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**PROJECT PROPOSAL**

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**ORGANISATION NAME:**

Albanian Institute of Science

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Raise Voice Albania – Youth for fair elections

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

Albania, National Level

**PROJECT PERIOD:**

June 2022 - July 2023

**OFFICE LOCATION:**

Rruga Asim Vokshi, Pallati 13 katesh Nr 25, Kati 3/7, Tirana Albania

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Aranita BRAHAJ ([info@ais.al](mailto:info@ais.al))

**DATE OF SUBMISSION:**

07/04/2022

## **Brief Description of Organization**

AIS, is an organization established in 2011. The original name of the organization is the *Albanian Institute of Sciences*, referred to as AIS in the proposal. The main mission of our organization is to use innovation and new technology as tools for providing more information, transparency, communication and citizens' participation. AIS activists and founders have established a joint group of experts from different fields.

We are implementing various projects with an impact on the Albanian public.

The work of the AIS is strongly related to **Principles** such as Transparency; Accountability; e-Participation; Citizens Engagement, Youth Capacity Building; and Good Governance.

Applied **instruments** include: Open Data Standards; Risk Assessment tools and methodologies; Case Studies; Innovation and ICT; Youth Engagement.

**Impact:** Disclosure of information and accessibility in the public sector through Open Data; Information Symmetry; Youth capacitating and up skilling; Increased Citizens' awareness; Raised public reaction and pressure (e-Participation); Strengthened Anti-corruption efforts; Instillation of the Fact-Checking and the Watchdog Culture.

Our past and ongoing projects are supported by **donors** like the Netherland Embassy in Tirana<sup>1</sup> ; SIDA- Embassy of Sweden<sup>2</sup> in Tirana; the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Democracy Commission Small Grants of the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Tirana<sup>3</sup>.

## **The following databases are a product of our Organization:**

<https://ndiqparate.al/> - allows you to follow the money trail, through transparent data and socio-economic research articles.

<https://openprocurement.al/> Open Procurement Albania – Open and transparent data regarding each stage of tendering process in sectors like Health; Road Infrastructure; Acquisition of Publicly Owned Companies; Municipality tenders. The database also employs an instrument for risk assessment and tender marking, whose algorithm marks with a *RedFlag* tenders exhibiting issues of competition and race.

<https://spending.data.al/> Spending Data Albania platform constitutes a database containing all the information regarding payments issued by the State Treasury from 2012 onwards. These payments are listed and can be traced by Institution; beneficiary client; date of execution; category of expenditure, or description of invoice.

<http://moneypower.al/> MoneyPower.al - Money and Power is a database containing data present in the mandatory Asset Declaration Form, compiled by senior officials, MPs, mayors, members of the Council of Ministers, and Magistrates.

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<https://opencorporates.al/> Open Corporates Albania - another platform offering open data profiling and passports with information for every business that wins public contracts (with state institutions).

<http://www.aksesrejtisi.al/> Information and Passport with accessible data and documents concerning High Level Judges.

**Legal Status:** Non-Governmental Organization

**Court Registry number** 3048 Albania date of registration 28.03.2011.

**Address:** Rr. Asim Vokshi; Building 13/25 floor 3 Tirana.

### **Project Goal**

The project aims to provide education, capacity building, response and youth activism for quality democratic processes and fair elections. The main purpose of the project is to ensure civil engagement for a fair and regular electoral process and increase and strengthen citizen's participation in the democratic culture. Albanian youth can exert pressure on public institutions and especially on institutions involved directly in the electoral process. Ensuring democratic and fair electoral processes are the main objectives of project's activities. The project will be working under the slogan Make Elections Count.

### **Project Justification**

30 years after the fall of the Communist system, the country is experiencing delicate moments in terms of democratic developments, reaction and civic trust in the process. The aspiration for integration and European standards unfortunately coexists with pessimism and civic apathy. Lack of trust is followed by exodus and waves of emigration from the country. Electoral processes held every two years (for general parliamentary elections and for local elections in 61 Municipalities), often take place among harsh tones, and have been repeatedly contested by the parties. While international reports list issues regarding procedures and administration, case by case reports and signals also speak of abuses and vote-buying or misuse of assets and human resources of public administration for electoral purposes. The justice system, which would have to investigate and punish criminal offenses against free elections, has undergone a Reform and Vetting process that is delaying the delivery of positive results. Regardless of this, various civil actors try to advance the need for a good model of civic reaction. Student or civic protests have shown signs of reaction and calls to account, as promising developments.

Our organization is active in implementing activities aiming to strengthen transparency, accountability, and civic response. In addition to working with public spending and contract monitoring, AIS has also set up a youth network where young people become part of a training group learning how to be more engaged in matters of public interest and be able to understand processes and articulate carefully on their progress.

In our proposal to support the activities of the project **Za'Lart Albania** (en: Raise Voice Albania) -Youth for Fair Elections, we intend to work with young people from all over the country, training them on the basic concepts of freedom of election and guarantees provided by the law and institutions. It will also focus in educating them to participate and be responsive, by contributing in their respective locations for fairer electoral processes.

### **Project Description**

The project will create a team of young boys and girls from different regions in the country, who will be selected, trained, and assisted in activism and advocacy promotion for Fair Elections. Initially, a youth team will be formed by identifying and selecting new students, activists, individuals who have the desire and incentive to work for orderly and democratic processes in the country. A training curriculum will then be created. The curriculum will provide training on the electoral cycle and aspects related to the right of freedom to elect. More technical aspects of the training will be concerned with how to identify irregularities and problems, setting in motion the institutions that guarantee the fairness of the process. In brief, the youth will be an educated and trained team for Activism for Fair Elections.

The training will take place during the remaining of 2022, while the project will continue during 2023, the election year. The activities will be held in seven major municipalities in the country.

In order to coordinate election tasks, an ICT fact-finding instrument will be created for developments connected to the right to free elections. This fact-finding ICT instrument will require citizens to report on issues during the election campaign. Each signal will be coordinated with individual members of the youth team in the municipality or local area from where the signal will be reported. After that, the members of the Youth Team will make a verification and will campaign to promote a solution to the reported problems.

The signals will become part of a (weekly) verification report shared with the media and other important public actors.

If during the field verifications of the signals, it turns out that there are issues which are subject to Verification and Administrative Investigation, a Report will be prepared and made available to the relevant Institution (state commissioner for elections).

The project aims to strengthen the role of young people in education, promotion and advocacy for free elections. Through our planned activities, citizen monitoring on various electoral aspects will be carried out. Young people will be educated with a culture of civic engagement, activities where civic pressure promotes regularity of the process will be held and in the end, the institutions mandated to conduct verifications and administrative investigations for irregularities and violations during the electoral processes will be set in motion.

## **Key Project Activities**

- A youth team for Fair Elections will be created. Young people in different municipalities of the country will be identified, interviewed and the most driven will be selected, trained, assisted and activated for fair elections.
- ICT for Fair Election, an instrument where different individuals can refer problems and obstacles encountered during the campaign and the election process. The instrument will be well-structured and also suitable for android, giving the individual members the possibility to also track the location where the reported irregularities are happening through the signal and to compile the categories of violation or difficulties applied by USAID, which is one of the *opensource* platforms that has worked in various countries for election monitoring, by citizens and in real time.
- Training of young people on fair elections. Curriculum development, lecturer selection and 2 to 3 day practical training.
- Compilation of reports and their distribution, public pressure for improvement of electoral procedures. Advocacy aimed at the Institutions to encourage them to carry due administrative investigation and contribute to the process improvement.

**Beneficiaries** of This Project are: Young activists, journalists with a vocation to contribute to democratic processes in the country. Similarly, the implementation of this project will also benefit the citizens in general; Journalists; Activist and others committed to Democratic Culture and Processes.

**Project Sustainability:** As a project aiming to educate, raise awareness and build capacity among young people, in addition to the direct results during the implementation, we also anticipate long-term results, whose effects will extend well beyond the projects' timeframe, . Likewise, we expect that the young beneficiaries of these activities will continue to exercise their civic role even after the completion of the project.

Part of the sustainability of the project is also offering the best model of civic engagement against the widespread apathy of the citizens in Albania and we will ensure that the activists, who will join voices, will develop civic reaction and engagement skills.

## **Project Dates**

June 2022 - July 2023

## **Results**

Qualitative Results:

- Strengthening Active Citizenship for Democratic and Quality Processes
- Youth Education and encouragement for activation and volunteering in regular election processes.

- Creating Instruments for Raising Civic Voice, ICT for Fair Elections. An instrument of real time electoral process monitoring.
- Increase of the Citizens, civil society and voters' participation in electoral process.

### **Evaluation**

- 40 to 50 young people empowered, trained, assisted and activated for Education, Participation and Awareness.
- A curriculum and 3 to 4 day training on Education Fair Choices and Activism
- An Open Source Platform, Android Mobile Application
- Weekly Reports on the Election Situation during the Campaign (7 to 8)
- Reporting to the relevant Electoral Institution on Electoral Irregularities (1 to 2).
- Verified alerts for election irregularities and problems during the 2023 Local Election Campaign.

### **Project Team**

- Project Leader
- Moderator
- Coordinator for Local Volunteer Groups
- Trainers

### **Name and Background of the Representatives for this Project Proposal**

Aranita Brahaj Project Leader. Master Degree in Democracy and Human Rights European University of Tirana, and a Degree in Law. She has vast experience in project management and supervision, working with both private and public institutions. Working with AIS for more than 11 years gives her a solid understanding of the complex experience in the communication and public relation management.

### **Project Requested Amount**

For implementing this project, we are requesting a financial support of \_\_\_\_\_ Euro which will cover its total costs. The organization will cover all institutional costs, such as office rent for engaged staff as in-kind contribution to the project.