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**EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data**

**TERMS OF REFERENCES FOR LOCAL CONTRACTOR**

**PROMOTING FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE RBMP FOR NORTHERN RBD OF ARMENIA  
THROUGH THE SUPPORT IN THE PROCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STRATEGIC  
ASSESSMENT AND EXPERT EXAMINATION**

**AUGUST 2023**

**1. Financing**

European Union (ENI/2021/424-550)

Co-financing by Austria (Austrian Development Agency) and France (Artois Picardy Water Agency)

**2. Procedure**

Simplified procedure according to EU PRAG<sup>1</sup>

**3. Contracting Authority**

International Office for Water (OiEau) - France

**4. Nature of contract**

Service contract

**5. Time period of implementation**

September 2023 – July 2024

**6. Contract amount**

Max. amount: 12 000 EUR

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<sup>1</sup> Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions

## 7. Background information

### I. Background and Objectives

The Programme “EU4Environment – Water resources and Environmental data”(hereinafter - the Programme) aims to operationalise several key mechanisms to preserve natural resources, enabling countries’ green growth in line with the European Green Deal and a post-COVID-19 green recovery. This will contribute towards longer-term environmental, climatic, and socio-economic resilience, and improved human health and wellbeing, as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Programme’s specific objectives are:

- Specific Objective 1 “Water resources management”: Water policies and practices support more sustainable use of freshwater resources and help reduce the adverse impacts of human activities on water quality and ecosystems.
- Specific Objective 2 “Environmental statistics and open data”: The use of sound environmental statistics by the partner countries is extended and improved, and better availability of policy-relevant data to decision-makers and citizens is ensured.

The Programme, co-financed by the European Union, is implemented in close cooperation and coordination with the Implementing Partners: three Member State agencies: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (also called “UBA” or “Environment Agency Austria”), Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and International Office for Water (OiEau, France) as well as two international organisations (OECD and UNECE).

### II. Scope of work

The main objective of this assignment is to promote the adoption of the River Basin Management Plan for Northern River basin in Armenia (7185 km<sup>2</sup>, see map in annex 1) by providing expertise and support to the realization of the Environmental Impact Strategic Assessment and expert examination process.

Draft river basin management plan (RBMP) for the Northern River Basin Districts (RBD) is being developed with the support of the EU4Environment Water and Data (EU4WD) Programme, with active participation of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia. The draft RBMP is being developed in line with the approaches and principles of the EU Water Framework Directive, as well as the approaches and principles envisaged by the water sector legislation of Armenia.

According to the Republic of Armenia Water Code the RBMPs shall be adopted by Government of Armenia Resolution. The formal adoption procedures, among other things, include undergoing environmental impact strategic assessment and expert examination at the “Environmental Impact Expertise Centre” State Non-Commercial Organization, as required by Article 14 (Types of Concept Papers and Intended Activities subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and Expert Examination) of the Republic of Armenia law “On Environmental Impact Assessment and Expert Examination” (2014). Also, according to Article 30 of the law, for carrying out expert examination process, stamp duty shall be levied.

Thus, the Ministry of Environment of Armenia, who is the owner of the RBMP for Northern RBD and the initiator of the process of formal adoption, has requested the support of the EU4WD Programme in the above-mentioned activity, which will help in formal adoption of draft RBMP for Northern RBD of Armenia.

#### *Procedures of Environmental Impact Strategic Assessment and Expert Examination in Armenia*

The procedures of environmental impact strategic assessment and expert examination of the RBMP for Northern RBD of Armenia and corresponding public hearings are regulated by the Republic of Armenia law "On Environmental Impact Assessment and Expert Examination" (2014) and Government of Armenia Resolution "On Order of Public Notification and Discussions" (2014).

According to Article 15 of the law the RBMP for Northern RBD shall undergo environmental impact strategic assessment and expert examination prior to formal adoption. The strategic assessment and expert examination shall be carried out in two phases: (1) initial phase, during which application for preliminary assessment shall be elaborated and submitted to the "Environmental Impact Expertise Centre" State Non-Commercial Organization for review, in accordance to the Article 16; and (2) primary phase, during which the strategic assessment report shall be elaborated and submitted to the "Environmental Impact Expertise Centre" State Non-Commercial Organization for expert examination.

To start the process, application of preliminary assessment of the RBMP for Northern RBD shall be prepared by the initiator (in this case the experienced service provider company), and submitted to the authorized entity with the properly organised and documented materials of the first round of the public notification and hearings. Following that, the second round of public notification and hearings shall be organized on the application of preliminary assessment. The data, location and venue of the public notification and hearings shall be notified to public at least 7 working days in advance of the intended public notification and hearings' date. The public notification and hearings shall be video recorded and corresponding written protocol of discussions shall be prepared with the list of participants, which shall be attached to the application package.

The initial phase of expert examination shall be carried out within 30 working days after submission of the preliminary assessment application by initiator to the authorized entity. In the initial phase of assessment: (i) completeness of the submitted preliminary assessment application shall be checked; and (ii) the scope of potential environmental impact of the mainframe paper and (or) planned activity shall be determined, content and terms of the assessment report shall be established, list of the participants of the process shall be prepared and, based on all these activities, terms of reference for preparation of consolidated impact assessment report shall be prepared and submitted to the initiator.

The 3rd and 4th rounds of public notification and hearings on environmental impact strategic assessment of the RBMP for the Northern RBD shall be organized in the primary assessment phase. At least 7 working days before the public notification and hearings, public notification shall be posted. During the 3rd and 4th rounds of public notification and hearings the initiator shall present a comprehensive and complete information on RBMP for Northern RBDs, including environmental impact strategic assessment report, and respond to all questions raised by the participants of the hearing. The protocol of discussions of public hearings with list of

participants, as well as video recording of all discussions shall be prepared by the initiator which should be included in the package of the strategic assessment report's package.

After the 3rd round of public notification and hearings the initiator shall prepare a corresponding report on environmental impact strategic assessment and present to the authorized body/expertise centre. The authorized body/expertise centre, after examination and revisions of the report and after possible revisions could be required from the initiator, shall publish the electronic version of the report in the official website and initiate the process of 4th round of public hearing together with initiator. Public notification shall be made at least 7 working days before the public hearings. Based on the discussions of the public hearings corresponding protocol shall be developed with the list of participants as an attachment. If during the public hearings or within 18 days of publishing the notification on hearings no written comments or remarks are made by public or any party/organization/community/regional governance body, then it is considered that there are no objections.

The 4th round of the notification and fourth public hearings is organized by the authorized body/expertise centre on the opinions and remarks received during the expertise process and on draft expertise conclusion on RBMP for the Northern RBD. After receiving opinions and remarks on environmental impact strategic assessment report the authorized body/expertise centre prepares draft expertise conclusion and through its official website notifies the public about the date, location and venue of the planned public hearings at least seven working days in advance. Members of public, who were present in the previous discussions and hearings, or who have presented remarks or proposals can be present in these final public hearings. If during this public hearing there are new participants or new justified remarks and suggestions are presented, then the initiator shall provide justified responses to the expertise centre within the period defined by the legislation. The experts of the expertise centre, who have the authority for preparing the final conclusion, shall prepare the report on public hearing and discussions. Within seven working days the authorized body or expertise centre shall publish the conclusion of expertise on environmental impact assessment in its official website.

Thus, it is expected that the consultant will support the Project, the Ministry of Environment and the consultant for elaboration of the RBMP in organizing the four rounds of the public notification and hearings and preparation of the application of preliminary assessment and environmental impact strategic assessment report for the RBMP for Northern RBD. The service provider should work closely and collaborate during the whole period of the service provision with the regional governor office/s concerned to the Northern RBD.

### **III. Deliverables & format**

The following three deliverables will have to be produced during the assignment:

**Deliverable 1:** Application of preliminary assessment, including the materials of the properly organized and implemented 1<sup>st</sup> round of public notification and hearings, in accordance to the Article 16<sup>th</sup> of the RA law "On Environmental Impact Assessment and Expert Examination" (2014) and RA Government Resolution "On Order of Public Notification and Discussions" (2014). Proceedings of public hearing meetings: (i) on of the RBMP Northern RBD; and (ii) on strategic assessment/environmental impact assessment of the RBMP for Northern RBD;

**Deliverable 2:** Environmental impact strategic assessment report, including the materials of the properly organized and implemented 3rd round of public notification and hearings, in

accordance to the RA law “On Environmental Impact Assessment and Expert Examination” (2014) and RA Government Resolution “On Order of Public Notification and Discussions” (2014).

**Deliverable 3:** The positive expertise conclusion.

The reports and deliverables will have to be submitted in English and Armenian languages.

#### **IV. Schedule & implementation modality**

##### **IV.1. Schedule**

Duration of the assignment will be up to July 1st 2024 and is expected to start from September 18,2023. The Client will provide all the required baseline data and documents to the service provider.

Payment for the deliverables shall be considered only when the work is accepted by the project team on behalf of the country beneficiaries.

##### **IV.2. Implementation modalities**

Works shall be implemented by an Armenian company or group of NGO(s), university, research institution, etc. that are not representing the project beneficiaries. The studies will be closely coordinated, assisted and monitored by the project team (OiEau, UBA and the project representative) and the beneficiaries (Water Resources Management Department, and Water Policy Department of the Ministry of Environment and the Water Committee of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures). Close coordination shall be ensured with the beneficiaries who will take full ownership of the documents produced.

The service provider should have at least 4 years proven experience in the environmental impact assessment and involvement in the expert examination processes as an initiator or by another role. The potential service provider should have also proven experience in at least 3 case experience in environmental impact strategic assessment and expertise involvement for concept documents, at least 1 of which should be in the sector of RBMPs.

The contractor has to designate competent specialists for each part of the assignment as well as a coordinator who is responsible of managing these specialists, harmonise the documents, and inform regularly the project team.

### **Contact details:**

Local Representative of the Programme “EU4Environment Water and Data” in Armenia:  
Mr Vahagn Tonoyan, Senior Water Management and Coordination Expert,  
v.tonoyan@eu4waterdata.eu

The responsible thematic leader:  
Mr Yannick Pochon, International Office for Water (OiEau), y.pochon@oieau.fr

### **V. Participation to the tender**

Interested parties (individual and legal persons) are invited to inquire the full tender dossier containing instructions and further information about the tender procedure from Ms. Ilke CICEKOGLU, Project Assistant, International Office for Water (OiEau) and Mr Yannick POCHON, Thematic Leader, International Office for Water (OiEau).

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Deadline for submission of the technical and financial offer is **11 September 2023, 18:00 CET**.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Map of Northern river basin

