



HEAD OF ARMAVIR COMMUNITY OF ARMAVIR REGION REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Armenia, Armavir Province, Armavir
Hanrapetutyun St., 32 Building
E-mail armavir.armavir@mta.gov.am

Expression of Interest for Joining the OGP Local

TO THE OGP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Date: 14.03.2022

Dear Co-Chairs,

We are writing on behalf of Armavir Municipality, to express our interest in joining the Local-OGP community. Joining this platform is more than important for our municipality, as the experience of the previous years has shown that Armavir is one of the communities where the local non-governmental organizations and citizens actively participate in the implementation of local self-government with their polls, feedbacks, suggestions and remarks, which can be institutionally developed by this initiative.

Currently open governance processes are much more important for the city, because Armavir has become a consolidated community since 2021, including 10 settlements in its form: *Noravan, Khanjyan, Hatsik, Myasnikyan, Mayisyan, Lukashin, Sardarapat, Aygevan, Lenughi, Araks.*

The establishment of democratic, fair, and participatory mechanisms at the local level has always been one of the main pillars of Armavir Municipality. However, we strongly believe that these developments would be better achieved by Local OGP platform, because the Municipality has a stressed mission to stand closer to the people and ensure transparent, accountable and participatory governance.

As a member of the *Union of Communities of Armenia - a national network*, Armavir commonly shares and promoted good governance principles among local self-governance units. As part of the decentralization reform of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure,

Armavir has advanced participatory budgeting processes and installed a live broadcast of community council meetings and weekly procedural discussions.

It is worth mentioning that in 2002 Armenia ratified the *European Charter of Local-Self Governance and the Additional Protocol to Charter* in 2013 on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. Respective changes have been introduced in the Republic of Armenia law on Local Self – Governance to enable and promote citizen participation in decision making at local level. It should be noted that from this point of view Armavir Municipality actively cooperates with non-governmental organizations operating in the city.

Experience has shown that any innovative project in the city will only be successful if we, as a community, support the implementation of these programs with all the relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries. Since there are enough NGOs in the city, they constantly work with the Municipality, *engaging local actors in the development of the city.*

The open platform for the CSOs is not only limited to monitoring actions, awareness raising and inclusion of citizens, but together with us, they apply to many donor organizations and implement various programs in the city. Just recently we have conducted “*Improved preschool education in No.4 kindergarten of Armavir*” with the financial support of the Bulgarian Embassy acquiring necessary property and equipment of the newly renovated kindergarten.

Besides CSOs, there are commissions set up in the municipality, which inspect, control and compile reports on the implementation of works related to the city's infrastructure, organization of procurement processes, improvement of the city, development of educational system, etc. The NGOs working in our city monitor in all directions. They make inquiries from city residents, understand dissatisfaction, raise voices at public hearings in municipalities, discuss, and decide on practical solutions.

Armavir Municipality also actively cooperates with the *private sector* in the city and region, establishing community-private sector partnership. As a result, the central park of Armavir has been improved this year, equipped with a modern playground, attractions and a modern cafe.

Armavir has been an active contributor and actor in **Armenia's democratic record**. Having a vibrant youth community and also being mainly led by young people after the Revolution in Armenia (2018), the city has a proved cadre of civic activism, professionals and artists who are eager to develop the democratic processes in Armavir consolidated community and establish rule of law. Armavir is a promising city in terms of *socio-economic and cultural context* too. The city is very active in organizing literary, cultural, youth and inclusive events with the help of students of the educational and cultural centers subordinated to the community. The residents of the community, all pre-school educational, educational, sports, cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations operating in the community also take an active part. Educational and cultural exhibitions are also encouraged in the city, for example, this year a "Master Class of Cross stones" took place in the central park of the city, which lasted for 10 days.

Right governance policy has become a priority for the municipality of Armavir. Policies in environmental protection, waste management, public utility provision, as well as business development policies have been co-designed and co-implemented by the municipal authorities and local civil society, and private organizations.

The City of Armavir has a *Social Affairs Committee*, which works with the city's socially disadvantaged groups to help them find job, detects donors to help these families, and provide assistance. For local entrepreneurs who have some interesting ideas to do business in the city, the city government offers space on favorable terms if possible.

The Municipality implements *a waste sorting and recycling program* by ISSD. This is an innovative program that communicates people how to handle waste properly, how to save paper and not harm the environment.

Armavir also actively contributes to the *European Covenant of Mayors*, which aims to promote "*green economic development*" in communities, improving the quality residents life. Every year a large number of *trees and flowers are planted* in the city, and most of the city is currently planted with greenery.

Recently, a *Scout Center* was established in the city, the students of which are united around one idea, to be educated as active citizens in the society.

For its democratic processes, Armavir Municipality has been nominated as a "city of potential and background" by *Council of Europe*. The following are some of the major achievements benchmarked by the Armavir Municipality:

- ✓ Holding town hall meetings (public hearing) allowing citizen participation in decision-making processes, particularly designing development programs, community budget, annual work plans, subvention programs, etc.
- ✓ Besides formal open doors, also welcoming non-formal meetings with the inhabitants to listen to their concerns
- ✓ Maintaining online submissions of the applications, request and complaints
- ✓ Online broadcasting/livestream of council meetings and welcoming citizens for asking questions, giving feedbacks to the council members during the meetings
- ✓ Ensuring transparency of information on the official website with regular publications of drafts of Councils and Mayor's decisions, and allowing citizens to provide feedback on the drafts, service delivery procedures and fees, tax liabilities, reports, municipal property management, etc.

Proceeding from the city's potential, experience and motivation, local OGP membership will serve as a "legitimization" of the civic activism in Armavir consolidated community and the institutionalized involvement of civil society and citizens.

Joining the local OGP platform, a collaborative learning platform will be developed to provide the city and the citizens working in open local governments with easy access to knowledge resources, learning opportunities, peers and expert networks.

Even more, we believe that this platform will multiply the acquired democratic directions and enhance the OGP values on local level by redesigning the current program to be more flexible, scalable and inclusive.

With this, we seek membership in the local OGP network to promote and support our progress towards open, transparent, accountable and participatory governance at the local level, as well as to extend our best practices to other municipalities in Armenia.

MAYOR

DAVIT KHUDATYAN



Letter of Support

Armavir Municipality Civil Society Organizations

15/03/2022

Dear OGP Steering Committee Co-Chairs,

We are writing this letter of support on behalf of Armavir community's Civil Society Organizations (CSO) to express our robust support for the candidacy of Armavir city as a Local OGP member.

We, as Civil Society Organizations, highly emphasize the essential role of the participation of both government and non-governmental stakeholders to the success of the OGP. That is why we write this letter to show our commitment to cooperate with Armavir Municipality in developing and implementing their action plans through a multi-stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and other non-governmental stakeholders.

During the joint meeting with the Mayor of Armavir Municipality, we noticed the readiness and willingness of the Mayor to join to the Local OGP, meanwhile expressing our mutual interest for successful collaboration.

Armavir Development Center, as an NGO, which has joined the OGP platform from the very first actions in 2011, when the first Task Force was established, demonstrated common interest and ability to implement strong and specific plans to ensure transparent, accountable and participatory action plan development. At this point, the rest of the CSOs also expressed their will to use their experience and resources to seek opportunities for *direct citizen engagement and inclusion of marginalized groups*, to *advocate for specific commitments*, contribute to the *contents of the action plan*, *raise awareness of the OGP process*, as well as *supporting and monitoring the implementation of commitments*.

We, together with the local jurisdiction, fully share and commit to meet OGP values while supporting and being part of the OGP Local processes.

We strongly believe that our participation will contribute to fulfilling OGP principle in co-creation and participation in our city and beyond.

We wholeheartedly express our support in partnership and ask for your consideration of Armavir Municipality for joining the local OGP and realizing ambitious action plans.

Sincerely,

Naira Arakelyan

“Armavir Development Center” NGO

Contacts: armavirnaira@gmail.com, +37494502039



Edgar Azizyan

“Sustain Development Initiative” NGO

sustaindi@gmail.com, +37494090079

A handwritten signature in blue ink.



Margarita Sedrakyan

“Huysi Metsamor” NGO

huysimetsamor@yahoo.com, +37477901188



Susanna Matinyan

“Youth Avangard” NGO

armavircenter.cyc@gmail.com, +37498554406

