



The 12th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum Consolidating the Black Sea NGO Community for Sustainable Development

23rd – 25th of October 2019
Istanbul, Turkey

- FINAL REPORT -

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The Black Sea NGO Forum – A driver of change

The Black Sea NGO Forum is an annual regional event first organised in 2008 by the [Romanian NGDO Platform \(FOND\)](#) in the context of the **Black Sea Synergy European Policy**, with the support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Representation of the European Commission in Romania and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation. Since 2013, the Forum has been financially supported by the European Commission.

Its main objectives are to increase the level of **dialogue and cooperation** among NGOs in the wider Black Sea Region, to strengthen the capacities of NGOs to influence regional and national policies and to increase the number and quality of **regional partnerships and projects**.

Since its very first edition, the Black Sea NGO Forum enabled an **open space for debate, sharing mutual knowledge and understanding, communication and cooperation** among civil society representatives, governments, international organisations and donors active in the Black Sea region. The Forum focuses on **sharing good practices** in various domains and **success stories of regional cooperation**.

More than 12 years after, the Black Sea NGO Forum has become a driver of change in the region, reuniting **more than 1,200 participants from 11 countries**: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. The Forum has enabled participants to share expertise and best practices on a diversity of themes of regional interest (democracy & human rights; local development; youth; children rights; environment; citizen participation etc.), encouraged multi-stakeholder dialogue and facilitated partnerships, thus, contributing to building trust and joint projects, identifying common challenges and opportunities and addressing them together.

You can find more information about the Black Sea NGO Forum at: <https://blackseango.org>.

The 12th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum: “Consolidating the Black Sea NGO Community for Sustainable Development”

The 12th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum was organised between the 23rd – 25th of October 2019, in Istanbul, Turkey, by the Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND) in partnership with the Center for International and European Studies (Kadir Has University), with financial support of the European Union.

The aim of the event was to continue the discussions held [last in year in Brussels](#) and **highlight the progress** made so far regarding the advancement of the [Black Sea Synergy European Policy](#), such as the adoption of the [Common Maritime Agenda](#) and the [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#), as well as **the role of civil society organisations in the implementation process** of these very important strategic documents, having in mind their contribution to building society resilience and sustainable development in the region



More specifically, the 12th edition of the Forum had the following **objectives**:

- Raising awareness on the work of CSOs in the region and their added value for building resilience and sustainable development at community and society levels;
- Introducing resilience assessing frameworks for CSO taking into consideration both external threats and internal vulnerabilities;
- Revising the regional Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation and its thematic cooperation priorities (endorsed as part of the Black Sea NGO Forum in 2015), as well as, the objectives and organization of the forum's thematic working groups;
- Presenting the main outcomes of the European policy processes supporting regional cooperation at the Black Sea region and their relevance for civil society engagement.

The final agenda of the event, as well as other resource documents, can be found online at: <https://blackseango.org/the-12th-edition-of-the-black-sea-ngo-forum-23rd-25th-of-october-2019-istanbul-turkey-summary/>.

Plenary Session: CSOs Deliver Sustainable Results – Stories from the Black Sea Region

Objectives:

- ✓ *Raising awareness on the work of CSOs in the region and their added value for building resilience and sustainable results at community and society levels;*
 - ✓ *Inspiring and motivating participants for the next sessions.*
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Moderator: Ms. Mona Prisacariu, Board Member, The Romanian NGDO Platform - FOND / International Program Coordinator, New Horizons Foundation

Ms. Mariana Ianachevici, CEO, The Association for Child and Family Empowerment “AVE COPIII”, The Republic of Moldova

Mr. Bogdan Maslych, Director, GURT Resource Center, Ukraine

Ms. Alina Porumb, President, Association for the Practice of Transformation, Romania

Ms. Burçak Çullu, Country Director ICE EEIG and NETBAN / Board Member, Institute for Future Research, Turkey

Key points

- *The major thing that an NGO should possess is the optimistic attitude that they can change things;*
- *No matter how much one has, the dreamers are the ones who make the difference;*
- *In order to get results we need to be patience about what we are doing and how society will change;*
- *In order for us to thrive, it is essential to have partnerships with others NGOs.*

Sharing lessons and experiences plays a crucial role in the life of CSOs because of the new ideas that can arise from one's and another's stories. In fact, many times many activities emerge from those ideas. The other important lesson here is to build our ideas by networking and learning from one another.

The starting point here is to identify the **local assets**, in terms of existing resources and strong points from the community. Relationship building between businesses from the community, authorities and people is also important because it supports the development of a sense of **collective power**, especially in small, rural communities.

Nowadays, civil society organisations function as an indefinite source of ideas and drivers of change. But what matters the most in this sector are **the people, those who are driven by passion**, because in the end, it does not matter how much one has, and it is the dreamer the one who makes the difference.

Changes do not happen overnight and in order to get results, we, as CSO representatives, have to be patient about what we are doing and society will slowly change.

On the other hand, there are things we cannot do alone, so we have to try to have **partnerships with other NGOs and remain connected to the region**. We should all see this as **an opportunity to come together and to bring new ideas**, to manage to develop a different relationship with NGOs – a **relationship of collaboration**.

There are many lessons that can be learned, but if one can underline some of the most important, there are the following ones:

1. *Attitude is key to success;*
2. *Flexibility and adaptability is very important for developing partnerships;*
3. *Long term view & vision strengthens our commitment in the sector.*

Plenary Session: Building Resilience Among Civil Society Organisations in the Black Sea Region

Objectives:

- ✓ *Introducing the Resiliency+ Framework developed by **PartnersGlobal** in partnership with CIVICUS, which provides key insights on how resiliency gives CSOs the capacity to anticipate, prepare and adapt swiftly and purposefully to external threats and internal vulnerabilities in such a way as to not only survive, but also thrive in response to multi-faceted changes posed by the civic space.*
-

Facilitator: *Ms. Olivia Baci*, Senior Adviser & Technical Lead, **PartnersGlobal**

Key points

- *Just 4% of the world's population live in countries where civic space is fully open.*
- *CSO resilience entails a series of processes of anticipating, responding to, adapting and ideally even thriving in times of crisis.*
- *In the end, CSO resilience is very much connected with organisational development.*

According to CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation's [State of Civil Society Report](#) published in 2017, just 4% of the world's population is living in countries where governments are properly respecting the fundamental freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression. There are many challenges that civil society organisations face in their day-to-day activities, coming from the threats of the external environment, but also from the inside, from their own internal vulnerabilities.

Starting from this, **PartnersGlobal** developed together with CIVICUS the **Resiliency+ Framework**, which is both a guide and a toolkit for CSOs that provides insights into what strategies, tactics and tools are useful to increase the internal capacities in order to withstand volatile civic space.

The Resiliency+ Framework takes into account four pillars of resiliency – **individual, organizational, sectoral and global**. Hence, organisations should start by assessing their organisational capacities, by understanding the entire ecosystem they are part of, by developing a strategic approach towards increasing their own levels of internal resilience, and last, but, not least, by discovering best practices, learning and adapting to the situations they are facing.



[Source: PartnersGlobal.org](https://partnersglobal.org/)

Interactive exercise – At the end of the session, several statements were projected and participants who identified with them had to stand up in the room. These statements were related to: external threats awareness, internal vulnerability awareness, agility and flexibility, network membership, active solidarity, transparency and engagement, communication and so on.

Please stand up if....

- ✓ Your organization specifically engages in scenario planning to plan for the impacts of shifts in civic space.
- ✓ Your organization regularly assesses internal organizational capacities and vulnerabilities as they relate to the changing external context.
- ✓ Your organization understands its external relationships and interactions as being critically important for your capacity to plan for, respond to, and recover from the external threats posed to the civic space.
- ✓ Your organization has resources and mechanisms dedicated to psychosocial support to staff.
- ✓ Your organization includes succession planning as a key element for the organization's resiliency.
- ✓ Your organization helps its peers in response to challenges posed by shifting civic space.

From the positioning of the present organisations, amongst the conclusions where that while organisations monitor the state of civic space and environment in which CSOs operate, understand that relationships are critical to recover from external threats and usually show solidarity with their peers, more complex activities such as scenario planning are not part of many organisations' strategies. Moreover, an important issue is the fact that the majority of the organisations admitted to not having a succession plan for its leadership and resources and mechanisms for the psychosocial support of their staff.

In this context, it is clear that organisations have specific needs that should be met if the resilience of civil society in the region is to increase.

Interactive Session: Refining the Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region

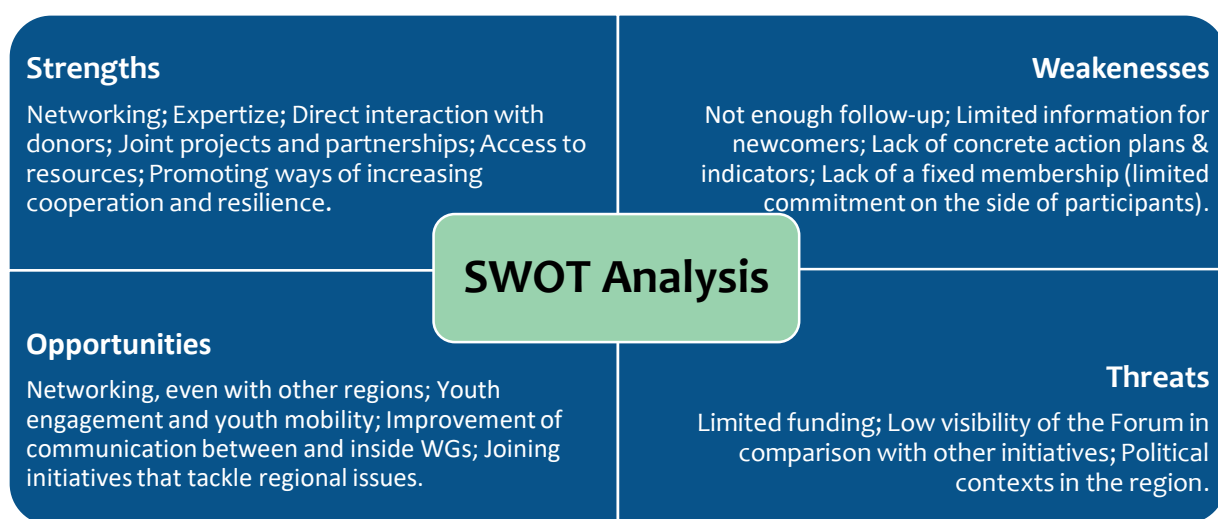
Objectives:

- ✓ Highlighting the results of the evaluation of the Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region (2015-2019);
- ✓ Refining the thematic cooperation areas to be included in the new version of the Strategic Framework and endorsing them.

Facilitators: Ms. Svitlana Kuts, Independent NGO Consultant

Mr. Ken Phillips, Consultant and Partner, Organization Futures

Interactive exercise – Before the beginning of the session, participants have been kindly asked to get involved into a **SWOT analysis** interactive exercise, that would indicate the main **Strengths**, and **Weaknesses** of the Forum, as well as the key **Opportunities** and **Threats** to its development. The chart below summarizes the ideas of the participants in this direction.



Key points from the evaluation of the current Strategic Framework:

- *The Forum remains a unique platform for CSO cooperation in the Black Sea Region, characterised by inclusiveness, flexibility and interaction.*
- *Main obstacles in creating regional partnerships & initiatives are related to: donor support, partners matching, and national legislation.*
- *In order to support the activity of its Working Groups, the Forum should provide: more funding opportunities for collaboration in between annual fora and more digitalized channels of communication.*

In the period June – October 2019, the Black Sea NGO Forum consultants Ms. Svitlana Kuts and Mr. Ken Phillips conducted an **evaluation of the Forum's [Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region](#)**, which was elaborated and approved by participants in 2015. The results of the evaluation were based on: interviews organised with key stakeholders of the

Forum, and online survey sent to all the Forum participants over the years, the review of the Forum's Working Groups' activity, the review of the regional thematic meetings' activity, as well as the review of various literature on the state of civil society and civic space in the region.

The evaluation reiterated the Forum's strategic role in supporting cooperation between the civil society organisations in the Black Sea Region, by providing opportunities for open dialogue and networking between them and relevant stakeholders in the Region. According to the findings, the Forum remains an unique platform for CSO cooperation in the Black Sea Region, characterised by inclusiveness, flexibility and interaction.

The initial findings of the evaluation indicate that on one hand, the main obstacles in fostering common projects and initiatives are related to: **scarcity of donor support, difficulty in partners matching and limiting national legislative framework**. On the other hand, the findings show that the successfulness of any project is given by: **the organisations/ partners involved, the CSO environment from the countries in which their partners are located, as well as the support of donor organisations**.

In order to support the activity of its Working Groups, the Forum should provide: *more funding opportunities for collaboration in between annual fora and more digitalized channels of communication*. Along with the new Strategic Framework, **the Forum's thematic cooperation areas were proposed to be revised**, in accordance with the current needs, interests and domains of activity of the participants.

Based on the responses received to the online survey conducted by the evaluation team, 23 thematic areas of cooperation were identified and presented to the participants. A prioritization process followed, with participants selecting the themes that they considered most important from their point of view. Moreover, some participants proposed new cooperation themes.

In the end, the 10 revised thematic cooperation areas are the following:

1. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
2. NGO SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE
3. CULTURE & EDUCATION
4. ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE
5. HUMAN RIGHTS & FREEDOMS
6. KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS FOR DEVELOPMENT
7. MEDIA & COMMUNICATION
8. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CSR
9. VOLUNTEERING
10. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Interactive Session: Consolidating the Black Sea NGO Forum Working Groups

Objectives:

- ✓ Revising the objectives and refreshing the membership of the working groups, according to the new thematic cooperation areas;
- ✓ Presenting the new Black Sea NGO Forum project;
- ✓ Gathering input for the activities to be implemented in the 2nd year of the Black Sea NGO Forum project.

Facilitators: *Ms. Svitlana Kuts, Independent NGO Consultant*

Mr. Ken Phillips, Consultant and Partner, Organization Futures

One of the main strategic directions of the new Black Sea NGO Forum project „[Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region](#)”, implemented by FOND and funded by the European Union, is to provide capacity building support for civil society organisations within the Region, with a view to promote regional cooperation and to facilitate partnerships, joint projects and regional networks.

In this context, starting next year, there are several activities planned in order to provide capacity building for the BSNGOF Working Groups, such as:

- The organisation of a training module that will support the start-up of regional CSO networks;
- The implementation of a sub-granting scheme to support the BSNGOF Working Groups to carry out activities that contribute to the development of regional CSO networks activities. Such activities could be: *working meetings, research studies on thematic or cross-cutting issues relevant for the networks, trainings, concrete small projects etc.*

For these reasons, one of the interactive sessions of the 12th edition of the Forum focused on **reorganising the Working Groups** corresponding to the 10 new thematic cooperation areas.

Methodology

After Mr. Ken Phillips briefly presented the methodology, each participant had to decide which Working Group they would like to contribute to, in accordance with their own professional



interests and the mission of the organisation they represented. The process was a flexible one, as participants were encouraged to merge two Working Groups into one, to create a new Working Group or to change the title/ priorities of an existing one.

For nearly one hour and a half, the members of each Working Group were asked to discuss, debate and decide on: the focus of the WG, its vision and mission, its leader, co-leader & members, the strategy and main objectives (goals, activities and timeline), as well as key indicators of success.

Results

Following discussions, the following **ten Working Groups** were formed, corresponding to the 10 revised thematic cooperation areas:

1. **Civic Engagement WG**
2. **CSOs Sustainability & Resilience Accelerator at the Black Sea WG**
3. **Culture & Education WG**
4. **Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development in the Black Sea Region WG**
5. **Human Rights WG**
6. **Knowledge Networks for Development WG**
7. **Media & Communication in the Digital Era WG**
8. **Sustainable Development Goals and CSR WG**
9. **Volunteering Development WG**
10. **Youth Engagement WG**

A reporting session was held the next day, during which each WG presented its strategic priorities for the following years. Their PowerPoint presentations can be viewed online [here](#).

DAY II: 24th of October

Plenary Session: Advancing the Black Sea Synergy

Objectives:

- ✓ Reaffirming political support for regional cooperation at the Black Sea and presenting the progress made in advancing the Black Sea Synergy European Policy;
 - ✓ Placing the Black Sea Synergy European Policy within the wider context of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.
-

Moderator: *Assoc. Prof. Dimitrios Triantaphyllou*, Director, Center for International and European Studies (CIES), Kadir Has University, Istanbul

Special Guest Speaker: **Mr. Karmenu Vella**, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission (video message)

H.E. Amb. Michael B. Christides, Secretary-General, Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

Ms. Audrone Perkauskiene, Head of Division Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE on behalf of **Ms. Angelina Eichhorst**, Acting Managing Director, EURCA, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Ms. Alexandra Damian, Counsellor, Analysis and Policy Planning Division, Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ștefan Cibian, PhD, President, The Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND / Board Member, ARCADIA: Romanian Association for International Cooperation and Development

Key points

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships are vital for advancing the Black Sea Synergy;**
- **Civil society organisations play an important role in promoting cooperation in the Black Sea Region, given their links with the local communities;**
- **Enabling environment for civil society in the region is key to ensure progress in the implementation of the Black Sea Synergy policy.**

Regional stakeholders within the Black Sea Region regard **collaboration with non-governmental organisations as beneficial in advancing synergies and in having their key messages reach a far greater target group.** This can also be reached by working on cross-cutting priority areas, such as climate change, environmental protection, or education, sectors to which CSOs are close.

"I would like to congratulate the Black Sea NGO Forum for being an important driver of societal and environmental change. And change is very much needed. Scientists warn that the Black Sea ecosystem is at risk, be it from climate change, or pollution. It is our duty as civil society, business and governments to tackle these challenges."

Mr. Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

At European level, significant progress has been made with regard to the advancement of the Black Sea Synergy policy. The launch of [the third implementation report of the Black Sea Synergy](#) in May 2019 was considered a success in this regard. Moreover, in June 2019, the EU Council adopted [a set of conclusions](#) on the **EU's engagement in the Black Sea regional cooperation**, by reaffirming its long-standing commitment to fostering prosperity, stability, and resilience. In this sense, cooperation with the civil society organisations from the Region is vital to preserving the bottom-up, sectorial approach of the EU's engagement.

During the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January – June 2019), a special focus has been put on the Black Sea Region and two milestones have been achieved: the adoption of the [Common Maritime Agenda](#) and of [the European Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#). These documents reiterate the stakeholders' commitment towards cooperation with civil society: they both come from the region (as they have been created with on-ground support from regional communities), and both represent a flexible guide for investors and stakeholders that are interested to support the region. The contribution of civil society in this sense is very valuable.

However, bringing civil society organisations together with relevant stakeholders for the region is a **long-term process of strengthening commitment towards collaboration** and it requires transparency, solidarity and flexibility. In order for this cooperation to thrive, a necessary condition is **to ensure an enabling environment in which civil society organisations operate freely and safely.** Over the past years, there have been *emerging trends of shrinking civic space* in the countries surrounding the Black Sea, and for overcoming common challenges, **CSOs need to build strong networks.**

Plenary Session: How to Strengthen Black Sea Cooperation? A Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Objectives:

- ✓ Presenting the *Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda* and of the *Common Maritime Agenda*;
 - ✓ Identifying potential contributions from civil society for the implementation of the two agendas.
-

Moderator: *Ms. Natalia Budescu, Director, The Association for Cross-Border Cooperation “Lower Danube Euroregion”*

Mr. Svetoslav Stoyanov, Policy Officer, A3. Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, DG MARE, European Commission

Associate Prof. Dr. Mustafa Yucel, Vice Director, Institute of Marine Sciences, Middle East Technical University (METU)

Ms. Ana-Maria Seman, Regional Policy Lead, World Wide Fund for Nature Romania

Key points

- *Civil society has been involved from the very start in the process of drafting and adopting the Common Maritime Agenda and the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda;*
- *The EU Strategy for the Danube Region represents an example of best practice in terms of involving CSOs in the implementation of a regional strategy.*

In May 2019, ministers from seven Black Sea countries Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine have endorsed the **Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea**. Its main goals are: to ensure healthy maritime and coastal ecosystems, to develop competitive, innovative & sustainable blue economy and to attract investments. Even from the start, CSOs, mostly from Bulgaria, Romania, and Georgia, have attended several workshops, contributing actively to its development. CSOs now can now be engaged by: disseminating information, supporting/ monitoring the CMA implementation process, crafting partnerships at local level and driving societal change.

The Black Sea Strategic Research Innovation Agenda (SRIA), launched back in May 2019, represents another important milestone for regional cooperation at the Black Sea. SRIA is both a reference framework and a programmatic tool with 4 main pillars: addressing fundamental research challenges (Knowledge Bridges), developing products, solutions and clusters underpinning blue growth (Blue Economy), building critical support systems and innovative research infrastructures (Key Infrastructure and Policy Enablers), and promoting education and capacity building (Empowered Citizens and Enhanced Blue Workforce).

Given that the two above mentioned agendas are at the beginning of their implementation, a look at other regional strategies might provide inspiration, especially in terms of involving all relevant stakeholders. With regard to the engagement of CSOs, one example of best practice is [*The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region \(EUSDR\)*](#). Endorsed back in 2011, EUSDR is a macro-regional strategy jointly developed by the European Commission, together with the Danube Region

countries and stakeholders, in order to address common challenges together. The Strategy seeks to create synergies and coordination between existing policies and initiatives taking place across the Danube Region. CSOs' engagement has been visible from the very start, as they have been the main project promoters and initiative drivers of the Strategy, advocating at the national level for its implementation, and bridging the link between its Priority Areas.

Interactive exercise – Participants were asked to split in groups of 4-5 people and put together ideas that can be fostered under one of the 4 pillars of the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda. At the same time, the panellists were asked about the contributions they can bring in this process.

More details about the results of this consultation will be included in a separate paper elaborated by the Black Sea NGO Forum team based on the input of the participants.

Parallel Workshops

Good Governance for NGO Networks and NGOs: Standards and Challenges

Co-organisers: ChildPact – The Regional Coalition for Child Protection & The Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection – APSCF

Objectives:

- ✓ Explore the different understanding of the concept of good governance as applicable to NGO networks and NGOs and facilitate a common understanding relevant in our region and in line with accepted standards;
 - ✓ Engage the participants into meaningful facilitated debate on the components of good governance;
 - ✓ Facilitate the exchange of experiences and practices across the region with regard to good governance for NGO Networks and NGOs.
-

Key points:

- **Ensuring good governance and transparency for civil society are best practices for increasing internal resilience;**
- **Procedures related to transparency, whistle blowing mechanisms and quality control, which are required for the public sector should be applied by the civil society sector as well.**

Interactive exercise – By using the online app Mentimeter, participants were asked to respond to two questions on issues of good governance and transparency from two distinctive points of view: first, from a non- governmental activist's point of view, and secondly, from a public servant's point of view. Results were later on discussed during the session.

Following discussions in smaller groups, participants reached the following conclusions:

- Change comes from the inside of the organisations – the CSO sector needs self-regulating mechanisms for its members;
- CSO staff well-being should also be included in the governance framework, as a step towards sustainability;
- There is a great need for support for integrity in the public sector, to which CSOs may contribute.



Surviving in the digital age: the role of media professionals and local activists

Co-organisers: Common Europe Foundation Ukraine & Association “Institute for Social Prospects” Russia

Objectives:

- ✓ Mapping the influence of digitalization and new opportunities for non-state actors;
- ✓ Reassessing the role of media professionals in the development of CSOs and local initiative groups within various spheres of interest;
- ✓ Proposing a concrete toolkit to strengthen the dialog between CSOs, media, private sector, academia, local authorities and policy makers;
- ✓ Cross-sharing practical tips on involving media workers in successful running of CSOs / local initiative groups’ campaigns in the Black Sea Region countries.

Key points:

- **Social media is a source of information used by each and every one of us;**
- **Every article / post should have a powerful story behind;**
- **A communication strategy is essential if you want to engage as many audiences as possible.**

Nowadays, social media plays a crucial role in our daily life, being used as a source of information, or just for personal matters. Subsequently, every post should tell a story, based on what your audience enjoys, keeping in mind to think visually and expand the reach by engaging with fans.

Several recommendations were made on how CSOs should work and coordinate with others sectors: to proceed from a small format, no more than 8-10 people, that would have regular meetings and that would come with proposals. In terms of resources, priority should be given to initiatives with a short period of implementation and a low cost. On the other hand, it is essential to be determined to keep members updated



with follow-up events such as: seminars, round tables, exchanges and to involve the members of the local authorities' groups in events.

An essential role in the group discussion is played by the moderator who is very important for the survival of the group. He should possess some specific skills based on practical experience gained in the field of communication, also it is required to be previously involved in the local agenda.

The final suggestion is to negotiate with media professionals, due to their skills and experience of discussing with authorities.

Ecosystem for Sustainable Development: 5Rs Framework

Organiser: Ashoka Romania

Objectives

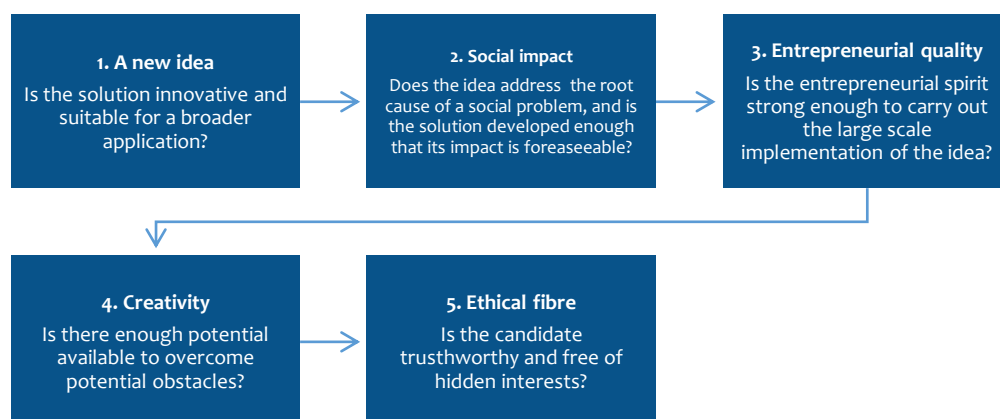
- ✓ Participants understand of what an ecosystem is made up;
- ✓ Participants create the map of the ecosystem where they intervene;
- ✓ Participants build the paths for sustainable development in their ecosystems.

Key points:

- *The 5Rs Framework methodology: evaluate your ideas from 5 angles.*

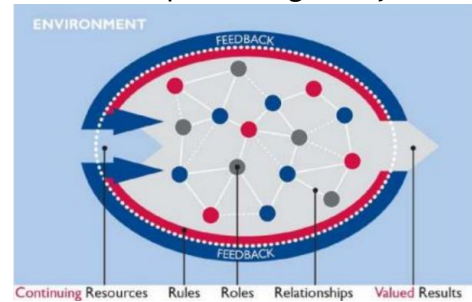
Ashoka is a global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs with innovative, system-changing solutions to the world's biggest problems. What basically Ashoka does around the world is **to activate a network of change makers** who will work on different areas and the good lessons learned and practices will be subsequently shared around the network.

Ashoka developed a **filtering mechanism for ideas** which works as a **5 stages process of analysing the potential challenges from different perspectives**. Throughout this process **ideas are evaluated from 5 angles**, in terms of **broader application, social impact, entrepreneurial quality, creativity and ethics**.



Another useful tool implemented by Ashoka is the “5RsFramework”, an efficient methodology for supporting sustainability and local ownership in projects and activities focusing on local actors and local systems. The “**5Rs Framework**” can serve as a practical tool to promote good systems practice. Hence, this framework underline five key dimensions of systems: **Results, Roles, Relationships, Rules and Resources**. Jointly these 5Rs can serve as a lens for assessing local systems and a guide for identifying and monitoring interventions designed to strengthen them.

In the second part of the workshop there was a practical component in which every participant had the chance of putting into practice the methodology of the “5R Framework” on their own organization or project.



Building responsible innovation ecosystem in the Black Sea Region in parallel to the implementation of SDGs

Co-organisers: Civil Development Agency – CiDA Georgia, Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center SiNC Georgia, The Baku Academy of International Law and Human Rights Azerbaijan

Objective:

- ✓ *To discuss the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their regional impact, particularly in relation to the development of responsible innovation ecosystems in the Black Sea Region.*

Key points:

- ***The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents one of the most complex commitments to eradicate global poverty.***
- ***The Black Sea Region faces social, economic and environmental challenges and by making business sustainable, communities become more sustainable.***
- ***Responsible research and innovation can contribute to advancing sustainable development in the Black Sea Region.***

The **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, together with their 169 targets, are enclosed within the **United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, adopted back in 2015. In the process of their implementation, each one of these SDGs and targets are intersecting. In this regard, multi-stakeholder engagement from early stages of SDG implementation is important for eradicating world poverty and hunger.

Sustainable Development Goal no. 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development emphasizes the importance of collaboration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. *What can different sectors do?* When it comes to the private sector, the **UN Global Compact Network**, as the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, promotes effective CSR in the day to day activities of companies and private firms. Accordingly, best practices on CSR in Georgia were presented.

In order to achieve sustainable results, a responsible research and innovation approach is needed. It anticipates and assesses potential implications and societal expectations with regard to research and innovation, with the aim to foster the design of inclusive and sustainable research and

innovation. **Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)** implies that societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business, third sector organisations, etc.) work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of society.

DAY III: 25th of October

World-café: CSO – Donor Dialogues

Objective

- ✓ *Fostering the dialogue between CSOs and donors active in the Black Sea Region, with a two-fold purpose: for CSOs to learn about funding opportunities available for civil society in the region and for donors to meet their potential grantees and learn about the needs on the ground.*
-

Facilitator: *Ms. Cristina Rigman, Secretary-General, ChildPact – The Regional Coalition for Child Protection*

Mr. Victor Bojkov, Advisor to the Director, Directorate Eastern Neighbourhood, DG NEAR

Ms. Didem Tekeli, Country Consultant, European Endowment for Democracy

Ms. Maria Florea, Program Officer, Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation

Ms. Agnieszka Gmys-Wiktor, Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy

Ms. Luisa Elsig, Project Manager, Stiftung Mercator

Methodology

Starting from the very positive feedback received from the participants at the Forum on the world café sessions organised over the past few years, this session aimed at supporting an **active dialogue between donors and CSOs in the Black Sea Region** in what concerns funding opportunities.

Participants were split in **5 groups of approximately 15-20 people**, and were encouraged to discuss



together with the representative of the donor organisations about the engagement and support they provide to CSOs.

In each group, **the donor “hosted” the discussions**, presenting the main activities, priorities and CSO funding programs of the organisations they are representing. Following discussions, they allocated time for interaction, questions and comments.

After a first round of 20 minutes, participants were asked to join the discussions of a different group in order to ensure direct interaction and networking with all donors present.

Plenary Session: Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development - CSOs as Essential Actors

Objectives

- ✓ Raising awareness on the 2030 Agenda / Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- ✓ Highlighting the essential role of CSOs for achieving sustainable development.

Moderator: Ms. Anca Ciucă, Vice-president, The Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND / President, Foundation for Democratic Changes

Mr. Justin Kilcullen, Co-Chair, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness – CPDE

Ms. Inese Vaivare, Director, The Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) / Council Member, International Forum of National NGO Platforms (Forus)

Ms. Biljana Spasovska, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)

Ms. Mona Prisacariu, Board Member, The Romanian NGDO Platform - FOND / International Program Coordinator, New Horizons Foundation

Key points

- *The implementation of the 2030 Agenda will not be possible without a full engagement of civil society and people's genuine participation;*
- *In order to build trust between CSOs and people, partners, supporters and donors, the Global Standard for CSO Accountability has been created;*
- *Grass-roots initiatives such as the Impact Clubs contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.*

The most important point that we need to take into consideration is that the progress **needed in order to achieve the systemic changes for people and planet promised by 2030 Agenda will not be possible without a full engagement of civil society and people's genuine participation in their organizations and communities**. For example, CSOs can contribute by adhering to the 2019 Belgrade Declaration, launched by CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness – CPDE in 2019 or by engaging in the process of drafting the Voluntary National Review (VNRs), which are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development follow-up and represent a strong instrument that can be used by civil society.

Also, in order to maintain the accountability and to build trust between CSOs and people, partners, supporters and donors **the Global Standard for CSO Accountability** has been created by nine CSOs from across the world including the **Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)**. The global standard was developed as a commitment to build practices of how to improve the work of the global networks and how responsible is their leadership.

In another line of thought, this session was used to spread the good practices of NGOs from the Black Sea Region and an example in this sense is **New Horizons Foundation** with their initiative called **Impact Club**. Through this project they try to teach children new skills demanded for future jobs. The Impact Clubs are led by 2 leaders who work every week with children on a voluntary basis.

Conclusions and acknowledgements

The 12th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum focused on building resilience among civil society organisations in the Region, on encouraging and fostering dialogue between regional stakeholders in advancing European policies and on strengthening the Forum itself, as a mechanism for promoting regional cooperation in thematic areas of strategic action.

Throughout its three days, the Forum gathered **124 participants from 17 countries**, both from the Black Sea Region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine), as well as from the EU (Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Ireland and Romania), the Balkans (North Macedonia and Serbia) and the United States of America.

The Black Sea NGO Forum team wishes to give special thanks to our funders and partners:



The European Union



Center for International and European Studies
(Kadir Has University)

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our participants for their active involvement during this year's edition as well!

In the following period, the Black Sea NGO Forum will continue its support to CSOs in the region and new opportunities will be launched in the context of the project “[Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea Region](#)”, implemented by FOND with the financial support of the European Union.

Among the activities we plan for 2020, we will:

- Continue the [Mobility Fund for CSO Experts in the Black Sea Region](#) to support the exchange of best practices/ lessons learnt amongst CSO experts with the aim of strengthening their capacity to engage in regional cooperation;
- Support the capacity building of NGOs in the region by **designing and implementing a leadership & organisational programme for CSO leaders**;
- Continue to strengthen the Forum's internal structure by **organising a training and mentoring programme for the start-up of NGO networks in the Region** and **by implementing a sub-granting scheme for the Forum's Working Groups**.

We invite you to stay updated with news about the Black Sea NGO Forum and opportunities for the NGO sector from the Black Sea Region by following:

Our website: <http://blackseango.org/>

Our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/BlackSeaNGOForum/>

Our Twitter: <https://twitter.com/blackseango>

For any inquiries, please contact us at: forum@blackseango.org.