

“Budgets for Citizens” Project funded by the European Union



“Budgets 4 Citizens” Project

Call for Sub-Grant Applications for CSOs (Mass Media) to involve Young Specialists from Budget Sector in CSOs/Mass Media on Employment Basis

1. About “Budget 4 Citizens” Project

The “Armenian Lawyers’ Association” (the lead organization) and partners “Economic Development and Research Center (EDRC) and AGORA Central Europe (AGORA), a Czech NGO, are currently implementing the “Budgets 4 Citizens” (B4C) project (hereinafter referred to as the Project).

The European Union funded Project was launched on 8 December 2022. The Project duration is 48 months. **The Overall Objective** is to foster an inclusive and transparent budgetary process with Civil Society in Armenia. **The Specific Objective** is to enhance participation of Civil Society in public budgetary processes.

2. About the Sub-Grant Component of the Project

The results of the baseline survey¹ conducted within the framework of the project recorded that only 20% of the CSOs surveyed in the budget monitoring process have monitored budget performance, while 80% have never conducted budget monitoring. At the same time, the monitoring activities carried out were mostly at the local self government (LSG) level. The low level of monitoring by Armenian CSOs in the budget process was also emphasized by representatives of line/branch ministries. The low level of participation was recorded within the Open Budgets Survey (OBS) as well. In particular, according to the comparative assessment of the participation of Armenia and other countries, Armenia received 6 points in 2021,² and 11³ in 2023. Of course, although the score received in the last year has doubled, the level of participation in the budget process remains low in Armenia, unlike other countries (for example, Georgia received 44 points in 2021 and 2023).

According to the results of the baseline survey carried out within the framework of the project, it has also become clear that the main skills which CSOs seek to improve in budgetary field are budget analysis (83.8%) and access and use of budget information (82.5%), followed by monitoring (73.8%) and advocacy (71.3%). During the focus group discussions conducted within the framework of the survey, the recommendations voiced by the participants related to the need to develop analytical skills, as well as skills in monitoring and advocacy. As for simplified budgets, the vast majority (over 90%) of the CSOs that participated in the survey have never drafted a simplified (“citizens”) budget.

¹ <https://budgets.am/1162.html>

² <https://internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2021/armenia>

³ <https://internationalbudget.org/sites/default/files/country-surveys-pdfs/2023/open-budget-survey-armenia-2023-en.pdf>

"Budgets for Citizens" Project funded by the European Union

Based on the needs identified as a result of the above-mentioned survey, a budget training program (hereinafter referred to as the Course) for CSOs and the media was organized during the previous four months. The main objective of the Course was to address the needs identified as a result of the survey. In order to address the needs the experts of the Project, prepared the study topics, making them as accessible, meaningful and easy to understand as possible. Participants also had the opportunity to have individual meetings with experts on these topics, and to receive advice and additional information on training materials and topics.

Among other things, representatives of CSOs and the Mass Media received training on theoretical and practical topics on the implementation of budget analysis and monitoring in the budget process, learned the specifics of developing simplified budgets, and the concept of a citizen's budget. In parallel, young professionals were trained with the same curriculum and methods⁴ as well. They will soon start working in the CSOs and Mass Media⁵ that won the sub-grant announced by this call, and will help them to carry out budget analysis and monitoring, develop simplified budgets of target sector, as well as carry out advocacy campaigns in target areas (sectors)⁶. Within the framework of this sub-grant, the one year salary of a young professional will be ensured by providing a corresponding sub-grant to the CSO/Mass Media.

In order to involve the young professional in an NGO to work on employment basis, the Project, based on the results of the training program aimed at providing budgetary knowledge to young professionals within the framework of the "Budgets for Citizens" Project, compiles a list of 6 young professionals and, at its discretion, decides the young professional who will be employed in the selected CSO.

It is important to note that a CSOs/Mass Media applying for a budget monitoring and analysis sub-grant may also apply for a sub-grant announced aimed at involving the young specialist from the budget sector to work for the CSO/Mass Media.⁷

3. Objective of the sub-grant program and preferred (eligible) activities

At this stage of the project, the launch of the second sub-grants for CSOs and Mass Media that have successfully completed the training is announced, having the aim to involve the a young professional from the budget sector to work for the CSO/Mass Media on the basis of the employment contract.

3.1. Overall Objective

Provide professional assistance to CSOs/Mass Media aimed to implement the above-mentioned sub-grant programs by working for at least one year in the CSOs and mass media that applied for the announced sub-grant programs to develop budget monitoring and analysis within the scope of the Project.⁸

⁴ <https://budgets.am/1603.html>

⁵ The meaning of the terms "CSOs" and "Mass Media" mentioned in this announcement is presented in Section 5, which refers to Applicants/Applicants.

⁶ Within the framework of the Project, other competitions for conducting advocacy campaigns in target directions will be announced as well.

⁷ <https://budgets.am/2382.html>

⁸ In the sense of this Call, the concept "professional assistance" implies conducting budget monitoring and analysis, as well as implementation of advocacy campaigns in target directions (sectors).

“Budgets for Citizens” Project funded by the European Union

The overall objectives also include the analysis, monitoring and improvement of the budget of the target sectors, including the development of simplified budgets of the target sectors, as well as ensuring public participation in these processes and increasing public influence.

3.2. Target Sectors and Directions

(1) Justice, (2) Education, (3) Social Security and (4) Agriculture.

Directions of target sectors:

3.3. Target Sectors and Directions

(1) Justice, (2) Education, (3) Social Security and (4) Agriculture.

Directions of target sectors:

(1) Justice

- a. Judicial and legal, including bankruptcy, advocacy, mediation, notary activity, civil status acts registration, state registration and identification of legal entities, personal data protection, legal expertise, international mutual legal assistance systems,
- b. Human Rights,
- c. Anti-Corruption,
- d. Police and Law Enforcement Agencies,
- e. Penitentiary and Probation System,
- f. Compulsory Enforcement Service.

(2) Education

- a. General Education, including pre-school, primary, basic, secondary/high school
- b. Professional Education: including Primary (Craftsmanship) and Secondary Vocational Education, Higher Education and Post-Graduate Professional Education

(3) Social Security

- a. Integrated social services,
- b. State pension security,
- c. Social support,
- d. Demographics,
- e. Social protection of family, women and children,
- f. Social protection of persons with disabilities and the elderly,
- g. Integration or reintegration of asylum-seeking refugees, displaced persons, long-term migrants and forcibly returning RA citizens.

(4) Agriculture

- a. Plant cultivation,
- b. Phytosanitary,
- c. Animal breeding,

“Budgets for Citizens” Project funded by the European Union

- d. Veterinary medicine,
- e. Processing of agricultural products,
- f. Food security,
- g. Food safety.

3.4. The following activities may be implemented within the framework of the project:

1. An at least one year employment contract with up to 40 hours of work per week has been signed with the young professional provided by the Project, providing a salary of AMD 200,000 (including taxes and other compulsory payments provided for by the RA legislation).
2. Within the scope of the employment contract ensure the implementation of planned activities for the implementation of budget analysis and monitoring, including developing simplified budgets for target sectors that are provided as work functions in the submitted project proposal as well. The work functions for other months provided for the implementation of advocacy campaigns may be reviewed as needed and in accordance with the procedure established by the RA legislation.

4. Applicants

CSOs/Mass Media can apply for the sub-grant program under the conditions mentioned below.

CSOs and Mass Media that meet the following conditions can apply for the competition of the sub-grant program in accordance with the procedure established by the RA legislation.

- 4.1. In the case of CSOs: have been registered as non-commercial and non-governmental/local (community) organization at the State Register Agency of Legal Entities of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia as specified by the RA Law (hereinafter referred to as “State Registration”).

***Note 1.** Separate units of CSOs cannot apply individually to the grant program.*

- 4.2. In the case of Mass Media: have been registered as state registration as a non-commercial or non-profit organization, or they do not have state registration, but are established and operated by a state-registered non-commercial or non-governmental/local (community) organization.

***Note 2.** CSOs and Mass Media created by state, local (community) or commercial organizations (bodies) cannot claim to receive grant funding.*

- 4.3. Have completed the training program⁹ aimed at developing the skills of CSOs and Mass Media within the framework of the "Budgets for Citizens" Project, in accordance with all the conditions specified in the announcement, and received the certificate of completion of the training program by the "Budgets for Citizens" Project.

⁹ <https://budgets.am/1596.html>

"Budgets for Citizens" Project funded by the European Union

- 4.4. Have applied to the announced competition for sub-grant applications for monitoring and analyzing the budget in targeted directions within the framework of the "Budgets for Citizens" Project.
- 4.5. Agree to apply for participation in the announced sub-grant program for conducting advocacy campaigns in target areas in the framework of the Project. In case of the absence of agreement, in each case the Project (Grant Committee) will discuss separately with the applicant, and in the case of applying with a consortium, with the Consortium, the period and budget of this sub-grant.
- 4.6. The winning applicant organizations (CSOs and Mass Media) will be required to participate in mandatory one-day training with the "Budgets for Citizens" Project representatives to receive expert counseling on the implementation process of the grants, including financial advice. In case of applying by a consortium, each CSO/Mass Media member of the consortium shall participate in the mandatory training.
- Note 3: A sub-grant agreement will not be concluded with CSOs and CSO consortia who refuse to participate in the mentioned training and discussion:*
- 4.7. Bare direct responsibility for preparation and complete implementation of the project.
- 4.8. In the case of an application for a sub-grant project to be submitted through a consortium, it should be specified that the employment contract with the young specialist for the sub-grant for budget monitoring and analysis shall be signed by the lead organization applying.
- 4.9. In the case of a grant project submitted by the Mass Media, the lead applicant, or at least one of the consortium members of the project must be a media. In terms of this call, the requirements related to mass media are provided in clause 5.2.

5. Budget and Eligible Costs

Up to 6 sub-grants to CSOs in the amount of up to AMD 2,400,000 (two million four hundred thousand) will be provided within the framework of the program¹⁰. The provided sub-grant must be fully directed at the salary of the young professional with whom an at least one year employment contract with up to 40 hours of work per week has been signed, providing a salary of AMD 200,000 (including taxes and other compulsory payments provided for by the RA legislation). In any case, the amount of the provided budget will be considered taking into account the existence of the conditions defined in clause 5.5 of this call.

Expenses incurred before the official date of awarding the sub-grant as well as those not related to the sub-grant will not be accepted. Only the actions mentioned in clause 4.3 of this Call will be financed.

6. Evaluation and Selection Criteria of Applications

¹⁰ The size of the sub-grant budget may vary depending on the exchange rate of the foreign currency.

"Budgets for Citizens" Project funded by the European Union

The evaluation of applications and selection criteria are provided in Annex 2 of the ALA Procurement Policy, which refers to the procedure for sub-grants provided within the framework of the "Budgets for Citizens" program.

7. Submission Procedure

All interested CSOs and Mass Media that meet the requirements set out in this call are invited to participate in this competition by completing the form attached to this application.

Documents to be submitted with the sub-grant application:

- Certificate on applying for a sub-grant competition announced for conducting budget analysis and monitoring within the framework of the project and developing simplified budgets for the target sector.
- In the case of a consortium, a written agreement by all members that the employment contract with the young specialist will be signed by the lead applicant, however the work functions of the specialist will be aimed at the performance of program activities, regardless of which organization is responsible for the specific component.
- A written agreement (if available) that the applicant, and/or in the case of applying through a consortium, the Consortium, will apply for participation in the announced sub-grant program for conducting advocacy campaigns in target areas in the scope of the Program, and will involve the young professional in this program as well.

All documents must be submitted in Armenian language. In case of necessity, the Sub-Grant Committee may request additional documents, as well as the originals of the submitted documents from the applicants.

8. Duration

The duration of sub-grants projects shall be 12 (twelve) months. In any case, the issue of the term will be considered taking into account the presence of the conditions specified in clauses 3 and 5.5 of this call.

9. Other Requirements

The Sub-Grant Project Proposal and accompanying documents must be signed by the Head of the Lead Applicant organization and be sealed with the seal of the Lead CSO/Mass Media.

The complete application and the attached documents must be sent electronically to the email address info@armla.am indicating "**Sub-grant application for young specialists in the budget sector**" in the subject line.

Please Note: Applications submitted manually will not be considered.

The deadline for submitting applications for this round is **13 October, 2024 at 18:00.**

“Budgets for Citizens” Project funded by the European Union

The submitted application and attached documents will not be returned to the applicant, regardless of whether the application is accepted or not. Only one set of documents is required to be submitted.

All matters relating to sub-grants are resolved in accordance with the Grant Policy of the ALA.

Decisions on awarding sub-grants will be made **by 25 October, 2024**. Information about the winners will be published on the Project website at: <https://budgets.am/>.

Sub-grant agreements with the winners will be signed by 30 October, 2024. Implementation of sub-grants shall begin **on 1 November, 2024**.

In case of questions, please contact Mr. Artak Saribekyan, Project Grants Manager, by calling +37410 540199 or by e-mail at info@armla.am.

10. Information/awareness meetings

The Project will organize on-line information/awareness meetings aimed at informing CSOs and Mass Media about the sub-grants provided by this call for project proposals. The announcement on participation and registration will be posted on the project website: <https://budgets.am/>.

Note 4.

The terms and conditions mentioned in the announcement can be changed if necessary. In case of changes, the information will be published on the Project website: <https://budgets.am/>.

Attention.

Applications submitted after the deadline and/or do not include all the required information, or do not meet the terms of the Program will not be considered.

Documents attached to this announcement:

1. Grants Policy of the Armenian Lawyers' Association NGO,
2. Sub-Grant Application Form,
3. Appendix 1. Logical Framework of the Project.