

GI-TOC's OBSERVATORY OF ILLICIT ECONOMIES IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

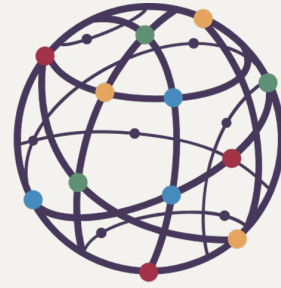
Engagement with civil society and governments

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**GLOBAL
INITIATIVE**



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AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

GI-TOC comprises a network of over 500 independent global and regional experts working on human rights, democracy, governance, and development issues where organized crime has become increasingly pertinent.

Founded in 2013 and headquartered in Geneva, Global Initiative is now registered as an international civil society organization, has offices also in Vienna, Cape Town, Malta, a core Secretariat and a high-level advisory board.

Geographic regions around the world are covered by Observatories. Currently GI-TOC has six and new ones are being planned.

Observatory of Illicit Economies in South-Eastern Europe (SEE-Obs)

Launched in July 2018 with the support of the UK in the framework of the Berlin Process.

It mainly covers Western Balkans Six: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, but also our research spans Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece.

Key activities: risk, resilience and building bridges

1. Research and analysis: regional reports and monthly risk bulletins.
2. Support to local civil society together with the Resilience Fund.
3. Discussion and debate: convening meetings (in person and virtually) and strengthening networks (through the regional network and the Resilience Fund).

SEE-Obs is funded with the support of the government of the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Poland, the OSCE as well as the EMCDDA.

THE SEE OBSERVATORY REGIONAL NETWORK OF EXPERTS

- ❑ 20 CSOs
- ❑ 6 investigative journalists
- ❑ 15 academics



Purpose of the regional network:

- Be a resource of knowledge for GI-TOC, expertise on the ground and a direct connection to a wider network of researchers working on organized crime and corruption across the region.
- Provide quality control and enrich SEE-Obs' work in the region with additional expertise and legitimacy.
- Increase SEE-Obs' presence and outreach in the Western Balkans and beyond (i.e. share news and publications).
- Facilitate the exchange of relevant information, data and access to local organizations and institutions.

Strengthening Resilience

The space for civil society in the Western Balkans is shrinking

- Civil society in the WB6 have limited experiences in countering organized crime and corruption directly but mostly address different aspects of vulnerability: youth, drug issues, post-prison reintegration, anti-corruption, environmental issues, marginalized groups, violence against women.
- Community-based organizations feel exposed and are often reluctant to raise their concerns.
- Many CSOs are not part of national, regional or international networks and are vulnerable to the pressures of local governments or criminal groups.
- Each community has a different approach on how to counter the local forms of organized crime but in each case they are creatively tailored to their local audiences and involve the community at all levels of the process.
- Security risks remain high, especially for journalists.
- At the same time, the attention of many international donors is low.



Figure 12: Civil society organizations working against organized crime and corruption.

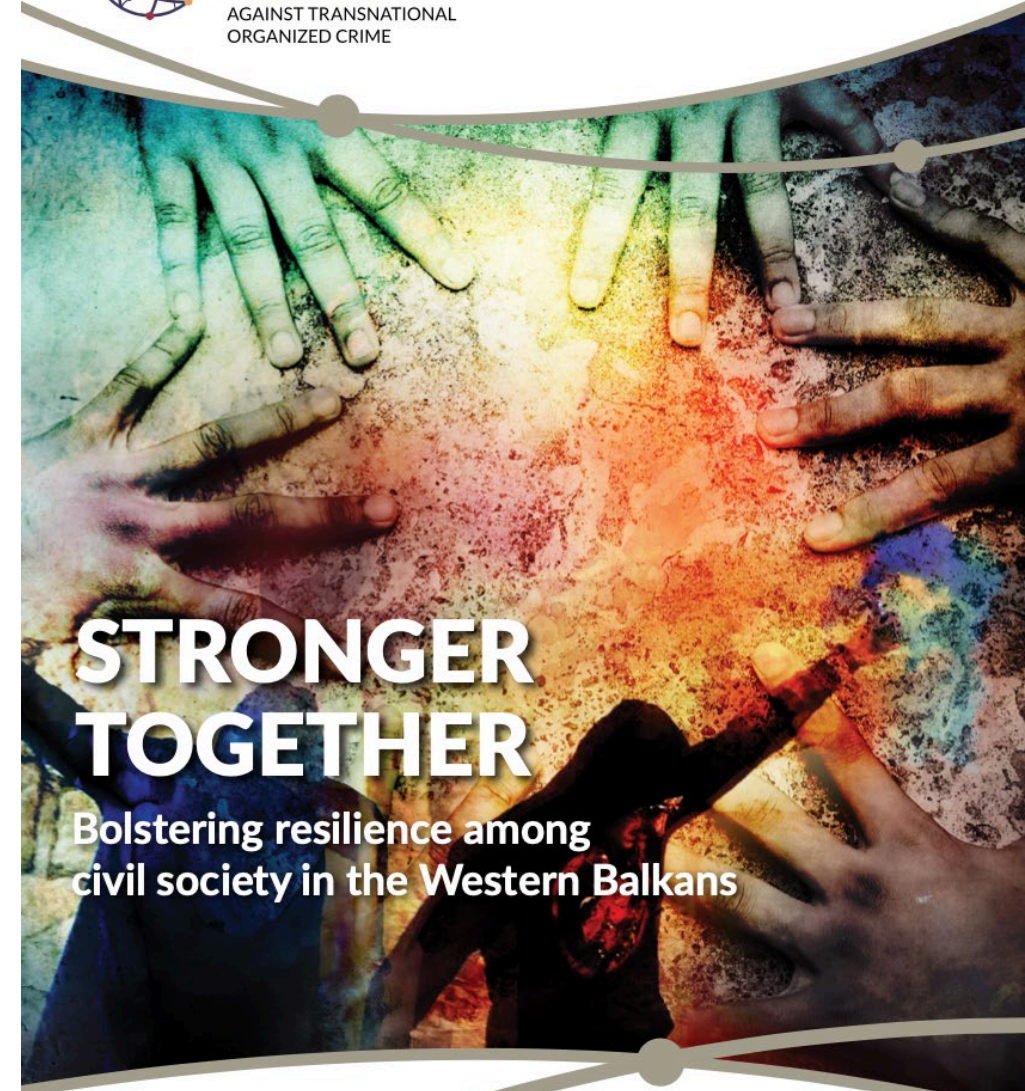
Working with civil society in the Western Balkans

GI-TOC's Resilience Fund has been supporting 20 civil society organizations in the Western Balkans.

Grantees focus on the following topics:

- Juvenile delinquency.
- Environmental crime.
- Post-penal assistance.
- Extortion.

Stronger Together (2021): The report looks at organized Crime and corruption in the region from a civil society perspective. It gives an overview on how CSOs in the region deal with these issues and highlights the main activities and concerns.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Bolstering resilience among
civil society in the Western Balkans

Who can benefit from the Resilience Fund?



Activists

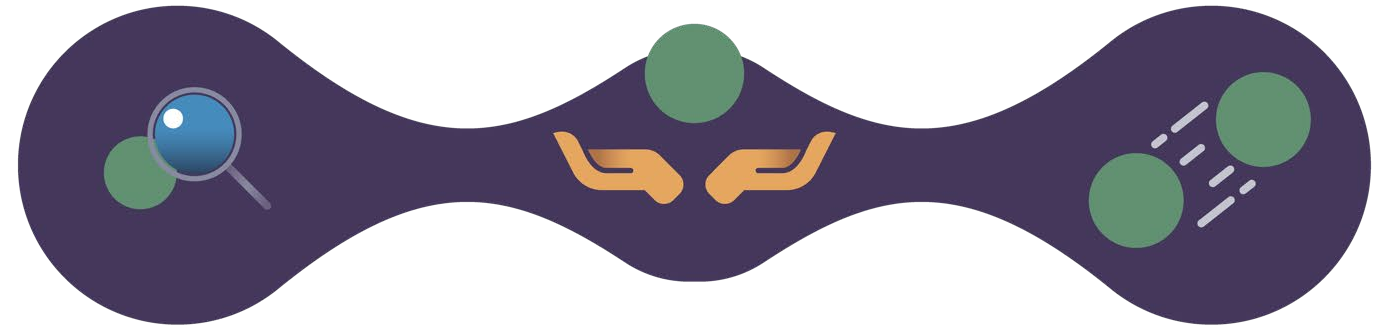


Community Resilience groups



Journalists

APPROACH OF THE RESILIENCE FUND



Identify

Research, find and select civil society beneficiaries from the three Fund windows.

Incubate

Support and nurture local initiatives, and work with civil society resilience actors to create a global network that can grow into a powerful model of resilience.

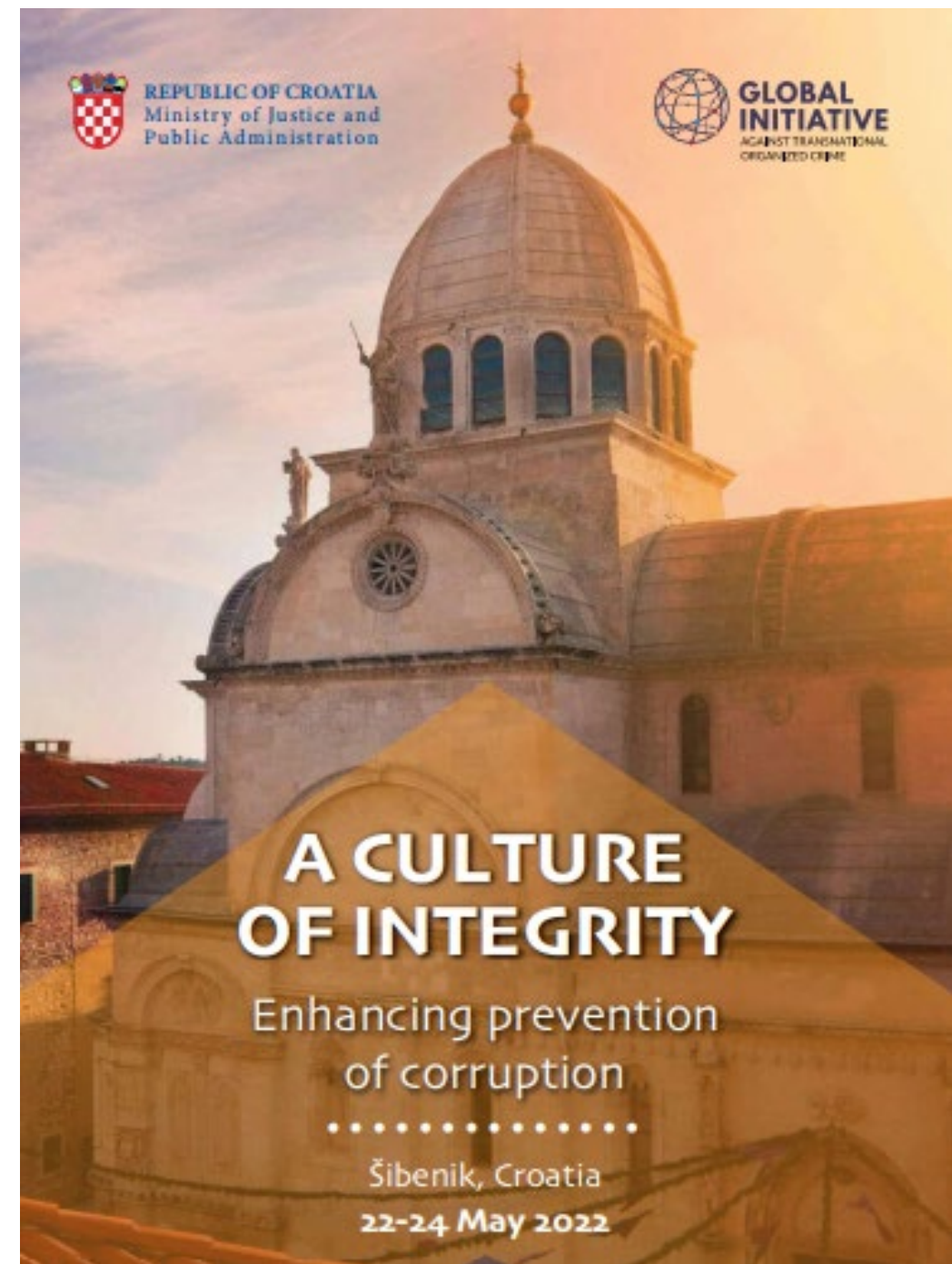
Replicate

Having identified and incubated successful practices, our final goal is to create a replicable model of resilience capacities and initiatives, implemented globally.

We have supported 20 organizations throughout the region with around 30 projects.

Anti-corruption conference on enhancing prevention and dialogue

- A conference in Šibenik, Croatia, brought together ministers of Justice from the Western Balkans, directors of anti-corruption agencies and inter-governmental organizations, along with civil society, to discuss how to prevent corruption and exchange best practices.
- The meeting, held on 23–24 May, was co-organized by the Ministry of Justice and Administration of Croatia and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) with the support of the UK government.



Anti-corruption conference on enhancing prevention and dialogue

- Participants discussed the roles of the state and civil society in promoting a culture of integrity; in what ways can corruption be prevented; how to strengthen regional cooperation; illicit financial flows in the Western Balkans; the potential for social re-use of criminal assets; and how to address “organized corruption” – a symbiosis of organized crime, criminal methods and high-level corruption, which creates a crooked ecosystem that enriches and protects those with access to power.
- Šibenik conclusions approved at the end of the conference



THANK YOU

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