**Terms of Reference**

**Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs on Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning System**

# **Basic Information**

**Position Title:** MEL System Technical Expert

**Position Type:** Consultant

**Location:** Yerevan, Armenia

**Duration:** Six months - extendable based on performance

**Number of positions available:** 1

# **Background**

Democracy International (DI) is implementing the USAID-funded Protection, Inclusion, and Empowerment Activity, which aims to support disadvantaged and marginalized populations in Armenia through needed legal/regulatory framework changes, improved services, and intensified cooperation between the government and non-governmental actors to address the needs of vulnerable populations. It will do so through five interrelated components: 1) Inclusion, protection, and empowerment policy and legislative reform; 2) Improved inclusion, protection, and empowerment services for vulnerable and marginalized groups; 3) Enhanced protection and inclusion of those affected by instability and violent hostilities/conflict; 4) Outreach, communications, research regarding social sector policy and services; and 5) Adaptive social protection to address the impacts of global or domestic crises.

As part of this effort, DI is supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (MLSA) to: a) strengthen its monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems and practices; b) generate and use evidence gathered through its MEL system to inform program planning, policy formulation and decision-making; and c) strengthen its position as a leading advocate for policies within the management of the MEL systems.

To achieve the primary goal, the specific objectives for the Consultant are:

* Collaborate with the MLSA MEL focal point to assess current MLSA MEL practice, highlighting strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement.
* With support from the MLSA MEL focal point, design a comprehensive MEL system that equips the MLSA with the tools and methodologies necessary to systematically track, assess, and learn from the outcomes and impacts of its strategies, policies, and programs. This will include creating performance indicators, data collection protocols, evaluation plans, and feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous learning, improvement, and evidence-based decision-making.
* Collaborate with the MLSA MEL focal point to identify and advocate for legislative amendments that support the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the MEL system within the MLSA. This involves reviewing existing laws, regulations, and policies to pinpoint areas requiring modification and developing recommendations that align with international best practices to enhance the MEL system's operational framework and ensure it can be effectively integrated and maintained within the governmental structure.

# **Position Summary**

DI seeks to hire a consultant to effectively support the MLSA in establishing its MEL system. The specialist must specialize in developing and implementing a comprehensive MEL system and advocating for legislative amendments to ensure its long-term sustainability and effectiveness. **This position is only open to Armenian citizens.**

# **Essential Duties**

* Assess the existing MEL practices within MLSA to understand strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.
* Collaborate with relevant stakeholders within MLSA and with MEL Focal Point consultant to collect feedback, requirements, and expectations for the MEL framework.
* Design a structured MEL framework tailored to MLSA's programs and policies, including objectives, methodologies, data collection protocols, and performance indicators.
* Define key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with MLSA's goals and objectives to effectively measure the outcomes and impacts of policies and programs.
* Establish plans for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of MLSA's programs and policies.
* Establish feedback mechanisms to facilitate continuous improvement and learning, enabling MLSA to adapt its strategies based on evaluation results and stakeholder input.

By effectively fulfilling these duties, the Expert can contribute to establishing a robust MEL system within MLSA, enabling evidence-based decision-making, continuous improvement, and accountability in implementing programs and policies.

# **Qualifications**

**Academic Qualifications:**

* A Master's or Ph.D. in Public Administration, Public Policy, Social Sciences, Economics, Evaluation, or a related field.

**Professional Experience:**

* At least 7 years of professional experience designing, implementing, and managing MEL systems, preferably within governmental or large organizational contexts.
* Previous experience working within or closely with government agencies, understanding the intricacies of public sector operations and policymaking processes.

**Skills and Competencies:**

* In-depth knowledge of MEL methodologies, data collection and analysis techniques, performance measurement, and impact evaluation.
* Strong analytical skills to assess existing systems and identify gaps to provide relevant recommendations.
* Proven ability to manage complex projects, including planning, executing, and monitoring MEL activities.
* Excellent communication skills to advocate for legislative changes, engage with stakeholders, and present findings and recommendations.
* Proficiency in engaging and collaborating with various stakeholders, including government officials, policymakers, and civil society organizations.
* Flexibility to adapt to changing environments and challenges, with a proactive approach to problem-solving.
* Proficiency in spoken and written Armenian and English.

**Personal Attributes:**

* High level of integrity, professionalism, and commitment to ethical standards.
* Keen attention to detail to ensure accuracy and reliability in MEL processes and legislative recommendations.
* Ability to work effectively as part of a team and foster a collaborative working environment.
* Innovative mindset to develop and implement new approaches and solutions in MEL.

The consultant must be based in Armenia, preferably in Yerevan. **This position is only open to Armenian citizens.**

# **Deliverables**

* **Assessment Report of Existing MEL Practices:** Comprehensive assessment document detailing the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in current MEL practices within MLSA conducted with the MLSA M&E focal point.
* **Stakeholder Consultation Report**: Document summarizing insights, requirements, and expectations gathered from consultations with relevant stakeholders within MLSA.
* **Comprehensive MEL Plan**: Written plan for an MLSA MEL system, providing an overview of the system’s purpose plans for performance measurement, evaluation, and learning.
* **Standardized Data Collection Protocols**: Set of standardized, documented protocols for data collection to ensure consistency, reliability, and relevance across all MEL activities.
* **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**: Document listing and defining KPIs aligned with MLSA's goals and objectives for measuring outcomes and impacts effectively.
* **Evaluation Plan**: Guidelines for internal and external evaluations of MLSA's programs and policies.
* **Feedback Mechanisms Report**: Document outlining feedback mechanisms, including processes for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing feedback for continuous improvement and learning.

# **Reporting**

The consultant will report directly to the DI's MEL Specialist, ensuring a harmonized approach to establishing and developing the MEL system and maintaining a clear line of oversight and support.

# **Level of Effort and Compensation**

The consultant is expected to work no more than 90 working days on this assignment until January 31, 2025. The consultants will only be compensated for days agreed in writing by DI and when written reports are submitted on time and of acceptable quality. The payments will be made bi-weekly based on verifying the deliverables and approval by DI’s MEL Specialist. If travel is required, DI will bear the travel expenses in accordance with its travel policy.

# **Application Process**

Interested candidates should email a cover letter explaining why they are the most interested candidate, their resume, and requested daily rate to MELsupport-MLSA@democracyinternational.com by specifying the subject line։ “MEL System Technical Expert”. DI will only consider applications submitted by July 22, 2024.