



Project funded by the European Union

Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2



ReLOaD2 in brief:

Overall objective: To strengthen participatory democracies and the European Union (EU) integration process in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society and youth to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society organizations (CSO).

- **Funded by the EU**
- **Implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**
- **Budget:** EUR 12.63 million (USD 15.06 million - 13.53 million funded by the EU and 1.52 million from local governments and UNDP)
- **Project start date:** January 1, 2021
- **Duration:** 48 months
- **ReLOaD in Western Balkans:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia
- **Target groups:** 50 local governments and 300 CSOs
- **Partners:** Ministries and institutions in charge of local governments and civil society in each participating IPA beneficiary
- **CSOs will implement 300 projects for 40,000 beneficiaries**

#ReLOaD



WHY ReLOaD2?

As a critical component of democratic systems, civil society has been and will continue to be an important actor of reform processes taking place in the Western Balkans. In this context, the EU accession agenda in the region promotes the role of CSOs in further democratisation, including consultation in decision making, contribution to processes associated with policy and regulatory changes and promoting of public accountability.

However, limitations in the environment for CSO work, as well as capacity constraints faced by both CSOs and local governments affect their cooperation efforts. While local governments across the region

provide sizeable public funding to CSOs, they also face transparency and accountability challenges.

Another challenge Western Balkan region is facing is insufficient youth engagement. While considered critical for strengthening fragile democracies and promoting broad-based social transformations in the Western Balkans, youth engagement in the region still needs to be stimulated and improved.

Based on the extensive experience from ReLOaD1 and previous project interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ReLOaD2 will be able to address these issues and challenges in each of the participating IPA beneficiaries: **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.**

* For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to position on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. For UNDP all references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of the UN Resolution 1244/1999.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

For the next four years (2021-2024) the goal of the ReLOaD2 is to strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society and youth to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for CSOs.

ReLOaD2 will work with local governments and incite them to use public funding for CSOs in a transparent and development-oriented manner, recognising local needs and embracing a project-based approach. Also, the project will promote youth engagement and support implementation of youth initiatives and will work on improvement of their economic perspectives in partner localities.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED KEY PROJECT RESULTS?

Key project results that ReLOaD2 will achieve in 50 local governments are:

- Strengthened the capacities of local governments and CSO to institutionalise and implement transparent and gender responsive grant schemes and deliver good quality projects servicing the local community;
- Capacity of local authorities and CSOs to generate greater civic and youth engagement in local affairs is enhanced;
- Regional networking and dialogue among civil society and local governments across the Western Balkans is enhanced.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED IMPACT OF THE PROJECT?

Working across the region, ReLOaD2 will enhance capacities of local governments and CSOs to engage in productive partnerships and contribute to improved service delivery and realisation of local priorities in line with development strategies thus contributing to higher quality of living in 50 local communities.

It is expected that the CSOs will implement around 300 projects and offer improved and diversified services for over 40,000 citizens at the local level in six IPA beneficiaries.

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