

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union



"Budgets for Citizens" Project

Call for Proposals for CSOs (Mass Media) to Conduct Budget Monitoring and Analysis in Target Areas

1. About the "Budgets for Citizens" Project

The Armenian Lawyers' Association NGO, as the lead organization, together with its partners - Economic Development and Research Center NGO and Agora Central Europe Czech NGO - is implementing the "Budgets for Citizens" project (hereinafter referred to as the Project).

The Project was launched on December 8, 2022, and is funded by the European Union. The Project duration is 48 months. **The main objective** of the Project is to promote an inclusive and transparent budgetary process in Armenia with the participation of civil society. **The specific objective** of the Project is to contribute to strengthening civil society participation in the state budgetary processes.

2. About the Project's Sub-grant Component

The results of the baseline research¹ conducted within the Project framework indicate that only 20% of surveyed CSOs have monitored budget performance, while 80% have never conducted budget monitoring. At the same time, the monitoring activities were mainly carried out at the local government level. The low level of monitoring by Armenian CSOs in the budgetary process was also emphasized by representatives of line ministries. The low level of participation was also recorded within the Open Budget Survey. In particular, according to the comparison of Armenia's and other countries' participation scores, Armenia received 6 points in 2021², and 11 points in 2023³. Although the score doubled in 2023, the level of participation in the budgetary process continues to remain low in Armenia, unlike other countries (for example, Georgia received 44 points in both 2021 and 2023).

¹ <https://budgets.am/en/1167.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 is funded by the European Union

The results of the baseline research conducted within the Project framework also revealed that the main skills in the budget field that CSOs aim to improve are budget analysis (83.8%) and access to and use of budget information (82.5%), followed by monitoring (73.8%) and advocacy (71.3%). The suggestions made by participants during focus group discussions conducted within the research framework referred to the need to develop analytical skills, as well as monitoring and advocacy skills. Regarding simplified budgets, the vast majority of CSOs participating in the survey (more than 90%) have never developed a simplified budget.

Based on the needs identified through the above-mentioned research, two streams of a budget training program (hereinafter referred to as the Course) have been organized for CSOs and media in the preceding months, with the main purpose of addressing the needs identified by the research. To address these needs, the training topics were prepared by the Project experts, developing them to be as accessible, substantive, and easy to understand as possible. Participants also had the opportunity to have separate meetings with experts to receive advice and additional information on the training materials and topics.

Among other things, CSOs and media from both streams were trained on theoretical and practical topics related to budget analysis and monitoring implementation in the budgetary process, and learned about the specifics of developing simplified budgets and the concept of citizen's budget. In parallel, young professionals were also trained in two streams. The young professionals from the first stream have been employed in sub-grant projects provided to CSOs/media within the Project framework since November 2024.

Young professionals who completed the second stream will be employed in CSOs and media that win the sub-grant announced by this call⁴ and will help CSOs/media to conduct budget analysis and monitoring, and develop simplified budgets for target areas. The one-year salary of young professionals will be provided by the Project through providing appropriate sub-grants to CSOs/media. It is important to know that a CSO/media applying for a budget monitoring and analysis sub-grant can simultaneously apply for a sub-grant announced for the purpose of involving a young professional in the budget field on a working basis in the CSO/media⁵.

3. Purpose of the sub-grant project and Preferred (Allowed) Activities

At this stage of the Project, the second sub-grant for CSOs and media that have successfully completed **the first and second Courses** is being announced to conduct budget monitoring and analysis, as well as to develop simplified budgets for target areas.

3.1. General Purpose:

⁴ The concepts of "CSOs" and "media" as mentioned in this announcement are defined in Section 5, which refers to Applicants

⁵ (the link to the new announcement will be placed here)

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

Analysis and monitoring of budgets in the Project's target areas, including the development of simplified budgets for target areas. The general purposes also include analysis, monitoring, and improvement of budgets in target areas, and ensuring public participation and increasing public impact in these processes.

3.2. Target Areas and Sectoral Directions

(1) Justice, (2) education, (3) social support, and (4) agriculture.

Directions of target areas:

(1) Justice

- a. Judicial and legal, including bankruptcy, advocacy, mediation, notary activities, state registration of civil status acts, state registration and accounting of legal entities, personal data protection, legal expertise, international legal assistance systems,
- b. Human rights,
- c. Anti-corruption,
- d. Police and law enforcement agencies,
- e. Penitentiary and probation system,
- f. Enforcement service.

(2) Education

- a. General education, including pre-school, elementary, basic, secondary,
- b. Vocational, including preliminary vocational (craft), middle vocational, higher vocational, postgraduate vocational.

(3) Social Support

- a. Integrated social services,
- b. State pension security,
- c. Social assistance,
- d. Demography,
- e. Social protection of family, women, and children,
- f. Social protection of persons with disabilities and the elderly,

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

g. Integration or reintegration of refugees, displaced persons, long-term migrants, and forcibly returned citizens of the Republic of Armenia.

(4) Agriculture

- a. Plant cultivation,
- b. Plant sanitation,
- c. Animal husbandry,
- d. Veterinary medicine,
- e. Processing of agricultural products,
- f. Food security,
- g. Food safety.

3.3. The following activities can be implemented within the Project framework:

1. Analysis of sectoral budgets or budget programs,
2. Analysis and/or evaluation of budget program implementation, including comprehensive analysis of performance indicators,
3. Monitoring of sectoral budget programs/measures or their separate directions, including the development of two sectoral simplified budgets for 2026,
4. Evaluation of sectoral expenditures or budget program implementation, including compliance, effectiveness, impact, and other evaluations,
5. Preparation of reports based on the results of analyses and monitoring, including reports on budget implementation. Reports and/or statements should include improvement proposals. The identified issues and proposals should serve as a basis for future advocacy campaigns. For this purpose, separate sub-grant projects are planned for 2025,
6. Presentation and discussion of reports and/or statements with competent state bodies, and if necessary, with specialized CSOs,
7. Organization of public awareness and discussions, presenting monitoring results, collecting participants' opinions and suggestions, reflecting them in the framework of reports and/or statements,
8. One of the grant programs may be aimed at supporting the implementation of actions regarding participatory mechanisms in the budgetary process in Armenia within the

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

framework of the "Open Government Partnership" initiative (if there is an action in the OGP-Armenia national program).

4. Applicants

CSOs and media can apply for the sub-grant project under the conditions specified below.

CSOs and media established in accordance with the RA legislation can apply for the sub-grant project competition if they meet the following conditions:

4.1. In the case of CSOs: They have been registered in accordance with the RA legislation by the Agency of State Register of Legal Entities of the Staff of the RA Ministry of Justice (hereinafter referred to as state registration) as a non-commercial and non-state/local (community) organization.

Note 1: Separate subdivisions of CSOs cannot apply separately for the sub-grant project.

4.2. In the case of media: They have received state registration as a non-commercial or non-profit organization, or they do not have state registration but have been created and are operated by a non-commercial or non-state/local (community) organization that has state registration.

Note 2: CSOs and media that have been established by state, local (community), or commercial organizations (bodies) cannot claim to receive funding from sub-grant projects.

4.3. They have completed two training programs aimed at developing the skills of CSOs and media within the framework of the "Budgets for Citizens" project in accordance with all the conditions specified in the announcement⁶ and have received a certificate of completion of the training program from the "Budgets for Citizens" project.

4.4. If declared winners, CSOs and media agree to participate in a one-day mandatory training with representatives of the "Budgets for Citizens" project to receive expert, including financial, advice on the implementation of sub-grants. In case of applying as a consortium, each member CSO/media of the consortium must participate in the mandatory training.

Note 3: A sub-grant agreement will not be signed with CSOs and CSO consortia that refuse to participate in this training and discussion.

4.5. They bear direct responsibility for the preparation and complete implementation of their sub-grant project.

⁶ <https://budgets.am/en/1648.html> , <https://budgets.am/en/3303.html>

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

4.6. In the case of implementing a grant program, CSOs and media can apply through a consortium consisting of CSOs and/or media, which will be considered an advantage. In the case of a jointly submitted sub-grant project application, the relationship between the cooperating parties, the division of responsibilities and powers between them, as well as commitment letters from all cooperating parties must be attached. In the case of a consortium, at least the main applicant must have completed the first or second stream of the training program

4.7. In the case of a sub-grant project submitted by media, the main applicant of the program must be a media organization or at least one of the consortium members must be a media organization. For the purposes of this announcement, the requirements for media are presented in Section 4.2.

Preference will be given to applicants who apply as a consortium of CSOs that include media, or to separate CSOs that involve a journalist in the program.

One CSO, as the main applicant and partner organization, can be included in only one consortium.

5. Budget and Eligible Expenses

Within the Project framework, up to 8 sub-grants will be provided to CSOs in the amount of up to 2,565,000 (two million five hundred and sixty-five thousand) AMD⁷. Of the 8 sub-grants, 6 will be provided for conducting budget monitoring and analysis, and 2 for developing simplified budgets. Only activities specified in paragraph 3.3 of this announcement will be funded.

Expenses to be incurred before the official deadline for granting the sub-grant, as well as expenses not related to the sub-grant, will not be accepted. In addition to the aforementioned, **the following activities are considered unacceptable:**

- activities that relate only or mainly to individual sponsorship for participation in seminars, conferences, and congresses,
- activities that relate only or mainly to individual scholarships for study or training courses,
- activities that discriminate against individuals or groups of people based on their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack thereof, or ethnic origin,
- activities that support political parties.

The following expenses are considered unacceptable:

⁷ The amount of the sub-grant budget may change depending on the currency exchange rate

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

- debts and debt service charges (interest),
- reserves for losses or possible future liabilities,
- expenses that have been declared by the beneficiary (beneficiaries) and funded by another action or work program that receives a European Union grant (including through the EDF),
- purchases of land or buildings,
- foreign exchange losses,
- loans to third parties,
- salary expenses of national governing body staff.

The total of changes made by the sub-grant recipient in the amounts of budget expense items should not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total budget, which must be notified in writing in advance to the responsible person of the Project/Armenian Lawyers' Association (ALA) and receive their written consent. Changes exceeding ten percent (10%) of the total budget or changes in the purpose of the sub-grant must be made in the form of bilaterally approved written changes to the sub-grant agreement. The provisions for budget allocation are provided in Chapter 5 of the ALA grant policy.

6. Application Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The application evaluation and selection criteria are presented in Annex 2 of the ALA procurement policy, which relates to the sub-grant procedure under the "Budgets for Citizens" project.

7. Sub-grant Application Submission Procedure

All interested CSOs and media that meet the requirements presented in this announcement are invited to participate in this competition by completing the form attached to this application.

The following documents must be attached to the sub-grant application:

1. A copy of the charter of the CSO and media applying for the sub-grant project (in case of a consortium, copies of the charters of all member CSOs and media).
2. A copy of the state registration certificate of the CSO applying for the sub-grant project (in case of a consortium, copies of the state registration certificates of all member CSOs and media), including copies of all inserts,
3. A brief (maximum one page) description of each applying organization.

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

4. A copy of the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) of the lead organization (main applicant).
5. A certificate from the bank about the existence of the lead organization's bank account.
6. If the sub-grant project director is not the head of the CSO/media, an authorization given to the program director by the head of the CSO/media.
7. CVs of the main members of the sub-grant project implementation team.
8. In case of a consortium, commitment letters from consortium members or a cooperation agreement on joint implementation of the sub-grant project.
9. A copy of the certificate of completion of the training program aimed at developing the skills of CSOs and media within the framework of the "Budgets for Citizens" project.
10. Written assurance that the Applicant, or in case of applying as a consortium, the Consortium, will also apply for the sub-grant project announced for the purpose of involving young professionals in the budget field on a working basis in the CSO/media.

All documents must be submitted in Armenian. If necessary, the sub-grant committee may request additional documents from applicants, as well as the originals of the submitted documents.

8. Duration

The duration of sub-grant projects must be 6 (six) months.

9. Other Requirements

The sub-grant application form, appendices, and attached documents must be signed by the head of the organization leading the Program and stamped with the seal of that CSO/media.

The complete application and attached documents must be sent electronically to the email address info@armla.am, with the subject line "CSO/Media Sub-grant Application".

Attention: Applications submitted in person will not be considered.

The deadline for submitting applications for this phase is June 10, 2025, at 18:00. The submitted application and attached documents will not be returned to the applicant, regardless of whether the application has been accepted or not. Only one package of documents is required to be sent. All issues related to sub-grants are resolved in accordance with the ALA grant policy. Decisions on granting sub-grants will be made by July 2, 2025. Information about the winners will be published on the Project website: <https://budgets.am/>.

The start of sub-grant implementation is **July 15, 2025**.

"Budgets for Citizens" project is funded by the European Union

If you have questions or clarifications regarding the program proposal, you can submit them in writing to info@armla.am, which will be summarized and the answers will be presented during the information meeting.

For technical questions, you can contact the Project's Grant Coordinator Artak Saribekyan by calling +37410 540199, or by email at info@armla.am.

10. Information Meetings

An online information meeting will be organized by the Project to inform CSOs/media about the sub-grants provided by this announcement. The announcement regarding participation and registration for this meeting will be posted on the Project website⁸ and on the Facebook platform⁹.

Note 4:

The deadlines and conditions mentioned in the announcement may be changed if necessary. In case of changes, the information will be published on the Project website.

Attention:

Applications that are submitted after the specified deadline and/or do not include all the required information or do not meet the Project conditions will not be considered.

Documents attached to this announcement:

- ✓ ALA grant policy,
- ✓ Sub-grant proposal application form,
- ✓ Appendix 1. Logical framework of the Project,
- ✓ Appendix 2. Project budget.

⁸ <https://budgets.am/en>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090358352230>