



## **Methodology regarding the implementation of ELoGE in Romania**

### **European Label for Excellence in Governance ELOGE**

#### ***THE CONTEXT OF ELoGE IMPLEMENTATION in Romania***

ELoGE is an award granted by the Council of Europe to local public authorities, based on an analysis made by a European and international evaluation mechanism regarding the quality of local governance, and represents a way of certification, appreciation and recognition of those local public authorities whose activity is carried out according to international standards.

The Council of Europe awards this award to local public authorities that wish to achieve international recognition and achieve a high level of good governance in accordance with the Council of Europe's benchmark standards. At the same time, ELoGE represents a method of analysing the degree of democratic governance at the local level, but also of improving the practices of local public administrations.

The purpose of this methodology is to inform those interested about the stages that must be completed in order to implement ELoGE, the responsibilities of all parties involved, the steps and the activities that need to be carried out.

#### ***ACTORS AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

1. The Council of Europe has accredited the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG), through the Service for Open Government within the General Directorate Open Government, Public Relations and Cooperation, to, in the next 3 years, implement the European Label for Excellence in Governance (ELoGE) together with the local public authorities in Romania.

Thus, the SGG team represents the interface between the Council of Europe and the local public authorities that participate in the program, thus ensuring the efficiency and correctness of the implementation of the ELoGE label, in such a way that at the end of the program the most accurate X-ray of the situation at the level of the local public authorities that they applied.

2. At the national level, the evaluation of the way in which ELoGE is to be implemented in Romania is done by the National Evaluation Commission, which has in its composition representatives of the following institutions: the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, the National Council of Rectors, the Institute National Administration (INA), the National Union of County Councils in Romania (UNCJR), the Association of Romanian Municipalities (AMR), the Association of Romanian Cities (AOR), the Association of Romanian Municipalities (ACoR), the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG). The presidency of

the National Evaluation Commission is ensured by the General Secretariat of the Government, and its composition can be found in **Annex no. 1** to the present methodology.

The National Evaluation Commission (CNE) represents a mandatory national body for the implementation of ELoGE, a partner structure of the European Stakeholder Platform (within the Expertise Centre for Good Governance of the Council of Europe) and has the following main attributions:

- approves the reference criteria of ELoGE on the basis of which the way of implementing the principles of good governance in the activity of local public authorities will be analysed;
- approves the final list of local public authorities that meet the ELoGE award conditions.

**3.** Responsibility for the implementation of the ELoGE benchmark at the level of local public authorities in Romania, belongs to a group of local experts constituted in this sense.

The local experts were proposed by the associative structures of the local public authorities and the National Institute for Administration and were selected by the National Evaluation Commission. The experts cannot be the legal representatives of the administrative-territorial units enrolled in the program (presidents/vice-presidents of county councils, mayors/vice-mayors).

The list of the 58 administrative-territorial units in Romania (5 counties, 7 municipalities, 11 cities and 35 communes) implementing ELoGE in the 2022-2023 session can be found in **Annex no. 2** to the present methodology, and the list of experts selected in 2022 for the implementation of the ELoGE benchmark and their distribution by administrative-territorial unit can be found in **Appendix no. 3** to the present methodology.

**4.** The Association of Romanian Municipalities was contracted by the Council of Europe to support the implementation of ELoGE in Romania by the General Secretariat of the Government.

## ***THE 12 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE***

The 12 principles of good democratic governance evaluated in the context of ELoGE implementation are:

- 1. Participation, representation and fair conduct of elections**
- 2. Receptivity**
- 3. Efficiency and effectiveness**
- 4. Openness and transparency**
- 5. The rule of law**
- 6. Ethical behaviour**
- 7. Skills and Abilities**
- 8. Innovation and openness to change**
- 9. Sustainable development and long-term orientation**
- 10. Sound financial management**
- 11. Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion**
- 12. Liability**

## ***HOW TO USE THE BENCHMARK ACCREDITED BY THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE***

The benchmark refers to the instruments accredited by the Council of Europe on the basis of which the analysis of the practical implementation of the 12 principles of good governance will be done:

1. Self-evaluation forms intended for local elected officials: mayors, vice-mayors, local councillors, presidents, vice-presidents of county councils, county councillors;

2. Forms-interviews addressed to the population of the administrative-territorial unit that implements ELoGE;

3. Forms intended to evaluate the activity of local public administration authorities by their employees.

The benchmarking of the 12 principles of innovation and good democratic governance allows the identification of those local public authorities that are closest to complying with all (or most) of the principles and are therefore eligible to receive ELoGE.

The benchmark provides the following information:

➤ A description of the principle of good governance and a list of activities that would typically help a local public authority to implement that principle

➤ A self-assessment section where local public authorities are asked to identify their level of maturity for that principle :

<b>The level of maturity of the local public authority with respect to the principle is evaluated as follows:</b>			
<b>Very weak</b>	<b>Pretty weak</b>	<b>Good enough</b>	<b>Very well</b>
1	2	3	4
We are aware of the key issues to address but currently have no or very few approaches or activities developed to address them.	We recognize the key issues and or approaches are being developed activities to address them, although it existed limited practice implementation so far.	We have well-laid plans and key approach activities problems with meaningful examples of implementation.	We can show clear evidence of good practices that can be shared and are further developing our approach to ensure long term and sustainable improvement.

➤ Evidence in support of the self-assessment provided by the local public authority.

### **ACTIVITIES REQUIRED TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELoGE**

1. At the level of administrative-territorial units that implement ELoGE, evaluation collectives are established (by order of the president of the county council or by order of the mayor, as the case may be).

As soon as they have been established, the contact details of the members of these evaluation groups (surname, surname, telephone and e-mail address) are sent to the Association of Municipalities in Romania / the General Secretariat of the Government, with the explicit mention of the designated contact person from the local public authority side to liaise on all procedural matters.

2. ACoR communicates the contact data mentioned above to the local experts, by reporting to the local public authorities assigned to each expert for the implementation of ELoGe.

Thus, each local expert is responsible for supporting the implementation of ELoGE at the level of a number of local public authorities, according to **Annex no. 3**.

In this regard, each local expert will have a dedicated e-mail address and telephone number to ensure good communication with the representatives of the assessment groups.

3. In a first stage, the local experts send the self-evaluation section/self-evaluation matrix to the evaluation collectives established at the level of local public authorities - **Annex no. 4** to the present methodology. The local experts will also submit the indicative list of documents considered relevant for each principle, which support the self-assessment provided by the local public authority.

In this section, local public authorities are asked to identify their level of maturity for each of the 12 principles of good governance and demonstrate this by submitting documents deemed relevant.

Thus, local public authorities implementing the ELoGE object must:

- read the information provided for each principle;
- take into account the evidence at their disposal that would support the application of the principle;
- do a self-assessment of their maturity for that principle;
- record the evidence they would like to provide in support of their self-assessment.

The description of the "indicators" for each principle reflects a level of governance rules that would be consistent with a standard that would be appropriate for ELoGE.

Information used as evidence to complete the self-assessment may be: existing policies, procedures, operating rules and guidelines, internal audit and review reports, and external audit, inspection and review. The citizen survey required as part of the ELoGE assessment is expected to provide a useful source of evidence to support the self-assessment.

The deadline by which local public authorities are required to complete and submit the self-assessment section as well as the relevant documents for each principle is **31 January 2023** .

**4** . In the second stage, the local experts send to the evaluation collectives established at the level of local public authorities, the interview forms addressed to the population of the administrative-territorial unit that implements ELoGE and the forms intended for the evaluation of the activity of the local public administration authorities by their employees.

The minimum number of interview forms addressed to the population is calculated by reference to the number of inhabitants that the administrative-territorial unit has as follows

- **Administrative-territorial units with a population of less than 20,000 inhabitants: 1 questionnaire/100 people for each administrative-territorial unit;**
- **Administrative-territorial units with a population between 20,001 and 30,000 inhabitants: 1 questionnaire/150 people for each administrative-territorial unit;**
- **Administrative-territorial units with a population between 30,001 and 40,000 inhabitants: 1 questionnaire/200 people for each administrative-territorial unit;**
- **Administrative-territorial units with a population between 40,001 and 50,000 inhabitants: 1 questionnaire/250 people for each administrative-territorial unit;**
- **Administrative-territorial units with population over 50,000 inhabitants: minimum 200 questionnaires for each administrative-territorial unit.**

The interview form addressed to employees and the population can be found in **Appendix no. 5** to the present methodology.

The evaluation team is responsible for conducting the interviews with the residents of the administrative-territorial unit. Interviews are mainly conducted online, but can also be conducted in person, as appropriate.

The forms intended for local elected officials can be found in **Annex no. 6** to the present methodology.

The responsibility for creating the forms intended for the evaluation of the activity of local public authorities by their employees, as well as those intended for local elected officials, also rests with the evaluation team. Interviews are mainly conducted online, but can also be conducted in person, as appropriate.

The three types of forms are completed and sent to local experts by **February 15, 2023** .

**5.** Following the analysis of the 4 types of documents received from the evaluation teams, the local experts evaluate the maturity of the achievement of the 12 principles of innovation and good democratic governance by the local public authorities, in order to establish their eligibility to receive ELoGE and propose the awarding of points . At the same time, they make reports on the results obtained. The reporting framework model for each expert to this methodology **and** the reporting obligations of the experts regarding

the results obtained for each assigned administrative-territorial unit, as well as for all the administrative-territorial units they dealt with, are provided in **Annex no. 7**.

6. At this stage, the proposals for granting the ELoGE label and the above-mentioned reports together with all related supporting documents are sent by the local experts to the General Secretariat of the Government (which provides the secretariat of the National Evaluation Commission).

The deadline for local experts to submit the above-mentioned proposals to the SGG is **February 28, 2023**.

7. The National Evaluation Commission approves the final list of local public authorities that meet the ELoGE award conditions.

8. SGG awards ELoGE to deserving local public authorities who have successfully completed ELoGE.

The award is a crystal dodecahedron with the principles of good democratic governance inscribed on its faces.

This label, which is valid for one year, is a recognition that a local public authority has achieved a high level of good democratic governance in accordance with Council of Europe standards.

The maximum term stipulated in the accreditation received by SGG until which local public authorities are awarded is April 2023.

### **General rules**

- Documents are sent exclusively in electronic format. All the documents analyzed/identified by the team of experts that support the scoring are archived, to be sent in electronic format by each administrative-territorial unit that implemented ELoGE.
- All the activities proposed to be carried out within this methodology (including the interviews) are mainly carried out online, physical participation being allowed, as appropriate.
- The hierarchy/list of documents used to justify the score/grade for each principle is developed by the SGG together with ACoR (e.g. grade 2, existence of only one document, grade 4 existence of 2 documents).