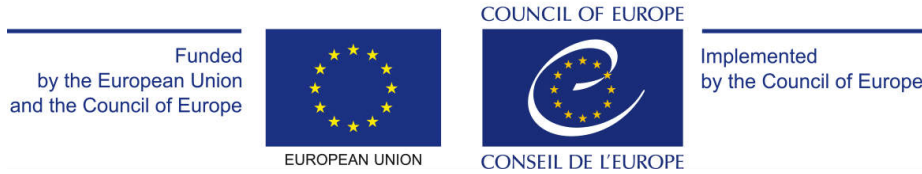


Programmatic Cooperation Framework for
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

LOCAL INITIATIVES ON INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION IN ARMENIA

European Union/Council of Europe Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF) for
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

Project	“Strengthening Institutional Frameworks for Local Governance”
Awarding entity	COUNCIL OF EUROPE
Funding	Programme funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe
Issuance date	15 March 2017
Deadline for applications	10 April 2017
Estimated starting date of implementation	10 May 2017
Duration	Projects shall be implemented by 31 October 2017 Reporting requirements shall be completed by 30 November 2017

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APPENDICES:

- Appendix I - Application Form (A or B)
- Appendix II - Estimated budget (Template)
- Appendix III - Template Grant Agreement (for information only)

HOW TO APPLY?

- Complete and sign the Application Form (See Appendix I)
- Attach a provisional budget (using the template in Appendix II)
- Attach the supporting documents (see below p.V of the Call for Proposals):
- Please send these documents in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: pcf.grants2017@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: APPLICATION: 2017 - Local initiatives on inter-municipal co-operation in Armenia
- Applications must be received not later than 10 April 2017 (at midnight, CET, GMT + 1).

I. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals is launched within the Thematic Programme “Strengthening Institutional Frameworks for Local Governance”, implemented by the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, Directorate General of Democracy II and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Programme is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe, through the Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF) 2015-2017 for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

The current call for proposals aims to support the implementation of projects promoting inter-municipal co-operation in Armenia.

Project proposals shall aim to deliver an added value to the Council of Europe and European Union efforts in the establishment of reliable and efficient local self-government in Armenia, in line with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROGRAMME

The purpose of the thematic programme is threefold: (1) to support the ongoing process of local government reform in the participating countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus); (2) to promote ethical behaviour by locally elected representatives in the region and (3) to support the improvement of financial and human resources management of local administrations based on European standards and benchmarking processes.

To achieve its purpose, the programme will focus on:

- improving and streamlining legislative frameworks;
- increasing the efficiency, transparency and accessibility of local self-government and enhancing their capacity;
- incorporating best practices and implementing policy recommendations;
- increasing leadership capacities of local elected representatives;
- promoting effective provision of services to citizens, in particular through inter-municipal co-operation;
- strengthening the capacities of local authorities by promoting good governance, transparency, accountability and ways to prevent and combat corruption;
- fostering citizens' participation as a means to reinforce the accountability of local authorities;
- supporting central governments and local authorities in improving the situation of local finance through improved regulations, institutions and practice.

Project beneficiaries include local and regional authorities and their respective associations, ministries responsible for local self-government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and citizens.

III. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The Council of Europe intends to award a maximum of three (3) grants to consortia (clusters) of two or more municipalities or to joint municipal enterprises created with the purpose of implementing inter-municipal co-operation in Armenia.

The Council of Europe is seeking project proposals with a budget up to 45,000 EUR (forty five thousand Euros) each.

Subject to availability of funds, the Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds, choose more than three (3) proposals and/or to redistribute the available funds in a different manner depending on the project proposals received and on the outcome of the award procedure.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

1. General objective

The grant programme will fund projects aimed at improving delivery of public services through inter-municipal co-operation initiatives of mutual benefit to all proposing partner municipalities and their citizens.

2. Means of action

The project proposals may cover the following types of public services:

- inter-municipal infrastructure for education or culture;
- inter-municipal infrastructure for environment, tourism and economic development;
- inter-municipal urban transport development or management, such as local community roads or other transport infrastructure;
- inter-municipal urban development and environment management;
- inter-municipal water supply, sanitation and waste management;
- inter-municipal natural resources management, energy efficiency and pollution control.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive and projects may include other public services in line with the general objective of the Project.

The grantee bears the full responsibility for the compliance of the proposed activities and works/purchases with the national legislation and standards (including regarding environmental, safety and quality requirements, etc.).

3. Implementation period

The implementation period of the projects should start no later than 10 May 2017 (see timetable under VIII below) and shall not extend beyond 31 October 2017 (although the implementation of activities may extend beyond this date). Reporting requirements shall be completed on 30 November 2017 at the latest.

Projects completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. For projects that started prior to the date of submission of the applications, or prior to the date of signature of the grant agreement, only those costs incurred after the date of submission of the grant application will be eligible and it must be stipulated in the grant agreement what costs shall be eligible.

4. Target stakeholders

Projects should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

- local and regional authorities;
- citizens, civil society organisations, etc.

The above list is not exhaustive and projects may include other relevant stakeholders, while keeping in mind the general objective of the Project.

5. Budgetary requirements

Project proposals shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See Appendix II Estimated Budget) up to EUR 45,000 (forty five thousand Euros) each.

The applicants should submit their budgets in Armenian drams with an indicative conversion into euro (EUR) at the conversion rate determined by the Central Bank of Armenia on the day of submission of their proposal (see Appendix II, estimated budget). Grants shall be paid in drams and all financial reporting shall be done in this currency.

The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in line with the activities proposed. Project salary costs generally shall not be covered by the Council of Europe and shall be included as contribution of the applicant. In exceptional cases, funding of salary costs shall be considered only if justified by project activities and shall not exceed 7% of the total estimated budget.

Each Grantee shall also be required to contribute to the project either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties. Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources, in-kind contributions or income generated by the action or project.

6. Further to the general objective, preference will be given to proposals:

- submitted by consortia of municipalities which have existing agreements on inter-municipal co-operation
- submitted by newly created (not earlier than one year ago) joint municipal enterprises;
- ensuring sustainability after completion of the project;
- introducing initiatives with the potential to be replicated throughout the country;
- taking into account gender mainstreaming throughout implementation.

7. The following types of action will not be considered:

- projects/actions providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes);
- projects/actions concerning only or mainly individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- projects/actions supporting political parties;
- payment of debts;
- budget items financed by other donors;
- purchase of land or buildings;
- projects/actions not corresponding to the call for proposals' objectives;
- expenditures unrelated to the project;
- projects/actions that do not constitute inter-municipal co-operation (with less than 2 partner municipalities or municipal enterprises founded by only one municipality).

8. Funding conditions:

The funds for each grant should in principle be distributed as follows:

- 90% will be paid when the Grant Agreement between the two parties is signed;
- the balance will be paid based on actual expenditures incurred, and after the presentation and acceptance by the Council of Europe of the final narrative and financial reports for the Grant implementation.

Changes to the proposed payment structure will only be accepted where legal or technical constraints related to the operation of Grantee funding, in the specific country, make this unavoidable.

Any funds which are not spent by the Grantee in pursuit of the grant agreement must be fully refunded to the Council of Europe.

9. Reporting requirements:

- narrative reporting requires a full narrative report on the use made of the grant and a copy of the register of the persons present during each of the activities, including names and signatures of participants. Narrative reports shall include:
 - a summary of the project activities and results achieved;
 - monitoring and evaluation means (including problems encountered during the implementation process and remedies applied; lessons learnt);
 - a section on the sustainability (what steps were taken towards ensuring the sustainability of the current initiative);
 - a brief summary of the findings; and
 - the annexes on documentation / publications / visibility (what activities have been carried out to present project results; lists of participants in project activities etc.).
- financial reporting requires in particular a statement in the currency in which the Grant Agreement will be concluded (the local currency), in English, stating the payments made for the implementation of the activities, certified by the responsible financial officer of the Grantee, accompanied by “appropriate original supporting documents” (see below). The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask for summary translations of invoices into English. If for legal reasons the original documents must be retained by the Grantee, certified copies must be submitted with the financial statement.

“Appropriate original supporting documents” refers to signed contracts, invoices and acceptances of work (for all transactions), payment authorisation for all transactions should also be provided in case the Grantee uses such practice, and reliable evidence of payment (authorised payment order and bank statement).

As regards round tables / conferences, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation of a programme indicating the title, dates, venue, and agenda of the event; the names of persons facilitating the event, a signed list of participants, the contracts with the owner of venue of the event (e.g. hotel) for the rent of premises, food and beverages of participants, invoices from the owner of the venue of the event for the above services, and a report on the results of the event (see narrative reporting above).

As regards consultancy services, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation of evidence of the outputs produced, contracts with experts and consultants containing a specific description of services to be carried out, invoices produced after the works have been performed and delivered (the specialities of the consultants shall correspond to the nature of activities for which they are contracted). As regards travel fees / lodging of experts and participants, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation, where relevant, of contracts with a travel agency for travel fees and lodging, invoices of the travel agency indicating destinations, dates, ticket costs, and names of the travelling persons, a programme of the event indicating the names of the experts and signed lists of participants. The above description is not comprehensive. Any doubt regarding the interpretation of the notion of “appropriate original supporting documents” should lead the Grantee to consult the Council of Europe.

V. HOW TO APPLY?

1. Documents to be submitted:

Each application shall contain:

(compulsory)

- Completed and signed Application Form (See Appendix IA or IB);
- A provisional budget (using the template in Appendix II);
- CVs of the person delegated to ensure the co-ordination of the project and of the key personnel to be involved in the project (same format for the whole team);
- Valid proof of registration of joint municipal enterprise (if applicable);
- Co-operation (inter-municipal) agreements between the municipalities that will participate in the project implementation (in case of consortium of municipalities).

(non-compulsory but advisable)

- Other materials considered to be relevant in order to increase the applicants' credibility and to complement the project proposal: recommendation letters from other donors; annual activity reports, developed materials: studies, strategies, manuals, informative materials; copies of written, audio and video materials etc.

Please also provide a list of the documents submitted.

Applications may be submitted in English or in Armenian. Applications in Armenian must be accompanied by an unofficial translation into English.

Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.

2. Questions

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe, Eastern Partnership Programmatic Co-operation Framework http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/EAP/default_en.asp and the webpage of the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau-working-together-to-improve-local-governance>).

Other questions regarding this specific call for proposals must be sent at the latest one week before the deadline for the submission of proposals, in English, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: pcf.grants2017@coe.int with the following reference in subject: QUESTIONS: 2017 - Local initiatives on inter-municipal co-operation in Armenia.

3. Deadline for submission

The application form, completed and signed, together with the supporting documents, must be submitted in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: pcf.grants2017@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: APPLICATION: 2017 - Local initiatives on inter-municipal co-operation in Armenia. Upon signing the grant agreement, selected applicants shall submit the original version of the application.

Applications must be received not later than 10 April 2017 (midnight, CET, GMT + 1). Applications received after the above-mentioned date will not be considered.

4. Change, alteration and modification of the application file

Any change in the format, or any alteration or modification of the original application file, will cause the immediate rejection of the application concerned.

VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The projects presented will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of at least three members.

The procedure shall be based on the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination, in accordance with [Rule 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe](#).

The applicants, and their projects, shall fulfil all of the following criteria:

1. Exclusion criteria:

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they:

- a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering;
- b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- c. have received a judgement with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;
- d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established.

By signing the Application Form, applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations (See Appendix I, Item 12. Declaration).

The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants at a later stage to supply the following supporting documents:

- for the items set out in paragraphs a), b) and c), an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements are met;
- for the items set out in paragraph d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment.

2. Eligibility criteria:

In order to be eligible for a grant, an applicant must:

- be a consortium of two and more municipalities or a joint municipal enterprise created by at least two municipalities with the purpose of providing public services to their residents;
- be entitled to carry out activities described in its project proposal;
- have sufficient financial capacity (stable and sufficient sources of funding) to maintain its activity throughout the period for which the grant is awarded and to participate by way of its own resources (including human resources or in-kind contributions);
- have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including human resources, to carry out activities described in its project proposal;

- indicate an official bank account in which the receiving entity can securely deposit the funds for the grant.

Multiple applications by the same municipality(ies) or municipal enterprise are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.

3. Award criteria

All eligible applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

#	Criteria	Weight
1.	The relevance and added value of the project for improving the public services provided to citizens through sound inter-municipal partnerships	30%
2.	The extent to which the action meets the requirements of the call	25%
3.	the quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application, strategy and the estimated budget	20%
4.	Involvement of the community in project design and implementation, and the prospects for sustainability	20%
5.	The relevance of the experience and expertise of the applicant and its staff	5%
TOTAL		100%

VII. NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS

On completion of the selection process, all applicants will be notified in writing of the final decision concerning their applications as well as on the next steps to be undertaken.

The selected Grantees will be invited to sign a Grant Agreement (See Appendix III, for information only), formalising their legal commitments. Potential applicants are strongly advised to read the draft contract, in particular its requirements in terms of payment and reporting.

VIII. TIMETABLE

Phases	Timing
Publication of the call / Launching the call for proposals	15 March 2017
Deadline for submitting applications	10 April 2017
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	24 April 2017 (indicative)
Signature of the grant agreements	5 May 2017 (indicative)
Implementation period	Until the 31 October 2017
Reporting deadline	30 November 2017
