



Network of Associations of Local
Authorities of South-East Europe

SUMMARY of NALAS

2021
Annual
Operational
Report

Despite the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, for NALAS 2021 was a year of successes and growth. Effectively adjusting to the new circumstances, NALAS managed to do more and reach to many more beneficiaries. In 2021, NALAS implemented 15 different projects, 4 more compared to 2020, organised 79 different capacity development events (30% more compared to 2020) and increased its reach to final beneficiaries for 41%.

All of these ensured successful implementation of the NALAS Strategic Plan 2021 objectives, but is also setting the basis for long-term sustainability and independence of the Network.



15 different projects have been implemented by the Network and contributed to the achievement of its strategic objectives



Launched **EU for Municipalities Project in Albania**, that will provide up to 1.75 million € in investment grants for Albanian municipalities and started **four other projects** contributing to local democracy and development.



Established **NALAS Decentralisation Observatory**, the data and information hub on local government issues in South-East Europe



More than **2,900 mayors, experts and practitioners** developed their capacities during **79 NALAS conferences, workshops and webinars**



2021 at a glance



5 new e-learning courses were made available to South-East Europe local government employees



Published **3 studies** and **15 research papers**



Supported municipalities to **localise SDGs** and implement **2030 Agenda**, via social mapping, aligning municipal social protection policies with 2030 Agenda's Leave-
No-One-Behind principle and implementing concrete measures for vulnerable groups



Developed and piloted **methodology for gender-sensitive solid waste management**

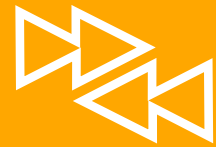


NALAS Quick Response service supported 14 national advocacy and lobbying activities



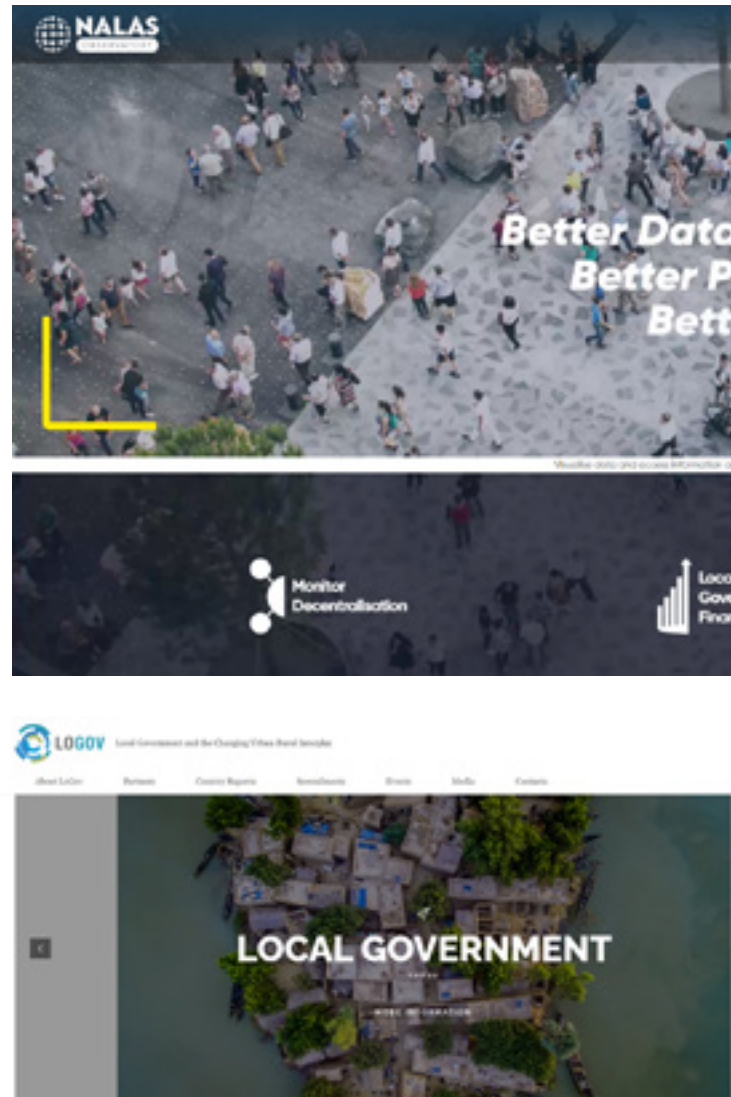
33 Digests and **COVID-19 Updates** provided a **coordination and knowledge exchange** for local governments and their Associations

Key programme achievements



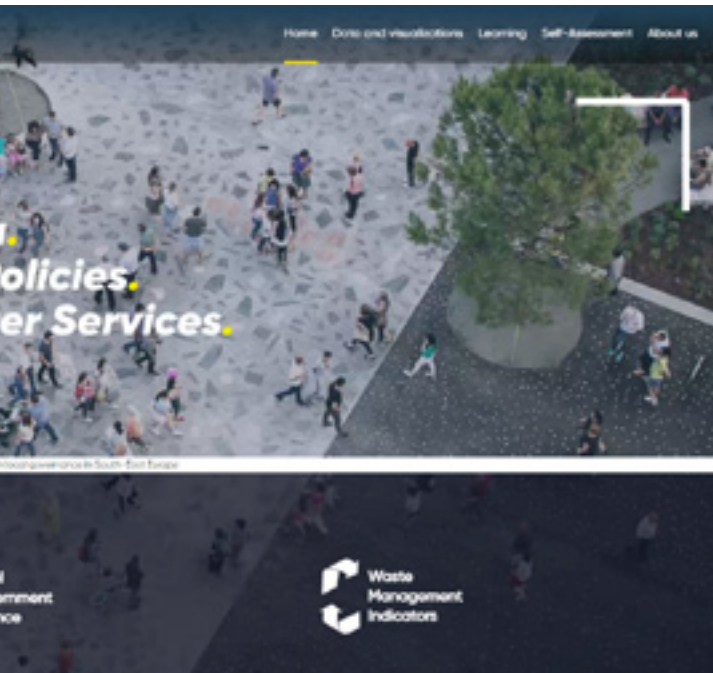
Improving local public services:

- 41 capacity development measures implemented by LGAs via sub-grants within the Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN), involving more than 400 representatives from LGs and PUCs.
- EUR 160,691 committed for six NALAS member LGAs, for implementing capacity development activities for the water and sanitation sector for the period May 2021-May 2022.
- 88 representatives of the partner LGAs and APUCs benefited from the regional CD measures implemented by NALAS within RCDN.
- Built capacities of 25 representatives from LGs and LGAs from 10 SEE economies to enhance the accessibility, resilience, and sustainability of municipal infrastructure assets.
- Over 200 participants were part of the NALAS conference on Sustainable Local Economic Development.
- Finalised 15 research papers exploring local governments practices to address the changing urban-rural interplay
- Conducted two Regional Workshops on Local Government and the Changing Urban-Rural Interplay, involving 40 participants.
- The first call for proposals was launched within the EU for Municipalities Project in Albania, focusing on the upgrade of municipal infrastructure and public services and promoting sustainable development.



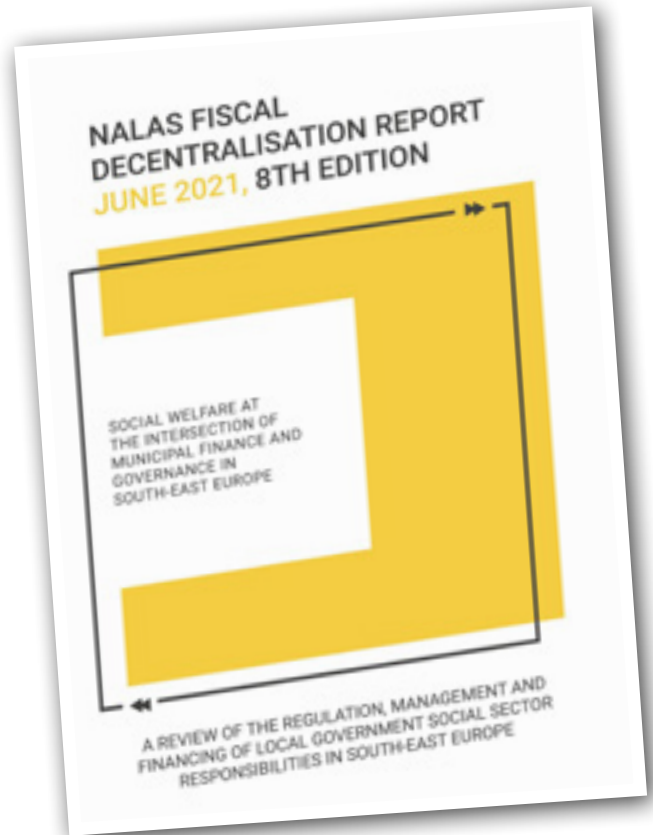
Strategic Objective 1: Sustainable Communities

Local Governments in SEE have capacity to create sustainable communities based on smart and innovative growth through quality services and job creation.



Supporting **fiscal decentralisation reform** in South-East Europe:

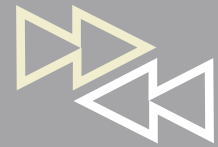
- 👉 **NALAS Decentralisation Observatory** launched as the data and information hub on local government issues in South-East Europe (www.nalas-observatory.eu).
- 👉 The **eighth edition of NALAS Fiscal Decentralisation Report** published, focusing on the regulation, management and financing of SEE LGs responsibilities in education, social protection and



healthcare, and a special chapter dedicated to the municipal response to COVID-19 in the social sector in SEE.

- 👉 During 2021, in Academia.edu, the reports have been viewed 559 times and downloaded 225 times, by 282 unique visitors, from 75 countries and 152 cities from almost all continents, of whom 108 work in universities.

Key programme achievements



Localising **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) and implementing **Agenda 2030**

- Municipal staff trained in **Localising SDGs** in North Macedonia (Strumica, Bitola, Kocani, Suto Orizari) and Kosovo¹ (Kamenica, Ranilluge, Shtime, Obilic).
- **Social mapping methodology applied** in municipalities of Štip (North Macedonia) and Hani I Elizit (Kosovo).
- **Social protection policy aligned with 2030 Agenda's** Leave-No-One-Behind (LNOV) principle in municipalities of Štip (North Macedonia) and Hani I Elizit (Kosovo).



¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Strategic Objective 2: Stable and Resilient Communities

Decentralised cooperation contributes to stable, safe, inclusive and resilient SEE communities and regional cohesion.



PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF “LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND” PRINCIPLE



- **Minority Commissioner** social approach web seminar organised with 100 active participants.
- Enhanced capacities of municipal staff specialised in social protection from Serbia, North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina via four-week **e-learning course “Minority Commissioner – model for inclusion of minorities”**.
- Strengthened capacities of municipal staff on the functioning of the **Minority Inclusion Models** from

its origin in Schleswig-Holstein and scaling up experience in Bijeljina, Bosnia Herzegovina via a three-day **Virtual Study Visit**.

- **502 local practitioners** from 5 economies increased their knowledge through **3 webinars** on developing social local policies tailored to vulnerable groups.
- **Five e-learning courses on social approaches** are available at NALAS e-Academy.

Key programme achievements



- After attending e-learning courses, **83 LG representatives** are capacitated to initiate approaches for **alternative ways of delivery of social services at the local level**.
- “Leave no one behind (LNOB)” **Social Mapping Methodology** piloted in three LGs.
- **25 LGs** developed concepts for application of respective social approaches through **5 Learning Clusters**.
- **9 LGs** supported **144 children** with IT for online schooling.
- **41 young people with special needs** will benefit from the vocational training centre in Prijedor Municipality, BiH.
- **150 children with special needs** from 3 LGs will benefit from municipal Day-Care Centres.
- **10 LGs** will use standardised LNOB methodology and instruments for conducting **social mapping of vulnerable groups**.



Improving municipal capacities for **Disaster Risk Management:**

- Prepared draft Case study on City of Zagreb in **prevention, preparedness and response to earthquakes**.
- Collection of EU **good practices in usage of new technologies and innovative approaches** in prevention, preparedness and response to earthquakes.
- Partnership among NALAS, Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI) and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) initiated to contribute to the development of a cohesive **regional strategy for disaster preparedness and prevention** and to support national and local resilience building in the region of SEE.

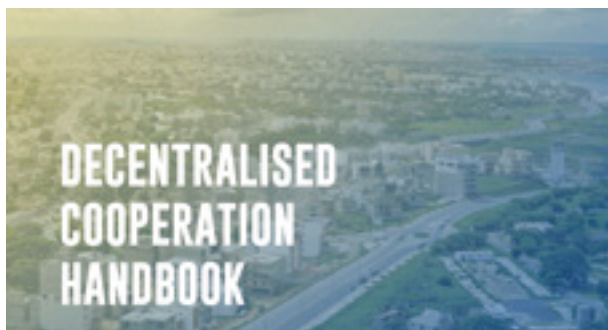
Strategic Objective 2: Stable and Resilient Communities

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Promoting **decentralised cooperation**:

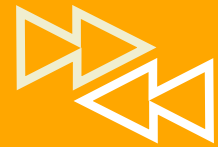
- Developed **Decentralised Cooperation Handbook**, comprised of a number of good practises in decentralised cooperation among city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation.



Achieving **gender equality** at local level:

- 57 local practitioners and municipal staff from 22 LGs from 11 SEE economies have increased their knowledge on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting in the frame of the spring and autumn sessions of delivery of the **NALAS e-learning course on "Introduction to Gender Mainstreaming at Local Level"** in Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian and English languages.
- Women local elected officials from the region exchanged their good practices on inclusive local economic development and challenges of women in the urban development within **two sessions of the NALAS Forum of Women Mayors from SEE**.
- Methodology for identification of gender aspects in the solid waste management** service delivery was applied in the City of Bijeljina, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Biannual **gender-disaggregated data in SEE** and NALAS Network is collected, analysed and disseminated.

Key programme achievements



Supporting **informed policy-making** and **LGAs advocacy role**:

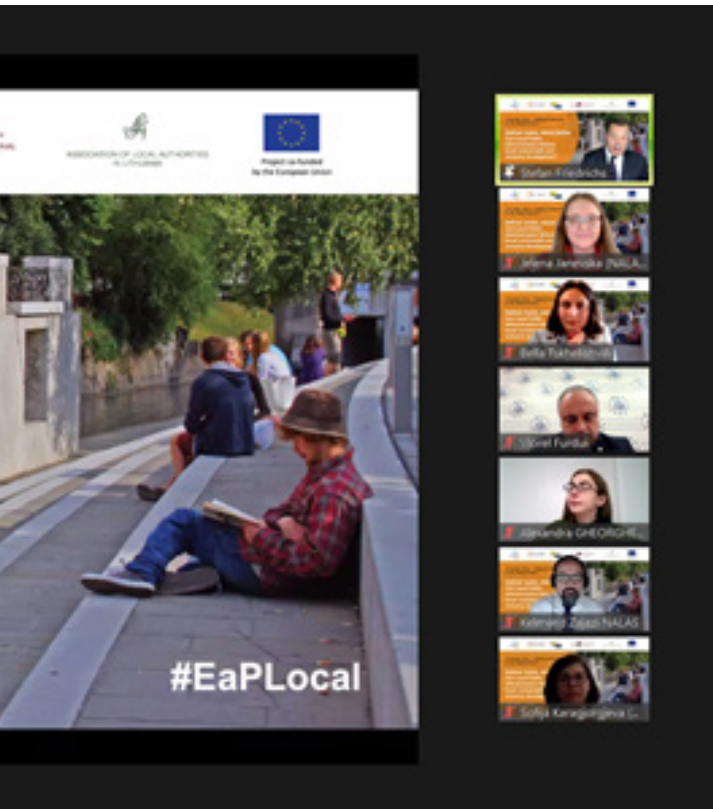
- Produced **14 Quick Response reports** that supported LGAs' national advocacy efforts and associations' development.
- **22 COVID-19 Updates** provided the latest information on the measures throughout the region, as well as associations' adaptation to the pandemic circumstances.
- Published **11** issues of the electronic **NALAS Digest**.
- NALAS' 2021 publications and resource materials have **over 8,800 downloads** from NALAS website.
- **Improved intergovernmental dialogue in Moldova**, through multi-stakeholder Coordination Seminar on Moldova: "Reinforcing Dialogue on Local Government Reform in Moldova and in SEE" with **over 200 participants**.



- Supported **institutional development** of the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM), and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) through **peer-to-peer exchange** with **90 participants** from NALAS and PLATFORMA member LGAs, focusing on the key challenges faced by the associations.
- **Supported advocacy efforts of LGAs in the Eastern Partnership** via publications: Decentrali-

Strategic Objective 3: Improved Services

SEE Local Government Associations and Local Governments emerging needs are met by a unique knowledge and evidence-based policy making and influence, through strategic regional and national partnerships.



sation and Local Public Administration Reform in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine: Learning from the past – preparing for the future.

- Organised the **third EU-Eastern Partnership Local Leaders Forum**.
- Leaders of the EU, of the EU member states and of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries reflected rec-

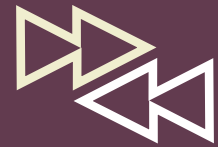
ommendations to support decentralisation efforts empowering local and regional self-government by the EU-EaP Local Leaders Forum in **“The Joint Declaration of EU-EaP Summit”** (14964/21) of 15 December 2021.



Strengthening local government via **NALAS e-Academy:**

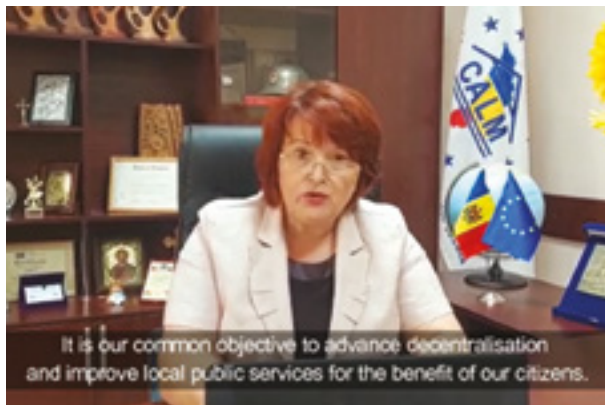
- NALAS e-Academy offered **13 e-learning courses** in the spring and autumn delivery sessions.
- **144 participants successfully completed the courses** and got a certificate.

Key programme achievements



EU advocacy and networking for **voicing** and **improving the position of local government** in South-East Europe:

➤ Enhanced cooperation with **UCLG Local Economic and Social Development Commission** has resulted in official approval of NALAS being member of the Commission.



➤ Enhanced cooperation with and visibility within the Development Partners Network on Decentralisation & Local Governance (DeLoG)

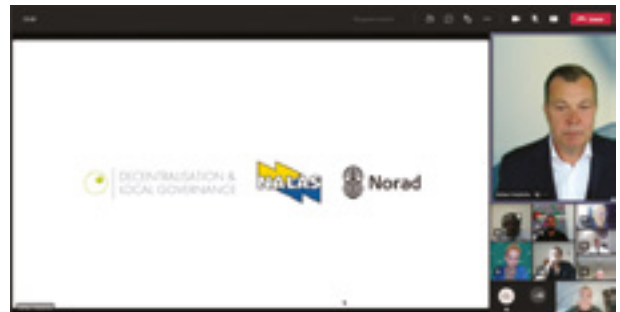
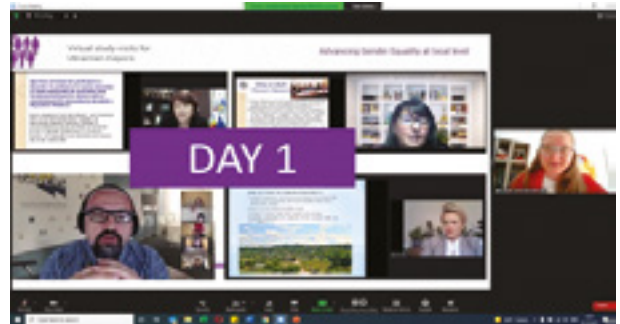
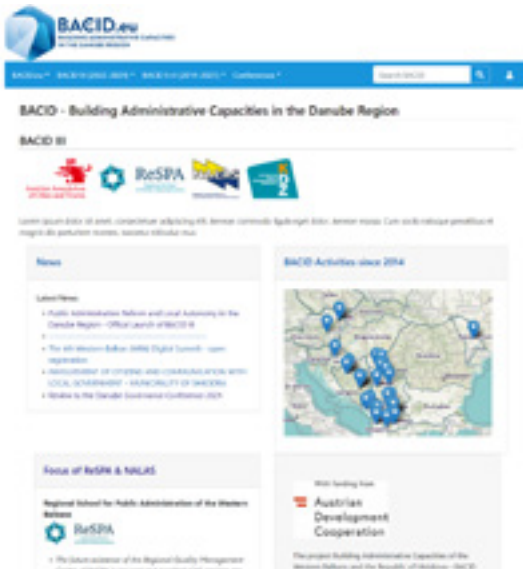


Strategic Objective 4: Sustainability of the Network

Networks' sustainability is ensured by using all NALAS potentials.

Fundraising:

- NALAS won **one new EU project**, and **signed** a new contract with CEMR/PLATFORMA, with an important support of **NALAS Revolving Fund**.
- NALAS is also a partner in the new phase of the **BAC-ID III Project** "Building Administrative Capacities of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova", funded by the Austrian Development Agency and implemented by the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns, in partnership with KDZ, Centre for Public Administration Research.
- Completed **a service contract with NDI Ukraine** and organised a **study-visit for Ukrainian Mayors on Advancing Gender Equality at Local Level**.

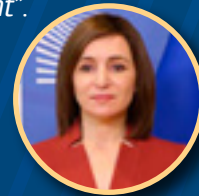




What do others say

"I would like to express my appreciation for NALAS. NALAS is a strong partner for our local authorities, having also a strong contribution in the creation and strengthening of CALM. We are grateful for NALAS expertise and guidance, which has been contributing to enhancing the capacity of our local authorities to grow stronger and more independent".

**H.E. Maia Sandu, President of Moldova,
at the opening of NALAS 2021 General Assembly.**



"NALAS is a very unique organisation, with very big legitimacy and relevance. I see three main roles for NALAS in the future: 1. Serving as a repository of knowledge, 2. Acting as an accelerator for innovation, and 3. Catalyst for training of local staff and issues".

**Ms. Catherine Farvacque-Vitkovic, World Bank Urban
Partnership Programme, during 2021 City to City Dialogue.**



"Collaboration and partnerships are important for positive economic and social development in normal times, but during crisis of a current scale they become essential. NALAS is for me a symbol for collaboration and partnership. Such an association of many local authorities that NALAS represents will help strengthen the voice and will help finding positive solutions to recover and emerge from this crisis".

**Mr. Maciej Popowski, Director General, Directorate General Neighbourhood and
Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), during NALAS 2021 General Assembly.**





"I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the well-organized course on introduction to gender mainstreaming at the local level. I hope that in the future this type of courses will be organised in order to broader education of employees for easier implementation of gender equality policies both at the local level and beyond".

Ms. Marija Panceva,
Kisela Voda Municipality, North Macedonia



"The training was an excellent opportunity to advance knowledge to integrate a gender perspective into local policies and budgets, as well as to create an appropriate response to narrow the gender gap at the local level".



Ms. Blagorodna Shopova,
ZELS, North Macedonia





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