TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Local communication company to promote the achievements of Armenian startups and the local innovation ecosystem

1. General information

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| **Assignment name** | Provision of communication services for the EU4Innovation East project |
| **Beneficiary** | Expertise France – EU4Innovation East project |
| **Country** | Armenia |
| **Duration** | 1 April 2026 – 31 April 2028 |

1. Context and justification of the need

EU4Innovation East is a regional project enhancing the competitiveness of the startup ecosystems in five Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. At its core is a comprehensive strategy to foster high-performance incubators, expand funding and market opportunities, strengthen community ties and amplify the visibility of EaP startups. Through strategic co-financing, capacity building, regulatory support, and a commitment to gender equality, EU4Innovation East promotes a sustainable innovation landscape. By amplifying regional achievements and deepening cross-border connections, the project lays the groundwork for impactful growth. The EU4Innovation East project is implemented by Expertise France, funded by the European Union and co-funded by the French government.

A core objective of EU4Innovation East is to highlight the achievements of startups across the Eastern Partnership region. In Armenia, this effort will be supported by engaging a local communication company\* to document, disseminate, and showcase the accomplishments of local startups and the broader innovation ecosystem. Through strategic storytelling and visibility across local platforms, the initiative aims to strengthen public awareness and foster a culture of innovation.

**\*Proposals may be submitted by individual agencies or consortia of companies with the relevant specialized expertise.**

1. Objectives

### General objective

To showcase and promote the achievements of Armenian startups, including EU4Innovation East beneficiaries.

### Specific objectives

1. Showcase the startups and broader accomplishments of the Armenian innovation ecosystem.
2. Increase visibility of innovation success stories in national media.
3. Strengthen public perception of Armenia as a growing tech hub.
4. Description of the assignment

### 4.1. Planned activities

The service provider must provide the following activities:

### Content development

* + 1. **Drafting impact stories in written format**

The communication company will be responsible for drafting impact stories that highlight the achievements of Armenian startups and the broader innovation ecosystem, including beneficiaries of EU4Innovation East.

**Content Focus**

* **Startup Profiles:**
  + Growth trajectory, milestones, and results achieved.
  + Specific contributions of EU4Innovation East support (grants, mentorship, networking).
  + Human-centered storytelling: founders’ journeys, challenges overcome, and lessons learned.
* **Sector/Programme Features:**
  + Stories showcasing multiple startups from the same programme or industry vertical (e.g., agritech, fintech, healthtech).
* **Analytical:**
  + Articles that combine success stories with broader context about Armenia’s innovation ecosystem.
  + Coverage of policy developments, ecosystem enablers, and partnerships.
  + Data-driven narratives (e.g., number of startups supported, jobs created, investment attracted).

**Format & Style**

* Journalistic Style: engaging, accessible, and easy to read. Use of different storytelling techniques to capture attention. Balanced tone: informative yet inspirational.
* Varied Formats: Press releases for official announcements. Feature articles for in-depth storytelling. Opinion/editorial-style pieces to highlight ecosystem trends.

**Additional Elements**

* + Visual Integration: Inclusion of photos, infographics, or startup logos to enhance readability. Coordination with video story production for cross-media consistency.
  + Language & Accessibility: Stories drafted in Armenian and English to ensure both national and international reach. Clear, jargon-free language to appeal to general audiences while maintaining credibility with experts.
  + Attribution & Credibility: Quotes from founders, mentors, investors, and EU4Innovation East representatives. References to verified data and statistics to strengthen impact.
  + Dissemination-Ready: Content tailored for placement in national media outlets.
  + Alignment with EU4Innovation East branding and communication guidelines.
    1. **Producing video stories**

The communication company will be responsible for producing short video stories that highlight the achievements of Armenian startups and the broader innovation ecosystem, including beneficiaries of EU4Innovation East.

**Content Focus**

* **Startup Profiles:**
  + Document founders’ journeys, growth milestones, and results achieved.
  + Showcase how EU4Innovation East support (grants, mentorship, networking) contributed to success.
* **Sector/Programme Features:**
  + Videos highlighting multiple startups from the same programme or industry vertical.
* **Ecosystem Stories:**
  + Short documentaries or explainer-style videos that combine success stories with broader context about Armenia’s innovation ecosystem.
  + Coverage of events, partnerships, and ecosystem enablers (universities, corporations, government).

**Format & Style**

* **Length:**
  + Core videos: up to 3 minutes (suitable for TV, online platforms, and presentations).
  + Adapted versions: 30–60 second reels optimized for Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
* **Storytelling Approach:**
  + Journalistic yet inspirational style, combining interviews, visuals, and narrative voiceovers.
  + Human-centered focus: founders, teams, and beneficiaries speaking directly to the audience.
* **Visual Elements:**
  + Professional filming with clear audio and lighting.
  + Use of graphics, captions, and infographics to highlight key data.
  + Branding aligned with EU4Innovation East guidelines.

**Additional Elements**

* + Language & Accessibility: Videos produced in Armenian or English with subtitles.
  + Cross-Media Consistency: Ensure alignment with written impact stories for integrated campaigns. Adapt visuals for both long-form and short-form formats.
  + Distribution-Ready: Videos delivered in formats suitable for TV broadcast, online platforms, and social media. Reels optimized for vertical viewing (9:16 aspect ratio).
  + Engagement Features: Incorporation of quotes, testimonials, and behind-the-scenes footage.

**4.1.4. Producing institutional videos**

The company will produce short institutional videos (up to 3 minutes) that summarize key findings and recommendations from project knowledge and learning sessions and their appropriation by and perspectives of Armenian stakeholders.

**Core Specifications**

**Content**

* Stakeholder Interventions: Up to 5 stakeholders featured per video.
* Narrative Flow: Clear storyline— findings, recommendations, stakeholder uptake.
* Tone: Professional, accessible, and aligned with EU4Innovation East values.

**Visual Elements**

* Professional filming with high-quality audio and lighting.
* Graphics, captions as necessary.
* Branding consistent with EU4Innovation East guidelines (logos, color palette, fonts).

**Language & Accessibility**

* Produced in Armenian or English with subtitles.

**Distribution**

* Delivered in formats optimized for online platforms.
* Ready for use on websites, social media, and stakeholder presentations.
  + 1. **Dissemination and Showcasing of Impact Stories**

The communication company will be responsible for ensuring that all written and/or video impact stories are widely disseminated and prominently showcased across national and digital platforms.

**Dissemination**

* **Publishing:**
  + Disseminate stories in national media outlets. Secure national press coverage for each story/article in at least 10 distinct media sources.
* **Social Media Leverage:**
  + Ensure stories are shared via the social media channels of the media outlets where they are published (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube).
  + Draft tailored posts for EU4Innovation East’s official channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook) to reflect and amplify each story.
  + Implement paid boosting for all stories on EU4Innovation East’s official channels to maximize visibility and reach targeted audiences.
  + Achieve the following KPIs for boosted posts:
  + Engagement: minimum 500 per post (likes, comments, shares, clicks)
  + Impressions: at least 50 000 per post
  + CTR: above 3.5 for every post

### Anticipated deliverables

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| --- | --- |
| **Deliverables** | **Estimated number of units** |
| 1. Written impact stories | 20 |
| 1. Video stories (up to 3 minutes each) | 12 |
| 1. Adaptation of each video into reels format (30–60 seconds, vertical). | 12 |
| 1. Institutional videos | 3 |
| 1. Dissemination of the impact stories (written and/or video) | At least 10 media outlets per story |
| 1. Final report on the execution of the campaign, materials produced, coverage achieved etc. | 1 |

### 4.3. Coordination

The service provider shall designate a single contact person for project implementation purposes.

A designated contact point within the Communication Department of the EU4Innovation East project will be assigned for coordination with the service provider on behalf of Expertise France.

A launch meeting shall be held three days after the contract award has been notified.

Close collaboration must take place with the representatives from the Communication Department as well as the local office in Armenia of the EU4Innovation East project from assignment preparation right up to completion. Furthermore, regular exchanges must take place with the representatives of the Communication Department from the EU4Innovation East project on assignment progress and any difficulties that may be encountered.

1. Place, duration and terms of performance
   1. Implementation period: 1 April 2026 – 31 April 2028
   2. Place: Armenia
2. Qualifications and experience

The contracted company should have a proven history in successfully providing similar services, as following:

* Minimum of **5 years of demonstrated experience** in media production (written and video) and communication campaigns.
* Strong experience in **storytelling for innovation**, entrepreneurship, or development projects.
* Established connections with national media outlets.

1. Application documents

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

In support of their offer, candidates must submit a file consisting of the following documents:

* A proof of a legal identity form;
* The expression of interest form and his appendices, the declaration of honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict-of-interest template and the identification sheet of a third party;
* The attached GDPR compliance verification form, used to verify that the bidder has implemented appropriate technical and organisational measures such that data processing complies with relevant data protection laws and regulations (GDPR and French data protection legislation), thereby guaranteeing the rights of data subjects;
* The draft contract, including the candidate's financial offer, duly completed, dated and signed.
* A technical offer comprising:
  + CVs of the experts designated for the implementation of the activities (specify);
  + A portfolio or company presentation with at least three relevant case studies or client references from previous work in managing communication campaigns. The portfolio should refer to or showcase company’s experience in communication for innovation and the established connections with the national media outlets.
* A detailed financial offer, including:
  + a breakdown of costs presented as a unit price schedule.
* The financial offer must also include all associated costs, such as travel, accommodation, materials, and any other expenses necessary for the successful implementation of the assignment:

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

Electronic submission via the French government procurement platform at <https://www.marches-publics.gouv.fr/?page=Entreprise.EntrepriseAdvancedSearch&AllCons&id=2863777&orgAcronyme=s2d> is mandatory. Any submission via other means will be rejected

Deadline for submission: **March 13, 2026**

The period of validity of the tenders submitted is fixed at 120 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 70 points.

* The quality of work reflected in the company’s portfolio outlining the successful provision of communication services [35 points];
* Professional qualifications of the team experts participating in the project, evaluated according to their CVs. [15 points];
* Experience in **storytelling for innovation**, entrepreneurship, or development projects [10 points];
* Established connections with national media outlets [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.