



**HEAD OF THE METSAMOR COMMUNITY OF THE ARMAVIR REGION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

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31.10.2023

Expression of Interest for Joining the OGP Local

To the OGP Steering Committee Members

31.10.2023

Dear Co-Chairs,

I am writing on behalf of the Metsamor municipality, to express our desire to join the OGP local. Since its formation, the Metsamor community has been making efforts to establish democracy, effective, fair, transparent and participatory mechanisms at the local level.

Joining the OGP platform is one of the priority goals of the community, since in the case of such cooperation, open governance processes will enter a qualitatively new stage. The experience of previous years has shown that Metsamor is one of those communities where civil society actors actively participate in local self-governance with their observations, suggestions and issues of concern.

Currently open governance processes are much more important for the community, because Metsamor has become a consolidated community since 2021, including 30 rural and 1 urban settlements in its form: Metsamor, Alashkert, Aknalich, Amasia, Aygeshat, Arazap, Argavand, Armavir, Artashar, Arevik, Bambakashat, Berkashat, Getashen, Yeghegnut, Yerashkahun, Zartonk, Haykavan, Margara, Mrgashat, Nalbandyan, Nor Armavir, Nor Artagers, Nor Kesaria, Norapat, Shenavan, Janfida, Jrashen, Vardanashen, Tandzut, Taronik, Pshatavan. Along with community consolidation and population growth, the need for services and the need for more effective and responsible local self-government bodies have increased. Being the first in the region in terms of number of settlements and having more than 80 thousand inhabitants, the community is moving towards proportionate development of settlements, and in this context our intention to join OGP is also emphasized in terms of stimulating the process.

We strongly believe that through the OGP platform we will develop high-quality, integrated, dynamic and digital local governance.

As a member of the Union of Communities of Armenia, Metsamor within the framework of local self-governance, commonly stimulates, widely disseminates and promotes the principles of good governance, enhances community capacity and administrative skills, properly utilizes the potential of local self-governance, ensuring the provision of efficient and high-quality services.

The platform of open cooperation with civil society actors is not limited only to monitoring actions, raising awareness and involving citizens; the key to rapid development of the community is the result of the interaction of these links, thanks to which various programs are implemented in the community.

The Community cooperates with civil society, academia, the private sector and others with the aim of innovative and sustainable solutions to problems in social, economic, cultural, and a number of other areas. The municipality also actively cooperates with the youth of the community. In order to revitalize youth life, to make youth an integral part of the decision-making process in the community, a youth

parliament was formed, which is based on proportional, decentralized youth development.

The municipality also actively collaborates with the regional and private sectors, including the Armavir community, which is a member of OGP local.

Metsamor community has a Social Affairs Committee that works with vulnerable groups, and disadvantaged families, meeting their needs and providing assistance. Provides socio-psychological, psychological, humanitarian and medical assistance. In order to solve social problems, the community actively cooperates with international and national non-governmental organizations, such as: "Armenian Association of Social Workers", "Armavir Development Center", "Child Development Fund", "Family and Community", "Huysi Metsamor", "People in Need", "Mission Armenia" public organizations and "World Vision" international charity organization.

The environmental movement is gaining momentum in the community, within the framework of which waste is sorted and recycled, trees are constantly planted, and individual projects are being implemented to expand green spaces in the community. Currently, work is underway on the construction of a park with an area of 3,227 square meters in the city of Metsamor, a project with innovative solutions is the only one of its kind in the region.

Metsamor city has been nominated as the «Youth capital of the Republic of Armenia for 2023» in connection with which a number of events have already taken place and are planned to take place in the municipality. International Youth Day was celebrated in the city, filled with rich interactive, adventure and educational events. Youth EXPO, the Armenian-Georgian international forum, will be held at the end of 2023. The community constantly hosts cultural events and exhibitions, among which is the annual "Golden Apricot" festival.

Metsamor is a community with great potential, we list some of its accomplishments:

- Ensuring transparency of official information on the municipality's website - regular publications of decisions, projects of the Council and the head of the

Municipality, which allows residents to express their opinion on projects, procedures for providing services and payments, tax obligations, reports, municipal property management, etc.

- Holding meetings of the municipality, regular public hearings that allow citizens to participate in decision-making processes, in particular, in the development of 5-year development programs, the 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,
- Possibility of submitting applications, queries and complaints online, as well as checking the status
- Online broadcasting of council meetings.

Based on the potential, experience and motivation of the community, as well as the fact that one community in the Armavir region Armavir is already a member of OGP local, Metsamor's membership in OGP local will contribute to the "legalization" of civic activity in the region, expanding the framework of institutional involvement of civil society and citizens.

Metsamor has the potential to benefit from joining the Open Government Partnership (OGP) at the local level, which would help expand the involvement of local citizens and community organizations in government decisions and activities. The experience and enthusiasm of the community, combined with the fact that a neighboring community (Armavir) is already an OGP member, make this a promising opportunity to improve our local governance and citizen engagement. Interaction with OGP local will allow global cooperation with other communities, apply modern practices and tools for citizen engagement.

We welcome the opportunity to share experiences with other communities. Moreover, we believe that this platform will multiply the achieved democratic directions, enhance the values of local governance and redesign the current program to be more flexible, scalable and inclusive.

In closing, we express our strong commitment to becoming a part of OGP local, as we work towards fostering open, transparent, accountable, and collaborative governance at the local level.

Sincerely

Head of Metsamor community



Vahram Khachatryan

Letter of Support from CSOs:

Call for OGP LOCAL Expressions of Interest 2023

October 25, 2023

Metsamor, Armenia

Dear OGP LOCAL team,

Armavir Development Center and "Huysi Metsamor" NGOs are pleased to extend their support for Metsamor community's application to join the OGP Local. By becoming an OGP member, Metsamor will also endorse the Open Government Declaration and its underlying principles.

As civil society organizations, we place significant importance on the involvement of both government and non-governmental stakeholders in OGP's success. We are writing this letter to demonstrate our commitment to collaborating with Metsamor Municipality in crafting and executing their action plans through a multi-stakeholder process. This process will actively engage citizens and other non-governmental stakeholders.

In recent months, we've engaged in various meetings and conferences, including the OGP Global Summit, with the Mayor of Metsamor Municipality. We've observed the community's eagerness to join the OGP Local and express our mutual interest in a fruitful 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. We've also supported Armavir Municipality in becoming an OGP Local member, which is currently implementing their first action plan. Drawing from our

experiences and resources, our organizations will actively seek opportunities for direct citizen engagement and the inclusion of marginalized groups, advocate for specific commitments, contribute to the content of action plans, raise awareness of the OGP process, and support and monitor commitment implementation.

In close cooperation with the local jurisdiction, we are committed to adhering to the fundamental values of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) as we actively engage in the OGP Local processes.

We express our full support for this partnership and kindly request your consideration of Metsamor Municipality's application to join the OGP Local and implement ambitious action plans.

Sincerely,

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