



## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

Republic of Armenia

Local Economy and Infrastructure Development (LEID) Project

Loan No.: P150327

**Assignment Title:** Consulting Services for Development of Yeghegis Tourism Cluster Vision

**Reference No.:** TRIP-QBS-DYCV-03

The Government of Armenia has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Local Economy and Infrastructure Development (LEID) Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The Local Economy and Infrastructure Development Project (LEIDP) is expected to result in higher economic growth and employment in the selected regions. Project activities intend to focus on improving the quality and reliability of municipal infrastructure; supporting the tourism and agribusiness development; and creating an enabling environment to attract private sector investments.

The Armenian Territorial Development Fund (ATDF) under the LEID project Component 2: Institutional Development, seeks consultancy services for development Yeghegis Tourism Cluster Vision for Armenia Tourism and Regional Infrastructure Development Project (P179968).

Yeghegis cluster is part of the country-level tourism clusterization strategy to be adopted by the Armenian Government. Among 20 clusters identified by the strategy, Yeghegis tourism cluster aims to develop as a year-round cluster focus on cultural and adventure tourism. The cluster aims to attract both international and domestic visitors by offering diverse tourism experiences such as cultural and adventure tourism. The main objectives of the cluster include developing a competitive destination for cultural and adventure tourism, attracting new investors, creating new jobs, and improving the standards of living for the locals.

Yeghegis is a captivating area nestled in the heart of the Vayots Dzor region. With medieval roots, Yeghegis offers a window into Armenia's rich cultural past. Surrounded by the dramatic landscapes of Vayots Dzor, Yeghegis is an ideal destination for those seeking both cultural exploration and natural beauty. Visitors can explore ancient churches and monastic complexes, whilst also participating in adventurous activities such as freeride skiing and hiking. At the moment a huge part of incoming tourists to Vayots Dzor, are only visiting key sites such as Noravank Monastery. Developing the Yeghegis cluster will help to direct part of this influx into a new well-designed direction.

Within the Yeghegis tourism cluster, the focus of interventions within Armenia Tourism and Regional Infrastructure Development Project would be put on but not limited

with the available resources, whose potential has not been revealed at its fullest and used yet. The list of nearby settlements that might be included in the cluster are: Yeghegis (Center), Arates, Hermon, Goghtanik, Artabuynk, Shatin, Hors. The possible investment components might include: (i) restoration, reconstruction of Smbataberd, Proshaberd fortresses, Tsakhats Kar, Spitakavor St. Astvatsatsin, Hermon, Shativanq, Arets monasteries, Chesar Orbelian palace; (ii) develop and improve hiking trails in the areas adjacent to these cultural sites; (iii) construction of parking lots, next to cultural sites, public infrastructure, including bathrooms, rest areas, furnishing of tourist and road signs, as necessary; (iv) establishing a solar photovoltaic station for emerging businesses, as the hotels operating there currently have electricity problems, and overhaul of external street lighting system; (v) construction of water and sewage system (currently operating hotels have problems with water supply); (vi) improve the sections of Yeghegis, Hermon, Goghtanik villages roads that are used as access locations for freeride skiers (roads need redeveloping to fit with the natural environment, rather than being asphalted); (vii) help and support new private projects, such as business who want to establish hotels and recreation zones here.

The cluster investments are expected to, capitalize on the cultural and natural assets of the town and neighboring settlements place, driving tourist spendings through high value tourism product creation.

The objective of this assignment is to assess the current socio-economic context of Yeghegis cluster and propose a prioritized portfolio of investments that will turn the existing unique cultural and natural assets into high value tourism products. These investments should be aimed at enlivening public and private spaces, breathing new life into structures and streetscapes, bolstering local business viability, and enhancing public safety. The envisioned outcome is a more resilient Yeghegis with sustainable and thriving tourism ecosystem.

Throughout the work, the consultant is expected to ensure active engagement of key ecosystem actors, considering this endeavor as a collaborative effort by locals, individuals, and groups to collectively reimagine their surroundings.

### **The consultant shall:**

#### **Phase 1: Cluster Context Analysis**

##### 1.1 Baseline assessment of the current state, including

- i) Assets [detailed mapping of all endowed (e.g. nature, cultural heritage) and acquired/soft (e.g. events/festivals, hiking trail networks)]
- ii) Ecosystem actors [detailed mapping of key public (both local and central), private and civil society actors engaged/contributing to the tourism value chain, mapping/analysis of the current linkages/interdependencies between the actors, and their role within the existing ecosystem]
- iii) Tourist [profiling of key tourist archetypes, their motivations, preferences, variety of experiences (including type, length, cost)]
- iv) Host community [socio-demographic characteristics of the host community, behavioral patterns, perception of tourism impact, social cohesion matters in regard to locals engaged in

tourism related jobs and not, as well as specific skills, trainings that the local population may have to enhance their engagement in the tourism value chain]

## 1.2 Trends / benchmark analysis

i) Analysis of global trends for heritage cave sites and outline the specific advantages/potential that Goris cluster has, to be positioned/branded as a competitive regional destination.

ii) Benchmark analysis - analysis of regional and international benchmarks (both peer and aspirational cases, up to 6) to understand the competitive landscape and potential market segments/niches, while at the same time, including the not successful experiences and lessons learnt.

## 1.3 Gap analysis

[detailed description of gaps identified across the tourism value chain and framing of development needs both within hard and soft infrastructure needs on the public and private side]

## 1.4 Cluster concept

[distinctive narrative of Yeghegis intricately woven with destination's core values, assets and its authentic sense of place]

[outline of potential themes and niche directions driven both by global tourism trends and local context]

## **Phase 2: Cluster Investment Portfolio**

2.1. Selection criteria [strategic rationale/selection criteria for the investments to be included in the cluster with clear explanation of interdependencies and interconnections among the identified needs;]

2.3 Feasibility study of investments per the prioritization selection criteria [detailed description of each investment in the cluster, including operational model, cash flows and financial outcomes; assessment of feasibility from implementation, operation and maintenance stances, stakeholder management plan (power/interest matrix), impact value chain, risk management plan;]

2.4. Investment portfolio – [portfolio level aggregation of all cluster investments in terms of operations and financial flows]

2.5. Management modality of the cluster [governance and modus operandi of the structure responsible for the overall destination management]

The implementation period is **four months** after signing the contract.

The Armenian Territorial Development Fund (ATDF) now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

**The shortlisting criteria are:**

The contractor should:

- a) *Provide evidence on minimum 10-years work experience in development of strategic development documents.*
- b) *Relevant experience in developing and implementing strategic visions in at least one community in Armenia or somewhere else.*

*Examples of similar work samples from previous projects; brief description, duration, name of the client (beneficiary) should be presented. If the results of the service are available online, the relevant link must be presented.*

*The contractor best complying with all the qualification criteria, must present in the Technical Proposal the methodology of services and describe how the relevant professional and organizational standards will be met during the implementation.*

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans by World Bank Borrowers ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub consultancy to enhance their qualifications. The consortium of maximum 3 different members is allowed.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality-Based Selection (QBS) method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours from **09:00 to 17:00 (Yerevan time)**.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by **June 14, 2024, at 17:00 (Yerevan time)**.

Armenian Territorial Development Fund

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