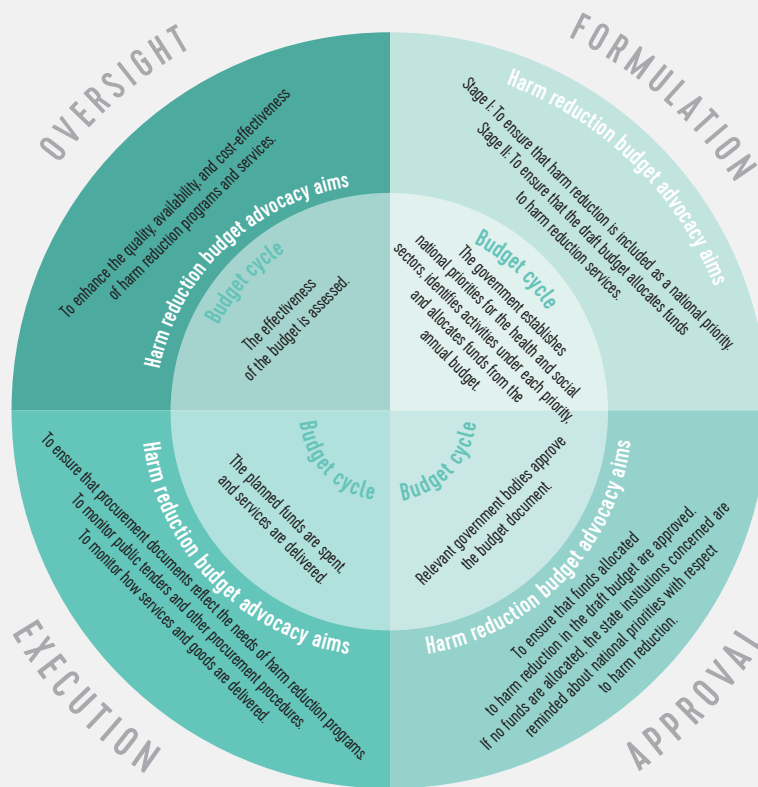


HARM REDUCTION AND THE BUDGET CYCLE



Adapt budget advocacy to your needs!

Before starting any engagement in the budget process, civil society and community-based organizations are advised to obtain detailed information about:

- ▶ Country-specific budget processes in general, and for harm reduction in particular;
- ▶ The functioning and financing of the health system in general, and of harm reduction in particular; and
- ▶ Specific needs of the communities you are trying to get the money for.

WHY BUDGET ADVOCACY?

Budget advocacy is a set of strategic actions undertaken by civil society actors and communities to influence how governments allocate and spend public money. This process has two general objectives:

1. To increase the budget allocated to the issue we are advocating for; and
2. To ensure better oversight of how public money is spent.

Budget advocacy for harm reduction means that civil society organizations working in the area of harm reduction and communities of people who use drugs (PWUD) undertake specific, well-planned activities to influence government decisions on the allocation and execution of public budgets for harm reduction services, as well as to enhance the transparency and accountability of government institutions and service providers.

Due to repressive drug policies and the lack of national funding for harm reduction programs, PWUD living in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia experience legal pressures and barriers when accessing health care services. Despite the proven effectiveness of harm reduction, it is largely underfunded. This, in turn, leads to more infections, higher mortality rates, and the continued imprisonment of more and more PWUD.

In view of international donors' decreasing funding for harm reduction programs, one of the key strategic tasks for the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network is to ensure the sustainability of harm reduction programs and a gradual, responsible transition towards funding from alternative sources, including state and municipal programs and budgets. Budget advocacy is crucial to achieve this task.

For more information, see: www.harm-reduction.org/issues/budget-advocacy

