

# Regulations for Implementing the European Label of Governance Excellence

As adopted on 11 September 2024 at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ELoGE Accreditation Platform established under the aegis of the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities as **CG-ELoGE(2024)2**.

## I. Introduction

1. The [European Label of Governance Excellence](#) (ELoGE)<sup>1</sup> is awarded to local authorities which can demonstrate their compliance with the Twelve Principles of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5<sup>2</sup> of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the principles of good democratic governance, and further detailed in its explanatory memorandum.
2. ELoGE celebrates and helps local and regional authorities to improve their governance, through a self-assessment tool in the form of a comprehensive European Good Democratic Governance Benchmark and a series of questionnaires aimed at citizens, elected representatives, and local officials, as well as of a methodology to ensure an objective evaluation of the results.
3. The present Regulations govern the procedure for implementing ELoGE. They were adopted at the first meeting of the ELoGE Accreditation Platform, established under the aegis of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, on 11 September 2024.

## II. ELoGE

4. The ELoGE can be awarded to local authorities<sup>3</sup> and other relevant public authorities of the Council of Europe member States, which demonstrate compliance with the Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance, as measured against the European Good Democratic Governance Benchmark, an inquiry with the population and a questionnaire addressed to local council members.
5. Measurement of governance practice against the European Good Governance Benchmark is performed by means of self-assessment, followed by verification of said self-assessment by independent local experts engaged by the accreditation entity.
6. In deciding whether or not an applicant local authority merits the label, the accredited entity will also consider whether the authority is involved in international co-operation aimed at improving governance such as, but not limited to, the European Local Democracy Week organised by the Congress or through capacity-building activities organised by the Centre or Expertise for Multilevel Governance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local level (herewith 'the Strategy') was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 26 March 2008, at the 1022<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. It aims at promoting action and policies that establish or improve good governance, in particular at local level. The Strategy includes the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance and the ELoGE mechanism. These measures, however, can also be implemented at regional and national levels of government.

<sup>2</sup> CM/Rec(2023)5 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the principles of good democratic governance and its explanatory memorandum

<sup>3</sup> Inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) entities can also apply for the awarding of the ELoGE label, in those member states where they have legal personality and competencies comparable to those of local authorities.

7. ELoGE<sup>4</sup> can be awarded for a period of up to three years, subject to an implementation procedure adopted by the accredited entity.

### III. Accreditation

8. The ELoGE Accreditation Platform is established under the aegis of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe as the body responsible for granting accreditation to implement and award ELoGE.

#### ***Who can request accreditation to implement ELoGE?***

9. The ELoGE Accreditation Platform grants accreditation to deliver ELoGE to a reputable national, regional, or transnational entity which has demonstrable capacity and competence to oversee implementation of ELoGE within the designated territory.
10. The following entities can apply to the Platform for accreditation to award ELoGE:
  - i. an existing national or regional body or public or academic institution<sup>5</sup> which is reputable and has substantial know-how, expertise and/or experience in the field of good democratic governance, in particular at local or regional level and is to involve properly local authorities and/or their associations.
  - ii. an ad hoc national or regional stakeholders' platform comprising representatives of local government and/or their associations, central or regional authorities, civil society, and social and economic actors in a balanced way.
11. Accreditation may be delivered to regional entities in regional member States.
12. Accreditation requests may be submitted by reputable transnational platforms, bodies or institutions with substantial know-how, expertise and/or experience in the field of good democratic governance, in particular at local or regional level, with a view to awarding ELoGE in one or more Council of Europe member States or regions where no national or regional stakeholders' platform, or any existing national or regional body or institution has been granted accreditation. The competence of such transnational entity to award the label in a country or region shall cease upon accreditation of a national (regional) body for the same purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> The physical distinction consists of a crystal dodecahedron the facets of which bear the above-mentioned Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance. Alternatively, the label can be awarded in form of a certificate.

<sup>5</sup> The term "public institution" includes any body, organisation or office, other than a member State's government, which has public or governmental functions, such as regional governments, their executive branches and legislatures or assemblies; local governments, their executive branches and assemblies; and any agency, company or similar entity over which national, regional or local governments exert effective control or decisive influence.

***What must be included in ELoGE Accreditation request?***

13. The requesting entity must demonstrate the following:
  - i. It has the necessary competence and capacity to mobilise participation of sufficient numbers of local / regional authorities to apply for and participate in the ELoGE assessment process.
  - ii. The composition of the proposed ELoGE evaluation committee offers balanced participation, including representatives of local authorities and/or their associations, as well as, when appropriate of the civil society and academia.
  - iii. Any proposed amendments to the ELoGE Benchmark and/or questionnaires are necessary to reflect the good democratic governance framework applicable in the given territory.
  - iv. An implementation plan, including budgetary provisions, indicating a clear timeline for awareness-raising, application, assessment, and award procedures.

***What support can be offered by the ELoGE Accreditation Platform?***

14. The Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance at the Congress can deliver capacity-building activities for local experts and accredited entities upon request and subject to availability.

***Is there a duty to report to the ELoGE Accreditation Platform?***

15. Accredited entities shall keep the Accreditation Platform informed about their actions regarding ELoGE and respond to requests from the Platform in a spirit of cooperation. On a regular basis, or at the latest before the end of their accreditation period, they should provide a narrative report describing its activities in relation to ELoGE, including completing the information sheets for each municipality awarded ELoGE.

**IV. Procedure for granting accreditation**

16. Upon receiving an application from one of the bodies mentioned under articles 6 and 7 above, the Accreditation Platform will grant accreditation if it is satisfied that:
  - i. public authorities at the relevant level are (or will be) adequately informed about and free to take part in the process leading to the award of ELoGE;
  - ii. the national (regional) benchmark for assessing the performance of the local authorities with regard to the principles of good democratic governance set by the CM/Rec(2023)5 is broadly equivalent to the relevant Council of Europe benchmark. Any changes the requesting entity may deem necessary or desirable, at the level of the national (regional) benchmark, shall be fully explained and approved by the Accreditation Platform;
  - iii. the scoring of local authorities with regard to the benchmark will be verified by an independent body or expert and supplemented by responses to the questionnaires addressed to citizens, elected representatives, and local officials on the

- performance of the municipality;
  - iv. the accredited entity has the capacity to administer the process for granting the label;
  - v. equality and diversity, including the balanced gender participation at all stages of the process, will be taken into account in implementing ELoGE;
  - vi. the rules, procedures and decisions in relation to implementing and awarding ELoGE are taken according to a transparent procedure and can be subjected to review.
17. Accreditations to the entities listed under articles 6 and 7 can be granted for a maximum period of 3 years, renewable upon the applicant's request for a duration to be decided by the Accreditation Platform. Renewals of accreditation are to be granted if the ELoGE Accreditation Platform is satisfied that there has been no change in the circumstances that justified initial accreditation.
18. The ELoGE Accreditation Platform may request additional information to be provided by the entity applying for accreditation or renewal of accreditation.
19. The ELoGE Accreditation Platform makes decisions according to its Rules of Procedure.<sup>6</sup> Decisions of the Accreditation Platform cannot be appealed. They will be communicated to the applicant entity without delay.

#### **V. Challenges to the award of ELoGE leading to suspension, withdrawal or refusal of accreditation**

20. The ELoGE Accreditation Platform may decide to suspend an entity's accreditation 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 inquiries. If at the conclusion of the inquiries the Accreditation Platform finds serious breaches of the Regulations, it shall withdraw accreditation and may take such other action as may be necessary to safeguard the reputation of the Label.
21. A decision not to grant accreditation is without prejudice to the right to submit further applications.
22. Exceptionally, and only if there are multiple, duly justified, and credible complaints concerning the granting of the label by an accredited entity to a specific local authority, the Accreditation Platform may decide to launch an inquiry and, in the light of its findings, may annul one or more decisions to grant the label. In such case, it may also decide whether to apply the provisions of paragraph 20 above.

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<sup>6</sup> CG-ELoGE(2024)1

## **VI. Implementing and awarding ELoGE at national (regional) level**

23. The accredited entity is responsible for managing the process for awarding the Label, and for any actions and consequences as a result thereof. It commits itself to promoting the Label and the principles of good democratic governance described in Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States. The accreditée also commits itself to implementing ELoGE in a meaningful number of local authorities within the period of its accreditation.
24. As a matter of principle, accredited entities shall bear the costs related to implementation of ELoGE.

## **VII. Exceptional awarding of ELoGE by the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance in co-operation with a non-accredited entity**

25. In exceptional circumstances, where there is no accredited platform and with the agreement of the ELoGE Accreditation Platform, the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance may award ELoGE in co-operation with a national, regional or transnational entity which is not accredited but is qualified to apply for accreditation, at the following conditions:
  - no accredited entity can award ELoGE in the country or region concerned;
  - the entity in question has the capacity, reputation and resources to become accredited and is interested in doing so;
  - the local authorities in question have successfully run the ELoGE benchmark, have fulfilled all the conditions which are normally required for being awarded the label and are actively participating in the European Local Democracy Week;
  - the results of the benchmarking have been assessed by the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance in cooperation with the entity in question.
26. The above procedure can be resorted to with the same entity for only one round of ELoGE for any given territory. A refusal to grant ELoGE according to this procedure is without appeal.

## **VIII. Miscellaneous provisions**

27. All correspondence with the Council of Europe and the documentation relating to ELoGE shall be in English or French.
28. On a periodic basis and without prejudice to the right of the Congress Bureau to do so, the ELoGE Accreditation Platform, in consultation with accredited entities, should assess the implementation of ELoGE, its effectiveness in promoting compliance with the principles under review (see Articles 3 and 16), and consider ways to improve it.
29. These provisions can be modified and supplemented at any time by the ELoGE Accreditation Platform in the light of the experience.