

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Implementation of Local initiatives on Anti-corruption and Public Integrity

[8668-2021-07]

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| **Project** | Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent and participatory local governance in Armenia |
| **Awarding entity** | **Council of Europe** |
| Congress of Local and Regional Authorities |
| **Funding** | Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency, under the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2019-2022 |
| **Duration** | Projects shall be implemented by31 May 2022  Reporting requirements shall be completed by 15 June 2022 |
| **Estimated starting date** | 01 December 2021 |
| **Issuance date** | 18 October 2021 |
| **Deadline for Concepts (stage one)** | 29 October 2021 |
| **Deadline for applications (stage two)** | 19 November 2021 |

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APPENDICES:

* Appendix I – Concept Note
* Appendix II – Application Form
* Appendix III – Provisional budget (Template)
* Appendix IV – Template Grant Agreement (for information only)

**How to apply?**

* Complete and sign the Concept Note (see **Appendix I)** with a provisional budget
* If preselected by the Evaluation Committee, develop the proposal further by completing the **Application Form** (See **Appendix II**) which should be also signed and supported with a budget proposal (using the template reproduced in **Appendix III**)
* Attach the other supporting documents:
* Certificate of community attendance in the Council of Europe Congress trainings on Open government (June-September 2021);
* CVs of persons delegated to submit and ensure the co-ordination of the project, and the key personnel to be involved in the project (same format for the whole team);
* Other materials considered to be relevant in order to increase the applicant’s credibility and 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.
* Send these documents in electronic form (Word .and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: [tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int](mailto:tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int). Emails should contain the following reference in subject: APPLICATION: Local initiatives in Armenia 2021.
* Concept notes must be received **before 29 October (at 18.00 Yerevan time)**.
* Full Applications must be received **before 19 November (at 18.00 Yerevan time)**.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This call for proposals is launched in the framework of the Council of Europe Project “**Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent and participatory local governance in Armenia**” (hereinafter the Project), implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (hereafter the Congress) from July 2019 until June 2022. The current call for proposals aims to support the implementation of local initiatives by selected Armenian municipalities who will benefit from a grant (funding), expert support (coaching) and peer reviews.

Project proposals shall aim to deliver an added value to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe efforts in the establishment of a transparent, reliable and efficient local self-government, in line with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and its Additional Protocol, on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

Project proposals shall aim to produce an added value to the Council of Europe efforts in this domain.

1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT**

The purpose of the Congress Project is to improve the quality of local democracy in Armenia, enhance citizen’s confidence and trust in local authorities through greater voice, accountability, effectiveness and inclusiveness of the local self-government bodies. The project addresses the issues in two directions: 1) supporting local authorities in fostering citizen participation in decision making and implementing accountability instruments and European standards of local democracy, transparency, open government, political integrity and ethics through their policies and practices and 2) empowering the Communities Association of Armenia (CAA) in the execution of its mandate of catalysing and voicing the unified position of local authorities and.

In particular, it aims to strengthen the ethical leadership capacities of the local elected representatives (both mayors and local councillors) to improve the quality of local democracy in Armenia. Mayors and councillors from enlarged communities are supported to act as drivers for change in their communities and address the key elements of ethical and transparent governance, including ways to prevent and combat corruption and to foster citizen participation as a means of reinforcing the accountability of local authorities.

Project partners include Communities Association of Armenia (CAA), Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Secretariat of Open Government Partnership in Armenia.

1. **BUDGET AVAILABLE**

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is EUR 150 000 (one hundred fifty thousand Euros). The Council of Europe intends to award 10 grants of a maximum amount of EUR 15 000 (fifteen thousand) each.

Subject to availability of funds and extension of the Project initial duration, the Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds, and/or to redistribute the available funds in a different manner depending on the project proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

1. **REQUIREMENTS**
   1. **General objective**

The grants will fund projects designed to develop and implement local initiatives that clearly articulate the recommendations of the Community of Practice on public integrity and ethics in local governance in Armenia (hereinafter CoP) into policies and procedures for promoting open government through improved transparency, accountability and citizen oversight and participation as means for reducing corruption risks in their activities.

* 1. **Means of action**

Municipalities are invited to experiment with innovative, participatory and democratic mechanisms in order to foster citizen involvement in local decision-making, and ensure transparency and accountability, to fight corruption and promote open government principles at local level. The local initiatives should include meaningful processes of dialogue with the public at all stages and should consider the following:

* feasibility: the process should concern a local issue for which citizens have room to influence decisions to be made by the municipality;
* responsiveness: local authorities should indicate in which ways the inputs from citizens will be taken into account;
* inclusiveness: opportunities should be given to a wider range of citizens, including those representing vulnerable social groups (youth, people with disabilities, the elderly, ethnic and cultural minorities, internally displaced persons, etc.), to enable them to express their views and to take part in the participatory processes implemented;
* result-oriented: the process should be constructive and solution-oriented;
* continuity: citizens should be included in the successive phases of the project, from design to implementation and follow-up;

Local initiatives may include, *inter alia:*

* development of local anti-corruption plans,
* corruption risk self-assessment procedures,
* institutional arrangements related to the development and implementation of Codes of conduct,
* introduction of tools for public integrity, conflict prevention, transparency and access to information;
* introduction of positions of ethics officers and public procurement officer (recruitment, training, etc.);
* development of procedures and mechanisms for citizen contribution to local decision making and oversight of decision implementation.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive, and applicants may propose other approaches, in line with the work and objectives of the CoP and general objective of the Project.

* 1. **Implementation period**

Following the conclusion of the selection process, grantees will benefit from guidance and assistance provided by the experts throughout the project implementation period.

The implementation period of the local initiatives funded under this grants scheme should start no later than   
1 December 2021 (see indicative timetable under VIII. below) and shall not extend beyond 31 May 2022.

Reporting requirements shall be completed on 15 June 2022 at the latest.

Local initiatives completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. As regard local initiatives 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 could be eligible (provided the agreement concerned so provides).

* 1. **Target stakeholders**

Local initiatives should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

* Enlarged communities (local authorities and their administration), members of the Community of Practice on public integrity and ethics in Armenia
* Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor municipalities,
* Civil society organisations

The above list is not exhaustive, and applicants may propose to target other relevant stakeholders, while keeping in mind the general objective of the Project.

* 1. **Budgetary requirements**

Concept Notes shall be accompanied by a provisional budget amounting to a maximum of EUR 15 000 (fifteen thousand Euros). No more than **1/3 of the total estimated budget should be spent on technical services**, such as purchase of technical equipment and/or renovation of municipal premises.

Full Project proposals, to be developed if the applicants Concept Notes are evaluated positively and preselected by the Evaluation Committee, shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See Template Budget, in Appendix III) amounting to a maximum of EUR 15 000 (fifteen thousand Euros). The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the activities proposed. Municipal staff shall not be funded by the grant, except in case of recruitment of ethics officers and public procurement officer in municipalities where these don’t exist. **No more than 1/3 of the total estimated budget should be spent on technical services**, such as purchase of technical equipment and/or renovation of municipal premises.

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.

* 1. **Further to the general objective, preference will be given to proposals:**
* Ensuring sustainability following completion of the project;
* Introducing initiatives with the potential to be replicated at country level;
* Projects/actions involving Civil Society Organisations and citizens’ groups (women, youth).
  1. **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;
* Projects/actions not corresponding to the call for proposal’s objectives;
* Projects/actions which are currently being implemented/completed by the applicant.
  1. **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.

Any funds which are not spent by the municipality in pursuit of the grant agreement, or are not accepted as eligible following the review of the final financial and narrative report, must be fully refunded to the Council of Europe.

* 1. **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. An interim narrative report shall be submitted by 15 February 2022, covering the results achieved within first three months of implementation, and in line with the initiative’s monitoring and evaluation plan. A final narrative report will be required 15 days after the initiative’s end-date, and not later than 15 June 2022.
* Narrative reports shall include:
  + a summary of the project activities and results achieved;
  + monitoring and evaluation methods (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 conclusions and lessons learnt; 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 (local currency AMD), in English, 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.

1. **HOW TO APPLY?**
   1. **Documents to be submitted:**

Each application shall be assessed through a two-stage process by the Evaluation Committee (see Section VI for more details). It shall contain **compulsory** and non-compulsory documents as follows:

**Stage one**

*(Compulsory)*

* the completed and signed **Concept Note** (see **Appendix I**) in Armenian language, respecting the requirements of the Call as stated under Section IV, article 2 Means of action;
* a provisional budget (respecting the budgetary requirements, see Section IV, article 5 above for more details).

**Stage two:**

*(Compulsory)*

* the completed and signed **Application Form** (See **Appendix II**) in Armenian language;
* a provisional **budget** (using the template reproduced in **Appendix III**) respecting the budgetary requirements (see Section IV, article 5 of the Call for more details);

the other supporting documents:

* + CVs of the persons delegated to submit and ensure the co-ordination of the project, and the key personnel to be involved in the project (same format for the whole team);

*(Non-compulsory but advisable)*

* Certificate of community attendance in the Council of Europe Congress trainings on Open government (June-September 2021);
* Other materials considered to be relevant in order to increase the applicant’s credibility and 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.

Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.

* 1. **Questions**

General information can be found on the website of the of the Congress of Local and Regional Activities <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress> and the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan <https://www.coe.int/en/web/Yerevan>

Other questions regarding this specific call for proposals must be sent at the latest one week before the deadline for the submission of proposals, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: [tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int](mailto:tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int), with the following reference in subject: QUESTIONS: Local initiatives in Armenia 2021.

* 1. **Deadline for submission**

The Concept notes must be submitted by 29 October, 2021 in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: [tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int](mailto:tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int). Emails should contain the following reference in subject: APPLICATION: Local initiatives in Armenia 2021.

The application form, **completed and signed by all Grantees**, together with the supporting documents, must be submitted in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: [tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int](mailto:tender.armenia-BH8668@coe.int). Emails should contain the following reference in subject: APPLICATION: Local initiatives in Armenia 2021.

Preselected communities must submit full applications before 19 November 2021 at 18.00 CET +4

Applications received after the above-mentioned date will not be considered.

* 1. **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.

1. **EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

The project proposals will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee within both stages of application composed of donor organisation, Council of Europe and partner Ministry(ies).

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):

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. have received a judgement with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;
4. 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;
5. 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;
6. 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**).

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.
  1. **Eligibility criteria:**

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

* be a local authority from Armenia and a member of the Community of Practice on public integrity and ethics in Armenia[[1]](#footnote-1), established in March 2020 under the project “Strengthening the Communities Association of Armenia and transparent, participatory local governance in Armenia”, implemented in the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenian (2091-2022);
* be entitled to carry out activities described in its project proposal;
* have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including human resources (staff), to carry out activities described in its project proposal;
* indicate an official bank account in Armenian Dram in which grantee can securely deposit the funds for the grant.

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

* 1. **Award criteria**

**Stage one: Concept Notes** will be assessed against the following criteria:

* the relevance of the proposal to the work of the Community of practice;
* the relevance of the proposal to the problems identified at local level;
* the integration of proposed project actions into local policies and practices, i.e. extent to which the action is sustainable and replicable.

Preselected applicants will be informed and invited to

**Stage two: Applications** will be assessed against the following criteria:

* the relevance and added value of the project with regard to the work of the Community of Practice and to the promotion of open governance, anti-corruption measures and other fields related to the objective of the Call (40%)
* the extent to which the project is sustainable and replicable (25%);
* the resources invested by the local administration: budget, time, staff, commitment to the continuation of the project in the future, etc. (25%);
* the quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application and the estimated budget (10%).
* Preference will be given to the applicant authorities that have completed the thematic trainings organised under the Community of Practice (Public integrity – 24-26 June 2021; Transparent and open government – 1-2 July 2021 and Anti-corruption policies – 8-9 July 2021)

1. **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.**

1. **INDICATIVE TIMETABLE**

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| **Phases** | **Indicative timing** |
| **Publication of the call** | 18 October 2021 |
| **Deadline for submitting Concept note** | 29 October 2021 |
| **Information to applicants on the results of the preselection** | 5 November 2021 |
| **Deadline for submitting full applications** | 19 November 2021 |
| **Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure** | 27 November 2021 |
| **Signature of the grant agreements** | 29 November 2021 |
| **Implementation period** | 1 December 2021 – 31 May 2022 |

1. Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Amasia, Akunq, Alaverdi, Ani, Areni, Arpi, Byureghavan, Dilijan, Geghamasar, Gladzor, Eghegis, Zaritap, Lori-Berd, Kapan, Odzun, Sarchapet, Vayk, Tatev, Tashir, Urtsadzor [↑](#footnote-ref-1)