

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Regulations for the promotion of the Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level and the granting of the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE)

Introduction

The Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local level was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 26 March 2008, at the 1022nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

The Strategy aims at promoting action and policies that establish or improve good governance, in particular at local level, but these can also be implemented at other (central, regional) levels of government. Member States are encouraged to adopt and pursue its objectives through appropriate measures.

The European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) is the intergovernmental body of the Council of Europe where member states can exchange information and best practice about the initiatives they may take with a view to promoting the implementation of the principles around which the Strategy is built.

The European Platform is the body established by the CDDG that delivers the accreditation to the national platforms or bodies authorised to grant the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE). In some cases, municipalities that meet the requirements of the Twelve Principles may also be granted the Label directly.

The Rules that follow govern the accreditation of the bodies that are responsible at national (or regional) level for the awarding of the Label and the granting of the Label directly to municipalities.

The rules that follow were adopted by the European Platform at its meeting on 18 May 2016.

I. Joining the Strategy

1 Member States¹ that wish to join the Strategy are invited to inform the Council of Europe and make their decision public.

2 Joining the Strategy carries an undertaking by the state, and by the local authorities through the agency of their representative associations, to try to achieve the objectives of the Strategy and carry out such actions as may be necessary to that effect.

3 The European Platform cooperates with the European Committee on Democracy and Governance with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Twelve Principles by the member States.

II. Awarding of the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE)

4 The European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE) can be delivered to European municipalities which achieve a certain standard of governance quality by national (or regional) bodies accredited by the Council of Europe's European platform. This standard of governance shall be ascertained against the "benchmark" adopted by the accredited national structure and shall be consistent with the one adopted by the European Platform².

5 In a Council of Europe member State (or region), the European platform can accredit:

- i. an ad-hoc national (or regional) stakeholders' platform (NSP) comprising representatives of central or regional government, local government, civil society and social and economic actors in a balanced form, the composition of which shall be communicated to the European Platform;

or

- ii. an existing body or institution which is reputable and has substantial know-how, expertise and/or experience in the field of local governance.

¹ In federal or regional states, where the competences and responsibilities about local government lie with the federated states or with the regions, the references to member States in these Rules must be understood as referring to the federated states or regions.

² The Council of Europe benchmark is publicly available at and can be downloaded from the following address : www.coe.int/local

6 Upon specific request by one of the bodies mentioned under Article 5 above, the European Platform shall accredit it if it is satisfied that:

- The member State has no objection against the accreditation;
- Local authorities are (or will be) adequately informed about and free to take part in the contest leading to the granting of ELoGE;
- The national (regional) benchmark for assessing the performance of local authorities with regard to the Twelve Principles is the same as the European benchmark. Any changes the applicant body may deem necessary or desirable , at the level of the national (regional) benchmark shall be approved by the European platform;
- The scoring of municipalities with regard to the benchmark are verified by an independent body or person and supplemented by other information about the public's views of the performance of the municipality;
- The rules, procedure and decisions in relation to the granting of ELoGE are taken according to a transparent procedure and are subject to review.

7 The duly accredited national (regional) structure shall be capable of and responsible for managing the procedure for granting the Label, and for any actions and consequences as a result thereof.

8 The decision to accredit the national (regional) platform shall be communicated to the applicant and given appropriate publicity.

9 The European Platform may suspend a national (regional) platform's ability to award the Label at any time, in the event of suspicion of a breach of the applicable regulations or other possible irregularities, pending further investigations. If at the conclusion of the investigation the European Platform finds serious breaches of the regulations, it shall withdraw the national (regional) platform's accreditation and may take such other action as may be necessary to safeguard the reputation of the Label.

10 In member States where neither a national platform nor an independent body or institution has been accredited individual municipalities may submit an application for the European Label of Governance Excellence to the Council of Europe directly, subject to compliance with the domestic legislation applicable.

11 After informing the European Platform and in the absence of any objection from it, the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform may grant the ELoGE if it is satisfied that the municipality:

- has participated in a capacity-building programme or in an ad-hoc piloting of ELoGE organised by the Centre of Expertise, or
- has participated in activities of sharing experience with other municipalities in at least one other member State in the last five years,

and

- has demonstrated a good or very good level of compliance with the criteria of the benchmark of the Twelve principles as well as with the results of the two questionnaires, where appropriate as adapted with the help of the Centre of Expertise, or
- has used the benchmark as a tool for improving the quality of its governance and taken action to redress any inadequacy or shortcoming identified.

12 The municipality may obtain ELoGE according to the above procedure only once. A refusal to grant ELoGE according to this procedure is without appeal.

III. Miscellaneous provisions

13 Accredited National (Regional) Stakeholders' Platforms and national (regional) institutions or bodies shall bear the costs related to their own functioning and of the management of the procedures for granting ELoGE.

14 The European platform may request any appropriate information from the NSPs, institutions and municipalities prior to deciding on accreditation and granting of ELoGE.

15 Accreditations shall be given for a limited duration at the expiry of which they can be renewed upon request if the applicant meets the relevant conditions. A decision not to grant accreditation is without prejudice to the right to submit further applications.

16 National platforms, institutions or bodies and municipalities shall keep the European platform informed about their action in regard of ELoGE and respond to requests from the European platform in a spirit of cooperation.

17 All correspondence with the Council of Europe shall be in one of the Organisation's official languages.

18 ELoGE is a crystal dodecahedron the facets of which bear the twelve principles engraved. It is offered by the Council of Europe to municipalities granted ELoGE directly by the latter.

19 These provisions can be modified and supplemented at any time by the European platform in the light of the experience.