### Reporting Agency: United Nations Development Programme

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### Country: Armenia

### **STANDARD PROGRESS REPORT**

### No. and title: “Addressing climate change impact through enhanced capacity for wildfires management in Armenia” UNDP-RTFD 0010455

### Reporting period: 01.07.18-30.09.18

### **I. PURPOSE**

This project will help address the critical issue of forest and wild fire risks exaggerated under the climate change, by supporting national partners building necessary technical capacity and establishing sustainable practices of monitoring, prevention and coordination of roles and responsibilities during suppression of forest fires. The project thus will contribute to the application of sustainable forest management practices enhancing carbon sink, as well as conservation of carbon in agriculture lands and protection of forest ecosystems’ rich biodiversity.

The stated objectives can be ensured through provision of assistance for improvement and enforcement of the relevant policy and regulatory framework, strengthening forest fire early warning and monitoring systems, establishment of clear roles and responsibilities of corresponding national structures, and developing their technical capacity to execute their mandates. The project will provide for contemporary equipment, technologies, and other capacities to consolidate the efforts of respective stakeholders at regional and national levels.

The project will involve forest neighbouring communities in all project activities as key stakeholder and steward for sustainable management of forest resources, including assistance in transfer and application of climate change mitigation innovative technological solutions, e.g. production of pellets and bricks; energy efficient stoves, involving them in agroforestry system through cooperation with technology accelerator, thus generating income, and jobs.

The project builds on a number of past and current UNDP activities in the area of sustainable management of natural resources and disaster risk reduction. The project foresees significant cooperation with the Russian Federation, both through technical and advisory support and in terms of technology transfer.

The Project contributes to **Sustainable Development Goal 13/Target 13.1**: Climate Action: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

**Partners**: The Implementing Partner is the RA Ministry of Nature Protection (MoNP). The Responsible Party of the Project is the United Nations Development Programme. Senior beneficiaries of the project are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

**Funds**: The Project is funded by Russia-UNDP Trust Fund for Development.

### **II. RESOURCES**

Total: 1,000,000.00 USD (Russian-UNDP TFD) is allocated for the project implementation in 2017-2020.

### **III. RESULTS**

In the reporting period, the Project activities were accomplished in accordance with the drafted 2018 AWP, and directed toward achievement of the corresponding indicators that adequately measure progress toward the Project objective and outcomes.

**Component 1: Revised and updated policy and legislation documents, normative acts and/or standards related to forest and wildfire management.**

*Output 1.1 Legislation and normative documents*

* The results of the analysis of legislation related to wildfire management, with the aim of identification of main public institutions at national, regional and local levels involved in wildfire monitoring, prevention and fighting, their rights and responsibilities under different circumstances, as well as the review of existing coordination mechanisms to clarify the roles of different public administration entities to improve forest and wildfire management (inventory, reduction, prevention, monitoring and control) conducted by the Project National Expert have been communicated to national counterpart through series of workshops and local meetings with forestry enterprises and protected areas.

*Output 1.2 Early warning and monitoring systems through remote sensing*

* An International Expert has been contracted to develop wildfire danger monitoring system for Armenia. The tasks of the expert include the following:
	+ Revision of Armenia’s existing national forest fire danger classes (5 classes) to reflect the status of forest ecosystems, verification of these based on new internationally accepted and mostly quantitative characteristics based on temperature, humidity and wind.
	+ Development of recommendations on improvement of national forest and wildfire information system based on improved system of forest and wildfire statistical data acquisition, collection, analysis and exchange in national, regional and international contexts, and improved integration of the system in national crisis management system.
	+ Revision of existing early warning system and development of recommendations on its improvement, based on application of well-developed geo-information technologies using remote sensing, drones and ground-based components.
	+ Provision of recommendations on integration of remote and ground-based data on the unified GIS-based platform to facilitate prompt analysis to reflect the situation and act as a reliable source for decision-making.
	+ Training of respective officials on interpretation of acquired remote sensing data.

**Component 2: Developed forest and wildfire fighting community-based rescue team and regional administrative capacities (including the institute of volunteers) for prevention and mitigation of forest and wildfire risks. Developed and supported alternative entrepreneurship-based activities for the prevention and mitigation of wildfire risks.**

*Output 2.1 Equipment for extinguishing forest fires*

* Visits have been organized to dfifferent regions of the country to meet with representatives of local protected areas and forestry enterprises and discuss the idea of establishing 12 wildfire management districts in Armenia, based on the findings of preliminary analysis of wildfire management system of Armenia conducted within the framework of Wildfire Management Project. Another objective has been the discussion of the preliminary list of firefighting machinery and equipment, procurement of which is planned under the Project. Representatives of local branches of the Rescue Service of MES have also been invited and participated in some of the meetings.
* Contract has been signed with the winner of previously announcement tender for supply of three firefighting vehicles, equipped with necessary tools and machinery for a crew of 5 firefighters. The vehicles will be supplied by the end of October 2018.
* Technical specifications for procurement of firefighting tools, equipment, radio sets, and other necessary items have been developed by the Project and approved by the Project Board. Tender for procurement of necessary tools and equipment for 360 firefighters has been organized and the procurement is expected to be finshed by the end of 2018.

*Output 2.2 Capacity development*

* Training needs of employees of forestry enterprises and protected areas, with emphasize on use of respective tools and equipment, as well as coordination mechanisms during the firefighting operations, have been assessed during the visits to forestry enterprises and protected areas, conducted in August.
* The draft terms of reference for development and adding of forest and wildfire prevention and monitoring module to the curricula of “Forestry and Landscape Gardening” specialization at the Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) and assistance to the introduction of the subject of “Forest and Wildfire Management” in the curricula of the Crisis Management State Academy has been discussed with representatives of above-mentioned institutions and respective tender has been announced. Based on the results of the tender, where the only bid amount exceeded planned budget, the procurement process has been stopped and will be restarted in the beginning of 2019 after revision of the ToR.

*Output 2.3 Investment ideas to reduce wildfire risk*

* National Expert has been contracted to conduct assessment of briquette production potential in Kotayk region of Armenia, including:
	+ Analysis of firewood consumption in Kotayk region of Armenia and estimation of available straw and organic residuals’ potential, based on the experience of other regions of Armenia.
	+ Analysis of wildfire statistics in Kotayk region, particularly in agricultural lands, as well as available biomass volume and firewood consumption trends to inform pre-selection of community cluster for establishing of briquette production facility.
	+ Identification of potential partners for establishing briquette production in Kotayk region, through analysis of available information sources, interviewing of community members from pre-selected cluster.
	+ Identification of organizational model and technical requirements and characteristics needed for organizing briquetting production in Kotayk region and ensuring efficiency.
	+ Conduction of primary financial analysis of briquette production to identify the minimal and maximal production capacity of the facility needed for sustainable operation and ensuring attractiveness for potential partners and investors.
	+ Training and supporting of selected community cluster members in establishing organizational model needed for production of briquettes.

**Component 3: Established sustainable mechanism for the promotion of innovations and replication of technological solutions in Climate Change adaptation and mitigation activities related to agriculture and forestry sector.**

*Output 3.1 Start-up teams, innovators, scientists, engineers, researchers, and entrepreneurs to move their products to the market, create new ventures, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship in Armenia*

* Tender for provision of Climate Change Technology Accelerator program organization and mentorship services has been organized in July and a consortium of companies has been contracted as a result.
* Climate Change Technology Accelerator (CCTA) was launched on September 5, 2018 in partnership with Innovative Solutions and Technologies Center (ISTC) Foundation, Founders Institute Yerevan and Enterprise Incubator Foundation. The core mission of CCTA is to establish a sustainable mechanism for the promotion of innovations and replication of technological solutions in Climate Change adaptation and mitigation activities related to agriculture and forestry sector. CCTA will come to help start-up teams, innovators, scientists, engineers, researchers, and entrepreneurs to move their products to the market, create new ventures, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship.
* Over 30 applications were received from 6 countries and 10 made the list (8 ventures from Armenia, 1 from USA, and 1 from France).

**Project management**

* Project Board Meeting has been held on July 12, during which the draft 2018 annual work plan of the Project has been discussed and approved, as well as there has been presented the approved budget of Project. Presentation of the results of the analysis of wildfire management system in Armenia, with recommendations on necessary equipment and related logistical solutions, has also been conducted during the meeting.

**Implementation concerns:**

Changing of the Government as a result of peaceful revolution has led to resignation of some of the members of Project Management Board, which in turn caused a delay in conduction of Board meeting. Due to this some of the activities requiring coordination with the Government partners, have been postponed.

### **IV. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

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| **Initial Amount (as per approved regional budget) for 2018** | **Actual Expenditures + Commitments (up to 30 September 2018)** | **Current delivery (up to 30 September 2018)** | **Expected Delivery Rate by the end of 2018** |
| 415,400 USD | 205,319 USD | 49.43% | 100.00% |