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Reporting Agency: United Nations Development Programme

Country: Armenia

**PROGRESS REPORT**

Project: UNDP-GEF “Generate global environmental benefits through environmental education and raising awareness of stakeholders” medium-sized Project 00091047/00081989

Reporting period: January– December 2017

**I. PURPOSE**

**The aim of the project** is to expand the capacity of Armenia to generate global environmental benefits through environmental education and raising awareness of stakeholders to implement Rio Convention strategies.

**The project's objective** is to strengthen the capacity to use environmental education and awareness raising as tools to address natural resource management issues. It will, on one hand, increase the public knowledge on the environment and the need to protect nature, and, on the other hand, transfer the required knowledge to the targeted beneficiaries to allow them to be development actors without harming the environment. Through the activities of the project, it will include support for the dissemination of environmental information on state-of-the-art technologies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation of biodiversity and prevention of soil degradation. It will also provide resources for raising the capacity of decision-makers in governing bodies, who are promoting the sustainable development of the country.

**Partners:** The Implementing Partner and the Responsible Party of the Project is the RA Ministry of Nature Protection (MoNP). The senior beneficiary of the project is the RA Ministry of Education and Science (MoES).

**Funds:** The Project is funded by GEF and co-funded by UNDP.

**II. RESOURCES**

The resources to the Project come from GEF and UNDP TRAC allocations totaling to 750,000.00 USD (Y2017: USD 214,744.82 - GEF: USD 208,745.19 and UNDP: USD 5,999.63).

**III. RESULTS**

***Outcome 1: Enhanced legal, policy, institutional and strategic frameworks to strengthen EE and raising awareness of stakeholder as natural resource management tools.***

***Output 1.1: Adequate legislation and policy frameworks are in place to implement obligations from the Rio and Aarhus Conventions related to environmental education and public awareness.***

* **Support in the development of “National Strategy on development of Ecological Education and Upbringing”:**  In response to the request from the RoA Ministry of Nature Protection, the Project provided technical support for the “Development of a National Strategy for Ecological Education” through recruiting a team of experts for: i) pre-school, general school and vocational education; ii) tertiary (higher) and post-graduate education; iii) supplementary education; iv) informal and non-formal education, as well as v) public awareness. Developed ToRs were validated by the Ministry of Nature Protection. To ensure participatory approach, the draft design of the strategy was discussed with key partner ministries, educational entities and interested group of experts on 12 July 2017. The draft strategy was developed and public hearing with participation of 26 representatives from key stakeholder ministries, governmental entities, international and non-governmental organizations was organized on 17 November 2017. The draft Strategy was communicated to 8 ministries and placed on the Unified website for drafts of legal acts of the RoA Ministry of Justice (<https://www.e-draft.am/projects/545>). Based on comments and suggestion the document was finalized, the necessary accompanying documents (certificate, summary on suggestion and comments from relative ministries) were prepared. On 21 December 2017 the document was presented to the RoA Government for approval.
* **Support to the development of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) website for Armenia.** In response to the request from the RoA Government to assist EITI implementation process of Armenia the Project is supporting the development of respective web-portal aimed to enhance the implementation of Aarhus Convention [on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters](http://live.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf). The implementation of EITI in Armenia will assist to effective, transparent and accountable management of natural resources and solving environmental issues, as well as public participation in environmental decision-making. The ToR was developed in cooperation with “Republic of Armenia Government Staff". The procurement call (RFP) has been announced though UNDP Procurement portal. Selection will be finalized in early 2018.
* **Support in publication of the Red Book of Animal and Plant of the Republic of Armenia.** In response to the official request from the RoA Ministry of Nature Protection, and taking into consideration the importance of Red Book for increasing awareness of national agencies and decision-makers on biodiversity protection and rehabilitation issues (thus for implementation of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity), the Project supported the publication of Red Book of Armenia in 500 copies to be distributed among the following institutions, organizations and other interested parties:

1. National Assembly of the RoA
2. Ministries of RoA and connected parties
3. Universities, Scientific and Educational institutions
4. Ministry-affiliated SNCOs
5. Structural subdivisions of the Ministries
6. Diplomatic representatives, embassies
7. Museums, scientific institutions, National Academy of Science of the RoA, schools
8. Ministry staff or other field representatives
9. NGOs/CBOs and environmental activists
10. Other interested organizations or individuals

***Output 1.2: Relevant institutions have the necessary mandates to use environmental education and public awareness as tools for environmental management.***

* **Development, organization and facilitation of training workshops/study tours for sharing experience on environmentally sound practices among decision-makers in Armenia.** Based on the conducted assessments on legal and institutional framework related to EE, as well as with consideration of Training Need Assessment results, the Project has initiated procurement of services for organizing and facilitating training workshops in mid-December 2017. The call will be finalized in early 2018. The overall objective of the assignment is to facilitate sharing experience of good environmental friendly practices among decision-makers in Armenia in order to promote methods and practices that are economically viable, environmentally sound and protect public health.
* **Development of proposal with practical recommendations for mainstreaming EE into the training programs for Civil and Community servants in Armenia.** Existing training programs for civil and community servants in Armenia were studied from the perpsective of involving environmental concerns into the curriculum thereof. Furthemore, job descriptions and passports of civil and community servants to identify responsibilities or tasks related to environment protection and natural recourses management were analysed. The report, including main findings of the analysis and suggestions for mainstreaming EE into the training programs for civil and community servants was developed.

***Outcome 2: Improved capacity of relevant government and educational entities to integrate EE and awareness raising into programmes and projects as tools for natural resource management.***

***Output 2.1: Capacity enhanced of key government and educational entities to integrate environmental education and public awareness into programmes and projects.***

Activities is for 2018.

***Output 2.2: Integrated training programmes developed and delivered through training centers for civil servants; training centers for teachers and other existing relevant training mechanisms.***

* **Training needs assessment governmental sector staff and self-governing bodies in the Environmental Education area.** Training needs assessment (TNA) to identify capacity gaps of governmental sector staff and self-governing bodies in the Environmental Education area is finalized. 112 respondents, representing 9 key Ministries involved in natural resource management, all 10 Regional Administrations, 69 Local Self-Governance Bodies of Municipalities of regional towns and rural communities, as well as Yerevan Municipality, were involved in the survey. The results of assessment were presented during Advisory Committee first meeting on 12 September 2017.
* **Capacity and needs assessment of educational institution.** The methodology was developed and training needs assessment of educational institutions in the field of EE was completed in June 2017, with involvement of 13 Higher educational institutions in survey.
* **Development of environmental educational materials for decision-makers.** Following UNDP procurement standards, AUA Fund was contracted to design and develop training modules for decision-makers involved in natural resource management. Eleven (11) draft training modules were developed and presented for Advisory Committee discussion and feedback on 7 November 2017. The draft curriculum was submitted to the Civil Service Council of RoA for approval. The Council decision is anticipated in February 2018.
* **Framing of the training modules by exploiting the potential of Behavioural Science to nudge the decision makers and the public to make environmentally friendly decisions.** With the aim to foster environmentally friendly behavior utilizing cutting-edge research in Behavioral Science the project hired local consultant on BS. The report describing relevant findings from behavioral science that may potentially influence pro-environmental behavior and sketching applicable recommendations for an effective Environmental Education program based on these findings was submitted. Recommendations are considered in the scope of developing EE materials by AUA Fund.
* **Development of Environmental Disaster Risk Reduction training materials and organization of training for professors/lecturers from educational institutions and representatives of CBOs.** Local consultant for development of training materials on “Environmental Disaster Risk Reduction” was recruited. The developed material(s)/manual have been applied for organization of workshop on 12 December 2017 with participation of 26 professors/lecturers from higher educational entities and CBO representatives.

***Outcome 3: Developed capacity of community based organizations (CBOs) to use EE and awareness raising as tools for natural resource management.***

***Output 3.1: Capacity enhanced of CBOs to implement environmental education and public awareness campaigns.***

* **Capacities and need assessment of CBOs and media in the field of EE.**  An assessment covering 23 environmental CBOs, 15 non-environmental CBOs, as well as 15 media outlets was conducted. The desk research on the coverage of environmental issues by the mainstream media outlets (with highest number of audience) for the period from July 2016 to July 2017 was completed in August 2017. The results of assessment and report on desk research were presented during the first Advisory Committee meeting on 12 September 2017 for further consideration.
* **Support the delivery of training sessions through CBOs.** Following the Training Need Assessment recommendations, a call for submitting Project Proposals under Environmental Education Challenge was announced on 23 October 2017. Main objectives of the Environmental Education Challenge are to develop capacities of CBOs to deliver Environmental Education programs, and to raise awareness of public and decision-makers on natural resources management issues, including global environmental issues and solutions. Overall, 48 proposals were received. 7 proposals were shortlisted, and concept notes were presented for the Evaluation Panel, consisting of Project coordination unit, UNDP SGP Programme Coordinator. The full applications were submitted by all shortlisted CBOs, whereas 3 proposals were pre-selected to receive financial support. The contract modality (Mico-capital grant) has been discussed and confirmed by the Project RTA and UNDP Operation/Procurement units. The approval of modality by the PB is pending.

***Output 3.2: Environmental education material is developed and delivery mechanisms are identified.***

* **Support the development of video material on wildfires**. Local consultant on development of a short video material on forest fires was recruited and a short 4-minute video material to increase public awareness on wildfires was developed.

***Climate Change Education and Awareness Project – Climate box***

* Cooperation was established with Russian Trust Fund and $50,000 was leveraged by the Project for customizing and adapting “Climate Box” Project aimed at raising environmental literacy of mid-school aged youngsters. The Project will be implemented in 8 counties for the period of 2017-2019. Project budget for Armenia is estimated in the amount of 85,000.00 USD (Russian Trust Fund: 50,000.00 USD, Project co-funding: 35,000.00 USD). TORs for adaptation of content and methodology is under development and will be finalized in January 2018.

***Project management.***

* Project Advisory Committee consisting of 29 representatives from key ministries, educational and scientific institutions, non-governmental and international organizations was established.
* The Project Advisory Committee meetings were held:
  + on 12 September 2017. The main findings of completed training needs assessment (TNA) of government and self-governing entities in terms of implementation of and compliance with Rio and Aarhus Conventions were presented for the Advisory Committee attention and discussion. The results of capacity assessment of higher educational institutions, community based organizations and media entities for conducting Environmental Education and public awareness were also be presented during the meeting.
  + on 7 November 2017. The general approach and methodology for the development of environmental education materials and 12 draft modules developed by the AUA Fund were presented for the Advisory Committee discussion and feedback.
* The Project Board meeting was held on 28 September 2017. The Project progress report and results of conducted assessments were presented during the meeting.
* The subsequent/year-end Project Board meeting will be held on 26 December 2017. The Project will present overall project progress per outcomes for Y2017, budget delivery. Y2018 workplan will be presented for approval.
* The project mid-term evaluation was carried out on 24 November – 5 December 2017 by an independent international consultant. The draft of mid-term evaluation report has just been received. The MTR will be finalized by February 2018.
* The Project underwent budget revision in December 2017 in order to adjust Y2016 expenses to CDR expenditures and re-allocate resources as per updated workplan. The revision was agreed to and signed by UNDP and MoNP on 14 December 2017.
* Three quarterly reports for Y2017 on the project progress were developed and submitted to the UNDP and MNP; Y2017 annual progress report was developed and submitted to GEF, UNDP and Ministry of Nature Protection.

***Cooperation and synergy with ongoing interventions in the EE sector***

* The project regularly participates in the Environmental Education Network meetings of Armenia, which unifies key partners and serves as a platform for regular discussion and updated information on EE among counterparts. Many representatives of EEN are Project Advisory Board members.
* “Communications and Outreach National Consultant” was recruited to provide regular support in development of project public and outreach materials. The latter developed UNDP official website material, reviewed media questionnaires, researched survey modalities etc.
* Infographics reflecting the Project overview was developed. Infographics is widely used to ensure visibility of the Project among stakeholders. The updated version of Infographics as per 2017 achievements will be available in early 2018.

**IV. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

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| **Budget for 2017(USD)** | **Delivery** | **Delivery Rate** |
| USD 214,744.82 | USD 204,400.00 | 95.18 % |

**V. WORK PLAN 2018**

The main tasks for 2018 work plan are as follows:

***Outcome 1: Enhanced legal, policy, institutional and strategic frameworks to strengthen EE and raising awareness of stakeholder as natural resource management tools.***

***Output 1.1: Adequate legislation and policy frameworks are in place to implement obligations from the Rio and Aarhus Conventions related to environmental education and public awareness.***

* Based on Assessment of the national legislation and policy frameworks, as well as National Strategy on Ecological Education to develop a recommendation on legal and/or policy instruments/ amendments related to EE to be submitted to Government for review and approval.
* In collaboration with the RoA Government to launch, develop and finalize the development of EITI portal.
* Organize training workshops for sharing experiences of environmentally sound practices among decision-makers in Armenia.
* Organize training for representatives of Ministries and Regional Administrations aimed at enforcement of legislation related to environmental protection and sustainable natural resources management by organizing.
* Develop 4 short animated films, related to implementation of Rio and Aarhus conventions in Armenia.

***Output 1.2: Relevant institutions have the necessary mandates to use environmental education and public awareness as tools for environmental management.***

* Develop and implement actions to address prioritized institutional gaps and overlaps, including review and possibly revision of job description to integrate environmental concerns
* Proceed with approval of respective EE curriculum by Civil Service Council and Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development
* Organize trainings for representatives of Ministries and Regional Administrations to develop capacities to obligations under Rio and Aarhus conventions in Armenia

***Outcome 2: Improved capacity of relevant government and educational entities to integrate EE and awareness raising into programmes and projects as tools for natural resource management.***

***Output 2.1: Capacity enhanced of key government and educational entities to integrate environmental education and public awareness into programmes and projects.***

* Support the development of new strategies, programmes and projects integrating environmental education and public awareness as tools to improve the management of natural resources at the national and local levels.
* ***Output 2.2: Integrated training programmes developed and delivered through training centers for civil servants; training centers for teachers and other existing relevant training mechanisms.***
* Finalize development of environmental education materials / curriculum for decision-makers and introduce them into regular training/retraining curriculum of civil and community servants.
* Develop digital educational materials, such as video lessons and others for decision-makers involved in natural resource management.
* Publish training materials for conducting training for decision-makers involved in natural resource management. The published educational materials (manuals for teachers and training participants) will be used as a tool for regular training/retraining of civil and community servants.
* Organize ToTs for key stakeholders in different educational entities to build capacity to deliver EE programmes
* Support the delivery of training programmes for civil and community servants by training entities, particularly by Public administration academy of RA

***Outcome 3: Developed capacity of community based organizations (CBOs) to use environmental education and awareness raising as tools for natural resource management.***

***Output 3.1: Capacity enhanced of CBOs to implement environmental education and public awareness campaigns.***

* Support activities to develop capacity of CBOs to deliver EE and PA programmes on global environmental issues and the obligation of Armenia under the Rio Conventions

***Output 3.2: Environmental education material is developed and delivery mechanisms are identified.***

* Support delivery of training sessions through CBOs aimed at raising awareness of public and decision-makers on natural resources management issues
* Support development of training and information materials such as brochure, videos, posters, etc.
* Support adaptation, translation and publication of Climate Box tool. Organize ToT workshops. Support implementation of trainings in pilot schools
* Give public access of training/information materials

***Output 3.3: A Communication campaign developed and delivered through community based activities and national media.***

* Organize training for representatives of mass media aimed at raising awareness on legal frameworks related to environmental protection and sustainable NRM management
* Support the development and delivery of a communication campaign, focused on raising community awareness on global environmental issues and on the Rio Conventions
* Raise environmental awareness and literacy of journalists.