

### Support to the National Assembly of Armenia to improving parliamentary oversight and communication with electorate

Project title	Support to the National Assembly of Armenia to improving parliamentary oversight and communication with electorate
Country	Armenia. The project will be implemented in Yerevan and will have impact in all regions of the country
Project Purpose	Support the National Assembly of Armenia in strengthening its institutional capacity and performance; to enhance the accountability and transparency of the institution as Armenia completes its transition to a parliamentary democracy model.
Direct beneficiaries	Members of Parliament of Armenia
Indirect beneficiaries	Public at large
Duration	2 year, 4 parliamentary sessions (June 2017- end of March 2019)
Background	<p>Following the adoption of constitutional amendments in 2015 the political system of Armenia will transform into a parliamentary republic. In April 2017, parliamentary elections were held, marking an important step in the country's journey to become a parliamentary republic. According to the new governance system, nationwide elections should be held only for the Parliamentary elections; and the deputies will elect the President. The National Assembly will increasingly become an important actor in the policy dialogue, engaging in substantive debates with the Government on policy priorities and issues. A newer generation of politicians based on grassroots support successfully run and will enter the Parliament to shape new political culture, which is more accountable and transparent and politically proactive, which in its turn will create a window of opportunity for potential actions.</p> <p>This project complements previous initiatives of the British Embassy Yerevan, such as study visit of Armenian MPs to the British Parliament in November 2016. This is a promising time to launch the new project, both in terms of the political environment and in terms of complementing other projects. This project is unique as it enables the transfer of British experience into local policies and legislation directly.</p> <p>The project will work in partnership with the National Assembly to provide technical assistance through a variety of approaches: direct consultations, formal and informal training programmes, experiential learning, and other adult learning techniques, study visits, establishment of working groups and drafting strategic plans. Briefings, manuals, and other materials will be provided to respond directly to information and knowledge gaps.</p> <p>The project will invest in building capacity of members of parliament in strategic political communication to help them better engage with the Armenian public as well as to promote MPs' role in checking and reporting on the work of government departments thus enhancing the oversight function of the legislature. To achieve long-term impact and sustainable results the project will target individual, reform-minded members of parliament and committees actively</p>

	seeking levels of collaboration with the UK and oriented to learn from Westminster parliamentary model. It is envisaged that the project will align activities with the interests and incentives of deputies and professional staff. The project will work with female MPs and support gender participation as well as consider the issues of gender at all stages of project implementation.
Illustrative activities / interventions	<p>The proposed activities should be developed in response to the request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting substantive “New Member Orientation” at the time of parliament first session;</li> <li>• Workshop for standing committee chairs on effective leadership skills;</li> <li>• Strategic planning retreats as best practice to set legislative goals and develop action plans;</li> <li>• Invite UK experts to conduct workshops to focus on strategic communication to cover political communication structures, narratives, message development and discipline, media strategy and interview techniques;</li> <li>• With support of UK experts conduct a series of one-to-one coaching sessions for MPs to build capacity in questioning and cross-examination techniques to help ensure quality debate;</li> <li>• Visit to UK institutions/twinning/networking events for selected parliamentarians and civil society, media representatives;</li> <li>• Capacity building for the parliament staff, including development and implementation of capacity building strategy and plan;</li> <li>• Train and create a network of Gender Focal Points across all committees of the legislature;</li> <li>• Present and discuss UK best practices for developing, exercising, and strengthening oversight functions;</li> <li>• Support MPs to work with CSOs and media to solicit information from and to inform the public about on-going investigations of public issues and concerns;</li> <li>• Provide training on techniques for holding the Government accountable through various instruments.</li> </ul>
Project Level Outcomes	<p>In achieving the project goal, the following outputs should be delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced public outreach and constituency relations mechanisms;</li> <li>• Practical application of committee operations improved, including transparency and accountability;</li> <li>• Ability of committees to perform oversight function improved;</li> <li>• System of review of government expenditure by the parliament improved;</li> <li>• Capability of staff and MPs to prepare quality reviews/speeches improved;</li> <li>• Enhanced capacity of female MPs to realise their rights and capabilities, fulfil their potential;</li> <li>• Representation of citizens’ interests by Members of Parliament increased;</li> <li>• Oversight of the executive branch by legislature improved leading to enhanced efficiency and targeting of Government spending.</li> </ul>
Illustrative indicators to	Progress toward the project should be measured by the following illustrative indicators:

measure success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More suggestions from the Parliament reflected in the enacted budget;</li> <li>• Public perception of the efficiency and targeting of the state budget (feedback from specialized CSOs, experts, donors, media reports);</li> <li>• Public perception of committee effectiveness;</li> <li>• Review and assessment of communication from research and CSOs;</li> <li>• Networking arrangements established in each stakeholder group.</li> </ul> <p>Project will measure behaviour change at four important junctures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the immediate reaction to the capacity-building activity;</li> <li>• learning gained as a result of the project interventions;</li> <li>• transfer of new knowledge, skills, and abilities and their use in the workplace; and</li> <li>• impact or results demonstrated and performance directly attributable to project assistance.</li> </ul>
Project Budget	Up to £ 300,000 in two equal instalments per each UK financial year (April – March). 85% of annual funding allocation should be completed by the end of November 2017 and November 2018.