

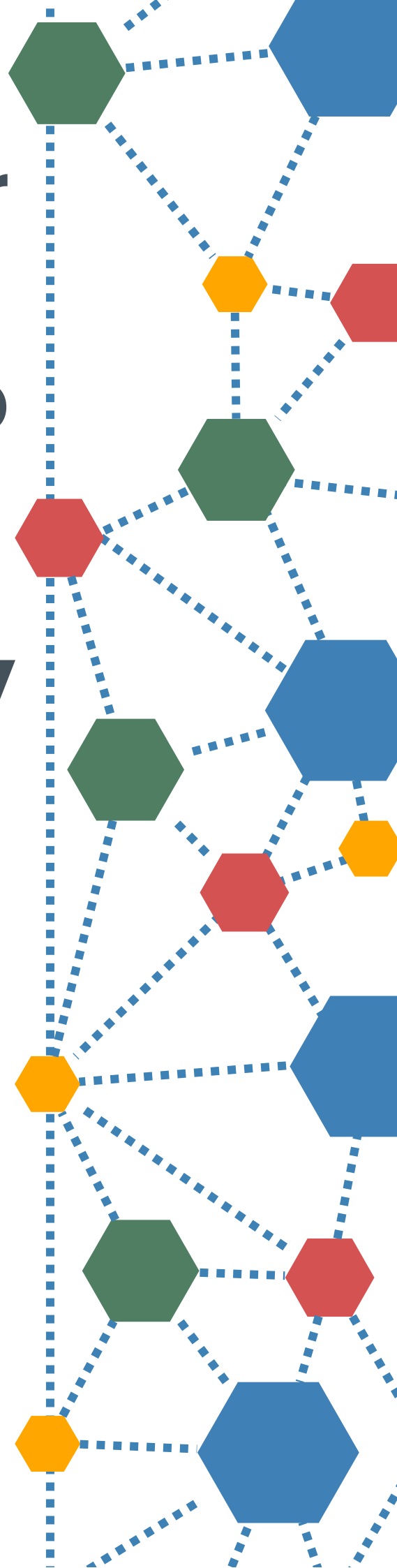
Balkan network for local democracy BNLD

Accountability principles



**Balkan Network
for Local Democracy**

Novi Sad, June 2022



Balkan network for local democracy

BNLD

The Balkan Network for Local Democracy - BNLD is a regional network founded in 2019 by the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) and the 7 Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) from the Western Balkans with the aim to promote citizen participation, democratic governance, co-operation, and dialogue between civil society and local public authorities, and to enhance regional co-operation and dialogue in the Western Balkans.

As determined by the statutory provisions, BNLD regionally implements the shared vision and mission between the LDAs and BNLD to contribute to good neighbourhood relations, regional stability, and prosperity based on local democracy development and good local governance through engagement of civil society and local authorities, contributing to a culture of dialogue and respect for diversity. BNLD's mission is to help empower civil society and local authorities to jointly engage in the democratic reform process, local democracy development, and contribute to regional cooperation and policy dialogue for EU integration of the Western Balkans.

Since its establishment in 2019, as the result of over twenty years of collaboration of the founding Local Democracy Agencies, BNLD has embraced their local experiences and put them in practice at the regional level demonstrating organizational commitment to transparency, accountability, and integrity in our internal operations.

BNLD network members are firmly committed to CSO accountability standards as the essential interface with our constituencies based on consistent interaction and promotion of trustful and long-term relationships. Through pursuing their mission and vision in respective local communities, Local Democracy Agencies are fully responsive to the citizens and diverse stakeholders they work with through community engagement considering feedback, responses, and recommendations.

Accountability principles

The LDAs' primary constituencies include local formal and informal citizens' interest groups, youth groups, women's associations, ethnic minority groups, and other diverse and often marginalized groups, as well as local policy and decision makers. Through establishing policy dialogue platforms, BNLD and its network members practice dynamic accountability principles, engaging their stakeholders in inclusive and participatory approaches while continuously improving efficiency. BNLD's regional work has been greatly recognized, including its role in contributing to a diverse and open culture of dialogue in the Western Balkans, empowering civil society and local authorities to jointly engage in the democratic reform process, promoting good governance principles and local democracy development, and contributing to policy dialogue on different levels.

BNLD adheres to strong partnership-building through local, national, and regional networking with issue-based, thematic CSOs and CSO networks and local authorities through exchanges of good practices and promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation and capacity building programs underpinning local participative democracy. Long-term joint commitment, job shadowing, and knowledge and information sharing are contributing factors to strong capacity-building partnerships. BNLD establishes cooperation agreements between the Network members with a wide scope of stakeholders, conducting regular context analyses, developing guidelines and sector policy recommendations, and cherishing close relationships to plan, implement and monitor jointly developed actions.

BNLD is strongly committed to empowered local ownership and participation as the core values in the Statutes, our mission statement and vision. A regional "community of good local practice" has been developed through sustainable and long-term initiatives comprising methods and tools for promoting inclusive society, participative local democracy, social cohesion, a culture of dialogue and intercultural understanding, and respect for diversity and human rights in multicultural local communities.

Accountability principles

BNLD and its members fully respect and effectively apply responsible decision-making principles ensuring that our decisions are responsive to feedback from our target groups, partners, volunteers, and staff. An effective evaluation system has been developed for improving our members' performances, both through their programmes and through regular reporting to collect and evaluate constituent feedback, consult with both local stakeholders and partners engaged, and to enable proactive debate and participation of decision-making bodies, staff members, associates, and volunteers.

BNLD and its members collaborate with diverse groups of stakeholders to promote the justice and equal rights for all principle. We have developed participatory and systemic approaches for conducting surveys, analyses, evidence-based advocacy actions, cooperation, and policy dialogue platforms considering needs and priorities of multicultural local communities and constituencies, particularly youth, women, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups. Our core local and regional programs and initiatives are developed within a wider context of post-conflict reconciliation in the WB countries and aim for promotion of respect for the universal human rights and equality principles.

BNLD and its members are fully committed to women's rights and gender equality principles. Both the Network's and LDAs capacity building and awareness raising programmes, local networking actions, employment practices are aimed to promote and advance women's empowerment and gender equality to create equal opportunities. BNLD's statutory provisions reiterate the gender equality principles, allowing for overcoming barriers to inclusion, and identification of opportunities for participation.

Accountability principles

As determined by the Statutes, BNLD ensures conditions for efficient, effective and ethical use of financial and other resources to manage regional co-operation programmes. The Governing board is responsible to follow generally recognised financial accounting standards, to ensure the implementation of strict financial controls to reduce the risk of misuse of funds by handling resources responsibly and transparently.

Adopted at the BNLD Assembly meeting
Novi Sad, 22st June 2022

President:
Mr. Sladjan Ilic