

**SOCIAL CONTRACTING AND LGBT
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:**

REALITY

OR

MYTH?

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GLOSSARY

AIDS Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

CCM Country coordinating mechanism

CNAM National Health Insurance Company (Moldova)

CO Community organization

COVID-19 Coronavirus disease 2019

CPH Center for Public Health (Ukraine)

ECOM Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity

EECA Region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia

HIV Human immunodeficiency virus

MoH Ministry of Health

MSM Men who have sex with men

NCDC National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (Georgia)

NGO Non-governmental organization

PLH People living with HIV

PrEP Pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV

PUID People who use injecting drugs

STI Sexually transmitted infections

UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

USAID United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

Funding issues are relevant for all community organizations, but funding activities aimed directly at LGBT communities are becoming problematic in many EECA countries. ECOM's review of best practices in obtaining budget funding in various EECA countries makes it possible to analyze the most common situations, their positive and negative aspects, as well as prospects for further support. Thanks to the active implementation of budget advocacy programs, we are already seeing progress, and, in most countries, support for prevention programs for MSM or trans people, for example, is not something that is out of the ordinary or that violates the foundations of society. Nevertheless, each country has its own specificities, and different organizations have their own approaches and practices.

We believe that such a collection will be useful both for experienced organizations working to provide services to the community, and for young organizations that are just beginning their activities. In particular, you should consider that there are various methods to attract funding (for example, grants, tenders, or social contracts), and various sources, and that it may not be easy to get money from the state budget, while the budget of a city or region can serve as a good source of support.

In this collection, we have compiled 8 stories, or more precisely, best practices, from 6 countries in the EECA region. They are all different, but we tried to identify the most common situations in order to summarize experiences, and describe the most common examples of funding.

The experiences of the following organizations were used in the preparation of this collection:

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION
Belarus	Republic Youth Community Association (RYCA) «Vstrecha»
Georgia	«Equality Movement» Organization
Georgia	«Temida» Association
Kazakhstan	CA «Human Health Institute»
Moldova	Information Center GENDERDOC-M
Russia	Charitable Foundation «Support of Social Initiatives and Public Health» (LaSky)
Ukraine	All-Ukrainian Charitable Organization «Convictus Ukraine»
Ukraine	Community Organization «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL»

All information in this collection was prepared based on interviews with representatives of the community organizations mentioned above and information from open sources. We express our deep gratitude to those who gave their time and helped in preparing the collection: Yulia Bepalaya, Beka Gabadadze, Aidar Kapasov, Vitaly Krasko, Evgenia Kuvshinova, Veaceslav Mulear, Roman Nesterov, and Georgy Khobua.

EXPERIENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REGION: MAIN TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

The receipt of funding from governmental agencies by non-profit community organizations has long ceased to be something unique in the EECA region. However, in the context of support for LGBT communities (including both HIV prevention services and support for community organizations), the situation differs depending on the country, and its policies and approaches to vulnerable groups.

In this publication, we describe the experiences of several countries in detail. First, however, we will describe general trends for the region that characterize state social contracting mechanisms.

MECHANISMS FOR RECEIVING FUNDING

A survey of representatives of community organizations showed that in all countries, there is a mechanism for funding HIV prevention services from the **state or local budgets**, although, the situation varies by country: this may be only from the local/municipal budget, only from the state/federal budget, or from different sources of funding (the most common situation). **Community organizations may apply for funding through:**

- ➔ **TENDERS FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES (public procurement)**, announced through the Ministry of Health or relevant bodies (Center for Public Health, oblast/regional health department, AIDS Center, National Insurance Company (Moldova)). In most cases, tenders take place either via price comparisons or through open bidding, where participating organizations can reduce their cost of services during the bidding process in order to obtain funding (Ukraine). Although the terms of tenders usually consider the experience of and other requirements for organizations, the cost remains the decisive factor. To a certain extent, this removes the focus on quality and creates a certain risk that an organization without much experience in obtaining services, but which drops its prices, will be awarded the tender.
- ➔ **COMPETITION FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES:**
 - **A direct competition for the provision of HIV prevention services** is announced based on the priorities of the national/regional HIV program and is aimed at community organizations and vulnerable groups. The selection of winners occurs based on the decision of the competition commission. In order to participate, you must prepare a complete application.
 - **A general competition for social grants** differs in that it is carried out by government agencies and provides support for various initiatives of non-governmental organizations, including in the context of HIV and the rights of vulnerable groups. This form is the least acceptable for LGBT community organizations, since the expert commission is often not focused on these issues, and those evaluating applications may have homophobic attitudes.

→ IN-KIND ASSISTANCE:

- For example, purchases by the AIDS Center of **commodities** for the implementation of HIV prevention programs, with the aim of subsequently providing them.
- Previously, NGOs reported receiving preferential rent for premises for work in the field of HIV prevention as an example of government assistance. This form of assistance was not mentioned in this survey. Most likely, this remains a problem in some countries, and in others, it is a fairly common form of support.

BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECTS FINANCED BY BUDGET FUNDS

- 💰 The experience of the community organizations surveyed shows that in most countries the chance of funding is greater if the final beneficiaries are not MSM (LGBT community, trans people), but rather people vulnerable to HIV as a **«collective beneficiary»**. This makes it possible to provide services, for example, for MSM, even in countries unfriendly to LGBT communities.
- 💰 **If MSM and trans people are listed in national HIV program documents** as a group vulnerable to HIV (MSM are in almost all countries, trans people — not in all), then there is a possibility that a tender/competition will be announced for the **provision of services directly to this group**.

COVERAGE




- 📍 In most EECA countries, government funding for HIV prevention programs makes up only part of the total coverage, the rest comes from Global Fund grants.
- 📍 In Ukraine, all services in the minimum package for MSM are financed by the state, services for trans people are funded only by the Global Fund.

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING

The majority of NGOs surveyed indicated that working with public money is not easy and that administration requires a significant amount of time. The situation varies across countries, although there are general trends.

- **Unstable and unpredictable financing**, depending on the availability of funds in the budget.
- **Complex reporting** (many countries note that they still have to carry huge folders with paper reports every month), multi-level coordination.
- **Low wages**, usually at the level of wages in the public sector with very rare cases of revision and indexing.

WHEN CAN BUDGET FUNDING BE RECEIVED?

-  Budget funding for community organizations can be allocated if the **national HIV program includes prevention programs**, support for vulnerable communities and cooperation with NGOs.
-  A common situation is when a state, when applying for funding from the Global Fund, **undertakes to allocate budget funds for HIV prevention programs**. As part of these obligations, tenders and competitions are carried out.
-  An interesting experience was documented in Georgia. After eight years of advocating for the creation of a shelter for LGBT communities, an opportunity arose to receive funding as part of financing measures to combat the COVID-19 epidemic.

WHY DO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS NEED FUNDING FROM THE STATE OR LOCAL BUDGET?

First of all, this provides NGOs with prestige and recognition. Often for large organizations, it is essential to receive even a small and labor-intensive grant from the local or state budget so that the organization's activities appear in reports, etc. Strict reporting and thorough checks, characteristic of all grants, and which funders of community organizations do not like so much, are also an indicator of transparency and professionalism in the management of financial documents.

Financing through the social order mechanism is advantageous, since it is a chance to join government programs in the short and longer term.

In addition, this is an indicator of loyalty to the authorities in many countries, which is also important.

BUDGET ADVOCACY

In most cases, the allocation of budget funds for HIV prevention and community support is impossible without **budget advocacy** by community organizations. In most cases, many years of work with government agencies at various levels lie behind current examples of success. Such work is not paid, and requires many resources.



In the following sections we will examine in more detail the experiences of a number of countries in the EECA region: Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

BELARUS: EXPANDING THE ACTIVITIES OF AN ORGANIZATION THROUGH STATE SOCIAL ORDERS



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Republican Youth Community Association (RYCA) «Vstrecha» has been working in the Republic of Belarus since 2006. The goal of the organization is to prevent HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, and tuberculosis, as well as to curb the HIV epidemic among vulnerable groups. To this end, RYCA «Vstrecha» provides information and counseling on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and STIs, conducts anonymous rapid testing for HIV/STIs, provides psychological assistance and support to HIV-positive MSM/trans people and people living with HIV and tuberculosis. The organization operates as part of the international technical assistance project «Strengthening national systems of prevention, treatment, care and support for HIV and tuberculosis in the Republic of Belarus – phase 2», funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.



SPECIFICS OF WORK OF THE STATE SOCIAL ORDER

Funds for financing the state social order are allocated from local budgets. Then, a **competition is announced for the provision of services or the implementation of a project for HIV and tuberculosis prevention and support** for various vulnerable groups, in which interested community organizations participate. In particular, RYCA «Vstrecha» submits applications to participate in competitions, and receives funding to work with MSM and trans communities, as well as with people living with HIV and tuberculosis.

#STATE ORDER

#ADDITIONAL SERVICES
FOR THE GLOBAL FUND
GRANT

A prerequisite for organizations participating in the competition is a **contribution of the organization itself** of at least 20% of the project budget. This is covered by RYCA «Vstrecha» from the main budget of the Global Fund project following agreement with the donor (consumables) or is provided in-kind (office rent, equipment, partial payment of staff salaries). In practice, the funds of the state social order are used for activities, which are part of the implementation of the subprogram «Prevention of HIV infection» of the state program «People's Health and Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus» for 2021-2025, and supplement the main grant of the Global Fund, subject to the obligation of **avoiding duplication of project activities**.

"And this is logical, because there is no point in funding something that already works," says Vitaly Krasko, Chairman of the Board of the RYCA «Vstrecha».

EXAMPLES OF COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

🌀 In 2023, the use of state social order funds in **Grodno** made it possible to cover more representatives of target groups with prevention services and testing. Such activities are also carried out as part of the Global Fund project, but thanks to additional funding from the state, it was possible to increase the number of social workers, and to give clients incentives to undergo HIV testing (a certificate for a retail chain), which is not provided for under the main grant. An analysis of the activities showed that **due to this incentive, the service coverage of the target group doubled**.

EXPANDING
ACTIVITIES

EXPANDING
GEOGRAPHY

🌀 For two years, state social order funds have been used in the **Gomel region** to work in small regional towns, to where social workers constantly travel to provide prevention services and HIV testing for representatives of target groups.

Thus, the state social order complements the activities of the Global Fund grant. In particular, it helps to expand the geography of service provision throughout the country.

"An intervention, such as sending a social worker to small towns is also included in the Global Fund project," comments Vitaly Krasko, "but it does not cover all regions. Therefore, we analyze in which regions we can carry out such activities with funds from the state social order and use this opportunity. It should be noted that the state social order is always aimed at promising areas that have already shown their effectiveness in the context of project activities, or those areas that are of high priority for the region."

SPECIFICS OF FUNDING

- 💰 Generally, the procurer (local government authority) independently determines the duration of the provision of a service or the implementation of a state social order project. This decision is influenced by several factors: the amount of funds allocated, whether competitions have already been announced in the region, and the degree of trust in community organizations. In general, based on the results of the first competitions in the region, short-term contracts are concluded, and for the second or third ones, long-term contracts are offered. Minsk and the Gomel region, which were the first to work in state social order programs in the field of HIV, seek to finance projects lasting from one to three years. In most cases, programs in other areas are short-term, from three to six months, with a certain amount of funding.
- 💰 **Financing from the state social order is quite small.** For example, 11,500 Belarusian rubles (\$4,500) were allocated to the project being implemented in the Gomel region in 2023. The amount of funding determines the volume: the annual coverage of clients (MSM and trans people) in the Gomel region as part of the state social order is **no more than 15%** compared to the Global Fund grant.

- § The announcement of the state social order is developed at the level of regional health care committees and is intended for non-profit organizations. Information is published on the website of regional executive committees under notices on state orders. Recently, there have been changes in requirements for the competition. Now in order to hold a tender, it is **not necessary for there to be several participants**; it is enough if at least one organization submits an application. The notice specifies certain criteria and expected results. Based on this, the applicant organization decides which indicators to include in the application, and what coverage is possible given the announced amount of funding.

"We decide ourselves what to include in the project application based on the results that the procurers want to receive," says RYCA «Vstrecha», "for example, the procurers want us to reach an additional five hundred people with our services and test two hundred of them. In this case, we will submit an application if we feel that we can cope with this number of clients. Perhaps the budget allows us to provide some kind of incentive to get tested; we can include this in the application. If this is not possible, we will look for other ways to motivate people. In a project application, you can indicate less coverage and vice versa; you can indicate that you will do more for the stated amount. In other words, each organization itself must evaluate its own capabilities, taking into account the key positions identified by the procurer. There are the basic numbers for the order, but how you achieve them and what exactly you include in the application is the task of each applicant."

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING (based on the experience of RYCA «Vstrecha»)

- **Unstable funding.** Funding is guaranteed for three years as part of the Global Fund grant, but only for three months for a state social order, and without a guarantee of subsequent renewal, even though corresponding funds will not be allocated to the local budget. Even if the activities under the state social order are calculated for several years, the contract concluded with the community organization stipulates that the project will only be implemented in subsequent years if the procurer has funding.
- **Funding limitations.** The procurer, guided by national regulations, limits the goals of project expenses. Types of expenses that are not subsidized as part of project implementation: purchase of office equipment, expenses for current and major repairs of buildings and structures.
- **Unevenness of funding.** There are no methodological recommendations for calculating the cost of services per recipient of services. The amount allocated for the same activity as part of a state social order may differ significantly in different regions: for example, one region may allocate 40,000 Belarusian rubles to promote testing, and another may allocate 10,000 Belarusian rubles for the same activity. This is quite difficult for organizations that base their work and project activities on a unified approach to payments.

INSTABILITY

LIMITATIONS

UNEVENNESS

UNPREDICTABILITY

DIFFICULTIES
WITH REPORTING

- **Unpredictability of funding.** In most cases, state social orders are announced at different times. In practice, community organizations learn about them from announcements on the website of the regional executive committee, so planning the use of state social order funds in project activities is quite problematic. For example, in 2022, in one region, the state social order was only announced in December (with implementation from January to March of the next year).
- **Difficulties with reporting.** When funding through state social orders, the procurer generally requires monthly reporting (program and financial). This is quite labor-intensive, since it must include all primary financial documents, employee reports, statements, copies of all acts of work performed, contracts, and so on.
- **Low wages.** Wages in an application for funding under the state social order must be tied to wages in the public sector, meaning they cannot be higher. This is very carefully controlled by the procurer of services, who checks the coefficients and the proper choice from the register of average wages for the previous period. For example, the coordinator of one of the state social order projects at RYCA "Vstrecha" receives 130 Belarusian rubles (\$43) per month. For similar work on a Global Fund project, the pay would be significantly higher. Due to low wages under the state social order, the community organization has to allocate staff in such a way that they do not only work on government projects.

+ Despite the number of significant disadvantages, the involvement of a community organization in government funding through the social order mechanism is useful. It is an opportunity to be included in government programs, both in the short and longer term. In Belarus, it is constantly emphasized that many HIV prevention programs, which are currently being implemented through a grant from the Global Fund, will subsequently fall completely under the patronage of the state. Therefore, the experience cooperating with government bodies that a community organization acquires during the implementation of state social orders can be very useful in the near future.

PRESTIGE

EVIDENCE OF TRANSPARENT ACTIVITIES

FUTURE PROSPECTS

"For our organization, working with state social orders is definitely not about money," says Vitaly Krasko, "it has a positive impact on our reputation. It is very prestigious that "Vstrecha" constantly participates in competitions for the implementation of various projects, wins, and successfully implements them. This shows the state that we are serious and reliable partners. It is also important that reporting on state social orders is carefully checked. In this way, we demonstrate that the organization operates completely transparently in other areas of its activities. Budget funds give us the opportunity to expand the geography of our services and reach those clients who have not yet been reached. In addition, new projects always mean new opportunities, including additional knowledge and competencies for our staff. In sum, like with anything, the state social order has both disadvantages and advantages. For us, the latter are more significant. That is why the list of projects successfully implemented by "Vstrecha" in partnership with the state is growing, and we are currently preparing to participate in several more competitions. And, of course, we hope to win them!"

GEORGIA: GLOBAL FUND GRANT AND DIRECT BUDGET CONTRACTING THROUGH THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PUBLIC HEALTH



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The «Equality Movement» Organization provides social and legal services based on the needs of beneficiaries, works to mobilize communities, and conducts policy advocacy and social change activities. Its main areas of activity include ensuring access to health services for women and LGBT communities, mobilizing and supporting the social inclusion of women and LGBT communities, and creating an enabling environment for the empowerment of women and LGBT communities.



The experience of the organization Equality Movement in obtaining funding from government agencies is quite specific. This queer-feminist organization, one of the largest in the Caucasus, actually receives funds from the state as part of two programs. The first is the Global Fund program, since the grant recipient in Georgia is the state, the **National Center for Disease Control and Public Health** (NCDC). «Equality Movement» is one of the program's sub-grantees, and receives funds to implement a package of prevention services for MSM, bisexual men, and trans women. Since the transfer of funds goes through a government agency, all procedures for receiving money, reporting, and documentation are the same as the procedure for receiving grants directly from budget funds. Therefore, the Global Fund grant for Georgian sub-grantee organizations indirectly constitutes funding from the state budget. However, this will not be examined in detail. It will only be considered as a comparison with funding allocated from the national HIV program.

#STATE BUDGET FUNDING

State grants to NGOs for HIV prevention are part of the state's obligations to the Global Fund, a mandatory condition for receiving the primary grant

Based on the recommendations and policy of the Global Fund regarding the gradual transition to state funding for HIV programs, **Georgia has committed to partially cover the costs of HIV prevention:**

- In 2020, the first stage began with **rapid HIV test** cassettes (capillary blood) beginning to be purchased with state funds.
- In 2022, the **testing process** itself began to be paid (wages for consultants).
- This year, community organizations working with key target groups **received grants from the state for the first time to conduct rapid HIV testing.**

- The country is preparing a new application to the Global Fund; a new round will begin in 2024. At the time this document was written (July 2023), it was still unknown what the state's obligations will be and what project costs for prevention programs are expected to be covered by the state budget.

SPECIFICS OF PROVIDING FUNDING

- 💰 During the first stage, the NCDC announces the **development of terms of reference** for community organizations submitting tenders to receive funding for HIV prevention services.
- 💰 This announcement is posted on the official state portal for tenders: the [Unified Electronic System of Public Procurement](#).
- 💰 Organizations assess their capabilities and needs under this terms of reference, and determine the desired amount of funding. These applications are submitted to the NCDC.
- 💰 Three weeks after the announcement of the terms of reference, an **official tender** is announced, where organizations can submit their project, planned activities, and financing (cost of service) for the year.
- 💰 Based on the results of the tender, the **winning organizations** are selected.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- ✔ The tender is intended for non-governmental organizations.
- ✔ The submission of an application by one organization is sufficient for the tender to take place.
- ✔ HIV-service organizations in the country have agreements on who works with which target group in order to avoid unnecessary competition. The Equality Movement organization traditionally applies for support for the key populations it works with: MSM and trans women.
- ✔ A prerequisite for participation in the competition is experience in the field of HIV services. Therefore, if it is necessary to involve a new organization that does not have such experience, it is appointed as a sub-contractor.
- ✔ Generally, organizations that are already sub-recipients of the Global Fund grant participate in the competition.
- ✔ According to the terms of the competition, organizations that receive funding can contract sub-recipients. Equality Movement has two subcontracts, with the organization «Temida», which works with trans people in Tbilisi, and the organization «Identoba», which works in Batumi and Kutaisi.

"There are requirements in the terms of reference that the organization must have experience in this field," says **Georgy Khobua, Coordinator of the HIV/AIDS Prevention Program of the organization «Equality Movement»**, "if there is a new organization, we can only include it in this tender with us as the contractors and them as the subcontractors. For example, a few years ago, a new trans community organization was founded in Tbilisi. This year, it became our subcontractor, and provides services for trans people, while receiving funding from Equality Movement."

ACTIVITIES OF THE EQUALITY MOVEMENT ORGANIZATION THROUGH BUDGET FUNDING

- ⚙️ The ratio of funding from the Global Fund grant and the government grant is **90% to 10%**.
- ⚙️ Budget funds allocated to NGOs as a grant cover the **salaries of testing consultants** (15 GEL per test - about \$6). The organization also receives rapid test systems purchased with government money.
- ⚙️ All other activities, including prevention measures, salaries of social workers and doctors, and support for the work of offices in Tbilisi, Batumi and Kutaisi, are funded by money from the Global Fund, which is received by the organization through the NCDC.

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING (based on the experience of the organization Equality Movement)

Georgy Khobua, Coordinator of the HIV/AIDS Prevention Program of the organization «Equality Movement», notes that **administering the Global Fund grant is practically no different than administering a grant provided directly from the state budget** since funding and reporting take place via the same body, the NCDC. Only the departments to which reports should be submitted differ.

- + In general, **transferring money does not take much time**. Everything follows established procedures; after submitting and verifying the report, the money is transferred to the organization.
- + Georgy Khobua sees a significant advantage in the fact that all procedures for administration, reporting, and the transfer of funds have already been developed.

There is virtually no difference in the administration of the Global Fund grant and grants for NGOs from the state budget, since everything goes through the NCDC

"But there is also an advantage," he says, "since we have everything very well organized, we have answers to all questions, and so on, everything is going very much according to plan. Of course, bureaucracy is not good, but, in another sense, it is very good, since all the documents are always in order, always. The main thing is to know which folder to put the documents in. Other employees tell me: "You both love and hate this bureaucracy."

- Reporting is quite **bureaucratic** compared to reporting on other grants that the organization has. All reports must be submitted in paper form, which places an additional burden on the organization's staff. According to Equality Movement staff, while reporting on other grants takes up one folder per year, reporting on government funding requires 10-15 such folders per year.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

It is still difficult to say whether the share of government support for financing HIV programs will increase. The new application is being prepared and, according to Georgy Khobua, it is most likely that the ratio will remain at the previous level.

GEORGIA: SUPPORT FOR A SHELTER FOR LGBT COMMUNITIES

 Organization: Association «Temida»

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The queer association «Temida» was originally founded in 2015 with the support of the «Women's Foundation of Georgia» as a women's club. The goal of the club was to strengthen the feminist movement in Georgia and support trans feminism. The organization elected a new board in 2019 and today positions itself as a queer activist organization led by trans people. «Temida» is a queer activist, leftist trans community organization working and fighting to create a safe, equitable and suitable political, legal and social environment for trans and queer people. The organization's goal is to create a suitable, equal and fair political, legal and social environment for transgender people, in which their needs, problems and rights are seen and supported by the state and society.



In 2022, the organization «Temida» opened a **shelter for representatives of LGBT communities** in Tbilisi, which was quite innovative. Funds for the work of the shelter were allocated from two sources: an ongoing grant from the Global Fund, which in Georgia is administered through the state Principal Recipient, the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC). Additionally, activities have already been partially funded by a **state social order** from the NCDC for two years. The terms of reference of the grant provided for the creation of a shelter for representatives of vulnerable groups (without a special emphasis on LGBT communities) and all interested community organizations were given the opportunity to apply. For the second year now, Temida has received funding for a shelter operated by the association.

#FINANCING FROM FUNDS TO COMBAT COVID

#BUDGET ADVOCACY

"It is a refuge for all key populations, but mainly for LGBT communities who are experiencing various crises, including domestic violence, partner violence, discrimination resulting in job loss, as well as health crises," says Beka Gabadadze from the «Temida» Association, "this can all be a reason for having to move to a shelter. We have been advocating for the idea of a shelter for eight years, but, unfortunately, before the start of the COVID epidemic, no one agreed to it. No funding was allocated from either international donors or government agencies."

An important factor should be noted here: the shelter is financed from the state budget using money allocated to combat the COVID-19 epidemic. Sometimes, it is precisely such new programs and newly created funds that allow for funding to be obtained, even if such opportunities were not previously available. However, this also creates a certain area of risk: such funding is short-term. After the end of the reason for which it was established (in this case, the COVID epidemic), funding may cease.

*"There are no state housing programs or policies to combat homelessness in Georgia, so advocating for the creation of a shelter was very difficult, in fact, it took us more than eight years," says **Beka Gabadadze**, "if it weren't for the COVID crisis, we probably wouldn't have been able to count on funding. But COVID created an atmosphere where we were really able to show that this was an essential need for key populations. And they heard us."*

The COVID epidemic raised the issue of the need of vulnerable groups for shelters

WORK OF THE SHELTER FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY

- 🏠 The organization employs an interdisciplinary team, which includes psychologists, a doctor, a social worker and a lawyer. This group reviews applications and decides whether or not to accept a beneficiary.
- 🏠 The beneficiary can use the services of the shelter from three to six months. The optimal period is three months, but in some particularly difficult cases, it is possible to stay for a period of up to six months.
- 🏠 In 2022, about 40 people used the services of the shelter; in 2023, the number increased.

SPECIFICS OF PROVIDING FUNDING

- 💰 The announcement of the competition is posted on the special state portal for tenders, the [Unified Electronic System of Public Procurement](#). Organizations wishing to participate must regularly monitor the information on the portal, since the deadline for submitting documents is quite short.
- 💰 There are many **criteria** that the applicant organization must follow, for example, an annual budget, the existence of certain policies and procedures, an account in a reliable bank, etc.
- 💰 **The reporting system is quite complex** and requires the preparation of a large number of documents. The fundamental issue is that funding occurs on a monthly basis, and a new tranche is allocated only after approval of the report for the previous month. This may take up to 15 days and the organization may need to seek additional sources of funding.

For small organizations, participation in a state tender is rather difficult

- \$ Funding covers only the **basic needs of the shelter**: food, utilities, staff salaries. At the same time, beneficiaries need expanded services, which are primarily health-related.
- \$ Funding is allocated for **one year**. In order to continue activities, it is necessary to wait for the next competition, the winner of which will be selected on a general basis. Therefore, there is always a **risk of funding being cut off**.

*"If you are simply providing services through a government grant, then this delay is not a big problem. You report on the service at the end of the month, then the report is verified, and next month, if the report is accepted, they transfer the money," says **Beka Gabadadze**, "but for the shelter, if you don't have savings and other funding, it becomes a problem. We need to buy food, pay rent and utilities, etc. We solved this problem by turning to another donor, the UNDP, and received small funds that help us close these funding gaps".*

Need for a «spare» donor

If an organization wants some activities to be funded by the budget, other sources are definitely needed, because it is difficult to work only with public money. It is advisable to have internal funds or another "spare" donor.

PROBLEM AREA

The housing market in Tbilisi is very dynamic. Recently, due to the flow of migrants, rental prices often double and sometimes triple. Currently, the organization pays about €2,000 in **rent**, but there is **always the risk of an increase** by the landlord, which could lead to a shortage of grant funds. The «Temida» Association sees lobbying of the Ministry of Health, as well as at the municipal level, as one of the priorities of its advocacy activities, in order to possibly receive preferential or free rental of ownerless buildings in the city, which could be renovated with funds from other donors. A number of position and advocacy documents were prepared, but due to the political climate in Georgia and the drafting of legislation on foreign agents, all these processes are now frozen, even though the controversial law was withdrawn from parliament.

However, the state has experience in funding shelters for people with disabilities and victims of gender-based violence. Therefore, «Temida» hopes that the issue of a shelter for LGBT communities will also remain on the agenda.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

*"In Georgia, besides us, there are no shelters for LGBT communities," explains **Beka Gabadadze**, "there may be options. For example, representatives of the lesbian community, if they experience some kind of domestic violence, can end up in shelters for victims of violence. But in the case of others, there are no such services. Unless you are under 18 years old, then there are some possibilities, there are several crisis centers and shelters. But if you're an adult, there's really no program that can help you. That's why our shelter is unique."*

The main problem regarding the stability of funding for the work of the shelter is the end of the COVID epidemic and, accordingly, funding from the fund to combat this disease.

The «Temida» Association plans to launch an advocacy campaign to attract funding for the shelter, and is also preparing new grant applications, in particular, for the establishment of a shelter in Batumi. Complicating the situation is the fact that the current Global Fund grant ends in 2023.

However, «Temida» looks to the future with optimism. There is talk in the CCM about including gender-based violence and hate crimes in the national HIV plan. Therefore, the activities of such shelters will likely fall under these provisions, which will ensure the allocation of money through government grants.

*"There will definitely be competition. If we don't win, then maybe others will. So, in any case, there will be a shelter," sums up **Beka Gabadadze**.*

KAZAKHSTAN: BUDGET ADVOCACY AND EXPANDING SERVICES



Community Association «Human Health Institute»

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The community association «Human Health Institute» (Astana) is a public organization whose main field of activity is the right to health. Programs and projects implemented by the organization are aimed at health issues, human rights, as well as at the impact of the environment on public health. «Human Health Institute» has experience in implementing HIV prevention programs for MSM with the support of the Global Fund, as well as with mobilizing LGBT communities. Over the years, the organization has implemented approximately forty-five projects.



BUDGET ADVOCACY

Thanks to **budget advocacy**, carried out by community organizations, it was possible to support key population groups using local budget funds. For the second year, in the capital of the country, Astana, a competition was announced to fund prevention programs for key population groups, in particular MSM.

This support **continues to grow**: in **2022**, budget funding was provided for three target groups, PUID, sex workers, and MSM (total amount around \$100,000), while in the next year, PLH were added and funding for prevention among vulnerable groups in Astana increased to \$200,000.

#FUNDING FROM
LOCAL BUDGET

#BUDGET ADVOCACY

"I think this is very good progress," says Aidar Kapasov, Chairman of the CA «Human Health Institute», "we achieved this through (a) the activity of non-governmental organizations that work in the AIDS service of the city of Astana, and (b) successful cooperation with the city AIDS Center."

However, the **situation is not the same throughout the country**. For example, similar competitions for funding HIV prevention programs from the local budget were held in the Kustanai and Karaganda regions of Kazakhstan, but the terms of reference were not fully developed. For example, in one of the regions, services for MSM and sex workers were grouped together. In another, they combined all vulnerable groups into one application, and allocated funds for the year in the amount of \$50,000. According to experts from HIV-service organizations, the reason for such shortcomings is complex: the AIDS Center staff do not have sufficient experience in preparing applications for social order competitions, while local non-governmental organizations do not have sufficient capacity and experience in budget advocacy.

"I always tell all non-governmental organizations to allocate funds for **budget advocacy** if they want most, if not all, to be covered by government funding tomorrow," **says Aidar Kapasov**, "this is one of the main tasks of your projects. If you are implementing a project, it has shown effectiveness, and you want such activities to be included in the state order and provided systematically, you need to try and take certain steps to obtain this funding."

The experience of the «Human Health Institute» shows that this is a rather lengthy process; **4 years** passed from the time it began working in the field of budget advocacy until it received its first grants as part of a social order from local budget funds.

"I immediately realized that we need to work with the state budget, whether we want to or not," **states Aidar Kapasov**, "in fact, our budget advocacy took us three years: learning to write a proper application, analyzing city budgets, and so on and so on. Non-governmental organizations that analyze the state budget also provided very powerful support and assistance. This is a big, long and powerful process."

Current funding from the budget of Astana (example of «Human Health Institute»):

- **900 people** — coverage of MSM (**40%** of total coverage, including Global Fund grant). The total coverage in the city is now 2,200 people (about 50% of the estimated population).
- **10 staff** members under the state order (16 people under the Global fund grant).

SPECIFICS OF PROVIDING FUNDING

§ The competition is announced by the local **health department** through the «[Public Procurement](#)» portal. An important consideration is that if the competition is aimed at social projects, participants pay a **nominal** fee for using the portal (about \$8). Sometimes such competitions are announced through the AIDS Center, but then it is classified as the procurement of services, rather than a social competition (due to the status of the AIDS Center — a **republican state enterprise with the right of economic management**, an institution that has the right to provide paid services). In this case, the fee for using the portal will be the equivalent of \$140, which complicates the application process for non-profit organizations, which often may not have such funds available.

TWO TYPES OF FUNDING COMPETITIONS:

- **State social order**
- **State procurement**

§ All organizations wishing to participate in the competition submit their technical specifications.

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING (based on the experience of CA «Human Health Institute»)

- + Noticeable difference in reporting compared to the Global Fund grant, for example, which is also implemented by the organization:
 - The Global Fund has **too many reporting requirements**. According to the state social order, in practice, a **certificate of completion of work** and a small **descriptive section** must be provided, which include quantitative indicators (coverage, number of services provided).
 - Payment for services is carried out after submitting the certificate, report and **electronic invoice**, which is generated on the portal.
- + Public procurement is more **stable**. For example, reporting forms and requirements for activities do not change, whereas in the case of large international donors, procedures and priorities can change at any time, additional requirements may arise, etc.
- Planning activities with public funds is more difficult than under the Global Fund grant, where the deadlines for receiving tranches are determined in advance and are usually respected. With government funding, an organization must always have a certain amount of internal funds to cover critical expenses (for example, salaries) before receiving money. According to Aidar Kapasov:

SYSTEMS FOR TRANSFERRING FUNDS:

- **Monthly, after submitting report**
- **At the end of the year, after completion of all activities and submission of report**

"Actually, the organization must have certain funds of its own to cover wages for work carried out specifically as part of the state order before receiving the tranche. Generally, every organization has such a «reserve» for emergencies when the procurer has not transferred the money on time. We use this money temporarily for project needs, and then we return it. But this year we were a little unprepared. There were a lot of projects, and we had to invest in them. One month we didn't have enough money for the project, but we are waiting to receive funding from other projects. But in government grants there is another payment system: funding is distributed not after signing the contract, but after submitting final reports. In other words, during the year, we spend our own money, provide all the necessary reports, and by the end of the year the entire amount is paid in full according to the stipulations of the contract and competition. This is also a big problem."

- The experience of administering state social grants shows that relatively simple reporting exists only in the case of the provision of direct services. If **training and capacity building activities are being funded, the reporting system is much more complex**. For seminars, trainings and other training events, a large package of documents must be submitted: lists of participants, pre- and post-training surveys, agendas, protocols, analysis of feedback from participants, etc. Therefore, many HIV-service organizations try to obtain funding only for a package of services for vulnerable groups.
- Any government grant involves a complex system of **inspections**, and Kazakhstan is no exception. Any supervisory authority may make inspections, including the Treasury, Ministry of Finance, Tax Inspectorate, Financial Police, etc., and may demand documentation at any time.

HOW TO OBTAIN STATE FUNDING FOR AN HIV-SERVICE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION based on the experience of CA «Human Health Institute»

- ✓ To obtain funding for the next fiscal year, the necessary **advocacy work** must be carried out so that when budget development begins in **August**, money for programs is **included in the budget program**.
- ✓ Generally, city **deputies adopt the budget** in **October**, when it becomes clear what budget has been approved and how much funding may be available for HIV prevention and support for vulnerable groups.

*"The most important thing," says Aidar Kaposov, "is to be able to provide all the necessary documents in August so that the Treasury can allocate money for these projects and programs. If this money has already been allocated in the Treasury, you should begin working with city deputies who will approve the budget. This means, talk to them, and explain and prove **why these funds should be allocated**, why exactly do you expect to receive such a budget amount? Well, and, accordingly, you do all this regardless of the projects that the organization is implementing. You just understand that it needs to be done. In general, the fact that we have a large number of MSM is an argument that works well. If we do not carry out prevention activities, the state will have to spend much more money on treating HIV infection. Is the state ready to spend, say, \$4,000 a year for 100 people next year? But if, let's say, you give us this \$200,000 now, then we will be able to reduce healthcare costs. This argument works for now, but we need to think about the future, because approaches and understandings may change, so we have things to work on."*

- ✓ After October, **planning for financing programs and projects** begins and competitions for state social orders are announced. The most important thing is to **correctly write down the technical specifications in order to clearly identify services and requirements for organizations that can provide them**. In practice, this prevents «impostors», i.e. organizations and business organizations that do not have relevant work experience, from participating in the tender by lowering the cost of services. In Kazakhstan, thanks to the budget advocacy of non-profit HIV-service organizations, specifications take into account the experiences of tender participants, the availability of a material and technical base in the city/region where services are to be provided, and the experience of a particular region. Work on the technical specifications is carried out in the health department, with the direct participation of NGOs through mutually beneficial cooperation.

*"Last year, we didn't write these points down," Aidar Kaposov shares his experience, "and we had one competitor, let's say, who had nothing to do with HIV services in the city. Fortunately, everything worked out in our favor, but we realized that we had shortcomings, particularly in terms of the material and technical base in the city of Astana. When we addressed this this year, no «outsider» entered the competition. It all depends on us. **To what extent we and our capacity are able to compete in such competitions**. And the second thing is **how willing we are to work without money in order to a prepare a good technical specification? How willing are we to conduct budget advocacy for free, without any funding?** Do we have the desire? There is a good saying that is more or less applicable: «you reap what you sow». This is probably a point for growth and capacity building."*

An important positive consideration to optimize the process of obtaining budget funding for HIV service programs was that all Astana organizations providing such services came together in order to **eliminate unnecessary competition**. They all united into **one legal entity, the «Human Rights Health Association»**, and promoted their agenda in the city. This eliminated the problems that are observed in a number of other regions of the country, where organizations start to establish certain relationships among themselves and weave intrigues.

"We try to support each other," explains Aidar Kapasov, "to build capacity and explain how to move forward together. Unfortunately, there is no consolidation between non-governmental AIDS-service organizations in all regions, but this is probably due to the fact that each organization has been working independently for a long time. That's why they have such crazy competition. But here in Astana it's a little easier, we are united."

PROMISING ACTIVITIES

Currently, funding for HIV prevention services is provided only from local budgets at the municipal level. However, the «Human Health Institute» does not want to stop there and sees some promising activities.

- 1 Inclusion of outreach workers in the classifier of professions.** In practice, currently, only health departments announce competitions, so all services are focused only on health. In reality, HIV prevention services are more consistent with the activities of the Ministry of Social Protection and Development. If the competitions are divided between various ministries, it will be possible to concentrate more on the **social component** of prevention, and have a larger budget, more employees, and the opportunity to provide more services, thereby significantly increasing coverage. The inclusion of the profession of outreach worker in the classifier of professions is not just a formality. This may create the opportunity to write justifications for terms of reference, referring to the classifier, and to calculate coverage based on a standard workload and the required number of employees. So far, such activities are only in the planning stage, but have already been identified as an area for budget advocacy.
- 2** If it becomes possible to recruit more outreach workers (according to the organization's calculations, at least 40 outreach workers are needed to cover the estimated number of MSM in the city (4,300)), then there is a **possibility to ensure maximum coverage of the target group** with services, although a constant increase in the number of MSM in the capital has been documented, which is quite typical for most large cities worldwide.

"So far, as part of the state social order, we only provide a basic package of services," summarizes Aidar Kapasov, "we have now begun the process of preparing additional service packages, which are needed. Accordingly, in this phase, we will work on expanding services. In any case, we will work, this is our objective."

MOLDOVA: FUNDING FROM THE NATIONAL MEDICAL INSURANCE FUND



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Information Center «GENDERDOC-M» was founded in 1998 and is the oldest non-governmental organization that actively promotes the rights of LGBT communities in the Republic of Moldova. Over the course of its work, GENDERDOC-M has implemented more than fifty projects of various sizes with support from various donors. The Information Center «GENDERDOC-M» is a member of the board and founder of the Coalition for Non-Discrimination, a member of the National Coordinating Council on HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis, the National Youth Council of Moldova, and ILGA-Europe. The Information Center «GENDERDOC-M» was recognized by the Ministry of Justice as a socially useful organization, and was issued a certificate confirming the important role of the Center in social work at the national level.



The main form of funding for HIV prevention programs from the state budget in Moldova is support for projects through the **National Health Insurance Company** (CNAM)¹. Moldova has a compulsory medical insurance system. The CNAM has an insurance fund intended for medical institutions and a prevention fund aimed at preventing diseases, which funds the projects of community organizations.

FUNDING THROUGH
THE NATIONAL MEDICAL
INSURANCE COMPANY




CNAM prevention fund:

- Funding community organizations since **2017**, cooperation began in 2015.
- Funding **regulations** were developed by the CNAM together with key community organizations in the country and approved by the Ministry of Health.
- Every year a **competition for funding** is announced, the topics may vary from year to year, but the **issue of HIV is always addressed**.

¹ The National Health Insurance Company is an autonomous state organization at the national level that carries out non-profit activities in the field of compulsory health insurance.

KNOW-HOW OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN MOLDOVA

Since the number of projects that can be supported by the CNAM fund is quite limited (three projects in the country for both the expanded and basic package of services for activities in the north, center and south of the country), HIV-service organizations apply for grants as a **consortium**. Several organizations will determine their priority areas and prepare one common application. For example, in 2023, three organizations merged (one provides services for drug users, one for sex workers, and GENDERDOC-M for MSM). In the northern region, 100 MSM receive services (basic package), while in the central region 500 MSM receive the basic package and 200 MSM receive the expanded package.

-  When an application is submitted by a consortium, more organizations get funding opportunities.
-  Officially, the grant recipient is the organization to whose account the funds are transferred. Since the terms of the grant do not allow for sub-granting, all financial documents are processed through the organization with which the agreement is signed, which places an additional burden on its financial department. The grantee organization purchases consumables and pays for the work of outreach workers. Community organizations within the consortium agree on who will take on the role of grantee; in general, this changes every year so that there are no conflicts.
-  Reporting, which is submitted to the national monitoring system under the National HIV Program, is carried out by each organization participating in the consortium.

Cooperation with Moldovan civil society organizations, HIV-service organizations, and experts is quite well established at the CNAM, which makes it possible to work effectively and enact timely changes when they are needed.

*"We started collaborating in 2015," says **Veaceslav Mulear, Coordinator of the LGBT+ health program of the GENDERDOC-M organization**, "They helped develop a regulation, then another one, as the first one turned out to not be good enough. They tested it. Last year [2022], they developed another regulation to establish a mechanism for continuous funding, so that the competition would be announced by at least November. So that even when there is no approved budget, applications would be tested. If there is a budget – great, if not – that's also ok, but we avoid wasting time. Everything is in accordance with the law and very complicated. We needed to amend the law so that they could adapt to our specifics. It was very difficult, but we achieved it. We have many organizations representing drug users, sex workers, MSM, people living with HIV. Together we are a very powerful force."*

The GENDERDOC-M organization, with funding from the CNAM, is implementing **a component on MSM**:

- In 2023, as part of government funding, it is planned to provide a **basic** package² of services for **500 MSM** in the center of Moldova and for **100 MSM** in the north.
- This represents **additional** coverage to that provided by the Global Fund program.
- Funding of services is also ensured as part of an **expanded package**³ of services for **200 MSM**.

Additionally, in the last two years, the organization has also received funding through a competition announced by the Chisinau City Hall (**funding from the local budget**). This competition was also announced as part of the National HIV Program and adapted to the context of a particular city. Thanks to this grant, it was possible to cover **100 MSM** with an expanded package of services in 2022

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING (based on the experience of funding through the national insurance fund)

- + Opportunity to cover representatives of vulnerable groups, including MSM, with an **expanded package of services**.
- Distribution of funding is **not synchronized with the distribution of the Global Fund grant**. In all previous years, the competition was only announced in March, and actual work on the grant began no earlier than July, which results in an interruption in the provision of services. In 2023, thanks to the advocacy work of NGOs, the situation was slightly improved; activities began in February.
- The cost of services is **not synchronized with the cost of the Global Fund project**. Although there is a desire to standardize costs, the government agency has been slower to enact change. At the end of 2022, the Global Fund increased the cost of the service package due to inflation, which resulted in cost differences.
- **Complicated reporting system**. In practice, since government agencies had no experience in funding services, they adopted almost all of the documentation of the Global Fund's reporting system. Unlike with the Global Fund, however, paper reporting for all documentation (including both financial documents, consent forms, beneficiary applications, etc.) is still mandatory, despite the existence of an electronic reporting system.
- **Complicated system for allocating funds**. After signing the contract, about 30% is transferred for the purchase of condoms, lubricants or syringes for example. Reporting was previously submitted once a month, then was switched to a system of reporting once every three months. Money is transferred only after the report is received and approved. The last tranche (10-15%) is transferred only after receipt of the full report and completion of the grant.
- **Lack of financial flexibility**. If there is savings, for example, on purchases, there is no possibility to redistribute the leftover funds; the money must be returned.

² The basic package of services includes: testing, condom and lubricant distribution, counselling, information support, TB screening.

³ The expanded package includes a full range of services: consultations with medical specialists, legal services, psychological services, group events, assistance with paperwork, sexual and reproductive health services, etc.



Services for MSM in Moldova are financed by the Global Fund and the state budget. Clients are not duplicated; overall coverage across the country is calculated on the basis of all projects.

This financing scheme carries certain **risks**. Although the state has declared its willingness to co-finance a basic package of services for vulnerable groups, including MSM, such intentions are not always realistic.

*"When I was writing an application to the Global Fund this year, I was very doubtful, since a very large volume of services is provided with funds from the state insurance company," says **Veaceslav Mulear**, "As far as we know, this year the insurance company allocated approximately €200,000 for HIV prevention among all vulnerable groups. In the application, we have written that, over the next three years, more public money should be allocated for MSM alone than is currently allocated for all groups. There is a risk that the insurance company will not be able to cope with this, and it is unclear what the fate of basic services will be."*

RESULTS

Moldova is a country with a fairly positive experience in relation to financing HIV-related programs with public funds. This was largely achieved thanks to the coordinated budget advocacy of all HIV-service organizations in the country. Veaceslav Mulear shares the secrets of successful work:

**Secret of success –
«authorities—NGOs»
in tandem**

"We must learn to work together with government agencies. This can be done in several ways:

- *Help the relevant ministry develop a funding mechanism and regulations, without which it is impossible to allocate grants. You need to sit down, do almost everything for them, show them what will work, what won't work, etc. In most cases, we did everything for them. They watched, and then we redid everything together. **Government agencies love to be helped**; they are always busy and appreciate help.*
- ***Advocacy should be at different levels, from the national to the municipal level.** Municipalities need to be shown how important it is to adapt the national program at the local level and how to implement it. Show the benefits of investing in such a program. We always invite representatives of the mayor's office to informational events, since they also have some money, so it is very important to involve them. Image is also important for them.*
- *The secret of success lies in this tandem. If you all work together, then they will be interested, but no one will tell you to «come», you have to go yourself. **Then it will all work, you need to beat on the door until it opens.**"*

RUSSIA: FUNDING FOR COMPLEX PROJECTS



Charitable Foundation «Support of Social Initiatives and Public Health» (La Sky)

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

«LaSky» is the largest prevention program for MSM in Russia, and provides direct services to the community: counselling, HIV self-testing, harm reduction in the context of chemsex, PrEP, services of trusted doctors, ART kits, and support for PLH, MSM, and trans people.



Securing budget money to support LGBT communities in the Russian Federation is quite problematic. The experience of the «LaSky» project shows that several possibilities exist. In particular, the organization has a single experience, not of funding in a literal sense, but **transferring commodities and materials for carrying out HIV prevention work**, such as test systems, condoms, and lubricants, purchased with funds from the municipal budget and transferred for use in the work of the non-profit organization. A small number of tests and condoms, which were left over at the end of the project, were allocated for a campaign that was part of the implementation of the project of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation «HIV Test: Expedition 2021».

#FUNDING FROM
LOCAL BUDGET

#TRANSFER
OF COMMODITIES

MECHANISM FOR RECEIVING FUNDING

- Receipt of materials for the implementation of prevention programs occurs based on an agreement on the transfer of commodities and materials between NGOs and the implementer of the MoH grant.
- The transfer of commodities and materials purchased with budget funds does not occur on a competitive basis, but requires the submission of an application by the NGO. To do this, it is not necessary to participate in the competition, but an application must still be submitted.

Specifics: when submitting an application previously agreed upon with the AIDS Center, it is possible to receive tests and other consumables for direct work with MSM (and other target groups with which the organization works).

In practice, this involves procurement in order to achieve the indicators of the state HIV program, for which funds are allocated. There is no need to justify whether the funding is appropriate, as in the case of grants. The amount of commodities and materials that NGOs receive as part of such cooperation may vary. There are organizations that receive 1,000 tests; «LaSky» receives about 150 per year, since there are also international grant programs that cover the needs of MSM receiving prevention services.

In addition, the organization has experience receiving **direct funding**, but this was for a prevention project targeting people who use drugs, including activities that involved MSM living with drug addiction. The organization received such funding twice. This involved participation in the procurement of goods and services to meet state and municipal needs (Federal Law No. 44 of 04.05.2013 «For the provision of rapid HIV testing services, social support, counseling and interviewing the population of groups with risky behavior»).

"We were awarded a government contract for two years, but everything in it was focused on working with drug users, so under this activity, we also included work with MSM who use drugs," says Roman Nesterov, "LaSky" Project Manager, "If we had submitted an application purely for work with MSM, it is unlikely that it would have been funded. To have a chance of success, it is necessary to indicate that work is also being carried out in parallel with the general population, or with some other vulnerable key population."

Obtaining funding from a government grant is a rather complicated process.

"We submitted several applications last year and this year, both to the Presidential Grants Fund, and to the Moscow Mayor's Awards, as well as to some other government programs. But not a single application of ours was supported," says Roman Nesterov, "Obviously, our applications turned out to be too complex, because they included testing, PrEP, outreach, and self-testing for HIV. And these projects emphasized MSM. Unfortunately, we did not receive funding, often falling 0.2 points short of success. It's easier for us to get funds, for example, from some pharmaceutical company that doesn't care what we do specifically, but at the same time, this often involves doing charity work. But it's very difficult to get money from the state, you have to submit a comprehensive application, and only mention MSM in the context of other key populations."

Obtaining funding is only possible in complex projects that provide services for several key populations



For information: MSM are included in Russian HIV program documents as a vulnerable group in the context of the infection (as «persons engaging in non-traditional sexual relationships»).

Negative rhetoric regarding MSM, which is common in contemporary Russian society and is supported at the state level, means that the juries for all state grant competitions are quite homophobic and are not willing to support projects aimed at LGBT communities.

FORMS OF FUNDING

- \$ **Tenders** for the procurement of HIV services under Federal Law No. 44 of 05.04.2013.
- \$ **Grants** (Presidential Grants Fund (PGF), local state funds, Moscow Mayor's Fund, Potanin Foundation).

SPECIFICS OF FUNDING

- \$ PGF grants: to receive large grants, you need to start with small projects and amounts. For example, receive 300,000-600,000 rubles (\$3,000-5,000), if the organization submits reports on time, then next year you can apply for a larger amount — up to \$100,000 or more. But this rarely happens, and not everyone will approve such projects.
- \$ Tenders are designed for a short period of time (usually 3-6 months), so all activities need to be implemented at a very accelerated pace.
- \$ Generally, tenders do not provide 100% of the funding after signing the contract: about 30% is provided at the beginning for work and 70% is transferred after the report is submitted. However, advance funding is also possible.
- \$ Tender purchases are announced for relatively **small amounts**. The last tender announced by the MoH for the provision of services to 4 key populations in 4 regions of the country over 9 months provided grants of up to 1,250,000 rubles (about \$13,500).

REPORTING SYSTEM

If an organization has received **commodities and materials** from a government agency, then the reporting process is simple: it is sufficient to submit information on how many clients received services.

Administration of Presidential (and other state) grants (based on the experience of the «LaSky» project and partner organizations):

- ✓ It is necessary to open a **special account** that is only for this grant.
- ✓ Strict **reporting** on the movement of money in the account is required.
- ✓ Before signing the contract, the organization must submit a large number of various documents to confirm the existence of various **policies and regulations** within the organization, including anti-corruption policies, an ethics code for staff, procurement regulations, etc..
- ✓ Frequent and thorough **checks** by the Presidential Grants Fund. Any error in financial documents may result in a request for the funds to be transferred back.

RESULTS



«LaSky» is a fairly well-known HIV-service organization in Russia that receives funding from various sources. However, obtaining budget funding remains an important priority for the organization.

"We always try," says Roman Nesterov, "First, sometimes donors themselves demand that there be some kind of partial government funding for the activities for which donor funding is allocated. In addition, this is also partly an advocacy activity, as we are promoting the key population of MSM and speaking out about their interests and needs. Participation in such competitions is an opportunity to show our loyalty to the state and agreement with state policy."

**Participation
in government funding
programs is a good
opportunity
for an organization
to express itself**

UKRAINE: HIV PREVENTION AMONG MSM WITH FUNDS FROM THE STATE BUDGET



Organization: Community organization «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL»

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The community organization «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL» specializes in providing services related to HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) for MSM. It focuses on the development and consolidation of LGBT communities, protecting human rights and helping to reduce homo-, bi- and transphobia in Ukrainian society. CO «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL» was registered in October 2002. Since that time, the organization has implemented more than 80 projects and studies among LGBT communities. Today, the organization's main activities are focused on providing priority humanitarian and financial assistance during the war, operating shelters for LGBT communities, providing public health services for MSM and LGBT communities, developing community centers and other «safe spaces», protecting human rights and conducting national advocacy regarding the access of LGBT communities to rights and health.



The organization «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL», as one of the leading Ukrainian LGBT organizations, has sufficient experience in administering various grants. For many years, it has been receiving international grants for the implementation of HIV prevention projects among MSM, as well as advocacy and human rights projects, such as the development of a network of paralegals and the creation of a Paralegal hub (Global Fund, UNAIDS, USAID, PACT, SIDA, ICF «Alliance for Public Health», CO «100% Life», PATH, etc.). However, the experience of implementing an HIV prevention project among MSM using funds from the State Budget of Ukraine, the procurer for which was the Center for Public Health (CPH) of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, was quite new for the organization.

ACTIVITIES WITH FUNDING FROM THE STATE BUDGET

In accordance with agreements signed with the CPH, «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL» is implementing HIV prevention projects among MSM (basic package):

- In the Dnipropetrovsk region (since 2021, 10,767 clients have been covered with the basic package of services).
- In the Chernihiv region (coverage of 1,316 clients).

According to the **subcontract agreement**⁴ with the Charitable Organization «100 Percent Life. Kyiv region»:

- HIV prevention among MSM in the city of Kyiv.

Tender of the CPH of the MoH of Ukraine:

- A tender is announced for the implementation of **HIV prevention programs among all vulnerable groups**, including MSM⁵.
- Tenders are held on the **state procurement web portal Prozorro** through an **open auction**. During the bidding process, each applicant organization can reduce the cost of services (one step - 0.5% of the total cost). There must be at least two bidders⁶.
- After the procurement procedure is carried out, corresponding contracts are concluded between the Center for Public Health and the non-governmental organizations that won the bids.

Although this procedure is quite transparent, and in 2021, when it was first used, it was very new and innovative, staff members of «ALLIANCE. GLOBAL» now see **certain problematic areas**. The auction format ensures that the organization that offers the lowest price wins the tender. Unfortunately, in many cases, the procedure tends to turn into «gaming by organizations»: in some regions there were situations where organizations presented completely unrealistic prices for services, which were impossible to provide with high quality for that amount of money. In practice, **in the race for the lowest price, quality is lost**. According to the terms of the tender, organizations that do not have any experience are not permitted to participate. A document confirming the organization's actual material and technical base is required. However, the price remains key.

"When the tenders begin," says Yulia Beshpalaya from «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL», "everything gets very heated. Everyone begins to lower prices, and the games go on until the moment there is no way to reduce the cost any further. It gets to the point that we cannot simply do anything with these funds."

Funds are received by the organization as payment for services provided during the month, in accordance with the certificates of services provided. To maintain the continuity of service provision, the terms of the contract indicate that during the transition period between the signing of agreements, services are provided in the amount of 20% of the total cost of funding provided for in the contract.

⁴ A subcontract agreement is signed with an organization that is recognized as the winner of the bidding for activities in a specific region, and which has an agreement with the CPH of the MoH for the corresponding funding.

⁵ The only key population that is not yet covered by prevention services in Ukraine funded by the state budget is trans people. Services for them are provided with funds from the Global Fund.

⁶ If only one organization applies for the tender, it is announced again. If the procurer has twice cancelled the procurement tender due to a lack of a sufficient number of participants, it may decide on a negotiated procurement procedure.

SPECIFICITIES OF WORKING DURING WARTIME

According to the terms of the tender, it must be held annually. The bidding for 2022 was successfully carried out, and contracts were being signed when the war began. For some time, state funding for HIV prevention programs was in question. Funds from the Global Fund were used, however, eventually, all the state's obligations to NGOs were fulfilled. The provision of services did not stop.

"We tried not to stop the process of providing services where it was possible and to resume service provision as soon as it was possible," says Yulia Bespalaya, Financial Manager of «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL», "So, services were provided in the Dnipropetrovsk region, and even in the Chernihiv region, where military operations were ongoing constantly. In March, there was still direct fighting there, so it was impossible to work, but later we started providing services. We were in constant communication with the Center for Public Health, with employees, with program coordinators, and financial coordinators from the CPH. They promised to resolve the funding issue, so we had discussions with social workers and project managers. We continued to provide services without changes, although it was very challenging. Staff went without salaries for about four months. It was very difficult to motivate them, but we have been cooperating with them for many years. Thanks to the teamwork of the organization, we survived. We received the first funds in June, so there was a delay of about five months.»

For 2023, contracts with existing service providers in the field of prevention were extended. They were given the opportunity to provide services in connection with the war in Ukraine. Unfortunately, «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL» was forced to abandon work in the Chernihiv region, because social workers left, and the number of MSM decreased significantly; many moved to safer regions of Ukraine.

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING (based on the experience of «ALLIANCE.GLOBAL»)

- + Cooperation with a government agency is very different from cooperating with other international donors and organizations. In practice, the community organization receives payment precisely for the services it provides, which are procured by the state. This format gives the **organization freedom in budget development and management, and in ensuring the service provision process.**
- + Organizations have a flexible process for **budgeting and implementing activities** in this field. They can quickly and flexibly adapt to urgent needs that arise during the provision of prevention services. **There is no system for coordinating and redistributing the budget.** The organization has the opportunity to develop the entire service provision process, select and train staff, and carry out the activities necessary for the successful achievement of the indicators it has set.

- + **Flexible budgeting for organizations** makes it possible to quickly and autonomously manage the service provision process.
- + An **uninterrupted supply of tests, condoms and lubricants** is ensured.
- The procurement process does not include a quality requirement for the selection of service providers.
- Signing contracts takes a lot of time.

"The contract stipulates that it expires sometime in mid-December when the procurement procedure for the next year begins," says Yulia Beshpalaya, "We submit documents sometime in December, and the first stage of procurement begins. In general, there are two stages. Well, this continues until spring; generally, we don't sign an agreement before April. As a result, from December to April, the only source of funding is the 20 percent, which, under the contract, is provided to ensure the continuity of funding. We survive on this until the start of the new contract."

- **Issues of the taxation of HIV prevention services in the healthcare sector and value added tax** have not been fully agreed upon. Many non-profit community organizations were forced to acquire the status of VAT payers precisely because they provide such services. This leads to a financial burden on organizations, which must pay the VAT amounts from the total funding amounts received for services provided under these contracts. It has also increased the amount of tax reporting and paperwork required to ensure proper tax accounting.
- **Tariffs** on the provision of services have not been revised or **indexed** since 2021. It is very difficult for organizations to pay rent and other services, the costs of which are constantly increasing. For example, testing services cost 73.15 hryvnia (\$2.7 at the 2021 exchange rate and \$1.9 at the 2023 rate), the provision of targeted informational, educational and communication services costs 16.62 hryvnia (\$0.62 at the 2021 rate and \$0.4 at the 2023 exchange rate). This is significantly different from the tariffs of other donors, which are constantly indexed.
- An **outdated document management process** and a large number of paper documents are used in the provision of services. In practice, all documents are submitted in paper form, and must be physically brought to the Center for Public Health, where they go through several stages of verification, corrections, etc.
- **Inflated indicators** do not correspond to the real needs of community representatives. There is a discrepancy between the number of services procured by the Center for Public Health and the actual needs of MSM. MSM need increased numbers of HIV testing services, but do not require as many targeted informational, educational and counseling services. In terms of condoms and lubricants, clients would like to receive as many as possible over the course of 1-2 visits, but programs of the Center for Public Health only stipulate the provision of a minimum amount of condoms and lubricants over the course of 9 visits throughout the year.

UKRAINE: SEXUAL EDUCATION FOR YOU WITH FUNDS FROM THE CITY ADMINISTRATION



All-Ukrainian Charitable Organization «Convictus Ukraine»

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The organization «Convictus Ukraine» has been operating since 2006, and has been implementing HIV prevention programs since 2008. The organization works at the national and local level to develop the public health system and ensure social protection for the population. «Convictus Ukraine» creates effective programs, institutionalizes services, introduces innovations and lobbies for the interests of vulnerable population groups.



After the state began purchasing a basic package of HIV prevention, care and support services for people living with HIV in Ukraine in 2019, “Convictus Ukraine”, like many HIV-service organizations, began actively participating in the public procurement process, and received funding for different areas of activity. However, the organization will present its experience of receiving funding from local budget funds for this collection of best practices.

#FUNDING FROM
LOCAL BUDGET

#COMPETITIONS
BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Experience: funding work with young people with risky lifestyles from the funds of the Kyiv City Administration – sexual education.

At the end of 2020, «Convictus Ukraine» submitted an application for funding as part of the competition of the Kyiv City Administration «Public Perspective: Transparent Government and Active Community» for the activities of civil society organizations in 2021. The topic of the application is «Aware and Protected: sexual and reproductive health education for adolescents with risky behavior, countering violence and protecting rights». The project was supported with funding totaling 150,000 UAH (about \$5,500 based on the exchange rate at that time). The project «Path to Success: building leadership and building the capacity of adolescents with risky behavior to ensure their successful and healthy future» was submitted for funding in 2022 (UAH 150,000) and received support, but its implementation was delayed due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

"In 2022, we took part in the same competition again, and decided to concentrate more on in-depth work on sexual education with teenagers from different vulnerable groups," **says Evgenia Kuvshinova, Executive Director of «Convictus Ukraine»**, "we won this competition, but the war began, and so funding was frozen. Therefore, it was actually very unexpected for us to receive a message this year [2023] in February or March from the Kyiv City Administration stating they were ready to unfreeze the funds and finance our project. Honestly, we had doubts about this until recently, because we are seeing a reallocation of budget funds towards military needs; this is understandable. However, we successfully signed the contract, have already opened an account, and are getting the keys at the Treasury. In fact, we even agreed with the Kyiv City Administration on some changes in the project (previously this was not welcomed). So it is also very nice that the city authorities turned out to be quite flexible in their activities despite the war."

SPECIFICS OF FUNDING FROM THE LOCAL BUDGET (experience of CO «Convictus Ukraine»)

- 💰 A mandatory condition for participation in the competition was the organization's **own contribution** to the project budget (40,000 hryvnia/\$1,500, 21%). In the case of «Convictus», all administrative expenses were covered by its own funds, the grant funds were used exclusively for educational events.
- 💰 Funding came **directly from the city budget** through the State Treasury of Ukraine. Working with the Treasury is quite labor-intensive and complex; it involves many requirements that have not been used for a long time in the usual administration of grants. For example, it requires opening a separate account in the personal presence of the director and chief accountant. Reporting requires a lot of effort on the part of the accounting department.
- 💰 Funding for a **short period of time**: the 2021 grant was for 6 months, the 2022 grant was for approximately 3 months.
- 💰 All purchases under the grant had to comply with the **state procurement procedure** and be carried out through tenders. The results of tenders, even if they were carried out according to the internal procedures of the organization, had to be published on [Prozorro](#), the Ukrainian electronic public procurement system.

"According to the procedure, we must conduct our internal selection of trainers; according to the requirements, this could be done for procurements of less than 50 thousand hryvnia," **says Evgenia Kuvshinova**, "with this we had to very clearly demonstrate that we have **clear and transparent procedures for selecting consultants within the organization, but we must publish all selection results in the Prozorro system.**"

⁷ The discussion took place in July 2023.

SPECIFICS OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED WITH GRANT FUNDS

- ⚙️ All activities had to take place **strictly according to the schedule** approved by the city administration, since their reporting was carried out in the same way as for activities at the city level in this area.
- ⚙️ At almost every event, there was a **representative from the administration who monitored compliance with the program** and the number of participants. In the event of large discrepancies (for example, a «shortfall» of participants), they could propose holding a new event, or not accept the event as having been held. During monitoring, attention is paid to the topic, the quality of the provision of information, and the quality of the work of the staff.

PLUSES AND MINUSES OF BUDGET FUNDING (based on the example of a local budget competition)

- + Funding from the competition provides **more opportunities to the applicant**, since they can really present their topic, their way of implementing it, their budget, etc. Then, the entire application is evaluated, and receives a certain number of points based on the various criteria of the competition committee.

Grant competition give more freedom to the applicant

«Convictus», as an organization that has experience participating both in state tenders, as well as in local competitions, sees a significant advantage of the competition. According to the director of the organization:

*"The difference is that when we are funded from the state budget through the prevention service procurement model, there's a large competition where the winner is the one that offers the lowest price. Unfortunately, in practice, if there are unscrupulous competitors, the one who offers the lowest price actually wins the procurement. In a project competition, you propose a **clear six-month project with a work plan, and qualitative and quantitative results**. You have a fixed budget for the project, and you achieve victory by publicly defending this project before a commission established by the Kyiv City Administration."*

- Since the project is funded directly through the Treasury, there is increased liability. When financed through a tender, the organization receives funds from the Center for Public Health. Therefore, when an audit from the Treasury takes place, the organization is audited not as a direct recipient of funds, but as a contractor mitigating risks. When receiving a grant, the organization effectively opens an account with the Treasury and acts as a **direct recipient of the funds, subject to all government audits**.

"When agreeing to such a model, it is essential to organize the accounting of the organizations very clearly, so that all of the figures are in place in case of inspections and monitoring. There can be inspections by the Kyiv City Administration at any time," **says Evgenia Kuvshinova.**

- Working with budget grants is very labor-intensive. For relatively small amounts of funding, you need to do a lot of paperwork. Even «Convictus», an organization with very extensive experience working with various donors, and which is able to work with different types of money, has had to rework various program and financial documents more than once. This places an additional burden on administrative staff.

ADVICE AND LESSONS

1 **Grant funding from the local budget will not cover all the financial needs of the organization and will be quite labor-intensive.**

ADVICE FROM «CONVICTUS UKRAINE»

"I would advise large organizations to take such grants when they have other project grants that can cover their administrative staff, accounting department, and so on. It will be difficult for small organizations that do not have an established administration system to take on such projects, because in general, **small funds require significant effort.**"

Great effort is needed for little money

2 **Implementation of budget grants – greater responsibility.**

ADVICE FROM «CONVICTUS UKRAINE»

"This is the kind of work that should be done right from the start, because we know that if we make the administration question whether we are really carrying out the planned activities, for example, then we should not count on further support from them. If you mess something up once, you will either attract increased attention to yourself or not get the project at all. And you need to remember, because these are state funds, the **administration of the organization bears criminal liability if these funds are deemed to be misused.**"

Criminal liability for the misuse of budget funds

RESULTS

Obtaining funding, especially from the city budget, by organizations working in this area is necessary because **it is important to be part of city programs**, especially for activities where the community organization is the initiator or has extensive experience. For «Convictus», this included work with adolescents from various risk groups, especially those who practice risky sexual behavior, including MSM and trans people. Engaging in project implementation with the support of the city administration is a confirmation of the trust of local authorities and support for the activities of the community organization. Being involved in programs funded from the local budget is an important step for the visibility of the organization.

Being involved in programs funded from the local budget is an important step for the organization's recognition.

ADVICE FOR NGOS: HOW TO GET FUNDING FROM GOVERNMENT FUNDS?

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR OBTAINING BUDGET FUNDS FOR HIV SERVICES

1 If a vulnerable (key) population is mentioned in government documents, then the government can fund work with this target group. However, for many countries in the region, a direct reference to LGBT communities, for example, is still not very acceptable. Therefore, when applying for government funding in countries that do not openly support LGBT communities, the optimal solution is to make a **general reference to key (or vulnerable) populations**, using general language without details, or the terms that are used in the National AIDS Program or other relevant documents (MSM, rather than LGBT community).

General reference to target groups

2 In order to successfully obtain budget funds, **professionalism** is required, which can often pose difficulties for new NGOs that do not have sufficient experience. The agencies initiating state competitions and tenders **expect a professional dialogue, an understanding of how to prepare documents, and a professional approach** to assessing the situation and types of services.

Professionalism

3 The **indicators** that an NGO includes in its application are extremely important for the state. They must help **achieve the goals of government programs**. This is probably a **universal recipe** for any country in the region. In other words, if the figures stated by the NGO can be integrated into government programs, this is an important step towards obtaining funds.

Indicators of government programs

4 The state places particular importance on a **results-oriented approach**, as mentioned above, so that the outcomes of the activities of NGOs can reflect the achievement of state programs and objectives.

Focus on the result

5 It is very important that the NGO can show that an intended activity is **long-term** and not just related to a specific time-limited project.

Long term

6 **Coverage** is important for the state, so applications from small NGOs from small towns are often of little interest and require a lot of time for administration. Therefore, **network applications** are more effective, in which several organizations come together to achieve a common objective.

Large coverage

The state needs NGOs to fulfill the goals and objectives set in state programs. To receive funding, it is desirable that it falls under a specific program

ADVICE FROM NGOS IN THE EECA REGION

- Working with public money requires a high level of responsibility. In particular, the administration of the organization can be held criminally liable if the use of funds is found to be inappropriate.
- When looking for funding programs, it is not necessary to focus only on competitions in the field of HIV. There could be grants in the fields of social policy, human rights activities, etc. You should monitor new trends and areas of activity, for example, the allocation of funds to combat the COVID-19 epidemic. Sometimes, it is precisely such new programs and newly created funds that will help you to obtain funding, even if such an opportunity was not previously available. However, this also has some risks. Such funds are short-term; after the end of the reason for which it was established (in this case, the COVID epidemic), funding may cease.
- You should not expect a large amount of funding right away. If the organization does not have relevant experience, it is better to start with small projects and amounts. Once there has been some positive experience of cooperation, you can subsequently expect to receive larger sums. Although, this does not always happen in all countries.
- Budget advocacy is the key to success! If you do not establish yourself as an organization, and speak out about the urgent needs of the community, money will not come. It should be noted that such activities, in general, are not usually paid, but serve as the basis for subsequent success.
- Grant funding from the local budget is unlikely to cover all the financial needs of the organization. Therefore, it is better for large organizations to receive such grants when they have other projects that can cover expenses not covered by the state grant.

The logo for ECOM, featuring a white icon of six small squares arranged in a 2x3 grid to the left of the word "ECOM" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

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