



## Press Release

### **Eurasia Partnership Foundation is launching a new project** ***Partnership for Budget Transparency: Civil Society Oversight of Public Spending***

**November 2, 2014**

**Tbilisi**

On November 1, 2014, Eurasia Partnership Foundation with the support from the European Union is launching a new project ***Partnership for Budget Transparency: Civil Society Oversight of Public Spending in Georgia*** that aims to contribute to improved budget transparency and accountability in Georgia.

Over the past seven years, EPF has provided capacity building and grant support to more than 100 civil society organisations in Georgia to design and implement evidence-based participatory civic monitoring and advocacy campaigns, with a large number of the funded projects looking into public expenditure monitoring on the local level. As a premier civil society capacity builder and grant-maker in Georgia, EPF believes it is well positioned to contribute to improved budget transparency and accountability in Georgia by achieving the following results: (1) strengthened CSO capacity to promote reform and improve transparency of budget spending, and (2) increased interaction between civil society and Georgian public authorities on improving public finance expenditure oversight mechanisms. achieve the results envisioned in the project.

The Project reflects the need for improved oversight of public expenditure and will address this issue by improving civil society's capacity to monitor public expenditure and increasing CSO participation in reforming the public expenditure management (PEM) oversight mechanisms. Given the technical nature of the PEM field, capacity building support is of paramount importance to ensure that the CSOs are able to undertake proper monitoring of budget spending and engage in effective advocacy to effect positive change. They also need support in coordinating their advocacy efforts in this area, so that the high quality research and analysis conducted by some of the Georgian CSOs is fully utilised in broad advocacy campaigns. For successful advocacy, Georgian CSOs also require support in opening channels of interaction with national authorities.

To achieve the objectives of the project, EPF will undertake the following activities:

- organize a series of trainings on public policy-making and PEM oversight mechanisms and publish a Georgian language booklet *Monitoring Budget Spending for Beginners*, in partnership with Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG), for CSO representatives;

- award grants (up to EUR 15,000 each) to four CSOs to implement public expenditure monitoring activities;
- create and facilitate regular discussions of the Platform of CSOs on Budget Transparency issues; undertake an assessment of the existing PEM oversight mechanisms and develop recommendations for their improvement;
- organize series of public forums to present the findings of the assessment report, recommendations elaborated by the CSO Platform and the results of monitoring activities undertaken by the sub-grantees;
- create and facilitate the work of the Budget Monitoring Coordination Council which will involve representatives from CSOs and relevant public authorities;
- develop and broadcast public service announcements and commission feature programmes.

The final beneficiaries of the project will be Georgian taxpayers and citizens. Government decisions on how to spend financial resources greatly determine the extent of well-being of citizens. By supporting CSO engagement in public expenditure monitoring, the project will involve tracing the

flow of public funds earmarked for purchasing public goods or delivering public services from origin to destination, helping to identify inefficiencies, bottlenecks or corrupt practices that keep budget funds from reaching the ultimate beneficiaries and helping those, who are in need. EPF believes that civil society participation in PEM is likely to improve both the socio-economic outcomes of government policies, as well as confidence of Georgian citizens in public institutions.

The project is financed by the European Union under the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility 2013 and co-funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

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