



## State Grant Funding System Reform

### STATE GRANT FUNDING MONITORING REPORT 2017

Network of Centers for Civic Engagement (NCCE) with the financial support of EU and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in the framework of the project „Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative” presents state grant funding monitoring research report 2017

## SUMMARY

The presented Monitoring Report examines state grants issued to the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in 2017. The report, on the one hand, examined the procedure of grant issuance, a general legal framework and the practices followed by state organizations at every level – such as planning, issuance, monitoring. On the other hand, this analyzes the experience of CSOs participating in grant competition. It does not assess the quality of the content of the projects funded.

Information necessary to conduct monitoring was gathered from representatives of grant issuing government agencies and grantee CSOs, as well as from CSOs who participated in the competitions but did not succeed. Research results, core findings and recommendations are based on desk research, a legal framework analysis, as well as the knowledge gained through in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted within the framework of the research.

## IMPORTANT FINDINGS

- In 2017, seven government organizations issued grants to CSOs from the state budget. In total, 121 grant agreements worth 6.264.975 were signed.
- Those government organizations include:
  - The Ministry of Justice of Georgia;
  - The Former Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia;
  - The LEPL National Center for Teachers Professional Development;
  - The LEPL Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation for Georgia;
  - The LEPL Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Center;

- The LEPL Georgian Innovations and Technologies Agency;
- The LEPL Children and Youth Development Fund (State subsidy is issued).
- During the examination of the practice of grant issuance by state institutions, it was identified that the practice lacks involvement from stakeholders and experts during the process of determining the priorities of the grant program. Furthermore, it failed to substantiate, through various forms of research and resource allocation, as well as the empirical basis to identify needs and directions that address current and significant issues in society, as determined by the grant program.
- Projects proposals are accepted electronically, as well as in sealed envelopes. The latter method is a barrier for regional CSOs residing outside of Tbilisi.
- Georgian laws do not imply the involvement of the CSOs during project evaluation. In some cases, representatives of international organizations and relevant experts are represented by the projects evaluation board. CSOs participating in the research considered this practice an important criterion for objective, transparent and reliable results.
- Project evaluation systems (arithmetical mean; positive-negative evaluation) shall be followed through narrative explanations, in order for the results to be more measurable and transparent.
- The CSOs competing in grant competitions hesitate to appeal results, because of bureaucratic mechanisms and prolonged procedures in the administrative code of Georgia.
- For the most part, financial monitoring of the funded projects is carried out by the grant issuers. There are no external audit reports of the projects.
- State agencies have not conducted a large-scale impact evaluation report of funded projects that will confirm the main results of a grant programs.

“Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative” was developed and is implemented by the consortium lead by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in cooperation with four Georgian Civil Society Organizations: Civil Society Institute (CSI), Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSR DG), Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC) and Education Development and Employment Center (EDEC). The project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening the way for empirical research and determine the main directions / priorities of the relevant grant program supported by the research findings. It is important to clearly illustrate the relevant source and the grounds for determining priorities while providing well-reasoned solutions relating to the problems described in the grant program.
- Establish a participatory mechanism for experts and potential beneficiaries, to determine a grant program that will significantly contribute to the sharing of knowledge in the sector and increasing civil society participation in the process of correctly defining the direction of a grant.
- During the process of publishing information about grant competitions (apart from the online media sources), it is necessary to disseminate information among the stakeholders through public presentations and consulting. Based on this practice, public presentations increase awareness more effectively for organizations willing to submit their proposals for the first time.
- Organizing additional training sessions for project writing and budgeting by government agencies, in order to strengthen competencies and the capacity of CSOs.
- Introducing/improving the electronic application submission electronic in order to implement the process faster and more effectively. In those cases where this platform already exists, the development of this platform will guarantee the anonymity and objectivity of the application acceptance process.
- Increase in the involvement of the civil sector and relevant experts on the evaluation boards of grant applications, which promotes the improvement of quality, reliability, and transparency.
- The improvement of grant application assessment mechanisms. The usage of arithmetical mean or other assessment measuring system based on points received. In addition to the quantitative assessment, the introduction / improvement of content evaluation.
- The enhancement and simplification of the appeal mechanism, including shortening the time needed for appeals.
- Strengthening public information publishing mechanisms, including the publishing of names of project evaluation board members after the final results are announced.
- The provision of personal data coverage when issuing public information. Some information relating to contracts and reports provided within the research included the personal data of individuals, such as: personal ID number, bank information, etc.
- Conducting Grant Programs Impact Evaluation Survey. This recommendation is especially important for those public institutions which run a permanent grant program. It is desirable to conduct efficiency research from time to time.
- The establishment of a special platform with the participation of grant managers from government organizations for the purpose of sharing the knowledge gained, and the experience gathered, and the adoption of best practices. This can be on platforms such as an annual forum, session or a congress.mework of the project „Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiati