Convention of the Future Armenian
Concept Note

1. 2022/2023, Prototype & Set-up: Innovation Objectives

It is anticipated that the Convention of the Future Armenian will become an effective way for Armenians to collectively address the challenges we face. The **four innovation objectives** for this phase of work are:

- Demonstrate a new way for Armenians to collectively address the challenges we face.
- Prototype and establish a new citizens led deliberative process to address important challenges.
- Generate practical proposals that are being taken forward (by the partner network, by the Foundation, by politicians, citizens, civil society organisations, businesses etc.).
- Provide evidence that The Convention's outputs (e.g. proposals, public debate) are having noticeable positive impact.

The Convention is citizen-centred, and part of a three phased approach:

- Phase 1: Preparation (Experts Committees work),
- Phase 2: Convention (Convention of the Future Armenian),
- Phase 3: Implementation (Partner network).

In order to frame the project as a [social innovation experiment](#) an 'innovation challenge question' guides the Convention:

"How might we create a new citizens led deliberative process to enable Armenians from Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora rapidly accelerate our ability to collectively address the critical challenges we face by 2043?"

Sub-questions followed from the question above fall under two categories: process and impact. The evaluation framework should consider these aspects to ensure learning from prototyping phase is captured.

1. Process questions:
   a. What methods of participation would be applied? (e.g., online, face-to-face, survey etc.)
   b. What is required setof participation methodsand towhom it would be applied? (e.g., what are the learning and accessibility needs of different audiences? what are the most inclusive participation approaches depending on the needs identified?)
   c. What level of r public awareness do we strive for and how do we achieve it? (e.g., whether it make sense to conduct an opinion poll before, during and after the Convention to assess the level of public awareness?)
   d. How should we frame the Convention (e.g., as intervention inpolitics or problem-solving intervention) and the participants (e.g., as power holders or informing power holders)?

e. What should the role of Experts committees be (e.g., as a governance mechanism, as amechanism for providing the information,as a source of background documentations/projects/scenarios or as Convention proposals processing board)?

f. Do we need to have events distributed nationally or globally? (e.g., to What extent will the distributed events inform the Convention's process or its outcomes? What is the purpose of the distributed events?)

g. What are the best methods of overcoming polarisation? (e.g., what are the most effective facilitation or process design techniques to address polarisation? is the process allowing the trade-offs to be effectively raised during the deliberation?)

2. Outcome questions
   a. How do we best support citizens to build their ability to take proposals forward themselves?
   b. How do we set-up the Partner Network to maximise the impact of the Convention?

2. CFA Project Objectives

2.1 Five Top-Level Outcomes are:

Have real world impact
Generate solid proposals for 'securing Armenia's future' in relation to three of the 15 goals of The FUTURE ARMENIAN initiative: "Historic Responsibility," "Armenia-Diaspora Unity" and "Growing Population". If appropriate, these proposals are promoted by other 'actors' e.g., the Partner network, Media, Businesses, Civil society organisations,the Government, donor community.

Influence Policy
Generate concrete proposals for 'securing Armenia's future' that have a apparent impact on policy.

Activate Citizens (enabling citizens to act)
Frame citizens and participants as active agents of change beyond simply seeking to influence the institutions. This assumes that we would:
- frame Citizens' Convention as a decision-making chamber itself, and not just the entity that influences other 'power-holders'.
- support participants to act as spokespeople or advocate on behalf of the generated proposals.

Overcome Polarisation
Bring diverse groups together and generate mutual understanding between people who have (at least initially) opposing views.

Generate a Public Debate
Engage the population of Armenia and Armenian Diaspora in the Convention thanks to a distinctive communication strategy.

2.2 Process outcomes

- Create a new deliberative process that makes it possible to progress in solving urgent and , extremely important challenges that the people of Armenia and Diaspora face
- Get the widest support as possible from politicians, the media,citizens, the political community and academia
- Ensure high standards of integrity in terms of:
  - Transparency
  - Methodological accuracy
  - Participant selection (e.g., possible selection principles: anyone in Armenia and in Diaspora could be selected and anyone in Armenia and Diaspora could participate)

Engage participants who are Armenian residents, citizens and are from the Diaspora
Assumptions:
- We aim to generate proposals but not necessarily a consensus.

2.3 Outputs

Building upon extensive work of The FUTURE ARMENIAN initiative since 2020, in particular:
- Armenia 2021-2041
- 15 Goals
- Futures Studio Analytics
- Surveys and polls

Output 1: Proposals/Scenarios: *citizens' proposals developed based on the previous work (e.g., 15 Goals, 'Armenia 2021-2041' report), as well as the work of the Experts Committees.*

Output 2: Implementation Mechanisms: *set-up initial prototype mechanisms to promote the proposals (e.g. Partner Network and Programme Committee).*

Output 3: 'Participation' process: *set the agenda for the next deliberative process.*

3. Activities

3.1 Project Set-up

Aim:
- *Design & planning:* ensuring that the team has a clear understanding ofexactly how our goals would be achieved, what assumptions we make and what activities will achieve these goals (e.g., Issues selection: 3 of the 15 goals were selected, how was that done?)

3.2 Overall CFA Design

There are two primary elements of the design and delivery of the Convention:
- CFA deliberation process
- Implementation and influencing approach.

3.2.1 Participation System Development

i) Facilitation/Deliberation Process Design
Aim: to design the full Citizens' Convention process
Deliverable documents:
- The agenda

ii) Participant Selection Process
Aim: to design the participants' selection methodology
Deliverable documents:
- CFA Participant Selection

iii) Experts Committees set up and management
Aim: to provide expert input into the CFA.
Method: based on the goals selected ("Historic Responsibility", "Armenia-Diaspora Unity", "Growing Population"), ceate three committees to provide CFA the expertise it needs.

Deliverable documents:
- Framing questions guidelines
- Framing questions
- CFA Governance overview
- Experts Committees Terms of Reference (TOR)

iv) Learning phase design
Aim: develop a learning phase for participants
Deliverable documents:
- Feedback/comments on any learning materials developed by the experts committees (i.e. scenarios, experts justifications etc.)

v) Reporting
Aim: Developing the Final Report.
Deliverable documents:
- Final report

3.2.2 Implementation
- Implementation Plan

3.3 Evaluation & Learning
Aim: to capture learning from the prototype year to improve the process and have more productive events subsequently.
Deliverable documents:
- Evaluation framework