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**Reporting Agency:** United Nations Development Programme

**Country:** Republic of Armenia

## STANDARD PROGRESS REPORT

**No. and title:** 00100450, Integrated Rural Tourism Development

**Reporting period:** January-December 2017

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**In 2017 project had two main goals; identify/grade the potential of touristic destinations and pilot intervention projects in two marzes of Armenia. The following results were achieved:**

- A special **methodology for grading** the tourism potential of the destination was developed.
- More than **900 villages were inventoried** and an electronic database developed.
- More than **40 villages** were visited to assess and develop touristic projects
- **8 tourism infrastructure** (hiking trails, watch points, roads) developing projects were identified for assessment and implementation.
- **3 PPP touristic** value-added projects were identified to be implemented with the private sector (private sector co-funding totals to 60,000USD). A 40km hiking trail will be developed to cover 40 km and pass 5 villages.
- An **experimental project** was identified to be implemented in **Bjni**. With the permission of the Ministry of Culture, a museum would be built in the house of the villager to create interest for the fortress visitors and attract to a small family operated café in the garden.
- A special **cooperation platforms** for participatory planning and activities synchronization purposes were developed with the private sector and international organizations
- **3 DMO models** were developed in cooperation with the Center for Strategic Initiatives and submitted for the Government approval.
- A **research and development center** was launched on the base of Yerevan State University branch of Ijevan (Tavush Marz). 10 interns were selected and started their activities within the UNDP's framework of "Youth Career Trail"- paid internship.
- **91 youth were trained** in different tourism and business skills related topics (6 thematic trainings) in cooperation with ILO;
- A set of gastrotourism, sanitary related and communication related **trainings** were conducted for the villagers in Bjni

### I. RESOURCES

**Total Project budget for 2017: 707,714.00 USD** (Project is funded 100% by the Russian Federation)

### II. RESULTS

#### COMPONENT 1: Planning of sustainable integrated rural tourism.

*Objective 1.1. Raise the accessibility and sustainable utilization of tourism assets of the community.*

*Activity 1.1: Assessment of local products and services attractiveness for tourism market.*

##### 1.1.1 Tourism Resources Inventory of RA Rural Areas

To ensure that the identification, assessment and prioritization of tourism assets of the villages envisioned in the mentioned Activity is conducted with maximum efficiency and minimum bias. an assessment system was developed for scoring, comparison and filtering of villages, as well as for extracting long and short lists of villages matching any predefined criteria. The inventory was decided to automate the process to the extent possible, which would reduce both human subjectivity and human error. All villages of the Republic of Armenia are included in the Inventory process (952 villages).

### Assessment Process Stages:

- Preliminary design of the methodology
- Piloting the preliminary design in two marzes (Tavush & Lori)
- Shortlisting villages from the pilot marzes
- Analyzing and reflecting on the pilot phase
- Revising and finalizing the methodology based on lessons learnt
- Conduction of the inventory of other 8 marzes
- **Shortlisting villages from the 8 marzes (we are currently in this phase)**
- Creation of on-line user-friendly and analytical database

### Process Steps:

#### *Methodology development:*

The process consisted of two parts: a) data collection, b) village evaluation. The assessment was conducted in two stages: pilot and main. During the pilot stage, rural tourism resources of Tavush and Lori marzes were researched and evaluated. Based on the analysis of the results of the pilot stage the assessment of the remaining marzes was implemented with the revised methodology.

Data collection focused on retrieving the tourism potential of villages (nature, human-made, including tourism attractions and support services) as well as on documenting their socio-economic characteristics. Teams of subject-matter specialists collected all the data available (secondary sources through semi-structured questionnaires and direct calls to village administrations and other informed parties). Upon completion of data collection, tourist resources of the villages were scored in terms of attractiveness and the potential time a tourist could spend there. Each village was scored by two independent specialists, based on a 1–5 scale, where “1” means “Very low” and “5” means “Very high”.

In addition, the villages were categorized based on the type of attraction. To allow comparison and filtering across all villages and resource types, a consolidated Master Matrix was developed. The next planned stage is to develop an electronic database to store the collected data and assessments.<sup>1</sup>

### Tourism Inventory Stages:

**First stage:** 2 marzes (Tavush-34, Lori-122)

**Deadline:** April 2017

**Goals:**

1. Collect data, grade and score the potential, consolidate data into a Master Matrix for automated comparison, filter and shortlist 12 villages.
2. Test the methodology, make corrections and start the second stage.

**Second stage:** 8 marzes (Tavush -27 (bordering villages, Aragatsotn-117, Armavir-95, Ararat-95, Kotayk-62, Gegharkunik-93, Shirak-128, Syunik-127, Vayots Dzor-52)

**Deadline:** October 2017

**Goals:**

1. Collect data, grade and score the potential, consolidate data into a Master Matrix for automated comparison, filter and shortlist 48 villages.

### Strategy for the village selection

Based on the international experience and discussing the rural tourism development opportunities with the private sector, we recommend developing tourist services and products that will later be marketed by the private sector itself - tour operators and agents. The following two approaches were formulated in the result of the discussions:

1. Development of value added services:

Creating new tourism attractions in the villages located close to the existing popular destinations, which the tour operators will include in their existing tours. Services and products with short-term usage potential, which alone might not be sufficient to make a tour, are envisioned for this group.

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<sup>1</sup> The methodology was discussed and reviewed by the Skolkovo IEMS team, the opinion of which was very important for the project team for further improvements, the wording on methodology was: “UNDP Armenia’s methodology as highly relevant to the project overall goal and objectives. IEMS would like to praise the selection of the more time-consuming census approach rather than a sampling research method” (May 2017), which was considered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the inventory.

## 2. Creation of new tourism destinations:

Creating tourism services and/or products in the villages far from current popular destinations, which will transform the villages into tourism destinations, to which the tour operators will start organizing regular tours. Services in this group must have long-term usage potential to allow development of tour packages for at least one full day (9:00-18:00).

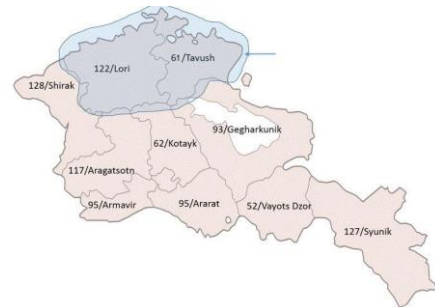
**Conclusion:** Creation of new tourism destinations requires larger investments than development of value added services., It was suggested that a new tourism destination will be created in one village and value-added services are developed in the other five in each marz.

## Principles for Shortlisting the Target Villages:

### First Stage

The results of the assessment are consolidated in the digital Master Matrix, which allows searching, sorting and filtering the villages based on their scores and characteristics.

Because of inventory, the short-list of villages was developed and submitted to the government (RA MTAD) for approval to proceed with the final selection (May 15, 2017). The positive feedback on inventory methodology and principles of selection was received on June 01, 2017, which included the following criterias:



### **Target Village Selection in Tavush and Lori Marz**

#### *Value added services*

- ✓ The number of shortlisted villages for value added services should not exceed 20% of all the villages in the marz (to develop a reasonable quantity of villages for visits)
- ✓ Distance from main tourism destinations: up to 7 km (Lori Marz)
- ✓ Distance from main tourism destinations: up to 20 km (Tavush Marz)
- ✓ Size of the village. 100-1500 residents
- ✓ High average score for questionnaires 1, 2, and 3 (Nature, Human Made, Human Living Activities)
- ✓ Potential usage time: 1 hour – 0.5 working day minimum

Note: A main tourist destination was defined as the most offered by the private sector destination in the marz. A special research of tour packages offered in the market was conducted and the list of favorite destinations derived.

**Number short-listed destinations for value added service: 23 in Tavush and 10 in Lori Marzes**

**Number short-listed destinations: 3 villages in Tavush and 2 regions in Lori Marzes to explore more**

### *Final Selection of Villages*

To finalize the selection, the project team visited the shortlisted destinations several times to involve locals into the participatory planning process and identify the tourism potential of the village. Final selection of villages was made based on the analysis of the collected information, observations and the potential tourism product development idea.

### **Results**

- 952 inventoried villages
- Finalized “Tourism Resources Assessment” Methodology
- Tested usability of the collected information
- Database in Excel format
- Inventory results to be reflected into on-line analytic database: the related activities started in

November 2017

- 3 villages (Hovk, Achajur, Ditavan) were identified for Tavush Marz where the project interventions are planned 2 villages (Yenokavan and Gosh) were delisted from the initial list by the RA MTAD, 1 alternative village is to be selected from the three villages of Berd region proposed for future consideration
- 6 villages (Ardvi, Debet, Pambak, Neghots, Haghpat and Gargar) were identified for Lori region where the project interventions are planned, the 1 alternative village considered is Fioletovo village.
- The final list of villages was discussed and edited with the RA MTAD (2 villages were delisted from the initial list).

### Second Stage

To guarantee the fair distribution of the project resources, it was suggested equal division of the budget among the total number of villages (60) between the marzes (10). As per initial plan, interventions were planned in the following order; 2017-2 marzes, 2018-5 marzes, 2019-3 marzes. Based on the lessons learned, it was concluded to start interventions for the villages of the remaining 8 marzes simultaneously and asap. The long list of villages will be developed within the period of December 2017-January 2018.

### Working Group

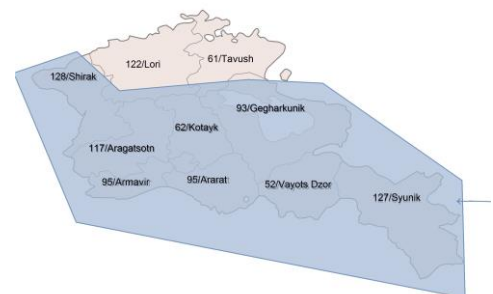
To accelerate the process of village selection and intervention projects agreement with the government, the working group consisting of different stakeholders (state, public and private) will be established. The first meeting of the working group is planned for December 2017.

### Target Village Selection in other 8 RA Marzes

Based on the experience from the past, the project team reconsidered principles for the villages selection. The following principles were presented to the working group for the discussion purposes.

#### New principles for the village selection

- ✓ Distance from main tourism destinations: up to 15±5 km
- ⤵ Distance from the marz main road: up to 15±5 km
- ⤵ Average score for the potential-3 or higher
- ✓ Potential usage time: 1 hour – 0.5 working day minimum



### **Activity 1.2: Participatory planning of integrated rural tourism development.**

Four from planned five diverse groups of segments were involved in the participatory planning and product development process: Villages; Private sector; Universities and Youth; Diaspora

**1.2.1 Villages:** To assess the real-life potential of the villages for the tourism development, field visits were conducted. By the end of June, team visited 33 villages agreed with the Ministry. Starting July, high potential villages have been several times revisited to discuss the potential developments and assess the readiness of the locals.

**1.2.2 Private Sector:** To stimulate, facilitate and broker innovative private investments, value chain linkages, technical expertise and guarantee the long-term sustainability of the village-based economic units a partnership platform with the private sector was established. “Bridge” Network is a voluntary partnership framework of private companies who came together and committed to support and advance the sustainable rural tourism development. The Launch event successfully took place on the May 30th, followed by a presentations and discussions between the different international organizations, state and private sector. “ Any legally registered company in Armenia is free to apply for a Network membership by sending a letter of Interest. Since the launch of the network, 60 leading tourism related companies and organization operating in Armenia applied for the network membership.

**1.2.3 Universities:** Regional universities were chosen to become human capacity and business development hubs in the regions to support the long-term institutional development of the tourism industry. Tourism Research and development centers will be established on the bases of the regional universities to research, assess, support, develop, educate, link, and promote the regional tourism development.

In May 2017, 40 fresh graduates from the Yerevan State University branch of Ijevan (Tavush Marz) were interviewed for internship positions in R&D laboratory. As a result, 10 interns were selected and started their activities within the UNDP’s framework of “Youth Career Trail”- paid internship.

Note: Similar Tourism R&D centers will be launched in Lori, Shirak, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik marzes. Yerevan based R&D center may be launched to support Ararat, Armavir, Aragatsotn and Kotayk marzes.

This was the first-time initiative in Armenia and very much supported by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development and Ministry of Education and Science to become a successful prototype for other regions of Armenia. These interns have been involved in several ILO Moscow developed trainings of trainer’s courses to learn and share their knowledge and experience through tourism R&D laboratories and push the regional tourism development. The center was officially opened in November 2017.

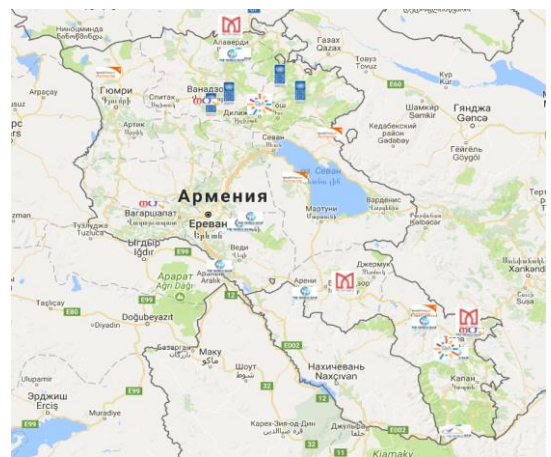
Project team has already contacted universities in Lori, Gegharqunik and

Vayots Dzor Marzes and conducted feasibility study to identify the best match for the Tourism R&D Centers. In Lori Marz, the Crisis Management State Academy, Stepanavan Branch was considered to establish a joint in synergy with UNDP another Project DRR. This will be Tourisms & Resilience R&D Center supported by the community and will jointly will operating with the city municipality. In Gegharqunik, Gavar State University was contacted for collaboration and Gegharqunik Toursim R&D Center is planned to establish in February 2018. The Project introductory meetings are already conducted with the potential YCT candidates to be processed to hire 10 interns for the center.

In Vayots Dzor, State Economic University, Yeghegnadzor Branch was conducted for collaboration, and the arrangement are in process to open the center in February 2018.

**1.2.4. Diaspora:** Different representatives of Russian Diaspora have been contacted and models of cooperation discussed. An event was organized in Moscow in September 2017, jointly with Armenian Embassy in Russia, where the representatives of Diaspora were invited to be introduced with the project goals and the possible cooperation were discussed.

**1.2.5. Active Tourism Stakeholders (ATS):** The Project team initiated the coordination meetings with the local and international organizations active in tourism development in Armenia. Those active stakeholders are: UNDP IRTD Project, World Bank, Izmirlyan Foundation, SME DNC of Armenia, JICA-SME DNC, CSI, DADAG-EU, State Tourism Committee of Armenia, DFA, UITO, GIZ, IDeA Foundation, Smithsonian Institution, USAID-My Armenia Cultural Heritage Tourism Program, World Vision.



Meetings are giving opportunities to be up-to-date aware about the on-going projects in Armenia in the industry. The digital on-line mapping was created where the ATS members’ activities with the respective organization’s logo and brief description of the projects implementing in that area are presented. The information is being updated on monthly bases for on-line track of process and on-going activities, which visualizes the possible collaboration areas ([https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1nUyOk\\_FO71TXfWXdlQ9H\\_pRogFQ&ll=40.07417792851764%2C45.07725269999992&z=8](https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1nUyOk_FO71TXfWXdlQ9H_pRogFQ&ll=40.07417792851764%2C45.07725269999992&z=8)).

**Results**

- 91 youth trained in different tourism and business skills related topics (6 thematic trainings);
- 10 recruited interns and 40 in the process of recruitment;
- 1 officially opened center: Tavush Tourism R&D Center
- 2 planned centers opening in February 2018: Gegharqunik and Vayots Dzor Tourism R&D Center
- 1 planned for the opening in February 2018: Lori Marz Tourism and Resilience R&D Center
- “Bridge” Network with 60 members
- ATS with on-line mapped info



**COMPONENT 2: Increase income level through diversification of tourism products and services in the community.**

**Objective 2.1. Support the community to thrive as a tourism destination by diversification of services and developing high quality products.**

**Activity 2.1. Capacity building for tourism startups.**

**2.1.1 Armenia Innovation Challenge Scheme**

To involve private sector capability and investment into the “Integrated rural tourism development” project, an Expression of Interest under the “Armenia Innovation Challenge Scheme” of rural tour products development initiation was announced for the established “Bridge” network members.

The Innovation Challenge Scheme (ICS) is a collaborative project implementation opportunity providing co-funding to creative and commercially feasible innovative ideas and their implementation of the final marketable rural tourism products.



Armenia Innovation Challenge Scheme was implemented in two staged:

- 1st Stage: submission of the "Project Concept Note" was announced through UNDP website as procurement note on 03/07/2017 with the deadline of 17/07/2017. In the result of the 1st stage 21 companies submitted applications for the competition for co-financing, development and commercialization of rural tourism products, out of which 9 project ideas were selected. The selection was done by the “Bridge” Network members in perspective of necessity in tourism development.
- 2nd Stage was processed for the submission of full project applications on 02/08/2017 with the deadline on 01/09/2017. In the result 4 companies out of 8 submitted have been selected. The selection was done by the Evaluation Committee (compiled by the Project Coordinator, “Bridge” Network Task Leader, Portfolio Associate and Manager) that studied the submitted packages and assessed from the rural tourism development perspective for the mentioned Marzes (Tavush and Lori).

Within the framework of the Co-financing Initiative the winning privately-owned company finances the 40% of the whole project while UNDP's "Integrated Rural Tourism Development" should cover the 60% of the project’s expenses (but not exceeding the 20,000 US dollars’ threshold). As it became clear, the private company investment usually exceeded the expected 40%.

The results of the first stage were summarized and feasible, creative ideas with superior economic impact potential on the community were identified to process for implementation. Selected companies started preparatory activities. The results of the first stage were summarized and based on the program’s objective and evaluations.

***Innovation Challenge Scheme Selected Projects:***

	<b><i>Project Title</i></b>	<b><i>Implementing Tour Operator</i></b>
	Lori Hiking Trails: Build and mark 40 km hiking trail in <b>Lori Marz</b> to connect villages of Akhtala, Haghpat, Sanahin, Akner, Odzun	<b>“Armenian Hikers” Union NGO (“Arevi” Tour Operator)</b>
	Organize Rafting in Alaverdi – Neghots (15km) section of the river Debet and establish Raft Center in v.Neghots in <b>Lori Marz</b> , Armenia	<b>Armenian Young Women’s Association (“Nuri-Nrneni” Tour Operator)</b>
	"Traditions and Charm of Lori Region" tour product, restoring Lori traditional rituals with their songs, dances, cuisine, costumes and ritual puppets in Pambak village, <b>Lori Marz</b> .	<b>“Revival of Traditional Festivals” Cultural Educational NGO (“Tonatsujts” Tour Operator)</b>












**Activity 2.2. Facilitate access of local tourism startups to seed funding.**

Beneficiaries and type of assistance will be identified after the selection of 60 villages.

**Activity 2.3. Rehabilitation of community infrastructure.**

IRTD works to obtain a balance between cultural values, human made / environmental attractions and sustainable economic results that the development of tourism can offer to a destination. Within this principle, IRTD targets to two type of infrastructure rehabilitations:

1. Community tourism infrastructures that will attract tourists’ primary to the destination and stimulate the demand for the value added local services to be provided by the villagers.
2. Villagers / Spots infrastructure that will attract tourists to the destination to get a valuable experience and create a demand for an appropriate community infrastructure.

<b>Lori Marz: Haghpat, Ardvi, Gargar</b>		
 <p>Establish information check-point and build trading facilities for the villagers in Haghpat (design and construction calculate is finalized).</p>	 <p>Sayat-Nova Augmented Reality in Haghpat Monastery (to be launched by the end of December 2017)</p>	 <p>Developed hiking trail to connect Ardvi and Gargar villages with botanic garden (Dentropark) (trail to be accepted by the end of December 2017)</p>
<b>Tavush Marz: Hovk, Achajur, Ditavan</b>		
 <p>Eco-land in village Hovk developing concepts for infrastructure improvement, landscape design, hiking trails and fishing facilities development (TOR and the concept development stage).</p>	 <p>Wine production and testing room in village Achajur discussing possible cooperation with Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) for facility development and future management of the space (negotiation and concept development stage).</p>	 <p>Makaravank (proposed by the Minister) infrastructure(road) improvement, looking for alternative road building cheap solutions almost 2km (design and construction calculation stage).</p>
 <p>Hiking Trails in Ditavan discussing the hiking trail options and requirements (TOR drafting stage).</p>	 <p>Rail Park developing innovative rail biking solution for using abandoned railroad for the touristic purposes. This service will connect several communities (Concept finalization stage).</p>	
<b>Kotayk Marz: Bjni</b>		
<p>In cooperation with RA Ministry of Culture, State Committee of Tourism and local community the destination was discussed as tourism attraction infrastructure rehabilitation options of Bjni village<sup>2</sup>. After UNDP implementation of the pilot project in the village in 2015, targeted at the capacity building of the local community, feasibility concluded that Bjni has a potential to become an alternative tourism destination in the province.</p>		
<b>Implemented and On-going Interventions:</b>		
 <p>Launched the initiation v.Bjni as a rock climbing/ alpinism center</p>	 <p>Bjni Museum</p>	 <p>“Basics of catering and hospitality in rural tourism” Training Course to households</p>
<p>Open public access to the drinking mineral water<sup>3</sup>. Open public access to the mineral water can position Bjni as a health resort and wellbeing center of the region.</p>	<p>Public access and trails, information signs and billboards in the fortress and the church<sup>4</sup>.</p>	<p>CLEAN-UP BJNI: Recommendations for Improvement of Waste Removal and Sanitary Cleaning to Foster Tourism in Bjni Area.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Bjni is a village in the Kotayk Province of Armenia. The village is one of the prominent centers of education and culture of ancient and medieval Armenia. The village has very attractive natural and historical monuments. The name Bjni is well promoted in Armenia as a brand name of the mineral water. Bjni is well located in the middle of well-known touristic destinations such as Aghveran and Tsahgkadsor.

<sup>3</sup> Mineral water is the strongest competitive advantage of the village, but community has never benefited from the resource existence since water is transported to another location for bottling.

<sup>4</sup> Bjni has a historical fortress and church, but there are no signs to direct access or information bulletins to guide the tourists.

### Results

- 3 Armenia Innovative Challenge Scheme initiated projects in Lori Marz
- 2 finished projects in Lori Marz: 1 hiking trail and 1 augmented reality
- 4 developed project concepts in Tavush Marz
- 2 infrastructure improvement initiations in Tavush Marz
- 1 alternatively selected village for branded intervention:  
7 trained households, 1 concept for the area clean-up, 1 museum

## COMPONENT 3: Destination Management

### Objective 3.1. Ensure the sustainability of the rural tourism through establishing basic destination management mechanisms.

#### Activity 3.1.

UNDP Armenia in cooperation with the Center for Strategic Initiatives of Armenia and Tourism State Committee of Armenia has developed three models for the DMO sustainable operations in Armenia:

**Model 1: DMO as a PPP:** an entity within local government and they often work with an appointed oversight or advisory committee made up of government representatives and tourism stakeholders. In scope of the Public-Private Partnership model funds for DMOs should come from public partners (including the Ministry of Economic Affairs), as well as provincial and municipal governments, marketing organizations and businesses within the travel and tourism sectors.

**Model 2: DMO as an independent company:** a free-standing, independent agency, commercial organization, with their own governing board of stakeholders who has the founder as the executive director responsible for establishment and governance of the policies and procedures of the organization, and who give overall direction to the DMO's program of work. The founder is obliged to buy a license from the tourism committee/ appropriate body for getting rights and a package for DMOs establishment.

**Model 3: DMO as an entity inside a Country promotion agency:** a new institution, "Country Promotion" agency will be established that will be a commercial, partially self-funded organization with its own programs and profit-making projects to promote the country and urban/ rural tourism. In scope of this agency DMCs will be established based on franchise rights and will be licensed and managed by Tourism Committee. It is supposed that the main resource of income for this organization will be destination-marketing fees, levy that will be collected from tourists based on their night- stays at hotels with more than 8 beds. All fees from B&Bs as well as from local products will be directed to the local budget of a DMO.

**Note:** (UNDP has developed three DMO models which have been evaluated based on their functionalities and sustainability, and the most effective one has become a part of the "Country Promotion Board", a new concept developed by the UNDP Armenia-CSI teams., the CBP concept with a DMO component has been firstly submitted to the RA PM and after initial confirmation was presented to the RA President approval, when being approved by the President, this concept is in the phase of finalization including legislative, sustainability and other relevant issues).

Based on the research made there are two types under consideration, regional and village based DMOs to be piloted within the project.

Regional DMO will be tested based on Tavush Tourism R&D center of Yerevan State University branch of Ijevan.

The village model will be tested on the DMO of Bjni village. For this purpose, the designing and constructing a tourism kiosk- coffee shop was initiated. The goal of tourist kiosk is to link the destination tourism service providers with the visitors by providing full information about existing tourism products in that area, rest and storage area, toilets and other facilities.



#### Activity 3.2.

Series of trainings are planned to coordinate the efforts between local stakeholders engaged in the tourism sector, as well as monitor and manage the implementation of the DMO Models.



### Activity 3.3.

In the purpose of the extensive promotion of new destination areas. An extensive media coverage was done within the project reporting period:

- FB page was created: <https://www.facebook.com/armenianruraltourism/>
- Media coverage of the reporting period:
  - [https://youtu.be/o\\_GuCxcrA9w?t=31m18s](https://youtu.be/o_GuCxcrA9w?t=31m18s)
  - <http://hetq.am/arm/news/83368/tavushi-marzum-bacvec-turizmi-zargacman-ev-hetazotutyankentrony.html>
  - <http://ijevan.y-su.am/07-nov-2017/>
  - <https://www.armedu.am/index.php/am/news/view/1487>
  - <http://tavush.mtad.am/news/item/2017/11/07/kent/>
  - <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/911556/spasvox-lrahos-7112017.html>
  - <https://goo.gl/sDD91r>
  - [goo.gl/Fzec8Y](http://goo.gl/Fzec8Y)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg3pYoXc6yY&feature=youtu.be&t=21m43s>
  - [goo.gl/NA4kbH](http://goo.gl/NA4kbH)
  - <http://armalp.am/hy/rock-climbing-paths-in-bjni-hy/>
  - <http://nt.am/am/events/26101/>
  - <http://www.un.am/hy/news/586>
- Webpage is under construction
- Invited BBC Journalist/Photographer: <https://jodihilton.photoshelter.com/gallery/041017-armenia-tourism/G0000XdHPznFFSmE/C0000YW11C5K9PPI>

### Activity 3.4.

Catalogue development for the IRTD Project was initiated with the TUMO (Simonian Educational Foundation). The objective of the current initiation is to develop a publication, which will showcase urban and rural areas of Armenia in the most creative and interesting way. It was decided to implement with TUMO students. They were divided into groups, each having their supervisor photographer and travelled to rural destinations and capture most interesting spots they found. In the reporting period, the marzes of Tavush and Lori are developed for the catalogue. This is a photo album featuring urban and rural spots of Armenia through the eyes of creative young photographers.

### Activity 3.5.

Series of promotional activities were organized and participated to promote and raise recognition of rural communities as new destinations for both domestic and foreign tourists:

- MITT 2017:
- OTDYKH 2017:
- Collaboration with Russian magazines:
  - [http://www.ttg-russia.ru/upload/lastnumber/TTG-11\\_12-2017.pdf](http://www.ttg-russia.ru/upload/lastnumber/TTG-11_12-2017.pdf)
  - [goo.gl/fa7EPt](http://goo.gl/fa7EPt)

#### **Results**

- 3 developed DMO models
- 2 models selected for piloting
- 1 coffeeshop-kiosk concept
- 13 media coverage
- 2 Russian media coverage
- 2 participated exhibitions

### III. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Project Components	Budgeted for 2017	Actual with open POs	Balance
Planning of sustainable integrated rural tourism	94,121	94,121	0
Increased income	396,766	293,011	103,755
Sustainable Destination Management	75,859	179,614	-103,755
Project implementation	140,968	140,968	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>707,714</b>	<b>707,714</b>	<b>0</b>

\*Open POs to be disbursed in 2018

The expected delivery of the IRTD Project during the reporting period (January-December 2017) is 100%.

### IV. FUTURE WORK PLAN

- Launch a working group to select all villages and products to be developed in the marzes
- Continue value added products and infrastructure improvement projects development in Tavush And Lori
- Opening of 5 Tourism R&D Centers in regions to stimulate youth involvement in the regional tourism development
- Opening of 10 village DMO resource centers
- Initiate “Innovation Challenge Armenia” co-funding program for PPP for the selected destinations
- Start Me Up project to stimulate tourism involved villagers to increase the quality of provided service
- Support the country promotion in Russia
- Develop at least 2 branded events in the identified locations
- Trainings in the villages targeted at the specific tourism products/service quality improvement.