

TERMS OF REFERENCE

*for selecting 5 local CSOs to act as regional implementing partners in the EU-grant project
“Inform, Empower, Act. Civil Society for good budgetary governance in Republic of Moldova”*

1. Brief project description

Donor: European Commission and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung e.V.

Implementation period: February 2019 – January 2022

Project total budget: EUR 1.15 million EUR

Independent Analytical Center “Expert-Grup”, as lead partner, in consortium with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung e.V. (KAS, Germany), Eastern Europe Studies Centre (EESC, Lithuania) and Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE, Republic of Moldova) are implementing since February 2019 the EU-grant project “Inform, Empower, Act. Civil Society for good budgetary governance in Republic of Moldova.

The general objective of the project is to enhance civil society contribution to higher transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of budgetary formation and execution at the local level through participation and oversight.

Specific objectives:

1. To increase the level of information, awareness and motivation among the population and civil society at the local level about the budgetary process: importance of analyzing the local budgets, discussing spending priorities, monitoring the budgetary execution, with emphasis on procurements for large investment projects;
2. To empower the population and civil society at the local level with appropriate knowledge, tools and frameworks to take a more active role in consultations, contribution and oversight of the local public policies and budgets;
3. To enhance the involvement of the population and civil society in public policy development, budgetary process, monitoring and oversight activities of the public spending.

The main **activities** of the project are:

- Creating the local coalitions (25 local coalitions in 25 localities from 5 regions of the Republic of Moldova: North, Center, South, Gagauzia and Transnistria)
- Launching an information, awareness and visibility campaign
- Developing instruments for participatory budgeting
- Capacity building of 5 local implementing partners and members of local coalitions on participatory budgeting
- Promoting the improvement of the budgetary process at the local level
- Stimulating the participation of local coalitions in the budgetary process
- Promoting changes in the budgetary processes at the central level

Target groups and final beneficiaries of the project: The main target group are CSOs and civic activists at the local level. In particular the project is targeting members of local coalitions from 25 LPAs, created and led by 5 regional CSOs acting as key local implementing partners in North, Centre, South, Gagauzia and

Transnistria regions (on average, 5 municipalities (urban/rural) per implementing partner). It is estimated that each local coalition will include around 30 members (CSOs and local activists, as well as representatives of LPAs), making it a total of 750 persons as primary beneficiaries of the project. The entire population of localities where the project will be implemented accounts to 400 – 500 thousand people.

2. Objective of the assignment

In order to facilitate the project implementation at the local level, there will be identified 5 CSO that will act as regional implementing partners (1 CSO per region: North, Center, South, Gagauzia and Transnistria). The grantees will follow four key objectives: (i) identification and mobilization of local stakeholders (LPAs interested to enhance their budgetary transparency, and CSOs and civic leaders at the local level, interested to engage in the budgetary processes at the local level) and forming local coalitions; (ii) ensuring the visibility of the project at the local level, by dissemination the project materials, under the communication and visibility strategy implemented by the central project team; (iii) providing logistical support in organizing all activities and events at the local level (e.g. public hearings, round tables, trainings and workshops); (iv) ensuring the connection between the central project team and the beneficiary LPAs (including, obtaining relevant data and information on budgets and budgetary process) and members of the local coalitions.

The selected CSOs will be the beneficiaries of the sub-granting scheme of this project. Hence, there will be 5 grants of about 60,000 each, for the entire project duration (36 months). The grants can fund all the activities of local CSOs that will contribute to the implementation of project objectives (salary costs (maximum 20% of the total), costs related to the organization of all project events at the local level, printing project materials, transportation, catering and bank charges).

3. Key activities

Each selected CSOs will benefit of a preparatory phase for the project. During this phase, the central project team will build capacities of the selected CSOs in the area of participatory budgeting (more details are listed below). Based on the preparatory phase, the selected CSOs will be responsible for promoting the concept of participatory budgeting at the local level, by contributing to the implementation of the activities in 5 pre-selected localities for achieving the project objectives. Most of the activities will be implemented with the active participation of the central project team.

Preparatory phase

1. Participating in a 2-day general training organized by the central project team

The training will be held in Chisinau, will last 2 days and will be designed for 10 participants (2 people from each CSO). The training will have 3 components: (i) presenting the project and roles of responsibilities of every partner (delivered by the project team leader); (ii) presenting the general concept of participatory budgeting, its importance and opportunities (delivered by an EU expert from one of the international partners of the consortium); and (iii) presenting the implementation approach.

2. Participation in a study visit to Lithuania (activity organized by the central project team)

After the general training, there will be organized a study visit to Lithuania for the selected local implementing partners (2 persons from each organization, 10 people in total). It will be a 3-day visit, which will be organized together with the Lithuanian partner. It will serve to inspire the local implementing partners with good practices of participatory budgeting and its transformational impact at the local level. Namely, the participants will meet experts and CSOs from Lithuania that deal with budgetary transparency, as well as will meet some LPAs and policy makers in this area. The discussion will focus on the Lithuanian experience in implementing the budgetary calendar, conducting medium-term expenditure framework, conduct-

ing public hearings and engaging citizens in consultations on budgetary issues. The Lithuanian experience is very relevant for Moldova because both countries are from the Eastern Europe and share the same Soviet past, with corresponding challenges, Lithuania being much more advanced with having implemented reforms to democracy and market economy.

Participation in a series of 5 thematic workshops (activity organized by the central project team)

The central project team will organize for the selected 5 CSOs a series of 2-day workshops, based on the concept of training-of-trainers. The workshops will focus on the following specific issues related to participatory budgeting:

- o Workshop on understanding the budgetary process, budgetary calendar, interpreting the budgetary data and conducting Independent Budgetary Analyses and Citizens' Budgets.
- o Workshop on participating in budgetary formation: defining budgetary spending priorities for the short, medium and long term, formulating requests for budgetary allocations, participating in public hearings and organizing independent consultation events on budgets.
- o Workshop on human rights-based budgeting: identifying the vulnerable groups and representing their needs in budgetary allocation, and gender-based budgeting.
- o Workshop on monitoring public procurements, with the focus on infrastructure projects and EU funded projects.
- o Workshop on implementing territorial approach to local development by means of participatory budgeting.

Activities that will be implemented by selected CSOs based on the preparatory phase

1. Forming and managing 5 local coalitions per CSO (core activity of the regional partners)

The selected 5 regional CSOs will form a total of 25 local civic coalitions for budgetary participation and oversight (5 coalitions per CSO with about 30 members per coalition), involving the selected 25 localities. The project will seek to engage with vulnerable groups to be part of these local coalitions. These coalitions will be among the key direct beneficiaries of the action, and will represent the critical mass of local agents of change that will continue to inform and empower others, as well as engage in participatory budgeting, after the end of the action, using the delivered tools and expertise.

The process of creating local coalitions will start by identifying and securing the proper buy-in from the respective LPA (first level). There will be launched an open call for expression of interests among LPAs. The key selection criteria will be commitment of the mayor to increasing the transparency and openness of LPA about the budgetary process. Also, preference will be given to larger localities for three reasons: (i) the upcoming decentralization reform could make the small LPAs merge with larger ones, while the large LPAs, most likely, will not suffer changes that would impede the project implementation; (ii) larger localities are more likely to produce stronger impact, because there will be larger budgets exposed to civic participation and, hence, more opportunities to produce change at the local level; (iii) the project is meant to inspire other localities, and larger localities could inspire a larger number of communities, especially due to the reason mentioned in the previous point. Note: this step, while being mandatory for the North, Center, South and Gagauzia regions, is not mandatory in the case of the Transnistrian region. In this region, the process of creation of local coalitions will rely primarily on the identification of grass root CSOs and community leaders interested in the promotion of participatory budgeting.

After securing the buy-in from LPAs, the local implementing partners will identify candidates for forming local coalitions for participatory budgeting. They will consist of local grass root CSOs, community leaders, private sector representatives and will amount to about 30 persons per coalition.

The selection of coalition members will be a careful process and will involve stakeholders with clear motivation for participatory budgeting (e.g. youth activists, CSOs promoting the interest of vulnerable groups, representatives of pupils' councils, environment activists and other local civic leaders who advocate for more effective use of local public funds in their sectors of interest). The local implementing partners will keep a close contact with the members of the local coalitions, in order to keep them engaged and active. Also, the local coalitions will always be open for new members, meaning that these will be live structures. These approaches will ensure that the local coalitions will not remain only formal, but will contribute to promoting the participatory budgeting and more effective use of local public budgets.

2. Organizing general trainings and thematic workshops for the members of local coalitions – by June 2020.

Selected regional CSOs will act as focal point at regional level and will be responsible for the logistics, organization of events and provision of trainings for local coalitions and authorities (for 5 in each region). One of the main activities in this regard will be organizing general trainings and thematic workshops for the members of local coalitions. Based on the information received during the preparatory phase of the project (general training, study visit and thematic workshops), the selected 5 CSOs will organize general trainings and 5 thematic workshops (similar to the ones listed above in the preparatory phase) for the members of local coalitions. These activities will be implemented at the local level. Namely, every local implementing partner will organize in the beneficiary localities (5 per each CSO) the general training and the thematic workshops. The events will be attended by about 30 members of the local coalitions and representatives of beneficiary LPAs. The logistical arrangements will be conducted by the local implementing partners. Although the training will be delivered by the local implementing partners, the training materials will be developed together with the experts of the central project team. Also, at least one expert from the central project team will attend every general training and thematic workshop as a mentor.

3. Organizing in 5 LPAs together with local coalitions the best suitable participation mechanisms, including Participatory Budgeting

For this purpose, the regional CSO together with central project team for each local authority (total 5) will:

- i. Develop Memorandums of collaboration between *local coalitions* and Local Authorities for implementing participatory budgeting and other participatory frameworks;
- ii. Organize local consultations and public hearings (1 local consultation and 1 public hearing per LPA per year);
- iii. Monitor the implementation of local budgets;
- iv. Develop supporting documents for increasing the participation and transparency of the local budgets:
 - gap analyses and action plans for the beneficiary LPAs (2 gap analysis and 2 action plans per LPA);
 - local citizens' budgets (2 local citizens' budgets per LPA);
 - independent analyses of local budgets (2 independent analyses of local budgets per LPA);
 - monitoring reports on public procurements (2 monitoring reports on public procurements per LPA).

4. Timeline of key activities

The activities will be implemented according to the following tentative milestones calendar:

Preparatory phase:

1. Participating in a 2-day general training organized by the central project implementing team – by June 2019.
2. Participation in the study visit to Lithuania – by September 2019.
3. Participation in a series of 5 thematic workshops - by the end of 2019.

Implementation phase:

1. Forming the local coalitions – by the end of 2019.
2. Organizing general trainings and thematic workshops for the members of local coalitions – by June 2020.
3. Organizing in 5 LPAs together with local coalitions the best suitable participation mechanisms, including Participatory Budgeting:
 - a. Develop Memorandums of collaboration between *local coalitions* and Local Authorities for implementing participatory budgeting and other participatory frameworks (by the end of 2019).
 - b. Functioning participatory budgeting mechanisms established – by end of January 2020;
 - c. Organize local consultations and public hearings – throughout 2020 and 2021;
 - d. Monitor the implementation of local budgets – throughout 2020 and 2021;
 - e. gap analyses and action plans for the beneficiary LPAs – throughout 2020 and 2021;
 - f. local citizens' budgets – throughout 2020 and 2021;
 - g. independent analyses of local budgets – throughout 2020 and 2021;
 - h. monitoring reports on public procurements – throughout 2020 and 2021.

5. General and specific requirements from CSOs

General requirements

- Non-governmental organization that is legally registered in the Republic of Moldova.
- Strong preference will be given to local CSOs that are actively working at the local/regional level.
- Independence from any political party or public authority.
- Ability to act according to the statute/regulation in the field of participatory budgeting.

Specific requirements

- At least 3 years of experience in implementing projects/activities aimed at mobilizing local communities and engaging with LPAs.
- At least 3 years of experience in organizing trainings and other capacity-building activities for local communities.
- Proven experience in forming and managing local coalitions/networks.
- Previous experience in implementing grants, sub-grants financed by the EU or other international development partners is considered an asset.

6. How to apply

Interested CSOs are invited to submit their applications comprising the following documents:

- a short motivation letter should contain a clear statement regarding the regions where organization will operate (North, Central, South, Transnistria, Gagauzia as they are defined in the law regarding regional development nr. 438/2006), and reasons of participating in this competition;
- a short description of the organization (1-2 pages);
- the list of relevant project references (no limit);
- a short (2-3 pages) vision of the applicant about participation in the project activities mentioned under section 2 and 3 of the attached TOR;
- a proposed budget for project activities (according to template);
- the activity report of the organization for the most recent year;
- Certificate of registration (excerpt from the State Register of Legal Entities issued no later than 12 months prior to the application submission date will be requested in case of contract signature);

- Charter;
- financial reports for the last 3 years (balance sheets, profit and losses balance, etc.);
- the most recent audit report of the financial statements of the organization (if available).

The application should be presented in the Romanian language.

The application deadline has been extended. The documents must be submitted before **25 May 2019, 18.00** to the email address julia@expert-grup.org. Any questions can be addressed at dumitru@expert-grup.org (contact person: Dumitru Budianschi, manager of the project).