

ALDA-MAD-MERCATOR STIFTUNG

THE:PLACE

TURKEY HAND IN HAND WITH EUROPE:
PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES
AND CIVIL SOCIETY'S EXCHANGE



Info Day Meeting

18.05.2026



OUTLINE

What is **THE:PLACE**

Objectives of **THE:PLACE**

Who is **THE:PLACE** for?

Activities of **THE:PLACE**

Timeline of **THE:PLACE**

Q&A



WHAT IS IT?

Introduction

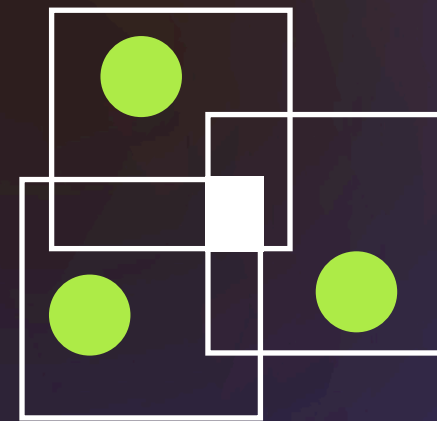
THE:PLACE is a collaborative exchange program bridging Türkiye and the EU + Enlargement Countries. It empowers Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Local Authorities to co-produce and co-implement solutions for their local challenges.



Partnership Building



Capacity Building



Project Building



Collaboration Building



PROGRAMME TEAM



Giulia Sostero



Hüseyincan Eryılmaz



Fedoua Bouderdaben



Tansu Toprak



Funded by

STIFTUNG MERCATOR



Jannes Tessmann



OBJECTIVES

What we aim to achieve

Build Lasting Networks

Build up lasting **Türkiye – European networks** of CSOs that work on local issues

Empower Local Actors

Favor the empowerment of **CSOs** and **Local Authorities (LAs)** as actors of local development

through

Capacity Building

exchanging knowledge and best practices between CSOs from Türkiye and the European Union + Enlargement Countries

Peer Learning

introducing novel methods of **mutual/peer learning** and **co-design processes**

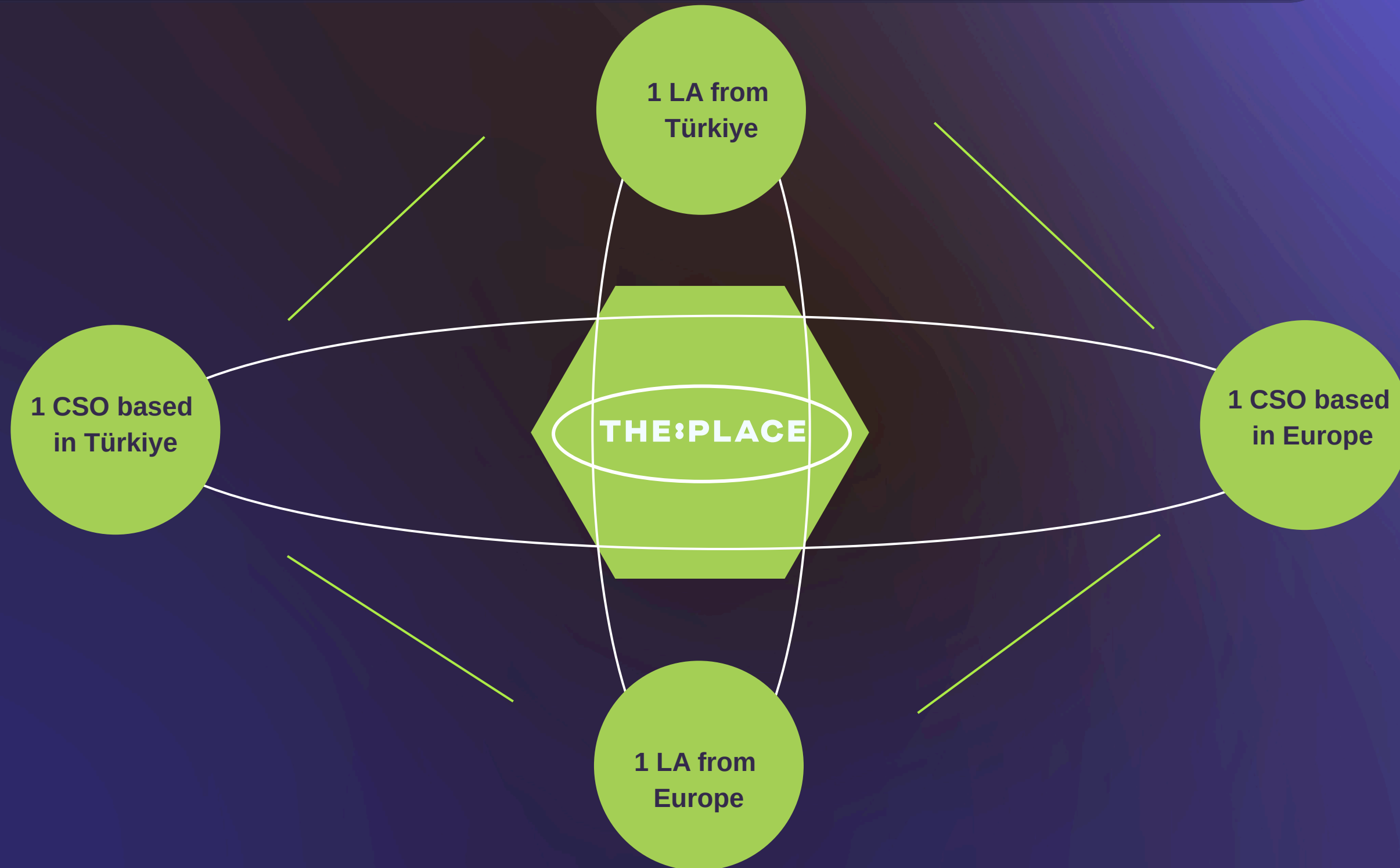
Joint Project

promoting **cross-collaborations** between CSOs and local authorities



WHO IS IT FOR?

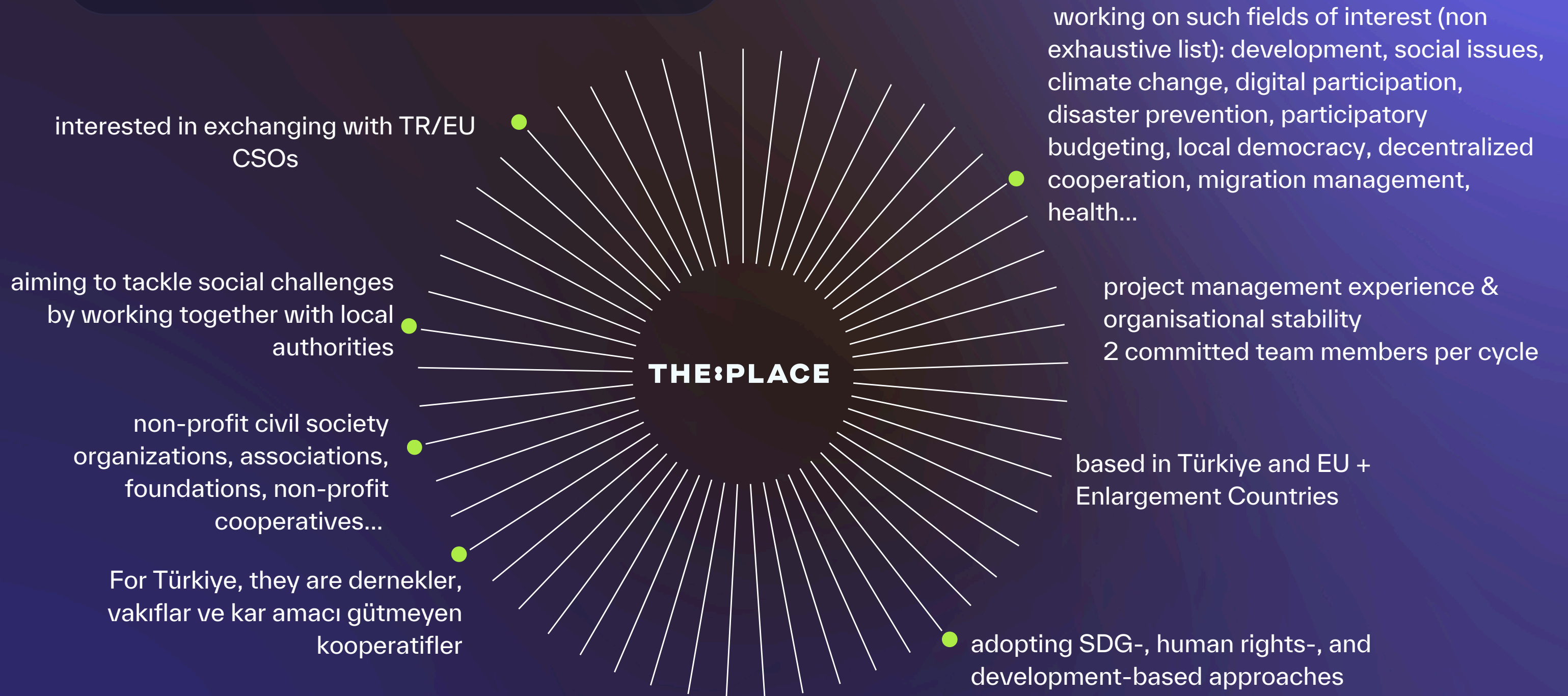
The programme will create **quadrilateral partnerships** composed of;





WHO IS IT FOR?

For those organizations, who are;





WHO IS IT FOR?

- The focus specifically on **participatory practices**

Encouraging partnerships and projects adopting methodologies to **involve citizens and communities in decision-making, co-creation and joint initiatives.**

- We specifically encourage projects involving **climate adaptation and digitalisation.**



ACTIVITIES



A1 - Online Networking

- Preliminary online meeting
- Open to all pre-selected CSOs (10 TR + 10 Europe)
- Thematic virtual tables on topics of interest identified by CSOs themselves > possibility to debate around potential project proposals



A2 - Selection

- Following the networking event, the interactions between the 10 & 10 pre-selected CSOs will be assessed, and **6 CSOs based in Türkiye and 6 CSOs based in the EU + enlargement countries will be selected** as final beneficiaries of the programme



A3 - Online Matchmaking

- Open to the selected CSOs (6 based Türkiye and 6 based in the EU + enlargement countries); an interactive session of presentations will be organised to start imagining potential joint projects.

★ ACTIVITIES



B1 - Intensive Meeting

- in Brussels (TBC) of 4 days in October 2026 focusing on team building through interactive sessions to get to know each other and reflect on the two main axes of THE:PLACE programme: CSO-LA collaboration and EU-Türkiye cooperation. The coaching will also be aimed to introduce the partnerships to the insights of project development.



B2 - Online Learning: Mentoring & Expert Support

- Expertise support will be provided either by peers or external experts when needed, based on the topic chosen by the partnerships.
- These 6 partnerships will work together to co-develop a project with coaching provided by ALDA and MAD

ACTIVITIES



C1 - Designing joint projects

- 6 partnerships (1 Turkish CSO + 1 Turkish LA + 1 European CSO + 1 European LA) will co-develop a project.
- The process is supported by coaches from MAD and ALDA assigned to each partnership, enabling peer exchange and, when needed, providing theme-based external expertise.



C2 - Project Implementation

- The period of **up to 12 months** (December 2026 - November 2027) will engage the partnerships in local activities, capacity building activities, meetings, events, job-shadowing among staff, in-presence studies
- The support of a grant of **32.000€** per partnership (**16.000€ reserved to the Turkish partner and 16.000€ to the EU/enlargement partner**)



ACTIVITIES



D1 - Mid-term Meetings

- An interim face-to-face meeting bringing together Turkish beneficiaries in Türkiye, European beneficiaries in Europe, MAD, and ALDA to strengthen exchange and collaboration.
- Participants will share project experiences, visit relevant institutions, and connect beyond programme requirements through informal interaction and peer learning.

D2 - Closing - Crossroad Meeting

- The Crossroads Event combines the closing of Round 1 with the in-person launch of Round 2, enabling networking and peer learning across cohorts.
- Round 1 participants will share feedback, present project results, and explore future ideas and funding opportunities. Round 2 participants will engage in networking, matchmaking, and project development workshops to build new partnerships.



TIMELINE



OUR NETWORK

Each point represents a location where civil society and local authorities have collaborated through THE:PLACE to create local impact.



F.A.Q - Eligibility

Q1. Is it admissible if applicant CSO would like to make a collaboration with a local authority out of its district?

A1. Yes, it is possible even though the programme prefer collaborations within your local area. In the application form you will be asked to explain why this collaboration is relevant. Please be as specific as possible, so to help us best understanding the type and relevance of your relationship with that local authority.

Q2. May applicants apply from a candidate country to EU?

A2. Yes, Türkiye and the EU +Enlargement Countries based CSOs are eligible to apply.

Q3. What would it be a problem for assessment if CSO had zero income in the last fiscal year, due to the pandemic and restrictions related to that?

A3.The financial operational capacity is one of the evaluation criteria, as to guarantee the capacity of the NGO to manage cash flow, etc. Please do explain in the application form your reasons for your current situation. We will take those exceptional cases into consideration at the evaluation process, if they have reasonable ground.

F.A.Q - Eligibility

Q4. Are the associations of local authorities eligible for the collaboration CSOs would like to establish or strengthen?

A4. Yes, they are acceptable for collaboration along with municipalities and metropolitan municipalities.

Q5. Can an European umbrella organization apply?

A5. Yes, provided that it is registered as a non-for-profit organisation or foundation in an eligible country (EU or enlargement countries) as established in the call guidelines.

Q6. Are federations of associations eligible to apply?

A6. If the federation of associations is registered as an association, it qualifies for eligibility. This criterion will be validated through the organization's legal status document. Federations with association status can apply by selecting the "association" option in the application form and uploading the relevant legal status document to the system.

Q7. I would like to know what exactly means Local Authority, does it necessarily involve a State authority, or other civil society authorities can be taken into consideration?

A7. By "Local Authority," we refer to state actors at the city level, which can include municipalities, metropolitan municipalities, or associations of local authorities functioning at the local or district level in Türkiye.

F.A.Q - Eligibility

Q8. My association was established in April, 2026. Are we eligible for this program?

Yes, it is eligible; however, the evaluation jury will take into account the applicant organization's prior experience, institutional capacity, and relevant expertise. Therefore, we recommend including any activities or community work conducted prior to official registration, as well as detailing the team's pertinent expertise and professional background, in the appropriate sections of the application form.

Q9. Is the participation of a partner from Turkey mandatory?

A6. Indeed, including a Turkish organization in the partnership is a crucial objective of the program. Each partnership will consist of both a Turkish partner and a European partner. However, as a European Civil Society Organization (CSO), you are not required to have an existing partnership with a Turkish organization for the application, as the collaboration will be established within the framework of the program itself.

F.A.Q - Collaboration

Q1. What kinds of costs will be eligible costs during the project period?

A1. Costs related to project management (human resources, travel & accommodation, material,, communication, etc.) The coverage will be detailed at the time of the project period.

Q2. Should CSOs find partners for the projects before the programme application?

A2. No, you don't need to. Partnerships will be built through the matchmaking, intensive coaching and online learning programme activities among the selected 6 Türkiye and 6 EU+Enlargement Countries based CSOs.

Q3. If it's possible for a European CSO to pick the Turkish CSO/L.A they'd like to work with, or are the pairs made only by you?

A3. The application is intended for individual organisations from the EU+Enlargement Countries and Türkiye which will be later matched in the course of the programme. However, it is also possible to indicate a preferred partner from the EU+Enlargement Countries (if the applicant is located in Türkiye) and vice-versa.

F.A.Q - Activities

Q1. What type of activities are eligible?

A1. The call guidelines provide a non-exhaustive list of eligible activities, which includes:

- Local activities
- Capacity-building initiatives
- Meetings
- Events
- Job-shadowing among staff
- In-person studies

Please note that any activities intended solely for individual benefit are not considered eligible.

Q2. Will the municipality personnel be involved in the training program?

A2. Representatives from the Local Authority will be engaged throughout the entire program and are encouraged to take part in the capacity-building phase as well.

Q4. Is an exchange of experiences concerning a city adaptation plan for small/medium cities eligible?

A4. Also in this case, we confirm that this type of activity would be eligible in the program, provided that the established partnership shares the same interest.

Q3. How does the programme prioritize micromobility projects that focus on behavioral change and cultural transformation—like promoting a cycling culture—rather than hard infrastructure, when jointly implemented by a local government entity and an NGO?

A3. We consider this as an example of an initiative that could be supported by THE:PLACE, provided that the established partnership shares the same interest. As climate adaptation is one of the two thematic priorities of this edition, we specifically welcome proposed initiatives within this aim.

F.A.Q - Budget

Q1. Does the €16,000 partnership budgets cover travel expenses and meeting participation (including accommodation and per diems) for program events, or are these costs handled separately?

A1. The 16,000€ per partner (32,000€ per partnership) grant will cover every expense related to the project implementation. Other travel costs, such as travel and accommodation to attend the kick-off meeting, the mid-term meeting and the final event will be covered by the program.

Q2. What types of expenses are eligible for the provided funds? For instance, are costs related to personnel or subcontractors included? Additionally, is there a requirement for co-financing?

A2. Yes, human resources costs and sub-contractors are eligible as project costs. There is no requirement of co-financing, but scaling up the project with other funds is possible and encouraged.

Q4. Is procurement of some equipment eligible within the programme?

A4. Yes, it is eligible, however it should not represent the majority of the project expenses.

Q3. How is the budget managed? Is the total budget transferred to one of the CSO partners in TR or EU+Enlargement Countries?

A3. The budget reserved to the European (including enlargement countries) CSOs will be transferred by ALDA, and the budget reserved to the Turkish CSOs will be transferred by MAD. The two partner CSO will co-develop the budget plan and agree on the division of expenses to manage their joint project.

ACTION



Scan the QR Code to read the Call Guideline.