CALL FOR PROPOSALS
POLICY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP - SPRING 2020
Open Society Foundations - Armenia

The Open Society Foundations Armenia (OSFA) works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies with governments accountable to their citizens. Human rights, transparency, access to justice, promotion of civil society and social inclusion are among Foundations' core areas of concern. Responding to the challenges of open and pluralistic society, and in its quest for an empowered civil society, OSFA announces Call for Proposals for the Policy Research Fellowship, *PRF, the Spring cycle 2020*. The program invites applications from policy researchers and advocates who are willing and prepared to conduct credible and innovative policy research identifying critical open society challenges, to develop practical solutions and to initiate measures towards effective advocacy. The program also aims to enhance the capacity of researchers in influencing public policy-making processes, and encourages proactive cooperation between independent researchers, decision-makers, the civil society and the policy community, to achieve a higher quality of policy analysis and research-based dialogue.

ELIGIBILITY The PRF Program is open to civil society representatives, university faculty, policy researchers, analysts and advisers. The applicants must have at least an MA degree in Public Policy and Administration, Political Science, Law, Economics, International Relations or any other related field. Experience in policy analysis and advocacy is desirable. Strong research skills are highly valued. Availability of fellows to devote significant time to the fellowship is required. Applications are accepted from individual authors or groups of two co-authors; the duration of research projects is up to five months.

EXPECTATIONS Applicants are expected to identify and conceptualise specific issues in the framework of challenges in Armenia today,[1] conduct policy research and contribute to public discourse by promoting policy concerns, and generating solutions to identified problems. Successful applicants are expected to question policies, reforms or their implementation, formulate concerns based on reasoned arguments and apply relevant methodological techniques. Fellows are expected to provide a structured and informed reporting in the form of a policy paper[2] and a policy brief with clear and targeted recommendations.

Fellows are also expected to develop advocacy strategies, and delegate time for their implementation to promote the results of their research, including identifying relevant decision-makers, groups and allies, initiating targeted consultations, engaging in formats of public communication, networks and following-up on policy developments. It is expected that fellows take the initiative for the advocacy of their research results.

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[1] Applicants are encouraged to formulate concerns based on but not limited to suggested areas presented in Appendix 1 (page 3).
[2] An average of 10,000 words.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES Applicants are required to submit *PRF Spring 2020 Application Form*[3] by carefully considering and responding to the framework designed for proposal submission and evaluation. All applicants will be informed about the results of competition in a period of seven weeks after the submission deadline. Shortlisted applicants may be invited for an interview.

BUDGET Fellows will receive individual grants up to $3,000 (USD) to cover research-related costs.

TRAINING OSFA PRF assists fellows in developing policy analytical capacity. Fellows participate in a mandatory seminar on research methods, policy writing and advocacy. The seminar is organised in partnership with the Hertie School of Governance. Fellows are expected to actively participate and contribute with their expertise to the policy discussions and meetings organised by the OSFA and other civil society organisations.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND CONTACTS All interested applicants are required to submit the Application Form (Appendix 2) and supporting documents: resume (mandatory) and sample/link to previously conducted research (optional) to OSFA via email: **register@osi.am** by:

Monday, 17 February 2020 17:00

Applications are submitted electronically.

Applicants will receive an electronic confirmation of application receipt to their email in a period of two working days after submission. If no confirmation email is received -- contact us. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. For questions or additional information, please contact Policy Research Program Coordinator Valentina Gevorgyan valentina@osi.am or (010) 533 862, 536 758.

Information session:
Monday, 07 February 2020 17:00
Vivaldi Hall, Grand Hotel Yerevan, 14 Abovyan str., 0001 Yerevan

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[3] See Appendix 2 (page 5) for Application Form, also available here.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS POLICY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
SPRING 2020

Appendix 1
Developing Civil Society's Public Policy and Advocacy Capacity for Reforms

After Armenia's revolution, there are opportunities towards country's democratic transformation. The agenda for systemic reforms will be conditioned by the implementation of state's commitments, political will, and the availability of evidence-based research support. The public policy research support in a number of sectors will stimulate the development of informed decisions and contribute to the transparency and monitoring of policymaking processes.

The Policy Research Fellowship Program aims to enhance the value and role of research in public policy decision making. The Program supports the public, local and international institutions by developing independent policy research with clear and feasible recommendations. The Program stimulates open dialogue between the different members of the policy community. Fellows are expected to provide an in-depth expert analysis on an emergent policy issue and implement local and international advocacy, targeting the relevant for their research institutions and authorities. These include but are not limited to, ministerial departments and ministers, government adjacent agencies, parliamentary working groups and members of parliament, civil society organisations and international representations, academic and research institutes, policy advisors, experts, journalists etc.

Fellows' policy research may denote but be not limited to the following areas, subareas and institutions: *justice system*, including judiciary, law enforcement, investigative and prosecutorial bodies, constitutional reform, issues related to transitional justice, civilian oversight, penitentiary institutions and other closed and semi-closed institutions. The researchers may develop proposals addressing issues of *governance accountability, transparency and corruption prevention*, including development and implementation of anti-corruption reform agenda, anti-corruption bodies, public procurement system, regulations on asset declaration and beneficial ownership, illicit enrichment, conflict of interest, whistle-blower protection.

To contribute to the development of public policy capacity for reforms in a number of areas, the applicants are strongly encouraged to initiate research addressing the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) agenda and the government priorities as laid down in the national strategy on human rights, the strategy on judicial-legal reforms, the anti-corruption strategy, and other national strategic documents.

In the area of *economic and social justice*, applicants may consider issues related to Armenia's integration into the Eurasian Economic Union, tax, customs and import policies, market access, conflict of interest issues and policies protecting economic competition. In the context of *human rights, non-discrimination and fundamental freedoms*, we encourage

research related to social justice, labour rights, the rights to access to justice, fair trial, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, the right to freedom of assembly, association and expression, issues addressing domestic violence, minority and marginalised groups, as well as human rights protection mechanisms in the context of security.

The applicants can research issues related to the *general and higher education*, particularly education quality assurance mechanisms, inclusive and egalitarian policies and equity guarantees in the reform of the education system, optimisation of general education in the context of community enlargement, issues of social justice in education, autonomy in higher education, integration and institutionalisation of extracurricular activities, academic qualification process, academic integrity, academic freedom, educational programs and issues of scientific research in higher education institutions.

Considering the absorption of public spaces by propagandistic narratives, the applicants may develop proposals addressing the mechanisms, ways and political logic of *disinformation and propaganda*, issues related to critical thinking, fake news and information flows, media literacy, cyber security and personal data protection, fact-checking methods, communication methods and techniques between different groups, etc.

In different areas, the proposed examples of research activities, include <u>but are not limited</u> to analysing Armenia's progress in terms of implementation of international commitments, developing benchmarks to assess activities and responsibilities of different institutions; addressing ideological foundations of reforms, stereotypes, attitudes and perceptions towards those of different social groups; issues of civilian oversight, mechanisms ensuring public awareness and support for reforms; links between researchers and public authorities; implementation of public funds; data collection methods and mechanisms, international experience of fact-collecting and fact-checking and its application in Armenia, and so on.

The above suggested – as well as other areas, research activities and issues identified by applicants – should be aimed at supporting the development and implementation of public policy, strengthening the agenda for reforms and contributing to the institutional development, thus ensuring the process of democratic transformation in Armenia.

Call for Proposals Policy Research Fellowship Spring 2020
Appendix 2
Application Form

This application form offers framework for proposal submission and evaluation. The form highlights selected key sections that a robust policy research proposal shall contain. Each section has to be carefully addressed. Word limits [min-max] in each section are expected to be taken into consideration. Precise, concise and clear writing are advantages of a potentially successful proposal.

1. Project title and abstract
Provide a *title* and a *brief overview* of your policy research: what do you intend to examine? What is the motivation and reason behind your research? What is the current reform relevance? Describe the questions you seek to answer. (150-300 words)

2. Problem description and policy relevance
Define the policy problem and specify what you aim to achieve with your policy research. What are the novelty, relevance and urgency of addressing the problem? How the problem affects the Armenian society today? Who are the stakeholders directly and indirectly involved; targets influenced by the problem? Present the context and nature of the specific concern and anticipated contribution to the field as a result of your research. (850-1200 words)

3. Research questions
Present your main and sub- (if any) research questions (in a question format). (80-100 words)

4. Evaluation of policy alternatives
In the scope of the presented policy problem and research questions, elaborate on the possible/preferred policy alternatives. Provide the reasons why the possible alternative option(s) you suggest is(are) more effective. Provide the policy evaluation to display the background knowledge on the policy issue and the field of research. (300-400 words)

5. Research plan and methodology
Describe your research plan and methodology (including description of each method, participants, types of analyses and so on) selected to answer your research question/s. Indicate potential obstacles in applying research methods, and elaborate on how you will overcome those. (300-400 words)

6. Outputs and deliverables
Describe your research outputs and deliverables: policy papers, policy briefs, posters, conference papers, databases, guidelines, information leaflets, infographics, presentations, audio visual materials etc. (80-150 words)

7. Advocacy strategy
How you see the impact of your policy research? What tools and resources you will use to reach out to target audiences in properly communicating the findings of your research? Elaborate on the advocacy strategy you will apply to maximise the impact of your research. What are the risks associated with the implementation of your advocacy strategy? (400-700 words)

8. Project timetable
Provide the timeframe for the project and its key activities. Please note that the maximum project duration is five months.

9. Budget
Please list all costs associated with your research in an itemised budget table below (in USD). Expenses such as honorarium, fieldwork, advocacy costs (presentation, publication of policy paper), and other necessary expenses can be included in the budget. Please note that the budget shall not exceed $3,000.

	budget category	unit	number of units	cost per unit ($)	total ($)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
	Total ($):				