

2022

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

FOR THE PROJECT

**“ENHANCING HUMAN SECURITY AND BUILDING A RESILIENT
SOCIETY IN THE DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES OF ARMENIA”**

Conducted by Independent Evaluation Specialist Mariam Mkhitaryan

**IMPLEMENTING UN AGENCIES IN ARMENIA
UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNIDO, IOM, FAO**

i. Acknowledgments

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The author is also grateful for the time and participation of the respondents and key informants: governmental and local-community partners, partners in development and implementation, as well as other key stakeholders and beneficiaries in target communities of Armenia who shared their experiences and opinions in this learning process.

ii. Disclaimer

Except for the cases when appropriate authors and publications are acknowledged and referred to, the report enclosed herein consists of the author’s work undertaken in compliance with Project materials and requirements set in the Terms of References of the final evaluation. The views and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Project donor, Project implementers and the Project’s responsible parties.

Data collected throughout the evaluation process remains the property of the stakeholders described in this document. Information and data are used with their consent.

Mariam Mkhitarian

Sociologist-Researcher

Founder & CEO of the “EMPIRICA” Research Company

Lecturer at Yerevan State University, Department of Sociology, Chair of Social Work and Social Technologies

April 2022

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DRR | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| GoA | Government of Armenia |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| HSA | Human Security Approach |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| LLRM | Local Level Risk Management |
| MoE | Ministry of Economy |
| MoES | Ministry of Emergency Situations |
| MoESCS | Ministry of Education Science, Culture and Sport |
| MoLSA | Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs |
| MoTAI | Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NK | Nagorno-Karabakh |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| RA | Republic of Armenia |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Fund |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| UNTFHS | United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

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PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS

| PROJECT INFORMATION | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| Project Title | “Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” | |
| Atlas ID | Project ID: 00112637 Output ID: 00111073 | |
| United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 | <p>Outcome 2: People benefit from a progressively universal, inclusive and shock-responsive social protection system across the lifecycle.</p> <p>Outcome 4: People, communities and regions benefit from equitable economic opportunities, decent work and sustainable livelihoods; enabled through competitiveness and inclusive green growth.</p> <p>Outcome 5: Ecosystems are managed sustainably and people benefit from participatory and resilient development and climate-smart solutions.</p> | |
| Benefiting Country and Location | Amasia (Shirak region), Alaverdi, Tumanyan (Lori region) and Berd (Tavush region) consolidated communities of Armenia | |
| Project Dates | Start 15 October 2018 | Planned End 30 April 2022 |
| Funding source | UN Trust Fund for Human Security | |
| Lead UN Organization | UNDP Armenia Natia Natsvlshvili, Resident Representative e-mail: natia.natsvlshvili@undp.org | |
| Implementing UN Organization(s) | <p>UNDP Armenia Natia Natsvlshvili, Resident Representative e-mail: natia.natsvlshvili@undp.org</p> <p>UNICEF Armenia Christine Weigand, Representative Email: cweigand@unicef.org</p> <p>WFP Armenia Jelena Milosevic e-mail: jelena.milosevic@wfp.org</p> <p>UNIDO Armenia Anahit Simonyan, Country Representative Email: a.simonyan@unido.org</p> <p>IOM Armenia</p> | |

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|--|---|---|
| | Ilona Ter-Minasyan, Head of Office Email: iterminasyan@iom.int FAO Armenia Gayane Nasoyan, Assistant Representative Email: fao-am@fao.org Focal Point on Finance Finance Analyst/Head of Finance Unit, UNDP Armenia Email: undp.am.finance@undp.org; davit.asatryan@undp.org | |
| National Implementing Partners | Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Ministry of Economy Ministry of Emergency Situations Regional administrations of Tavush, Shirak and Lori regions Community administrations of target communities. | |
| Total programme budget including indirect support costs in USD | USD 5,636,578.18 | |
| Amount requested from the UNTFHS in USD | USD 1,999,595.81 | |
| Amount to be sourced from other donors in USD | UNDP UNICEF WFP Fund for Armenian Relief Government of Armenia | USD 2,376,531.00 USD 494,951.37 USD 365,000.00 USD 30,000.00 USD 750,000.00 |
| EVALUATION INFORMATION | | |
| Evaluation Type | Project Evaluation | |
| Type of Report | Final Evaluation Report | |
| Period Under Evaluation | Start 15 October 2018 | End 30 April 2022 |
| Evaluator | Mariam Mkhitaryan | |
| Evaluator Email Address | mariam.mkhitarian@gmail.com | |
| Evaluation Dates | Start 11 February 2018 | End 30 April 2022 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Context:

“Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” Project (hereinafter: the Project) is funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and is jointly implemented with six UN agencies, namely UNDP (lead agency), UNICEF, WFP, UNIDO, IOM and FAO in close cooperation with the Government of Armenia (GoA). The UN agencies have implemented the Project activities in Armenia in the period of October 2018 - April 2022.

The UNTFHS has funded the Project with USD 1,999,595.81. Additional contributions were made by UNDP (USD 2,376,531.00), UNICEF (USD 494,951.37), WFP (USD 365,000.00), Fund for Armenian Relief (USD 30,000.00) and the Government of Armenia (USD 750,000.00).

The main goal of the Project is to support Armenia’s efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by addressing the root causes of human insecurity for vulnerable people of Alaverdi, Tumanyan, Amasia and Berd communities in Lori, Shirak and Tavush regions of the Republic of Armenia (RA).

The overall objectives of the Project are:

1. To foster early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience;
2. To strengthen social protection and inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities;
3. To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building.

Project Theory of Change:

Human security approach taken within the Project addressed individual rights, good governance, access to safe and inclusive education, food security, risk informed development, migration and local opportunities, so that opportunities and choices are fulfilled at maximum potential, and are aimed at reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and community resilience, as well as promoting understanding of human security in terms of the risks and insecurities faced by individuals and groups at grass roots level. This was achieved by identifying the specific needs of populations under stress, human security, highlighting the complexity of the challenges and promoting integrated solutions that ensure greater coherence and stronger impact.

The Project theory of change was developed based on the human security approach (HSA) which is rooted in the notion that threats to people’s survival, livelihood and dignity are seldom singular in nature. Most of the time several factors generate situations that are often complex and multidimensional. For example, economic insecurity related to unemployment and poverty may lead to labour emigration and decreased personal security due to a higher exposure to human trafficking and exploitation. Similarly, the reasons behind children’s frequent absence from school may be

socio-economic or health-related, or the reasons behind women being less engaged in business than men in a given region could be economic, cultural, or educational. Hence, to protect the vital core of human lives, fundamental freedoms and fulfillment, the HSA utilizes a wide range of new opportunities to tackle such threats in an integrated manner by examining the linkages and interdependencies between risk informed development, human rights and security (see the details in Figure 1).

Evaluation methodology:

The evaluation assessed the following criteria defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact (to the extent possible) with the purpose to inform the primary users of this evaluation on the outcomes of the Project, as well as different cooperation processes during its implementation.

The evaluation used the qualitative approach for data collection and analysis to assess results at the outcome and output levels. The application of qualitative methods was intended to be transparent, inclusive and participatory, as well as take into consideration gender equality and human rights perspectives. The evaluator collected data from desk reviews and verified them using soft data from the interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries. The analysis was built by triangulating information collected from different stakeholders: project staff, project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Evaluation Key Findings:

Relevance. The Project was implemented in line with the HSA and its principles, with the recognition, that threats to people’s survival, livelihood and dignity are not singular but interconnected and as such, compounding in nature. Subsequently, by identifying the root causes of interconnected insecurities and adopting integrated and mutually related solutions that are people centered and context-specific, aiming to reduce existing risks and prevent the generation of new ones, at the same time, informing on intersectorality and externalities between interventions. This was possible thanks to the unprecedented cooperation among six UN Implementing Agencies within one joint programme, utilizing the experience, presence and efforts built throughout the years both on the national level with the Government of Armenia, and on the local level with local self-government bodies, local organizations and households. The implementation was further strengthened by the appointment of community focal points, which provided technical and professional expertise and consultations in concrete subject matters, ensured comprehensive understanding of the Project components at the local level and provided detailed understanding of the local needs for the Implementing Agencies and partners.

The Project logic and interventions are well aligned with the Sectoral Strategies of the GOA. The Project document was developed in line with the Government Programme 2017-2022, National Development Strategy (until 2025) and Disaster Risk Management National Strategy to explicitly link it to the SDGs and Sendai Framework 2015-2030 for DRR with the horizon of 2030, 2017-2021

Strategy for Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia and its Action plan, strategy on the Protection of the Rights of the Child 2017-2021 and Work Plan 2012-2017, in which mitigation of disparities in development of Armenia's regions was included as a priority. Moreover, the Project was aligned with a number of ongoing reforms, for example, decentralization and community consolidation, integrated social services etc., keeping the relevance despite COVID-19 issues and NK conflict, as well as parliamentary elections. The Project logic and interventions were reconfirmed within the new 2021-2026 Government programme.

The Project represents a successful model-platform for complex multi-agencies/multi-beneficiary intervention and its application is to be further promoted. All the activities were to the biggest extent inclusive in targeting women, the youth, farmers, migrants and other vulnerable groups and ensured decent jobs and comprehensive support from the stage of consulting to capacity building and provision of production means.

Effectiveness. The Project made a success in the implementation of activities covering several areas of importance for the consolidated communities. Despite some delays, the Project achieved its goals and for the majority of activities, the result is better than expected. Overall, the evaluation is showing that the Project achieved targets on both outcome and output levels. The Project objectives resulted in improved cooperation and interventions between the partner agencies with a focus on long-term solutions, which enabled the communities to resist the threats to human security, timely assessing, minimizing and preventing the impacts of threats.

Within the Project objectives, a solid progress was achieved on HSA assessment and DRR interventions by UNDP/UNICEF, on various aspects of social protection for vulnerable families and children, including assessment of social needs at the local level, capacity development of social workers, finding solutions to deprivations caused by poverty (e.g. health, education), as well as looking for opportunities to engage vulnerable groups in various income-generating opportunities advanced within other project components. The Project continued making progress towards enhancing human security through local economic and food security development initiatives and by creating income generation opportunities for vulnerable groups in targeted Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions in Armenia and promoting agricultural best practices, as well as addressing the challenges, that emerged as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and hostilities in and around NK.

Efficiency. The complexity of the Project interventions (donors, implementing agencies, numerous national partners on national and local levels, etc.) was challenging for all three pillars of efficiency – cost efficiency, time efficiency and implementation structure. The Project was implemented by six different UN agencies with different internal rules. Each of the Implementing Agencies prepared its activities to cover different goals; needed to be coordinated first internally and then jointly within the framework of the Project. The Project shows that various activities regarding local-level projects (by each UN agency) could run different budgets, not necessarily with the same reporting requirements. Joint programming, as a modality to implement complex and innovative interventions, is effective when underpinned by robust design logic, with clearly assigned responsibilities among participating UN agencies, and extensive involvement of national and local partners in all stages of

the Project cycle. Furthermore, the knowledge and experience from this Joint Project also contributed to improving the "Deliver as One" concept within the UN agencies. The achievements of the Project are to a large degree based on a well-structured budget and efficient implementation structure, including financial implementation. Therefore, it could be stated that achieved results well justify the costs of intervention. Overall approach and exercised principles of optimized financial management cannot be replaced by some other approach to enable achievement of the same results with fewer investments of resources. Besides, additional and complementary resources were mobilized to implement the Project by the Implementing Agencies.

Sustainability. The project interventions were being designed and implemented according to the pillars of sustainable development such as human, social, economic and environmental aspects of growth. The principles of DRR-informed development, human capacity building and social inclusion can be found in all project components. To ensure the sustainability of its interventions, the Project created capacities for the relevant stakeholders to ensure that the final target beneficiaries receive higher quality services from both state and private sector representatives. All relevant stakeholders were involved from the design phase to implementation, which ensured their ownership of the Project. The human security challenges of consolidated communities are enormous and the need for financial resources is significant.

Impact. Throughout the Project, it has created conditions for long-term social, economic and other changes for individuals, communities, institutions for realization of SDGs in targeted communities, with multi-sectoral impact and integrated HSA advanced by the six implementing UN agencies. Enhanced cooperation and project synergies were achieved, enabling the Project interventions and the HSA to gradually become a critical flagship catalyst for the UN in Armenia, "delivering as one" to achieve human security in consolidated Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan communities of Armenia. Considering the complexity of human insecurities and the permanent demand for addressing the challenges, Implementing Agencies put efforts into mobilizing resources in improving people's livelihoods.

Lessons Learned: Positive experience in the coordination of an integrated inter-agency project is evident. The experience of establishment and operation of the Project should be applied to the management of other similar projects. The system of work of the Project Board also gave a positive experience.

L1: Inter-agency coordination and cooperation within the UN family and with other stakeholders enhanced the synergies with positive and integrated results.

L2: Coordination with partners and local authorities in targeted communities was essential for identifying the business, social and other needs of the communities.

L3: Development of legal and policy framework at the national level, afterward its replication in the target communities had proven to be more sustainable and effective in the unified approaches focusing on the community social work, family social needs assessment, case management and local social planning.

L4: The flexible approach to programming and confirming of the Project priorities with partners upon every crisis situation (COVID-19 pandemic and hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh) allowed for successful implementation of the Project activities, in line with ongoing Government reforms at the national and local levels.

L5: The implementation of a complex and multi-agency project required additional and enhanced coordination and implementation structures in place in order to ensure synergies and complementarities and avoid duplication of effort, thus maximizing on the HSA and the Project interventions.

Challenges Faced During the Project: In general, the Project notwithstanding its limitations and risks has been very important for the successful implementation of its goals and objectives. Regarding the extent to which the Project has adapted to changing external conditions (risks and assumptions) in order to ensure benefits for the target groups and communities, it is necessary to mention the Project's main challenges.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Political | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change of GoA and uncertainty of reform processes. ▪ Continued and protracted COVID-19 pandemic posing difficulties. ▪ The hostilities in and around NK and the impact on Armenia. ▪ Military escalation in targeted Tavush region, which is a bordering province. ▪ Parliamentary and local elections affecting priorities at national and local level. |
| Financial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited financial resources at the local level. ▪ Suspension of the school feeding programme. |
| Operational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low participation of targeted community members. ▪ Lack of Conservation Agriculture equipment. ▪ Low prioritization of school safety and preparedness activities. ▪ Lack of work force due to the restrictions. ▪ Complex insecurity in some areas led to low motivation of the local communities for launching micro-business. |

The Project adapted to these challenges and mitigated the risks by putting short-term mitigation plans. All designed interventions were accompanied by costing exercises to propose sustainable and low-cost solutions at the local level. The Project team reconfirmed engagement with the new community administrations, as well as organized a number of introductory meetings in the targeted communities to meet with potential beneficiaries and raise awareness among the local population, etc.

Main Conclusions and Recommendations: Summarizing the results of the evaluation according to the major components it is important to mention the following revelations and conclusions.

The Project is highly relevant with principles of a complex multi-donor/multi-agency/multi-beneficiary intervention, successfully aligned with country and regional development frameworks, donors' country strategies, as well as the Project targets. Initial weaknesses of the Project implementation had been overcome during the implementation by strong national and inter-agency

participation at all levels and efficient operational planning and flexible and strong follow up of field implementation. The Project's goal, design and implementation approaches assume unprecedented cooperation among the UN agencies and creation of synergies among their respective programmes. Thus, the Project ensured participatory design and implementation approaches, based on long consultation processes with key partners and stakeholders as well as HS Needs Assessment, ensuring local ownership and dedication to the Project's initiatives.

Effects of intervention at both outcomes and output levels are achieved – most of the outcome indicators are significantly higher than the targeted values. In addition to the overall structural model of complex intervention, good practice models for actions were created at the operative level and were widely replicable under similar conditions. By exercising principles of strong local participation and on-job learning, local capacities are created, capable to streamline further regional development. Overall, the Project structure succeeded to create vertical and horizontal synergies between participants and actions at all levels. Time extension was justified with dual crises, parliamentary and local elections and additional funds were used in line with the Project goals and contributed to the overall Project's delivery and results. Initial budget structure and efficient financial implementation provided the Project efficiency.

Overall results of the Project are demonstrating high level of sustainability expectance: basis for results' sustainability is developed primarily through strong local participation and ownership, including local capacity building approach, providing knowledge and services for the benefit of vulnerable groups. Under unfavorable conditions in the targeted regions as well as in the country in general, it is necessary to provide longer and continuous external development support in order to ensure full sustainability of the results.

The Project's progress towards SDGs is clear and visible. The interventions aimed at risk-informed and resilient community development, overcoming poverty, providing access to quality, inclusive and safe education and social services and ensuring gender equality have already started to show measurable results.

Based on the results of the evaluation we can bring forward the following recommendations:

| # | Recommendation | Priority | Time Period | Addressee |
|----|--|----------|----------------|--|
| 1. | The Human Security Approach adopted within the Project can be replicated as a good practice and “umbrella” methodology throughout Armenia for context specific, people-centered and prevention oriented assessments, analysis and mapping of root causes of local inter-related insecurities and, therefore, considering more comprehensive and integrated | High | September 2022 | Project Team Project Board Key Stakeholders UN Agencies |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--------|----------------|--|
| | interventions to tackle the existing complex challenges. | | | |
| 2. | The “Delivering as One” approach adopted from joint design, management and implementation of the Project by the Implementing Agencies was combined with coherent and well-adjusted communication with government and partners and members of target communities, thus becoming one of the main successes of the Project and highly beneficial for the target communities. Hence, it shall be further scaled-up and replicated not only in other regions of Armenia, but also within the UN Country Team to enhance joint analysis, planning and achievement of joint outputs and outcomes with multiplying effects. | Medium | September 2022 | Project Team Project Board UN Agencies |
| 3. | The concept of human security, its main features, dimensions and operational phases shall be mainstreamed further throughout the country to become an important principle of public administration, outlining concrete benefits to the livelihood and dignity of the people from development policies, plans and programmes that are being planned at regional and community levels. | High | September 2022 | Project Team Project Board Key Stakeholders UN Agencies |
| 4. | Cooperation and coordination between the Government and UN agencies needs to be continued at the local and regional levels for ensuring sustainability in all project directions, also considering the increased role of communities in emergency response, for better, integrated and more effective results and for avoiding duplication. | Medium | September 2022 | Project Team Key Stakeholders |

| | | | | |
|-----------|--|--------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 5. | In order to reinforce initial benefits and build upon them, future directions ought to consider reinforcing the positive aspects demonstrated by this Project and build upon what has been field-tested and proven as demonstrated by the achievement of the Project and its local-level projects. | Medium | December 2022 | Project Team Project Board |
|-----------|--|--------|---------------|-------------------------------|

CHAPTER I. BACKGROUND, OBJECT AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

“Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” Project (hereinafter: the Project) is funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and is jointly implemented with six UN agencies, namely UNDP (lead agency), UNICEF, WFP, UNIDO, IOM and FAO in close cooperation with the Government of Armenia. The UN agencies have implemented the Project activities in Armenia in the period of October 2018 - April 2022.

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The overall objectives of the Project are:

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2. To strengthen social protection and inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities;
3. To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building.

The concept of human security, as originally articulated by UNDP in its 1994 Human Development Report, is based upon individuals’ rights to “freedom from fear”, “freedom from want”, “freedom to live in dignity”, and the global community and each country must prioritize building a world that secures these essential freedoms. It is distinguished from national security by its people-centered focus. In its advocacy for the protection and empowerment of the most vulnerable in times of crisis, human security is also relevant to the objectives of conflict prevention.

Human security approach taken within the Project addresses, individual rights, good governance, access to safe and inclusive education, food security, risk informed development, migration and local opportunities, so that opportunities and choices are fulfilled at maximum potential and are aimed at reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and community resilience, as well as promoting understanding of human security in terms of the risks and insecurities faced by individuals and groups at grass roots level. This was achieved by identifying the specific needs of populations under stress, human security, highlighting the complexity of the challenges and promoting integrated solutions that ensure greater coherence and stronger impact.

The overall objective of this assessment was to conduct a final evaluation (hereinafter: the Evaluation) of the Project, based on the detailed terms of reference presented in Annex 1: “Terms of Reference”. The main goal of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact (to the extent possible) of the interventions under the Project with the purpose to inform the primary users of this evaluation on the progress towards the targets at the output and outcomes levels of the Project, as well as different cooperation processes during its implementation and achievement in the longer-run.

The evaluation assessed the time period of the Project implementation from October 2018 to April 2022 defining the geographical coverage as the consolidated communities of Tumanyan, Alaverdi, Amasia and Berd (including their settlements) in Lori, Shirak and Tavush regions of the RA.

The evaluation used the qualitative approach for data collection and analysis to assess results at the outcome and output levels. All data gathered were verified through triangulation or ensuring the credibility of data gathered by relying on data from different sources (primary and secondary data), data of different types (qualitative, quantitative and resource information), or data from different respondents (e.g., representatives of government bodies, beneficiaries, stakeholders and others). Both primary and secondary data were used in the evaluation. Primary information was collected verbally from the various applicable strata of stakeholders. This evaluation report is based on the key findings arrived at through data collection, analysis and conclusions, and provides specific recommendations to primary and secondary users of the evaluation: government, implementers, partners, donors and UN agencies for future initiatives that build on the Project’s results. Primary users of the evaluation are National Implementing Partners and Implementing Agencies. The evaluation provided specific recommendations to the government, implementers, partners, donors and UN agencies and the learning results of the evaluation will serve as a guidance in developing future projects and programs in the respective field.

1.2 Background and Context of the Project

The logic and the outputs of this multi-agency joint project were stemming from the fact, that the multiple interconnected and compounding vulnerabilities at local community levels could not be addressed individually and they need to be tackled in good understanding of local context and inter-relatedness. As a result, the six UN agencies have shared knowledge, expertise and planning to work together to eradicate the core underlying insecurities and positively contribute towards the sustainable and resilient development – an unprecedented level of cooperation among UN agencies in the country.

Under the community consolidation and decentralization reforms in Armenia, the smaller settlements were clustered into larger administrative units for consolidation of limited human, financial and material resources available to the local government systems. However, during its inception phase, these reforms caused temporary increase in vulnerability following the consolidation and decentralization, with many segments of population registering little or no immediate impact and even registering decreased coverage, performance and accountability from

local self-government bodies, and decrease of public participation at more general, enlarged context. Considering the impact from old and emerging challenges, the immediate results related more to uncertainty, shock, deterioration of economic indicators and increased vulnerability. In this regard, the Project was designed to support 4 of the most vulnerable consolidated new community units in different dimensions of human security, helping address the temporary increase in vulnerability following the consolidation and decentralization

The Project was launched on October 16, 2018, and was accompanied by a strong partnership among UN agencies and RA government entities, particularly ministries managing Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Investments and Agriculture, Education and Science, Labor and Social Affairs, Migration, etc. The Project implementing organizations and partners have committed strong support for the Project activities, for the added value of the HSA, recognizing that developmental or humanitarian challenges are the confluence of multiple interconnected and mutually reinforcing factors and that those challenges require greater integration of activities across the UN system.

Also, the Project has complemented many past and ongoing government and donor-funded actions, supporting the government efforts to address disaster risk reduction and socio-economic development through improving livelihoods and creating jobs within communities, encouraging public participation, increasing the quality, access and the level of efficiency of social services, providing balanced, safe and high-quality nutrition in Armenia through enlarging the sustainable school meal programme, enhancing management of labour migration and fighting against trafficking and labour exploitation, as well as ensuring the safety of children in vulnerable communities and educational institutions.

UNDP: As the designated agency UNDP ensured the overall coordination of the project, build public-private partnerships on local level and shaped inter-agency synergies for more focused and targeted interventions, sustainability and partnership. UNDP took responsibility for the overall administration of the financial and human resources, project management, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

The role of UNDP was to establish an environment for comprehensive and resilient community development. To this end the agency launched need assessment exercises in the local communities using participatory mechanisms and HS methodology and increased capacities on the local level to address a range of socio economic and natural disaster risks. UNDP undertook a leading role in establishing effective resilience governance mechanisms and enhancing functional private-public partnership networks at local level that provided legitimate basis for risk-informed development and planning, timely risk communication and effective management of both threats and opportunities at local level. Next to this UNDP cooperated with the partner agencies to address the needs identified in the assessment phase, particularly aligning efforts with UNIDO, WFP and IOM towards reducing economic insecurities through sustainable agribusiness development.

UNICEF: UNICEF was the lead agency for activities in regard to vulnerable children and their families in the target communities. Main interventions included strengthening of the ability of communities and education institutions to ensure comprehensive safety and wellbeing of children and families, as

well as advancement of early prevention-oriented, equitable and responsive social protection systems to address the needs of vulnerable families and children.

UNIDO: UNIDO in cooperation with UNDP and IOM contributed to the local economic growth in selected rural areas by creating sustainable jobs and increasing regional competitiveness in three clusters of communities. Economic development was achieved through the implementation of an innovative integrated system linking different agricultural and processing sectors in a mutually beneficial closed scheme.

UNIDO supported development of a market environment for an enhanced use of clean and renewable technologies (e.g., solar heaters, small biogas units) in small and medium agro-processing enterprises as a basis for promoting their competitiveness, ensuring an integrated approach for lower carbon intensity and improving the local environment. Next to this, the agency introduced the advanced technologies in sustainable waste collection, sorting and recycling in the local communities. Furthermore, UNIDO supported establishment of new businesses as well as upgrading existing ones based on the proved business model to stimulate creation of additional jobs and additional income among rural population. Strong linkage was established between supported businesses and vulnerable groups to tackle economic insecurities and provide income generation opportunities for the latter.

WFP: WFP was leading the food security and nutrition interventions in target communities through increasing the scope and targeting of its sustainable school meals programme. The proposed intervention also created a significant sustainable demand of local agricultural production for school meals programme, which boosted the economic capacities and well-being of smallholder farmers. Pilot interventions of homegrown school feeding were launched in the province of Shirak region where WFP also launched its cash interventions prior to handing over the schools in this province to the National School Feeding Programme.

FAO: FAO promoted agricultural sector development in target regions as well as contribute to poverty level reduction in rural areas through creation of models of sustainable agricultural practices on Conservation Agriculture (CA), Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Irrigation Advanced Practices and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM).

IOM: IOM was largely concentrated on the economic security domain and supported the efforts of the other UN agencies towards job creation and income generation for returning migrants, local vulnerable population prone to migration, youth and other through business training, business development and follow up, which created opportunity to apply knowledge and skills received during the trainings and generate income for the households. In addition, IOM concentrated on reducing personal insecurity of the labour migrants and prevented possible cases of labour trafficking and exploitation via capacity building to the State Employment Agency and its Migrant Resource Centers and proactive information sharing.

The Project was managed by the Project Board at the highest level, which was comprised of representatives from the key national beneficiaries, including the Ministry of Territorial

Administration and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and the heads of implementing UN agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, FAO, WFP and IOM. The Project Board was responsible for decision-making on proposals and recommendations coming from any of its members, or through the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee.

The Inter-Agency Coordination Committee was composed of representatives of each of the six participating UN agencies. The main objective of the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee was to facilitate effective implementation and coordination of the Project at a more technical level. The Project implementation was supported by the Project Coordinator. Although contracted by UNDP, all participating agencies shared the responsibility for supervising the work of the Project Coordinator to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the Project implementation. The Project Coordinator also provided logistical support to the Project Board and Inter-Agency Coordination Committee. The partnership of six UN agencies, along with the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee, ensured the accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the Project. The Project provided annual reports on the Project implementation and financial delivery to the Committee¹.

The UN partners employed a parallel funding modality. UNDP, as the lead agency, was in charge of submitting, with support of the Project Coordinator, consolidated performance and financial reports to the UNTFHS. The Project management board, Inter-Agency Coordination Committee, with other stakeholders and partners conducted joint monitoring of the Project activities or procurement process to increase the effectiveness. Each agency managed its own funds in accordance with its procedures and in the framework of its assigned responsibilities under the joint Project proposal and budget, and in accordance with its internal rules and regulation.

1.3 Object of the Evaluation

The main goal of the Project was to support Armenia’s efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by addressing the root causes of human insecurity for vulnerable people of Alaverdi, Tumanyan, Amasia and Berd communities in Lori, Shirak and Tavush regions of the RA. Therefore, to accomplish the Project’s goal the six Implementing Agencies have intensified their endeavors, attempt and intentions for the implementation of the Project components: objectives, outputs and indicators presented in Table 1 while the broader vision of the change (ToC) is explored further in the section. Essentially these adjustments reflected a more realistic expectation of what the Project might achieve. The evaluation measured achievements against the Project indicators.

Table 1: Project Components: Objectives, Outputs and Indicators²

| Project Objective and Expected Outputs | Objectively Verifiable Indicators |
|--|-----------------------------------|
|--|-----------------------------------|

¹ Source: Project Document, Chapter IV. Governance and Management Arrangements

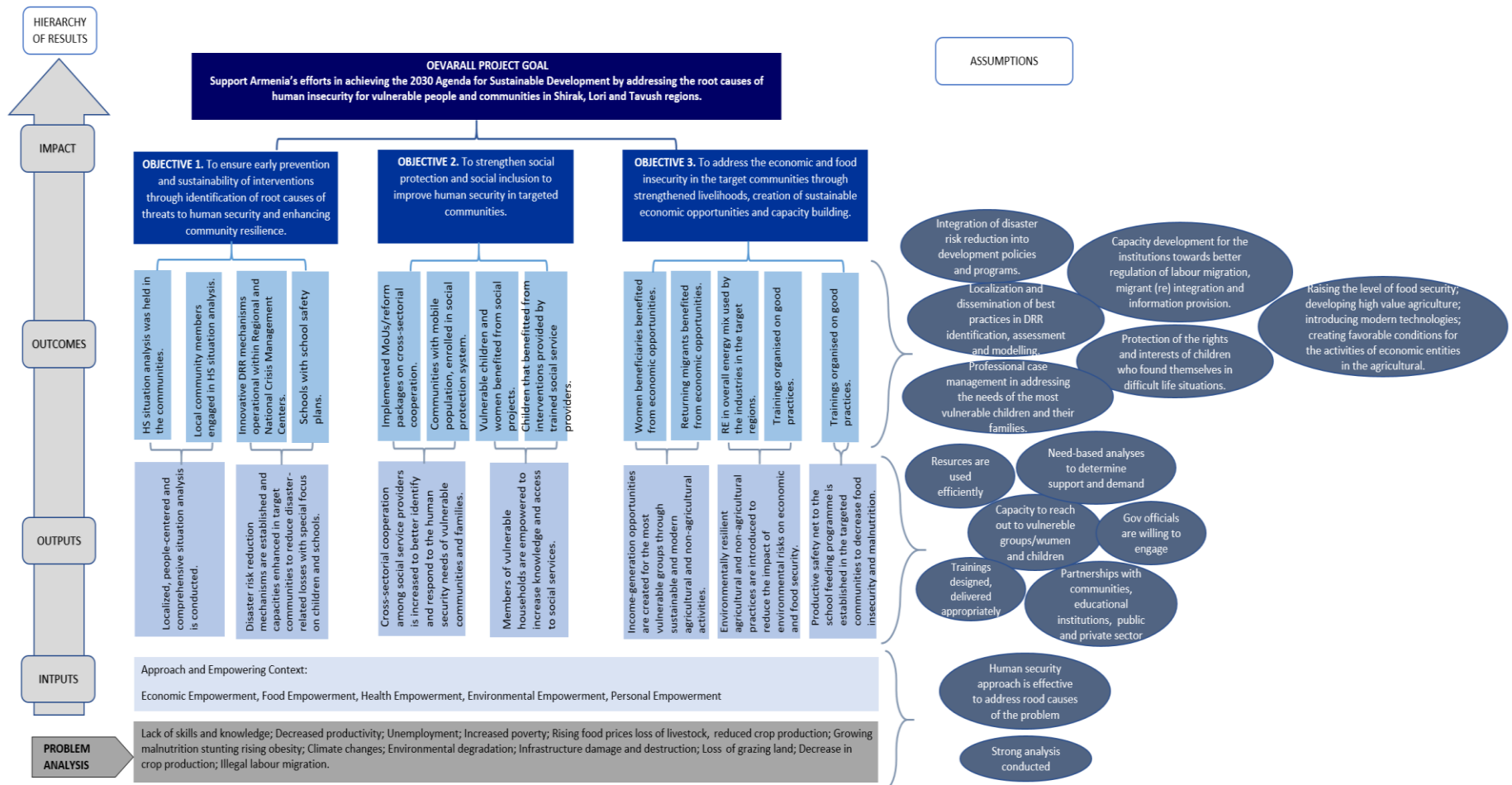
² Source: Result Monitoring Report, 2021

| | |
|--|---|
| Objective 1: To ensure early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience. | # of communities where HS approach is integrated into community development planning |
| | # of recommendations for risk-informed community development implemented by communities |
| Output 1.1 Localized, people-centered and comprehensive situation analysis were conducted. | # of communities where HS situation analysis were held |
| | # of local community members engaged in HS situation analysis |
| Output 1.2 Disaster risk reduction mechanisms are established and capacities enhanced in target communities to reduce disaster-related losses with special focus on children and schools. Early Warning Systems in communities were installed through technical upgrade, improved coordination and mechanisms. | # of innovative DRR mechanisms operational within regional and national Crisis Management Centers |
| | # of schools with school safety plans |
| Objective 2: To Strengthen social protection and inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities. | # of most vulnerable families and children benefitting from improved social services |
| Output 2.1 Cross-sectorial cooperation among social service providers is increased to better identify and respond to the human security needs of vulnerable communities and families. | # of implemented MoUs/reform packages on cross-sectorial cooperation |
| Output 2.2 Members of vulnerable households are empowered to increase knowledge and access to social services. | # of vulnerable children and women that benefitted from social projects |
| | # of children that benefitted from interventions provided by trained social service providers |
| Objective 3: To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building. | % of income raise among the most vulnerable target groups of the Project |
| | % of decrease of food insecurity levels within the targeted population |
| | % of beneficiary farmers' capacities strengthened on good practices |
| Output 3.1 Income-generation opportunities are created for the most vulnerable groups through sustainable and modern agricultural and non-agricultural activities. | % of women benefiting from economic opportunities |
| | % of returning migrants benefiting from economic opportunities |
| Output 3.2 Environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices are introduced to reduce the impact of environmental risks on economic and food security. | % of RE in overall energy mix used by the industries in the target regions |
| | # of trainings organized on good practices |
| Output 3.3 Productive safety net to the school feeding programme is established in the targeted communities to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition. | % increase of locally procured food for the implementation of School Feeding Programme |

The evaluator took a Theory of Change (ToC) based approach by reviewing the existing ToC of the Project and developing as a framework to help in identifying appropriate evidence to assess the Project's overall performance and to the extent possible, reconstructing it so as to determine whether: (a) the envisaged changes identified at the Project design stage have taken place; (b) the possible contribution of the Project to bring about those changes can be confirmed; and (c) the assumptions that the Project identified were realized or no.

Figure 1: ToC of the Project³

³ Source: Own elaboration by the evaluator based on the Project Document, Annual Progress Reports, Results Monitoring Reports



1.4 Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The final evaluation (hereinafter: the Evaluation) of the Project aimed to provide insight into operations and performance of the Project. The main purpose was to provide an independent in-depth assessment of the Project results and outcomes against planned results including aspects of efficiency and their contribution to tangible results and outcomes. The evaluation also assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact (to the extent possible) of the Project and provided specific recommendations to government, implementers, partners, donors and UN agencies for future initiatives that build on the Project's results for future initiatives.

The evaluation was conducted with the purpose to inform the primary users (National Implementing Partners and Implementing Agencies) of this evaluation on the outcomes of this Project as well as different cooperation processes during its implementation. The ultimate purpose of this evaluation was geared towards learning, based on an assessment of the past performance, aiming at understanding the process to fill the gap between its current and future states. The learning results of this evaluation will serve as a guidance in developing future projects and programs in the respective field.

The main objectives of the evaluation were to provide the users of the evaluation with:

- a) an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the Project to be evaluated, paying particular attention to the reasons underpinning the assessment results with the aim to learn for future activities;
- b) key findings, conclusions and related recommendations to the primary and secondary users of this evaluation.

The evaluation assessed the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issues of gender, youth, migrants, persons with disabilities, children and human rights in the Project in accordance with the Project documents.

1.5 Evaluation Methodology (short)

The evaluation assessed the following criteria defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact (to the extent possible). These criteria were the bases for the evaluation questions where, in some instances, a question may address one or more of the criteria in its intent. The evaluation questions are intended to give a more precise form to the evaluation criteria and to articulate the key areas of interest of stakeholders, thereby optimizing the focus and utility of the evaluation. The evaluation criteria and questions, as well data collection methods and data sources were developed and presented in Annex 3: "Evaluation Matrix".

The evaluation used the qualitative approach for data collection and analysis to assess results at the outcome and output levels. The qualitative methods were used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant. These data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. The large-scale quantitative data collection was

impossible because of the variety of interventions and beneficiary groups and did not have much-added value; instead, the existing quantitative data sources were used. To strengthen the validity and reliability of the data collected, the evaluation employed the triangulation of methods as well as sources of information. The following evaluation methods were applied in the scope of the objectives and tasks put forward in the evaluation:

- Review and analysis of the Project reports and collected data;
- Qualitative interviews with specific questions depending on target group and other stakeholders.

Details on data targets, sampling approach and scope of the fieldwork are presented in Annex 2. The application of these methods was intended to be transparent, inclusive, participatory, as well as take into consideration gender equality and human rights perspectives⁴. The data collection tools were developed based on the evaluation questions which are presented in the ToR. The interview guide and instruments are presented in Annex 4.

Aside from the desk review, data was collected through interviews conducted with around 80 stakeholders, beneficiaries, key informants and Project experts representing all project components and all target communities. The interviews enabled reaching the data saturation point and to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of the collected qualitative data, as well as the validity of findings and conclusions (for more detail see Annex 2). The analysis from the results informed key findings, conclusions and recommendations related to the Project implementation, to serve as a basis for decision-making and learning to further upscale results, effectiveness and best practices in the future.

The model of the analysis, on the one hand, enabled to reveal and evaluate the awareness, attitudes and standpoints of the main stakeholders concerning the Project activities, and on the other hand, it explained the cause and effect relations based on the qualitative comments and examples.

The Project direct beneficiary pool includes:

- 1) Ministries of RA (MoTAI, MoLSA, MoESCS, MoE, MoES,);
- 2) Other government entities;
- 3) Regional administrations of Tavush, Shirak and Lori regions,
- 4) Local authorities, local self-governing bodies and community administrations;
- 5) Educational Institutions (including school administrators, teachers and students);
- 6) Farmers organizations;
- 7) Private sector;
- 8) NGOs;
- 9) Target community members.

⁴The evaluation followed the guidance on the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in the evaluation focus and processed as established in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Handbook, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance. The evaluation followed UNEG Norms and Standards and abide by UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct and any other relevant ethical codes.

To analyze data the evaluator employed qualitative techniques - descriptive, content, comparative (see Annex 2). These approaches were applied in summative and prospective analysis, as well as in data synthesis.

The key findings, conclusions and recommendations related to the Project implementation were derived from the evidence and results to serve as a basis for decision-making and learning to further upscale results, effectiveness and best practices in the future.

All the interviews were anonymized and the collected data were generalized in the analysis. The participation of respondents was voluntary and the data confidentiality was ensured. Data protection and privacy issues are discussed in Annex 2. The responses were analyzed at an aggregate level to identify emerging trends or issues relating to the particular areas of investigation of the evaluation. Because most of the information collected within the scope of the evaluation was qualitative and textual data, the relevant methods for analysis were used. In particular, content analysis was carried out for reducing a large amount of unstructured textual content into manageable data relevant to the evaluation questions. Thematic coding was conducted for identifying passages of the spoken text which were linked by a common theme or idea. Clear and coherent narratives were built related to the changes occurring for the communities, direct or indirect beneficiaries, or other stakeholders. Most of the numeric data were obtained from the provided project-related documents including human security baseline analysis, project monitoring framework and budget implementation report. The main techniques to be used for analyzing this data were exploratory techniques which involved taking a “first look” at a data set and summarizing its main characteristics, through the use of visual methods.

1.6 Major Limitations

During the course of the evaluation, the evaluator uncounted some limitations but they have not significantly affected the results of the evaluation. These included the following:

COVID-19 Effects

Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation obliges people to keep a distance during face-to-face communication. In cases when it was not possible to carry out fieldwork outdoors, the telephone interviews were used to avoid any risks of COVID-19 for interviewer and interviewees.

Compressed Timeframe

Due to the time limitation and the significant distance among the remote regions, the data collection process from the beneficiaries and the partners was conducted through phone calls.

Since the telephone interviews were major instrument for primary data collection it is important to mention the effectiveness of it: many interviews were conducted per day as a result the time for traveling was saved; had personal touch, misunderstandings were modified; were cost effective.

Ongoing operations

The evaluation was carried out before the end of the Project, which did not give an opportunity to fully assess some of the ongoing activities and to measure the achievement of the targeted results at the impact level.

1.7 Ethical considerations, Human Rights and Gender

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation”⁵. The evaluator safeguarded the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders, directly addressing no harm and leave no one behind principles, through measures (personal data protection) to ensure compliance with relevant codes governing the collection of data and reporting on data. The evaluator also ensured the security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols (like archiving, password protection and non-disclosure) to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process were solely used for the evaluation.

Informed verbal consent was sought from stakeholders prior to asking any questions related to the Project evaluation. To obtain consent, the evaluator briefly explained the reasons and objectives of the evaluation, as well as the scope of the questions asked during the interview. Stakeholders had the right to refuse or to withdraw at any time. The evaluator also ensured respondent privacy and confidentiality. Comments provided during individual and group discussions were aggregated to render impossible the identification of specific stakeholders.

During the overall process of the evaluation, the evaluator followed the principles of impartiality and credibility, as well as human right-based approaches, which require human rights principles⁶ (universality, indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability) with focus on developing the capacities of both “duty-bearers” to meet their obligations and “rights-holders” to claim their rights.

The key findings and draft evaluation report which includes the findings and conclusions responding to the evaluation questions, as well as an overall assessment, was presented to the representatives of Implementing Agencies. The evaluation report was subject to a quality assessment by the Implementing Agencies. Several meetings were organized with Implementing Agencies to validate the findings and the conclusions.

⁵ Source: UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020; Online source:

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

⁶ “Human rights are universal and inalienable; indivisible; interdependent and interrelated. They are universal because everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of where they live, their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic background. Inalienable because people’s rights can never be taken away. Indivisible and interdependent because all rights – political, civil, social, cultural and economic – are equal in importance and none can be fully enjoyed without the others. They apply to all equally, and all have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. They are upheld by the rule of law and strengthened through legitimate claims for duty-bearers to be accountable to international standards”. “United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework - Internal Guidance”, 2019; Online Source: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf

The evaluator put gender equality at the heart of the evaluation, driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, considering gender aspect across the evaluation criteria and questions, using gender-sensitive methods and tools and data analysis techniques, incorporating gender analysis across findings, conclusions in line with the minimum requirements agreed upon by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group⁷.

⁷ Source: United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), (2014), UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note. Retrieved; Online Source: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>

CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The findings presented in this chapter are based on key questions of the Evaluation Matrix. This chapter presents the analysis of the Project's results through the prism of OECD criteria for evaluating development assistance programmes, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

2.1 Relevance

The relevance of the Project is assessed based on the extent to which the Project and its interventions and activities are suited to state, regional and local development policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, relevance is also assessed by determining how the Project relates to the main objectives of the Results Framework for the Project.

Relevance of the Project's concept and design, both structurally and the activities, within the context of Armenia. The Project was highly relevant in structural terms to the challenges faced in the HSA in consolidated communities. **There is a very high level of interlinkage and complexity between the wide range of different types, levels, and reaches of vulnerability and the multiple types of threats that have been experienced.** The situation in the target communities is characterized by its complexity and hybridity. As the Project reminds us, the HSA is particularly well suited to analyze and suggest measures that permit hybrid analysis of the interlinkage of “natural” threats to HS (pandemic, war, border conflict, disaster risk, etc.) and “human-made” threats such as poverty, social injustice and inequality, food insecurity, migration, etc.

The Project was designed with the premise that the HSA, with its emphasis on specific operational principles for policies and programmes, namely people-centered, comprehensive, context specificity, preventive, as well as its dual framework of protection and empowerment, would be appropriate for localizing the implementation of the Sendai Framework in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The emphasis on partnership among different UN agencies was also meant to reinforce the comprehensive and context-specific principles. The partnership was on the expertise and resources of a wide range of actors from across the UN, Government, civil society, private sector, educational institutions, other government agencies and communities. The Project proposal is well written and it is evident that the Implementing Agencies put a lot of effort into its development, including the initial proposal and the amendment as well, in close consultations with partners. The proposal correctly captures the complexity of development issues faced by the consolidated communities and provides an utter understanding of the cause and effect nature of the Project interventions⁸.

Relevance both to ongoing and planned efforts of the GoA and the UN agencies. The HSA that is the core of the present Project was fundamentally different from - though ultimately compatible with - ongoing government efforts, and can be regarded as a supplement to the plans and efforts of

⁸ Source: Expert Interviews

the GoA. **Human security is an individual-centered approach: this means a focus first and foremost on individual vulnerabilities.** When the individual vulnerabilities are first conceptualized and pragmatically addressed, the solutions to collective vulnerabilities become clarified and can be addressed. To the degree the Project succeeded in redirecting attention and resources from the institutional approach to the individual-based HSA, it was relevant to the ongoing and planned efforts.

The Project was in line with the Government strategic development plan in its action areas: economic rebuilding; social rebuilding; agricultural rebuilding; institutional rebuilding; environmental rebuilding; household and personal rebuilding, both in terms of content and process. For the content, it focused on a priority need of the GoA, to support Armenia's efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by addressing the root causes of human insecurity for vulnerable people. As such, the HSA supported further the protection and empowerment of impacted communities in a comprehensive manner. The Project was relevant as it also introduced new methods to prevent risks by educating populations.

The Project design was relevant and suited to the priorities and policies of the GoA and UN partners. The rationale of the Project was fully justified and aligned with the Government's priorities, including during the Project amendment process. The analytical part of the Project proposal provided all the necessary and relevant data explaining the reasons for this type of intervention. The Project interventions were developed and conducted in close partnership with the Ministries of Emergency Situations, Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as other state agencies and targeted consolidated communities in the following **key capacities**⁹:

- to strengthen the community and ecosystem resilience and sustainability;
- to improve economic development, economic inclusion and economic well-being of vulnerable groups;
- to enhance access to and utilization of relevant, quality essential social services and to ensure access to the social protection system;
- to protect the vulnerable groups from poverty, chronic food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition;
- to create income-generation opportunities for the most vulnerable groups through sustainable and modern agricultural and non-agricultural activities;
- to introduce environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices to reduce the impact of environmental risks on economic and food security;
- to establish a productive safety net for the school feeding programme to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition;
- to tackle irregular migration and create decent work with sustainable incomes;
- to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures, as well as climate-smart solutions into the community development cycle.

⁹ Source: Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

The Project intervention logic is coherent with the Sectoral Strategies of the GOA¹⁰. The Project Document was developed in line with the Government Programme 2017-2022, National Development Strategy (until 2025), Socio-Economic Development Programme of Shirak, Tavush and Lori regions 2014-2017, and Disaster Risk Management National Strategy to distinctly link it to the SDGs and Sendai Framework 2015-2030 for DRR with the horizon of 2030, 2017-2021 Strategy for Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia and its Action plan and Strategy on the Protection of the Rights of the Child 2017-2021, as well as ongoing reform of integrated social services in the country. Despite the dual crisis of COVID-19 and hostilities in and around NK, the focus on priorities of the Project activities were kept.

Relevance to the target groups' needs and priorities. As the localized, people-centered and comprehensive situation and problem analysis on the target communities is related to different areas (not just environment insecurity but also food, health, social, economic insecurity, etc.), a multi-pronged approach was appropriate. The HSA is ideal for developing comprehensive and integrated responses that address the impacts of challenges as well as the underlying social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to vulnerability.

The Project was relevant and appropriate to the needs of the people and targeted communities. The Project activities responded to important challenges faced by the people of the consolidated communities. Furthermore, during the Project implementation further and new needs were identified and emerged posed by the dual crises, which were also addressed by the flexible approach of the Project, while keeping the overall design and logic of interventions.

It addressed critical issues considered important for communities targeted by the Project. By targeting various levels, **the Project proved its relevance to the specific context of the RA:**

- the national and strategic levels were targeted for the ministries of RA in order to support them in integrating the HSA within their programmes and enhancing measures that lead to the strengthening of human security with a special focus on the identified target groups;
- the institutional level was supported by building the capacity of state structures through awareness-raising campaigns, training workshops and dissemination of materials to integrate the concept of human security measures within their strategies and plans;
- communities and households were targeted at the local and operational levels.

As a preventive framework, the HSA adds value in the context of planning for a comprehensive strategy on community and rural development, disaster risk reduction mechanisms establishment, social protection interventions and community consolidation, agricultural and non-agricultural practices and methods introducing and safety net for the school feeding programme establishment, which promotes coherence across agendas and plans, and ensures sustainability. Thus, the HSA adds a vision for long-term solutions by addressing underlying stress factors and risks as well as people's resilience to mitigate the impacts¹¹.

¹⁰ Source: Project Document

¹¹ Source: Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

Accordingly, the protection and empowerment framework of the HSA was targeted through interventions designed to focus on reinforcing institutional structures that have the responsibility for protecting the population on the one hand, and on strengthening the role of individuals on the other hand. All these points mean that the Human Security framework was very much relevant to the context of strategic planning and the Project implementation to mitigate risks of various spheres for targeted communities.

The Project was designed as a one programme with six UN agencies involved. The participating UN agencies contributed their expertise and technical knowledge to raise the quality of the design and implementation of the joint Project. The roles and responsibilities of key partners implementing the Project were properly assigned and reflected their expertise and comparative advantages. This approach simplified supervision and control and allowed for greater operational synergies.

The Project management and implementation setup were quite liberal. The Implementing Agencies were responsible for the full management of the Project components and finances that they were required to implement. On one hand, this was the proper set-up of a joint project that has adopted the HSA where the Implementing Agencies pooled their joint efforts and came together as one to address human security needs identified in the consolidated communities. However, within the Project logic, while the Implementing Agencies contributed their expertise in this or that field, none of them could technically have a supervising role. With this setup, each Implementing Agency managed its own project activity with its own financial, monitoring and HR systems, while the Project as a whole was managed through the Project coordination committee led by the Project coordinator, specific technical meetings and Project Board meetings, during which the Implementing Agencies shared information on implementation and discussed cooperation¹².

The Project was implemented in line with the Human Security Approach and its principles, with the recognition, that threats to people's survival, livelihood and dignity are not singular, but interconnected and as such, compounding in nature. Subsequently, by identifying the root causes of interconnected insecurities and adopting integrated and mutually related solutions that are people centered and context specific, aiming to reduce existing risks and prevent the generation of new ones, at the same time, informing on intersectorality and externalities between interventions. This was possible thanks to the unprecedented cooperation among six UN implementing agencies within one joint programme, utilizing the experience, presence and efforts built throughout the years both on the national level with the Government of Armenia, and on the local level with local self-government bodies, local organizations and households. The implementation was further strengthened by the appointment of community focal points, which provided technical and professional expertise and consultations in concrete subject matters, ensured comprehensive understanding of the Project components at the local level and provided detailed understanding of the local needs for the Implementing Agencies and partners¹³. To address the current challenges, the Project adopted more comprehensive and consolidated interventions. Having a human-centered

¹² Source: Project Reports

¹³ Source: Expert Interviews

approach and the methodology during the activities, the Project can help to create a good practice to be used in the future.

Overall, the relevance of the Project, from the initial phase to the final phase, represents a good example of a successful implementation. The interventions were planned, programmed, and designed on the solid ground of a national development platform and cooperation with governmental institutions, LSGs, as well as the private sector. The Project succeeded in responding to national development priorities and their implementation at the local level. Despite the changing circumstances the Project's relevance was kept. As a result, the Project succeeded in building a potential good practice model for complex multi-donor, multi-agency, multi-beneficiary action.

2.2 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the Project is defined as the extent to which the intended results have been achieved and opportunities created by the Project were equally accessible for women and men. Also, the evaluation considered whether the Project effectively attained its three objectives.

The Project made a success in the implementation of activities covering several areas of importance for the consolidated communities. In spite of some delays, the Project achieved its goals, and for the majority of activities, the results are overperformed¹⁴. Overall, the evaluation is showing that the Project achieved targets on both outcome and output levels. As per outcome, the most important achieved results are:

¹⁴ Source: Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

Table 2: Project Results¹⁵

| Project Objective and Expected Outputs | Output Indicators | Targets | | | |
|---|---|----------|--|--|----------|
| | | Baseline | Target | Achievements | Status |
| Objective 1: To ensure early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience. | # of communities where HS approach is integrated into community development planning | 0 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 LLRM assessments developed and endorsed by the target communities; ▪ 4 Community Resilience Action Plans approved; ▪ 4 Disaster Risk Management Plans approved; ▪ 4 Community Resilience Teams Established; ▪ 32 Early Warning Systems Installed and integrated nation-wide; ▪ PPP established for investing in agricultural DRR. | Achieved |
| | # of recommendations for risk-informed community development implemented by communities | 0 | At least 50% of the recommendations implemented by the communities | | |
| Output 1.1 Localized, people-centred and comprehensive situation analysis were conducted. | # of communities where HS situation analysis were held | 0 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HS situation analysis was held in 3 communities; ▪ 130 representatives of community administration, schools and active residents from 40 settlements of all target communities were engaged in different stages of HS situational assessments in the target communities. | Achieved |
| | # of local community members engaged in HS situation analysis | 0 | 1000 | | |
| Output 1.2 Disaster risk reduction mechanisms are established and capacities enhanced in target communities to reduce disaster-related losses with special focus on children and schools. Early Warning Systems in communities were installed through technical upgrade, improved | # of innovative DRR mechanisms operational within Regional and National Crisis Management Centers | 0 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LLRM methodology established with gender and child sensitive Human Security Approach; ▪ 4 City Resilience Action Plans formulated and officially approved by the Community Heads. ▪ 59 school staff from all 52 schools from four target communities has been trained on school disaster management and are developing the school safety plans. | Achieved |
| | # of schools with school safety plans | 0 | 52 | | |

¹⁵ Source: Own elaboration by the evaluator based on the Project Document, Annual Progress Reports, Results Monitoring Reports

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|----------|
| coordination and mechanisms. | | | | | |
| Objective 2: To strengthen social protection and inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities. | # of most vulnerable families and children benefitting from improved social services | 0 | 2000 most vulnerable children; 500 families. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2136 children; ▪ 1033 families. | Achieved |
| Output 2.1 Cross-sectorial cooperation among social service providers is increased to better identify and respond to the human security needs of vulnerable communities and families. | # of implemented MoUs/reform packages on cross-sectorial cooperation | 0 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 MoUs signed with Alaverdi, Amasia, Tumanyan municipality and Lori regional administration on cross-sectorial cooperation; ▪ The modalities for cooperation, prevention and early identification were developed. | Achieved |
| Output 2.2 Members of vulnerable households are empowered to increase knowledge and access to social services. | # of vulnerable children and women that benefitted from social projects | 80 children; 9 women. | 500 children; 50 women. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 680 children, 65 women; ▪ 2,191 persons (611 men, 814 women, 406 boys and 360 girls, as well as 691 displaced persons) were re-assessed by trained social workers for rapid response to COVID-19, conflict and rising poverty. | Achieved |
| | # of children that benefitted from interventions provided by trained social service providers | 0 | 200 | | |
| Objective 3: To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building. | % of income raise among the most vulnerable target groups of the Project | AMD 40,867 maximum monthly income of the poor population | 20% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local economic and food security development initiatives were created to address income generation opportunities for vulnerable group and promote agricultural best practices; ▪ 71 businesses were established or supported, creating or ensuring 152 permanent and seasonal jobs; ▪ Feasibility study for high-value cheese, fruit and dried herbs, high-value field crops was conducted, which was utilized as reference for economic security interventions; | Achieved |
| | % of decrease of food insecurity levels within the targeted population | Food Consumption Score (FCS) - baseline value to be determined | 60% decrease | | |

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|--|--|---|-----|--|----------|
| | % of beneficiary farmers' capacities strengthened on good practices | 0 | 30% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productive safety nets for the regional school feeding programme were developed to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition. | |
| Output 3.1 Income-generation opportunities are created for the most vulnerable groups through sustainable and modern agricultural and non-agricultural activities. | % of women benefiting from economic opportunities | 0 | 50% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 producer group (66 micro-businesses) has been established in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors; 71 income generated opportunities (51 male, headed, 20 female headed) have been created with the aim to alleviate the socio-economic pressures on households; A collective farmers group of 430 local and regional producers was supported in Amasia community with procurement and installation of a grain photo separator/cleaner in existing factory owned by the farmer's group; 2 small municipal enterprises were supported in Alaverdi city, boosting local polyvinyl door and window production (3 men, 1 woman) and beverage production (2 women, 1 man); The previously identified herbal tea producer in Berd community was supported with a Herbal tea dryer and a tea-bag producing equipment, which enabled the company to build a new collection center in Navur settlement of Berd consolidated community for approximately 70 new seasonal workers (65 women, 5 men); 152 people engaged in small-scale production, including cattle-breeding, gardening, planting, cultivation, agriculture, etc. 2 cheese producers from Voghji, Shirak region and Alaveri, Lori region, 1 fruit and vegetable producer group from Choratan, 3 fruit drying producers from Berd, Paravakar and Choratan Tavush region were supported with main types of equipment to expand production and create additional work places. | Achieved |
| | % of returning migrants benefiting from economic opportunities | 0 | 30% | | |
| Output 3.2 Environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices are | % of RE in overall energy mix used by the industries in the target regions | 0 | 10% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three grapevine IPM demonstration plots and ten demonstration farms on advanced irrigation techniques were established in different settlements of Berd community; | Achieved |

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|---|--|-----|------|--|----------|
| introduced to reduce the impact of environmental risks on economic and food security. | # of training organized on good practices | 0 | 30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The capacities of farmers, public and private extension services, the professors and students of the ANAU as well as the Project other beneficiaries were enhanced through the series of training, workshops, hands-on training and on-the-job training (in total, 402 people, out of which 349 male and 53 female). ▪ 2 solar water heaters were installed in Amasia wool processing factory and in Paravak - fruit drying producer to introduce usage of alternative energy and reduce production costs. ▪ A sustainable plastic waste collection center was established in Alaverdi, Lori to organize collection of plastic waste and further utilization and sales to generate additional income for community. Over 70 people from the community participated in the “Sustainable waste collection and environmental impact on community” training, | |
| Output 3.3 Productive safety net to the school feeding programme is established in the targeted communities to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition. | % increase of locally procured food for the implementation of School Feeding Programme | 40% | 100% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 77 farmers received support in the form of training and agricultural inputs to increase the coverage of land harvested and the subsequent yield that is processed; ▪ 75 headmasters of schools received training in nutrition to encourage the incorporation of nutritional components in school meal menu formulation, in the procurement process of food, and how to meet sanitary standards in school meal preparation. | Achieved |

The Project activities with three objectives were structured to ensure developments in the mentioned directions.

Objective 1: To ensure early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience.

This objective resulted in improved cooperation and interventions between the partner agencies with a focus on long-term solutions, which enabled the communities to resist the threats to human security, timely assessing, minimizing and preventing the impacts of threats.

The comprehensive, context specific and people-centred **Human Security Analysis** conducted in 4 targeted consolidated communities identified the root causes of local insecurities and vulnerabilities, using a fully participatory and gender sensitive Local Level Risk Management Assessment Tool endorsed and commonly used by UN agencies and MES. During the inception phase the UN Human Security approach was fully integrated into LLRM methodology for community development and planning cycle and was endorsed by the implementing agencies. The assessment results and recommendations not only served as the foundation and main starting point for all interventions by the implementing agencies, but also will continue benefiting the communities well beyond the Project cycle for risk informed and participatory community development planning.

The Project assessments went beyond participatory assessments, conducting **GIS risk profiling**, and providing the community administrations comprehensive, science-based assessments on potential losses and impact to key infrastructure induced by a scenario earthquake and landslides in consolidated cities of Berd, Tumanyan and Amasia, which was conducted by the “Georisk” Scientific Research Company of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

The conducted trainings on human security and disaster risk reduction resulted to official establishment of Community Resilience Teams by the respective orders of Community Heads, functioning as advisory councils for resilience building. The Community DRM Plans were officially endorsed by the MoES and all Community Administrations.

The findings and recommendations from both assessments were further presented to the community administrations, active NGOs and local citizens and validated through conducted 4 public hearings at local levels and their recommendations were officially integrated into Community resilience action plans and 5-year community development plans by respective decrees of Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan Communities¹⁶.

Following disaster risk reduction mechanisms were established and implemented¹⁷:

- ✓ LLRM methodology with gender and child-sensitive HSA utilized for community vulnerability and capacity assessments and risk-informed community planning;
- ✓ 4 Community Resilience Action Plans formulated and officially approved by the decrees of Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan Community Heads;

¹⁶ Source: Expert Interviews

¹⁷ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informants Interviews

- ✓ 4 Community Resilience Teams were officially established for mainstreaming Risk informed development into community planning;
- ✓ The Project also contributed to the development of the draft law on “Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection” which has been submitted to the Government of Armenia for endorsement further to be sent to RA Parliament for Approval. The approval of the Law will require the development of many subsequent sub-laws for ensuring the operational implementation of the law. In this regard, the approved 4 community development plans and 4 Resilience action plans in the targeted consolidated communities will serve that purpose to ensure such operational implementation.
- ✓ 32 Early Warning Systems installed and integrated nation-wide PPP established for investing in agricultural DRR;
- ✓ 59 school staff (administrators and teachers) from all 52 schools from four target communities has been trained on school disaster management and developed the school safety plans;
- ✓ Learning by doing exercises for school safety club members on disaster risk management and school safety (36 clubs with 234 students (92 boys, 142 girls) from 52 target schools) were organized.
- ✓ The behavior change communication (BCC) strategy/roadmap (including needs assessment, development, piloting, presentation, and finalization of BCC strategy/ roadmap) was developed for the MoES and for the field in general. 115 people (58 school children, 47 teachers, 10 representatives and experts of state agencies, international organizations) participated in the needs assessment and the results of the evaluation and the solutions proposed by the expert were presented to students of Alaverdi and Tumanyan.
- ✓ The Project built partnerships with agricultural entities, supporting private investments in agricultural disaster risk reduction (DRR). To this end, anti-hail protection systems were installed for a total of 3 ha of apple orchards, with 85% private investments, while UNDP supported with the 15% of the expenses, ensuring increased quality and quantity of local agricultural production for many years.
- ✓ 2 schools in Amasia (241 beneficiaries) and Tumanyan (182) communities, 10 kindergartens (1423) in Alaverdi community and the Berd multifunctional college (277) were equipped with solar energy panels with a provision that they will continue receiving the funds previously spent on electricity, generating sustainable savings for investing in other DRR initiatives that improve resilience.
- ✓ Within the Project and based on the request from the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Project supported the development of the web-site of the MES. The developed web-site has been already presented to the Ministry and currently, based on received feedback it is being tested for finalization by September 2022.

Prior to LLRM assessments, 130 representatives of community administration, schools, and active residents from 40 settlements of all target communities were trained during 10 rounds LLRM and CRT trainings and were equipped with preparedness and response knowledge and skills on

appropriate behavior before, during and after natural disasters, also contributing to PPP for community risk-informed development.

Aiming to support the implementation of the Comprehensive School Safety in target schools and preschools 18 school administrators (7 male, 11 female), 123 teachers (62 male, 61 female) were trained in 2-day interactive teaching and learning seminar series on DRM (including LLRM methodology and electronic maps) including project-based learning. 67 teachers and 320 students participated in online trainings and capacities of target schools on comprehensive school safety were enhanced to ensure children's safety in 49 target schools for 6398 (3270 boys, 3128 girls) children. The number of people involved in the Project works is 289, of which 55 are teachers (8 male, 47 female), 234 are students (92 boys, 142 girls). Also 2 schools in Amasia (241 beneficiaries) and Tumanyan (182) communities, 10 kindergartens (1423) in Alaverdi community and the Berd multifunctional college (277) were equipped with solar energy panels with a provision that they will continue receiving the funds previously spent on electricity, generating sustainable savings for investing in other DRR initiatives that improve resilience.

Objective 2: To Strengthen social protection and inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities.

Within this objective a solid progress was achieved on various aspects of social protection for vulnerable families and children, including assessment of social needs at the local level, capacity development of social workers, finding solutions to deprivations caused by poverty (e.g., health, education), and the dual crises, as well as looking for opportunities to engage vulnerable groups in various income-generating opportunities advanced within other project components¹⁸.

- ✓ The MoLSA has undertaken large scale reforms in the social protection field, which directly impact the delivery of social services at local level. Guidelines for social workers were developed for early identification, prevention and response to HS social needs in the context of cooperation among social services. The guidelines included references to such topics, as labor market participation, education, social relations, nutrition, self-help, family relations, independent solving of social issues, parenting, and food security. These topics altogether account as deprivations of the most vulnerable persons in the communities and their concerted solutions would result in building better resilience of those groups to shocks and stresses, as well as lifting them out of poverty and deprivation. The guidelines were adapted to the crisis context and tested in collaboration between UNICEF, MoLSA and the National Institute of Labour and Social Research (NILSR).
- ✓ As a result of testing and in consultation with the MoLSA, the guidelines served as a basis for a concept note for a new system of family social needs assessment including during shocks, for early identification of human security vulnerabilities, as part of overall integrated social services and social protection reforms. Moreover, consultancy work was done, including recommendations for damage and loss determination from the social aspect during shocks and crises, thus linking needs assessment with DRM.

¹⁸ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informants Interviews

- ✓ Agreement was reached among UNICEF, MoLSA and NILSR on supporting peer-to-peer workshops and capacity development of social workers at local level, including from target communities and regions, on a wide range of topics, including integrated social services reform and the role of social protection, overview of various benefit schemes, case management and social work, presentation and discussion on problematic cases, dealing with cases of children, women, violence, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration. The capacities of more than 260 staff of territorial offices of Unified Social Services, including social workers, administrators, joint reception staff and heads of centers were increased in the 3 target regions, including participation of some of them in the special certification course on social work.
- ✓ Memorandums of Understanding were signed with a coordinated approach to social, educational and DRR programming with Alaverdi, Amasia and Tumanyan communities on cross-sectorial cooperation covering, inter alia, key aspects of HSA and ensuring a coordinated approach to HS needs of children and their families within the community.
- ✓ As part of a broader revision of the Law on Social Assistance, the clarification of roles and responsibilities between community social workers and case managers continued, capitalizing on the reform in Yerevan municipality supported by the Project. The team of experts continued the work on creating more sustainable mechanisms for financing of local social projects, building on the regulation developed for Yerevan municipality and suggesting concrete legislative changes in this regard.
- ✓ Based on the HS needs assessment, a more in-depth assessment of social needs was conducted in the target regions with representatives of the Governor's Offices, NGOs, Mayors of 4 target communities and community representatives. 4 focus group discussions were held for 50 participants, identifying social services, needs, as well as most vulnerable groups challenged by poverty and deprivation. These, when reviewed as a result of the dual crises, served as the basis for the development of community level local social projects. A workshop was organized for representatives of community administrations and NGOs from target communities to discuss local social planning as part of the territorial needs assessments conducted in the previous phase of the Project, including changed social needs. As a result, six local social projects were developed in a participatory manner by target communities, which received co-funding covering multiple settlements in the communities. These included:
 - Alaverdi: increasing the standard of living of socially vulnerable families, with focus on women empowerment and employment, through skills building and creation of income-generating opportunities (e.g., fruit-drying, fruit-bearing tree gardens etc.) in 5 settlements of Alaverdi. Some 20 family members and women were targeted with capacity development, focusing on women whose children attend alternative preschool services established by UNICEF. Mobilization of community social worker, businesses and active NGOs was done.
 - Tumanyan: creating a space for adolescent and youth participation and engagement for approximately 30 adolescents and youth in Atan, including development of their knowledge and skills on project development, community participation, tourism potential

- etc., with a particular focus on socially vulnerable families. Creation of partnerships with NGOs, involvement of youth in community decision-making. Creating a community center, considering that one part of the building hosts the preschool service established by UNICEF. Maintenance costs will be borne by the community.
- Berd: expanding preschool services in Berd community and providing women with employment opportunities. Kindergarten No2 in Berd was renovated and refurbished to be able to enroll 60-90 additional children under 5 in the preschool. The renovation was done as part of a subvention programme that the community has won (23 mln AMD) due to the support by the Project (and co-funding). 30 women participated in two-day trainings organized by the community in collaboration with partners on CV-writing, job-seeking and other aspects. The community will take over increased maintenance costs of the kindergarten, as well as employ at least three new teachers in the kindergarten.
 - Amasia: expanding preschool services in Amasia community (two settlements) in complement to the subvention programme for the establishment of a kindergarten in Zorakert settlement, including creation of opportunities for inclusive leisure and play for more than 100 children aged 3-10 in Amasia and Zorakert settlements.
 - The establishment of three alternative preschool services – in Jiliza, Kachachkut and Tsakghkashat settlements of Alaverdi consolidated community - was finalized in cooperation with Full Life NGO. The preschool in Alaverdi was renovated and revamped, where a new group was opened for preschool age children, including provision of social, psychological and educational services for children with disabilities. In the consolidated community of Amasia, an alternative preschool education service was opened in Gtashen settlement of the community and adaptation and renovation works were completed in Amasia kindergarten, allowing for children, including children with disabilities to receive preschool education and care. Overall, 235 children of preschool age (116 girls, 119 boys) received possibilities to attend preschool services in the communities of Amasia and Alaverdi. A total of 41 preschool teachers (40 female, 1 male), special educators, speech therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, nurses in kindergartens and other narrow specialists involved in provision of services to children were capacitated on their work, including early identification and intervention provision.
- ✓ Migrants' awareness on safe and legal migration was enhanced through Public Service Announcement (PSA) on migrant rights and safe migration, broadcasted on the main local TV channels in three regions of Armenia: Shirak (Tsayg) TV), Lori (Fortuna TV, Vanadzor TV) and Tavush (Tavush TV) and widely circulated through social networks and websites of the Migration Service, State Employment Agency and IOM.
 - ✓ Series of video and human stories of migrants and members of their families describing the most typical migration situations in the Armenian context were launched in cooperation with the State Migration Service of Armenia.
 - ✓ The iMigrant portal developed and run by the State Employment Agency was enhanced and lined to the electronic systems used by the MoLSA to improve identification and registration of persons (including labour migrants), eligible to benefit from Government-initiated and

other support programs, developed and implemented for mitigation of socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic in Armenia. The portal has been transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Currently it is operating under “Nork” Social Services Technology and Awareness Centre Foundation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia.

- ✓ The Project made progress in introducing HSA in the local economic development by creating income generation opportunities for the vulnerable groups in the target regions of Armenia, which helped to reduce risks associated with the irregular labor emigration, including risk of trafficking and labor exploitation for 45 micro-businessmen (in 8 producer groups) in all three target regions.
- ✓ Aiming to address emerging challenges, followed by hostilities in and around NK, COVID-19 pandemic, social media campaign on behavioural changes was initiated to improve the overall understanding and behaviour of the local population as well as the displaced population on COVID-19 pandemic and other health-related issues, trying to provide support on stress management and psycho-social and mental health issues, thus mitigating the socio-economic and health related problems of the communities.

Objective 3: To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building.

The Project continued making progress towards enhancing human security through local economic and food security development initiatives and by creating income generation opportunities for vulnerable groups in targeted Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions in Armenia and promoting agricultural best practices¹⁹. Overall, 168 businesses were established and supported and 1082 jobs were created or supported to be maintained.

- ✓ 71 businesses were established or supported, creating or ensuring 152 permanent and seasonal jobs.
- ✓ A feasibility study for high-value cheese, fruit and dried herbs, and high-value field crops, was conducted, which was utilized as a reference for economic security interventions.
- ✓ 8 producer groups (66 micro-businesses) have been established in the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. 71 income generated opportunities have been created with the aim to alleviate the socio-economic pressures on households.
 - A collective farmers group of 430 local and regional producers was supported in Amasia community with procurement and installation of a grain photo separator/cleaner in existing factory owned by the farmer’s group.
 - 2 small municipal enterprises were supported in Alaverdi city, boosting local polyvinyl door and window production and beverage production.
 - An herbal tea producer in Berd community was supported with a Herbal tea dryer and a tea-bag producing equipment, which enabled the company to scale up and diversify local herbal collection and promote responsible utilization of forest resources. The enabled the

¹⁹ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informants Interviews

- company to build a new collection center in Navur settlement of Berd consolidated community for approximately 70 new seasonal workers.
- 3 local dry fruits productions were established in Chinchin (Berd), Shamut (Tumanyan) and Movses (Berd) villages, creating additional 12 local jobs.
 - In total 152 people were engaged in small-scale production, including cattle-breeding, gardening, planting, cultivation, agriculture, etc.
 - 2 cheese producers from Voghji, Shirak region and Alaveri, Lori region, 1 fruit and vegetable producer group from Choratan, 3 dried fruit producers from Paravakar, Chinari, Berd, Tavush region were supported by UNIDO providing with technical equipment. As a result, the production was increased in many folds and over 100 seasonal and permanent jobs were created. The number of suppliers increased from 70 to 200, providing additional income generation opportunities for rural population, including vulnerable groups.
 - 12 local producers in Amasia consolidated community were supported in production of high-quality spices. In a meantime 16 sheep-breeding businesses were supported in the same community.
 - Production of construction blocks was created in Amasia community (Lori province), which helps to regularly employ number of seasonal workers.
 - Irrigation system for 30 ha land was renovated in Akner community of Lori province, thus solving water supply and farming issue in the community. This helped migrant families return back and start farming activities.
 - Overall, 16 cattle-breeding businesses were established in Tavush province, thus supporting production of meat and milk.
 - Returned migrants were supported in Aygedzor community (Tavush province) to start turkey-breeding business, which was later on enlarged and became sustainable. Additional support was provided such as turkey incubator, thus helping to have closed-chain business.
 - Horticulture-related business was established in Aygedzor community (Tavush province), which was later on supported in terms of providing drop irrigation system for the established gardens.
- ✓ In the framework of the environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices, three grapevine IPM demonstration plots and ten demonstration farms on advanced irrigation techniques were established in different settlements of the Berd community. The capacities of farmers, public and private extension services, the professors and students of the ANAU as well as the Project other beneficiaries were enhanced through a series of training/workshops, and hands-on training on promotion of integrated pest management, advanced irrigation technologies, pruning techniques, etc. to ensure sustainable agriculture development in Tavush region. In total, more than 402 people took part in these training/workshops.
 - ✓ 32 beekeepers (25 men, 7 women) operating in Tumanyan consolidated community, took part in a four-day beekeeping course organized by the contracted “Beekeeping forge” scientific-educational center. Based on the result of the training, 12 beneficiaries (7 males, 5

females) operating in Dsegh, Tumanyan, Ahnidzor, Lorut, Marts, Chkalov settlements of the community, who had obtained maximum test scores, were certified and subsequently received 5 beehives each, as well as appropriate working tools: veil, gloves, scraper, puffs, frames, wax sheet, cords, honeycomb, etc. The “Beekeeping forge” will continue the established cooperation, and the selected beneficiaries will transfer one beehive each to the qualified trainees next year, contributing to the sustainability of the Project.

- ✓ The local capacities on integrated soil and nutrition management and soil conservation in the Amasia community were profoundly enhanced through 3 piloted conservation agriculture projects, on-job training and workshops. In total, 39 people took part in these training/workshops including on-the-job training.
- ✓ Amasia wool factory, which has 17 women employees was assisted by UNIDO in the application of solar water heater to reduce production costs.
- ✓ A fruit drying producer from Paravakar was supported by UNIDO in installation solar water heater to demonstrate usage of renewable energy in agro-processing as well as reduce the production cost.
- ✓ As part of sustainable waste collection model implementation 150 containers for plastic collection and plastic waste press were provided by UNIDO to the Alaverdi municipality to start a separate plastic waste collection and further utilization and sales. Additional support was provided to improve waste collection points within the municipality. Furthermore, a training on waste collection and separation was provided to local population to raise awareness.
- ✓ The Project has also made a significant impact by developing productive safety nets for the regional school feeding programme to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition.
 - 77 farmers received support in the form of training and agricultural inputs to increase the coverage of land harvested and the subsequent yield that is processed. The trainings included agricultural techniques on the harvesting of specific nutritional crops (pulses and beans) that are under-produced in Armenia but have strong market potential due to the existence of demand. Innovative agricultural technologies were introduced to the farmers to increase the efficiency of the processing of the harvested crops to decrease post-harvest losses.
 - The farmers’ cooperative was registered as a retailer with WFP due to its ability to supply quality products. They now have the opportunity to participate in competitive procurement processes
 - One local procurement pilot was established. WFP has focused 100% of the Project resources on Berd Community within Tavush province to enable maximum change potential. One farmers’ cooperative of 15 active members was established, with the objective being to increase the volume of local produce of healthy items, and increase the farmers’ capacity to make sales to the school feeding programmes in the 75 schools in Tavush.
 - WFP supported with the construction of a 400sqm hydroponic greenhouse to increase year round productivity. Annual harvested yield increased more than 200% in 2020.

- The 75 headmasters of the schools received training in nutrition to encourage the incorporation of nutritional components in school meal menu formulation. They also received training in the procurement process of food and how to meet sanitary standards in school meal preparation.
- Specific trainings for the farmers' cooperatives were conducted by Agrarian University on the management and organization of agricultural cooperatives.

Thus, the evaluation results showed that the adopted human security approach, which was used during the Project and helped people to benefit from it, gave a useful example to ensure this practice in the future to become an important principle of public administration for creating and developing specific policies and plans in all the regions of Armenia.

Regarding the extent to which the Project has adapted to changing external conditions (risks and assumptions) in order to ensure benefits for the target groups and communities, it is necessary to mention the Project's **main challenges**:

Table 3: Challenges Faced During the Project and Mitigation Measures²⁰

| Challenges | Mitigation Measures |
|---|--|
| Political | |
| Change of GoA and uncertainty of reform processes. | All Project partners were reconfirmed, including at national and sub-national levels through meetings. The newly selected Project Board members were effectively communicated on the Project objectives and ongoing activities. |
| Continued and protracted COVID-19 pandemic posing difficulties. | A short-term mitigation plan was put in place by the Project team in consultation with the HSU for activities affected by COVID-19 with possible solutions, including either virtual implementation, postponement, repurposing or cancellation. More long-term mitigation measures were included into the UN COVID-19 Socio-economic response and recovery plan. The Project extension was sought and approved to allow for proper finalization of remaining activities. |
| The hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and the impact on Armenia. | The United Nations responded to this by establishing a Coordination Steering Group, which worked to ensure a coordinated response from all stakeholders as part of the Inter-Agency Response Plan. This included a focus on early recovery efforts, as well as reconfirmation of priorities at the Project Board. Moreover, the Project extension was sought to allow for proper finalization of the remaining activities. |
| Escalation of conflict situation at and around targeted Tavush region, which is a bordering province. | Re-consideration of assistance measured to migrants, displaced people from and to Tavush region. |
| Parliamentary and local elections affecting priorities at national and local level. | The Project team reconfirmed engagement with the new community administrations once in place. |
| Financial | |

²⁰ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informants Interviews

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|--|---|
| Limited financial resources at the local level. | All designed interventions were accompanied with costing exercises to propose sustainable and low-cost solutions at the local level. |
| Suspension of the school feeding programme. | With the school feeding programme having been suspended shortly before the first harvest in 2020 and remaining so in the second quarter of 2021, alternative points of sale have been sought by the cooperative. |
| Operational | |
| Low participation of targeted community members in open call for producer groups and prospective agricultural entrepreneurship. | The Project team organized number of introductory meetings in the targeted communities to meet with potential beneficiaries and raise awareness among local population. Meetings with the local administration and business communities, as well as the support from the Project focal points in target communities helped the Project to receive additional applications for review. |
| Lack of Conservation Agriculture equipment created difficulties for establishment of demonstration farms. | The Project team made additional efforts to transport the planter to the Project site and organize the planting works. |
| Low prioritization of school safety and preparedness activities, often linked to lack of capacities at the local level (school, community administration etc.). | The School DRM plan was approved by the order of the Ministers of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and Emergency Situations. |
| Lack of work force due to the restrictions. Delay in the planned activities, including procurement, construction and others related to the timely Project implementation. | Optimization of business processes, development of alternative working modalities (online, remotely). Regular contacts with suppliers accelerated activities that were not related to the supply of the equipment. |
| Low capacities at the local level in terms of risk informed community development, local social planning, consolidation of local active for business entrepreneurship and value chain development. | Participatory needs assessment, focus group discussions, capacity building events were organized, explaining both the purpose and directions of risk-informed development social planning and linkages to the national development agenda. |
| Small size schools lack capacity to plan and implement DRM plans. | The Project targeted to intervene in consolidated communities, which, in turn, helped to group schools to work together and assisted in DRM planning. |
| Passive attitude of schools – schools are overloaded with their daily tasks and do not pay enough attention to safety and preparedness. | The School DRM plan was approved by the order of the Ministers of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and Emergency Situations. The commitment of regional education administration and rescue services to support school DRM were enhanced by designing and implementing advocacy and capacity development events. |

2.3 Efficiency

The complexity of the Project interventions (donors, implementing agencies, numerous national partners on national and local levels, etc.) **was challenging for all three pillars of efficiency – cost efficiency, time efficiency and implementation structure.** The Project was implemented by six

different UN agencies with different internal rules. Each of the Implementing Agencies prepared its activities to cover different goals; needed to be coordinated first internally and then jointly within the framework of the Project.

Second, the Project put together several donors' funds. The Project shows that various activities regarding separate projects could run different budgets, not necessarily with the same reporting requirements. Joint programming, as a modality to implement complex and innovative interventions, is effective when underpinned by robust design logic, with clearly assigned responsibilities among participating UN agencies and extensive involvement of national and local partners in all stages of the Project cycle. Furthermore, the knowledge and experience from this Joint Project also contributed to improving the "Deliver as One" concept within the UN agencies²¹.

The Implementing Agencies with the lead Agency utilized their core expertise in the development and successful initiatives in both transition economies and elsewhere of genuine community-based approaches that have been shown to be extremely successful in bringing together consolidated communities around shared aims and values. UNDP as a lead agency has already been proven in practice and in the case of the Project has been utilized as a base for successful coordination at the operational level. Together with flexibility, well-developed communication with key stakeholders, as well as the ability to quickly respond to local needs it was the root cause of UNDP's central role in leading the Project by enabling functional synergy of separate projects. The operative level and its functionality were the key elements of the overall intervention efficiency. The Project can be an example lesson for similar projects in the future to avoid traps of overburdening by internal and external coordination.

In general, the Project funds and activities have been delivered by Implementing Agencies in a timely manner. Nevertheless, during the Project intervention, some delays in planned activities occurred. The first delay was at the beginning of the Project caused by the change of GoA in 2018. As a result, all Project partners were reconfirmed, including at the national and sub-national levels. The newly selected Project Board members were effectively communicated on the Project objectives and ongoing activities. The second delay occurred in 2020 and it was caused mainly by the continued and protracted COVID-19 pandemic posing difficulties in waves, creating limitations on travel, face-to-face training and meetings, shipments and installation works, resulting in overburdened Government institutions, regional and local authorities having immediate emergency relief priorities. In this regard, a short-term mitigation plan was put in place by the Project team in consultation with the HSU for activities affected by COVID-19 with possible solutions, including either virtual implementation, postponement, repurposing or cancellation, as well as the long-term mitigation measures were included into the UN COVID-19 Socio-economic response and recovery plan. The third delay was caused by the hostilities in and around NK in 2020 and the impact on Armenia including an influx of displaced population to the local communities and increased pressure on host and bordering communities. Besides, conflict situation at and around targeted Tavush region was added to this. This was responded to by the United Nations through the launching of a Coordination

²¹ Source: Project Reports and Expert Interviews

Steering Group who worked to ensure a coordinated response of all actors through the framework of the Inter-Agency Response Plan. Moreover, the Project extension was sought to allow for proper finalization of the remaining activities. The next delay was caused by parliamentary and local electoral periods, which were affecting priorities at the national and local levels. Despite all this, the Project continued acting in accordance with the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Having in mind that these problems affected all interventions in the country context, it could not be counted as the Project's failure to deliver, nor as a result of poor risk mitigation planning. On the contrary, taking into consideration that under an approved non-cost extension of 6 months, the Project succeeded to deliver not only initially planned achievements but also some additional results, it could be underlined as proof of the overall Project efficiency²².

The achievements of the Project are to a large degree based on a well-structured budget and efficient implementation structure, including financial implementation. Therefore, it could be stated that achieved results well justify costs of intervention. Overall approach and exercised principles of optimized financial management cannot be replaced by some other approach to enable achievement of the same results with fewer investments of resources. Based on data, from October 2018 to the end of April 2022, 100% of the total funds were disbursed and spent (see Table 4).

Table 4: Financial Status from October 2018 to the End of April 2022, in USD²³

| | Approved budget year 1 (A) | Funds received year 1 (B) | Approved budget year 2 (C) | Funds received year 2 (D) | Approved budget year 3 (E) | Funds received year 3 (F) | Total funds received to date (G=B+D+F) | Expenditure to date (H) | Balance of received funds (G-H) | Utilization rate (H/G) |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| UNDP | 217,844.51 | 217,844.51 | 267,415.02 | 267,415.02 | 180,804.32 | 180,804.32 | 666,063.85 | 666,063.85 | 0 | 100% |
| UNIDO | 80,442.60 | 80,442.60 | 390,443 | 390,443 | 15,210.05 | 15,210.05 | 486,095.65 | 486,095.65 | 0 | 100% |
| UNICEF | 122,405.86 | 122,405.86 | 89,328.95 | 89,328.95 | 29,895.80 | 29,895.80 | 241,630.61 | 241,630.61 | 0 | 100% |
| WFP | 171,628.00 | 171,628.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 171,628.00 | 171,628.00 | 0 | 100% |
| IOM | 186,303.05 | 186,303.05 | 62,522.24 | 62,522.24 | 34,453.66 | 34,453.66 | 283,278.95 | 283,278.95 | 0 | 100% |
| FAO | 27,698.61 | 27,698.61 | 88,531.80 | 88,531.80 | 34,668.00 | 34,668.00 | 150,898.41 | 150,898.41 | 0 | 100% |
| Total | 806,322.63 | 806,322.63 | 898,241.01 | 898,241.01 | 295,031.83 | 295,031.83 | 1,999,595.47 | 1,999,595.47 | 0 | 100% |

The Project activities have been conducted in line with the approved budget and respective agency specific revisions. Nonetheless, given the socio-political challenges, delays, rising costs and changing priorities, it could be estimated that the financial resources were well spent, initially planned costs were optimized and provided solid basis for efficient financial implementation.

A robust, jointly owned and managed monitoring and evaluation system is key to measuring the Project contributions to the development programmes. In accordance with UNDP's programming policies, procedures and joint project requirements, the Project was monitored through the

²² Source: Project Reports and Expert Interviews

²³ Source: Project Reports

following **monitoring and evaluation plans according to the Project Document**, which had an effective practice²⁴:

- Annual Progress Report: collect and analyze the progress data against the results indicators in the RRF to assess the progress of the Project in achieving the agreed outputs.
- Results Monitoring Report: update and present Project's progress and achievements, activities undertaken, inputs supplied, money disbursed, key findings, results, impacts, conclusions and recommendations from the Project interventions.
- Monitoring and Risk Management: identify specific risks that may threaten the achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log.
- Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned: capture regularly Knowledge, good practices and lessons, as well as the active source from other projects and partners, and integrated them back into the Project.
- Independent Mid-Term Evaluation: assess the Project implementation and make adjustments;
- Independent Final Evaluation Report: conduct an overall assessment of the Project, vis-à-vis the following criteria: i) relevance; ii) effectiveness; iii) efficiency; iv) impact and v) sustainability achieved through joint input from all the participating agencies and national beneficiaries, as well as recommendations for future interventions to build upon the results of the Project.

However, each Implementing Agency monitored and reported on its activities to its own office; this information was subsequently forwarded to the UNDP as a lead agency.

2.4 Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the extent to which the Project benefits will continue, within or outside the Project domain, after the Project assistance has come to an end. Replication refers to the lessons and experiences coming out of the Project being replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects.

The human security challenges of consolidated communities are enormous and the need for financial resources is significant. **Some of the strategies include**²⁵:

- resource mobilization and partnership with other donors to create favorable conditions for maintaining and improving upon the Project interventions;
- close and extensive collaboration with national, regional and local governments to strengthen the institutional foundations to sustain Project's interventions including allocation of funding from community budget to sustain the interventions of the Project;
- targeting efforts at increasing ownership and building capacity of the consolidated communities through its involvement in the Project decision-making process;

²⁴ Source: Project Document, Reports and Expert Interviews

²⁵ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

- adoption of evidence based and participatory approach to decision making by the Project that can help in identifying those activities and practices that are sustainable and can be replicated throughout the region, as well as the country;
- development of value-chain business model and producer groups selection criteria for establishment of sustainable economic opportunities and implementation of environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices;
- developing and endorsing Community Plans for Disaster Risk Management and enhancing Early Warning Systems in communities through the technical upgrade, improved coordination and mechanisms;
- science-based multi-risks assessment for the formulation of GIS-based “city scenarios”, giving high precision data on disaster-prone buildings, critical infrastructures and special areas, utility damages, disaster development and early recovery planning recommendations;
- trainings on comprehensive school safety, school disaster management, PSS and first aid for school administrators and teachers;
- enhancing the capacity of children and youth for engaging in community DRR and organizing community level DRR/Resilience advocacy campaigns
- engaging of local communities in the implementation of local social projects to strengthen their ownership and abilities for community planning and services, including allocation of resources for sustaining established services;
- supporting to effective cooperation modalities among social service providers for early identification of human security needs of vulnerable families and children, proactive and early prevention case management and community social work practices in line with the integrated social services reform advanced by MoLSA and underpinned by legal and policy changes;
- supporting of promising agricultural practices with high potential for region-wide replication and increasing awareness of the farmers of effective environmentally friendly agricultural practices;
- establishment of local extension agents who can continue promoting effective agricultural practices beyond the Project completion;
- development of sustainable and nutrition-sensitive food value chains;
- developing and establishing new business models for agro-processing industries and for producer groups with support to the building of human and physical capacities;
- promotion of integrated pest management, advanced irrigation technologies, pruning techniques;
- capacities building on integrated soil and nutrition management;
- supporting to existing or newly established dairy, dry fruit or greenhouse enterprises;
- providing training and follow up on the income generation opportunities to ensure sustainability;
- Introducing sustainable waste management through separate collection and recycling of plastic waste;

- enhancing of the Government Agencies (State Employment Agency, Migration Service) capacities to outreach the local communities and reduce human insecurity of Armenian labour migrants;
- establishment of the productive safety net to the school feeding programme with the strengthen the capacities of local producers and retailers, as well as other stakeholders regarding the maintenance on preparation of safe, nutrition-sensitive and healthy school meals;
- extensive promotional activities raising public awareness in the HSA and the Project interventions.

Although fully aware that long-term adaptation and resilience are two factors difficult to measure within the short life span of the projects, Project reports indicate that targeted communities have certainly benefited in the short term in reducing communities' vulnerability and strengthening the resilience of those ecosystems that communities depend upon for their livelihoods.

2.5 Impact

Throughout the implementation, the Project has created conditions for long-term social, economic and other changes for individuals, communities, institutions for realization of SDGs in targeted communities, with multi-sectoral impact and integrated HSA advanced by six implementing UN agencies. Enhanced cooperation and project synergies were achieved, enabling the Project interventions and the HSA to gradually become a critical flagship catalyst for the UN in Armenia, “delivering as one” to achieve human security in consolidated Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan communities of Armenia. Considering the complexity of human insecurities and the permanent demand for addressing the challenges, Implementing Agencies put efforts into mobilizing resources in improving people's livelihoods.

One of the hallmarks of the Project was **the comprehensive vulnerability and capacity assessment** conducted in the target communities using gender and child sensitive LLRM diagnostic toolkit adjusted to reflect the human security approach, serving as a foundation for all interventions by the implementing agencies. During the Project 4 Community Resilience Action Plans approved. The LLRM assessments was conducted in Amasia, Alaverdi, Tumanyan and Berd consolidated communities, serving as a foundation for all further interventions by the Implementing Agency. During the inception phase the UN Human Security approach was fully integrated into LLRM methodology for community development and planning cycle and endorsed by the Implementing Agencies. The Assessment results were validated through conducted Public hearings at local levels and its recommendations were officially integrated into Community resilience action plans by respective decrees of Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan Communities. All 4 target communities have developed and endorsed Community Plans for Disaster Risk Management²⁶.

A training was conducted on **Gender mainstreaming in DRR** for 15 members of community administration, school and NGO members on Gender equality in DRR context, introduced to the

²⁶ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

national framework of gender equality improving understanding of gender issues and needs in public administration overall and in disaster risk management in particular.

In the framework of the **enhancing the capacity of children and youth for engaging in community DRR** and organize community level DRR/Resilience advocacy campaigns the participatory designing of a behavior change communication (BCC) strategy/roadmap with children (Including Needs Assessment, Development, Piloting, Presentation and Finalization of BCC Strategy/ Roadmap) was developed.

Early warning systems were installed and the necessary technical upgrades made and integrated coordination mechanisms improved in 32 target settlements of Berd, Amasia, Alaverdi and Tumanyan cities. Science-based multi-risks assessment was conducted in Tumanyan, Berd and Amasia communities for the formulation of GIS based “city scenarios”, giving high precision data (85%) on disaster-prone buildings, critical infrastructures and special areas, possible traffic jams, utility damages, disaster development and subsequent response and early recovery planning recommendations.

Partnership with the manufacturers of anti-hail nets in Armenia has been developed for further promotion of Public-Private Partnerships between the interested parties, procuring anti-hail nets for 80ha agricultural land and by provision of 30% grant amount to the farmers interested in installation of anti-hail nets. Due to the pandemic and subsequent social-economic impact, it was decided to raise the support to up-to 50% for qualified farmers for procurement of anti-hail nets, based on which local farmers have established anti-hail protection systems at more than 3 ha of orchards, thus investing in agricultural risk reduction, increasing quality and quantity of local agricultural production for many years. Additionally, based on high-level meeting results between UNDP management and Government representatives, it was decided, inter alia, to support the most vulnerable schools, kindergartens and educational facilities of target communities with sustainable means for investing in DRR.

Critical educational facilities such as **schools and kindergartens were equipped** with sources of renewable electric power, which will also ensure sustainable savings for many years to invest in other safety and security-related needs. Additional early warning systems were installed in most vulnerable bordering villages, increasing community preparedness against disasters and shocks. PPPs were supported for investing in agricultural DRR, increasing quality and quantity of local agricultural production for many years. Strengthening of comprehensive school safety continued in 52 schools, with active engagement of adolescents and community representatives, further built resilience and preparedness for DRR²⁷.

The economic security of the local population was addressed through supporting many inclusive business projects and strengthening modern agricultural practices, enhancing entrepreneurial skills and providing in-depth consultations throughout the proposal, inception and development processes so that the people are able to dig into available resources and choices for creating

²⁷ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

individual securities. 71 income-generation opportunities were created with well formulated approaches to ensure the viability of sustainable, mutually connected, and modern agricultural and non-agricultural local business entrepreneurship, including dry fruit and cheese manufacturing, vegetable and berry processing, etc. The Project significantly strengthened the community-level waste management and plastic processing, thus not only contributing to service provision and recycling culture, but also creating additional jobs, advancing responsibility and improving environmental security.

Aiming to address emerging challenges, followed by the hostilities in and around NK, and COVID-19 pandemic, **social media campaign on behavioural changes were initiated** to improve the overall understanding and behaviour of the local population as well as the displaced population on COVID-19 pandemic and other health-related issues, trying to provide support on stress management and psycho-social and mental health issues, **thus mitigating the socio-economic and health-related problems of the communities**. Thus, it will enhance the outreach to potential and existing labour migrants and enhance their awareness of safe and secure migration for the benefit of migrants and communities.

Within introducing environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices 3 grapevine IPM demonstration plots and 10 demonstration farms on advanced irrigation techniques were established in different settlements of Berd community. **The capacities of farmers, public and private extension services, the professors and students of the ANAU as well as the Project other beneficiaries were enhanced through series of training/workshops and hands-on training**. For greater impact, support to existing or newly established dairy, dry fruit or greenhouse enterprises were provided after final selection of these beneficiaries. A small business operator from Amasia, Shirak region was assisted in application of a solar water heater to reduce production costs. Bin containers for plastic collection and a plastic waste press were provided to the Alaverdi municipality to start a separate plastic waste collection. Additional support was provided to improve waste collection points within the municipality.

The food security was addressed by enhancement of nutritionally rich food value chains and by improving the availability of nutritionally diversified food. This was accompanied by creation of additional employment opportunities in Berd community, addressing the demand for nutritious products and supply, improving safety standards and nutrition education to support consumption results. The local capacities on integrated soil and nutrition management and soil conservation in the Amasia community were profoundly enhanced through 3 piloted conservation agriculture projects, on-job training and workshops. IPM demonstration pilots were established for 3 pilot grapevines and demonstration farms on advanced irrigation techniques were introduced for 10 demonstration farms in Berd community. The local capacities of farmers, public and private extension service in Berd community, as well as of the professors and students of the ANAU were enhanced through series of workshops and hands-on trainings. The piloted projects were highly appreciated by the Ministry of

Economy of Armenia, further adopting their good practices in Government Programme 2021-2026 for further scale-up and replication²⁸.

Food value chains have an important role to play in decreasing poverty and malnutrition rates, and at the same time have significant potential to enhance food security. The Project began investing in nutrition-sensitive Food Value Chains with a vision to increase the national production of food items and promote a market model that works for the poor, thus contributing to country-wide economic growth. **The Berd project created an exceptional opportunity for the farmers of the cooperative to cultivate more land and more varieties of crops by providing them with the necessary equipment, trainings and a variety of high-quality seeds and fertilizers.** Prior to the Project farmers in the village would cultivate wheat for years but there was very little harvest, most of which was used to feed animals. Thanks to the Berd project, they now also grow beans, peas and lentils. **Moreover, the Berd project is already fully replicated in Goris consolidated community of Syunik region.**

Efforts concluded in 2020 to strengthen **food security in target communities generated tangible results during the Project.** Participating farmers have seen an increase in profit and purchasing power through their increased capacity to produce healthy marketable food. The local communities have seen an increased diversification of income-generating opportunities, and an enhancement of the ability of members to access healthy food. Finally, the impact at national level has been that green, clean, profitable and gender sensitive food value chains contribute vitally to availability of affordable healthy food for all.

Vulnerable groups and persons were identified also on micro levels with the help of community focal points, who ensured effective coordination and communication between the Project team, community administrations, vulnerable groups and business stakeholders, helping for development of support packages, including for women's groups, returning migrants and citizens with disabilities for enhancing HS and gender equality. **The collateral impact of these interventions strengthened community resilience and economic development and assisted the local government in building more accountable institutions, enhancing social justice and fostering integration of DRR and CCA measures into community development cycle.** The installation of EWSs in all communities was concluded. Administrative and human capital was strengthened by establishment of the Community Resilience Teams and endorsement of Community resilience action plans.

The Project had an impact on the social protection and education priorities: children of preschool age received possibilities to attend safe preschool services in the communities of Amasia and Alaverdi, with 4 newly established alternative preschool services and two renovated kindergartens. 87 children with disabilities received social support as part of the COVID-19 response, including awareness-raising information on parenting at times of COVID-19. The Project has also made significant impact by developing productive safety nets for the regional school feeding programme in targeted areas to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition²⁹.

²⁸ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

²⁹ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

Review and validation of needs were necessary to advance on planned outputs and activities on local social planning. The needs of 2,191 persons (611 men, 814 women, 406 boys and 360 girls) affected by the effects of COVID-19, conflict and poverty were assessed in collaboration with the National Institute of Labour and Social Research, informing future programmes for these groups by the Government. Six local social projects were developed in a participatory manner by the target communities, subject to confirmation by the MoTAI and implementation in the Project extension period. **Moreover, the capacities of social workers were comprehensively built, including certification for continuation of work within the territorial offices of social services.**

The PSS center established in Berd community provides services that improve psychological health and human security, while also transferring knowledge and skills for overcoming crises and building resilience.

The importance of civil society, NGOs and informal networks were highlighted, as the building blocks for ensuring individual strategies for reinforcing human security. Cross-sectorial cooperation among social service providers was increased with the development of guidance on social needs assessment of vulnerable families and community social work practices in the target communities were further enhanced.

The empowerment interventions conducted for many administrative, school, business, and CSO representatives ensured enhanced capacity building and dialogue on modern HS notions related to freedom from fear and want to live in dignity. These interventions focused on inclusive and participatory processes supporting individuals and communities as actors in defining and implementing their essential freedoms.

In the scope of the Project, **already created economic opportunities in the field were based on the value chain approach.** The Project carefully selected partners from the private sector with proven success records and profound growth plans that might become a dynamic power for the development of the whole chain. Their growth economic opportunities may create good ground for the development and strengthening other smaller private actors within the value chain. The Project did not impose support conditions upon private sector actors which might put an unnecessary load on businesses. Moreover, the Project created all the preconditions for the intended targets to be reached, thus ensuring the sustainability of the achievements. Another example was the opportunities being created for women and vulnerable groups. The Project promoted value chains in which women with different capabilities had an opportunity to be involved. For instance, the Project provided support for creation an herb and tea production value chain, where the co-founder and financial manager was a woman and the majority of work force were comprised of women. Another example is the intended support for a wool factory in Amasia, which created workplace for women³⁰.

Hereby it is manifest that the Project's progress towards SDGs is clear and visible. The interventions aimed at risk-informed and resilient community development for overcoming poverty, providing

³⁰ Source: Project Reports, Expert Interviews and Key Informant Interviews

access to quality, inclusive and safe education and social services and ensuring gender equality have already started to show measurable results. The joint implementation of the Project, which was possible due to very well established communication between parties, was one of the key success factors of the Project. Based on it, the “Delivering as One” approach was adopted helping the target communities highly benefit from the Project.

2.6 Lessons Learned

Positive experience in the coordination of an integrated inter-agency project is evident. The experience of establishment and operation of the Project should be applied to the management of other similar projects. The system of work of the Project Board also gave a positive experience.

L1: Inter-agency coordination and cooperation within the UN family and with other stakeholders enhanced the synergies with positive and integrated results.

L2: Coordination with partners and local authorities in targeted communities was essential for identifying the business, social and other needs of the communities.

L3: Development of legal and policy framework at the national level, afterward its replication in the target communities had proven to be more sustainable and effective in the unified approaches focusing on the community social work, family social needs assessment, case management and local social planning.

L4: The flexible approach to programming and confirming of the Project priorities with partners upon every crisis situation (COVID-19 pandemic and hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh) allowed for successful implementation of the Project activities, in line with ongoing Government reforms at the national and local levels.

L5: The implementation of a complex and multi-agency Project required additional and enhanced coordination and implementation structures in place in order to ensure synergies and complementarities and avoid duplication of effort, thus maximizing on the HSA and the Project interventions.

CHAPTER III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

In general, the Project notwithstanding its limitations and risks has been very important. Summarizing the results of the evaluation according to the major components it is important to mention the following revelations and conclusions:

- The Project is highly relevant with principles of a complex multi-donor/multi- agency/multi-beneficiary intervention, successfully aligned with country and regional development frameworks, donors' country strategies, as well as the Project targets.
- Initial weaknesses of the Project implementation had been overcome during the implementation by strong national and inter-agency participation at all levels and efficient operational planning and flexible and strong follow up of field implementation.
- The Project's goal, design and implementation approaches assume unprecedented cooperation among the UN agencies and creation of synergies among their respective programmes.
- The Project ensured participatory design and implementation approaches, based on long consultation processes with key partners and stakeholders as well as HS Needs Assessment, ensuring local ownership and dedication to the Project's initiatives.
- Effects of intervention at both outcomes and output levels are achieved – most of the outcome indicators are significantly higher than the targeted values. In addition to the overall structural model of complex intervention, good practice models for actions were created at the operative level and were widely replicable under similar conditions.
- By exercising principles of strong local participation and on-job learning, local capacities are created, capable to streamline further regional development.
- Overall the Project structure succeeded to create vertical and horizontal synergies between participants and actions at all levels.
- Time extension was justified with dual crises, parliamentary and local elections and additional funds were used in line with the Project goals and contributed to the overall Project's delivery and results. Initial budget structure and efficient financial implementation provided the Project efficiency.
- Overall results of the Project are demonstrating higher level of sustainability expectance. Basis for results' sustainability are developed primarily through strong local participation and ownership, including local capacity building approach, providing knowledge and services for the benefit of vulnerable groups.
- Under unfavorable conditions in the targeted regions as well as in the country in general, it is necessary to provide longer and continuous external development support in order to ensure full sustainability of the results.
- The Project's progress towards SDGs is clear and visible. The interventions aimed at risk-informed and resilient community development for overcoming poverty, providing access to

quality, inclusive and safe education and social services and ensuring gender equality have already started to show measurable results.

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of the evaluation we can bring forward the following recommendations.

| # | Recommendation | Priority | Time Period | Addressee |
|----|---|----------|----------------|--|
| 1. | The Human Security Approach adopted within the Project can be replicated as a good practice and “umbrella” methodology throughout Armenia for context specific, people-centered and prevention oriented assessments, analysis and mapping of root causes of local inter-related insecurities and, therefore, considering more comprehensive and integrated interventions to tackle the existing complex challenges. | High | September 2022 | Project Team Project Board Key Stakeholders UN Agencies |
| 2. | The “Delivering as One” approach adopted from joint design, management and implementation of the Project by the implementing agencies was combined with coherent and well-adjusted communication with government and partners and members of target communities, thus becoming one of the main successes of the Project and highly beneficial for the target communities. Hence, it shall be further scaled-up and replicated not only in other regions of Armenia, but also within the UN Country Team to enhance joint analysis, planning and achievement of joint outputs and outcomes with multiplying effects. | Medium | September 2022 | Project Team Project Board UN Agencies |
| 3. | The concept of human security, its main features, dimensions and operational phases shall be mainstreamed further throughout the country to become an important principle of public | High | September 2022 | Project Team Project Board Key Stakeholders UN Agencies |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| | administration, outlining concrete benefits to the livelihood and dignity of the people from development policies, plans and programmes that are being planned at regional and community levels. | | | |
| 4. | Cooperation and coordination between the Government and UN agencies needs to be continued at the local regional levels for ensuring sustainability in all project directions, also considering the increased role of communities in emergency response, for better, integrated and more effective results and for avoiding duplication. | Medium | September 2022 | Project Team Key Stakeholders |
| 5. | In order to reinforce initial benefits and build upon them, future directions ought to consider reinforcing the positive aspects demonstrated by this Project and build upon what has been field-tested and proven as demonstrated by the achievement of the Project and its local-level projects. | Medium | December 2022 | Project Team Project Board |

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Term of Reference

National Consultant/Lead for Project Final Evaluation

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Location: | Yerevan, ARMENIA |
| Application Deadline: | 03-Feb-22 (Midnight New York, USA) |
| Type of Contract: | Individual Contract |
| Post Level: | National Consultant |
| Languages Required: | English |
| Starting Date: | 10-Feb-2022 |
| Duration of Initial Contract: | 10 February – 10 May 2022 (45 consultancy days) |

Background

The United Nation’s FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO and WFP, in close cooperation with the Government of Armenia (GOA), are jointly implementing the following project which is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security; *“Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia”*. The goal of the project is to support Armenia’s efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by addressing the root causes of human insecurity for vulnerable people of Amasia, Alaverdi, Tumanyan and Berd communities in Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions of Armenia. The Project aims to (1) ensure early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience; (2) strengthen social protection and inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities; (3) address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building.

The human security approach (HSA) taken within the project addresses, individual rights, good governance, access to safe and inclusive education and health care, ensuring that opportunities and choices are fulfilled at maximum potential, and are aimed at reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and community resilience, as well as promoting understanding of human security in terms of the risks and insecurities faced by individuals and groups at grass roots level. This is achieved by identifying the specific needs of populations under stress, human security highlights the complexity of the challenges and promotes integrated solutions that ensure greater coherence and stronger impact.

The comprehensive community profiles, formulated with the support of the Project^[1], as well as progress reports, mid-term evaluation reviews and project results framework will be provided serving as a baseline for monitoring and evaluation of the project results.

The project is looking to conduct an independent final evaluation, which will include an overall assessment of the project, vis-à-vis the following criteria: i) relevance; ii) effectiveness; iii) efficiency; iv) impact (to the possible extent) and v) sustainability achieved through joint input from all the participating agencies and

national implementing partners, as well as recommendations for future interventions to build upon the results of the project.

UNDP Armenia, as the lead agency in the implementation of this joint project, seeks the services of a specialized consultant in the above-mentioned area to lead a team of two independent consultants (Lead Evaluator and Evaluation Support Assistant/Evaluator) to conduct the final evaluation of the “Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” Project (hereinafter -the Project).

The successful candidate is expected, should the COVID-19 permit, in Yerevan, Armenia for live interviews. If COVID-19 restrictions do not permit this the evaluation can be conducted online with prior approval from UNDP Armenia. *Participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments and Science based multi-risk assessments were conducted in all communities, will be provided.*

Basic project information is shown below in a table format:

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| Project title | “Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” | |
| Atlas ID | Project ID: 00112637; Output ID: 00111073 | |
| United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 | Outcome 2: People benefit from a progressively universal, inclusive, and shock-responsive social protection system across the lifecycle. Outcome 4: People, communities, and regions benefit from equitable economic opportunities, decent work, and sustainable livelihoods; enabled through competitiveness and inclusive green growth. Outcome 5 Ecosystems are managed sustainably and people benefit from participatory and resilient development and climate-smart solutions. | |
| Country | Armenia | |
| Region | UNDP Europe and the CIS Region | |
| Project Dates | Start 15 October 2018 | Planned End 30 April 2022 |
| Project budget (resources required) | USD 1,999,595.81 contributions; UNDP – USD 2,376,531.00 UNICEF – USD 494,951.37 WFP – USD 15,500.00 GOA –USD 750,000. | |
| Funding source | UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) | |
| Implementing Partners | UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP, FAO, IOM | |

The project has its own result framework with three objectives, corresponding outputs and activities, as well as an indicator framework.

Duties and Responsibilities

The overall objective of the final evaluation assignment is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of interventions under the “Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” Project.

Given that this is a final evaluation impact will be evaluated to the extent possible.

The geographical coverage of the evaluation includes Tumanyan, Alaverdi, Berd and Amasia consolidated communities together with their settlements. Considering the three-year duration of the project, as well as the granted six months no cost extension, the final evaluation will be conducted for the period of October 2018- 31 March 2022.

The evaluation will focus on direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project interventions and its methodology, including the Evaluation Design, detailed Evaluation Matrix, Data Collection Tools and the Time-frame of the Evaluation will be spelled out in the inception report.

The evaluation will be carried out in close cooperation with the representatives from the above-mentioned six UN Agencies based on the project document, its results framework and the joint work-plan, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

Findings of the final evaluation report will be shared with the Project Board, implementing partners and the donor –UNTFHS, as well as posted on UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre public website (<https://erc.undp.org>). The evaluation findings will be shared with the members of Project board, regional and community administrations, participating NGOs and donor to inform on the results of the Project, and the lessons learned. It will also inform on further joint work between the implementing agencies towards the implementation of UNSDCF and mainstreaming the Human Security Approach at national and community levels.

The following stakeholders will be consulted during the evaluation:

Key Stakeholders:

- Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure including the Migration Service;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs;
- Ministry of Economy;
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport;
- Heads of targeted Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan consolidated communities;
- Project Beneficiaries.

Other stakeholders:

- Development partners (UNTFHS);
- Relevant private sector and civil society organisations representatives.

Evaluation Criteria and Key guiding questions

All Project related documents and materials will be thoroughly reviewed in the Inception phase by the Evaluator(s) to finalize the evaluation design with a clear Evaluation Matrix, a clear logic and work plan of the evaluation, which shall be agreed by the evaluation commissioning unit in consultation with the implementing partners and relevant key stakeholders as deemed necessary.

Five core OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, namely the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact will be analysed. Guiding evaluation questions will include, but are not limited to, the following:

Relevance

- Are the project activities/components relevant to the actual/defined needs of the beneficiaries? Were the objectives clear and feasible? How do the main components of the project contribute to the planned objectives and are logically interlinked?
- Is the project in line with the current priorities of the country? Is the Government committed (both in terms of timing and financially) to the project? How is the project aligned with and supports the national, regional and community strategies/plans?
- Has the project involved relevant stakeholders through consultative processes or information-sharing during its preparation phase? Was the human security needs assessment/analysis carried out at the beginning of the project reflecting the various needs of different stakeholders? Are these needs still relevant? Have there any new, more relevant needs emerged that the project should address?

Effectiveness

- How effective has the project been in establishing ownership by the stakeholders? Can the project management and implementation be considered as participatory?
- Is the project making sufficient progress towards its planned objectives/outcomes/outputs? What are the key achievements, challenges and implementation lessons?
- How effectively are the beneficiary interventions in line with actual needs?
- How effective the project addressed the challenges, emerged as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and hostilities in and around NK?

Efficiency

- To what extent the project made good use of the human, financial and technical resources, and have used an appropriate combination of tools and approaches to pursue the achievement of project results in a cost-effective manner?
- Was there a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities of key actors involved?
- To what extent did the project capitalize on other complementary initiatives to the project to reinforce the results of the project?
- Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? If not, what were the bottlenecks encountered?

Sustainability

- To what extent did the project support the government and beneficiary communities in developing capacities and establishing mechanisms to ensure ownership and the durability of effects in line with Government reforms and strategies such as Community Consolidation, Disaster Risk Reduction, etc?
- What are the sustainability mechanisms used during the Project implementation?

Impact

- Has the project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, technical, environmental changes for individuals, communities, and institutions in achieving the SDG agenda?
- How the Project contributed to increase the level of human security in targeted communities?

Evaluation questions will be further adjusted and refined by the Evaluator(s) during the desk review phase.

In addition to five main evaluation criteria, the evaluation will review also how project incorporated principles of the human rights-based approach, gender equality aspect and other relevant cross-cutting issues. Gender equality concerns should be integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and methods and tools for data collection, as well as should be reflected in evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations wherever possible.

Cross-cutting issues

Gender equality and inclusion of the identified vulnerable groups (principle of Leaving No One Behind):

- Assess steps, undertaken to ensure the active and equal participation of women, men, boys, and girls within the programme and advise the steps, required to be taken in the future to improve women participation;
- Did the programme meet specific gender indicators and targets outlined within the project document?
- How were the target groups (including children, persons with disabilities and youth) , migrants, displaced population, others involved in the project? What impact has the programme had on reducing vulnerabilities of these age groups?

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner: key stakeholders will be involved in all phases of the evaluation, including the planning, inception, fact-finding and reporting phases.

In this evaluation mixed method approach will be applied by combining qualitative and quantitative components to ensure complementarity. The analysis will be built on triangulating information collected from different stakeholders (Project staff, Project partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries) through different methods including secondary data and documentation review and primary data. Regular meetings will be organized with the Inter-Agency Working Group, as the main entity for Project implementation, informing on and verifying the stages of evaluation, seeking relevant data and coordinating organizational issues. It should critically examine the information gathered from the various sources and synthesize the information in an objective manner. If contradictory information is obtained from different stakeholders, an effort should be made to understand the reasons for such information, including any gender-based factors and differences.

The Lead Evaluator shall review the following documents before conducting any interviews: Project documentation, progress reports, work plans, monitoring data, workshop reports, country data, policies, legal documents, etc.

Preliminary suggestions for data collection methods to be envisaged include:

- Desk review including review of analysis of existing documents, legal and policy framework; review of monitoring and evaluation reports, available reports and analysis generated through the project;
- Key informant interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers, community focal points, partner organizations;
- Expert interviews with project implementing agencies;
- Focus group discussions and interviews with beneficiaries, including the identified marginalized groups.

The independent evaluator will finalize the list of key stakeholders/informants (including but not limited to project implementers, decision makers, direct and indirect beneficiaries, etc.), and appropriate data collection methods for each informant category (such as semi-structured or in-depth interviews, expert interviews, focus groups), in close coordination with the project team.

A combination of these methods should be proposed by the independent evaluator in the detailed evaluation methodology.

In close cooperation with the Project Coordination Committee mechanisms will be used to validate the Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations also to avoid possible bias and project team, the independent evaluator will also be responsible for the development of appropriate instruments, including questionnaires, interview and focus group guides, for each of the methods selected. The materials should be gender-sensitive in language and presentation, as well as take into consideration human rights and equity angles.

The evaluation will be guided by the UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation as guiding principle to ensure quality of evaluation process, especially apropos conflict of interest, confidentiality of individual informants, sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs, discrimination and gender equality, to address issues of vulnerable population.

A major limitation to the evaluation will be the potential for impossibility of face-to-face interviews due to COVID-19 restricting measures, thus data will be obtained through online means, though following all strict guidelines to the extent possible.

Evaluation products (key deliverables)

1. Evaluation Workplans and Inception Report: Evaluation methodology, including Evaluation Matrix, data collection tools/questionnaires, list of beneficiaries and stakeholders to be interviewed, draft interview schedules and reports.
2. Draft Evaluation Report: After the field activities (online interviews conducted), the Lead Evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report for the Project, highlighting initial findings, conclusions, recommendations, lessons learnt, etc. The Preliminary findings of the Evaluation will be presented as a brief PPT presentation to Project Team for initial discussion and verification.
3. Final evaluation report: Evaluation report with an Executive Summary in English including key recommendations (minimum 30 pages plus annexes). Evaluation report shall be in line with the UN Evaluation Group standard 4.9. It shall be evidence-based, presenting the Project's progress vis-à-vis the Results Framework, based on triangulated data, findings and recommendations on Project planning, programming, necessary adjustment to the course change, etc.
4. Separate 1-2 pager summary brief with infographics summarizing the key findings of the evaluation for sharing with external audiences.
5. Evaluation methodology, including the Evaluation Matrix, data collection tools/questionnaires, list of beneficiaries and stakeholders to be interviewed. Field mission plans and reports – outlined in an evaluation inception report.
6. Data collection and analysis and draft outline of the Evaluation Report.
7. Evaluation report with an Executive Summary in English including key recommendations (max 30 pages plus annexes). Evaluation report shall be in line with the UN Evaluation Group standard 4.9. It shall be evidence-based, presenting the project's progress vis-à-vis the Results Framework, based on

triangulated data. The report shall present findings and recommendations on project planning, programming, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of interventions.

Related Evaluation Activities

To achieve the objectives and produce the deliverables of the evaluation, the Lead Evaluator will be expected to:

1. Contextualize the Project interventions.
2. Prepare Inception Report.
3. Conduct meetings (online interviews) with stakeholders
 - The UNDP project team will brief the Lead Evaluator and evaluation team and provide all necessary details and clarifications on the documents made available for the document review.
 - The evaluation team will have meeting and discussions with the project team, Project Coordinator, UNDP DRR Programme Manager and other unit staff as relevant, UNDP Resident Representative a.i.
 - The evaluation team will meet with relevant National and local government representatives, project implementing partners, civil society organizations, etc. to learn on their experiences with the project.
 - The evaluation team will meet with donor representatives and relevant development partners.
4. Consultation on draft report and recommendations following the submission of the draft report, undertake consultations with UNDP to receive feedback for incorporation into the final report.

Evaluation team composition, required competencies and skills for Lead Evaluator

The Evaluation will be conducted by an independent Lead Evaluator, with the support of the Evaluation Assistant. The selection of the consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall “team” qualities. The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities.

Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation”. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partner.

Implementation arrangements

The evaluation will be conducted by an Evaluation team comprised of independent consultants, including a Lead evaluator and an Evaluation assistant. The team will work in close collaboration with the Project Coordination Team and under the leadership of UNDP as lead agency for the joint project responsible for administering the evaluation. Final evaluation of the consultancies will be implemented by UNDP based on written feedback from all agency representatives of the joint project.

The Project Coordinator and UNDP Results-based Management Programme Analyst will be the main focal points for the day to day communication and administrative matters for the Evaluation team, while regular debriefings will be organized with the Project Coordination Team comprising of technical representatives and M&E focal points from 6 participating agencies to ensure the adherence of the evaluation process to UNEG norms and standards, providing necessary information, quality assurance and guidance for the Evaluation Team. The deliverables of each stage of the evaluation process needs to be reviewed by the Project Coordination Team, prior to further implementation and presentation to the Project Board.

In order to ensure impartiality and national ownership of the evaluation, the key deliverables will be presented and validated through the Project Board gathering high level representatives from line Ministries and six UN agencies, as well as consolidated community and regional administrations, that will serve as the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). Conducting the evaluation in a participatory manner and involving relevant stakeholders at key stages of the evaluation will also contribute to building evaluation capacity, confidence to evaluation results and further use of the generated recommendations for evidence-based policy-making.

Time frame for the evaluation process

| Description of deliverables | Delivery time |
|--|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inception report: Evaluation methodology, including Evaluation Matrix, (online) data collection tools/questionnaires, list of beneficiaries and stakeholders to be interviewed; interview schedules and reports are finalized and agreed with the UNDP Evaluations manager and Project; | 15 February 2022 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of initial findings of the Evaluation | 10 March 2022 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st draft Evaluation Report is submitted and accepted; | 15 March 2022 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final draft report is presented and accepted. Separate 1-2 pager summary brief with infographics summarizing the key findings of the evaluation for sharing with external audiences. Stakeholders debriefing discussion is organized. | 30 March 2022 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Evaluation Report is finalized based on the feedback of the above-mentioned parties and audit trial. The Management Response is prepared accordingly. | 20 April 2022 |

*UNDP evaluation process and documents are quality-assessed by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). Details of the IEO's quality assessment of decentralized evaluations can be found in Section 6 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines - <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-6.shtml>

Payment Mode and schedule

The payment instalments (Inception Report 30%; Final Report 70%) will be made upon satisfactory delivery of all the Deliverables and approval by the Commissioning Unit, Project Coordinator in consultation with Implementing Partners.

Key Documents to review

- Joint Project and Agency Project Document(s);
- Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report;
- Results and resources Frameworks;
- Project's Annual Progress Reports;
- Project Budgets and Expenditure Reports;

- Detailed Workplans and Revisions;
- CCA, UNDAF Evaluation, Agency and relevant other evaluations;
- UNDAF Results Groups Monitoring and reporting documents;
- Monitoring files with analysis of disaggregated data (women, men, boys, girls), data from the field;
- Relevant other documents, reports, evaluations, and evidence.

Suggested contents page

Opening pages (acknowledgments, list of acronyms)

Executive Summary (5-6 pages)

Chapter I Background, Object and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Background and context of the project

1.3 Object of the Evaluation

1.4 Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

1.5 Evaluation Methodology (short)

1.6 Major Limitations

1.7 Ethical considerations, Human Rights and Gender

Chapter II Analysis and Findings

2.1 Relevance

2.2 Effectiveness

2.3 Efficiency

2.4 Sustainability

2.5 Impact

Chapter III Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions and Lessons Learned

3.2 Recommendations

ANNEXES

1. Terms of Reference

2. Desk Review and Background Documents

3. List of Stakeholders Interviewed

4. Detailed Methodology

5. Interview Guides and Survey Instruments,

6. Output tables

Competencies

- Strong data collection, analysis and writing skills in English;
- Substantive knowledge of concept and principles of local development and governance processes, as well as subject-matter international instruments;
- Strong analytical capacity and creative thinking;
- Proven capacity to write analytical reports;
- Strong planning skills and ability to respect deadlines;
- Excellent communication and oral presentation skills in English;
- Excellent teamwork skills; ability to consult, involve and work with stakeholders of different backgrounds, points of view and interests;
- Demonstrated initiative, high sense of responsibility and discretion;
- High level of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity.

- Availability to travel as required.

Required Skills and Experience

Education:

- Minimum Master's degree in development studies, law, social sciences, or similar field. MA in development, law, social science would be considered where experience prevails.

Experience

- 10 years of professional experience in programme/project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for the international organizations in the above-mentioned areas; experience in development and application of methodologies for evaluation and assessment, including tools and techniques.
- 5 years of experience in development and application of methodologies for evaluation and assessment, including tools and techniques.
- Experience of leading evaluations and teams.
- Proven experience in working with community development projects.

Languages

- Fluency in English and Armenian. Knowledge of Russian is an asset.

CANDIDATES WILL BE EVALUATED BASED ON THE FOLLOWING METHODOLOGY:

Candidates will be evaluated using a cumulative analysis method taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' technical qualifications, experience and financial proposal. The contract will be awarded to the candidate whose offer has been evaluated and determined as technically responsive/compliant/acceptable to the requirements of the ToR and received the highest cumulative (technical and financial) score out of below defined technical and financial criteria.

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 49 points in the technical evaluation would be considered for financial evaluation.

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation - max. 70 points

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation - max. 30 points.

DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION.

- Financial Proposal and Availability form: [OFFEROR'S LETTER TO UNDP](#) (A total lump sum option is applicable for this assignment)
- CV shall include Education/Qualification, Professional Certification, Employment Records /Experience

Annex 2. Detailed Methodology

1. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation assessed the following criteria defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact (to the extent possible). These criteria were the bases for the evaluation questions where, in some instances, a question might address one or more of the criteria in its intent. The evaluation questions were intended to give a more precise form to the evaluation criteria and to articulate the key areas of interest of stakeholders, thereby optimizing the focus and utility of the evaluation. The evaluation criteria and questions were developed presented in Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix.

Relevance

The evaluation assessed the extent to which intended outputs and outcomes of the Project were consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders both with those for the time of design of the Project, as well as to current one, to understand how flexible and adaptable it was. Assessment of Relevance included supply- and demand-side relevance and comparative advantage of the Project. Priority setting processes were assessed, as was the use of resource mobilization and strategic foresight. The evaluation also assessed the synergies among the Project partners, and opportunities for further enhancing the relevance of evaluation results.

Effectiveness

The evaluation considered the extent to which an intervention has achieved its objectives. It could provide insight into whether an intervention has attained its planned results, the process by which this was done, which factors were decisive in this process and whether there were any unintended effects. Also, the evaluation considered the extent to which risks and constraints influencing out-scaling, outcomes and impacts were being addressed in research design, partnerships and capacity building. The evaluation also considered the extent to which opportunities to link with partners, other stakeholders were captured for further enhancing the likely effectiveness of the results.

Efficiency

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the intervention delivers, or was likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. This criterion was an opportunity to check whether an intervention's resources could be justified by its results, which was of major practical and political importance.

Sustainability

The evaluation considered the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or were likely to continue. Sustainability assessments were defined as processes integrating macro, micro

and societal systems, addressing both local and global dimensions, and covering both short-term and long-term perspectives or processes determining whether an initiative was sustainable or not, or an evaluation against a set of sustainability principles. Regarding sustainability of outcomes and outputs, the evaluation assessed measures taken by the Project to analyse and address factors enhancing the sustainability of the results.

Impact

As part of the summative component of the evaluation and considering the resources and priorities of the Project the perceptions of the impact by the beneficiaries were assessed. This did not qualify as impact assessment, which was a more objective process. It was primarily based on respondents-provided impact narrative supported by evidence. To the extent possible, the evaluation assessed emerging results and outcomes of the Project since its beginning and perceptions of impact by stakeholders.

2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation used the qualitative approach for data collection and analysis to assess results at the outcome level. To strengthen the validity and reliability of the data collected, the evaluation was going to employ the triangulation of methods as well as sources of information. The following evaluation methods were going to apply in the scope of the objectives and tasks put forward in the evaluation:

- Review and analysis of the Project reports and collected data;
- Qualitative interviews with specific questions depending on target group and other stakeholders.

A mixed-method design was used for this evaluation to ensure triangulation of data. All data gathered were verified through triangulation or ensuring the credibility of data gathered by relying on data from different sources (primary and secondary data), data of different types (qualitative, quantitative and resource information) or data from different respondents (e.g., representatives of the UN agencies and government bodies, beneficiaries, stakeholders and others). Both primary and secondary data were used in the evaluation. Primary information was collected verbally from the various applicable strata of stakeholders.

Project Target Groups, Beneficiaries and Key Stakeholders

The Project direct beneficiary pool included:

- 1) Ministries of RA (MoTAI, MoLSA, MoESCS, MoE, MoES,);
- 2) Other government entities;
- 3) Regional administrations of Tavush, Shirak and Lori regions,
- 4) Local authorities, local self-governing bodies and community administrations;
- 5) Educational Institutions (including school administrators, teachers and students);
- 6) Farmers organizations;

- 7) Private sector;
- 8) NGOs;
- 9) Target community members.

Desk Review

During a three-weeks inception phase, a desk review was done of secondary data sources, background documents on the Project, mid-term evaluation report, legal and policy framework, annual reports and documents related to complementary activities in the Project area, statistics, data from official and non-official sources and also secondary type of data. It gave an opportunity to analyze the documentation with the main purpose of providing an overview of:

- a) how the Project was designed and its relevance towards national plans and strategies;
- b) the coherence of the Project;
- c) whether results pathways of the Project and its assumptions have been realized and whether there are indications for the results to be sustained over time;
- d) the budget and financial data of the Project.
- e) the identifying key lessons drawing from the Project activities.

Checklist for review of the Project documents was including:

- Joint Project and Agency Project Document(s);
- Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report;
- Results and Resources Frameworks;
- Results Monitoring;
- Results Oriented Annual Reports;
- Beneficiary Matrix;
- Project's Annual Progress Reports;
- Project Budgets and Expenditure Reports;
- Detailed Workplans and Revisions;
- CCA, UNDAF Evaluation, Agency and relevant other evaluations;
- UNDAF Results Groups Monitoring and reporting documents;
- Monitoring files with analysis of disaggregated data (women, men, boys, girls);
- Data from the field;
- Relevant other documents, reports, evaluations and evidence.

The initial findings and conclusions should help in clarifying and defining specific objectives and evaluation questions to provide the basis to develop the evaluation methodology. Following an initial desk analysis of strategic project documents, progress reports and secondary sources, primary data were gathered through individual and group interviews with approximately of 87 stakeholders from the IAs, direct beneficiaries, government and local actors. Having in mind the extensive list of possible interviewees, special attention was given to sampling. The suggested sampling criteria were:

- ✓ role in the Project (national organization/institution, local organization/institution, donor, implementing agency, partner organization, beneficiaries target group, expert etc.);
- ✓ territorial coverage (national, regional, local);
- ✓ outcome coverage.

The initial group of interviewees was formed based on the results of the expert evaluation of the project documents, recommendations of the project management staff, and also by random sampling. Criteria for interviewee sampling were the followings:

- ✓ Beneficiaries from various target communities;
- ✓ Women and men beneficiaries will have equal opportunities to be interviewed;
- ✓ Beneficiaries who can present typical cases for the Project;
- ✓ Beneficiaries who already have felt some tangible impact of the Project results or can provide informed forecast for the anticipated results;
- ✓ All key stakeholders from public and private sector who can provide information to support evaluation process based on the defined criteria.

The selection of interviewees was aimed at achieving equal representation of a wide range of the Project partners and beneficiaries by key areas of the Project focus and for all UN agencies involved.

Table 1: Interviewee Numbers by Type of Stakeholders

| | Expert Interviews | Key Informants' Interviews |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Representatives of IAs | 6 | |
| Project Experts | 4 | |
| Community focal points | | 3 |
| Head of Communities | | 4 |
| Representatives of ministries of RA | | 5 |
| Representatives of regional administrations | | 3 |
| Representatives of other government entities | | 7 |
| Representatives of educational institutions | | 9 |
| Social service providers | | 9 |
| Representatives of private sector | | 8 |
| Representatives of CSOs | | 5 |
| Local beneficiaries | | 9 |
| Producer groups | | 5 |
| Farmers organizations | | 5 |
| Agricultural cooperatives | | 5 |
| Total | 10 | 77 |

Expert Interviews

Expert interviews were conducted with representatives of the Project Implementing Agencies and Project Experts. Also, will be viewed the field and present procedures from their professional

perspective and interpreted the regularities that had been uncovered during the evaluation, so the interviews will allow for a deeper understanding of implementation thus far.

Key Informants' Interviews

Key informants' interviews were conducted to gather information from national and local administrations, policymakers, community focal points, partner organizations using semi-structured interview guides based on the preliminary findings of the desk review. No interviews were conducted with children. During the interviews the interviewees expressed their ideas about the questions of the evaluation, provide us with the information referring to the applicable practices, regularities and facts and comments on their own standpoints regarding the solution of present problems as well.

Representatives of IAs as well as members of the national stakeholder group, local self-governments, sub-contracted agents, other stakeholders and beneficiaries provided extensive comments for consideration in the finalization of the report.

The application of these methods was intended to be transparent, inclusive, participatory, as well as take into consideration gender equality and human rights perspectives³¹. The data collection tools were developed based on the evaluation questions which were presented in the ToR. The interviews enabled to reach the data saturation point and to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of the collected qualitative data, as well as the validity of findings and conclusions. The interview guide and instruments were presented in Annex 3.

3. Data Analysis

To analyze data, the evaluator employed qualitative techniques - descriptive, content, and comparative. These approaches were applied in summative and prospective analysis, as well as in data synthesis.

Descriptive analysis - Was used as a first step to understand and describe the respective Project contexts and the nature and extent, as well as key features of the Project support in each structure before moving to more interpretative approaches.

Content analysis - Was used across the different lines of enquiry: a) to analyze and identify common trends, themes and patterns in relation to the community-level evaluation questions; b) to flag diverging views or evidence on certain issues. Emerging issues and trends deriving from this analysis constituted the raw material for crafting preliminary findings that fed into the evaluation report.

Comparative analysis - Elements of comparative analysis was used for example when comparing emerging findings with those of earlier experience and studies of the respective structure.

³¹The evaluation will follow the guidance on the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in the evaluation focus and process as established in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Handbook, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance. The evaluation will follow UNEG Norms and Standards and abide by UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct and any other relevant ethical codes.

The analysis from the results informed key findings, conclusions and recommendations related to the Project implementation, to serve as a basis for decision-making and learning to further upscale result, effectiveness and best practices.

All the interviews were done anonymous and the collected data were generalized in the analysis. The responses were analyzed at an aggregate level to identify emerging trends or issues relating to the particular areas of investigation of the evaluation.

The evaluator analyzed the information collected from the different stakeholders on beneficial ownership by using the qualitative analysis. In case the information provided is obscure, interviews were organized with those providing data for more and further clarification.

Triangulation was used to ensure the reliability of information and to increase the quality, integrity and credibility of the final evaluation findings and conclusions. Wherever possible, evaluation findings were based on several lines of enquiry and data sources.

4. Workplan

The evaluation was carried out in several phases.

1. Inception and Desk Phases

After a briefing meeting with the representatives of IAs and analysis of the basic Project documents and the Project intervention logic, the evaluator developed the draft inception report. The report included: the evaluation framework that was based on the log frame and reconstructs the Theory of Change with assumptions; delineated the scope; proposed an approach and methodology, the evaluation questions and a time frame. The representatives of IAs reviewed the inception report and validated the evaluation questions, evaluation framework and time frame. The evaluator drafted the final inception report.

The evaluator carried on with the consultation of available documents and performs interviews with responsible persons for the Project. The evaluator developed tools envisaged for the field phase, then specified all indicators and provided partial answers to the questions on the basis of existing information.

2. Field Phase and Debriefing

The evaluator had meetings to collect further data and held interviews with the beneficiaries, key stakeholders and other partners on the outcomes and output levels of the Project. Field missions were proposed to the vulnerable communities of Amasia, Alaverdi, Tumanyan and Berd in the Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions of Armenia.

3. Synthesis phase and debriefing

The evaluator undertook the analysis and developed the draft evaluation report, which included the findings and conclusions responding to the evaluation questions, as well as an overall assessment. This report also included recommendations that were clustered and prioritized.

The evaluation report was subject to a quality assessment by the IAs. The evaluator incorporated the comments of the IAs and drafted the final report. The draft/final report structure was in accordance with the principles of the evaluation report template and quality standards outlined in the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations”.

The deliverables of each phase of the evaluation process were reviewed by the Project Coordination Team, prior to further implementation and presentation to the Project Board. In order to ensure impartiality and national ownership of the evaluation, the key deliverables were presented and validated through the Project Board gathering high level representatives from line Ministries and six UN agencies, as well as consolidated community and regional administrations, that served as the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).

Conducting the evaluation in a participatory manner and involving relevant stakeholders at key stages of the evaluation also contributed to building evaluation capacity, confidence to evaluation results and further use of the generated recommendations for evidence-based policy-making. The evaluation was conducted over a period of two months from March to April 2022.

5. Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The evaluator was committed to providing quality products and services. As a deliverable was being developed, the evaluator had at least four checkpoints:

- 1) A discussion of the inception report and plans of action to ensure that the expectations of the IPs and Project Team are met;
- 2) Presentation and discussion of initial findings and recommendations;
- 3) A review of a draft evaluation report;
- 4) An acceptance procedure for a completed evaluation report.

Adjustments were made to reflect feedback at each of these points. More informal communication was contributing to the quality of the evaluation report. This process was ensured that multiple opportunities were provided to resolve issues, limitations and challenges throughout the evaluation exercise.

The evaluator followed the UNEG code of conduct and ethical responsibilities including guidelines on protection of privacy and conflict of interest. The evaluator exercised independent judgement and provided a comprehensive and balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the Project being evaluated, taking due account of the views of a diverse cross-section of stakeholders. The evaluator tried to ensure that the evaluation was based on reliable data and observations.

Annex 3. Evaluation Matrix

| Evaluation Question | Main Sources of Information | Data Collection Methods | Analysis |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Evaluation criterion: Relevance | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>1. Are the Project activities/components relevant to the actual/defined needs of the beneficiaries? Were the objectives clear and feasible? How do the main components of the Project contribute to the planned objectives and are logically interlinked?</p> | <p>Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Project quality assurance documents; Other relevant reports; Interviews.</p> | <p>Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs.</p> | <p>Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews.</p> |
| <p>2. Is the Project in line with the current priorities of the country? Is the Government committed (both in terms of timing and financially) to the Project? How is the Project aligned with and supports the national, regional and community strategies/plans?</p> | <p>Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Project quality assurance documents; Other relevant reports; Interviews.</p> | <p>Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers.</p> | <p>Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews.</p> |
| <p>3. Was the human security needs assessment/analysis carried out at the beginning of the Project reflecting the various needs of different stakeholders? Are these needs still relevant? Have there any new, more relevant needs emerged that the Project should address?</p> | <p>Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Project quality assurance documents; Other relevant reports; Interviews.</p> | <p>Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and Project focal points.</p> | <p>Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews.</p> |
| <p>Evaluation criterion: Effectiveness</p> | | | |
| <p>4. How effective has the Project been in establishing ownership by the stakeholders? Can the Project management and implementation be considered as participatory?</p> | <p>Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Interviews.</p> | <p>Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and Project focal points; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers.</p> | <p>Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews.</p> |
| <p>5. What are the key achievements, challenges and implementation lessons?</p> | <p>Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Interviews.</p> | <p>Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and Project focal points; Key informants' interviews with local administrations and other partners; Interviews with beneficiaries.</p> | <p>Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews.</p> |
| <p>6. To what extent have the interventions of the Project</p> | <p>Project documents; Annual progress reports;</p> | <p>Document review;</p> | <p>Triangulation of data deriving</p> |

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| made it possible to meet the needs of the beneficiaries? | Results monitoring report; Interviews. | Key informants' interviews with local administrations and partners; Interviews with beneficiaries. | from document review and interviews. |
| 7. How effectively the Project addressed the challenges, emerged as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and hostilities in and around NK? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Project quality assurance documents; Other relevant reports; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and Project focal points; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |
| Evaluation criterion: Efficiency | | | |
| 8. To what extent the Project made good use of the human, financial and technical resources, and have used an appropriate combination of tools and approaches to pursue the achievement of Project results in a cost-effective manner? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Project budget; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews; Trend analysis for period under review; Comparative analysis. |
| 9. Was there a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities of key actors involved? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |
| 10. To what extent did the Project capitalize on other complementary initiatives to the Project to reinforce the results of the Project? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Other relevant reports; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers and other partners. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |
| 11. Have Project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? If not, what were the bottlenecks encountered? | Annual progress reports; Project budget; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and focal points; Interviews with beneficiaries. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews; Trend analysis for period under review; |

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| | | | Comparative analysis. |
| Evaluation criterion: Sustainability | | | |
| 12. To what extent did the Project support the government and beneficiary communities in developing capacities and establishing mechanisms to ensure ownership and the durability of effects in line with Government reforms and strategies such as Community Consolidation, Disaster Risk Reduction, Integrated Social Services, etc.? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; National policy documents; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and focal points; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers and other partners; Interviews with beneficiaries. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |
| 13. What are the sustainability mechanisms used during the Project implementation? | Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Interviews. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and focal points; Key informants' interviews with local administrations and other partners; Interviews with beneficiaries. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |
| Evaluation criterion: Impact | | | |
| 14. Has the Project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, technical, environmental changes for individuals, communities, and institutions in achieving the SDG agenda? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; National policy documents; Interviews; FGDs. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and focal points; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, policymakers and other partners; FGDs with beneficiaries. | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |
| 15. How the Project contributed to increase the level of human security in targeted communities? | Project documents; Annual progress reports; Results monitoring report; Interviews; FGDs. | Document review; Expert interviews with representatives of the Project IAs and focal points; Key informants' interviews with national and local administrations, | Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews. |

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| | | policyholders and other partners; FGDs with beneficiaries. | |
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Annex 4. Interview Guides and Instruments

The UN agencies are conducting an evaluation of “Enhancing Human Security and Building a Resilient Society in the Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” Project among the Project partners, governmental counterparts, beneficiaries and other relevant stockholders on the implementation period from 2018 to 2022.

The purpose of this evaluation is to collect information on the nature and extent of efforts toward the achievement of goals, challenges or unintended consequences that may have emerged during implementation, good practices and lessons learned and suggestions on how to enhance future implementation. Please note that all responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used as part of aggregated data in this evaluation.

Please note that all responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used generalized in this evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Explain objectives of the evaluation, the purpose of the meeting, address all the evaluation questions and outline the topics for discussion, including in the context of the Project:

- **Relevance:** the extent to which intended outputs and outcomes of the Project are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries?
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the intended results have been achieved and whether opportunities created by the Project were equally accessible for women and men?
- **Efficiency:** how economically resources or inputs (e.g., funds, expertise and time) were converted to results?
- **Sustainability:** the extent to which benefits of the Project continue after external development assistance has withdrawn? The extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional and other conditions are present? What are projections about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the development results in the future?
- **Impact:** what are changes in human development and people’s wellbeing that are brought about by development initiatives, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?

Basic Information about Respondents

1. Please, introduce yourself: age, gender, residence, education, profession, employment (in case of direct beneficiaries and households also information about their family: family members, their gender, age, education, employment).
2. Please, describe how your work is related to the Project and how long have you been working on it?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For Expert Interview with representatives of IAs

Project Relevance

1. Describe, please, the purpose and objectives of the Project within several sentences. To what extent are the Project objectives still valid?
2. How was the Project introduced/integrated into current policies pursued by the state and what role did your organization play in establishing its direction and priorities? What steps have been taken for its compliance?
3. How was the Project planned and managed? How was the Project design developed? Have key stakeholders been involved in the design process and was it supported by them? Were the responsibilities of key stakeholders clearly defined?
4. Have the relevant cross-cutting issues (environment, gender, human rights and governance, donor coordination or others) been adequately mainstreamed in the Project design? What steps have been taken for its compliance?
5. How has the Project responded to important changes in the national/regional/local context (changes in policies or priorities)? Has it been effective in responding to change? As needs change, is the approach flexible enough to respond and adapt?
6. How were key stockholders, beneficiaries, target groups and key partners involved in the Project and selected for putting in the work plan? To which needs of them was the Project addressed to? How were their needs evaluated? Were the objectives clearly understood by the Project partners?
7. Were coordination, management and financing arrangements clearly defined, and did they support institutional strengthening and local ownership?
8. How the Project adjusted to COVID-19 and post-war conflict context with activities and mode of operation?

Project Effectiveness

1. How well was the Project achieving its planned result in the? How many beneficiaries (people, communities) have been affected by the Project? What is the quality of the results/services available?
2. How has the implementation contributed to changes in attitudes, policies, or practices that address demographic changes? In what sectors (social, cultural, gender, economic, environmental, etc.) and at what levels (national, regional, local)?
3. What were the key achievements and innovations as well as challenges and constraints of implementation? What kind of difficulties did the Project staff/IAs encounter during the Project implementation?
4. How have improvements met the needs of beneficiary groups? What strategies were in place in ensuring the Project activities reach target communities? Were there any factors (internal, external) which prevent target groups from accessing the results/services, and influence on the non-achievement of the objectives? Which ones? How did you overcome these difficulties and challenges?

5. To what extent has the Project adapted/is able to adapt to changing external conditions (risks and assumptions) in order to ensure benefits for the target groups? Are/were the risks and assumptions holding true? Are/were risk management arrangements in place?
6. To what extent are unplanned positive effects contributing to results produced/services provided? Have the experiences gained in support of specific communities and target groups contributed to improvements in the national/regional/local response to relevant challenges? How? Bring examples, please?

Project Efficiency

1. How well were the inputs/resources, implementation of activities and procedures being managed? What were the transparent and accountable mechanisms to manage the implementation of the Project? Were these mechanisms effective? Why or why not?
2. Were the activities towards implementation completed from all parties involved in a timely manner? If no, please describe key challenges to the timeliness of implementation?
3. Were the activities toward implementation cost-effective from all parties involved? If no, please describe key challenges to the cost-effectiveness of implementation?
4. How were activities monitored against schedule or work plans and how were changes made when required? If there were delays how they were rectified? Were there mechanisms to monitor the cost-effectiveness of activities (achievements of outputs in relation to inputs)?
5. How did the IAs and other key actors coordinate their efforts to make sure they made the best possible contribution and that there was a reduction of overlap/maximum coverage of areas and people?
6. Has implementation fostered any innovative ways of strengthening the provision or delivery of services? How are the results of implementation documented and shared among key stakeholders?
7. Have all planned outputs delivered in a timely manner and in a logical sequence? If no, please describe key challenges to the timeliness?
8. Were the outputs achieved likely to contribute to the intended results, and were they correctly reflected through the targets? What has been less successful in your view? Why? Was there an opportunity to change the Project along the way?
9. Have all partners been able to provide their financial and/or other contributions?

Project Sustainability

1. Is there a phase-out/hand over sustainability strategy in the Project design? How the government, IAs and other stakeholders will coordinate to achieve results and make the best use of their capacities after the Project completion?
2. What will be the future distribution for implementation of the Project among various stakeholders? Are the stakeholders ready to continue the cooperation and support the Project further? If yes, how? If no, why?
3. What is the level of policy support provided and the degree of interaction between the Project and policy level? What support has been provided from the relevant national, sectoral and

budgetary policies? Do changes in government policies and priorities affect the Project and how well is it adapting in terms of long-term needs for support?

4. Is the material, services and equipment support likely to continue after the Project has finished?
5. How well is the Project contributing to institutional and management capacity?
6. What lessons can be drawn from the coordination efforts and working arrangements between the IAs, its counterparts/beneficiaries and partner organizations?

Project Impact

1. How the Project impact with and responds to changes in national/regional/local needs and priorities?
2. Did the Project activities meet the beneficiaries' expectations? If yes, bring examples. If no, bring examples? How did the Project activities impact in improving the target groups' condition (social-psychological, cultural, gender, education, job, economic participation)? Bring examples.
3. Are the activities and outputs of the Project consistent with the intended impacts and effects? After the termination of the Project, will the beneficiaries manage to lead an independent life without the support of the Project?
4. How did the Project staff keep in touch with the beneficiaries? What kind of feedback did you receive from the beneficiaries and in what way? Please, bring examples of positive feedback. Tell about negative feedback and complaints.
5. What are the direct impact prospects of the Project on individuals, households and communities? Are any external factors likely to jeopardize the Project's direct impact?
6. Have there been/will there be any unplanned positive impacts on the planned key partners or other non-targeted communities arising from the Project? How did this affect the impact?
7. Did the Project take timely measures for mitigating the unplanned negative impacts? If any, what was the result?

CONCLUSION

1. Looking back over the last several years, what are the most important contributions and achievements of the Project implementation?
2. If you could do it again, so what would you like to change?
3. Thinking about the future, what are the critical priorities for the Project strategy and what it invests its efforts in?
4. Please, share any other comments or recommendations you may have on the Project design, implementation, management, management of resources, programmatic response, etc.

For Key Informants' Interview

Project Relevance

1. How do you collaborate with the Project?
2. Were you involved into the Project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation? If yes, how (e.g., sharing knowledge and expertise)?
3. Do you find the Project activities useful and relevant?

4. Did the priorities affected by the Project change since it was launched? Did the Project adjust its activities and objectives to reflect these changes?
5. How do other partners and beneficiaries view the Project relevance? What can be done to improve its relevance?
6. Are you satisfied with the Project 's partnership strategies and your involvement?

Project Efficiency

1. In your expert opinion, does the current model of implementation of the Project intervention by a group of agencies is more efficient (or less efficient) in comparison to what could have been achieved through a single agency's intervention?
2. Have been the timelines of activities always met? If not, why?
3. Did the Project management ensure quality and cost-effectiveness of the process of transforming inputs into outputs and outcomes?
4. Can the costs of the Project deliverables be lowered while still achieving Programme objectives?
5. Are there alternative delivery methods that can achieve the Project objectives more efficiently?

Project Effectiveness

1. To what extent have the planned results been achieved to date (quantitative and qualitative)?
2. To what extent did the Project have an impact on the targeted population?
3. What was the Project's coverage - were the planned geographic area and target groups successfully reached?
4. What were the constraining and facilitating factors that influenced the achievement of results?
5. What are the factors (positive and negative) that affected output completion? Are there some Project objectives that were not achieved? What are the reasons?
6. How do the Project components interact and complement each other?
7. What good practices or successful experiences or transferable examples have been identified?
8. Did the Project activities manage to achieve systemic changes? What are and can be the Programme's impacts? What are they and what is the evidence?
9. To what extent did the Project help to increase stakeholder/citizen dialogue and/or engagement on development issues and policies?

Project Sustainability

1. What is the degree of your commitment to continue supporting or carrying out the specific Project activities; replicate its activities in other regions or sectors of the country; scale them up and adapt the Project results to other contexts?
2. Do you find the Project 's sustainability strategy relevant?
3. Have been the capacities strengthened by the Project? Are you satisfied with the level of capacity building supports provided? Do you have any suggestions for
4. improvement of capacity building interventions?
5. Which components of the Project are sustainable? Please provide specific indicators of sustainability.

6. Do you have sufficient financial capacity/budget commitments to continue pursuing the Project objectives when it is completed? To what extent the Project objectives, strategies and interventions are mainstreamed into the broader national and regional development policies and sectoral plans? What are the prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of UN support?
7. Are there some components where sustainability remains an issue? What can be done to improve sustainability of these components?

For Interviews with beneficiaries

1. How did you find out about the Project?
2. In what Project activities you have been involved / familiar with?
3. Did you/your community benefit from the Project activities?
4. What kind of benefit /assistance you/ your community obtained from the Project?
5. How relevant/appropriate/timely and useful were the Project assistance/intervention?
6. How and what could have been done differently?
7. What difficulty/problems you faced or experienced before the Project intervention?
8. How did you identify your priorities, planning and delivery of actions?
9. What other parties/stakeholders have participated/engaged?
10. What were the Project assistance/intervention that have or have not contributed to resolving them?
11. What did you do, upon your own initiative, following the Project delivery of assistance?
12. How and what has changed as a result of the Project intervention?
13. How the Project activity affected the outcome and in what ways it has not been effective?
14. In your opinion, is there anything that could have been done better?
15. Whom and how the outcome benefited (women, men, youth, migrants, disabled, older)?
16. Would you participate in/support similar initiatives in the future?
17. Would you like to maintain/replicate/scale up joint achievements over time?
18. Once the Project is over how you are going to sustain the activity?
19. In your opinion what are the three major factors/obstacles that helped/limited your ability to succeed?
20. What kind of additional assistance you would require from the Project for sustainability of your activity?
21. What would you suggest for further improvement of the Project activities?

Annex 5. Beneficiary Matrix

| | Activities | Beneficiary organizations | Number of Organisations | Number of Representatives | Male | Female |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Objective 1: To ensure early prevention and sustainability of interventions through identification of root causes of threats to human security and enhancing community resilience. | Output 1.1: Localized, people-centered and comprehensive situation analysis is conducted. | LLRM participants in Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan Consolidated Communities | 48 | 3738 | 1589 | 2149 |
| | Output 1.2. Disaster risk reduction mechanisms established and capacities enhanced in target communities to reduce disaster-related losses with special focus on children and schools. | MoES (included Rescue Service, & other agencies) | 1 | 30 | 28 | 2 |
| | | MoESCS (including KTAK) | 10 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| | | Other Government Entities (MoTAI, Urban Dev. Committee, WSSP, SCMA etc.) | 8 | 19 | 13 | 6 |
| | | Private sector, NGOs | 8 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| | | Regional Administrations | 11 | 20 | 12 | 8 |
| | | Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | | International organizations | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | | School administrators | 52 | 53 | 20 | 33 |
| | | School teachers | | 1035 | 181 | 854 |
| | | School Students* | | 6654 | 3368 | 3286 |
| | | College teachers | 1 | 44 | 21 | 23 |
| | | College students | | 233 | 112 | 121 |
| | | *Including Children with Disabilities | 52 | 209 | 131 | 78 |
| | | | | Total Result 1 | 193 | 12057 |

| | | Beneficiary organizations | Number of Organisations | Number of representatives | Male | Female |
|---|--|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Objective 2: To strengthen social protection and social inclusion to improve human security in targeted communities | Output 2.1: Cross-sectorial cooperation among social service providers is increased to better identify and respond to the human security needs of vulnerable communities and families. | Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan Consolidated Communities and administrative representatives from settlements | 4 | 10 | 9 | 1 |
| | | Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (including National Institute of Labour and Social Research) | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Social workers/ case managers | 2 | 46 | 27 | 19 |
| | Output 2.2: Members of vulnerable households are empowered to increase knowledge and access to social services | Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (Migration Service) | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | | Regional and Community Administrations (including Yerevan) | 8 | 25 | 18 | 7 |
| | | Preschool and kindergarten teachers | 6 | 41 | 1 | 40 |
| | | Social workers/ case managers (Yerevan) | 15 | 88 | 46 | 42 |
| | | NGOs | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| | | Children | 6 | 1113 | 581 | 532 |
| | | Vulnerable adult population, including displaced | 2 | 1425 | 611 | 814 |
| Mixed focus groups in 4 target communities (community social workers, case managers, NGOs, community representatives, regional administrations) | 4 | 42 | 16 | 26 | | |
| | | Total Result 2 | 51 | 2803 | 1314 | 1489 |

| | | Beneficiary organizations | Number of organizations | Number of representatives | Male | Female |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|------|--------|
| Objective 3: To address the economic and food insecurity in the target communities through strengthened livelihoods, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and capacity building. | Output 3.1: Income-generation opportunities are created for the most vulnerable groups through sustainable and modern agricultural and non-agricultural activities. | Nor Hatik Collective farm (Amasia), Ethna LLC (Berd) 66 micro-businesses are established in Amasia, Alaverdi, Berd and Tumanyan consolidated communities, within 8 producer groups 12 beekeepers in Tumanyan community | 79 | 268 | 137 | 141 |
| | | 7 micro-businesses are established in Alaverdi, Tumanyan (Lori province) and Berd (Tavush province) consolidated communities | 0 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| | Output 3.2: Environmentally resilient agricultural and non-agricultural practices are introduced to reduce the impact of environmental risks on economic and food security. | Representatives of regional administration, communities, Tavush and Shirak division of Agricultural Extension, Innovation and Monitoring Department of Ministry of Economy, farmers organizations and farmers | 15 | 327 | 298 | 29 |
| | | Amasia Wool Factory | 1 | 18 | 4 | 14 |
| | Output 3.3: Productive safety net to the school feeding programme is established in the targeted communities to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition. | Local producers/ farmers from Berd community/ Tavush province engaged in the programme over a 2 year duration | 60 | 60 | 35 | 25 |
| | | 1) 430sq m Collection Center established to serve the entire Berd community/ /processing collection through increasing efficiency in processing harvest yield 2) 400sq m Greenhouse designed, established to enable growth and subsequent income for participating farmers year round | 2 | 77 | 46 | 31 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | 75 school headmasters and 7 Founders of Agricultural Cooperative trained. 75 school authorities trained on preparing safe, nutrition-sensitive, healthy and culturally accepted diversified school meals. 7 Founders of Agricultural Cooperative trained on management of the enterprises on maintenance (procurement, storage, etc.), financial management and marketing. | 76 | 82 | 38 | 44 |
| | | Total Result 3 | 233 | 839 | 563 | 286 |
| Total for all results direct beneficiaries | | | 477 | 15699 | 7369 | 8340 |

