



STATE GRANT FUNDING MONITORING REPORT 2018

Network of Centers for Civic Engagement (NCCE), funded by the EU and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and supported by the Civil Society Institute, presents the results of the monitoring of grant funding issued by public institutions to Civil Society Organization (CSOs) in 2018.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

This research examines the effectiveness, stages and general principles of the process of state grant funding. The research does not assess the content or qualitative aspects of the funded projects. On the one hand, the focus is laid on statutory procedures regarding the ways, stages and criteria creating the basis for public institutions to administer the grant competitions from budgetary resources, and on the other hand the practical experience of applicants and grantees are studied. This aims at producing recommendations based on the obtained information on how this process can be improved.

For implementing the research, we gathered information from state agencies issuing the grants, also from the applicant and grantee organizations. The research was produced based on the gathered public information and the analysis of legislative norms, also after processing the information received from interviewees and focus group respondents. Based on the collected information we studied and analyzed the process of grant issuance: planning, grant issuance and its further administration. Therefore, relying upon the results, the report provides an overview of key findings and conclusions of the monitoring process at each stage of issuance of the state grants, and produces respective recommendations for improving the effectiveness, reliability and transparency of the process.

KEY FINDINGS:

- In 2018, seven public agencies signed 142 grant agreements with CSOs, with the total value of 5,746,774 (five million seven hundred and forty-six thousand seven hundred and seventy-four) GEL.

- These public agencies are:

- The Ministry of Justice of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
- The LEPL National Center for Teachers Professional Development;
- The LEPL Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia;
- The LEPL Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Center;
- The LEPL Georgian Innovations and Technologies Agency;
- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

- In accordance with the grant issuance procedure, the request for grant applications announced in 2018 reflected the needs and directions of addressing the issues that were relevant and important for the public, within the scope of competencies of the public agency; however, no public agency has made any reference to regular and updated empirical research data, which would create the basis for grant programs, and corroborate its need and relevance.

- The public agencies do not exercise the practice of engaging the stakeholders (CSOs, beneficiaries, other thematic agencies) at the grant program elaboration stage;

- Grant applications should be received via electronic systems, and the documents should be submitted in hard copies as well, which creates an additional barrier for the applicant organizations from the regions.

Report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and it has been supported by the Civil Society Institute. The Network of Centers for Civic Engagement is fully responsible for its content and it may not reflect the views of the European Union, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Civil Society Institute.



- In most cases, the grant applications are evaluated by the persons who are representatives of public agencies, also those of various CSOs, international organizations and subject matter experts. However, in case of all the agencies, except the LEPL Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Center, the absolute majority of the council is comprised of the representatives of public agencies that issue the grants.

- Although the evaluators have an opportunity to attach a brief explanation to the points they have given, they seldom use this mechanism in practice. Based on the observation of those organizations that filed grant applications in 2018 but did not get funding, the published reports did not fully reflect on what grounds the decisions were made, because they did not contain the narrative explanation.

- The applicant organizations hardly ever refer to remedies to challenge the results because of the protracted procedures under the Administrative Code and complicated bureaucratic mechanisms.

- Judgment of the Panel of Administrative Cases of the Tbilisi City Court, which was passed on May 18th, 2016 and has entered its legal force, points out that the evaluations made by the members of the grant selection commission are based on the personal professional evaluation of every individual member of the commission, their internal belief and personal perception, which goes beyond the legislative regulations and is not evaluated under the law.

- In most cases there is no **external audit report** regarding the grant projects.

- There is no extensive study of effectiveness of state grant programs, which would support the need for interventions and determine the achieved results.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Priorities of grant programs should be grounded on their respective empirical research, which would solidify the need for intervention with grants;

- While determining the grant priorities, engagement of various stakeholders should be maximized (experts, civil sector, target groups, etc.) to ensure that the grant programs are elaborated in

accordance with the experience accumulated in a certain field;

- Information about the announced the Request for Applications should be disseminated not only by the official website of agencies, but also via social media and the websites: www.jobs.ge www.csogeorgia.org ;

- State agencies should introduce the electronic system for grant program management, which offers the functionality not only to submit the grant proposal, but also to upload the communication/reports during the project implementation;

- Together with the points-based system, the members of the selection council should present some comments for evaluating the projects, so that an applicant takes the received feedback into consideration for the future;

- The number of representatives of independent international organizations should be maximized within the evaluation commission to ensure that the process is conducted in a more transparent and impartial way;

- There should be more access to public information, and the information about the grants issued by each institution should be proactively published on the website of the agency in accordance with the resolution #219 of the Government of Georgia dated August 26, 2013;

- It is necessary to study the effectiveness of grant programs both at the planning stage of the grant program and after its completion;

- State funding opportunities should be enhanced for the civil society, so that the state can use the experience accumulated for years in order to offer services to vulnerable groups;

- The local municipalities should maximize their cooperation with the civil society and support the development of community based organizations, to ensure that various beneficiaries can enjoy the state services, especially those who needed it most;

- A special participatory platform needs to be formed for the persons engaged in the administration of programs of public agencies that are issuing the state grants, with the purpose of sharing the knowledge, experience and best practices, which have been accumulated during the grant issuance process.