

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

FIRE RESCUE CONSULTANT(S)

Institutionalising a Volunteer First Responder Service in Armenia (VolFiRe)

1. CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Title of the project	Institutionalising a Volunteer First Responder Service in Armenia (VolFiRe)
Country / Location	Armenia / countrywide
Date of the Action	01.12.2022 - 31.08.2025

The Civil Protection system in Armenia is currently mainly based on professional responders from governmental institutions. They are to a large extent on-duty firefighters and other paid staff of the Rescue Service (RS) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). But Armenia has numerous remote areas particularly affected by the limited coverage through the regional fire and rescue services. These areas are often out of reach if we consider international standards for rapid response to emergencies and disasters. Closest MIA RS local fire brigades are established far from these municipalities, 20km to 45km, and access is often difficult (bad road conditions, mountainous roads...). In some cases, the emergency services cannot at all reach the municipalities due to snow fall in winter or landslides in spring. This fact also applies to ambulances and other medical services. Therefore, the Armenian population living in remote areas is extremely vulnerable in case of emergencies (accidents, medical emergencies, house fires...) and disasters (landslides, forest fires...).

The Austrian Red Cross (AutRC) implemented the StrengthVOL project (<https://strengthvol.org/>) from 2020 – 2022 (funded by DG ECHO and co-funded by the Austrian Development Agency). In the frame of this project the Rescue Services of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia (MES)¹, Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) and Austrian Red Cross (AutRC) developed a comprehensive model for Civil Protection volunteering for Armenia.

In this model, the volunteers are first responders, firefighters and rescuers called “Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups” (VFRGs). The volunteers are affiliated to the Armenian Red Cross Society. Volunteers pass also an exam with the MIA Rescue services (RS) and successful candidates receive from the RS an official rescuer ID.

¹ now merged into the Ministry of Internal Affairs



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The VFRGs are alerted and deployed by the MIA Crisis Management Centre (911) for any emergency or disaster occurring within their municipality. They are available 24/7 and should deploy within 15 minutes after the alert. The groups themselves are responsible for running a VFR station, maintaining equipment and a fire truck. They are alerted and deployed on a regular basis. They are volunteer firefighters like in similar volunteer systems in many European countries, e.g., Austria.

The current project “Institutionalising a Volunteer First Responder Service in Armenia (VolFiRe)” is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), co-funded and coordinated by the Austrian Red Cross (AutRC). It is implemented in Armenia along with three project partners: Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), Caritas Austria (CA) and Armenian Caritas (AC).

All activities are implemented in close cooperation with the Rescue Services of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (MIA, formerly Ministry of Emergency Situations).

The project should contribute to the further development of 4 VFRGs already established within the preceding StrengthVOL project and facilitate the establishment of 8 additional VFRGs in Armenia.

The following 12 municipalities will be targeted (see ANNEX: Project map): Alaverdi, Areni, Ashotsk, Baghranyan, Champbarak, Garni, Kapan, Noyemberan, Spitak, Talin, Vayk, Vedi.

Based on the lessons learned from the StrengthVOL project and its main recommendations, the following outputs have been defined for the VolFiRe project:

- A conceptual framework for Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups in Armenia is developed (Output 1)
- The Volunteer Fire Rescue Group model is an integral part of the civil protection system of Armenia (Output 2)
- Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups are established, operational and well supported countrywide (Output 3)
- The local Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups are deployable for regional and national disaster response (Output 4)
- Enhanced integration of gender equality and disability inclusion in the Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups of Armenia (Output 5)

2. OBJECTIVE & SCOPE

The role of the consultant(s) will be to provide technical expertise for the further development of the conceptual framework for Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups in Armenia (> Output 1) and the establishment of the new Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups in Armenia (> Output 3).

The conceptual framework for VFRGs includes regulations and concepts that describe and define the process of establishing, training and operating Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups successfully. The development of the framework builds on the evaluations and recommendations of the VFRG pilots. It will form the basis for the formation of all new groups and their operations.

Before establishing new volunteer groups, the set of documents developed during the pilot project to regulate their foundation, training, support, and all their activities, will be reviewed, revised and amended. For this purpose, also international examples of similar frameworks and documents for volunteer-based emergency response organisations will be reviewed. The new documents will be combined in a new VFRG handbook of organisation and procedures. The handbook will contain VFRG regulations (on e.g., foundation, membership, decision making, leadership structure and

appointment, area of operation, finance and administration, ...), a generic organisational VFRG chart with roles and responsibilities to facilitate the self-management of the groups, and new as well as revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

A comprehensive training package needs to be developed to ensure, that the volunteers and the Rescue Service (RS) trainers have the necessary knowledge and skills for their respective roles. This will build on materials already available from previous activities with the partners and additionally consider best practices from countries with well-developed volunteer systems. It should include at least the areas mentioned below in each of the respective trainings:

Training of Trainers (5 days) for the regional RS fire departments, who will train the volunteer groups: adult learning principles, specificities of knowledge transfer to volunteers, participants prepare and hold training units

Fire Rescue Basic Training (50 hours) for volunteers: organisation and area of operation of own VFRG, personal and operational safety, personal protective equipment, firefighting and rescue equipment, radio operation, spill or leaking of fluids, fire theory, extinguishing agents and devices, the VFRG in a response operation, technical rescue, working with ladders, ropes and knots, ...

Incident Commander Training (3 days) for some of the volunteers: basics of command and control, VFRG leadership procedure, all VFRG Standard Operating Procedures, VFRG regulations, ...

The training package will include training curricula, trainer handbooks and participant manuals. The training development will be led by a Fire Rescue training expert (consultant) in close cooperation with specialists of the MIA Crisis Management State Academy.

When developing the Training of Trainers and the Fire Rescue Basic Training the draft curricula for pilot trainings recently developed through the EU twinning project “Enhancing Civil Protection in Armenia” led by MSB will be taken into account. Caritas will contribute a module for gender equality and disability inclusion in each of the trainings and ensure that these aspects are also mainstreamed through all the curricula (see project activity 5.2). For participants with disabilities, the trainings will be adapted according to their individual needs. In addition, an individual training plan will define the scope of their participation depending on their abilities and future roles within the VFRGs.

For the further development of existing VFRGs and the establishment of new VFRGs all volunteers will participate in a series of trainings in first aid, and psychological first aid, firefighting and search and rescue in their municipalities. Some of them will also be part of the Incident Commander training. Since the training curricula of all trainings are either completely new or revised, also the members of the already existing VFRGs, who were trained a couple of years ago, will be trained again. The trainings will be split in several units, either day by day, during the week or on weekends, depending on the preference and availability of the individual VFRG members.

3. REPORTING LINES AND MANAGEMENT

The consultant(s) will be recruited and managed by the Austrian Red Cross.

The consultant(s) will report to the VolFiRe AutRC Programme Manager. The consultant(s) will spend several weeks in Armenia for developing the deliverables jointly with MIA RS counterparts and the project team, and for holding trainings for RS trainers and VFRGs in Yerevan and the regions. Between travels to Armenia part of the work can be done remotely with regular online contacts with RS counterparts and project partners.

Travel costs (flight tickets, hotel, local transport) will be covered by the project separately and is not part of this contract.

4. DELIVERABLES & TRAININGS

The consultant (team) can submit a proposal for one or for both lots:

Lot A - Developing the conceptual framework (25 working days):

The consultant(s) will submit the following deliverables:

- VFRG regulations, including for instance VFRG foundation, membership, decision making, leadership structure and appointment, area of operation, finance and administration, ... (approximately 15 pages)
- VFRG organisational chart with roles and responsibilities (approx. 2 pages)
- Existing VFRG SOPs reviewed and revised; these are:
 - SOP1 Alerting, response & communication
 - SOP2 Incident command
 - SOP3 Leadership procedure
 - SOP4 Debriefing
 - SOP5 Reporting
 - SOP6 Personal safety and hygiene
 - SOP7 Maintenance & inventory
- New VFRG SOPs developed (up to 40 pages)
- Compilation of the above in a "VFRG Handbook"

Lot B - Development of comprehensive training package and holding trainings (90 working days):

The consultant(s) will submit the following deliverables:

- **Training of Trainers (ToT) for Fire Rescue:** training curriculum, trainer handbook and participant manual
- **Fire Rescue Basic Training:** training curriculum, trainer handbook and participant manual (all to review after holding the Pilot Fire Rescue Basic Training, see below)
- **Fire Rescue Refresher Training:** training curriculum (adapted from above)
- **Incident Commander Training:** training curriculum, trainer handbook and participant manual (to review after holding the 3 Incident Commander Trainings, see below)

The consultant will hold the following trainings together with RS trainers:

- 1 ToT for RS trainers (Yerevan, up to 30 participants, 5 days)
- 1 Pilot Fire Rescue Basic Training (in region, 30 participants, 8 days)
- 3 Incident Commander Trainings (in regions, 20 participants & 3days per training)

5. TIMEFRAME

The deliverables for lot A will be developed from May to June 2023.

The deliverables for lot B should be developed from May to October 2023. The trainings should take place in Armenia from October 2023 to January 2024.

The travels in Armenia will be defined with the consultant(s). 12 days in Armenia, including travel, are planned for lot A, and 36 days in Armenia, including travel, for lot B.

The exact time frame will be defined with the Austrian Red Cross according to final planning of activities and prior to signature of contract with consultant(s).

6. REQUIRED QUALIFICATION, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE

Depending on the lot (A and/or B) applying to, only the relevant qualifications need to be met.

Competencies and education

- Academic degree or equivalent education in relevant field
- Knowledge of regulatory and organisational frameworks of (European) volunteer fire rescue services and their integration into national civil protection systems
- Extensive knowledge of fire rescue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and ability to develop such
- Extensive expertise and knowledge of fire rescue techniques and relevant equipment
- Knowledge of training curricula and systems for volunteer emergency responders in the European context
- Ability to develop training curricula, content, and manuals for volunteer fire rescue service
- Expertise in adult learning and adequate training techniques
- Intercultural sensitivity and ability to work across language barriers
- Excellent writing and presentation skills and ability to formulate clear and concise
- Strong computer skills in word processing and formatting
- Ability to work self-organised, independently and in a very structured manner
- Strong interpersonal and organisational skills

Experience

- Experience in working with civil protection authorities and actors in a development context
- Experience in working with governmental authorities in Armenia or other post-soviet countries is an asset
- Personal experience of working as a paid or (preferably) volunteer firefighter is required (minimum 7 years), in a leadership role is an asset
- Experience in developing regulatory and organisational frameworks for volunteer-based emergency response organisations is a strong asset
- Experience in developing SOPs for fire rescue or other emergency response organisations
- Professional experience in developing and holding trainings for emergency responders



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- Experience of working with volunteers is an asset

Language Skills

- Fluency in English (C1 written and spoken) is required
- Proficiency in Armenian and/or Russian and/or German is a clear asset

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES & DONOR CONCEPTS

The consultant(s) must conduct the work in accordance with the Red Cross Fundamental Principles (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, universality), the principles outlined in ADA project guidelines and in the “Austrian Red Cross Code of Conduct”.

All relevant documents will be provided to the consultant(s) prior to signature of the contract.

8. HOW TO APPLY

Teams of consultants or organizations are explicitly encouraged to apply.

Interested candidates or organizations are requested to submit

- a cover letter clearly summarizing their experience,
- CVs of all consultants proposed for the work,
- a detailed proposal (including work plan, description of methodology, list and examples of similar work, names and contact details of two referees) demonstrating their ability to deliver on this assignment

with the subject **VolFiRe – Fire Rescue Consultancy** to Thierry Girard, VolFiRe AutRC Programme Manager, thierry.girard@roteskreuz.at.

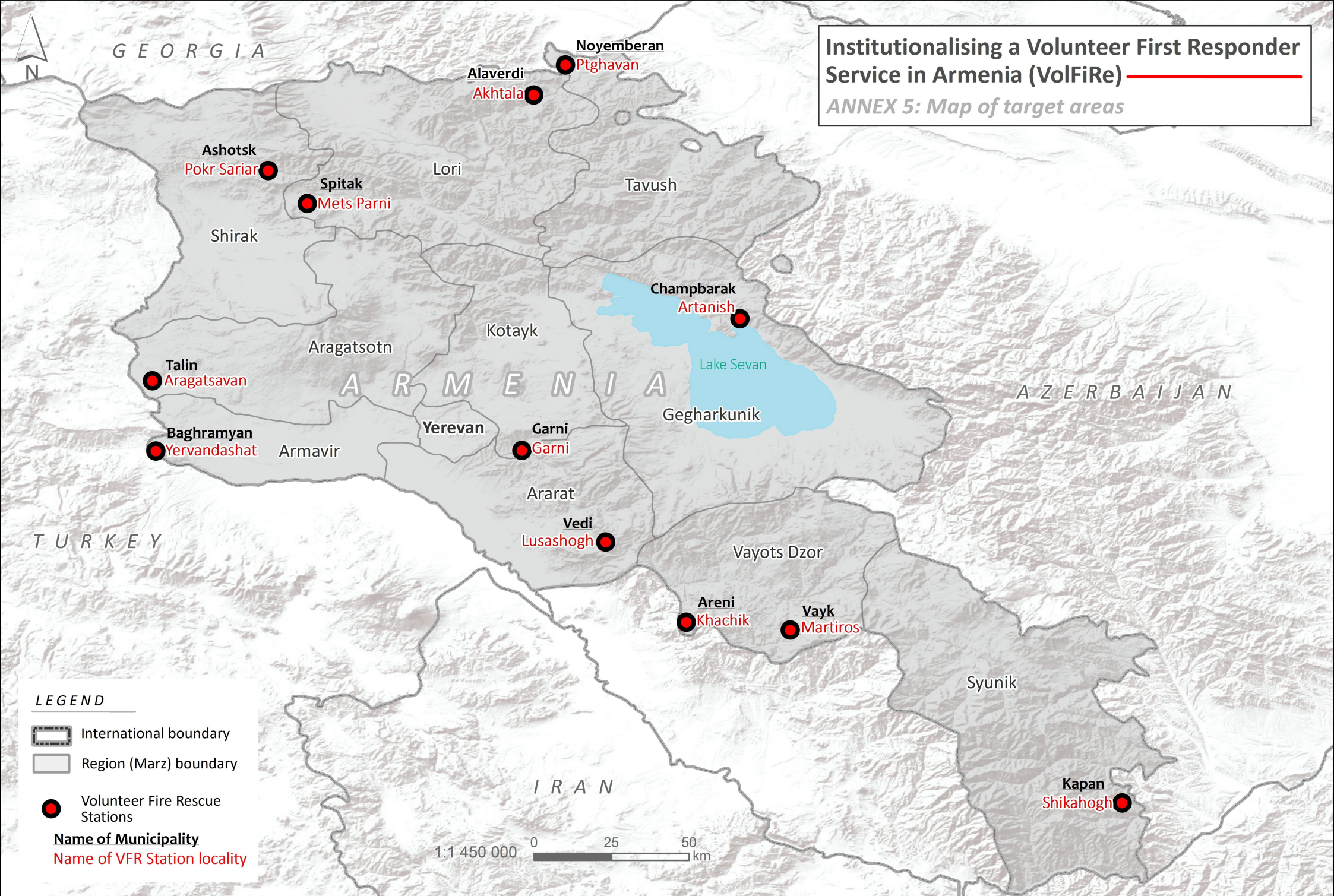
The financial offer should include the proposed budget with an all-inclusive fee in EURO.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 26th of March 2023.

ANNEXES

1. Project map

Institutionalising a Volunteer First Responder Service in Armenia (VolFiRe)
ANNEX 5: Map of target areas



LEGEND

- International boundary
- Region (Marz) boundary
- Volunteer Fire Rescue Stations
- Name of Municipality
- Name of VFR Station locality

1:1 450 000 0 25 50 km