

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

LOCAL INITIATIVES ON MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN LOCAL PUBLIC LIFE IN GEORGIA

Project	Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia
Awarding entity	COUNCIL OF EUROPE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
Funding	Programme funded by the Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2020-2023, with the financial contribution of the Austrian Development Cooperation
Duration	Projects shall be implemented by 31 August 2023. Reporting requirements shall be completed by 01 October 2023.
Estimated starting date	17 January 2023
Issuance date	24 October 2022
Deadline for applications	24 November 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT.....	3
III. BUDGET AVAILABLE.....	3
IV. REQUIREMENTS.....	4
V. HOW TO APPLY?.....	6
VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE	7
VII. NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS	8
VIII. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE	9

APPENDICES:

- Appendix I - Application Form
- Appendix II - Provisional budget (Template)
- Appendix III - Template Grant Agreement (for information only)
- Appendix IV - Unofficial translation into Georgian of the Call for proposal and application form

HOW TO APPLY?

- Complete and sign the **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**)
- Attach a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**)
- Attach the other supporting documents:
 - Curriculum vitae, drafted in Europass format, for 1. a person designated to ensure the project coordination / management; 2. key personnel who will be directly engaged in the project implementation; 3. expert(s) to be involved in project implementation (where already identified).
 - Non-compulsory: Other materials considered to be relevant to increase the applicant's credibility and complement the project proposal: studies, strategies, manuals, and other informative materials.
- The application package shall be submitted in English. A Georgian version may be attached for information. The English version will serve as the basis for evaluation.
- Send these documents in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: georgia.localgov@coe.int Emails should contain the following reference in subject: Application_Local Initiatives_ (Name of applicant municipality).
- Applications must be received **before 24 November 2022 (at midnight CET)**.

I. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals is launched in the framework of the Council of Europe Project "[*Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia*](#)". The project is by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Congress) and the Directorate General of Democracy, Division Elections and Participatory Democracy, within the [*Council of Europe Action Plan on Georgia 2020-2023*](#), in cooperation with the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) and with the financial contribution of the Austrian Development Cooperation.

The call for proposals aims to co-fund local initiatives developed by the Georgian local authorities¹ which have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Congress in December 2021 in the framework of the project. The selected municipalities have formed a Forum of Exchange which aims to enhance the mainstreaming of human rights, gender equality and diversity in their local policies, as well as increase the level of inclusion of underrepresented groups in decision-making processes.

The proposals to be submitted in the framework of the call shall aim to mainstreaming equality and diversity in local public life as well as to enhancing inclusion of underrepresented communities with the special focus on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), persons with disabilities (PwD), minorities, and other vulnerable groups. Proposals should aim at strengthening human rights protection and democratic public participation at local level, ensuring that both civil society and citizens have a meaningful impact on decision making processes.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to improve human rights protection and democratic public participation at local level, by strengthening institutional frameworks and by supporting local authorities and their national association in their endeavours to protect and promote human rights, with particular focus on gender equality and the elimination of discrimination. It also intends to contribute to reaching Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender equality), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (Partnership for the goals).

It aims to support local authorities (local elected representatives and municipal staff) and NALAG to enhance their capacities to better respect, protect and fulfil human rights at local level and to strengthen the dialogue with national stakeholders and civil society organisations (CSOs) on human rights. Project partners include NALAG, the Public Defender's Office (PDO), and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI).

Project beneficiaries include local authorities as duty bearers (local elected representatives and municipal staff), and citizens as rights holders, especially women, youth, and vulnerable / underrepresented groups, such as IDPs, PwDs, minorities, children, and the elderly.

The Project is implemented until 31 December 2023.

III. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The Council of Europe intends to award up to 10 grants to the target local authorities for a **maximum amount of 20 000 GEL** (twenty thousands) each. The indicative available budget under this call for local initiatives is 200 000 GEL (two hundred thousands).

The Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds depending on the project proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

¹ Thirteen (13) local authorities from seven (7) target regions of Georgia (Guria, Imereti, Kvemo Kartli, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Tbilisi and Kakheti), namely: Bolnisi, Borjomi, Chokhatauri, Dedoplistskaro, Dmanisi, Marneuli, Oni, Ozurgeti, Tbilisi, Tetritskaro, Tsalka, Tskaltubo, Zestaponi.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

1. General objective

The grants will fund local initiatives designed to strengthen the mainstreaming of human rights principles, equality, and diversity in local life and political action as well as to enhancing inclusion of underrepresented communities with the special focus on IDPs, PwD, minorities, and other vulnerable groups.

2. Means of action

Initiatives may include one or more of the following means of action (non-exhaustive list):

a. Adopting relevant measures to increase gender equality and the inclusion of underrepresented groups, with a special focus on minorities, IDPs and other vulnerable groups.

Develop, implement, and monitor strategies, action plans, measures (including methodologies and tools) and/or policies to

- increase in the participation of underrepresented groups (i.e. minorities, youth, women, etc) in local decision-making;
- raise citizens' awareness on human rights and/or gender equality as well as on local authorities' relevant services, including non-judicial grievance mechanisms;
- apply gender budgeting, engaging local gender equality councils and municipal gender advisors in policy and budget planning and implementation;
- Introduce, pilot, and evaluate the effectiveness of new or revised data collection methods, including disaggregated in terms of gender and social determinants (e.g. age, ethnicity, etc.).

b. Adopting relevant measures to prevent and combat discrimination, enabling equal participation and representation in local decision-making, and considering different sensibilities and needs.

Develop, implement, and monitor strategies, action plans, measures (including methodologies and tools) and/or policies to

- strengthen the capacities and effectiveness of thematic councils (e.g. Gender Equality Council, Disability Council, etc);
- encourage representatives of vulnerable groups (i.e. minorities) to participate in the thematic councils;
- support the development of informal fora for dialogue on human rights at the local level;
- develop and/or review internal anti-discrimination policies, codes of ethics, and/or codes of conduct.

3. Implementation period

The implementation period of the projects should start on 17 January 2023 and shall not extend beyond 31 August 2023. For more information, please see **Item VIII. Indicative timetable**.

Reporting requirements shall be completed on 1 October 2023 **at the latest**.

Projects completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. For projects 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 signature of the grant application could be eligible.

4. Target stakeholders

Projects should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

- Local authorities (local elected representatives and/or municipal staff)
- Citizens
- Other relevant stakeholders at local level

5. Budgetary requirements

Project proposals shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See **Template Budget, in Appendix II**) amounting to a maximum of 20 000 GEL (twenty thousand Georgian Lari).

The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the activities proposed. Municipal staff should not be included in the estimated budget and no more than 35% should be spent on technical services.

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 project and it shall be clearly specified in the draft budget.

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

- Initiatives proposed by local authorities in mountainous and remote areas.
- Initiatives designed through a participative process.

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.

8. Funding conditions:

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

- 80 % will be paid to the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium when the Grant Agreement between the Parties is signed.
- the balance will be paid to the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium 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.

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.
- **financial reporting** requires in particular a statement in English in the currency in which the Grant Agreement will be concluded (Georgian Lari) stating the payments made for the implementation of the activities, certified by the responsible financial officer of the Grantees, 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 Grantees, 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 Grantees use 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 or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium to consult the Council of Europe.

V. HOW TO APPLY?

1. Documents to be submitted:

Each application shall contain:

- the completed and signed **Application Form** (See Appendix I)
- a **provisional budget** (using the template reproduced in Appendix II)
- the other supporting documents:
 - **Curriculum vitae** (Europass format, in Word or PDF) for:
 - 1. a person designated to ensure project coordination / management.
 - 2. key personnel who will be directly engaged in project implementation.
 - 3. expert(s) to be involved in project implementation (if applicable).
 - **Other materials** (non-compulsory but advisable) considered to be relevant to increase the applicant’s credibility and complement the project proposal: studies, strategies, manuals, and other informative materials.

Please also provide a list of the documents submitted.

Applications should be submitted in **English** and the documents can be also provided in Georgian for information. The English version will serve as the basis for evaluation.

“Other materials” do not need to be translated into English if not already available and can be shared in Georgian only.

Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.

2. Questions

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/georgia> and the web-page of the Council of Europe Office in Tbilisi www.coe.int/tbilisi.

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 or Georgian, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: georgia.localgov@coe.int with the following reference in subject: Question_Local Initiatives_(Name of applicant municipality).

3. Deadline for submission

The application form, **completed and signed by all applicants**, together with the supporting documents, must be submitted in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: georgia.localgov@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: Application_Local Initiatives_ (Name of applicant municipality).

Applications must be received **before 24 November 2022 (at midnight CET)**. 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 four members, including Council of Europe Congress Secretariat and representatives of NALAG, PDO and MRDI.

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 or, in the case of legal persons, their owner(s) or executive officer(s):

- a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- 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;
- e. are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- f. have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds.

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), c) and f), 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 local authority member of the Forum of Exchange on Human Rights developed in the framework of the project.
- be entitled to carry out activities described in its project proposal in the respective municipality.
- 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 additional own resources (including human resources or in-kind contributions).
- have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including staff, to carry out activities described in its project proposal.
- have a bank account.

Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.

3. Award criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The relevance and added value of the initiative with regard to mainstreaming of human rights principles, equality, and diversity in local life and political action as well as to enhancing inclusion of underrepresented communities. Proposals by local authorities from mountainous and remote areas will be prioritised. Explicit reference to issues highlighted within the Capacities and Needs Baseline Assessment developed within the Forum of Exchange will be considered a strength **(40%)**
- The quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application and the estimated budget **(20%)**.
- The involvement of the relevant target groups described in the call in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the initiative, as well as the prospects for sustainability **(20%)**.
- The resources invested by the local administration: budget, time, staff, commitment to continuing after the end of this project, etc. **(10%)**
- The relevance of the experience and expertise of the applying local authority and staff **(10%)**.

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 respective 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. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Phases	Indicative timing
Publication of the call	24 October 2022
Q/A (online) session	8 November 2022, 15 November 2022
Deadline for submitting applications	24 November 2022
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	21 December 2022
Signature of the grant agreements	17 January 2023
Implementation period	17 January – 31 August 2023
Deadline for reporting	1 October 2023

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