**Good Governance for Local Development South Caucasus Programme**

**Implemented by**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**Co-funded by**

the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

Call for Proposals

**ENCOURAGING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVATING DIALOGUE**

**IN ARMENIAN COMMUNITIES**

Deadline for submission of Applications is May 5, 2021, 17:00

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Good Governance for Local Development Programme South Caucasus (hereinafter “The Programme” or “GGLD”) advises and supports respective partner organizations at national, regional (sub-national) and local levels in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the implementation of cooperation initiatives towards improved local governance. It supports the improvement of frame conditions, addresses regional (sub-national) governance issues and works towards the improvement of municipal services and citizens’ participation at municipal level. In the context of the German international cooperation approach, the Programme’s objectives are oriented within the framework of the Caucasus Initiative; thus, the improved professional exchange among the countries of the South Caucasus and their increasing cooperation are also objectives at regional South Caucasus level.

The Programme is implemented on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in Armenia co-financed by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It is carried out in close cooperation with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI) as the main political partner.

In 2015 the Government of the Republic of Armenia has launched a large-scale structural change process, the Territorial and Administrative Reform (TARA), the overall goal of which was to reduce the number of municipalities in order to create territorial entities of manageable size, thus more viable and functional local self-government bodies that would be able to provide more effective services to their citizens, make efficient use of their financial resources and support sustainable socio-economic development. As of today, 465 former municipalities have been merged into 52 consolidated municipalities. Previously, the number of municipalities in Armenia was 915, varying greatly in size of population and capacities; and the municipal landscape of Armenia was highly fragmented. Many municipalities were too small to fulfil their functions effectively. In order to address these challenges, the Programme has been implementing different initiatives, with included strengthening of participatory mechanisms and engagement of citizens in local politics and decision-making processes. All the 52 municipalities are partners to the Programme, while citizens of the communities and community active groups are represented as direct beneficiaries.

One of the result areas of the Programme is Citizen Participation. While the participation of citizens in the development of their municipalities is generally beneficial to achieve citizen-oriented, transparent and inclusive local self-governance, it is of particular importance in the context of TARA to enable citizens to pro-actively shape the newly enlarged municipalities, receive and disseminate important information, and assume ownership of the reform. Governments can only function effectively if they enjoy the trust of their citizens. Local Self-Governments (LSG), and their municipal officers have a crucial role in trust-building and participatory decision-making, since they have a certain degree of autonomy over the distribution of resources, play an intermediary role in regard to national governments, represent the first interface between citizens and elected representatives. The professionalism and integrity of these governments and local administrations, their ability to function in a transparent, responsive, and accountable manner will lead to enhanced, fair, and equitable services provided to citizens. Equally, informed, organized and pro-active citizen participation can ensure more effective and efficient functioning of LSGs.

# OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

**The overall objective** of the Call for Proposals is tocontribute to increased citizen engagement and participation in Armenian communities by supporting local authorities in their efforts to improve the quality of local governance.

**The specific objectives are:**

1. To identify needs and gaps of citizen participation mechanisms in Armenian communities (activities to be carried out in accordance with the law and available human and financial resources of the LSGs), as well as to identify the resources needed for promotion of citizen participation.
2. To promote and foster dialogue between citizens and LSGs that would be built upon the results of the UNDP baseline assessment (more information below) and the focus group discussions.
3. To build capacities of target municipalities to better engage citizens in LSG processes.
4. To identify projects together with the participants of focus group discussions and/or representatives of LSGs. The projects should focus not only on citizen participation but also on the needs of citizens, the implementation of which will foster active community life.

The contracted NGO will be responsible for proper and high-quality organisation and implementation of different activities to reach the above-mentioned objectives. The activities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Preparation, organization, and implementation of focus group discussions to identify the needs and opportunities for increasing the level of citizen participation in public hearings, planning, decision-making and other processes of administration of community affairs.

Note: Focus group discussions should be conducted taking into consideration the outcomes of the baseline assessment conducted by UNDP (see details in Methodology).

1. Identification of needs to foster citizen participation in the municipality: what must be done according to the law, what can be done within discretion of the community, what can the municipality do without resources, what resources would be needed and possible sources of such resources.
2. Development of project proposals, funding projects/grant provision, support to implementation and monitoring of projects.
   1. Supporting consolidated municipalities in organization of events of different formats for citizen participation (e.g., town hall meetings, public hearings, etc.).
   2. Awareness raising activities with citizens, community active groups.

# EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of the activity are the following:

1. Report on findings and recommendations on citizen participation mechanisms is available and presented to target municipalities
2. Capacities of target municipalities on usage of different citizen participation mechanisms are developed and promoted
3. Up to 7 joint initiatives aimed at community development in the framework of CP are implemented in target communities (consolidated in the context of TARA).

# METHODOLOGY

In 2020, UNDP conducted a representative survey/ baseline assessment in 52 enlarged municipalities to measure the perception of citizens of the level of civic engagement in decision-making processes.

Some of the main findings are:

* 15% of residents of enlarged municipalities are not aware that their place of residence has been enlarged. The level of awareness is low based on the criteria of gender and employment: among women (19%) and the unemployed (29%).
* The main reason of the low level of participation is that 41% of the population are not aware of the enlargement process.
* The awareness of events organized by LSGs is low especially in the settlements (outside the centre of the municipality).
* Only 30% of the population was informed about the focus group discussions held by LSGs to learn approximate perception/assessment of the community residents towards some project or initiative, only 11% participated. The participation of men is 16%, and the participation of women - 6%. In terms of age, the younger a person, the lower is the level of involvement in focus group discussions.
* The main reason for not participating in is the lack of awareness about their occurrence (42%). The main precondition for participation in similar polls is that they are targeted (74%).
* The first three issues that community formal-informal groups must deal with in the communities are youth issues (75%), social issues (70%) and healthcare issues (62%), the same issues are raised as the main topics that residents would like to be informed through media and LSGs.
* Gender-age differences are evident obstacles for participation in communities.
* 63% of the public is informed that the community disseminates information about the programmes, projects and events implemented by the community through its official Facebook page. Communication in the virtual domain has reduced the cultural complexities that women face in the public sphere, which is why communication between women (8%) and men (10%) is almost equal on virtual platforms.
* 39% of the public is aware of the official website of their community, 36% have used that website. 39% of men and 32% of women make use of the official website of the community. In terms of age, the older a person, the lower the level of using the website.
* The most read information by the public from the official website of the community refers to the cultural events organized in the community (76%).
* 70% of the population prefers face-to-face contact with the mayor and council members.
* 96% of the respondents find it important for the youth and women to participate in decision-making processes of the LSGs.
* A person's employment / occupation plays an important role in his/her civic activity․ The level of participation is higher among those who are employed.

GIZ aims to build upon the main learnings deriving from the survey and to further promote citizen participation in up to 7 enlarged municipalities by working on one hand with target LSGs strengthening their capacities and on the other hand with civil society/citizens by engaging them in different LSG processes.

Below are the main provisions for this task:

1. An NGO will be contracted on competitive basis to implement the “Encouraging Citizen participation and Dialogue in Armenian enlarged municipalities” project in up to 7 target communities of RA. GIZ will provide a local subsidy and sign a contract with the selected NGO. The NGO staff is responsible for overall implementation of the project.
2. It is envisaged that it will be an 18-month contract, starting from June 1, 2021 until November 30, 2022.
3. The contract will cover 3 main tasks:
4. Focus group discussions aiming at deepening the above-mentioned baseline assessment,
5. Capacity development of LSGs in consolidated municipalities and promotion of citizen participation mechanisms,
6. Up to 7 small grants/ implementation of projects in consolidated municipalities.

# GRANT SIZE

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

* Minimum amount: EUR 40,000
* Maximum amount: EUR 70,000

**Note:** the individual sub-grants (up to 7) for community initiatives should be from EUR 2000 to EUR 4000.

# ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

This call is open for applicants from all over Armenia. Applicants must satisfy the following minimum eligibility requirements for their proposals to be considered:

* Be legal persons, registered at least 5 years before the call is launched
* Be non-profitmaking (NGOs and Foundations)
* Must be established and located in the Republic of Armenia

# ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

Only eligible costs can be covered by the grant. It is recommended that applicants provide realistic and cost-effective budget. Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary which meet all the following criteria:

* They are incurred during the implementation of the project
* they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the action
* they are necessary for the implementation of the action
* they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation
* they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency
* And can include the following budget categories described in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Estimated budget categories:** |
| 1 | Personnel costs: |
| 1.1 | Staff salary for 16 months |
| 2 | Transportation and accommodation: |
| 2.1 | Transportation and accommodation costs for project staff and beneficiaries |
| 3 | Direct costs: |
| 3.1 | Expert fee for “Focus Group Discussions” and follow up report |
| 3.2 | Organization of workshops, meetings, and other events |
| 3.3 | Development and printing of Guidelines and manuals |
| 3.4 | Grant money/portfolio – up to 7 projects |
| 3.5 | Visibility costs |
| 4 | Indirect costs: |
| 4.1 | Office rent |
| 4.2 | Communication costs |
| 4.3 | Electricity and heating |
| 4.4 | Office supplies |

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# LEVEL OF EFFORTS, SCHEDULE AND REPORTING

The project is expected to be implemented from **1st June 2021 to 30th November 2022**. The following table shows the indicative timetable and schedule:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Date** |
| 1. | Announcement of the Call for Proposals | Beginning of April 2021 |
| 2. | Assessment of bids and selection of the NGO | By mid-May 2021 |
| 3. | Signing of contract | By end-May 2021 |
| 4. | Implementation of project | 01.06.2021 - 30.11.2022 |

The NGO will closely work with GIZ in organization and implementation of all project activities. The NGO will directly report to the Programme Adviser on the progress and completion of the tasks. The NGO shall provide a report on each of the activities, including on each of the sub-grants.

# PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

* Proven experience in conducting focus group discussions/ surveys,
* Proven experience in working with local self-governments and project implementation,
* Proven experience in production of similar projects related to local governance and consolidation of communities,
* Pool of experts: CVs of key experts attached to the project with the knowledge of the local governance system or political background,
* Previous projects implemented for international partners.

# SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be examined and evaluated by GIZ GGLD program relevant staff. The following will be assessed:

* **Compliance with the submission deadline**. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
* **Relevance of the project** – How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals
* **Design of the project** - How coherent is the overall design of the project and whether the project is feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results
* **Financial and operational capacity** - Do the applicants have sufficient experience of project management, technical expertise (demonstrated experience of conducting research, surveys, FG discussions, experienced and knowledgeable staff) as well as stable and sufficient sources of finance.

# HOW TO APPLY:

Interested applicants should submit application package in accordance with GIZ requirements described in the **Guidelines for Applicants**.

The application package should include the following attachments:

* Technical Proposal - Project Description, Action Plan, Logframe
* Financial Proposal - Budget (presented in AMD), Budget description
* CVs of the proposed team members
* NGO registration certificate