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**Programme:** Private Sector Development South Caucasus (PSD SC): “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” project

**PN:** 13.2144.7.007

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**Activity:** Restructuring and redesign of [www.syarabi.am](http://www.syarabi.am) website to become an information platform on issues of economic integration of Syrian refugees in Armenia

**Period:** August 2017- March 2018

## 1. Brief information about the programme

The three countries of the South Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, face the challenge of generating broad based inclusive growth to reduce the urban-rural gap and poverty above all in rural regions. In view of the small domestic markets with low purchasing power, the primary aim is to expand foreign trade. High policy priority is therefore accorded to diversifying the economy and improving the competitiveness of export products. The greatest export potential exists in processed agricultural products and - though not in all countries - tourism development. In Azerbaijan, there is a scope for revitalizing the plastics industry.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), however, do not take advantage of the market opportunities provided by the European Union (EU), the main trade partner. The core problem lies in the lack of adequate entrepreneurial and institutional preconditions for developing foreign trade-oriented sectors for inclusive growth. The reasons for this lie in the insufficient capacities of the institutions engaged in economic policy, trade promotion and vocational qualification policy. There is hardly any inter-institutional cooperation and dialogue with the private sector. Services are lacking in the fields of production, quality, procurement and distribution. The increasing demand for specific qualifications and competence poses a further challenge for private sector development. Also, there is no systematic exchange of information and experience on economic policy issues among the South Caucasian countries.

The objective of the technical cooperation (TC) measure, Private Sector Development South Caucasus, is therefore: the conditions for the development of selected foreign trade-oriented sectors for inclusive growth have improved. To achieve this, the programme focuses on three intervention fields: (1) Improvement of the business development framework conditions, (2) Promotion of the private sector in the selected value chains, and (3) Vocational qualification. Business needs-oriented promotion of the private sector in the value chains with proven export potential is of the central importance. The intervention areas ‘Improvement of the business development framework conditions’ and ‘Vocational qualification’ are geared to this. The programme supports the implementation of policies, strategies and pilot measures.

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The measures are implemented in cooperation with the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and in coordination with the ongoing projects of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that support agricultural production in Georgia and Azerbaijan within the value chain promotion framework. An integrated development partnership (PPP / public private partnership) with the economy initiated by the predecessor programme in Armenia and Georgia is continued. There is potential for further cooperation with the private sector. The programme operates at the national level in each of the three countries as well as in pilot regions and promotes the exchange of experience and cooperation at the regional level.

In addition, there are three projects attached to the PSD SC programme which are in line with the objective and intervention fields of the programme:

(1) The project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” tackles the challenges related to Syrian refugees with an Armenian ethnic background that immigrated to Armenia during the last years due to the civil war in Syria. In order to support the economic integration of refugees in Armenia, the project supports the economic dialogue and coordination of relevant stakeholders, the integration in existing business networks as well as the access to and the adaptation of employment and qualification programmes. It comprises three main intervention fields: (1) Public-Private-Dialogue and Participation, (2) Integration in Value Chains and Business Networks, (3) Vocational Qualification and Skills Development.

(2) The project “SME Development and DCFTA” is related to the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) which was signed by Georgia and the European Union in 2014. The European Union is co-financing a support to SME development and DCFTA to be implemented by the GIZ Private Sector Development programme. It seeks to assist the Georgian Government in the implementation process of the DCFTA, supporting the development of the SME sector to adapt to DCFTA regulations and facilitating Georgia’s integration into the EU market. The project comprehends following components: (1) Improved enterprise development framework and SME participation in the political dialogue, (2) Comprehensive capacity development for SME support institutions with focus on improved service delivery, (3) Enterprise development and promotion via clustering and support to business networks on national, sector and local level, (4) Business clusters and networks integration into relevant existing EU networks for enterprise development, investment and trade promotion.

(3) The project “SME Development” in Armenia is co-financed by the EU and implemented by the GIZ Private Sector Development Programme. It focuses on the improvement of the Armenian business and investment climate and the support to the development of the SME sector, in particular the link between research and economy as well as access to finance. The projects comprehends following result areas: (1) Improved policy making process and coordination of support to SME development, (2) Strengthening private sector organization to

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implement SME policies, (3) Improved process of commercialization of ideas linking research institutions and business via cooperation networks, (4) Improved design and management of economic clusters (incubators, technoparks and Free Economic Zones (FEZ)).

The entire programme has a total budget of EUR 29,693,940 which is divided as follows:

- General PSD SC Programme: EUR 15,760,000 for three years and five months (2013 - 2017).
- Project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia”: EUR 2,500,000 for two years (2015 – 2017).
- Project “DCFTA and SME Development” in Georgia: EUR 5,033,940 for four years (2015 – 2019).
- Project “Support to SME Development in Armenia”: EUR 6,400,000 for four years (2016-2019).

**Module objective:**

The conditions for developing selected foreign-trade sectors for broad-based inclusive growth have improved.

**Indicators:**

1. In the economic sectors promoted by the programme, altogether six business framework conditions issues (e.g. sectorial development programmes, trade regulations and procedures, vocational qualification, economic integration of Syrian refugees in Armenia) have been improved.
2. Two policy documents (strategies) each contain gender-specific or conflict-sensitive measures.
3. 70% of interviewed enterprises in the promoted value chains (Wertschöpfungsketten) that have introduced new or improved management tools have raised their business performance (citing the positive changes, e.g. increased turnover, improved quality of products, diversification of business contacts, reduction of rejects, and improved energy efficiency, adaption to climate change, and human resource promotion and development (HRD)).
4. 50% of enterprises in the promoted value chains (Wertschöpfungsketten), including complementary service providers, assess the labour-market relevance of the new or adapted offers for vocational qualification as higher than that of existing offer for vocational qualification (in particular the offer for Syrian refugees in Armenia).

**Partner structure: executing agencies and intermediaries**

The programme has no regional lead executing agency. This function is, however, performed by the ministries of economics in each country - Armenia: Ministry of Economy (MoE);

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Azerbaijan: Ministry of Economy and Industry (MEI); Georgia: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD).

### **Implementing partners by intervention field**

In the intervention field “**Business Development Framework**”, the implementing partners are government and independent planning and analytical institutions (think tanks) and also the relevant line ministries with their subordinate institutions. The main concern in Armenia is to strengthen the capacities for implementing existing policies. In Georgia, the new government has filled many positions with well-trained, young but politically inexperienced personnel who now face the challenge of drafting and implementing coherent strategies. In Azerbaijan, planning and implementation capacities also need strengthening.

The implementing partners in the intervention field “**Promotion of value chains**” are the respective government agencies for export promotion, providers of business services (providers of training and coaching services, quality infrastructure service providers, e.g. test laboratories), private-sector institutions (employers’ federations, trade and business membership organizations) and selected enterprises, with which new approaches to improving entrepreneurial capacities will be developed and implemented as pilot measures for cooperation and development partnerships with the private sector. Many of these partners have comparatively low capacity levels for implementation. The market for business development services is only beginning to take shape. Associations are often heavily influenced by individuals and only represent a part of the companies engaged in a sector.

In the intervention field “**Vocational qualification**”, the implementing partners are the respective national ministries of education and their institutions, educational and vocational training institutions, local governments and authorities, as well as business membership organizations and representatives of civil society. Here, too, capacities for planning and implementing strategies differ greatly. The weakest links are often the underfinanced and poorly equipped vocational schools.

Regarding the project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” the programme cooperates with partners such as the German Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation with its expertise in financial consulting and management, the German Association for Adult Education (DVV) with its expertise in life-long learning and trainings, the German Business Association (DWV) and the Senior Expert Service (SES) as well as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

### **Target groups and other stakeholders**

The programme target group is females and males, owners and employees of enterprises (primarily SMEs) in the selected value chains and their suppliers. Female entrepreneurs are often engaged in micro and small enterprises in the traditional sectors (agriculture, production and sale of processed food, handicrafts, service sector, e.g. tourism).

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As part of the vocational qualification measures, the target group includes job-seekers and alumni of vocational schools and higher education institutions as well. In Armenia, significantly more women are affected by unemployment than men (35% of the female workforce is unemployed vs 22% of male; data from 2011). The unemployment rate among young women amounts to 40.7% in Georgia and to 69.4% in Armenia (32.4% and 42.7% respectively among male youth).

Other stakeholders are the teaching staff of vocational schools; specialists and managerial personnel of think tanks; representatives of ministries involved; service providers (e.g. export promotion agencies, management consultants) and non-governmental organisations.

The project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees” concentrates on Syrian refugees in Armenia as a target group with a special focus on women and people of the age between 30 and 50 years as well as young people.

### **Macroeconomic, socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental assessment– Impact and sustainability**

**Gender equality:** The programme seeks to improve the involvement of women in the economic life. In all three countries, gender-specific measures are targeted to support the entrepreneurship and integration of women in business life. At the general framework level, this entails raising awareness of this issue and accounting for gender in policy and strategy documents. Stake holding by women is also taken into account when selecting value chains for promotion and the participant enterprises can be advised on conducting measures for gender equality. In terms of education and qualification measures, the programme aims to involve both genders equally with a special focus on participants from rural areas. Therefore, the development measure has beneficial effects on gender equality.

**Participatory development/good governance:** The programme strengthens the steering mechanisms and management capacities of ministries and subordinate authorities, e.g. in structural policy, trade promotion as well as in qualification and youth employment promotion. The capacities of government and independent think tanks are strengthened for preparing and compiling economic policy studies. A major contribution is the inclusion of capacity development measures in business life. Considering the multi-level approach, the programme fosters a public-private dialogue (PPD) among the private sector, civil society and government at national and local (sub-national) level. Strengthening these processes enables male and female entrepreneurs to better articulate and advance their interests.

**Rural development and food security:** All three countries are largely agrarian. The main export potential lies in processed agricultural products. Trade promotion measures therefore also aim indirectly at promoting rural development, which is a major secondary objective of the programme. Especially the tourism sector and the promotion of the wine/beverage sector bear substantial potential to foster rural development. The accompanied measures to

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improve the framework conditions and the education and qualification offer also contribute to the sector's development.

### **Trade development**

The measures contribute directly or indirectly to strengthening the trade development within the South Caucasian countries as well as with the Eurasian economic region and the EU. The cooperation with the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme and the SME Panel which is initiated by the EU reinforces the mentioned orientation.

**Impacts on human rights:** The programme subscribes to the guiding principle of sustainable development. It advances the political and economic participation of women and men and the right to freedom of association by promoting business institutions. The programme also conducts its activities adhering to specific values and standards of transparency.

**Impact:** Improving the quality of business management in SMEs makes a contribution to raising the competitiveness of the group of enterprises, which plays a major role for employment. The promotion of largely agricultural value chains geared to foreign trade and improving the employability of women and men contributes in the long term to more income and employment, particularly in rural regions, and to narrowing the urban-rural gap. By promoting the framework, building the capacities of implementing partners and stepping up public-private dialogue, the programme contributes to institution-building. In order to increase the impact the programme accessed its scaling-up potentials already in 2014. It is planned to integrate the working results into national and sectorial strategies and policies on a local level by including education providers and cooperating with upstream and downstream segments while also considering the business interests. The increasing use of best-practice experiences is initiated on a regional level and will continue via a dialogue platform and a regional newsletter.

**Sustainability:** The South Caucasus is highly affected by the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan which also influences the regional exchange beyond the political sphere. The programme succeeds to establish a dialogue between relevant economic actors including Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, so far there are no concrete business cooperation or joint projects between the two countries. The commitment of the private sector turns out to be the key factor for economic development and diversification. Especially the need to improve the vocational education and qualification as well employment promotion is increasingly recognized and supported on a political level. A remaining risk is the lack of financial and personnel resources of the vocational education and qualification providers as well as the still negative image of vocational education within the society. The effects of the DCFTA trade agreement in Georgia, the accession of Armenia to the Eurasian Economic Union and therewith the international redefinition of priorities in terms of regional cooperation, are closely observed by economic and political actors. Azerbaijan accelerates the process to enter the WTO. Currently, the service market is still too underdeveloped to develop a

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sustainable service portfolio for enterprises considering the new trade and investment context. However, the programme seeks to assure optimal sustainability by reforming the business development framework in the above-mentioned areas, supporting the implementation of policies and strategies and building institutional capacities in the areas of training, policy analysis and export-dedicated services.

## **2. Current situation in the field of assignment**

According to the RA Government, the current number of refugees present in Armenia is estimated to be around 16.000<sup>1</sup> out of which the vast majority lives in the capital city Yerevan (as of February 2016) Almost all of the arrivals are ethnic Armenians. The Republic of Armenia (RoA) introduced a number of measures assisting persons displaced from Syria, offering them a variety of protection options, namely by way of (i) simplified acquisition of citizenship, (ii) accelerated asylum procedures or (iii) privileged granting of short, mid-term or long-term residence permits. Nearly 13,000 Syrian Armenians are already processed for Armenian citizenship and have received their Armenian passports.

The quite heterogeneous and diverse in terms of professional background and skills - group of Syrian Armenians is welcomed with open arms by the Armenian government and society. This combination of i) SA enthusiasm, broad skills, experience especially in the Middle East and Mediterranean and service-orientation together with ii) Armenia's declared interest and commitment for their integration supported by the international community offers excellent pre-conditions to tap into the many economic opportunities. This can possibly help Armenia's economy to innovate and grow and open new markets regionally and internationally.

There are multiple support programmes established and running for Syrian Armenians aiming at assisting them to establish their own businesses, integrating into Armenia's economy and becoming sustainable in Armenia. While a number of Syrian Armenians have well benefited from such programmes/projects and successfully established their own businesses gaining recognition and respect for the diverse products and services offered, there are still quite a large number of those who are hesitant or reluctant for new initiations or have failed previously with entrepreneurial activity due to various reasons, or simply lack the financial and/or technical capacities. Thus, the GIZ EISRA project aims to launch a series of PR activities to encourage and inspire Syrian Armenians in Armenia in becoming economically active and establishing their own businesses, by presenting the examples of successful Syrian Armenians, as well as raising awareness about the running Syrian Armenian businesses in Armenia both nationally and internationally. The first item of the PR package would be 1) a coffee-table booklet of success and inspiring stories of Syrian

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Diaspora, Hranush Hakobyan, "From Humanitarian Response to Sustainable Solutions " workshop held on 24 February 2016, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/837125/hranush-hakobyan-the-state-needs-diaspora-assistance-for-integration-of-syrian-armenians.html>

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Armenian businesspeople accompanied by their photos and in addition 2) an optional promotional booklet, followed by 3) an exhibition with large print photo stories. There are two further optional PR items to follow: 4) short video clips on success stories in English and Armenian with maximum duration of 90 seconds each and 5) a comprehensive documentary film, including the EISRA project description, key data, interviews and activities.

So far, the project “Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia” has undertaken the following activities (2015 - July 2016):

- Continuous exchange with the RA Ministry of Economy (MoE) to discuss activities.
- Baseline study to assess the current situation and needs for Syrian refugees in Armenia. It was conducted in August 2015 and financed by a Study and Expert Fund (SFF).
- Development of a proposed offer and its commissioning by the BMZ (September-October 2015).
- Strategic planning workshop (November 2015): developing and structuring priority activities divided by intervention fields in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders including representatives of the refugee community. Intervention fields are as follows:
  - o Public-Private-Dialogue and Participation (establishment of a platform for the economic integration and employment of Syrian refugees in Armenia)
  - o Integration in Value Chains and Business Networks (integration in business networks/value chains and adjustment of existing support programmes to facilitate the development of enterprises)
  - o Vocational Qualification and Skills Development (adjustment of existing support and qualification programmes for jobseekers and employees)
- Stakeholder analysis (December 2015):
  - o Specific definition of the target group: (1) Business men/women – including experienced producers and service providers, self-reliant business women and flexible entrepreneurs, (2) Youth – including young and creative start-ups, university students and young graduates, young jobseekers and employed young people as well as impoverished young people who predominantly fled alone, (3) Women – including middle-aged women who have never worked before and are either single or embedded into strong family and community ties).
  - o Assessment of challenges when integrating Syrian refugees in the Armenian economy (tight economic situation, lack of recognition of skills and qualifications in Armenia, lack of knowledge and experience with specific Armenian framework conditions, language barriers, computer

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skills, lack of financial resources, high interest rates, high costs for rent).

- Cooperation with the Savings Bank Foundation for International Cooperation (SBFIC) and its activities in the field of financial consulting and management to improve financial literacy of and the access to finance for the target group.
- Cooperation agreement with the German Association for Adult Education (DVV) with its expertise in life-long learning, trainings and as a partner for realizing the employment/entrepreneurship fora.
- Cooperation agreement with the German Business Association (DWV) and the Senior Expert Service (SES).
- Close cooperation with UNHCR office Armenia as a coordinator for humanitarian activities in Armenia which lays the foundation for the activities taken up economic.
- Establishment of a multi-stakeholder working group (WG) on economic integration of Syrian refugees in Armenia. The WG consist of representatives from public, private and non-governmental as well as international institutions and is co-chaired by MoE and GIZ EISRA. The objective of the WG is to coordinate and harmonise the various stakeholders' activities related to the economic integration of Syrian refugees, better understand their needs in order to develop tailor-made (possibly joint) activities. The group meets every 2-3 months.
- Regular exchange with RA Ministry of Diaspora (MoD) to update on activities, e.g. in the framework of the Inter-Agency Commission on Coordination of Syrian-Armenians' Issues
- The business forum & fair 'Week of Economic Opportunities (WEO)': a 4-day event for discussion networking, matchmaking and capacity-building which took place from 19-22 May 2016 at Yerevan Expo. The event aimed at promoting entrepreneurship/employment through revealing economic opportunities and training, building connections, discussing opportunities and challenges, raising awareness for and about Syrian Armenian economic activity in Armenia and building a more comprehensive database of the target group and their specific needs. More information available on the event website [www.syarabi.am](http://www.syarabi.am).

As part of its WEO activity, EISRA has created a website [www.syarabi.am](http://www.syarabi.am). The name of the website "syarabi" (shortened for 'Syrian-Armenian businesses') was created especially not only to represent the event but to use the domain also in the aftermath of the WEO. Currently, it is being used as a platform for download and updating of EISRA publications (factsheets, reports, videos etc), but doesn't contain any additional information on economic integration issues. As envisaged from the very beginning, the website should be handed over to a local body for continuation and sustainability. Syrian Armenian Union (SAU) NGO expressed its interest to take over the maintenance of the website already in autumn 2016,

which EISRA and the working group members very much welcome, but so far hasn't taken any further action.

It's important to note that the working group member Armenian Red Cross has developed a website <http://job-syrianarmenians.am> serving mainly as a matchmaking and job-finding platform for the target group. EISRA and Red Cross have already discussed how to synergise the two platforms to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure biggest benefits for the users.

The task of the re-structuring, redesign and updating process will be outsourced to a consulting company. The website is expected to be handed over to a stakeholder or partner operating in the field of the economic integration for the Syrian refugees after the GIZ PSD SC EISRA project ends: the chosen organisation needs to be prepared for this accordingly by the contractor.

### **3. Conditions of the assignment**

#### **3.1 Objective and tasks**

##### **a. Objective**

The objective of the activity is to re-structure and redesign already established website [www.syrarbi.am](http://www.syrarbi.am) to serve various stakeholders as a permanent and steadily updated information platform for the economic issues of the integration of Syrian refugees in Armenia.

The structure, design and content of the website have to be adjusted and updated accordingly on a regular basis until the end of the project. GIZ PSD SC EISRA developed a concept which supports the re-structuring process but may also be adapted by incorporating the expertise and experience of the related stakeholders about the needs of and opportunities for Syrian refugees in Armenia.

##### **b. Tasks and deliverables**

<b>Tasks – Deliverables</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
I. Change design/structure/layout of the website	End of August – Mid October, 2017
1. Kick-off & coordination meeting with GIZ EISRA and relevant stakeholders for establishing the new for the restructured website	End of August
2. Presentation of at least 3 options with rationales for the design/structure/layout of the website for	04 September

discussion with and commenting by GIZ EISRA (up to 3 rounds of editing)	
3. Final concept and activity plan of the approved option	12 September
4. Implementation of the proposed and approved design/structure/layout changes	Until end of September
5. Adaptation of the changes to the Armenian language webpage	By mid October
<b>II. Content update &amp; creation (in parallel to task I.)</b>	<b>Mid September – Mid October 2017</b>
1. Bilingual content creation and/or adjustment (Armenian and English) to the new categories	End September – Mid October
2. Content (audio-video materials, texts, PPT etc) creation, editing, proofreading	Ongoing, monthly
3. On-page Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) for higher Google rankings	Mid September - late September
<b>III. Creation of manuals for the maintenance of the website and instruction of involved persons</b>	<b>End of September – end of October 2017</b>
1. Create manuals for the maintenance and easy handover to another stakeholder or partner after the GIZ PSD SC EISRA project ends	End of September
2. Instruct EISRA team and potential future owner of the website on maintenance	From beginning of October
<b>IV. Ongoing support and maintenance</b>	<b>September - March 2017</b>
1. Provide ongoing assistance for technical issues with the website as well as upcoming updates and changes when needed (structure/design/layout)	Upon request
2. Monthly reports of Google Analytics to track the website's traffic	Ongoing

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### **c. Required technical features**

- Easy to manage for administrator/communication expert within project
- Easy to navigate for visitors
- Dynamic structure (adding/deleting menu items)
- Content management option (preferably WordPress)
- Photo and video gallery
- Document download section
- Social sharing possibility
- Responsive to all devices
- More features to be offered by the website developer.

### **3.2 Coordination and communication**

- The hired company reports to the GIZ EISRA team leader.
- The consultants will coordinate closely in all technical issues with the GIZ EISRA team member Ms Sirvard Amatuni. All activities have to be approved by the GIZ team beforehand.
- The consultants will be provided with the following documents by the GIZ team:
  - Relevant content for updates,
  - Links to the related stakeholders and organisations,
  - The flyers, factsheet and ppt. presentation of the project,
  - The link to the Corporate Design Center of GIZ:  
<https://www.giz.de/cdc/en/html/index.html> to follow the corporate design guidelines of GIZ mandatory for all printed materials and products, electronic presentations and other media.

### **3.3 Submission Requirements**

The hired company needs to meet the following requirements:

- At least 5 years of experience in website development field; strong portfolio of IT products, especially WordPress-based websites (provide minimum 3 completed website products as reference)
- Ability to deliver products and communicate in both English and Armenian (written and spoken)
- Deliverables in British English
- Excellent understanding of and ability to meet the demands and standards of an institution of international development cooperation

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- Structured, transparent, constructive and professional way of cooperation and communication
  - Creative and innovative approaches to website development and design
  - Having a Syrian Armenian developer/web designer/content writer in the team will be considered an asset.
  - Prior experience in the Syrian Armenian environment and knowledge of Western Armenian and/or Arabic language are an advantage.