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Press Release

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## COAF and GIZ to Bring Global Science & Art Festival to Lori Province, Armenia

**YEREVAN** — On September 10th, the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) will host a STARMUS Day at the COAF SMART Center in Lori's Debet village to celebrate and explore the intersection of science and art. The event brings the highly-anticipated Starmus festival experience, which will take place in Armenia's capital, Yerevan, this year, to the rural communities of the Lori region, inviting local and international guests to a wide offering of live musical performances, discussions, and transformative experiences.

This year, the sixth edition of Starmus, themed "STARMUS VI: 50 Years on Mars," will be held in Yerevan, Armenia, from September 5th to 10th to inspire new generations of Armenians to explore the world of science. As part of a joint effort between COAF and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), which aims to unleash the tourism potential of Armenia's Lori region, COAF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Starmus Co-Founder Garik Israelian earlier this year. The purpose of the MoU is to make the coveted festival accessible to rural youth in Lori and at the same time increase the region's visibility among local and international visitors.

"We are happy to support 'STARMUS Day at SMART,' in Lori, as we are confident that it will complement other tourism development activities in the region and will also help raise awareness of the Debed Canyon," states the team leader of the EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" (ITTD) project Wilhelm Hugo.

The event will feature an electric lineup of celebrated national and international artists, including Dogma, Kalandra, Katil band, Hayk Karoyi, Degh, Rozen Tal, Manizha, and Hogh Arthun, joined by esteemed figures from the world of science, including Nobel laureate Michel Mayor, physicist Scott Hubbard from NASA's Mars Program, Arbi Karapetian from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, editor-in-chief of Astronomy magazine David Eicher, along with senior editor Michael Bakich.

Guests will be able to explore the vastness of space through additional activities, such as stargazing and planetarium shows. Attendees are also invited to join an outdoor

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expo, where exceptional products created by rural entrepreneurs of the Lori region will be displayed, representing the talent and potential of rural residents to contribute to the development of their communities.

“STARMUS DAY AT SMART” is organized within the “Lori, Your Next Destination” project, implemented jointly by GIZ and COAF.

### **About COAF**

*The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that employs community-led approaches aimed at improving the quality of life in rural Armenia, with a particular focus on children and youth. COAF's target development areas are education, healthcare, social and economic development. COAF launched its programs in 2004, starting in one village and expanding to 66 villages in Armavir, Aragatsotn, Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Tavush regions, impacting more than 107,000 beneficiaries.*

*Since 2015, COAF has developed and started implementing the SMART Initiative. COAF SMART is designed to advance a generation across the rural world through education that will benefit individuals, societies, and the environment. As an exemplary model of development, COAF SMART will be replicated in other regions and communities throughout Armenia. The first COAF SMART Center was inaugurated on May 27, 2018, near the village of Debet, Lori Region.*

### **About Starmus**

*STARMUS is an international festival associated with the names of Steven Hawking, Brian May, Alexei Leonov and other world-renowned artists, scientists and musicians. It was launched in 2011 in Tenerife (Canary Islands, Spain) and later was also organized in Norway and Switzerland.*

*STARMUS is the only festival in the world connecting the brilliant minds and Nobel Prize laureates from science, education, technologies, as well as renowned musicians and artists on the same stage to collaborate and to enhance science communication, to popularize it through interdisciplinary cooperation.*

*The most prestigious the Stephen Hawking Science Medal awarding ceremony is also one of the key events of the Festival. Named after the greatest scientist of the 20th and early 21st centuries, Stephen Hawking, and sponsored by Starmus, it is an ambitious award which recognizes the merit of popular science on an international level.*