Terms of Reference for the Final External (Programme) Evaluation of the European Union-funded "Budgets for Citizens" (CTR 439-255) Project

I. Description

The European Union-funded "Budgets for Citizens" Project (hereinafter referred to as the "Project") is implemented by a consortium comprising the "Armenian Lawyers' Association" NGO (Lead Organisation), the "Economic Development and Research Center" NGO, and the Czech NGO "Agora Central Europe".

The Project is co-financed by the "Armenian Lawyers' Association" NGO and the "Economic Development and Research Center" NGO.

The Project duration is **48 months**. The Project commenced on **8 December 2022** and will end on **7 December 2026**. The planned Project budget amounts to **EUR 777,778**. The Project is implemented in Yerevan and the regions of the Republic of Armenia.

The **overall objective** of the Project is to foster an inclusive and transparent budgetary process in Armenia with the participation of civil society. The **specific objective** of the Project is to contribute to enhanced civil society participation in public budgetary processes.

The Project targets four sectors:

1. Justice
2. Education
3. Agriculture
4. Social Protection

The <u>main activities</u> implemented under the Project are as follows:

Outcome 1. Enhanced participation of Civil Society in public budgetary processes

To achieve this Outcome, the Project implemented activities aimed at building the capacities of civil society organisations, improving access to budget information, conducting budget analysis and monitoring, advocacy, organising public discussions, and training and engaging young professionals.

***Output 1.1**. Improved capacity of CSOs for participation in the budgetary process*

<u>Activities implemented:</u>

1. **Development and dissemination of tools to improve access to budget information.**

Tools for presenting information on the State Budget in an accessible format were developed and disseminated, including simplified budgets for the target sectors, informational infographics, videos and other awareness-raising materials. Simplified budgets were developed for the justice, education, social protection and agriculture sectors.

2. **Implementation of training programmes (modules) for CSO capacity development.**

Within the framework of the developed CSO capacity development programme, two cohorts of the Young Specialists and CSO Capacity Development School were organised and implemented. The School was attended by 80 representatives of 40 CSOs selected from Yerevan and the regions of the Republic of Armenia.

The training was delivered in online and in-person formats and comprised four modules. The training included lectures, masterclasses, group and individual analytical assignments, as well as study visits to competent authorities in the target sectors.

3. **Establishment of a pool of experienced experts.**

A pool of experienced experts was established, whose members worked with beneficiary CSOs/media by delivering lectures, practical assignments and masterclasses in the target areas.

4. **Provision of methodological support and knowledge transfer.**

The budgets.am Budget Knowledge Exchange Platform was established, where training and methodological materials were uploaded, including four training modules, with the aim of ensuring the continuous development of knowledge on State Budget analysis and advocacy.

5. **Provision of 12 sub-grants to CSOs for conducting Public Budget analysis and monitoring.**

Sub-grants were provided to 12 CSOs for the analysis of key performance indicators (KPIs) of Public Budget programme implementation, monitoring of budget programmes, expenditure oversight and development of simplified budgets.

Within the framework of the sub-grant projects, CSOs studied and monitored budget programmes in the target sectors, developed analyses and recommendations concerning the respective budget programmes, and submitted them to the relevant sectoral public authorities.

Output 1.2. *Improved awareness on the budgetary processes of and entry points for the civil society.*

Activities implemented:

1. **Provision of 17 sub-grants to CSOs/media outlets for the implementation of advocacy campaigns.**

A total of 17 sub-grants were provided to CSOs and media for organising advocacy campaigns and public discussions in the four target sectors, based on the findings of budget analysis and monitoring.

Within the framework of the grant projects, the organisations implemented advocacy campaigns aimed at raising public awareness of budgetary processes, sectoral policies and budget programmes, and promoting dialogue with the relevant public authorities.

2. **Organisation of events to present and discuss the findings of budget monitoring and advocacy.**

Seminars and public discussions were organised to present and discuss the findings of budget monitoring conducted by CSOs, simplified sectoral budgets, and opportunities for public participation in budgetary processes.

3. **Promotion of public discussions and participatory budgetary processes.**

The Project provided support for organising and expanding dialogue between public authorities and civil society on budgetary processes. Discussions involving CSOs were organised with public authorities on budgetary processes in the education, agriculture, justice and social protection sectors.

Output 1.3. *Improved access to quality human resources for budgets' analysis, monitoring and advocacy by the partner CSOs.*

Activities implemented:

1. **Organisation of the Young Specialists School and delivery of training.**

Two cohorts of the Young Specialists School were organised and trained. The School's training was delivered online and comprised four training modules. Approximately 200 young people received training at the School.

2. **Development of the professional and practical capacities of young professionals.**

Following completion of the online training, an advanced 12-day training course was organised for participants who had demonstrated high academic performance.

3. **Implementation of public awareness-raising events by young specialists.**

With the involvement of School graduates, public awareness-raising seminars were organised and conducted to disseminate knowledge on the State Budget, budget analysis and monitoring, as well as public participation in budgetary processes.

4. **Employment of young specialists in CSOs through 12 special sub-grant projects.**

Young Specialists selected from among the School graduates were employed as budget specialists in CSOs that had received grant support under the Project.

Overall, 41 sub-grants were provided under the Project across three areas:

1. 12 sub-grants to CSOs for conducting Public Budget analysis and monitoring.
2. 12 separate sub-grants for the employment of young specialists in CSOs.
3. 17 sub-grants to CSOs/media for the implementation of advocacy campaigns.

** The activities listed above are the main activities implemented under the Project. In addition to these, other activities were also implemented, which are likewise subject to evaluation within the framework of the Project's Final External (Programme) Evaluation.*

II. Purpose of the Final External (Programme) Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the activities implemented under the EU-funded Project, their relevance to the overall and specific objectives of the Project, the activities implemented and the expected results. The results of the Final External (Programme) Evaluation are primarily intended for the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia and the Project implementers.

III. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation should address the following questions:

- To what extent does the Project's implementation align with its overall and specific objectives (relevance)?
- To what extent was the Project coherent with and complementary to other initiatives in the sector (coherence)?
- To what extent were resources used economically and efficiently (efficiency)?
- To what extent were the planned results achieved (effectiveness)?
- What impact has the Project had on its direct and indirect beneficiaries (impact)?
- To what extent are the results sustainable after the Project's completion (sustainability)?

At the same time, taking into account that the Project is approaching completion, particular attention should be paid to the last two questions: impact and sustainability.

The evaluation analysis should cover the following criteria:

Relevance

To assess:

- the extent to which the Project's objectives were relevant to the needs and policies of beneficiary CSOs, other stakeholders, the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the funding organisation;

- whether the existing problems were clearly identified and analysed during the Project, and whether lessons learned from previous experience and existing initiatives were taken into account;
- the extent to which the Project's objectives, expected results and the activities envisaged to achieve them were formulated within a clear and logically interconnected structure.

Coherence

To assess:

- the extent to which the Project was coherent with other initiatives and/or policies implemented in Armenia in the areas of budget transparency, participatory governance, and public financial management;
- the extent to which the Project's activities complemented relevant programmes and initiatives implemented by public authorities and CSOs;
- the extent to which cooperation and coordination with relevant stakeholders were ensured, and whether duplication of activities was avoided.

Efficiency

To assess:

- the extent to which the Project's financial, human and time resources were used economically and efficiently to achieve the planned results;
- the extent to which the Project's budget planning and ongoing management ensured the appropriate use of resources, and whether budgetary constraints or insufficient resources affected the implementation of the Project and the achievement of its results in any way;
- the extent to which the Project's activities were implemented within the established or reasonably revised timeframes;
- the extent to which flexibility and adaptability were demonstrated during the Project's implementation in order to respond to changing circumstances and use resources efficiently;
- the extent to which the Project's management and coordination mechanisms were effective, including cooperation with consortium members, beneficiaries and the funding organisation.

Effectiveness

To assess:

- the extent to which the Project's planned objectives and results were achieved;
- what results the Project delivered for its direct and indirect beneficiaries, as well as its key stakeholders;
- the extent to which the Project's activities and approaches contributed to the achievement of the planned results;

- whether the assumptions, risks or unforeseen external factors envisaged under the Project affected the achievement of results, and the extent to which Project management responded to these circumstances;
- the extent to which the Project was able to secure the support and engagement of key stakeholders, including public authorities.

Impact

To assess:

- the extent to which the Project contributed to broader and longer-term positive or negative changes beyond its immediate results;
- the extent to which the Project contributed to changes in CSO participation in budgetary processes, dialogue with public authorities, budget transparency and accountability;
- whether any unintended positive or negative impacts emerged as a result of the Project's implementation, and what significance they had in terms of the Project's overall impact;
- the extent to which the broader changes observed were attributable to the Project or were contributed to by the activities implemented under the Project.

Sustainability

To assess:

- the extent to which the Project's results and benefits have been maintained or are likely to be maintained after the Project's completion;
- the extent to which beneficiary and key stakeholders have developed a sense of ownership, engagement and responsibility towards the Project's results;
- the extent to which beneficiary CSOs and relevant public authorities have the capacities necessary to continue and use the Project's results;
- the extent to which the necessary financial, institutional, political and other preconditions are in place to ensure the sustainability of the Project's results;
- the extent to which public authorities' policies and priorities, as well as support from civil society and other stakeholders, contribute to or hinder the maintenance of the Project's results;
- what risks may affect the sustainability of the Project's results, and the extent to which mechanisms are in place to address them.

EU Added Value

To assess:

- the extent to which the EU intervention has generated additional benefits compared to the results that could have been achieved through interventions by EU Member States alone;
- the extent to which EU funding and support have enabled the implementation of activities and the achievement of results that would not have been possible without EU intervention or could only have been achieved to a more limited extent;

- the specific role played by the EU intervention in achieving the Project's results and bringing about positive changes;
- the extent to which the additional results and benefits achieved under the Project are attributable to the EU intervention, and the additional value they have generated for beneficiaries, partner organisations and other stakeholders.

IV. Fundamental Principles Governing the Procurement Procedure

In conducting this procurement procedure, the "Armenian Lawyers' Association" NGO shall be guided by the following fundamental principles:

1. **Principle of Non-Discrimination** - aimed at preventing any form of discrimination in the procurement process on the grounds of race, gender, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.
2. **Principle of Open and Fair Competition** - ensuring impartiality, proper documentation and competitive conditions throughout the procurement process, while preventing any form of preferential treatment and conflicts of interest.
3. **Principle of Best Value for Money (best price-quality ratio)** - the contract shall be awarded to the applicant whose application offers the best price-quality ratio, based on the evaluation criteria and scores set out in these Terms of Reference.
4. **Principle of Compliance with EU Sanctions Lists** - excluding persons included in EU sanctions lists from participation in the procurement process.
5. **Principle of Compliance with the Rule of Origin**.

V. Methodology

The evaluation shall include the following tasks: review of documents; organisation of visits and meetings with direct and indirect beneficiaries, partners and representatives of other relevant stakeholders; conducting interviews; carrying out analyses; preparation of the draft report; obtaining feedback; editing the documents developed during the evaluation; and preparation of the final versions of the report in Armenian and English.

The document review shall include an examination of the Project materials, including, but not limited to, the following documents: the Project proposal, logical framework, reports, baseline and end-line surveys, communication materials, calls for sub-grant applications and announcements of training programmes.

The Evaluator shall conduct a participatory evaluation, ensuring the active involvement of stakeholders. The stakeholders to be engaged shall include, but not be limited to, the following: Project staff, specialists and experts, including consortium members; officials of partner organisations; public

servants; CSOs that received training and sub-grants under the Project; young specialists who received training and were subsequently employed by CSOs; and a representative of the donor organisation.

The Evaluator shall take into account the fact that CSOs and media operate both in Yerevan and in various urban communities across the regions of the Republic of Armenia. Attention should also be paid to the selection and application of appropriate research methods for collecting information from stakeholders, including individual interviews and focus groups, as well as the development and use of appropriate questionnaires.

VI. Selection Criteria

The individual (including an individual entrepreneur) or legal entity that submits a complete application for participation in the selection process within the specified deadline shall be selected as the Independent Evaluator.

Applications shall be reviewed in two stages.

Stage 1. Preliminary Review of Applications (Mandatory Requirements)
The following shall be checked:

- Whether the application has been submitted within the specified deadline.
- Whether a complete application has been submitted.
- Whether the application includes all documents required under the "Call for Applications" section of these Terms of Reference, including the signed Declaration and the Certificate of Absence of Conflict of Interest.

Applications that do not meet the above requirements shall not proceed to the next stage.

Stage 2. Scoring of Eligible Applications (100 points)

Evaluation criterion	Maximum score
Quality of the proposed methodology	25
Applicant's qualifications and professional experience	20
Feasibility of the methodology and work plan[1]	20

[1] The feasibility of the methodology and work plan shall be assessed in terms of the sequence of tasks, planned activities and resources.

Ability to complete the evaluation within the specified timeframe	15
Cost-effectiveness of the financial proposal*	20
Total	**100**

* The price score is calculated as follows: (lowest price offered ÷ price of the given application) × 20.

VII. Reporting Requirements

The Evaluator shall submit the following documents in both Armenian and English:

1. Draft Evaluation Report (submission deadline: 25 December 2026).
2. Final Evaluation Report (submission deadline: 10 January 2027). The Final Evaluation Report shall consist of the following sections:

    a. Executive Summary (maximum 2 pages).
    b. Summary of the Evaluation in PowerPoint format.
    c. Brief description of the context and the Project.
    d. Description of the evaluation objectives and tasks.
    e. Description of the evaluation methodology and the methodology used for collecting information during the evaluation, including the tools employed.
    f. Presentation of the main findings, results achieved, challenges and conclusions identified through the evaluation.
    g. Discussion of lessons learned.
    h. Recommendations (programme-related and other).
    i. Annexes, including a list of the Project documents reviewed and literature consulted, and a list of the individuals and organisations with whom interviews, meetings, focus group discussions, etc. were conducted.

Following submission of the Draft Evaluation Report, the Evaluator shall organise an oral presentation and discussion of the report with the Project implementer. The Project implementer shall provide its comments, which shall be taken into account before submission of the Final Evaluation Report.

VIII. Work Plan and Timetable

The Armenian Lawyers' Association plans to select the Evaluator by 24 November 2026. The selected candidate must be able to commence the evaluation on 25 November 2026.

The Draft Evaluation Report shall be submitted by 25 December 2026. The oral presentation and discussion of the Draft Evaluation Report shall take place by 29 December 2026. The deadline for submission of the Final Evaluation Report is 10 January 2027.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Armenian Lawyers' Association invites applications from individuals, including individual entrepreneurs, and legal entities to conduct this evaluation. Applicants shall submit an application in Armenian, which shall include:

- Letter of Interest, outlining the applicant's interest in participating in the procurement procedure and demonstrating their compliance (or, in the case of an organisation, the organisation's and its team members' compliance) with the requirements set out in these Terms of Reference.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV), providing detailed information on the qualifications of the Evaluator(s), their compliance with the criteria described in these Terms of Reference, including a list of similar assignments carried out in the same field.
- Where possible or available, a sample of an evaluation report prepared by the Applicant during the last three years (in Armenian and English).
- Description of the proposed evaluation methodology and the tools to be used for collecting and analysing information during the evaluation.
- Draft work plan and budget, in Armenian drams (AMD), excluding VAT, inclusive of all costs.
- A document confirming proficiency in Armenian and English (a diploma, certificate, a sample of an evaluation report previously prepared by the applicant, or another relevant document).
- In the case of an organisation or an individual entrepreneur: a copy of the state registration certificate, information about the head of the organisation's executive body, and information about the Evaluator(s). In the case of an individual: a copy of the passport or identification card.

If necessary, the Armenian Lawyers' Association may request additional documents, either in original or copy form.
Only complete applications shall be considered by the Selection Committee.

Applications shall be sent to the following email address: info@armla.am , with the subject line indicating: **"External Evaluation of the 'Budgets for Citizens' Project"**.

Questions and requests for clarification regarding the procurement procedure may be submitted to the following email address: info@armla.am .

The deadline for submission of applications is 20 November 2026, at 17:00 Yerevan time.

Note:
If necessary, the Armenian Lawyers' Association may amend the deadlines specified in these Terms of Reference. Information about any such amendments shall be published on the Armenian Lawyers' Association website: https://armla.am