

*As a part of the Global Accountability Week (GAW) 2022, the Balkan Civil society Development Network is cordially inviting you to the*

Regional workshop

***“Donors & CSOs: together towards a more Accountable Civil Society in the Western Balkans”***

7 October (Friday), 2022, Zoom

### Background/ Context

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) need to invest in proper and sustainable regulation mechanisms and strengthen their internal functioning and capacities, being acknowledged as vital societal actors fighting the negative narratives and governments' civic space obstructions. While serving constituencies' needs, CSOs should establish or improve their relationships with relevant stakeholders, including donors. CSOs- donors' relationship not only serves CSOs' fundraising goals and financial sustainability but is also one of the key aspects why CSOs should strive to improve their internal accountability and transparency.

By recognizing accountability as a lever of change and putting people at the core of decision-making processes, CSOs in the region could gain greater trust and legitimacy among their target groups and improve their visibility. For a more civil society-enabling environment, donors should provide more significant support to CSOs and transform their approach to CSO effectiveness and resilience. Concerning Donor-CSOs relations, a powershift needs to take place to ensure that organizations' message is taken into account and civic space is protected and advanced.

Various global initiatives seek to increase accountability in civil society. Looking from the perspective of CSOs as effective development actors, the [Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles](#), developed by [CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness \(CPDE\)](#) were among the first guiding documents outlining the CSO's commitment to accountability, back in 2010. Taking a step further, the [Global Standard for CSO Accountability](#) was developed as a reference standard by a community of CSO networks globally intending to transform the way organizations understand and practice accountability. As one of the ten Global Standard partners, BCSDN is committed to strengthening CSO capacities to be legitimate and accountable actors in our region; and one of the two objectives of our [Regional Civil Society Development Hub](#) is for CSOs to contribute towards effective, transparent, and responsible work that contributes to protecting civic space.

*This activity is part of the Forth Extension phase of the Global Standard project: Learning and strengthening accountability practices in the Western Balkans, funded by Sida.*

## Global Accountability Week

### Dynamic Accountability

Dynamic accountability is a systemic approach to CSO accountability, grounded in meaningful engagement with all stakeholders. Identified as inclusive, participatory, and continuously practiced, it is about creating transformational relationships between CSO and their stakeholders, striving to make organizations adaptive to constituencies' needs. This includes redressing unequal power dynamics, building partnerships with all its stakeholders, and recognizing that relationship-building with all stakeholders is necessary to achieve systemic change. Find out more [here](#).

The Global Accountability Week (GAW) started as a small campaign in 2017. It raises awareness on the importance of strengthening the dynamic accountability of civil society organizations (CSOs) around the world, while also demonstrating the positive impact of a more accountable sector. Led by Affinity Group of National Associations, AGNA ([CIVICUS](#)), the GAW has evolved into a full-week campaign during which CSOs and platforms including the [Global Standard for](#)

[CSO Accountability](#) share experiences, good practices and success stories on how organizations are finding ways to transform their accountability, legitimacy and transparency practices with their constituents, such as staff, supporters, members, volunteers, partners, peer-organizations, target groups, governments and society at large. The efforts shared by the organizations participating in the Global Accountability Week – big and small, located in different regions of the world, and often operating in very restrictive environments – are a powerful message that accountability practices are possible to all organizations.

### Donors- CSOs Conversations during Global Accountability Week 2022

During the Global Accountability Week (GAW) 2022, we will reaffirm our efforts to include different voices in creating a more robust Western Balkan civil society and face the power imbalances of donor-CSO relationships. The event will expand the donors'- CSOs' dialogue by identifying the current gaps and success in their mutual relationships, bringing the local context, and exploring the power dynamics and possible shift of power in improving organizations' internal accountability practices. The Dialogues will further strengthen the existing partnerships and create a better-funded, more sustainable, and effective civil society in the region.

The event will particularly reflect on the European Commission's role as one of the most prominent actors in recognizing CSOs' efforts and investing in CSOs' capacity in the region, and will put emphasis on Global Standard recognition in the [new EU Guidelines](#) and the [OECD's Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\) Recommendation on Enabling Civil](#)

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[Society in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance](#), as the recent positive developments regarding civil society accountability. For this reason, prominent CSOs donors in the region will be invited to share insights regarding the programs and plans focused on CSOs' accountability, among which the investment in internal CSOs' capacities, and investing in CSOs operations on the local level.

### The aim of the regional workshop

By using the examples of donors' practices and success stories, the workshop will aim to reflect on the recent success and challenges of Western Balkans Donors- CSOs' relations in building a more accountable, resilient, and effective civil society in the region.

To shift the power and recognize the national CSOs' efforts in building a more accountable and resilient civil society, the event will also reflect on how CSOs' adherence to national civil society codes can serve and enhance CSOs' relationships. After the GS recognition in the new EU Guidelines, the event will explore the relevance of the national civil society codes in building more enhancing policies for civil society development.

### Points of reflections

- Donors' role in building effective civil society in the Western Balkans;
- The lever for change/ new barriers in donor- CSOs relations?;
- How could donors further support CSO accountability practices?;
- How/ The level of CSOs' compliance with national codes can serve to CSOs- Donors relationships?;
- How the EU Civil Society Guidelines will be used in supporting the promotion/strengthening of CSO accountability in the region?
- The EU Civil Society Guidelines in the function of the Code of Ethics for the Macedonian CSOs and Code of Standards for the Albanian CSOs. Are the Guidelines a document we will use just as a reference or are they valuable instructions we should use in our practices?
- The way how the Guidelines should be communicated?
- Deriving from the standards, are we doing our best regarding civil society accountability?
- What is the value from donors perspective of CSO Accountability standards created by the civil society such as the Global Standard for CSO Accountability or the Istanbul Principles?

## DRAFT AGENDA

### Regional workshop

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| Time/ hour  | Item   | Speaker/ moderator  |
|-------------|--|---|
| 11:00-11:10 | <b>Welcome and Introduction</b><br><i>Agenda setting and welcoming</i>   | <b>Ms. Biljana Spasovska</b> , BCSDN<br>Executive Director  |
| 11:10-11:20 | <b>Introducing the Global Accountability Week and the Global Standard role in the process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Brief introduction of the Global Accountability Week 2022, its impact during the years, as well as Global Standard role in Western Balkans' CSOs accountability practices</i></li> </ul>   | <b>Ms. Anabel Cruz</b> , the Founder<br>Director of the Communication and<br>Development Institute (ICD)  |
| 11:20-11:40 | <b>Discussing the latest regional developments on CSO Accountability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Reflection on Global Standard for CSO Accountability embodiment into national efforts (Albania and North Macedonia) for promoting CSO accountability;</i></li> <li><i>Discussing the relevance of national civil society codes in creating essential documents and policy decisions on national, regional, and European level;</i></li> <li><i>Bringing up the possibility of existence of other similar initiatives and national civil society codes in the region;</i></li> <li><i>Joint conversation on how CSOs compliance to national codes can serve to CSOs-Donors relationships</i></li> </ul>  | <b>Ms. Ms. Ariola Agoli</b> , National<br>Resource Center Manager at<br>Partners Albania for Change and<br>Development<br><b>Ms. Aleksandra Savevska</b> , Project<br>Officer at Macedonian Center for<br>International Cooperation (MCIC)  |
| 11:40-12:20 | <b>Donors' Role in creating more accountable and effective Western Balkans civil society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Donors- CSOs power relations for advanced Western Balkans civic space;</i></li> <li><i>How the EU recognition of the Global Standard could be used as a positive example and inspire other donors in their work?; Are there some similar mechanisms donors could refer to?; How civil society programs and all donors should be involved in the process of EU Guidelines implementation?;</i></li> <li><i>Reflection on recent success and challenges of EU efforts in providing more resilient Western Balkans civic space, focusing on the GS recognition in the EU Guidelines;</i></li> <li><i>The EU Guidelines in the function of National Civil Society Codes</i></li> <li><i>The strategic importance of EU TACSO 3 functioning in the region</i></li> </ul> | <b>Ms. Hillen Francke</b> , Head of Sector<br>Civil society and human capital<br>development, EU DG NEAR<br><b>Ms. Birgitta Jansson</b> , Senior<br>Programme Manager/Specialist<br>Democracy and Human Rights<br>Department for Europe and<br>Latinamerica, Swedish International<br>Development Cooperation Agency<br>(Sida);<br><b>Mr. Richard Allen</b> , EU TACSO 3<br>Team Leader |
| 12:20-12:50 | <b>Q&amp;A session</b><br><i>Interactive dialogues among Donors and CSOs</i>   | All workshop's participants   |
| 12:50-13:00 | <b>Conclusions and What's Upcoming</b>   | <b>Ms. Daniella Hiche</b> , CIVICUS (AGNA)<br>Coordinator   |

\*The event will be moderated by Ms. Biljana Spasovska, BCSDN Executive Director.

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