TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Innovation ecosystem data platform development for Armenia

1. General information

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| **Assignment name** | Supporting the Establishment of a Sustainable Ecosystem-Wide Data Monitoring System |
| **Beneficiary** | Expertise France – EU4Innovation East project |
| **Country** | Armenia |
| **Duration** | 1 September 2025 – 31 December 2027 |

1. Context and justification of the need

The EU4Innovation East is a regional project aiming at enhancing the competitiveness of the startup ecosystem within 5 countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. At the heart of the project is a strategy designed to nurture high-performance incubators, expand funding and market opportunities for startups, and provide tailored support to Ukraine’s emerging tech sector. Through strategic co-financing, skills development, regulatory assistance, and a strong commitment to gender inclusion, EU4Innovation East is laying the foundation for sustainable, long-term growth in the region, ensuring that innovation is both inclusive and impactful.

The EU4Innovation East project is funded by the European Union, co-funded by the French government and implemented by Expertise France.

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| Title: | EU4Innovation East – Support to Digital innovation in the Eastern Partnership region |
| Geographic scope: | Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine |
| Duration: | 54 months, i.e. 4.5 years (04/2024 - 10/2028) |
| Financed by: | • EU Commission: 20.000.000,00€  • France: 2.120.000,00€, earmarked for Ukraine |
| Implementing  Agency: | Expertise France (EF) |
| Overall objective: | Contribute to strengthen the competitiveness and maturity of the private sector in innovation in EaP countries through valuable collaborations with European partners |
| Pillars’ description: | Pillar 1 – Supporting early-stage funding  Pillar 2 - Backing high added-value segments and high-performance incubation  Pillar 3 - Strengthening community ties  Pillar 4 – Promoting EaP startups and advancing the development of EU partnerships |

In Armenia, as in other Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, startups are often left behind when it comes to evidence-based support programs tailored to their needs. Absence of dedicated statistics on startups, hinders further analysis of ecosystem achievements, gaps, and overall status. Although falling within SME category have helped startups qualify for support and meet regulatory obligations, there are fundamental differences between startups characteristics and traditional SME categories. Startups aim for rapid growth (i.e employee numbers, funding, scalability, international markets) and are the main drivers of innovation. The rapid raise of high-tech sector in Armenia, with an impressive annual growth of 20–25%[[1]](#footnote-1) also signifies the importance of innovations that startups bring. It is important that strategic planning for innovations in Armenia is rooted in evidence and guided by data-driven insights to determine effective approaches.

Information on Green and Women founders from the EaP region is also disproportional, with female founders accounting for only 15% and green startups just 2% of all early-stage startups registered on international data platforms[[2]](#footnote-2). Further analysis of international databases shows that more than half (52 %) of the early-stage startups funded in Armenia are headquartered in the United States, underlying the ongoing challenge of retaining highly skilled teams domestically and reflecting a bottom-up, private-sector-led approach that lacks a unified national strategy. Data platforms if tailored around the characteristics of early-stage startups’ cycle of development, can also further unlock networks of investors and strategic partners for these ventures.

Armenia currently ranks 63rd on Global Innovation Index (GII)[[3]](#footnote-3). Despite being a growing regional hub, limited international recognition of Armenia’s achievements has been made. This is partly due to the absence of innovation strategy and consequently, applied methodology for measuring the ecosystem. Data-driven approaches for supporting and analyzing ecosystems is key. Combination of real-time data and micro-data, qualitative and quantitative assessment of the ecosystem will also feed in formulation of evidence-based policies and decision making by ecosystem players.

A service for building an innovation ecosystem data platform of Armenian startups is proposed. The service will be led and implemented **by the team of consortium members**. The objective of the assignment is to a) formalize a consortium of stakeholders to support the governance and sustainability of the data platform b) build and host the data platform of Armenian startups c) issue two evaluation reports on the Armenian ecosystem using data from the platform

The overall action A.3.3. Developing a Data Monitoring Practice contributes to the implementation of EU4IE Pillar 3 -Strengthening community ties

3. General objective

The objective of the assignment is to support the development, governance, and long-term sustainability of Armenia’s innovation ecosystem data platform through a consortium of ecosystem players

3.1. Specific objectives

1: A consortium of innovation ecosystem players around the startup data platform is established and formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

2: Data platform of Armenian startups (including Green and women-led startups) is fully operational and hosted by a consortium member

3: Two evaluation reports on Armenia’s innovation ecosystem by an international outlet, using data from the startup data platform is produced

4.Description of the assignment

4.1. Planned activities

The service provider, a leading applicant, must perform the following activities:

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| 1. Conduct research on the Armenian innovation ecosystem 2. Carry out **data collection** on startups based on user needs identified through the research 3. Identify relevant ecosystem players based on the research findings and **establish a consortium**, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Organize a study visit 4. Develop **a methodology** and **a workplan** for building a data platform 5. Set up and host **startups’ data platform, insert startups data** in the platform; International expert’s visit for a launch event 6. Carry out evaluation of Armenian ecosystem and produce **two evaluation reports** |

Minimum characteristics of a data platform

**Startups categories**: HQ location; Founding location; Launch date; Employee range; Exact number of employees; Industry verticals; Business model; Green-marked startups; Women-led startups; EU4IE-supported startups; Funding round (type and dates); Investor names; Funding amount; Aggregated total funding; Revenue (estimated); Valuation (investor estimate); Company overview (text description)

**Back-End Requirements**

Data Storage and Management: Support for structured and unstructured data (SQL/NoSQL).

Search Engine: Full-text search and filtering (e.g., Elasticsearch)

Security and Access Control: Authentication, encryption, role-based access

Manual Data Entry Interface- for manually adding, editing, or deleting startup records, including tagging (e.g., green-marked, EU4IE-supported), uploading documents, or correcting imported data

APIs and Integrations: external system integrations

Data Ingestion and ETL: Automated imports from surveys, APIs, and CSVs with validation

AI/ML Integration: Real-time analytics for startup performance

Report Generation: Export to PDF, Excel, CSV, and JSON with customizable filters

**Front-End Requirements**

User Interface Integration of Startup Categories (see above), *public view*

Search Functionality: Search bar with auto-complete and advanced filtering, *public view*

Filters Panel: Interactive filters by region, vertical, funding, tags, etc. *public view*

Company Cards and Profile Pages: Summarized and detailed startup views, *public view*

Real-Time Dashboard: Live KPIs, funding trends, startup growth metrics, *public view*

Data Visualizations: Maps, graphs, and charts (bar, pie, line, etc.), *public view*

Export/Save Options: Downloadable reports and saved views, *public*

**Compliance and Data Privacy**

Full compliance with GDPR and other applicable data protection standards

Audit logs, secure access, and data ownership policies must be defined

4.2. Anticipated deliverables

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| **Deliverables** | **End date** |
| 1. ACTIVITY Conduct research on the Armenian innovation ecosystem and carry out data collection on startups   **Deliverable 1.1** research report | September 30, 2025 |
| 1. ACTIVITY Carry out data collection on startups based on user needs identified through the research   **Deliverable 2.1** startups dataset | October 24, 2025 |
| 1. ACTIVITY Identify relevant ecosystem players based on the research findings and establish a consortium, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)   **Deliverable 3.1** Signed MoU of a consortium *(organization names, roles, duration, hosting, maintenance and governance of the data platform, reporting, funding and sustainability of the data platform)*  **Deliverable 3.2** Study visit for lead member (s) of a consortium to a selected international data platform HQ -mission report | October 31, 2025 |
| 1. ACTIVITY Develop a methodology and a workplan for building a data platform   **Deliverable 3.1** methodology based on research findings  **Deliverable 3.2** workplan *(tasks, outputs, timeline, responsible person)* | November 14, 2025 |
| 1. ACTIVITY Set up and host startups’ data platform, insert startups data in the platform   **Deliverable 4.1** deployment of the data platform  **Deliverable 4.2** inserting data in the platform  **Deliverable 4.3** system test reports *(user roles, navigations, reporting exports, integrations, bug fixing, security*)  **Deliverable 4.4.** final version of the platform deployed, fully functional and hosted by the consortium member | January 2, 2026 |
| **Deliverable 4.5** launch- event report(including international expert’s visit) | January 23, 2026 |
| **Deliverable 4.6** user manualin English language  **Deliverable 4.7** maintenance plan | January 26, 2026 |
| 1. ACTIVITY Carry out evaluation of Armenian ecosystem   **Deliverable 5.1** evaluation report  **Deliverable 5.2** validation workshop | December 31, 2026 |
| **Deliverable 5.3** evaluation report  **Deliverable 5.4** validation workshop | December 31, 2027 |

4.3. Coordination

The service provider will report to EU4IE national coordinator in Armenia.

Place, duration and terms of performance

1. Start date: 1 September 2025
2. End date: 31 December 2027
3. Effective duration of assignment: September 2025– December 2027
4. Schedule/program:

The provisional program for assignment implementation is as follows:

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| **Activity** | **Place** | **Period** |
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| 1. Conduct research on the Armenian innovation ecosystem | Remote  Onsite (Yerevan, ARMENIA) | September, 2025 |
| 1. Carry out data collection on startups based on user needs identified through the research | Remote | October, 2025 |
| 1. Identify relevant ecosystem players based on the research findings and establish a consortium, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Organize study visit for lead member (s) of a consortium | Remote  Onsite (TBD) | October, 2025 |
| 1. Develop a methodology and a workplan for building a data platform | Remote | November, 2025 |
| 1. Set up and host startups’ data platform-organize launch event with international expert’s engagement | Remote  Onsite (Yerevan,  ARMENIA) | November,2025 to January, 2026 |
| 1. Carry out evaluation of Armenian ecosystem and producetwo evaluation reports **-**organize validation workshops | Remote  Onsite (Yerevan,  ARMENIA) | December 31, 2026  December 31, 2027 |

5. Qualifications and experience

The contracted lead organization of the consortium should have a proven history of successfully providing similar services, as outlined below:

**Proven Experience in Innovation Ecosystem Evaluations:**

* **10 years** **of experience in evaluating and assessing innovation ecosystems** at the national and / or regional clusters level
* Demonstrated ability to design and implement evidence-based assessment methodologies innovation, aligned with international standards and benchmarks (e.g., Global Innovation Index, Startup Genome GSER, StartupBlink’s Ecosystem Ranking and Dealroom’s CEE report)
* Proven track record of translating strategic insights into policy implementation and accelerating startup ecosystems globally
* Strong knowledge of Armenia’s innovation ecosystem is an asset

**Proven Experience in Developing Innovation Ecosystem Data Platforms:**

* Experience in building and maintaining interactive real-time dashboards for startups and innovation ecosystem. Evidence of **implemented data platforms**, supported by reports and/ or active links.

**Strong Ecosystem Engagement and International Presence:**

* Demonstrated experience in engaging diverse stakeholder communities, including startups, investors, incubators, public agencies, academia and donors. **Evidence of leadership and governance on** innovation related topics

1. Application documents

The application and tender documents as well as all correspondence and documents relating to this assignment must be written in English.

Each competing consortium must submit a single file containing the following documents in support of its offer:

* A valid legal identity form of **the lead organization of the consortium**
* The expression of interest form and its appendices, the declaration of honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict-of-interest template and the identification sheet of a third party;
* The draft contract, including **the lead organization of the consortium** financial offer, duly completed, dated and signed;
* A technical offer comprising:
* **a description of the methodology** that will be used to carry out the activities, the methodology should include description of initial *governance and sustainability plan* (proposed hosting environment, roles and responsibilities across consortium, funding streams for sustainability, monitoring and evaluation, legal and regulatory compliance, etc) and initial *data management plan**(proposed data collection methods, data insertion, data analysis and roles, etc)*
* a detailed timetable,
* CV- evidence for qualifications and experience as described in Section 5, consortium members
* CVs of the experts designated for the implementation of the activities (for all activities),
* A breakdown of the financial tender presented in the form of a unit price schedule indicating and covering all the services owed under the contract;
* For any contract whose execution implies the movement of its personnel (or its subcontractor) in an orange or red zone (in accordance with the regional vigilance maps made available by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/>) the safety evaluation questionnaire completed.

The documents requested above are mandatory. If missing, the tender submitted will not be compliant and will therefore be rejected.

All submissions should be made electronically to:

* [info@eu4innovationeast.eu](mailto:info@eu4innovationeast.eu)

Deadline for submission: **August 20, 2025**

The period of validity of the tenders submitted is fixed at 90 calendar days from the deadline for submission of tenders.

1. Evaluation and selection

Expertise France will first check the eligibility of the applications and their ability to provide the service. Finally, it will evaluate the offers according to the following criteria:

* Criterion 1: Technical value (70%)
* Criterion 2: Price (30%)

The technical value of submitted applications will be assessed based on the following evaluation criteria, with a total of 100 points.

* The quality of work and range of projects reflected in **the lead organization of the consortium** portfolio [20 points];
* Methodology [20 points] ;
* Professional qualifications of the team experts participating in the project, evaluated according to their CVs. [10 points] ;
* Experience in working with international organizations, on similar assignments [10 points] ;
* Capacity to deliver the expected results on a timeline compatible with the set deadlines [10 points].

The applicants must achieve a minimum score of 70 percent in technical value in order to qualify for further consideration.

Expertise France may, if it deems necessary, open negotiations with all or some of the tenderers and will conclude the contract with the entity that submitted the best-rated tender in the light of these criteria.

1. Additional information

* If a candidate wishes to have additional information on technical or administrative points of the file, they may send questions before the application deadline to email [nejdeh.hovanessian@expertisefrance.fr](mailto:nejdeh.hovanessian@expertisefrance.fr) with copy to [info@eu4innovationeast.eu](mailto:info@eu4innovationeast.eu)

1. EU4Digital. (2025, April 6). Armenia’s tech evolution: 2025 market insights & industry trends. EU4Digital. <https://eufordigital.eu/armenias-tech-evolution-2025-market-insights-industry-trends/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dealroom.co, Crunchbase.com, EuroQuity, Startupblink, StartupTracker.io [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Armenia Ranking in the Global Innovation Index 2024.](https://www.wipo.int/gii-ranking/en/armenia) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)