

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ՔԱՂԱՔԱՊԵՏԱՐԱՆ
ՔԱՂԱՔԱՊԵՏ

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No

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« 15 » 03 2022

To the OGP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Call for Expression of Interest

Dear Co-Chairs,

On behalf of the Yerevan Municipality, I write to join the Local-OGP community. Sufficient time our Jurisdiction have made significant efforts to establish **democratic, fair, and participatory mechanisms** at the local level. Indeed, these reforms couldn't be achieved without the direct participation of citizens, the CSO community, and other stakeholders.

In 2002 Armenia ratified the *European Charter of Local-Self Governance* and in 2013 the Additional Protocol to Charter on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. Respective changes have also been introduced in the RA law on Local Self – Governance to enable and promote citizen participation in decision making at local level ensuring the balanced development of all administrative districts of Yerevan.

Yerevan is also active contributor to **the European Covenant of Mayors** which aims to promote “green economic development” in communities, improve the quality of life of residents through the use of modern energy-saving technologies and the use of renewable energy sources.

Yerevan is a member of the European sister cities movement with active partnerships at all levels with forefront European Cities. Yerevan Municipality cooperates with more than 50 cities abroad, joins 8 international organizations, creates a large contractual field, jointly implements

programs. Recently, the initiatives are aimed at improving cooperation with Yerevan's sister and partner cities and further expanding international relations.

Expanded or established new partnerships with organizations in dozens of European, Asian and CIS cities, the International Assembly of CIS Capitals, the International Association of French-speaking Mayors (AIMF), the Association of International Urban Lighting (LUCI), the Association of European Cities (EUROCITIES), the "CIUDAD GOSPEL" sub-program implemented by the European Commission, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Strasbourg Friendly Cities Club, the World Heritage Cities Organization.

Yerevan as a member of the Union of Communities of Armenia-a national network is constantly sharing and promoting good governance principles among local self-governance units. As part of the decentralization reform of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Yerevan has advanced **participatory budgeting processes**, **"Active citizen"** participatory tool and installed a **live broadcast of community council meetings and weekly procedural discussions**.

OGP has always been on the radar of Armenian municipalities. Local CSOs have been an integral part of the national OGP Task Forces.

In its strive to officially engage in the Subnational OGP network, the Government of Armenia backed up with the support of donor partners, has carried out a unique open governance readiness assessment among key municipalities. The assessment measured the level of management commitment, maturity of civil society, presence of economic capacities, and citizen participation records. As a result, the capital of Armenia Yerevan applies for Local Open Government subnational partnership. The OGP partnership may give Yerevan a chance **to harmonize and advance the public service provision and citizen engagement ecosystem** of Armenia.

Yerevan has been an active contributor to Armenia's democratic record, especially after the escalation of 2020 and also Covid related challenges.

Right governance policy has become a priority for the municipality of Yerevan. 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 following are some of the major achievements in the platform approach benchmarked by the Yerevan Municipality:

- Organization of regular public hearings allowing **citizen participation in** decision making while designing the 5-year development program, municipal budgets, annual work plans, etc.
- Online gateway for citizen e- participation and decision making via “**Active citizen**” tool.
- Ensured **transparency of information** on the official websites 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.
- “**EU for Yerevan. Solar Community**” program, which aims to reduce energy consumption in public areas through the introduction of energy efficiency tools and the installation of photovoltaic systems on the roofs of 97 multiapartment buildings.
- “**Yerevan Green City Action Plan**” developed in collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. A team of “Ernst & Young” and partner organizations was involved in the development of the project. The “Green City” Action Plan was developed for the first time in the CIS region, based on the methodology of the EBRD, developed jointly with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) “Economic Cooperation” Development Organization. This program, developed for Yerevan, is the first application of the EBRD’s “Green Cities” approach. Such initial work will help other major cities in the region to launch a Green City Action Plan for Green Growth. The program is aimed at promoting sustainable development, landscaping of the city, improving the quality of utilities, public transport reforms, optimizing the capital’s road infrastructure, reducing disaster risks, increasing disaster resilience, and protecting the health of the population.
- European Union initiative “**Mayors for economic growth**”, aim is to support local authorities to design and implement local economic development plans (LEDPs). Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to implement LEDPs in line with the principle of good governance and sound financial management.

- **Online broadcast of meetings of the Council of Elders and weekly discussions.**
- In 2020 the **Youth Council** under the Mayor of Yerevan (hereinafter referred to as the Council) was established in order to promote the development and purposeful implementation of the youth policy of the Yerevan community, as well as to stimulate the participation of youth, informal youth groups and youth organizations in various spheres of public life. The council includes representatives of the Yerevan Municipality, public organizations active in the field of youth, as well as individual citizens. During the meetings of the Council, numerous issues related to the youth sphere were discussed, existing problems in the sphere were identified, and in order to solve these problems, the council gave professional advice, which contributed to the settlement and improvement of youth issues in the city of Yerevan.
- Program on improving the knowledge of members of advisory bodies on **women and youth issues** under the head of the Community. The program was developed jointly with UNDP.

Our Community has a high track record in civil Society engagement and experience of involvement of civil society and leaders recognized in the country at the level of civic opportunities, such as the “Freedom of Information Center” NGO, “Transparency International” NGO.

Still, we should work hard on improving the **citizens-municipality proactive communication and engagement** in crucial socio-economic areas to ensure the sustainability of the policies.

The other main challenge is **fighting corruption and promoting integrity** for all municipal levels. Within this ambition, the role of **Civil Society organizations and partner jurisdictions will be appreciated at most.**

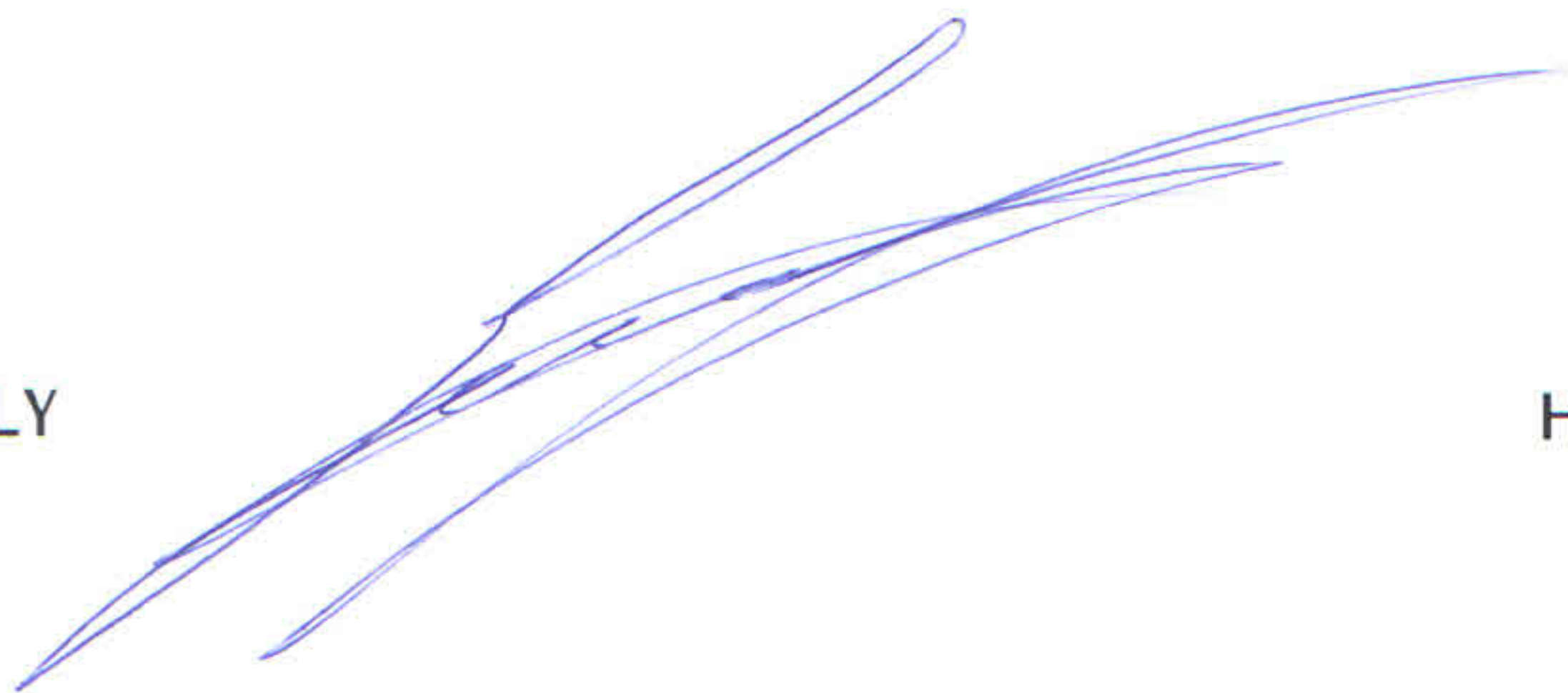
Our region is under turbulence and all democratic values are in the danger. **Strong cooperation and joint efforts of institutionalization** are vital to overcoming the current and upcoming challenges.

Yerevan would welcome the opportunity to work with the Open Government Partnership family to take forward reforms and innovations for our city while advancing open government policy and principles with the Eastern Partnership local municipalities.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with other Jurisdictions and share our experience and learn from peers.

We look forward to this opportunity and confirmation of our integration into the reformers' family.

SINCERELY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping strokes that form a stylized, elongated shape.

HRACHYA SARGSYAN

Staff Development and Investment Programs Department
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Yerevan city Civil Society Organizations' Announcement

Dear OGP Steering Committee Co-Chairs,

On behalf of the Yerevan community's Civil Society Organizations, we would like to show our strong support for the candidacy of Yerevan city as a Local OGP member. We write to join the Local OGP community and set the multistakeholder cooperation with the Yerevan municipality. After the joint meeting with the Deputy major of Yerevan municipality, we show mutual interest and define the capacity for international cooperation. We have a shared view to implementing strong and concrete plans to **fight against corruption in the public sector**, setting up the **integrity definitions and the Code of conduct**, to develop **citizen-municipality direct communication and feedback mechanisms**.

We, the local authorities and CSOs, fully share the fundamental values of accountability, transparency, participation, and innovation. We strongly believe that our participation will be an important milestone to further works towards ensuring principles of open government within and out of our region.

We would be very happy to follow and do more partnerships and collaboration with Yerevan Municipality authorities and help them to realize set ambitions.

Very Sincerely Yours,

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