



# ACTIVITY REPORT 2022 LINK 4 COOPERATION PROJECT





**ACTIVITY REPORT 2022**  
**"LINK 4 COOPERATION" PROJECT**

"Strengthening local participation and cooperation through partnership of Public Authorities and CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina"

**January, 2023**

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## ABOUT US

For the conception of the ["Strengthening local participation and cooperation through partnership of Public Authorities and CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina"](#) project (further herei: **"LINK 4 Cooperation"**), Local Democracy Agency (LDA ) Mostar, together with the project partners LDA Prijedor, LDA Zavidovici, Center for Development of Herzegovina from Trebinje, European Association for Local Democracy - ALDA, and ALDA Skopje, has formed a diversified and complementary consortium in order to maximize the impact of the action in each component. This valuable network has been shaped through various ties and relations built throughout the years: LDAs and ALDA are linked by a crossed and long term partnership and cooperation on different projects and initiatives from more than 20 years. LDAs from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Center for Development of Herzegovina form Trebinje have joint contacts and previous work in different spheres, from local development, local communities initiatives, activities related to youth and other groups in the civil society, culture activities, and many others. The project has been co-constructed by the consortium taking into account the specific expertise of each partner focusing on promoting good governance at local level in Europe and in Western Balkans.

The Local Democracy Agencies have been established in the Western Balkans by the Congress of the Council of Europe since 1992, as a support program to strengthen local democracy, foster respect for human rights and further sustainable development. Today there are 15 active Local Democracy Agencies based in Western Balkans, South Caucasus and North Africa coordinated by ALDA, and three Agencies – Operational partners, based in Croatia. The Agencies function as self-sustaining, locally registered NGOs, but they are different from other local NGOs because of the international framework they operate in. Indeed, the Local Democracy Agencies develop partnerships with local authorities and NGOs from all over Europe giving to the whole network direct access to an international framework through the support of ALDA, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

**LINK 4 Cooperation** is a three year project funded by [European union](#).



## OBJECTIVES

**Overall objective:** to strengthen the capacities of CSOs engaged in public policy processes to become skilled and reliable partners in policy-making and reform processes in B&H.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- ✓ Create stronger links to citizens by engaging in public policy process, reaching out to society as a whole including marginalized groups and grass root communities and encouraging civic activism and public participation in policy-making;

- ✓ Capable, transparent and accountable LAs;
- ✓ Effective CSOs;
- ✓ LAs have enabling policies and rules for grass root organizations and civic initiatives;
- ✓ CSOs create Network for coalition-building for increased impact in campaigning and advocacy.



## VISION

- ✓ To strengthen the capacities of CSOs engaged in public policy processes to become skilled and reliable partners in policy-making and reform processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## ACTIVITIES IN 2022

### The 1st half of the Year

#### **Meetings with the representatives of 12 local governments**

At the end of 2021 and at the beginning of 2022, representatives of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project consortium held a series of meetings with representatives of [12 local self-governments](#) from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are also the project beneficiaries. Activities implemented in the first year of the project were presented, as well as the upcoming activities, with the focus on the grant scheme for the civil sector in the project area, which will be realized in 2023. The meetings were also an opportunity to present potentially interesting models of joint promotion on the [project web portal](#) and the project's social networks ([FB](#) and [Instagram](#)).

The aim of the meetings was the presentation of the [European Label of Excellence in Management Program - ELoGE](#) and the [Leadership Academy Program - LAP](#) as extremely valuable tools of the Council of Europe that will give a new dimension to the relations between local governments and civil society organizations involved in this project.



## **Consortium meeting on the implementation of the ELoGE methodology of the Council of Europe**

At the meeting of representatives of the project consortium of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project held in Mostar on February 8, 2022, in addition to the regular exchange of information between partner organizations, a workshop was held on the implementation process of the methodology of the Council of Europe's ELoGE program, which will be applied in 12 local government units involved in the project. At the workshop, the steps and materials that will be used to make the ELoGE process as clear as possible to users were determined.



Previously, from October to December 2021, 16 representatives of the project consortium underwent ToT (training for trainers) for the implementation of the ELoGE methodology held by external experts delegated by the Council of Europe, and thus the representatives of the consortium became certified trainers for the implementation of the ELoGE program.

The ELoGE program includes a process of self-assessment of local governments within the framework of 12 principles of good local governance. The performed self-assessment detects stronger and weaker segments of local government activities, followed by targeted training aimed at improving them.

After the completion of the ELoGE workshop of representatives of the project consortium, a series of workshops began with representatives of local ELoGE teams, delegated on behalf of 12 local governments, beneficiaries of the "LINK 4 cooperation" project.

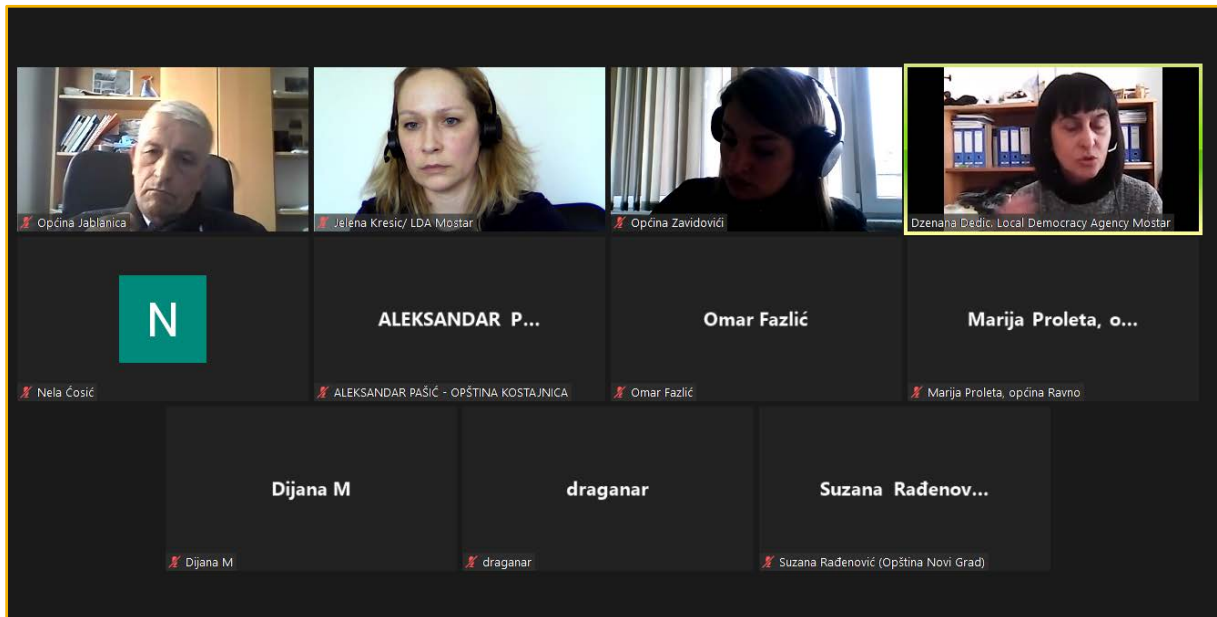
### **Online informative meeting: "Promotional and dissemination activities of the project"**

As a part of preparation for the first project Forum in Zavidovići, on March 9, 2022, an [online informative meeting was held on the topic "Promotional and dissemination activities of the project"](#) with communication officers of 12 local governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, beneficiaries of the "LINK 4 Cooperation".

The goal of the meeting was to intensify cooperation on the promotion and dissemination of all key project activities with a focus on the ELoGE program of the



Council of Europe, which will be officially launched on March 17, 2022, within the scope of the first project Forum in Zavidovići.



## Project Consortium Meeting on the occasion of the First Project Forum in Zavidovići

The meeting of the representatives of the project consortium was held on March 16, 2022, hosted by the Local Democracy Agency Zavidovići, with the aim to discuss details of the “Forum for the exchange of best practices of cooperation between CSOs and Local Authorities”.

Representatives of the project consortium made a detailed review of the status of the project activities carried out so far, discussed the details of the Forum, future project activities and financial reporting.



## First project Forum in Zavidovići

On March 17, 2022, the first project [Forum for the exchange of best practices of cooperation between civil society organizations \(CSOs\) and local authorities](#) was held in Zavidovići, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to representatives of the international community and donors, the Forum was attended by representatives of local authorities and CSOs from Berkovici, Jablanica, Kostajnica, Maglaj, Mostar, Nevesinje, Novi Grad, Prijedor, Ravno, Trebinje, Zavidovici and Zepce, who jointly identified specific challenges of cooperation and expressed readiness to find optimal solutions to strengthen cooperation.



The main part of the Forum was the **launch of the ELoGE program of the Council of Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina** designed to support communities in their quest to improve their local government, to be implemented in 12 cities and municipalities. The aim is to conduct self-assessments of these cities and municipalities in accordance with the 12 principles of good democratic governance. The first ELoGE accredited platform in BiH, consisting of representatives of the project consortium, will be continuously available to cities and municipalities in the process of self-assessment in the coming months.



### **Conclusions and Recommendations of the First Project Forum in Zavidovići**

The Forum had two important objectives:

1. Assessing the situation regarding the cooperation of local authorities and civil society in 12 local governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. Inauguration of the ELoGE program in Bosnia and Herzegovina



**The Conclusions and Recommendation of the Forum** are summed up in the following **DOCUMENT**.

### **ELoGE Workshops marked the beginning of an extremely important process of self-assessment**

In the period from March to June 2022, representatives of the consortium of the LINK 4 Cooperation project held a series of **workshops on the implementation of the ELoGE program of the Council of Europe addressed to representatives of 12 local governments** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project beneficiaries.

The workshops were facilitated by the project consortium representatives, certified ELoGE experts, including a detailed presentation of the ELoGE program based on 12 principles of good democratic governance. Special focus was put on the **ELOGE Benchmark methodology** and the parallel **collection of opinions from citizens, local elected officials and local administration through questionnaires**. Examples of good practices from EU member states were presented to ELoGE teams delegated on behalf of each of the 12 local governments with the emphasis on the fact that the process of passing the ELoGE standard is extremely important for detecting any shortcomings and positive aspects of local government.

Upon completion of the ELoGE process of self-assessment of local governments, and based on detected challenges in certain areas, training modules will be created through the **Leadership Academy Programme (LAP)** of the Council of Europe, which is also one of the specifics of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project.




## **An overview of the ELoGE Process within the “LINK 4 Cooperation” project**


### **The ELoGE program of the Council of Europe within the LINK 4 Cooperation project**

includes a process of self-assessment of 12 local governments, project beneficiaries, based on 12 principles of good local governance. In addition to fulfilling the basic document – ELoGE benchmark by local governments, opinions of citizens, local administration (local government employees) and elected local officials (councilors) on the quality of work and activities of local government are collected through online questionnaires.

In accordance with this methodology, local government self-assessment and the results of all questionnaires are sent for analysis to an independent committee composed of local government experts. Committee members make the final assessment of meeting the minimum requirements for ELoGE certification and symbolic award – ELoGE crystal dodecahedron.

It is necessary to emphasize that throughout this process, local governments have the continuous support of representatives of the project consortium, who are also certified ELoGE trainers. In this context, a series of ELoGE workshops were held with the representatives of ELoGE teams delegated on behalf of local governments. Workshops aimed at transferring the ELoGE methodology and all materials with detailed explanations regarding the implementation of this process.

 The **Local Democracy Agency Mostar**, as a project leader, is an accredited holder of the **ELoGE platform for Bosnia and Herzegovina**, while 16 representatives of the project consortium underwent several months of training to become **certified ELoGE trainers** and are available to local governments during the implementation of ELoGE process.

 It is important to emphasize that the **ELoGE program of the Council of Europe is being implemented for the first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the LINK 4 Cooperation project, funded by the European Union. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also the first country outside the European Union to implement this program.**

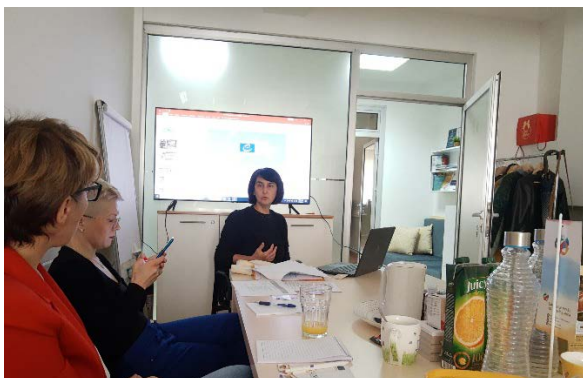
A total of 12 local governments from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina are included in the activities of the project LINK 4 Cooperation with the aim of improving their capacity, transparency and accountability.

### **ELoGE Process Evaluation Workshop**

**ELoGE process evaluation workshop** was held in Sarajevo on May 7, 2022 organized by the Local Democracy Agency Mostar.

The workshop was realized with the aim of transferring the evaluation methodology and procedures to an independent ELoGE committee consisting of experts in the field of local government.

The independent committee will make the final decision on which of the 12 local governments, beneficiaries of the LINK 4 Cooperation project, will meet the criteria of the ELoGE program standard, consisting of 12 principles of good democratic governance.



## Continuation of the ELoGE process with 12 local governments

At the beginning of the second half of 2022, representatives of 12 local governments from Bosnia and Herzegovina started with the implementation of the ELoGE program of the Council of Europe within the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project. This comprehensive capacity self-assessment process based on 12 principles of good local governance is a



tool which deeply scans all areas of local government and is an excellent landmark and basis from which municipalities and cities can make improvements in all areas that are more challenged. The Local Democracy Agency Mostar is the holder of the first and only accredited platform for the implementation of the ELoGE methodology in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also includes the other members of the project consortium. A total of 16 representatives of this platform have been certified by the Council of Europe for the

implementation of ELoGE, and are available to local governments as mentors during the implementation of this process.

In accordance with the ELoGE methodology, representatives of local governments have the task of filling out the basic ELoGE document, the ELoGE Benchmark, which is based on 12 principles of good local governance, and to which more than 90 indicators are linked. The grades assigned by the local government must be based on the provided documentation, which supports them. In parallel with the completion of ELoGE Benchmark, the opinion of citizens, local administration and elected officials is collected through ELoGE questionnaires, which are also based on 12 principles of good local governance. Although the opinions collected through the questionnaire do not directly affect the self-assessment carried out by the local government, they serve as a comparison and benchmark for the ELoGE independent commission on the degree of divergence of attitudes and opinions.

In accordance with the ELoGE methodology, the self-assessment of the local government is referred for analysis to an independent committee composed of local government experts. Members of the evaluation committee make a final assessment on meeting the minimum prerequisites for awarding the ELoGE certificate and the symbolic award – the ELoGE crystal dodecahedron to the local governments.

## Third project Newsletter



In July 2022, the **third** project Newsletter was created and distributed to more than 600 e-mail addresses in Bosnia and Herzegovina and promoted through the

project's official web platform and social networks. The third Newsletter was also issued in [English](#) and sent to over 100 e-mail addresses in EU countries.

## **The second half of the year**

### **Public call for CSOs to participate in the Leadership Academy trainings**



At the end of August 2022, the Local Democracy Agency Mostar announced a [public call](#) for the participation of CSO representatives in the training cycle within the Leadership Academy Program (LAP), which is carried out as part of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project. The training is intended for CSOs registered in BiH, which operate in the territory of 12 cities/municipalities as well as places that gravitate to the following: Berkovići, Jablanica, Kostajnica, Maglaj, Mostar, Nevesinje, Novi Grad, Prijedor, Ravno, Trebinje, Zavidovići and Žepče.

### **More than 60 representatives of local authorities and CSOs successfully completed LAP trainings**

During September and October 2022, as part of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project, the Local Democracy Agency Mostar (LDA Mostar) implemented [a series of trainings through the Council of Europe's Leadership Academy Program \(LAP\)](#). The training was intended for representatives of local government and civil society organizations from Berković, Jablanica, Kostajnica, Maglaj, Mostar, Nevesinje, Novi Grad, Prijedor, Ravno, Trebinje, Zavidovići and Žepče.





LAP training, divided into two cycles, was successfully completed by three groups of participants. Under the guidance of LAP trainers certified by the Council of Europe, more than 60 participants went through an intensive program having the opportunity to exchange the existing practices of their institutions and organizations, detected shortcomings in the work, and based on what they had learned, tried to find ways for improvements.



The training modules were selected based on a previously performed assessment of the condition and needs of the target groups, including a multi-month self-assessment process of 12 local governments included in the project. Additionally, the modules were adapted having in mind results of the questionnaire sent out to CSO representatives from the same 12 municipalities/cities.

The Leadership Academy Program (LAP) is a training program primarily intended for public authorities at various levels for strategies and capacity building taught in 2 cycles.

The purpose of the program is to teach participants better leadership, management and planning skills.



The main goal of LAP is to acquire knowledge and tools that will enable participants to better manage responsibility and changes within the institutions they come from. In order to support the democratization process, through the strengthening of good governance and capacity building of local authorities and civil society, the Local Democracy Agency Mostar, in cooperation with project partners, included representatives of civil society in the aforementioned Program.

### **Project consortium representatives meeting in Trebinje**

The Leadership Academy Program training in Trebinje was an opportunity to organize a regular **meeting of representatives of the project consortium**, which was held on October 25, 2022 in Trebinje. The focus of the meeting were preparatory activities for the start of the organization of the second project Forum in Prijedor. In addition to planning the project Forum, representatives of the project consortium evaluated the activities carried out in the recent period, and defined the approach to the implementation of upcoming activities.



## The Participatory Democracy Network



Within the framework of the project, an informal Participatory Democracy Network was established which, in addition to the 12 local government units included in the project, gathers civil society organizations registered on the territory of these 12 local communities. The goal of the Network is the exchange of experiences, networking and the establishment of closer cooperation between CSOs and local authorities. Until now, members of

the Network have had the opportunity to educate and develop the capacity of their organizations through the LAP program of the Council of Europe, and in 2023, CSOs, members of the Network, will also have the opportunity to apply for funds through a grant scheme that is an integral part of the third year of the project. Organizations that become members of the Network will also have the opportunity to sign an online protocol (memorandum of understanding) with local governments for the purpose of developing relations and continuous cooperation.

All interested civil society organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina are invited to join the Network through a simple [online form](#).

### **Project consortium meeting on the occasion of the second project Forum in Prijedor**

The [meeting of representatives of the project consortium](#) was held on December 8, 2022 in Prijedor, organized by the project partner Local Democracy Agency Prijedor, and preceded the second project "Forum for the exchange of best practices of cooperation between CSOs and local authorities".

The representatives of the project consortium agreed on the last details before the Forum in Prijedor, presented the activities carried out in the previous period, and touched upon the upcoming activities of the project and details related to financial reporting.



## Second project Forum in Prijedor

Second year of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project was rounded off with the second project **Forum for the exchange of best practices of cooperation between civil society organizations (CSOs) and local authorities**, which was held in Prijedor on December 9, and gathered over 60 participants with areas of 12 local communities included in the project.



In addition to representatives of the international community the Forum was attended by representatives of local authorities and CSOs from Berkovici, Jablanica, Kostajnica, Maglaj, Mostar, Nevesinje, Novi Grad, Prijedor, Ravno, Trebinje, Zavidovici and Zepce, who jointly identified specific challenges of cooperation and expressed readiness to find optimal solutions to strengthen cooperation. Additionally, as the key tools in the context

of joining the European Union an assessment of the impact and importance of the ELoGE process and the Leadership Academy (LAP) program of Council of Europe was also carried out.



## **Conclusions and recommendations of the Second Project Forum in Prijedor**

The second project Forum had two main goals:

1. Assessing the state of cooperation between local authorities and civil society in 12 local governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. Evaluating the impact and importance of the ELoGE process and the program of the Leadership Academy Program (LAP) of the Council of Europe as key tools in the context of joining the European Union

Please find the conclusions and recommendations from the Forum in Prijedor in the following [\*\*DOCUMENT\*\*](#).



## Fourth project Newsletter



In December, 2022, the [fourth](#) Newsletter of the "LINK 4 Cooperation" project was delivered, published and promoted, which provides an overview of the activities implemented in the second half of 2022 with a special focus on the project Forum in Prijedor, the ELoGE process, and the training cycle conducted through the Leadership Academy Program (LAP). The Newsletter is also distributed, published and promoted in [English](#).

## Local Initiatives



The "LINK 4 Cooperation" project provides to promote successful initiatives which originated from civil society organizations or informal groups, that have brought progress in the field of good governance in local communities. If you have already implemented or intend to implement an initiative of this type through your work, submit your initiative by filling out a simple [online form](#), and you will thus get space for promotion through the official project web platform and social networks.

## Project consortium meetings in 2022



Predstavnici projektnog konzorcija kojeg čine Agencija lokalne demokratije Mostar u svojstvu projekt lidera, LDA Prijedor, LDA Zavidovići, Centar za razvoj Hercegovine (CRH), Evropska asocijacija za lokalnu demokratiju – ALDA, te ALDA Skopje, održali su u 2022. godini 8 redovnih (3 uživo i 5 online) i 8 ad-hock sastanaka (1 uživo i 7 online). Sastanci projektnog konzorcija održavaju se s ciljem planiranja, koordinacije i nadzora implementacije projektnih aktivnosti. U 2022. godini predstavnici konzorcija su iskoristili brojne prilike da što detaljnije i preciznije planiraju implementaciju svih aktivnosti. Posebna pozornost je posvećena planiranju i implementaciji dva projektna Foruma u Zavidovićima i Prijedoru, provedbi ELoGE procesa u 12 lokalnih samouprava BiH, te Akademiji za lidere i formiranju Mreže za participativnu demokratiju.

## Communication, dissemination and promotion of the project activities



Regular communication and dissemination, as well as targeted promotion of project activities, is carried out in accordance with the adopted communication strategy and communication plans, and is implemented through the project's [official website](#) and online tools, [FB page](#) and [Instagram profile](#). Information about the implementation of project activities is disseminated to the general public in the form of press conferences, press statements, press releases or media invitations, and is generally well promoted through traditional and new media within the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to the regular dissemination of information about project activities, in 2022 targeted promotional campaigns on social networks were carried out, which aimed to increase the visibility of the project and project activities.

For example, the FB page of the project with 369 followers recorded at the end of 2021 gained a total number of 760 followers at the end of 2022, with a total increase in page visits in 2022 of 2,176 (228.7%) and content reach of 183,453 (332.6%) visitors.

The number of followers of the Instagram profile increased by 39 in 2022, which makes a total number of 116 followers, while in the same year, this profile was visited by 603 people (112.3%) with a total content reach of 28,050 (31,000%) visitors.



More information about the "**LINK 4 Cooperation**" project and its activities are available at [www.link4cooperation.ba](http://www.link4cooperation.ba), FB page and Instagram profile or contact us by e-mail: [info@link4cooperation.ba](mailto:info@link4cooperation.ba).



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