slavisa Prorok, BiH;
5. Ana Novakovic, Montenegro;
6. Dubravka Velat, Serbia;
7. Gjergji Vurmo, Albania.

The Executive Office in Skopje, Macedonia, manages the daily functioning and coordination of the network.

The Executive Director is the major administrative and financial official and represents BCSDN with other institutions, networks and donors. The Executive Director is appointed by the Board and participates in Council and Board sessions without the right to vote. The current Executive Director Tanja Hafner Ademi has been re-appointed to the position after a successful e360 degree evaluation and has started a new 3-year mandate on 7th October, 2014.

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[1] Organization with consultative status.

1.   PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

1.1. Goals

In the period 2012-2014, BCSDN is contributing to implementation of its mid-term priories:

Priority 1:   Monitoring EU & National policies on civil society through a common/regional framework on enabling environment for CSDev

Priority 2:   Improving funding policies & procedures for civil society at EU & national level

Priority 3:   Establishing structured dialogue between civil society in the Balkans, national & EU institutions

Priority 4:   Promoting alternative sources & models for supporting civil society

Priority 5:   Increasing opportunities for influencing EU & national policies & programmes for civil society

Priority 6:   Improving communication and increasing involvement throughout the region

1.2. Target Group & Area

BCSDN target group are **CSOs** working on civil society development (CSDev) in the Balkan region. The direct beneficiaries are local civil society development and resource organizations.

With its activities, the network targets stakeholders such as national institutions and international governmental organizations (IGOs). Among **national institutions**, the focus is on national public bodies/offices for cooperation with CSOs in member countries. Among I**GOs**, in focus are the EU institutions, Council of Europe (CoE), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and related inter-governmental initiatives in the Balkan region.

BCSDN promotes the principle of inclusiveness of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the society (incl. Roma community, inhabitants of rural areas).

BCSDN works in countries of the Balkan region, Europe and internationally, according to its mission, vision and goals.

1.3. Planed Activities & Results

In 2014, the network continued with the implementation of its Mid-term Strategy 2012-2014, as approved by the 2012 Split ACM, and the Annual Plan 2014, approved on the 2014 Prishtina ACM. The Mid-term Strategy is based on and continues the network's efforts from the previous strategic period 2009-2011. The success of the network has been in its advocacy at the EU and regional level and creating synergies with efforts of its members on national and local level. In the mid-term period 2012-2014, the network remained devoted to the same but refined strategic priorities in the attempt to consolidate its efforts in the enabling environment for CSDev in member countries and the role of the sector in the EU integration process, while further strengthening information-sharing and the coordination in the civil society in creating synergies for cooperation and advocacy measures of its members.

Concretely, the Annual Plan 2014 included the following measures and activities, under:
  ➢ **Priority 1**, promotion of 1st regional and 8 country reports under the Monitoring Matrix for Enabling Environment for CSDev, preparation of 2014 country progress reports and advocacy on its recommendations vis-à-vis public institutions;
  ➢ **Priority 2,** mix of global European and country level actions to support improvement of tax regime and public funding support to civil society;
  ➢ **Priority 3,** mix of European and country actions in support of improved cooperation between public institutions and civil society and role of CSO in EU integration process;
  ➢ **Priority 4,** finalized and promoted findings of donor strategies and priorities qualitative study;
  ➢ **Priority 5,** continuation of Slovak and Balkan Public Policy Fund (SBPPF) by extending it to 6 Western Balkan countries and adding a pilot internship component;
  ➢ **Priority 6**, continuation of network's standard information and coordination activities.

2.   IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

2.1. Monitoring EU & National Policies

The Strategic choice/approach for this area defined in the Mid-term strategy 2012-2014 aims to consolidate the existing research and knowledge on enabling environment in a consistent and applicative Monitoring Matrix defining the basis of a so called Civil Society Acquis to identify gaps, weakness of regulatory framework and practice, devise measures and lead action to address them.

Immediate results and impact include:

✓ *MM findings reflected in EC Progress Reports 2014-2015*
✓ *Framing national discourses on national instrument and needs in CSDev (esp. Albania, Serbia)*
✓ *MM recognized and presented as unique and innovative monitoring mechanism (eg. CIVICUS ICSW, Black Sea Forum, Georgia)*

2.1.1. The Monitoring Matrix
Setting the baseline: Developing and Promotion of Baseline Country and Regional Reports & Advocacy

In 2014, the **presentation of the Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development (the MM) Country reports** was organized in 8 Balkan countries[2] and Turkey by BCSDN members. Presentations were attended by approximately 300 participants from civil society, government institutions, and donors. The events presented a chance to communicate the reports' findings as

well as challenges of the enabling legal and practical environment for CSDev in Enlargement countries. Additionally, the first Regional Report on enabling environment prepared in partnership with ECNL on was presented on 27th May, 2014 to over 40 key representatives of the DG Enlargement, European networks, experts and civil society from WBT countries. The rationale behind the regional report was to identify key common issues across the region, which would serve as a basis and also as priorities for further intervention in the creation of more EE for CSDev, more concretely for identifying advocacy activities towards the EU. This event served as an opportunity to inform EU stakeholders of the monitoring findings, which as a result brought the EC representative to the acknowledgement that stronger support should be given to capacity building for both governments and CSOs.

The work on **advocacy actions** was launched with a joint workshop held in Pristina on 16th April, 2014. The workshop aimed at presenting diversification of tools used in support of communicating the findings and tracking progress in EE for CSDev in individual countries. The MM reports were also presented and guided the agenda in setting up the national benchmarks to be achieved under the Guidelines of the EU for Support to Civil Society in Enlargement Countries, 2014-2020 at the 1st EU-Government-CSO conference organized by TACSO in Tirana on 7th-9th May, 2014.

The 18th June, 2014 workshop in Skopje marked the **reflection of the first monitoring year** and revision of the approach in measuring the progress in monitoring cycles. Working groups, comprised of experts from the network, agreed on developing a joint sample questionnaire for surveys and interviews in all countries and defined **12 core standards** to be monitored in each country, while the rest 12 are to be monitored on biannual period and can be added based on

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[2] Albania, BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.

monitoring needs in each of the 7 monitoring countries. The 12 standards were selected according to importance, the EU CS Guidelines and the potential for change. In September, the **master questionnaire for e-survey** was developed. Although not standardized, the master presents the first step towards the unification of methodology in monitoring countries. The task for the master questionnaire for interviews/focus groups is currently under consideration and is pending its realization.

Different approaches to diversification of tools to be developed in support of communicating monitoring findings and measuring progress in EE in CSDev were considered and agreed to be tested in the form of a **scale for measuring progress**. Embracing quantitative methodology, namely the scaling, not only does adds on the already existing qualitative interpretation of the MM indicators, but it also gives possibility for easier interpretation and articulation of the monitoring findings, recommendations and ultimately improved advocacy approach.

In October, 2014, BCSDN published its 6th analysis on how the European Commission has treated the issue of civil society development and assessed the progress made in the Enlargement countries within the **Enlargement Strategy 2014-2015** and the country Progress Reports published in the beginning of the month. In brief, the analysis shows the Commission has unified its approach towards the issue of civil society and for the first time has structured it as separate section within the political criteria of the progress report for each country. It has furthermore mainstreamed civil society in Acquis chapters to some extent. Most importantly, the EC has used clear, strong and focused language in delivering the key messages to the governments and in highlighting the need for fostering enabling environment for civil society.

November 2014, saw a **kick-off workshop on Economic value of the civil society in the Balkans**. Based on one of the key recommendations from the Regional MM 2013 report, the aim of this workshop was to identify most important parameters of economic value of civil society (e.g. number of employees, volunteers, overall budgets) in WBT countries to advocate these to be included in official statistical measurements as a basis for sound and realistic measure towards CSDev.

The new monitoring cycle was launched and the **8 MM country monitoring reports for 2014** were prepared towards end of the year. Its promotion and presentation to the relevant stakeholders is expected in the first quarter of the same year.

2.2. Funding Policies and Procedures for civil society at EU and National level

> The Strategic choice/approach for this area defined in the Mid-term strategy 2012-2014 includes influencing of European level funding policies and procedures (via a mix of involvement into existing efforts of European networks' advocacy efforts and promotion of support models synergies used by different foreign and local donors and the EC) and national level (advocacy on enabling support to participation to EU projects, state financing and tax regime for CSOs - Monitoring Matrix Area 2).

At the **EU level**, BCSDN continued its participation and support of monitoring and assessing IPA funding transparency via the Aid Transparency Index (ATI). BCSDN also continued with the comprehensive review of all IPA CSF funding support to include the years 2012 and 2013. Analysis of the state of play and the use of **IPA CSF** till 2014 was prepared and presented to BCSDN's members for brainstorming. The scope of the analysis was broadened to include a) data on the use of funds by CSOs from the IPA cross-border component

(managed by DG) in the IPA beneficiary countries; b) data on the state funding in three pilot countries (Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) as a comparison to EU funding available to CSOs. The analysis will serve for further advocacy points, while a policy brief with Infograph for visual presentation of the findings is to br published in the beginning of 2015.

Immediate results and impact include:

✓ DG Enlargement published Implementation Schedule and started publishing information on IPA funding to ATI standard as of September 2013
✓ Provided clear facts and argument towards the EC in improving its support to civil society and transparency of IPA funding (e.g. launch for 1st operating grants call for proposal)
✓ Enabled timely information and inclusion to civil society influencing IPA 2014-2020 priorities.

2.2.1. Improving Transparency and Inclusive Programming of CS within IPA Funding

In continuation of cooperation from 2013, BCSDN again this year provided analysis and assessment of DG Enlargement under the Aid Transparency Index (ATI), the **industry standard for assessing foreign assistance transparency** among the world's major donors. BCSDN role was in providing independent assessment against the PWYF and DG's own assessment, which were then analyzed and influence the final scoring.

In terms of programming of IPA civil society support, the focus in 2014 was on **monitoring and coordinating input of civil society to the new IPA 2014-2020 cycle** while at the same time continuing regular monitoring of programming, awarding and contracting of IPA CSF assistance. Concretely, the review of all IPA CSF funding support 2007-2011 was expanded to provide a comprehensive analysis covering the whole period of IPA (2007-2013) that was used to give concrete recommendations for improvement in the programming of the IPA 2014- 2020. The research was closed with data as of 31st December, 2014 incl. comparison with the state funding mechanisms for support of CSOs to provide for strengthened and targeted basis for advocacy towards both EU commission as well as national governments.

BCSDN has used this analysis for actively contributing to the process of programming of the upcoming **IPA 2014-2020 assistance**. Contributions with concrete recommendations were prepared and sent to the relevant institutions on the Macedonian Country Strategy document 2014-2020 and the Multi-beneficiary Action Document 2014-2015. Additionally, initial analysis with suggestions for improvements was prepared and sent to the members for the other country strategic documents. In doing so, BCSDN cooperated and supported the CSO-lead IPA coordination mechanisms or initiatives where existent (e.g. Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia).

2.2.2. Support to individual country advocacy activities

BCSDN supported several in-country advocacy activities directly or via its members under the MM Area 2 (CSO Financial Viability and Sustainability). In Albania, as a result of advocacy activities - lead by Partners Albania and including IDM – changes to the VAT law included clarifications and improvement in the tax treatment of CSOs. Advocacy on the transparency and accountability of state funding was launched with an IDM debate and policy brief. In Kosovo, activities were directed towards reforms related to state funding for civil society, in particular the revision of the antiterrorism law, whose restrictions directly impede the funding for CSOs. In Macedonia, updated version of guidelines on economic activity was published to promote the new measure with CSOs and both BCSDN and MCIC supported a CSO initiative to improve long-standing tax treatment issues (personal tax etc.). Similarly, in Serbia, the support was provided to initiatives directed towards the changes of tax laws.

2.3. Establishing structured dialogue between civil society in the Balkans, national and EU institutions

> The strategic choice/approach for this area defined in the Mid-term strategy 2012-2014 is composed of advocacy for effective participation to existing structures for dialogue and programming, both at European and national level, under current, future IPA and Structural Funds.

Immediate results and impact include:
- ✓ The role of civil society and citizens perspective represented in key research on the EU integration capacity
- ✓ Boosting and supporting re-engagement of public institutions-civil society relations in several countries (e.g. Albania, Kosovo)
- ✓ Improved knowledge and capacities of CSOs and Government officials on (social) service provision regionally and esp. in Albania, Serbia

2.3.1. Strengthening the role of civil society in Enlargement process via research

As partner in the FP7 "Maximizing the Integration Capacity of the EU" project, BCSDN as the only WB partner provided the local context and particularly included **the perspective of the role and value of civil society actors in the project's activities and outputs, which are targeted to EU and Enlargement countries decision-makers**.

In 2014 BCSDN has contributed to 3 research activities:
1. Identifying national discourse on EU Enlargement in Macedonia and Serbia;
2. Mapping on EU efforts to promote the rule of law in Enlargement countries (the view of watchdog CSOs and media);
3. Organization on international workshop on the Effects on Europeanization on the issue of minority rights protection in Enlargement countries (the role of CSOs).

The aim of the *Identifying national discourse on EU Enlargement* deliverable was to identify how the EU Enlargement is perceived by ordinary citizens in two enlargement countries: Macedonia and Serbia. BCSDN was tasked to prepare data for analysis using the Q method analysis foreseen by the coordinator of the task - Leiden University. For this purpose, BCSDN organized 3 focus groups in each country, whose results were used for complying Q sort interviews. BCSDN conducted 72 individual interviews in total with random respondents across Macedonia and Serbia. The aim of the research on *Mapping on EU efforts to promote the rule of law in Enlargement countries* was to map EU efforts to develop judicial independence and the rule of law in the Western Balkans. For this purpose, BCSDN was responsible for identifying and conducting 12 interviews with relevant watchdog civil society and media organizations in the Western Balkan countries active in addressing improper political influence in the judicial system.

The third deliverable BCSDN was involved as part of the MAXCAP project was the international workshop organized in partnership with Queen Mary University London on *"The Effects on Europeanization on the issue of minority rights protection in Enlargement countries".* The workshop was held on 20th -21st November, 2014 in Sarajevo. BCSDN was responsible for organizing the workshop and for bringing relevant CSOs from the region to present the practitioner's point of view and contribute with a bottom up insight in identifying EU's future agendas and priorities. Experience on the role of civil society and especially the enabling environment was presented within a MAXCAP seminar held in Tbilisi on 8th-9th October, 2014, Georgia before Georgian academia, decision-makers and civil society representatives.

2.3.2. Support to individual country advocacy activities

BCSDN supported several in-country advocacy activities directly or via its members under the MM Area 3 (Government-CSO Relationship). In Albania, advocacy in improved institutional set-up for cooperation resulted in adoption of a Parliament declaration on the role of civil society on 24th December, 2014. Research on social procurement was conducted and published, advocating for development and implementation of social procurement and partnership between the CSOs and the State in the process. In Kosovo, support was provided to implementation of the new Strategy by supporting development of the rulebook and procedure for selection of civil society representatives to the Council. In Macedonia, a monitoring assessment on the implementation of the Strategy 2012-2017 was made so as to boost staled process of implementation. In Serbia, social contracting concept with exchange of good practices was presented in Serbia which aimed at improving the implementation of the Law on social provision. Finally, a **regional study visit on service provision** was organized in Slovenia on 22nd-24th October, 2014 for representatives of governments and project with the purpose of presenting the Slovenian case of already established partnership between state and CSOs in the area of service provision.

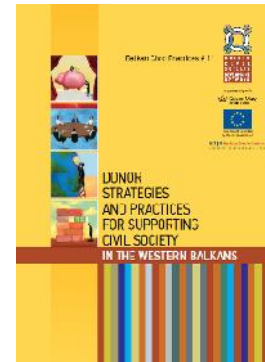## 2.4. Alternative sources & models for supporting civil society

The strategic choice/approach for this area defined in the Mid-term strategy 2012-2014 is to inform and influence exit strategies of foreign donors supporting CSDev and effective transition to domestically-funded civil society.

Immediate results and impact include:
- ✓ *Mapping donors cooperation and coordination with local stakeholders*
- ✓ *Influence on EU and other donor agendas to reflect the needs of local civil society actors*

In 2014, field visit interviews were finalized with Kosovo being the 6th and final country within the framework of the donor strategies and practices research. With this, the field research phase was finalized with a total number of **84 donors interviewed**. Data collected from field research served as a basis for developing in-depth country specific analysis as well as the regional perspective, which was produced by Queen Mary University of London. The analysis was first presented to the **national donors/stakeholders** in Bosnia and Herzegovina (20th November, 2014) and Macedonia (28th November, 2014), for consultation and feedback. Upon receiving the comments and remarks from the relevant stakeholders, the analysis was published in December 2014. This analysis delivers profile of strategies employed by donors in the WB region with the aim of providing comprehensive understanding of policies, decision making, coordination mechanisms and approaches taken by international donors in the region.

2.5. Opportunities for influencing EU and national policies and programmes for civil society

The strategic choice/approach for this area defined in the Mid-term strategy 2012-2014 is to support advocacy capacities, develop skills and provide information on the existing civil society related policies and programmes.

2.5.1. Slovak Balkan Public Policy Fund – Widening the Network by Sharing Experiences and Knowledge

Immediate results and impact include:

✓ Tailor-made policy and advocacy support to 21 CSOs in 6 Balkan countries
✓ Piloted fellowship component to strengthen the SBPPF approach

BCSDN, in cooperation with Pontis Foundation and support by Slovak Aid has administrating the 2nd cycle of the Fund with the aim to support civil society actors form the Western Balkans to develop their advocacy capacities and increase their engagement into the creation of public policy in regards to the EU integration process. The SBPPF has proved to be a successful support model for boosting the advocacy skills of civil society representatives, as the projects supported in both rounds have demonstrated tangible results from their policy work.

BCSDN in 2013 announced the successful candidates for funding under the Slovak and Balkan Public Policy Fund Programme. Out of 167 submitted project proposals from organizations and researchers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, **21 proposals** were selected for funding. All selected grantees implemented their research and advocacy projects throughout 2014, all the papers have been publicly presented in front of relevant stakeholders at national level, organized by the grantees themselves and funded through SBPPF. The objective of the public presentations was to present the research data and the main policy recommendations set in the policy papers but also it served as an opportunity to raise public awareness about the addressed topic in each of the papers and advocate and lobby for improvement of public policies among the representatives of the CSOs, public institutions, donors and other relevant stakeholders who attended the presentations. A total of 21 public policy papers have been published in a joint SBPPF publication, prepared by BCSDN. Through this second round of the SBPPF programme, the grantees (organizations and individuals) prepared quality policy outputs, revolving around two priority themes 1) Democracy and the rule of law and 2) Non-majority communities.

From 1st-3rd October 2014, representatives of 5 SBPPF grantees attended a **study visit** in Brussels. The grantees participated on a tailor made study visit with relevant individual meetings that took place in Brussels, with the EU institutions, CSOs and businesses that are relevant for the field of their research. IDSCS and CEA from Macedonia, KCSS from Kosovo supported by Pontis Foundation and SlovakAid; Institute for Environmental Policy from Albania and CERD BIH supported by BCSDN through the IPA FPA project participated on the visit. Joint meetings were organized in the EP with MEP Kukan that has a long term experience with the WB countries with whom the grantees were able to discuss directly the enlargement process and the situation in their countries. The grantees also met with the units of the EP that deal directly with the Western Balkans, a meeting organized by Mr. Andre de Munter, policy advisor in the EP and the Slovak representation to the EU. They all had highly useful meetings with EC representatives dealing with their countries and the topics they have worked on, and specific organizations on EU level that work on similar issues.

The Fund results were **presented** at two occasions: at the 3rd Annual International Conference "Development and Democracy" held in Bratislava, Slovakia, 15th October, 2014 and in a meeting with the Slovak ambassador in Macedonia. H.E Martin Bezák held on 13th November, 2014.

2.5.2. New Internship Component-Young Researchers Programme

Immediate results and impact include:
- ✓ New innovative communication products (i.e. Infograph & photo-story) have engaged new audiences and made information more enticing.
- ✓ A more active communication strategy has seen the significant growth of BCSDN's audience

Under the Visegrad-Balkan Public Policy Fund, Young Researches Programme, BCSDN partnered with several CEE organizations (the Pontis Foundation (Slovakia), DEMAS (Czech Republic), Demnet (Hungary) and its member KCSF (Kosovo) to **pilot an internship component** to its capacity-building via the Fund. The aim of the programme was to provide fellows with a chance to get first-hand experience with successful stories of the transformation process and involvement of the civil society in policy making. Within the framework of this programme, on the 24th of April 2014 in Skopje, the "Promotion of the selected IVF Fellowships from Macedonia" took place, organized by BCSDN. The event was an opportunity to inform the public about the possibilities offered through this programme through presentations of the selected research fellowships, and served as a platform for exchange of experiences and for discussion on the opportunities for further cooperation.

2.6. Communication and involvement through the region

The strategic approach/choice for this area defined in the Mid-term strategy 2012-2014 is focused on effective and sustainable functioning of BCSDN and effective internal and external communication.

When it comes to communication and outreach, 2014 has been an exciting and successful year for BCSDN, marked with numerous events, publications and products which have reached a wide target audience and have received positive feedback by important stakeholders. BCSDN continued using and enhanced its existing outreach programs which include BCSDN's main website, the E-mail Alerts service, Newsletter and social media, but also expanded to other social networking channels, such as Twitter and LinkedIn, in order to effectively reach different audiences, and paid increased attention to branding and visualization in order to strengthen recognition and visibility of the network and its products. Especially exciting was the **launching of the new Monitoring Matrix website**, first of its kind focused on the region, aiming to engage the audience and capture the visitors' interest with better visual presentation of the comprehensive research..

2.6.1. Outreach and Communication

Last year's communication strategy was reviewed and refreshed, and a more comprehensive approach was developed, leading to a wider audience reach.

The main **BCSDN website** has attracted around 22.000 visits in 2014 made by 13.450 users, out of which more than 40% are returning visitors. Despite the fact that the number of visitors to the website has not shown an increase since last year, there has been an increased interaction of the visitors with the page based on the average length and number of pages viewed during a session

www.monitoringmatrix.net

which have increased since 2013. This confirms that balkancsd.net is perceived as a relevant source for information, news and resources regarding civil society in the region, and has an established base of regular visitors. The **Monitoring Matrix website**, on the other hand, after seven months since its launch has attracted around 1.300 visitors, with a relatively high return rate of 45%, showing that about half of the visitors, have been visiting the website multiple times.

Furthermore, BCSDN in 2014 used a more elaborate **social media** strategy and increased its activity on different social networking channels, namely Twitter and LinkedIn, apart of the already active Facebook page. BCSDN's **Facebook** page continued growing in 2014 and reached 2071 "likes", which represents a notable 60% increase in number of fans since last year, but has also shown an increase in audience engagement with the page. In 2014 BCSDN used several sponsored ads catered to a desired demographic which has showed significant results in ensuring a wide reach of the target audiences and in increasing the engagement of users. Regarding other social networking channels, BCSDN's **Twitter** profile has tripled its followers' base, reaching 289 followers (thus, tripling the followers base), while the newly opened **LinkedIn** profile, aiming to present more technical content and reach professionals in the field, is slowly building its expert audience and connections, and has reached more than 90 followers within a couple of months.

While social media have been used effectively for reaching a wider audience, BCSDN's Email Alerts (EMA) service and the quarterly Newsletters have remained popular with the more expert audience, and are key to reaching BCSDN's most important stakeholders. The **E-mail Alerts** is a bi-weekly service that consolidates and disseminates interesting and up-to-date news and information about civil society in the region. The EMA's subscriber base has around 1400 registered users, and the number continues to grow. The **Newsletter** service, on the other hand, this year was refreshed and redesigned to put the focus solely on the network, in order to better communicate and promote BCSDN's activities and achievements and reach important stakeholders more effectively. In 2014, BCSDN published 24 E-mail Alerts and 3 Newsletters. In addition to the regular Newsletters, BCSDN prepared a special Newsletter edition on the topic of the EC Enlargement Strategy and Progress Reports, featuring BCSDN's background analysis and related publications, which was directly communicated to experts, media and relevant institutions.

In 2014, BCSDN had several **publications** which were successfully presented and gained the attention of various stakeholders. The 10th published edition of the **Balkan Civic Practices** is the first Monitoring Matrix Regional Report and the 11th edition is the "Donor Strategies and Practices for supporting Civil Society in the Western Balkans" Report. In addition to the Balkan Civic Practices publications, BCSDN within the framework of the Slovak Balkan Public Policy Fund (**SPBBF**) prepared a joint publication of 21 public policy papers on various topics, and promoted the publication also at an international conference in Bratislava, as well as to the Slovak Ambassador in Macedonia.

Joint SBPPF publication

In order to effectively reach the target audience, BCSDN is using various communication channels and tools, both online and offline. Seeking to increase the visibility of the network and its products, in 2014 BCSDN designed a number of **printed promotional materials** which were disseminated at different BCSDN events. In this regard, BCSDN designed a notebook, two leaflets for the Monitoring Matrix, and a booklet on what is an enabling environment for CSDev, providing a better visual presentation of BCSDN's products and engaging/reaching out also to a wider non-expert audience. In addition, for a more eye-catching experience online, BCSDN implemented a "photo-story" promotional campaign on Facebook for the

Monitoring Matrix promo materials

Monitoring Matrix regional report during the summer. In order to engage the audience and keep the information "alive" for a longer time, quotes from the report were uploaded on the Facebook profile as images designed to reflect and promote the Monitoring Matrix branding and thus to increase recognition.

Altogether, BCSDN's communication activities have shown positive results, and the feedback and engagement by influential organizations and relevant individuals has confirmed that the **information was reaching key stakeholders within and outside of its operational region**. BCSDN will continue improving efforts in engaging the target audience and increasing visibility and recognition of the network, for which a communication strategy on a network level, instead of EO-level, is also planned for the next year.

3. ORGANISATION

Maturing organization put to the test
2014 has been the most successful year for the organization as such as it has grown to 5 full-time employed, biggest budget and adoption and testing of set of internal governance rules such as Board Rules of procedure, Executive Office, Financial and Working Relations rulebooks/policy. Finally, the elections of the Board and appointment of the Executive Director have taken place.

Transforming European to national success on enabling environment
Impact achieved on the Enlargement policy and IPA funding to civil society has been consolidated and key challenge worked on in 2014 was on how to transform this into effective and tangible advocacy success in EE in Enlargement countries, which are seeing tendencies in sidelining basic freedoms and role of civil society. Here, the roll-out of the Mid-term strategy 2015-2017 has been set in Budva strategic meeting.

Securing sustainability
While the financial funding for operation and all other planned activities have been secured (IPA FPA, BTD till end 2014), the network's sustainability depends on generating its own (incl. membership fee, services), long-term and institutional donors/partners.

4. EXTERNAL COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

BCSDN continued its cooperation and membership in **CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation**. The main identified areas for cooperation between BCSDN and CIVICUS are: (1) participating and contributing to CIVICUS's global civil society assessments via the Civil Society Rapid Assessment and State of Civil Society report for the Balkan region; (2) contributing to the development of CIVICUS's Enabling environment monitoring methodology based on the BCSDN Matrix for Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development; (3) providing input into a global survey on the quality of engagement between the intergovernmental sphere and the civil society; and (4) becoming an official partner on civil society related news from the Balkan region by providing relevant information on the country/regional context. Moreover, BCSDN became an associate in AGNA (Affinity Group of National Associations) and was present at the International Civil Society Week in Johannesburg, South Africa between 19th and 25th November with presentation of the network and the MM.

In September 2014, BCSDN also jointed the CSDN partnered with the **Thomson Reuters Foundation through the TrustLaw Connect service**. TrustLaw is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono legal service that connects NGOs and social enterprises with the best law firms around the world willing to provide their services free of charge.

BCSDN has participated or been presented on several global events in 2014. BCSDN's Executive Director, participated to the 2014 edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum (8th-9th December) in Kiev, Ukraine, in the panel devoted to the enabling environment for CSOs in the

region. As partner in the MAXCAP project dealing with research on maximizing EU's integration capacity the Executive Director, featured as a panelist at a the expert panel discussion on the role of maximizing conditionality in Enlargement countries and the role civil society can play in this process on the 7th-8th October in Georgia.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Regular monitoring of project activities is secured through existing governing and management procedures. External institutional financial audit is conducted yearly on the basis of the Macedonian Law on No-profit Accountancy. Project audits are executed based on donor requirements.

The network activities have undergone 2 external evaluations (in 2003 and 2007) as part of the 3-year programme cycle. There was no evaluation planned for 2014.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT (in EUR)

BCSDN Budget 2013-2015 (in EUR)

Budgetlines	Financial report till 31st Dec	Financial report till 31st Dec	Budget approved 17th April, 2014 Prishtina	Budget (change) adopted on 29th Aug 2014 Board, Budva	Financial report till 31st Dec
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2014**	**2014**
1 OFFICE COSTS (incl. overhead)	10.318	12.932	11.128	11.128	14.721
2 TRAVEL & MEETINGS (incl. netw organs)	6.329	13.548	13.940	13.940	14.567
3 COMMUNICATIONS	1.189	1.575	1.200	1.200	2.046
4 STAFF SALARIES	19.916	34.463	34.820	50.991	46.773
5 INFORMATION SERVICES (web, alerts etc.)	9.928	2.120	1.200	1.200	2.105
6 FINANCIAL SERVICES (incl. audit)	2.820	4.239	8.968	3.600	3.962
7 EXCHANGE RATE DIFFERENCES		1.527	1.527	1.527	1.207
8 DIRECT COSTS	43.174	255.217	345.312	345.312	290.366
TOTAL EXPANDITURE	**93.674**	**325.622**	**418.094**	**428.897**	**375.747**
9 Members	3.004	2.004	4.250	4.250	3.753
10 BTD	39.283	60.873	29.115	64.171	25.766
11 EC IPA CSF FPA 2012-2014	33.360	213.206	230.768	291.350	529.098
12 FP 7 MAXCAP		21.783	14.234	35.982	20.543
13 SlovakAid/Pontis (BPPF) II	11.180	18.119		9.491	10.503
14 EACEA Europe for Citizens (CenzuraPlus)	2.435	1.788	6.437		
15 Intern'l Vishegrad Fund (IVF)/Pontis BPPF		5.132	6.120	0	
16 OSI TTF	893	4.463			7.640
17 Own revenues	34.701	4.754	4.800	4.800	1.430
TOTAL REVENUES	**124.856**	**332.122**	**295.724**	**410.044**	**598.732**
BALANCE	31.182	6.500	-122.371	-18.853	**222.984**

Status up-date 8th April, 2015

Notes:

6 Incl. only accountancy costs as audit has been paid as part of project. Activity audit.

  Originally planned at 366.960 EUR based on planned expected income (pre-financing + 2nd installment), realized at 246,605 EUR (pre-financing) as the only real income for the period 2013. In 2014, the income presented is in real currency as received on the account, i.e. received 2nd installment April 2014 under Phase I contract and pre-financing received in December 2014 for Phase II contract. Adjustments might be needed as the project has been underspent, but the

11 donor has not yet confirmed the approval of the financial report and re-payment of part of the advance payment.

  Previously not defined since no concrete information from lead partner on specific tasks/cost timing etc. and corrected to real income under pre-financing

12 installment. In 2014, the income presented is in real currency as received on the account.

17 From 2012, this item also incl. funds from USAID/ICNL-LIF grant (18.095 EUR), EIDHR/MCIC grant (7.256 EUR)

1. BALANCE OF REVENUES AND EXPANDITURES						
Description	**2013 (in MKD)**	**2013 (in EUR)**		**2014 (in MKD)**	**2014 (in EUR)**	
Total revenues	22.777.591	370.299		40.172.264	643.321	
Total expenditures	20.029.402	325.622		23.101.460	375.747	
Difference between revenues and expenditures	**2.748.189**	44.678		**17.070.804**	**267.574**	

1.1. TOTAL REVENUES						
Description	**2013 (in MKD)**	**2013 (in EUR)**	**%**	**2014 (in MKD)**	**2014 (in EUR)**	**%**
Donations and grants						
GMF-BTD	3.744.402	60.873	16,4	1.584.102	25.766	3,9
SlovakAid/Pontis Foundation	1.605.673	26.104	7,0	645.744	10.503	1,6
EC IPA FPA	13.114.563	213.206	57,6	32.529.662	529.098	81,0
FP7 MAXCAP FUB	1.339.878	21.783	5,9	1.262.996	20.543	3,1
ICNL/USAID-LIF	550.036	8.942	2,4			
OSI TTF	274.532	4.463	1,2	469.713	7.640	1,2
EFC-CenzuraPlus	109.962	1.788	0,48			
Total donations and grants	**20.739.046**	**337.158**	**91,05**	**36.492.217**	**593.549**	**90,8**
Assets from the difference between revenues and expenditures carried-over	1.494.860	24.302	6,56	2.741.362	44.588	6,8
Membership fees	123.283	2.004	0,54	230.761	3.753	0,57
Own revenues	309.985	5.039	1,4	18	0,29	0,00
Reimbursements of costs	81.195	1.320	0,36	30.425	495	0,08
Total own revenues	**514.463**	**8.364**	**2,3**	261.204	4.249	**0,65**
Interest rates	29.222	475	0,13	26.559	432	0,07
Extraordinary revenues				650.922*	10.587	1,62

	TOTAL REVENUES	**22.777.591**	**370.299**	**100**	**39.552.264**	**643.321**	**100**

1.2. EXPANDITURES							
Description	**2013 (in MKD)**	**2013 (in EUR)**	**%**	**2014 (in MKD)**	**2014 (in EUR)**	**%**
OFFICE COSTS (incl. overhead)	795.441	12.932	4,0	905.080	14.721	3,9
TRAVEL & MEETINGS (incl. netw organs)	833.354	13.548	4,2	895.596	14.567	3,9
COMMUNICATIONS	96.898	1.575	0,5	125.794	2.046	0,54
STAFF SALARIES	2.119.866	34.463	10,6	2.875.670	46.773	12,4
INFORMATION SERVICES (web, alerts etc.)	130.416	2.120	0,7	129.446	2.105	0,56
FINANCIAL SERVICES (incl. audit)	551.064	8.959	2,8	243.564	3.962	1,1
EXCHANGE RATE DIFFERENCES	93.959	1.527	0,47	74.205	1.207	0,32
DIRECT COSTS	15.408.451	250.498	76,9	17.852.105	290.366	77,3
TOTAL EXPANDITURES	**20.029.402**	**325.622**	**100**	**23.101.460**	**375.747**	**100**
BALANCE	2.748.189	44.678		17.070.804	277.658	
Tax on profit	6.827	111		8.422	137	
Assets from the difference between revenues and expenditures carried-over	*2.741.362*	*44.567*		*17.062.382*	*277.521*	

Notes:
* 620.000 MKD or 10.085 EUR reorganized from founding fund as per Law on non-profit accountancy.

2. BALANCE SHEET

Description	2013 (in MKD)	2013 (in EUR)	2014 (in MKD)	2014 (in EUR)
Assets	5.081.646	82.613	21.622.185	351.687
Funds and liabilities	5.081.646	82.613	21.622.185	351.687
Difference between assets and funds and liabilities	0	0	0	0
Description	**2013 (in MKD)**	**2013 (in EUR)**	**2014 (in MKD)**	**2014 (in EUR)**
2.1. ASSETS				
Fixed assets	291.714	4.742	345.846	5.625
Cash and cash equivalents (bank and foreign currency)	2.485.232	40.403	17.053.687	277.380
Receivables from given advances	1.077.301	17.514	111.415	1.812
Receivables from membership fee				0
Receivables from taxes	31.185	507	53.021	862
Accrued delimitations (PVR)	1.196.214	19.447	4.058.216	66.007
TOTAL ASSETS	**5.081.646**	**82.613**	**21.622.185**	**351.687**
				0
2.2. FUNDS AND LIABILITIES				0
Assets from the difference between revenues and expenditures carried over	2.741.362	44.567	17.062.382	277.521
Liabilities for suppliers	1.295.368	21.059	3.977.480	64.694
Liabilities for personal tax	134.136	2.181	198.699	3.232
Liabilities for employees	867	14	867	14
Passive time divisions	31.185	507	36.911	600
Founding fund	878.728	14.286	965.846	15.710
TOTAL FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	**5.081.646**	**82.613**	**21.622.185**	**351.687**