

Governance report

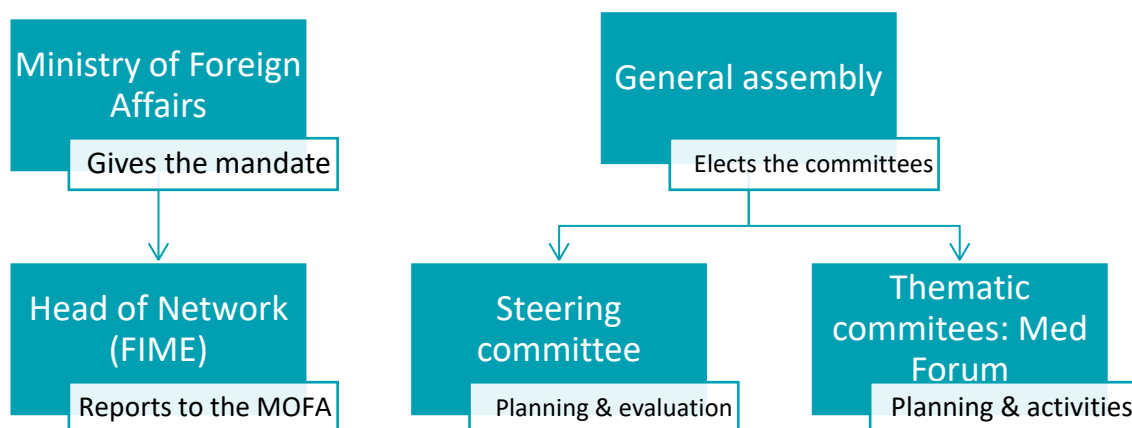
This report presents the current core practices in the Finnish Anna Lindh network and discusses possibilities for development. The report will be endorsed by all active members of the network. This will be done through passive endorsement.

Context

The main objective of the Finnish Anna Lindh network is **building intercultural dialogue in the Euro Mediterranean area**. The fundamental values of the network in governance are a) **transparency** and b) **active participation of members**. The aim is to have an active network, where members contribute to the planning and executing network activities and share a strong network identity.

The mandate for the network coordination comes from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The head of network is chosen through a tendering process. The current mandate of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East (FIME) is for the years 2019–2020.

Many activities of the network are already set in the tender, which partially limits the power of decision-making bodies of the network members, the general assembly and the steering committee. The general assembly is an annual gathering of the members of the network – though only a minority of the member organizations regularly participate the assemblies. The steering committee is elected by the general assembly and gathers more regularly. In addition to the steering committee, thematic task forces may be elected by the general assembly.



Currently there is over 100 members in the Finnish Network. Most of the members are CSOs, public organizations or individual members working on different themes related to cultural dialogue. The network is open to all NGOs; public, local and regional actors; public and private non-profit foundations; other non-profit organisations; social entrepreneurs, for-profit organisations with socially sustainable goals and individual members who adhere to the principles and to the mission of the Anna Lindh Foundation and whose work is based on democratic, pluralistic, and multilateral values. Individual people can join as members.

The Head of Network has the same accounting and backstopping resources and know-how as the Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East. FIME is well established, governed and managed. The basic funding is provided by the ministry of education and culture of Finland, and it is supplemented public and private grants and donations as well income from the activities themselves. The financial situation of the Foundation is sound. The accounting and salaries are outsourced to the Blond Accounts Oy and the accounts are audited by AltumAudit Oy.

Transparent network

Transparency of governance is mainly ensured through sound communications towards members. The relevant information has to be available to all members.

Official messages to members are sent by email. Other important information is shared in newsletters (12 per year). Communication must be accessible in the terms of language and format. For this, coordinators send more detailed reports to the steering group.

Most of the network communication is in Finnish, because majority of the members is Finnish speakers. Important messages are summarized in English. Some events are organized in English and the language of the general assemblies is English, if there are any participants who do not speak Finnish.

The coordinators share with the network the reports sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Summaries of these reports are published on the [network web page](#) semi-annually.

The Foreign Ministry is likely to launch new call for tenders for the network coordination (2021–2022) in the fall 2020. The network coordinators will ensure that the call is shared in all of the network's medias. In Finland, the Head of Network is chosen through a tendering process by the foreign ministry. The candidates must submit a work plan and a budget during the process, which gives quite rigid guidelines for the coordination.

Active participation of the members

The network coordinators have to ensure, that the activities of the network represent members' wishes and needs. Members can participate in planning and execution of activities, although the grand lines are determined already in the contract with the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs. The network shall not be dependent on the coordinators, but it's aimed to be pro-active in starting new cooperative projects between members and encourages them to work under the Anna Lindh label.

The network had a quite successful call for guest speakers in February 2020. This kind of a call for proposals is an efficient way to activate the network, but also to ensure that members have the possibility to contribute to the action plan. The network also has a non-stop web form for suggestions.

Members are given possibilities to suggest and execute activities in the Anna Lindh network. Med Forum task force is an exemplary case of this: the task force members contributed to the program of the Forum with a clear and well-planned proposition. This was thanks to the long term active and independent work of the task force.

Members who are interested in administration and developing the network can stand as candidates in the steering group elections. The current steering group was elected in a closed ballot in a General Assembly of fall 2019, in which all members could vote and stand for election. This election method was first endorsed by the general assembly. The network rules don't impose strict parameters, how to elect the steering group.

The network will reimburse travel costs to the general assemblies for 1 representative of each member organization. This ensures the geographical equality between the areas. Geographical equality will be further developed. Finland is a country of great distances, for which the network should develop its capacity for webinars and streaming.

Communications is again in key position in ensuring the active participation of members. Members must have a possibility to communicate towards the coordinators effectively. This ensures that the network is democratic and sensitive to the wishes and interests of the members.

General assemblies are the most important form of the two-way communication. In GAs, there is always time reserved for feedback and sharing new ideas. The strategy of the Finnish network is also to address substantial issues in general assemblies to make them more accessible to all members, not only those who are interested in developing the network.

There are also other means to increase the two-way communications: 1-on-1 meetings are efficient in recruiting new members and in activating the current ones, but they also form a valuable tool in surveying members' experiences and wishes. Coordinators aim to have at least one 1-on-1 meeting with members per month. The network has a closed Facebook-group for members, which enables instant and open two-way communication between members and coordinators. A final survey will be executed at the end of the contract period.

Member management and outreach

Membership management is an important administrative task. The coordinators are active in recruiting new members and the member requests are processed every month. The best marketing for the membership is to have active network with a strong sense of network identity.

For representative outlook, the coordinators keep the information considering the Finnish network in the Anna Lindh member database updated and encourage members to communicate about the changes in the information on their organizations. Updating the members' information in the database is a time-consuming task due to frequent changes in personnel.

To ensure that all our members are engaged in the work of the network, the coordinators will finish the membership reconfirmation process in the spring 2020.