



TERMINAL EVALUATION OF SUPPORT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA

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In accordance with normal practice, the contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the author and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme.

Evaluation Team

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
ACDA	Agriculture Cooperatives Development Agency
AMAG	Georgian acronym meaning Active Citizens' Local Group
AP	Action Plan
APMA	Agriculture Projects Management Agency
AR	Autonomous Republic
CO	Country Office
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSOs	Civil society organizations
ENPARD	The European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
ERDN	European Rural Development Network
ESC	ENPARD Steering Committee
EStC	ENPARD Stakeholder Committee
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus group discussion
GALAG	Georgian Association of Local Action Groups
GNTA	Georgian National Tourism Administration
GoG	Government of Georgia
GRDN	Georgian Rural Development Network
IACC	Inter-Agency Coordination Council
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAG	Local Action Group
LEADER	A French acronym meaning Links between actions for the development of the rural economy
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
MEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
MESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
GRDN	Georgian Rural Development Network
RDC	Rural Development Council
RDS	Rural Development Strategy
RDP	Rural Development Programmes
SADG	Strategy for Agriculture Development in Georgia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRDG	Support to Rural Development of Georgia
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Gro

Map of Georgia



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The terminal evaluation of the ENPARD II 'Support to Rural Development in Georgia' (SRDG) Project commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office (CO) Georgia was undertaken by an independent evaluation team. The evaluation was conducted from 30th November to 31st December 2018. The country mission was carried out from 15th to 27th December. Substantive interviews and meetings were held with the project team, partner ministries and key stakeholders in Tbilisi and Ajara.

SRDG with an input of US\$ 2.90 million was implemented from July 2016 to December 2018. The main donor was European Union (EU) with an input of US\$ 2.76 million and co-financed by the Ajara Autonomous Republic (AR) with a contribution of US\$ 135,610. The Project was part of a wider range of the activities funded by the European Neighborhood Partnership Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD II).

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to provide an independent assessment of the project in terms of progress and challenges, measure achievement of the project results, assess gaps and lessons learned and provide recommendations to guide implementation of the next phase of the project. The evaluation scope covered the project period from inception in June 2016 to December 2018.

Methodology

The evaluation of Project followed a mixed method approach through multiple methods to satisfactorily respond to the requirements of the evaluation. The primary data was collected through extensive interviews, vigorous consultations and focus group discussions with the Project team, various cadres of staff of lead and line ministries and institutions, local governments, Local Action Groups (LAGs)/ Active Citizens' Local Unions (AMAG), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and active citizens and all categories of the project beneficiaries. The secondary data for evaluation was drawn through desk review of relevant documents and reports produced by the project, UNDP, Governments of Georgia (GoG) and Ajara AR, development partners and other donors. The evaluation team did not encounter any major challenge during the process of evaluation except the limited time available that did not allow the mission to cover more stakeholders.

Main Findings

Relevance of the project objective and the strategy to the national and regional was strong, as it appropriately addressed the national and regional priorities and needs. In the course of achieving these objectives, the project effectively responded the Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia 2015-2020 (SADG) and the project outputs were also consistent with the ENPARD Georgia. In general, the design and output of the project activities were relevant. There had been a conscious decision to link the project objective with the wider UNDP corporate goals and the national development strategy, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project emphasized a wide embracing goal related to functional capacity building of the national, Ajara AR and local institutions. The Results and Resource Framework (RRF) clearly spelled out activities, responsibilities, targets and progress indicators.

Efficiency

The project was highly focused on a demand-driven and results-based approach to the interventions. National implementation modality (NIM) ensured the adequate level of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Overall, the project installed comprehensive and strong financial management systems for tracking all payments and for ensuring transparency and accountability of expenditures, reflecting the role of UNDP as custodian of donor funds. Project management displayed UNDP and EU standards, procedures and transparency in the recruitment of staff, operational procedures and selection of municipalities, projects and beneficiaries. Given that the project operated under the NIM, the use of staff resources is considered consistent with the scope of activities. Documentation produced on the project outputs reflected that project exercised in its work and selection of beneficiaries and projects of communities, accountability, participation, non-discrimination and the rule of law as key principles. An effective M&E mechanism was developed for assessing the project activities. Meetings of the Project Board (PB) were never convened, the importance of which cannot be overruled.

Effectiveness

The review of project documents and findings of the interviews reflects that the project has achieved great majority of its milestones. Strong project effectiveness was evident as all the stakeholders were fully involved in the project activities and satisfied with the outcomes. Country Programme Document (CPD) outputs and outcomes, ENPARD II

results indicators and SDG as specified in the EU Results Framework were successfully achieved. Careful planning of the project activities, use of quality consulting/training resources and sound M&E plan contributed to the effectiveness of the project activities. This implies that project objectives and outputs were clearly defined, practical, and feasible to achieve under the circumstances. Genuine interest and ownership from all stakeholders also played an important role in achieving the desired outputs under the project.

Production of Rural Development Strategy for Georgia 2017-2020 was project's major achievement. Under the EU funded ENPARD, with the technical support of the project and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Government of Georgia developed the integrated RDS that was then adopted under Decree №631. The project provided support to the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) Georgia to form and strengthen Inter-Agency Coordination Council (IACC), and Rural Development Council (RDC) in Ajara AR, high-level fora to coordinate and oversee the progress of RDSs. The action plans (APs) for RDSs for 2017 and 2018-2020 were also developed with the technical assistance of the project, that were used as the major tools for implementing the Strategy. The project provided expert assistance to thematic groups on the various issues pertaining to the RDS and its AP. Besides, project provided technical assistance in restructuring of MEPA and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Ajara, and organizational and institutional strengthening.

For capacity building, the project successfully organized trainings, workshops, conferences and consultations that benefitted to 2,777 persons (44% women) representing staff on the ministries, IACC/ RDC member institutions, municipalities and members of CSOs and LAGs/AMAGs, journalists and youth groups. Under all activities, the project produced overall 44 technical and research reports policy papers, frameworks and workshop proceedings. The project played a major role in the establishment of Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN) in order to ensure effective cooperation and mutual help among institutions and individuals.

Impact

Generally, a very high praise for UNDP and EU by the stakeholders was witnessed during the interviews. A sense of great ownership of the interventions prevailed among the partner ministries and institutions as the APs of RDSs were jointly implemented by the partner ministries. There was a behavioral change among the government staff and stakeholders, and cognizance of rural development as a vehicle for improving living standards of rural population. Results and achievements garnered from SRDG's activities show the project's increasing impact on improving capacities. Learning activities were launched targeting public sector at the national and local level, and at a more macro level, partnerships were forged with CSOs and community groups to boost their interest and capacity to influence rural development policy-making and delivery. Capacity building of government staff has fostered cooperation within and among different ministries and boosted confidence levels in areas of coordination, integration, unique role, co-design with local actors and engage strategically. For example, an evaluation conducted through knowledge and training evaluation forms showed on an average 35 % improvement in understanding of rural development policy and the EU LEADER approach, which is a high indicator, while the levels of satisfaction of participants were 70 % or higher in every region and Tbilisi.

The ***sustainability*** of the project's interventions is being addressed by ensuring the proper level of capacity development of the national, regional and local partners and, that interventions are technically and/or financially viable. For the first factor, the project in parallel implemented capacity development assistance tailored to the needs of the national, regional and local partners and gradually transferred the implementation responsibilities to the local authorities. The possible options need to be explored for the financial and institutional sustainability of LAGs and MAGs.

The ***cross-cutting issue*** of gender, rights-based and youth were appropriately addressed by the project. However, data on vulnerable beneficiaries did not exist.

Key lessons learnt

- Capacity building, an effective transfer of skills and knowledge is vital for the sustainability of the learning achievement of trained staff that allows for investments to have maximum impact and life-span. However, building sustainable initiatives should be thought of as an iterative process. SRDG has organized extensive training programme to enable the stakeholders to implement the Rural Development Strategies in Georgia effectively.
- When dealing with different layers of the government in project in the delivery of project activities, care must be taken to endeavour to engage with a broad range of executive decision makers. In case of IACC and RDC the apex management (Deputy Ministers) are members.

- Facilitating a culture of mutual understanding and collaboration among stakeholders at different levels through genuine participatory and consultation processes requires a persistent and systematic approach, good leadership skills and dedication that need to be sustained over a long period of time to reach the overall objective.
- Although RDS has been accepted by GoG even more political support, understanding of RD and in the end ownership of the policy is required to ensure effective implementation of RDS and its AP. It is unclear how long GoG's commitment with RD will last if clear ownership will be missing.
- Ensuring sustainability of project results through already established mechanisms and exploring new practices should be continued since it is an embedded risk of any government institution support project. Given risk can be considerably mitigated by focusing on specific types of activities that can further promote the sustainability such as institutional development and strengthening, training of trainers (ToT) approach, investment in long-term planning.
- IACC members have submitted monitoring reports with delays and often without appropriate data. It was perceived as 'additional burden' in many cases. It is unclear how evaluation can be conducted without impact indicators. IACC members lack the capacities and motivation about monitoring and often there is lack of communication with financial/budgetary departments.

Main recommendations

- The staff of partner ministries and other stakeholders still lacks skills in many areas required for effective implementation and M&E of RDS initiatives. Since, capacity building is an iterative process, SRDG project should continue to use cross-cutting capacity development approach mainstreamed throughout the whole set of project interventions.
- Though the necessity of clear RDS boundaries was recognized, MEPA and IACC members made limited steps to set a clear demarcations and consistency of RDS with other national policies by having few indecisive discussions on the subject. The purpose, objectives, policy focus, tools and approach of RDS still lacks consistency and clarity. The charter of IACC which is also broad may also be reviewed.
- Participation in the implementation of RDS activities by some ministries and their staff is considered as an extra work without any reason. Some public sector staff are not motivated to deliver timely reports with quality data. These issues need to be considered by IACC.
- There is a need to make the MEPA Rural Development M&E system as an essential part of an overall M&E system. Also, the knowledge and capacity may be enhanced to provide result-oriented reporting / improve analytical part of report writing. Improvement is required in the areas of data collection mechanism and evaluation approaches in order to measure not only quantitative, but qualitative achievements of the RDS AP.
- RDS action plans (AP) contain a broad range of initiatives those were already being undertaken by the partner ministries. The activities may be narrowed down to effectively manage and achieve tangible results. Emphasis of RDS initiatives should be on job creation.
- The staff turnover trained under the project is also the project's concern. Two of the IACC secretariat staff (Policy Department of the MEPA) moved to other departments. The concerned ministries should ensure that the staff trained by the project is retained to apply and disseminate their knowledge and skills in their jobs
- CB measures should provide further resources for reducing, if not eliminating, the institutional bottlenecks to the synergistic design, delivery and M&E of the RDS and APs. Further, institutional continuity should be discussed with the general management of the MEPA. This issue is very crucial due to very high staff turnover rate in Georgian public service system.
- At strategic level, in collaboration with the MEPA, municipalities should design future rural and agricultural strategies keeping in view the EU countries requirements. The municipalities need to determine their roles to be played in agriculture and rural development – strategic and institutional linking with resource allocation.
- LAGs should not assume continued EU funding beyond ENPARD and scope out options for their own future based on sustainable principles for development. Another area that needs to be addressed to develop networking and share the experience among LAGs and AMAGs, is the non-availability of broadband facility in the rural areas.
- Cognizant of the role played by agriculture in the rural development, it should be diversified to provide equal economic opportunities to wider range of its stakeholder groups of on-farm and off-farm entrepreneurs, thus to increase the likelihood for capturing innovation in Georgia and Ajara Region. The approach should be generic and open for different sub-sectors and opportunistic to put efforts on the most promising enterprises.
- There is a need to curtail the frequency of progress reporting to quarterly reports. Also, the progress reports should encompass more qualitative information, identify issues encountered during project implementations and measures taken, lessons learned and success stories.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The terminal evaluation of the ENPARD II ‘Support to Rural Development in Georgia’ (SRDG) Project was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office (CO) Georgia to assess progress, measure achievement of the project results, assess gaps and lessons learned and provide recommendations to guide implementation of the next phase of the project. At the time of evaluation, the project was at its last stage of implementation and ready to enter in the next phase (European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development - ENPARD III).

The evaluation was conducted by an independent Evaluation Team of an international consultant and a local consultant¹ from 30th November to 31st December 2018. The country mission by the Team Leader was undertaken from 15th to 27th December. An initial briefing was held via skype with the project team on 7th December. A briefing meeting with the UNDP CO was held on at Tbilisi on 17th December. Substantive interviews and meetings were conducted with the project team and participating ministries and stakeholders in Tbilisi and Ajara. Field visit was to Ajara undertaken from 21st to 24th December to hold meetings with the Local Action Groups (LAGs), AMAGs, municipality, civil society organizations (CSOs) and beneficiaries to collect the relevant information. A debriefing on the evaluation findings was given to the UNDP and European Union Delegate (EUD) on 26th December.

SRDG was implemented from July 2016 to June 2018 and extended to December 2018 with no additional cost. The total cost of the project was US\$ 2.90 million. Main donor was EU with an input of US\$ 2.76 million (equiv. to EUR 2.50 million). The contribution of the Ajara Autonomous republic (AR) was estimated at US\$ 135,610 (equiv. to EUR 122,591).

The primary audiences of the terminal evaluation are UNDP, the leading development partner to key public institutions on National and Ajara Autonomous Republic (AR) levels, including Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) of Georgia, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MESD), Inter-Agency Coordination Council (IACC), Ajara AR Government Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Rural Development Council (RDC).

The report has been divided into three chapters and sections according to the structure set in Terms of Reference (ToR), with some adjustments made to better reflect the scope of the evaluation and Project features. Chapter 1 provides the introduction and background, evaluation objectives, its purpose and methodology. It also provides a brief overview of the Project, main inputs, activities and outputs. Chapter 2 presents main findings of the evaluation based on the primary and secondary data. This chapter has addressed the principle evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. This chapter also encompasses cross-cutting issues including gender equality, human rights, environmental, youth and vulnerable. Chapter 3 presents evaluation conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations.

1.2. Description of intervention²

The Association Agreement (AA) signed by the Georgian Government with European Union (EU) in June 2014, aims to deepen political and economic relations between the EU and Georgia and to gradually integrate Georgia into the EU’s internal market. This entails, as one element, creating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the EU and Georgia. Article 333 of the AA (Cooperation between the Parties in the field of agriculture and rural development) provides with the clauses on ‘facilitating the mutual understanding of

¹ Hamid Chaudhry- Team Leader/International Evaluation Consultant; Kartlos Gviniashvili – Local Consultant

² Project Document, Support to Rural Development in Georgia, UNDP Georgia 2016.

agricultural and rural development policies. This was the basis for the formulation of a National Rural Development Strategy (NRDS) for Georgia which in turn identified measures to be funded under the ENPARD. A Rural Development Strategy (RDS) for Georgia was to be developed and adopted as a whole but, as an initial action, an RDS has been prepared for Ajara alone. As with support under ENPARD I (which was also first piloted in Ajara), this is informally seen as a pilot action preparatory to the formulation of the RDS and delivery of actions at the national level.

The UNDP Project “Support to Rural Development in Georgia”, which is part of a wider 55 million EUR support programme (ENPARD II), was launched in June 2016 with the end date of December 2018. The project budget is 2,622,591.38 EUR o/w 2,500,000 EUR is funded by the European Union (EU) and 122,591.38 EUR co-financed by Ajara Government. UNDP is EU implementing partner of ENPARD II Programme in Georgia, including Ajara AR.

Under ENPARD I (2013-2017), the primary focus of the programme was on support to agriculture through institutional capacity building and support, support for the development of small farmers’ cooperatives and pilot activities on rural development in three areas, Borjomi, Stepantsminda and Lagodekhi. The rationale for establishing the three rural development pilots is given as:

- Diversification of rural economic activities to address poverty and promote sustainable and inclusive growth.
- ENPARD experience in agriculture to help increased coverage and integration in rural development strategies and plans.
- Validation of EU approach to rural development.
- Inform the national strategy (contextual analysis, local level strategies).

Building on the existing support from ENPARD I, the second phase of the programme was designed to integrate support to agriculture, food safety, sanitary and phyto-sanitary and rural development. The expected outcome was to improve employment and living conditions in poor rural areas of Georgia, with subsequent impacts on poverty alleviation and growth. Specific measures were to build resilience and improve food security and nutrition through diversification of rural activities and income sources, particularly for women and girls and the most vulnerable groups including conflict-affected people and ethnic minorities.

Under ENPARD II (2016-2018), the primary focus was to shift from agriculture to rural development support (while consolidating the agricultural support already provided under ENPARD I). Through ENPARD II, the EU has agreed with the Georgian government the provision of a package of support to assist in the adoption of the Rural Development Strategy for Georgia that will assist the establishment of support programmes in many rural areas of the country. SRDG under ENPARD II project was implemented by UNDP Georgia. The main objective of the project is the establishment and implementation of RDS for Georgia and its Ajara region respectively based on the EU LEADER³ approach for local development, with associated capacity building measures.

The roll out of rural development support was based, and conditional on:

- Adoption and implementation of a National Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan (AP)
- Adoption of EU best experiences and practices
- Complementarity of support programmes (EU, Government, other donors) for effective implementation of municipal development plans

³ LEADER ("Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale", meaning 'Links between the rural economy and development actions') is a local development method which allows local actors to develop an area by using its endogenous development potential

The main rural development components under ENPARD II, included:

- Institution-building support for policy development
- Expansion of rural development projects to five new municipalities⁴

The main objective of this project is the establishment and implementation of RDSs for Georgia and its Ajara region respectively, with associated capacity building for institutions charged with administering rural development in Georgia.

The project strives to achieve 2 outputs:

Output 1: Institutional capacity in place for the development and implementation of a National Policy on Rural Development in Georgia.

The target results for this output were:

- 1.1: An integrated Rural Development strategy for Georgia developed and adopted
- 1.2: An integrated Rural Development Action Plan for Georgia developed and adopted
- 1.3: Capacity built amongst the public sector and stakeholders to deliver rural development policy

Output 2: Institutional capacity in place for the implementation of the Rural Development in Ajara AR

The target results for this output were:

- 2.1: An integrated Rural Development Action Plan for Ajara developed and adopted
- 2.2: Enhanced capacity within the public sector and stakeholders in Ajara AR to effectively deliver rural development policy
- 2.3: Enhanced understanding of the critical success factors for effective rural development to deliver improved employment and rural conditions in rural areas through the diversification of the rural economy in Ajara.

1.3. Contextual analysis

Rural development aims to improve the lives and well-being of rural dwellers while protecting the natural environment within which they live. In Georgia, there is clear rural-urban divide related to economic opportunities, and public service provision. Today, rural development is very important in Georgia, where 42.8% (1,591.9 thousand) of the population live in rural areas (2006 data), while 48.6% of those employed are engaged in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, while 97% of those people are self-employed. In 2015, agriculture's contribution to Georgia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 9.1%. There are few opportunities for finding alternative employment in rural areas.⁵ The poverty rate in the country is gradually decreasing but remains high at 20.6%, notably in rural areas, and the poverty is 26.5% as opposed to 14.55 in urban areas.⁶ Poverty is most severe in mountainous areas, and female-headed households are more likely to be poorer than male-headed households, since they have fewer economic activities especially in off-farm activities, earning on average 63 cents per each euro earned by a man.⁷ Rural poverty in Georgia is related to lack of economic opportunities, isolation, insufficient skills, capabilities and assets. Under these circumstances, the resilience of poor rural households relies heavily on subsistence

⁴ Under ENPARD I, three rural development pilots testing the LEADER/ LAG approach, were established in Borjomi, Kazbegi and Lagodekhi. It has been agreed that two similar pilots will be established in Ajara in the Keda and Khulo Municipalities. Under ENPARD II a further three pilots will be established in Georgia, bringing the total number of pilots to eight.

⁵ Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2017-2020

⁶ GeoStat: relative poverty is measured in terms of share of population below 60% of median consumption.

⁷ GeoStat (2015) Women and men in Georgia

farming and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources such as forests and pasture lands, all affected by worsening climatic conditions.

Agriculture represents the main source of food and income for rural households. The deterioration of the sector remains a root cause of poverty particularly for women, for whom 56% of Self-employed women work as unpaid family workers. Major land reform during the 1990s led to erratic privatization and fragmentation of farm land resulting in 955 small farmers with extremely low output and productivity. For decades, the lack of support to improve cultivation and post-harvest technologies, capital and basic skills have also led to massive under-utilization of fertile land, overgrazing in communal areas and decreasing soil fertility.

Rural development has an important role to play in the sustainable development of Georgia. Evidence from the experience of European Rural Development Programmes confirms the role that rural development can play in terms of increasing the welfare of rural populations and reducing the economic imbalance between rural and urban areas. The rural potential to deliver innovative, inclusive and sustainable solutions for current and future societal challenges such as economic prosperity, food security, climate change, resource management, and social inclusion should be better recognized. Rural and agricultural policies should build on the identity and tendencies of rural areas through the implementation of integrated strategies and multi-sectorial approaches. They should promote diversification and foster entrepreneurship, investment, innovation and employment. These policies should also add value to rural identity and enhance sustainability, social inclusion and local development, as well as increase the resilience of farms and rural communities.

Under ENPARD I (2013-2017), the primary focus of the programme was on support to agriculture through institutional capacity building, support for the development of small farmers' cooperatives and pilot activities on rural development in three areas, Borjomi, Kazbegi and Lagodekhi. The rationale for establishing the 3 rural development pilot projects is given below:

- Diversification of rural economic activities to address poverty and promote sustainable and inclusive growth.
- ENPARD experience in agriculture to help increased coverage and integration in rural development strategies and plans.
- Validation of EU approach to rural development.
- Inform the national strategy (contextual analysis, local level strategies).

1.4. Evaluation purpose and objective

The overall purpose of the final evaluation is to provide an independent results-focused assessment of the Support to Rural Development in Georgia Project, in terms of the progress and challenges, achievement of the project results, assess gaps, lessons learned and provide recommendations to guide implementation of the next phase of the project. (**Annex 1: Terms of Reference**)

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- To evaluate the project's objectives and target results.
- To evaluate how much-delivered activities of the project enabled achieving its objectives and delivering its intended outputs.
- To assess the effectiveness, efficiency and added value of the project in terms of achieved outputs and results, and its contribution to Country Program Document (CPD) outcome.
- To assess the project's contribution to ENPARD II programme result indicators and the EU Results Framework (Level 1 and Level2).
- To provide lessons learned and good practices.

1.5. The evaluation scope

The evaluation of the Project will cover the period from inception in June 2016 to December 2018. The scope of evaluation will include, but may not be limited to:

- i. Review all relevant sources of information – primary and secondary data collection sources.
- ii. Elaborate an evaluation matrix with evaluation criteria with the data sources, the data collection and data analysis methods.
- iii. Familiarize himself/herself with current standings of rural development Georgia and Ajara as well as with latest developments and achievements within ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project.
- iv. Following a participatory and consultative approach, frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and gender.
- v. Analyze the key objectives of the project and assess to what extent these objectives have been attained.
- vi. Evaluate the overall scope ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project has contributed to the ultimate objective of rural development in Georgia and the Ajara AR.
- vii. Assess the effectiveness of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project`s interventions in achieving its stated objectives and contributing to the relevant outcomes as stated in the project document
- viii. Identify the key stakeholders and hold discussions with them. Develop interview forms, questionnaires and other forms of communication tools for facilitating discussions and documenting stakeholders positioning towards ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project goals and results.
- ix. Collate evidence of what has worked and what has not worked (and why) from ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project initiatives, as well as programming approaches and strategies yielding the most effective results.
- x. Assess the relevance, effectiveness, appropriateness, efficiency and sustainability of the ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project as part of the broader ENPARD Georgia engagement in supporting agriculture and rural development in Georgia.
- xi. Assess ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project`s contribution towards the revised EU Results Framework (Level 1 and Level 2) including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Where possible, provide quantitative estimates.
- xii. Analyze the project`s contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- xiii. Prepare Draft and Final Evaluation Reports providing descriptive overviews, laying out the facts, outlining risks and lessons learned, and providing conclusions and recommendations and incorporating feedback from the UNDP team and key stakeholders.
- xiv. Present the documents at a national consultation and donors.

The main deliverables listed in the ToR are as follows:

- i. Inception report
- ii. A draft evaluation report
- iii. Final evaluation report

1.6. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation methodology has been designed on the basis of key questions outlined in ToR and adopted good practices in evaluation, encompassing the UNDP key evaluation principles – focusing on seven areas of evaluation (evaluation criteria): relevance, appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and gender.⁸ The evaluation provides evidence-based, credible, reliable and useful information. The evaluation adopted a mixed method approach to satisfactorily respond to the requirements of ToR. Evidence has been obtained and triangulated from document reviews, interviews and focus group discussions. The evaluation has exercised a client-oriented and participatory approach consistent with UN rules and principles to ensure close engagement and consultations with all stakeholders of the project. This approach, among other things allowed the evaluation to critically analyze achievements, performance, results and impact of the programme; and the extent to which the Programme, soft assistance, partners' initiatives and synergies among partners contributed to its achievement.

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards of Evaluation, principles and guidelines⁹ were strictly adhered to in conducting this evaluation. While collecting information the evaluation team respected the stakeholders' rights, dignity, security, privacy and self-worth in accordance with UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁰. This evaluation team also ensured that the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'¹¹ are strictly followed. Reliability and quality of information/data, and impartiality and independence were taken care of while conducting interviews and collecting the data. An attempt was also made to take into account the counterfactual analysis and concept of theory of change (ToC) in the process of evaluation. Further, data was collected on the UNDP cross-cutting issues of gender equality, empowerment of women and human rights.

Drawing inspiration from the aspects provided in the ToR, the following the evaluation exercise followed three major phases: (i) preparatory phase (desk review and preparation of Inception report including interview protocols); (ii) Evaluation phase (data collection, analysis and consolidation, presentation of initial results); and (iii) Final evaluation phase (preparation of draft and final report, incorporating stakeholders' comments and final evaluation report).

Consistent with these phases, the following steps were undertaken to complete this evaluation:

(i) Preparatory phase

Review of relevant documents

In order to use existing information and avoid duplication, secondary data were mainly collected through a comprehensive desk review and analysis of relevant documents as well as triangulation of different studies. Desk review provided insights into the programme implementation processes, changes in course, achievements and challenges among others. The key documents reviewed included Project documents, periodical progress reports and annual work plans of SRDG, research studies, assessment reports, UNDP documents including Country Programme Document 2016-2020 (CDP), government documents available on website, etc. Additional project reports, files and proposals, as well as UNDP published

⁸ UNDP's Evaluation Policy, Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, July 2016.

⁹ - UNDP Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, 2009/ Addendum June 2011 Evaluation;

- UNEG's Guidelines for Impact Evaluation in UN Agency Evaluation Systems, Aug. 2013;

- UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2017.

¹⁰ UNEG Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation -Towards UNEG Guidance, UNEG/G (2011)2, March 2011.

¹¹ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNEG, March 2008

reports were consulted during the assignment; both in terms of gaining contextual understanding and to examine specific interventions in greater detail. The documents reviewed are listed in **Annex 3**.

Preparation of Inception Report (IR)

The IR was prepared to identify the methodology and tools to conduct evaluation. The IR encompassed approach, tools, evaluation phases and evaluation matrix (**Annex 2**) developed based on evaluation questions listed in ToR.

(ii) Evaluation phase

Under this phase primary and secondary data were collected for evaluation. Data collection phase provided an opportunity to the evaluation team to collect additional documents related to the project implementation, sustainability and relevance. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected for evaluation. Triangulation of data and sources was used to minimize possibility of errors and discrepancy. Impartiality and independence was strictly observed in the selection of respondents for interviews and consultations.

Data collection

The required data were collected through multiple methods including, in-depth desk review of the relevant documents, questionnaires, (Annex 4a to surveys, on-site interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), key informants of key stakeholders and direct observations. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, surveys, on-site interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and key informants of key stakeholders (list of persons met and summary of meetings is given as **Annex 4 and 5**). The evaluation team conducted interviews with the UNDP, EUD, project team, government partner and line ministries, IACC and Working Groups' members, municipalities, members of Local Actions Groups/AMAGs, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders. Separate questionnaires were developed for key informants and tailored where necessary for semi-structured interviews and data/information collection on project's performance/results and problems encountered.

The secondary data were mainly collected through a comprehensive desk review and analysis of relevant documents, including, project document, periodical progress reports, Results Framework, annual work plans, previous internal and external reviews/evaluations, strategic country development documents, UNDP and government documents, and other material that were useful for this evidence-based evaluation.

Desk review of documents will provide insights into the project implementation processes, changes in course (if any), achievements and challenges among others.

Data synthesis and assessment of information

The data analysis process involved synthesis, consolidation, classification, summarizing and interpretation of the findings and results. Data from different primary sources were triangulated with data obtained from secondary sources, direct observations and any other data sources to produce a comprehensive report that adequately addresses the assessment and analysis requirements as per the ToR. The cross-cutting issues of gender equality, empowerment of women and human rights were taken into account during data collection and analysis. Data was disaggregated by relevant criteria in order to assess whether benefits and contributions were fairly distributed by the interventions being evaluated.

(iii) *Final evaluation phase*

During this phase a debriefing was given on the preliminary findings of evaluation. The draft evaluation report was submitted for comments by UNDP and EUD which were incorporated in the final report. The contents and structure of the evaluation report were consistent with UNEG evaluation template provided in ToR. The final report encompassed a set of clear, forward-looking and actionable recommendations logically linked to the findings and conclusions, and identified lessons learnt to improve the future strategies.

1.5. Limitations and challenges

The evaluation team did not encounter any major challenge duration evaluation process. However, there were following minor limitations that affected the primary data collection processor:

- Time was limited for the in-country mission to cover a project that has a broad range of activities and coverage of stakeholders, beneficiaries, fora and alliances. Also, due to time limitation and great number of stakeholders spread over various municipalities, could not be reached. However, a fairly representative sample of number of projects stakeholders was interviewed to collect evidence-based data for evaluation.
- Despite of concerted efforts by the project team, the representatives of some of the ministries and FAO could not be interviewed due to their non-availability.

2. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis on project achievements and simultaneously identifies the recommendations to be addressed for future strategy. The contents of this chapter are based on the data available in the documents, and information provided by the project team, key informants, and detailed FGDs with stakeholders and beneficiaries, and personal judgment and observations during field visits.

2.1. Relevance and appropriateness

Efficiency measures how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to results. An initiative is efficient when it uses resources appropriately and economically to produce the desired outputs. Efficiency is important in ensuring that resources have been used appropriately and in highlighting more effective uses of resources.

Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results, UNDP, 2009

The main objective of the support was, the establishment and implementation of Rural Development Strategies for Georgia and its Ajara region respectively, with associated capacity building for institutions charged with administering rural development in Georgia. Relevance of the project objective and the strategy to the national and regional was strong, as it appropriately addressed the priorities and needs. In the course of achieving these objectives, the project effectively responded to the priorities set out in the Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia 2015-2020 (SADG), under Measure 3.4.1 – *Defining and supporting rural development and investment strategies for each region*.¹² The project built the capacities of the national and Ajara AR partner and line ministries, and institutions in the sphere of rural development policy planning and implementation through constant support in the development of NRDS for Georgia and APs both for Georgian and Ajara.

The project was intended to meet the priorities of cooperation between Georgia and EU. The project outputs were also consistent with the ENPARD Georgia which, as noted, was designed to enhance agricultural production and rural development¹³. Specifically, the project was designed to ensure achieving the ENPARD's results, namely: the adoption and implementation of a NRDS and AR; the adaptation of EU best experience and practices; complementarity of support programmes (EU, Government, other donors) for effective implementation of municipal development plans. Moreover, the project objectives supported institutions building for policy development and the expansion of rural development projects to five new municipalities (two in Ajara and three in wider Georgia).

Through capacity building of public institutions serving rural communities, the project directly supported the UN priorities. The project contributes to United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development/UNDAF (or equivalent), Outcome 3 “*Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, creating employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded*”, and UNDP Strategic Plan outcome 1.¹⁴ The project outputs were also aligned with Output 2.1. *By 2020, national and local governments have greater capacities to promote user-centred,*

¹² Which concludes: “Clearly, agriculture by itself cannot generate sufficient employment and job opportunities to generate sustainable enterprise and incomes for the entire rural population. Therefore, the Government intends to promote and develop a concept of non-farm rural enterprise development in areas such as, services (shops, repair, crafts etc.), processing enterprises or agro-tourism (hunting, fishing, historical monuments etc.). Successful initiatives at regional and local level will be identified and examples disseminated of successful practices. The Ministry of Agriculture will work with other branches of Government to look the potential for technical or financial programs of support and to facilitate their realization.”

¹³ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/919&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

¹⁴ United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (Framework Document) Georgia 2016-2020, UN Tbilisi 2016.

inclusive and sustainable rural and urban development policies. Through providing training in environment issues and training to women the project directly contributed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Gender equality and SDG 13: Climate action. The project also indirectly contributed to 1: No poverty and Goal 2: Zero hunger. Rural development approach also corresponds closely and leads to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which are also closely compatible with the EUs approach to rural development.¹⁵

All the stakeholders interviewed endorsed the high relevance of the Project to the national and regional priorities and needs.

Project design

The project emphasized a wide embracing goal relating to functional capacity building of the national, Ajara AR and local institutions. In general, the design and output of the SRDG's activities were relevant. There had been a conscious decision to link the project objective with the wider UNDP corporate goals and the national development strategy. The activities were well defined covering purposes of the project. The Results and Resource Framework (RRF) - **Annex 6** and Capacity Development Results Framework (CDRF). clearly spelled out activities, responsibilities, targets and progress indicators. Interventions corresponded to the output and are consistent with country's requirements, Ajara AR's needs, development priorities and UNDP/EU policies in contributing to rural development of the communities with strengthened capacities of public support institutions at the national as well as local level and partners. The project provided the flexibility which allowed pursuing of different options according to the needs of its beneficiaries and the willingness of EU to fund project components consistent with their own objectives.

The project was well-designed, with separate, carefully thought-out strategy to specifically address the strategic directions 2: Institutional Development. Project components and activities identified in the project document were based on the needs and priorities of the communities. The project document Results and Resources Framework clearly spelled out the project objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities and milestones, with key stakeholders responsible for the project activities properly identified. The project activities were implemented through Annual Work Plans. The project budget and co-financing commitments were appropriate for the level of intervention, the intended outputs were achievable for the planned two-year duration of implementation, the capacities of the executing agencies (MEPA and MoA Ajara) were appropriately effective for the level of project intervention.

2.2. Efficiency

Efficiency measures how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to results. An initiative is efficient when it uses resources appropriately and economically to produce the desired outputs. Efficiency is important in ensuring that resources have been used appropriately and in highlighting more effective uses of resources.

Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results, UNDP, 2009

Efficiency of the project was assessed based on their outputs and how the entire programmes were managed. Particular focus was placed on how productively the resources were used to realize the results paying particular attention to project management and funds management.

¹⁵ Sustainable Development Goals, UNDP Georgia.

The project was highly focused on a demand-driven and results-based approach to the interventions. The project followed a rights-based approach in their work through wide publicity in media providing stakeholders from all groups and gender with an equal opportunity to compete and participate in the projects' activities ensuring accountability, participation, non-discrimination and the rule of law as key principles. A wide geographical coverage was ensured through extending assistance to eight municipalities. NIM ensured the adequate level of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2.1. Financial resources management

In financial terms, EU was the main donor with US\$ 2.80 million contribution, 95.6% of the project's total input of US\$ 2.90 million, while the contribution of the Government of Ajara AR stood at US\$ 135,610 (5%). For detail refer to Table I below:

Table 1: Financial sources, planned and actual expenditures of the project

(As of 30th November, 2018, in US\$)

Source of Funding	Year 1 (Jul 2016 -Jun. 2017)		Year 2 (Jul 2017- Jun 2018)		Year 3 (July 2017 – Dec. 2018)		Total Planned Expenditures	Total Actual Expenditures
	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures		
EU	542,068	400,639	1,436,322	801,278	787,097	881,683	2,765,487	2,083,510
Ajara	90,779	45,20	\$44,830	90,407	-	351,606	135,610	487,316
Total	632,847	445,842	1,481,152	891,685	787,097	1,233,289	2,901,097	2,570,816

* Note – Planned expenditure figures are taken from the project budget.

**Note - Actual expenditure figures are taken from PRODOC file (Excel) with data on project expenditures as of Nov2018. (Year 1 and Year 2 expenditures are time apportioned).

Table 2: Planned and actual expenditures on project outputs

(As of 30th November, 2018, in US\$)

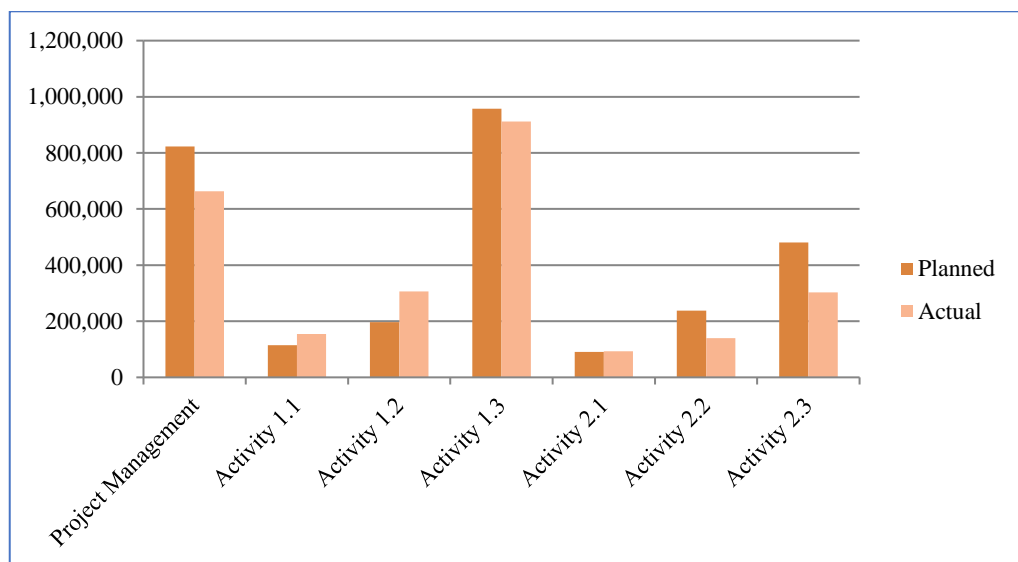
Project component/ Expenditures	Project Management	Output 1: Institutional Capacity development of RD in Georgia			Output 1: Institutional Capacity implementation in Ajara			Total
		Activity 1.1	Activity 1.2	Activity 1.3	Activity 2.1	Activity 2.2	Activity 2.3	
Planned *	823,386	114,282	197,074	957,613	90,497	237,357	480,886	2,901,096
Actual **	662,706	155,109	306,007	911,494	92,991	139,775	302,735	2,570,816

* Note – Planned expenditure figures are taken from the project budget.

**Note - Actual expenditure figures are taken from PRODOC file (Excel) with data on project expenditures as of Nov2018.

As reflected in Table 1, as of 30th November 2018, aggregate actual expenditures of the project were estimated at US\$ 2.57 million (88.62%) against planned allocation of UN\$ 2.90 million. As the project activities progressed the delivery rate increased from US\$ 891,685 in year 2 to US\$ 1.23 million in year 3.

Figure: Planned and actual expenditures on project activities



53.38% (US\$ 1.37 million) of the total expenditures were incurred on Output 1 related to the institutional Capacity development of RD in Georgia, while 20.82% US\$ 535,501 Output 2 related to Institutional Capacity implementation in Ajara. The expenditures on project management accounted for 25.8% (US\$ 662,706). This trend highlights the absorptive capacity of the project management.

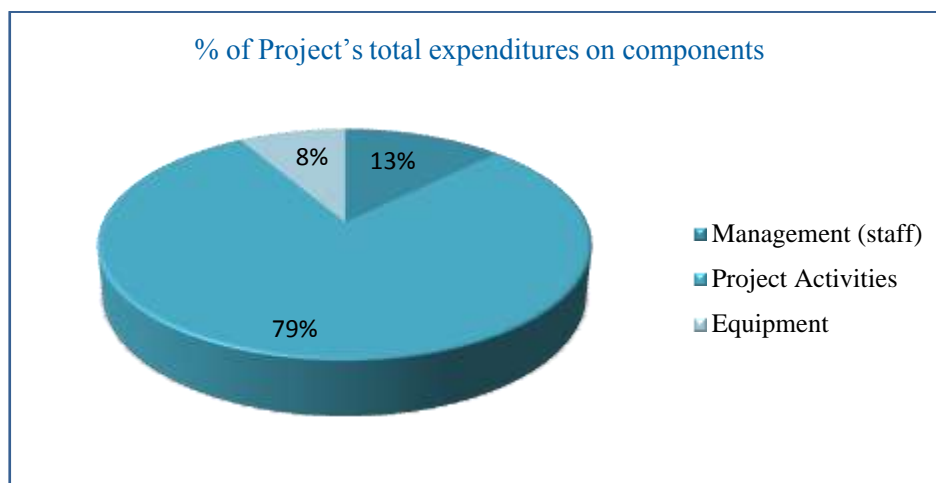
Most of the expenditures, 79% (US\$ 1.90 million) of US\$ 2.41 million were devoted to the project activities followed by management staff 12.6% and equipment with 8.4%.

Table 3: Allocation of expenditures- Project management vs project activities

Component	Expenditures	% of Project's total expenditures
Management (staff)	304,282	12.6%
Project Activities	1,908,110	79.0%
Equipment	203,114	8.4%
Total	2,415,506	100%

Overall, the project installed comprehensive and strong financial management systems for tracking all payments and for ensuring transparency and accountability of expenditures, reflecting the role of UNDP as custodian of donor funds. Evaluation found that under the national implementation modality (NIM) the use of funds was efficient. The evaluation did not observe any major financial issues and discrepancy. The programme maintained robust financial management systems and strong accounting practices. ATLAS was adopted by the project management to reflect the approved budgets as per project document. Staff strength was allocated along the approved budgets. Procurement and recruitment were made in line with the UNDP rules and regulations and UNDP Georgia Standard Operating Procedures. The project was not audited during

implementation. Clearances from EUD on content related topics. UNDP arranged several thematic discussion meetings with relevant counterparts with relevant regular reporting and information packages to facilitate the dialogue.



The project did not encounter any major fund release problem. Due to the specific situation during the inception period UNDP concentrated on the strategy elaboration and the contracting of staff was finalized in November – December 2016.

There was evidence of sound project fund management. The project had in place mechanisms to reduce possibilities of fiduciary risks. These included having a well-defined authorization and approval terms for any fund disbursements, which were also dependent on project activities and timelines. The project itself has a strong financial system with internal controls which all showed good management of project funds. In purchasing of any goods and services the project insisted on a Value for Money (VfM) basis and followed stipulated procurement procedures all the time. This evaluation, based on the financial statements noted that standard financial management approaches were being used in the way project funds were handled and managed. The financial reports were also indicative of a good value for money in view of the management/administrative cost area.

2.2.2. Human resources (Staff input)

Project management did not report any major problem in the recruitment of staff. An experienced and well-motivated team was assembled for the Project. The evaluation found project staff to be performing their duties conscientiously and with determined interest. Project management displayed UNDP and EU standards, procedures and transparency in the recruitment of staff, operational procedures and selection of municipalities, projects and beneficiaries.

Aggregate utilization of professional staff by the project was 298.54 person months. There was 21.35 person months input of international staff (22%) and 75.75 person months of national staff. The input on project support staff accounted for 201.44 person months. In terms of financial input, expenditures on staff were estimated at US\$ 499,550 representing 17% of the total expenditures of the project. The expenditures on professional staff represented US\$ 469,550 (62%) and management and support staff represented 38% of the

total spent on the management component. Given that the project operated under the NIM modality, the use of staff resources is considered consistent with the scope of activities.

The evaluation found project staff performed their duties conscientiously and with determined interest. Project management displayed UNDP and EU's standards, procedures and transparency in the recruitment of staff, operational procedures and selection of region, projects and beneficiaries. Evaluation found that there was a strong culture of participation within project and display of transparency by the management in its operational procedures. Documentation produced on the project outputs reflected that project exercised in its work and selection of beneficiaries and projects of communities, accountability, participation, non-discrimination and the rule of law as key principles. Also project implementation was focused on a results-based approach to its activities. Interventions were planned in a systematic and detailed way, and extensive documentation was produced on the project outputs.

There was a need to enhance essential capacities of the ministries and local institutions for the successful creation of organizational structure and rural development strategies. The project utilized the human resources efficiently to transfer the technical knowledge and improve technical competencies of the partner ministries and institutions in the areas of strategic planning, policy development for rural development and analysis and agriculture development. This objective was achieved through extensive formal trainings, coaching and directs application by the project partners through the implementation of specific interventions in capacity building. This combination proved to be efficient as it enabled the national, regional and local partners to go through the complete learning cycle where the learner "touches all the bases," i.e. a cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Immediate or concrete experiences lead to observations and reflections.

From the comments offered by the persons met and interviewed the evaluation has drawn the conclusion that the team established overall very good working relations with government counterparts, partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries, other projects and donors.

2.2.3. Organization and management

The project has exercised a strong degree of management autonomy under NIM approach. NIM modality is mainly motivated by its high potential for maximum cost-effectiveness and tailored flexible capacity development of local governments, institutions and local associations. During implementation, the project has sought strong involvement of different partners, with focus on the national and regional ministries and local institutions, which can, if proven to have sufficiently built capacities, eventually take over implementation of of the rural development strategies and project initiatives.

UNDP supported MEPA to lead the policy implementation. The Steering mechanisms of ENPARD II was modified and streamlined with ENPARD III in May 2018. The ownership and response rate from MEPA and other Government stakeholders was very high. Working level relations with Inter-Agency Coordination Council (IACC) members were streamlined to the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) creating a good environment for the project policy support related interventions planning. IACC through regular meetings effectively advocated and steered the Rural Development Policy implementation. The IACC is gradually transforming into a principal body for coordination which promotes more effective action for sustainable rural solutions and creates dialogue, partnership and consensus on rural development policy issues.

The general management of the project was noted to be efficient as it was characterized by specifically dedicated personnel with clear reporting lines and structures. The roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the project framework were in line with the UNDP Rules and Regulations for Project Management that define minimum requirements to ensure UNDP's accountability for programming activities and use of resources. The UNDP Georgia took full responsibility for the achievement of immediate objectives as well as for the administration of financial and human resources.

In the absence of Project Board (PB), IACC assumed this role of project oversight and monitoring of functions for quality assurance. UNDP Economic Development Team Leader and Programme Associate played the Project Assurance role. It should be noted, however, the importance of PB cannot be ruled out in the context of overseeing project progress and decision making.

The project adopted a participatory approach. The project worked closely with stakeholders and beneficiaries to respond to their needs in the loop of the project scope. Each project intervention has been discussed with the stakeholder and beneficiary groups beforehand to raise buy-in and ownership. Cooperation lasted in the implementation process as well to make a project and its intervention successful.

Delays occurred in contracting consulting services since offers were with too low quality and at exorbitant cost (e.g. quantitative survey). The exchange rate fluctuations brought some, but manageable difficulties in the budget planning. Besides, long administrative procedures within MEPA/the GoG, repeatedly led to avoidable delays, such as non-decision on the topic and timing of RD conferences.

The project followed the criteria of relevance for selecting each beneficiary group or partner to the project interventions. For example, for capacity building – policy-makers, relevant state officials and public servants (representatives of the IACC for Rural Development of Georgia member institutions involved in thematic work; representatives of Ajara A.R. RDC member institutions involved in thematic work); special focus on relevant structural units and respective staff involved in laying down the RD policy framework and in charge of administering RD policy design, delivery and monitoring. Similarly, CSO CiDA, with a network of regional CSOs was used for the planning of awareness campaign in the regions.

The content-wise complaints were not received from the participants. It is noticeable that they were asking to have a further opportunity to participate in trainings and workshops.

2.2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are key factors in helping improve performance and achieve results. ENPARD II was the second phase and had established an efficient monitoring mechanism. Overall, M&E mechanism for monitoring of project activities was efficient and effective.

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project developed and adopted a detailed M&E Framework, showing detailed indicators and targets for the intervention logic of the proposed activities the inputs, outputs and impacts. The project adopted results-based management as a corporate management approach, so that performance at the level of development goals and outcomes is systematically measured and improved. Monitoring was carried out through the analysis of the results-based quantitative and qualitative indicators outlined in the Projects' results framework and the budget allocation tables. SRDG field activities were monitored through activity work plans. The project management was also reflected by the overall activity timeline and output target compliance. All the process indicators showed positive compliance to the annual schedules and plans.

Quantifiable indicators for baseline and targets were not identified in the Results framework due to the fact that the project focused to bring in a new policy of Rural Development to the Georgian reality starting from the strategy/action plan development to the improvement of policy-makers, various stakeholders' capacities/skill on the way to establishment of the Rural Development, which meant to develop and establish systems, structures, to define functionalities of policy-makers and etc.

The targets were determined based on UNDP experience regarding establishing various policies / strategies in Georgia. Additionally, UNDP Georgia was recognized as counterpart while strengthening various state or private institutions by the Georgian Government and stakeholders last years. In case of the capacity building,

results framework was developed based on the UNDP Measuring Capacity and UNDP Capacity Assessment Users guidebooks.

The project document envisaged that in order to have governance and management arrangements for the project in place, the Project Board (PB) will be formed comprising executive, senior suppliers and beneficiaries. For the project purposes, the Ministry of Agriculture, Georgia and the Office Government of Ajara AR will assume the Executive Role in the Board.¹⁶ The Project Team informed that on the EU Delegate's suggestion, the PB's meetings were never convened. Alternatively, frequent meetings were held and communication established via email with key stakeholders. The role of PB was assumed by IACC. Its meetings were convened regularly to review the progress and take important decisions. However, the importance of the PB cannot be ignored, since it is a more effective and authoritative decision making forum. Under the ENPARD II and given the need to further build more ownership by partner national and regional public institutions on the implementation of the RDSs and APs, the ENPARD Steering Committee (ESC) and the ENPARD Stakeholder Committee (ESStC) meetings were held quarterly to present the progress and seek advice on specific issues.

As for internal review, self-assessment or brain storming, it was done intensively, and each staff member participated through staff meetings or individual discussions with the project management. However, it was not provided in formal way, mainly through verbal and email communication.

The Project Manager (PM) maintained the responsibility for the day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress based on the results framework indicators and the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators. The CO undertook periodic monitoring of implementation progress through quarterly meetings with the programme management team. PM informed the Evaluation Team that review meetings have also been held regularly with the EUD in order to share the Project's progress and resolve any outstanding issues.

The project participated in the stakeholder meetings convened by FAO's once every two months. Additionally, various meetings, like workshops, technical working groups or individual meetings were organized with the stakeholders (about once a month). In case of the project partners and counterparts, it was more frequent meeting based on need and issue (at least once a week).

The Project regularly held activity review meetings with LAGs and the regional chapters. The LAG representatives actively participated in 6 meetings organized by the project. Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN) concept was introduced during the meetings. The municipality and regional beneficiaries/stakeholders were activity involved in the process of regional chapter design, meetings, consultation to prioritize the problems and issues of the regions that lasted more than 3 month and meeting with beneficiaries took place at least twice.

The progress on activities and outputs was documented through a series of annual, monthly, quarterly, monthly, interim annual narrative progress reports, annual financial reports, policy briefs and other periodical updates for the EU and stakeholders. These reports were in general very informative, comprehensive and served as a tool for monitoring the implementation of planned activities. All reports indicated a highly satisfactory rating of implementation of project activities. Various technical reports were also produced on the planned activities. These technical reports were then used to formulate interventions.

The Evaluation Team, however, is convinced that progress reporting was massive and supplemented with huge number of annexes. Progress reporting was too frequent, e.g. monthly, quarterly, interim and annual. The progress reports have a scope for improvement. Frequent reporting may be avoided to save the extra time for the team to work on project activities. The updates may be produced on need bases with appropriate

¹⁶ Page 31, SRDG Project Document, UNDP Georgia, 2016.

frequency. The progress reports may also present a qualitative description of successes and weaknesses at an activity and output level. The reports also lack information on issues (management, financial, human resources, coordination, etc.) that emerged during various stages of implementation and how those were resolved. Further, lessons learnt and any recommendations will also help the decision makers to take appropriate actions for smooth implementation of project activities.

2.3. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which the initiative's intended results (outputs or outcomes) have been achieved or the extent to which progress toward outputs or outcomes has been achieved.

Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results, UNDP, 2009

The effectiveness of the project was assessed based on noticeable changes in capacity and institutional development in the Georgia and Ajara AR, a measure of the changes in relation to the achievement of project's outcomes, the overall contribution of the project to capacity building of national and regional ministries and local institutions.

The review of project documents and records, and interviews the project staff and stakeholders, show that the project has achieved great majority of its milestones. Strong project effectiveness was evident as the all stakeholders were fully involved in the project activities and satisfied with the outcomes. Evaluation found beneficiary satisfaction particularly centered on the training component covering a broad range of topics.

In general, the outputs planned under the project at the project design stage were achieved by the project. CPD outputs and outcomes, ENPARD II results indicators and SDG as specified in the EU Results Framework were successfully achieved. Careful planning of the project activities, use of quality consulting/training resources and sound M&E plan contributed to the effectiveness of the project activities. This implies that project objectives and outputs were clearly defined, practical, and feasible to achieve under the circumstances. Genuine interest and ownership from all stakeholders also played an important role in achieving the desired outputs under the project.

The approach of treating rural development as an important strategy to improve living standards of rural dwellings is a major initiative of GoG and seen as a change from the past. The UNDP project support was designed to provide the required technical capacity and support for successful implementation of this change programme in the rural and agriculture sector. The technical assistance provided by the project to MEPA and other ministries, has yielded catalytic results through our embedded technical advisors. The project contributed to the enhancement of institutional capacity of the Ministry in the areas related to rural development.

In order to build individual and organizational capacities, the project developed and implemented CDRF. The project successfully organized trainings, workshops, conferences, consultations and study tours that benefitted to by 2,777 persons (44% women) representing staff on the ministries, IACC and RDC member institutions, municipalities and members of CSOs, LAGs/AMAGs and youth groups. Overall, the project produced 44 technical and research reports policy papers, frameworks and workshop proceedings.¹⁷

¹⁷ 2nd Interim Progress Report July 2017 – June 2018, ENPARD II, SRDP, UNDP Georgia

2.3.1. Output 1: Institutional capacity in place for the development and implementation of a National Policy on Rural Development in Georgia

2.3.1.1: Government of Georgia is supported to develop and adopt a National Rural Development Strategy for Georgia.

The project provided support to the MEPA Georgia to form and strengthen IACC that was legalized by Government Decree №639 of 30 December 2016 consisting of Deputy Ministers from almost all line ministries including MEPA Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) and the other relevant state agencies. The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia chairs the IACC. The project liaised with key government interlocutors to lay down the governing mandate and specify functions falling within the competences of the IACC. UNDP provided support to the newly-established IACC Secretariat for strengthening its coordination functions on rural development policy planning and implementation. As a result of technical assistance, the IACC is gradually transforming into a principal coordinating body which promotes more effective action for sustainable rural solutions and creates dialogue, partnership and consensus on rural development policy issues. The Project also actively participated in ENPARD Steering Committee meetings and consulted with major stakeholders on various aspects of RD to generate wider consensus and collect feedback.

“It was the first time in my long experience that I could count so many Deputy Ministers and so many top officials attending the same event, and they all participating actively to the discussion, in a lively and interesting manner (Matteo Rastelli, AGEA)”.

2nd Interim Progress Report July 2017 – June 2018, ENPARD II, SRDP, UNDP Georgia

Project’s major breakthrough was the production of National RDS for Georgia 2017-2020. The integrated Rural Development strategy for Georgia 2017-2020 was developed and adopted (under Decree №631) by the Government of Georgia with the technical assistance of project and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), under the EU funded ENPARD. The strategy document was then published. The project’s major contribution was the support to MEPA and relevant ministries in the production of National RDS for 2017-2020. The Project mobilized high level expertise, technical assistance and provided guidance and support to the Strategy elaboration process. Under this support, the Project arranged high level RD policy workshops in Tbilisi and Borjomi which raised awareness of Georgian public officials in the EU model of RD policy, identification of potential synergies with existing national strategies and joint work on identification of major priorities for National RD Strategy for 2017-2020. RDS was finalized, submitted to the Government of Georgia and adopted at the Government Meeting on the 30th December 2016, Decree №631.¹⁸ Technical assistance was provided focusing on the provision of analysis, insight, and advice to MEPA, the lead Ministry and its partners from the European perspective, experience, and lessons learned on the new concept for the Rural Development Strategy of Georgia beyond 2020. The project encouraged and facilitated discussions on the fundamental basis of EU Rural Development Policy and its relation to the Georgian context in economic diversification, environmental protection, social issues, and local engagement areas.

¹⁸ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3529522>

2.3.1.2: Government of Georgia is supported in developing a Rural Development Action Plan based on an integrated model for delivery

Under this activity, the Project supported policy institutions and rural development stakeholders at national and regional level to shape evidence-based rural development policy and its implementation in Georgia through the analysis of relevant national, regional and sectorial policy frameworks. The RD Strategy APs (for 2017 and draft 2018-2020) were developed as the major tools for implementing the Strategy. The project provided expert assistance to thematic groups on the various issues pertaining to the RDS and its AP. The project assisted the authorities as they decided on the appropriate delivery model for Georgia, emphasizing the need for clarity and transparency of any costed interventions.

However, it should be noted that interviewees pointed out to the Evaluation Team that AP was merely a collection of lot of existing activities/programmes of various government agencies (e.g. MEPA, MRDI, etc.), and managing and monitoring of those activities was difficult.

Consultations facilitated by the project resulted in the creation of the Rural Development Policy Coordination Unit within the Department of Policy and Analysis of MEPA (Quarterly Progress Report 1 July - 30 Sep. 2018). This Department provides organizational support as a Secretariat of IACC. Further, the project team of consultants have provided a valuable analytic resource, providing guidelines on how to improve the monitoring and reporting of the 2017 AP's progress.

The project also assisted in the preparation of a Common M&E System of Rural Development Action Plan for 2018-2020 of Georgia, including Objective Indicators of Rural Development Action Plan for 2018-2020, approved by IACC. This is a handbook for the agencies responsible for the implementation of the action plan was prepared. The M&E system must ensure the supervision and evaluation of the implementation of the vision, priorities, objectives, and activities specified in the Strategy and the AP, timely detect existing challenges and delays in order to make, prompt and purposeful decisions. Besides, the objective of the system is to evaluate how the activities within AP have contributed to the achievement of priorities, objectives and the ultimate goal and whether or not the activities were chosen correctly in achieving the desired results and change.

The project also assisted MEPA to collect the evidence for fulfillment of ENPARD II and ENPARD III budget support performance indicators to be evaluated by the EU External Reviewer.

The project drafted the 'Regional Chapters' (regional profiles for rural development) as a tool for translation of National RD Strategy into different regional context have been developed for regions Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti. The intention is that the next National Strategy (2021 - 2024) will be informed by Regional Chapters shaped by extensive regional consultations involving a wide range of regional stakeholders. This work, therefore, will contribute to the next strategy but also will serve as an evidence-based tool for testing how relevant is the RDS 2017-2020 to the needs of rural communities. 18 meetings were convened with the participation of 192 regional and local government officials and 92 CSO representatives.

2.3.1.3: Capacity amongst the public sector and stakeholders to deliver rural development policy is built

The project envisaged implementation of targeted cross-cutting capacity development interventions with the aim of establishing strong institutional capacities, coordination and partnership-based policy framework. Various layers: national institutions, regional and local government, non-public and private entities are targeted with relevant support. Based on international best practice, the objective of the cross-

cutting capacity development approach, applied by the SRDG Project, was to address those important capacity needs that enhances a country's ability to meet its obligations under the rural development policy by creating synergies, while at the same time catalyzing the mainstreaming of area-based rural development concepts into national, regional and local development programmes and governance systems.

With the overall objective to enhance the capacity of the public sector through building a team of civil servants capable of handling multi-component agenda of the rural development policy, the project provided series of community development interventions and events for relevant ministry officials, local governments' staff, representatives of CSOs, active citizens and media. To achieve this objective, the project organized numerous trainings on a broad range of topics related to rural development, policy analysis and formulation, strategic programming, implementation, EU LEADER approach, evaluation of rural development and agriculture and the experience of the European Union. Overall, 795 persons (436 men and 359 women) benefitted from the training programme. The participants represented public sector, local experts, CSOs, municipalities and LAGs. Particularly 37 MEPA staff were provided with training in rural development policy design while other 26 were trained in public policy analysis. Participants replicated the policy analysis tools within the ministry and the follow-up discussions showed that the majority of the related staff now has a clear understanding of the policy formulation process. In order to bring the municipalities in the rural development streamline, the project organized a series of Rural Development Awareness Workshops for Regional and Local Authorities with a particular focus on RDS and LEADER for 170 high-level local public servants from 64 municipalities. Also, 34 journalists from the lead Georgian media outlets also attended awareness workshop to learn about Georgia's strategic priorities in rural development and the 2018-2020 AP. Cooperation between MEPA and CSOs strengthened and discussions on how to improve the interaction between government and rural development stakeholders are on-going. RD Advocacy Capacity Building Programme with 11 trainings across the entire country was attended by 232 CSOs / 304 participants (64% female). The training evaluation showed on average 35% improvement in understanding of RDP and the EU LEADER methodology.

“Rural Development is not a social programme, it is a programme which should help to increase competitiveness and market orientation of farmers and of the rural population” - Brigitte Mehlmauer-Larcher, UNDP Consultant on Rural Development (Austria).

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The project was instrumental behind the establishment of GRDN within the framework of the EU ENPARD programme which is in line with the priorities and objectives of the Georgian Rural Development Strategy 2017-2020. GRDN is one of the best tools for initiating dialogue and establishment of cooperation between the public, private, civil and other sectoral representatives, advocacy on prioritized or problematic issues and for development common approaches and solutions. Demo version of the GRDN website was developed and made functional. GRDN Brand Book was elaborated and agreed. The project further developed a draft proposal on GRDN Intervention Logic and AP and Recommendation for National Support Unit (NSU) Work/resource-budget planning. The project also proposed setting up of an appropriate mandatory institutional framework guaranteeing sound and effective policy implementation. It also developed an organizational structure with tasks of a Managing Unit within MEPA that will be responsible for RD policy design and implementation management.

The whole concept of GRDN was developed in accordance with EU relevant practices but adapted to Georgian reality. So, the work towards GRDN started with the establishment of effective and efficient cooperation fora with the LAGs, AMAGs and other relevant CSOs (rural stakeholders). The different working formats were introduced to meet with LAGs, NGOs, CSOs to straightforward the issue of the GRDN. All mentioned rural stakeholders highly appreciate to have the GRDN and cooperate tightly together. The GRDN event held in Tbilisi in December 2018, wherein a MoU was signed, proved the importance and acknowledgement of the GRDN by the mentioned stakeholders. The next step is to agree on the Charter of GRDN and register it as the entity. During this process of building-up the stakeholder network as the GRDN, the SRDG project was exchanging information with the LAGs and relevant NGOs and it is clear, that those LAGs, NGOs and some CSOs are cooperating with each other, exchanging with the practices and sharing relevant experiences, mostly the “older” LAGs” and helping newly established ones to enhance capacities, paying visits to each other’s municipalities, like study tours and etc.

Currently, the resources for the GRDN were provided from within the ENPARD II Programme and beyond this support options must be explored. Similarly, LAGs should not assume continued EU funding beyond ENPARD and should scope out options for their own future based on sustainable principles for development. The LAGs need to drive this forward and work out options for themselves and the formation of the GALAG is an encouraging sign that they are doing this.

Under this activity, in a bid to have a visibility in the country, the project successfully launched a publicity campaign by designing and disseminating 3,000 leaflets (2,000 in Georgian and 500 in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages) and 1,500 posters (1,000 in Georgian and 500 in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages). The leaflets provided information on the EU LEADER methodology and ENPARD facilitated LAGs in Georgia. The rural development posters illustrated three priorities of the RDS of Georgia 2017 – 2020. This campaign created awareness among the stakeholders and public about the concept of rural development and financial and technical assistance provided by EU and UNDP, respectively.

2.3.2: Output 2: Institutional capacity in place for the implementation of the Rural Development in Ajara AR

The desired results of this output were achieved through constant efforts of the project to build capacity enabling the key line ministries of Ajara AR to develop and adopt implement a meaningful AP for RDS by supporting participatory multi-stakeholder processes.

2.3.2.1: An integrated Rural Development Action Plan for Ajara developed and adopted

Under this activity, the project supported in the establishment of Rural Development Council (RDC) of Ajara AR. Through the ongoing project support and advocacy work, the governing mandate and functions of the RDC was streamlined and strengthened (decree №147 by the Government of Ajara AR, 26 August 2016).

The Project aimed to support to design of effective implementation mechanisms. As a result of constant support from the project, Ajara RDC approved and adopted a costed multiannual Ajara RD AP for 2018-2020 containing 47 activities for delivery across Government, state agencies and other bodies over the next three years to support the economic and social progress of rural Ajara. The project also supported the RDC in the development of AP for 2017. The support facilitated the process of identifying measurable indicators for use in the Action Plan and collecting data for relevant reporting.

The project facilitated the consultations for establishing a relevant Policy Unit resulted in the creation of the Rural Development Department within MoA that also serves as a RDC Secretariat. The Government of AR Ajara introduced changes to the regulations of MoA by the Government decree №1 on 9 January 2017. The process of establishing and staffing the new department was completed with the support of UNDP project.

Cognizant of the M&E system as a basic tool for measuring progress on the delivery of individual actions, measuring the economic and social impact of the plan on rural communities, the project supported the Department of Rural Development at MoA Ajara in the development of a Common Monitoring and Evaluation System and Objective Indicators of Ajara Rural Development Action Plan for 2018-2020 in line with similar documentation of MEPA of Georgia (adopted by the IACC on December 22, 2017). This Common M&E System has been adopted in RDC meeting of 14th December, 2018.¹⁹

2.3.2.2: Enhanced capacity within the public sector and stakeholders in Ajara AR to effectively deliver rural development policy²⁰

To achieve this objective, followed by a systematic organizational capacity assessment of MoA Ajara AR, the project developed and implemented a capacity response development plan. Overall 1,882 persons comprising 1,062 (56%) men and 820 (44%) women benefitted from the project's training package. These participants constituted civil servants of the MoA Ajara AR, RDC member institutions, AMAGs, CSOs, Active Citizens' Local Unions and youth. A broad range of topics were covered under the training package, some of them included:

Main topics covered under training framework	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Policy Planning; • Effective Communication and Facilitation; • Needs Analysis and Project Development; • Project Management; • Public Policy Monitoring and Evaluation; • Leadership, Supervisory and Managerial Skills Development • Analytical and Critical Thinking Skills • Market-Oriented Business Development and Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU RD Policy Inception Training • Project Management • Public Policy M&E • Effective communication and Facilitation • Needs Analysis and Project Development • Leadership and Teambuilding • Participatory Planning • Community-Led Local Development • Laboratory Methods and Procedures

Eighty (80) civil servants of MoA Ajara AR and RDC member institutions were trained within the framework of Public Policy Training Programme. The overall objective of the Public Policy Training Programme was to enhance capacity within the public sector to effectively plan and deliver rural development policy through building a robust and resilient team of civil servants capable of handling multi-component agenda of the Rural Development Policy planning and Rural Development Strategy implementation.

The project also provided technical assistance for improving organizational processes and strengthening the HRM system of MoA Ajara AR. Further, the project contributed to the formulation of organizational development plan for AMAGs which has been approved by MoA Ajara AR. Each AMAG which will be

¹⁹ SRDG Project, Ajara Office, December 2018, UNDP, Georgia.

²⁰ Ibid 19

officially registered should apply to this pan. That built the confidence of the community activists in rural areas of Ajara to influence rural policy decision making.

In an effort to bring the youth in the economic development streamline, the project provided various trainings to 157 youths (o/w 94 girls) in the areas of “Georgia’s European way, achievements and challenges”, gender equality, leadership, innovative entrepreneurship, start-up and entrepreneurial skills, community advocacy and civic engagement, social media and design websites and blogs, public relation and communication, voluntarism and designing cv and cover letter.

It should be noted that each public servant on National or Ajara level participated in the trainings at least twice. Some of them participated 3 or 5 times considering the issues and position of the public servant.²¹

2.3.2.3: Enhanced understanding of the critical success factors for effective rural development to deliver improved employment and rural conditions in rural areas through the diversification of the rural economy in Ajara

The project provided technical support to MoA Ajara AR toward improving its organizational structure in accordance with the new mandate resulting from the RD Policy. As a result, MoA Ajara has approved the new organizational structure and established three new Units (Annual Progress Report July 2016 – June 2017):

- i. A Rural Development Department,
- ii. Policy and Analysis Department and
- iii. An Information and Statistics Division.

The Rural Development Department serves as the major unit for leading the RDS implementation, liaising among AMAGs to properly plan the MoA services and programmes. The project implemented a comprehensive institutional capacity development plan of the RDC institutions. The project developed capacity of 23 (12 women) local CSO representatives from Ajara to better advocate for rural development. The project also completed Rural Community Capacity Building Programme in Ajara AR for 46 AMAGs (Active Citizens Local Unions) covered 187 (35 women) individual AMAG members (more than 25% from existing 677 AMAG representatives) and 65% of training participants (proportion varies between 44% to 84% for different training sessions) knowledge increased.

Participants’ quotes showing an importance of the training programme:

“The only thing I didn’t like about this training was time. The training should be either longer or repeated regularly”. Man, 46 years’ old.

"Finally, I understood why a bank refused my loan application; apparently a balance sheet matters". A woman, 35 years' old.

“It was an interesting and practical training”. Man, 50 years’ old.

“I had no idea that there were potential buyers other than the farmer’s market in Batumi.” Man, 52 years old (the quote was specifically referencing marketing).

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²¹ In total 595 youths comprising 358 (60%) girls have benefitted in Ajara from the Project through a training (13) package.

AMAGs are on the “board” of GRDN, as important as the LAGs. It should be underlined, that some people from Ajara LAGs, same time are the members of AMAG. So, it makes much easier for the process of cooperation between LAGs, Georgian Association of LAGs (GALAG) and AMAGs in Ajara AR. The rural stakeholders mentioned above are very oriented towards GRDN and fully realize the benefits of networking and multilateral cooperation under the well-shaped and established “umbrella” – like the GRDN.

Out of 6 pilot projects identified by SRDG in Ajara AR, the following 4 projects were implemented:

- Installation of the Agrikiosks in all rural municipalities of Ajara AR – the beneficiaries are all farmers from Ajara AR.
- Development of the service (repairing) center of small agriculture mechanization in Shuakhevi – the beneficiaries are farmers from Shuakhevi and Khulo Municipalities.
- Elaboration of Operational Guidebook for promoting good practice fish farming in Ajara AR – the beneficiaries include fish farmers from Keda Municipalities.
- Capacity building of LEPL Laboratory Research Center of the MoA Ajara AR.

As for AMAGs, 17 pilot projects were developed and implemented.

One specific pilot project was the development of an interactive information exchange innovative portal on agriculture. The touchscreen agrikiosk was designed to provide technical knowledge and information to cover various production topics and represent an alternative tool for agriculture extension. The portal contains more than 2,200 topics on agriculture and it will assist farmers and extension specialists of MoA and ASC of Ajara in various aspects such as information on agriculture, animal husbandry, and health, as well as estimation and precise calculation of product costs. In total 6 agrikiosks were installed in all municipalities of Ajara AR region. According to statistics about visitors’ different profession materials and topics was visited more than 10,713 times in the period September – November 2018.

Due to uncertainty with the new structure and composition of the Cabinet, MEPA approached UNDP with the request to postpone the date of the Rural Development Conference. Meanwhile, the project-initiated consultations with PSDA Innovation ServiceLab on possible cooperation and outlining of the conference.

2.4. Impact

Impact is referred to measures changes in human development and people’s well-being that are brought about by development initiatives, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Evaluation of impact generates useful information for decision making and supports accountability for delivering results.

Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results, UNDP, 2009

It was difficult for the Evaluation Team to assess the impact at this stage. However, through the review of documents, meetings with project staff, interviews with key informants and stakeholders and FGDs, the Evaluation Team had an approximation of the degree of the project effectiveness in all four activities. Addressing the extensive weaknesses and gaps in institutional capacities at national and regional level and competencies was a key determinant to addressing public service delivery.

Generally, a very high praise for UNDP and EU by the stakeholders was witnessed during the interviews. UNDP has successfully established its niche as a trusted and reliable partner by the stakeholders as well as recognized the EU contribution. UNDP is, therefore, well-positioned for further regional or national

engagement. The Evaluation Team observed the existence of strong commitment, will and vision of apex management of the partner ministries for exploring new avenues and opportunities for partnerships.

The staff of national and Ajara ministries, and CSOs were very satisfied with support provided by the project. The impact was visible at the institutional as well as individual levels, at the local as well as regional level. Though there was a sense of ownership of the interventions among the partner ministries and institutions as the APs of RDSs were jointly implemented by the partner ministries. However, the project team articulated that the Government has not taken real ownership of the rural development concept, which is a gradual process. There was a behavioural change among the government and stakeholders toward rural development and recognizing it as a vehicle for improving living standards of rural population. The terminological ambiguity regarding the rural development, agriculture and regional development has been cleared by the project. Behavior change among users of outputs within MEPA demonstrated fully developed capacity to independently and effectively support the work of IACC. IACC meets regularly to discuss progress in the implementation of RDS and its AP. Functioning IACC Secretariat. The actions taken by IACC after learning had a favorable impact on national and sub-national policy dialogue concerning RDP. Cooperation between MEPA and CSOs strengthened and discussions on how to improve the interaction between government and rural development stakeholders are on-going.

The project brought changes at individual, institutional as well as organizational levels through a series of capacity building activities which is a prerequisite to the implementation of RDS effectively to achieve the sustainable results in the rural development sector. By adopting EU LEADER approach, the Georgian rural development practices have become closer to the EU requirements.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MoENRP) was shifted to the Ministry of Agriculture to establish MEPA. Similarly, three new units were created within MoA Ajara (i) Agriculture, Food Safety and Rural Development Department, (ii) A Policy and Analysis Department and (iii) Information and Statistics Division. This restructuring and reorganization with new mandates supported by capacity building by SRDG project will not only lead to improved governance, accountability and transparency, but also enable these public institutions to provide services more effectively and efficiently in more coherent and coordinated way. MoAA's capacity to take evidence-based decisions on appropriate HR management procedures is strengthened as well as allocation of function across different departments and LEPLs.

The Ministry adopted a performance appraisal system which includes performance standards, performance evaluation procedure, roles and responsibilities.

Results and achievements garnered from SRDG's activities show the project's increasing impact on improving capacities. Learning activities were launched targeting public sector at the national and local level, and at a more macro level, partnerships were forged with CSOs and community groups to boost their interest and capacity to influence rural development policy-making and delivery. In addition, close ties were developed between the Project and LAGs in eight municipalities to pursue initiatives of common interest.

For example, every training participant who took the pre- and post- knowledge evaluation test demonstrated meaningful up to 30% progress, which was a high indicator considering general training practices. The training sessions also resulted in increased interest to obtain more detailed information over the tools and approaches applied in EU countries while implementing rural development policy.

Capacity building of government staff has fostered cooperation within and among different ministries and boosted confidence levels in areas of coordination, integration, unique role, co-design with local actors and engage strategically. For example, an evaluation conducted through knowledge and training evaluation forms showed on an average 35 % improvement in understanding of rural development policy and the EU LEADER approach, which is a high indicator, while the levels of satisfaction of participants were 70 % or higher in

every region and Tbilisi.²² Pre- and post- knowledge evaluation tests show increased understanding of in rural development policy choices and institutional requirements based on EU experience and practice.

The results of Rural Community Capacity Building Programme in Ajara AR for 46 AMAGs covering 187 AMAG members reflected that on an average, 65% of training participants had increased knowledge. That built the confidence of the community activists in rural areas of Ajara to influence rural policy decision making.²³ Analysis of the issue-specific knowledge evaluation pre- and post-tests showed that delivered trainings facilitated increased understanding of the participants around the issues related to *Community Participation and Municipal Budgeting Process*. Namely, the knowledge increase has been observed in more than 72% (74 out of 102) of training participants (average increase in score equals to 3.1). Moreover, according to the analysis results, general assessment of the training sessions was very positive as well according to all criteria (general assessment of the content part, trainer evaluation; training location).²⁴ Individuals, groups and community activists in rural areas of Ajara have been empowered to develop the confidence, understanding, and skills required to influence rural policy dialogue and decision making through established 46 AMAGs.

2.5. Sustainability

Sustainability measures the extent to which benefits of initiatives continue after external development assistance has come to an end. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating the extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional and other conditions are present and, based on that assessment, making projections about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the development results in the future.

Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results, UNDP, 2009

Sustainability was determined by examining not only the degree to which the outcomes are continuing and have been or will be continued with other funding, but also the socio- political, institutional framework and governance and environmental aspects of sustainability.

Since the project continues through ENPARD III, a separate sustainability plan was not elaborated. Itself, the ENAPRD phase III UNDP project is an effective mechanism and tool to sustain achievements of ENPARD II. The SRDG project built a strong cornerstone for the EU like Rural Development, which is one of the integral parts of the ENPARD phase III.

The sustainability of ENPARD II SRDG project was taken care of through various measures. The sustainability of the project outcomes was ensured through built-in strategy of the project, which is characterized by being fully inclusive, supportive of participatory processes both at the national and regional level, with a strong emphasis on networks of learning and capacity building activities to ensure a meaningful project legacy. The project's major focus was on building capacities at organizational, intuitional and individual levels. The project also adopted an approach of formation and institutionalization of various fora, such as high level IACC for Rural development, that has taken the role beyond the project life cycle. IACC was formalized by the Government Decree No639 of 30th December 2016. Organizational structure of MoA Ajara was strengthened by creating three new units namely, (i) Rural Development Department, (ii) A Policy and Analysis Department and (iii) An Information and Statistics Division.

²² Ibid 17.

²³ Ibid 17.

²⁴ Rural Community Capacity Building Programme in Ajara, Georgia, Final Report. May 14, 2017, Tbilisi, Georgia

The sustainability of the project's interventions is being addressed by ensuring the proper level of capacity development of the national, regional and local partners and that interventions are technically and/or financially viable. For the first factor, the project in parallel implemented capacity development assistance tailored to the needs of the national, regional and local partners and gradually transferred the implementation responsibilities to the local authorities. Sustainability was further safeguarded by building necessary capacity of national RDS and Aps, simultaneously with the development of national RDS and APs.

Sustainability of LAGs and AMAGs will remain an issue. LAGs have built human and social capital (experience, skills and networks) in delivering the LEADER model to Georgia. This capital has value as Georgia develops its rural development policy, institutional capacity and implementation models for improving life in rural areas. There would need to be a transition period for the LAGs, to go from being a fully donor-funded body to their new status, and support from MEPA and the GoG would be crucial in this period.²⁵ The alternate possible options need to be explored for LAGS' financial and institutional sustainability. Similarly, sustainability of GRDN may remain an issue.

2.6. Visibility and communication

During the course of interviews, the evaluation team found that the project has successfully launched its visibility strategy and publicity campaign to keep the stakeholders abreast of project activities. The interviewees were well aware of the project funders and facilities and how to participate in its activities.

The project promoted better knowledge about the activities of the ENPARD Programme funded by EU and UNDP as an implementing partner. The ENPARD logo was used as standard for any products produced or events delivered. The logo was displayed on the sign boards, printed material and various media products and training certificates. Meetings with rural development stakeholders including government authorities were held in the premises equipped with signs, flags, and logos of the partners and stakeholders involved in this project. Support by EU was explicitly acknowledged during the meetings and most clearly appreciated. All written communication with stakeholders included logos of donors and delivery organizations.

The project developed numerous pieces of information, and multimedia (TV, Facebook, YouTube, and Radio) ensuring visibility for the project and its stakeholders. All educational and informational material issued within project frames such as Textbooks, leaflets, Video Podcasts, and Newsletters depicted the project logos, of donors and delivery organizations. 3,000 leaflets (2,000 in Georgian and 500 in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages) and 1,500 posters (1,000 in Georgian and 500 in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages) were designed and printed with the aim to disseminate them among training participants. The leaflets provided information on the EU LEADER methodology and ENPARD facilitated LAGs in Georgia. The rural development posters illustrated three priorities of the RDS Georgia 2017 – 2020 such as economy and competitiveness, Social conditions and Living Standards and the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and provided information on objectives of the RDS.²⁶

EU's high-level participation was ensured on the major visibility events (including EU Ambassador's level at the national launch of RD Strategy) along with the EU and ENPARD visibility. All those partner organizations who were involved in the delivery of the Project were supplied and equipped with promotional material, such as signs and ENPARD logos. Further, The IACC's meetings were aired through various media outlets news, like 1TV Channel, TV Imedi, TV Maestro, TV Iberia, Radio Green Wave, Interpressnews, Expressnews.

²⁵ Options for achieving sustainability of LAGs, Annex 8: October 2018 Mission Report, Ciaran Gannon, SRDG, UNDP, Georgia.

²⁶ Ibid 17

The media was also extensively and effectively used for the publicity of project concept and create awareness. 34 journalists from the lead Georgian media outlets attended awareness workshop to learn about Georgia's strategic priorities in rural development and the 2018-2020 action plan. The aim of the seminar was to create awareness of media representatives in rural development related topics and share information on the country's progress in introducing and implementing the new concept of rural development – RDS and its APs (RDAP) for 2018-2020. 13 media outlets aired information on Rural Development Strategy and its implementation.

Besides, the project designed and installed 6 touchscreen Agri kiosk in all rural municipalities of Ajara region to provide technical knowledge and information to cover 2,200 production topics and represent an alternative tool for agriculture extension. According to statistics about visitors' different profession materials and topics was visited more than 14,700 times in the period of August-November 2017.

2.7. Cross-cutting issues

2.7.1. Gender equality

The project document advocated promotion of gender equality, women's stronger representation and empowerment.²⁷

As such a separate component on gender mainstreaming was not a part of the project design. However, the project has made efforts to ensure equal participation of women as partners and beneficiaries across its activities. The project considered gender aspect in each activity, especially while planning for training and workshops. For example, each training provider or partner organization was invited during planning and implementing to enable the gender representation. In addition, the project paid attention to the promotion of cooperation through contributing to skills development and employment issues (especially for young people and women) through Rural Development Action Plan for 2018-2020.

Of the 2,777 beneficiaries of the project interventions, 44% (1,226) were women. These interventions mainly were focused to building capacity through trainings, workshops, conferences, representation, consultations and meetings in various Fora. The women represented ministries, regional and local administrations, CSOs and youth groups.²⁸ See Table below.

Table 4: Gender equality indicators

Activity	Number of Participants		Total Number of Participants
	Men	Women	
Training	1,125	693	1,818
Workshops	141	203	344
Youth Conference	41	113	154
Fora	53	63	116
Meetings	86	92	178
Presentations	105	62	167
Total	1,551	1,226	2,777

²⁷ Page 24, Ibid 2

²⁸ Ibid 19.

2.7.2. Human rights

The project document emphasized that it will be guided by human rights-based principles such as: equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law. Regional and local development will be approached as a means for safeguarding the basic rights of rights-holders (local citizens, women, vulnerable and other groups) and enabling proper satisfaction of their fundamental rights, needs and interests.²⁹ However, data was not available from the project on these aspects.

Strengthening the rights-holders is an integral part of LEADER and therefore the project's approach. In a post-Soviet transition economy like Georgia, anchoring a rights-based approach is a long-term endeavor. Nevertheless, the project made great advancements not only in empowering the rights holders (e.g. LAGs, AMAGs) but also in integrating their concern into the approaches of the duty-bearers (e.g., LEADER working group within IACC). It can hence be argued that the approach worked better than one could expect though a long way is still to go.

Ethnic issues were not the project direct scope, however, the Rural Development Action Plan considers of providing a Georgian Language Classes to the state officials under the second priority area: social situation and standard of living.

2.7.3. Vulnerable

The ENPARD II project document suggested that 'specific measures will build resilience and improve food security and nutrition through diversification of rural activities and income sources, particularly for women and girls and the most vulnerable groups including conflict-affected people and ethnic minorities.'³⁰

No quantitative data or information was available on this aspect from the project sources. As for ethnic or vulnerable groups, during information dissemination process, the project together with the implementing partner outreached to these groups through regional CSOs network (where scope of CSOs are wide and cover each area of society development). Even, project has printed the brochures in Armenian and Azeri Languages for better outreach and accessibility. Please see for reference the SRDG Brochure_geo_ar_az. As for vulnerable groups due to high sensitiveness of the issue, the project did not request from implementing partner to make specification, while provided data on the participants registration

The Rural Development Action Plan considered providing a Georgian Language Classes to the state officials under the second priority area: social situation and standard of living.

2.7.4. Environment sustainability/climate change

Project document envisaged that the support will be implemented with the due consideration of the environmental impact having in mind institutional, policy and operational aspects.

It was not the project direct scope. However, the Rural Development Strategy and Action plan cover it through the third priority area: Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. However, the issues of climate change and environment were adequately covered in RDS action plans.

²⁹ Page 24, Ibid 2.

³⁰ Ibid 2.

Excessive deregulation and economic pressures, inherited unsustainable practices, inadequate policy and legislative frameworks and limited institutional capacities at all levels present a complex set of challenges to environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources, including ‘green’ growth. Exposure to environmental hazards and a lack of evidence-based adaptation measures to reduce disaster risk, combined with the impact of climate change, have exposed communities to significant risks, especially in rural areas and river basins. Over the last 40 years, 70 per cent of Georgia has suffered repeated hydro-meteorological and geological events, with economic losses exceeding \$14 billion.³¹

2.7.5. Youth

In total 595 youths comprising 358 (60%) girls have benefitted in Ajara from the Project through a training (13) package. The project has implemented specific initiative related to rural youth in Ajara, the main aim of the initiative was to advance the role of young people in decision-making processes through developing leadership skills and in partnership with local government leaders enhance youth efforts in improving the quality of life in their rural communities. The project provided training to youth on various small-scale businesses and confidence building.

2.8. Theory of change

The Theory of change (ToC) was one of the integral parts of the Project Document. Assembled with risks and assumptions it gives the logic and hierarchy of interventions, the management tools and risks analysis and external factors. Relevant amendments were made to the Project Document to reflect the changed operational and strategic approaches.

A ‘theory of change’ (ToC) explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. A ToC can be used for strategic planning or programme/policy planning to identify the current situation (in terms of needs and opportunities), the intended situation and what needs to be done to move from one to the other.³² ToC articulates the assumptions or hypothesis about the process through which change will occur and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving the desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur. A theory of change allows to detect i) what went right when a project or organization achieves its expected outcomes and what wrong when that does not occur and ii) how to adjust along the way. It is a living document that can be adjusted as learning takes place about what works and doesn’t work.

As part of their responsibilities for developing countries, UNDP and EU have been working in Georgia to support public institutions to capture and increase the impact of their services for staff of the MEPA and other ministries. Expected outcomes were identified, outcomes frameworks developed, as part of impact practice, to enable the project assess, measure progress against outcomes and supports them to demonstrate the impact of the initiatives.

The change is generally measured against a project impact hypothesis. However, the hypothesis was not developed for ToC in the project document. The SRDG project implemented the targeted capacity development activities with an aim to establish strong institutional capacities, coordination and partnership-

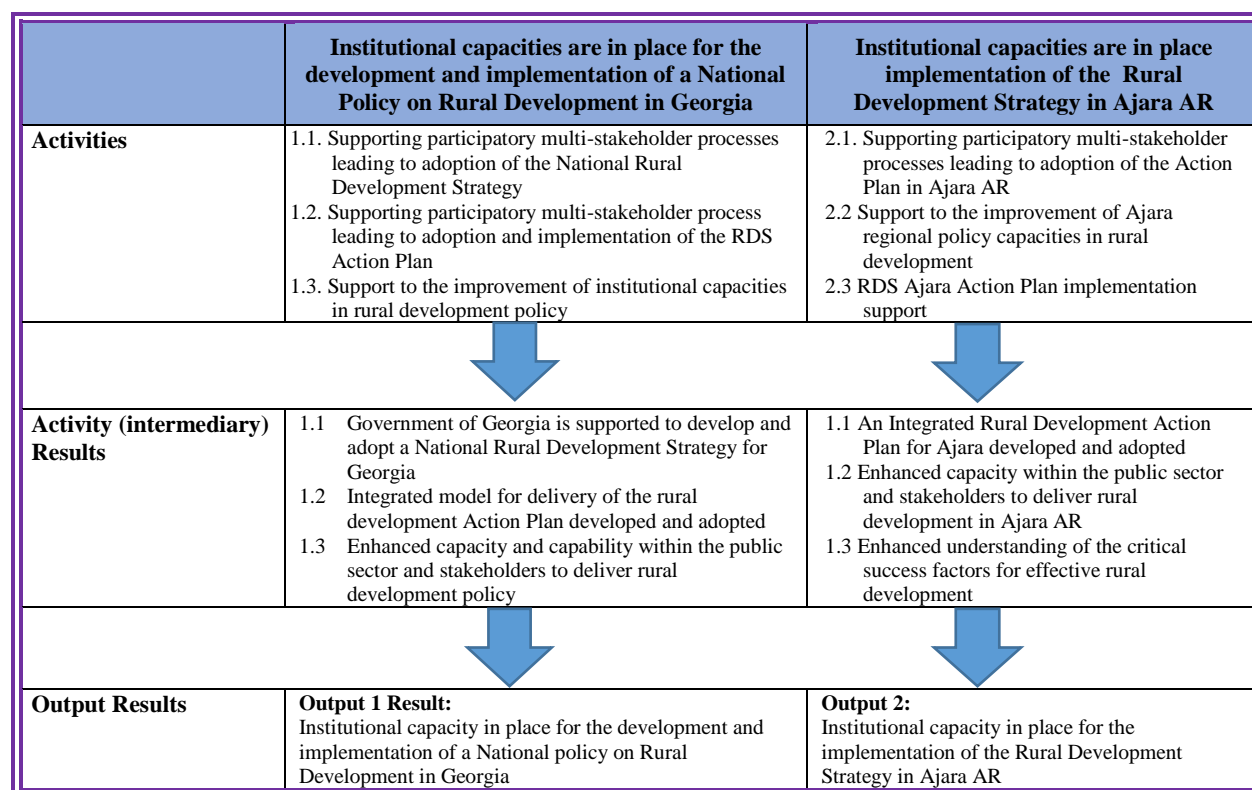
³¹ Country Programme Document for Georgia (2016-2020), UNDP Georgia

³² Theory of Change, Methodological Briefs Impact Evaluation No. 2 Office of Research – Innocenti, UNICEF, 2014.

based policy framework. Various layers: national institutions, regional and local government, non-public and private entities were targeted with relevant support. The capacity development efforts by the project brought a clear change in the overall working environment in the key partner and line ministries enabling them to develop and implement the RDSs at national and Ajara AR levels.

It is evident that project initiatives were planned with an explicit understanding of the early and intermediate steps required for long-term changes to occur in rural and agriculture sector; therefore, many assumptions about the change process need to be examined for next phase planning or evaluation planning to be most effective. A ToC will create an honest picture of the steps required to reach the goals of ENPARD III. It will provide an opportunity for development partners and stakeholders to assess what they can influence, what impact they can have, and whether it is realistic to expect to reach their goal with the time and resources they have available with them.

Figure: Proposed Theory of Change³³



2.9. Synergies and partnership with other projects and donors

The project developed synergies and collaboration at national as well as local levels. These were several key stakeholders, whose role, motivation and capacity were crucial for the overall realization of the UNDP support. These were partner and line national and Ajara AR ministries, local governments, responsible for rural and local development. The partnership was also developed with LAGs and other projects and CSOs

³³ Ibid 2

operating in the municipalities. During the course of implementation, project also developed cooperation with other donors (such as FAO) and agencies in the country, either directly or indirectly through their national partners.

The project by its nature promoted cooperation among all ministries and municipalities. The targeted ministries and local governments were involved in every stage of the project implementation, consolidation of development partnerships and coordination mechanisms (co-founders of the LAG) through inclusive planning.

A Strategy was to build common understanding about the mission, goals, benefits, added value of networking, respect the equality, confidence among the partners. The project has introduced an IACC as a perfect tool for coordination and implementation of the Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan. Most of CD interventions targeted more than 1 Department within MEPA and Ajara MoA, and more than one Ministry at national and/or A.R. level, certain training sessions were primarily aimed at fostering partnerships and co-operation across the agents of change.

The IACC covers other governmental entities as well, like LEPL "Georgia's Innovation and Technologies Agency"; LEPL "House of Justice"; the Notary Chamber of Georgia, LEPL "National Archives of Georgia"; LEPL "National Agency of Public Registry" etc. IACC members and stakeholders have conducted series of consultation meetings/workshop to have better understanding of how to improve RD policy-making. On these meetings representatives of line-ministries (at least on mid-management levels) expressed interest in improving the policy practice.

To support municipalities, awareness workshops were held with representatives of all municipalities on the Rural Development and Involvement in the process of elaborating the Regional Chapters in each region of Georgia.

The project and civic and economic stakeholders (including civil society representatives) in at national level and within the region were actively involved throughout the project implementation through intensive public consultations, community mobilization and facilitation, as well as targeted training inbuilt within key project activities. Among others, their representatives were involved as founders in the work of the LAG. In general, LAGs are one of the main "focus groups" involved in rural development policy delivery in the EU member states. The SRDG project does not target LAGs, GALAG, AMAGs directly, but as they are. The project also brought various stakeholders of RDS together at one platform in the form of GRDN that is now taking a shape of formal forum.

2.10. Internal and external factors affecting project implementation

There were various internal and external factors that have affected the project activities during the course of implementation, including political, bureaucratic and administrative.

Structural changes in the Government of Georgia (GoG): A substantial structural and functional reorganization of the GoG was announced on November 2017 and implemented in December 2017. This was followed by the second wave of Government reshuffle announced by the newly-appointed Prime-Minister in June 2018 and finalized in September 2018 which included changes in the Law of Georgia on the Structure, Authority and Rules of Operation of the Government of Georgia. Resultantly, the composition of the IACC changed. The Ministry of Energy and the Natural Resources Management component of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection was incorporated with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Energy with Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Culture merged with the Ministry of Education and Science. Also, the working of the counterpart Ministry was affected.

Merger of counterpart Ministry: During the project period, the environment component of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MoENRP) was shifted to the Ministry of Agriculture to form MEPA. This major change resulted in significant challenges in terms of reconstituting institutional arrangements and functional distribution, as well as managerial stability and human resource-related considerations causing confusion among the rural development policy formulating and implementing partners and consequently, disruption of the project's ongoing activities. But the change also facilitated the cooperation with the MEPA in relation to the implementation of the environment component of the successor project *Improving Rural Development in Georgia* (IRDG) under the EU ENPARD III programme.

As previously stated, the link between RDS and ongoing reforms and national priorities is very crucial. During the implementation period, the project did not encounter too drastic changes in political priorities. The structural changes within GoG, including the merger of the counterpart Ministry with the environment component of the MoENRP to establish MEPA led to some, though surprisingly little delays and additional efforts.

Regarding administrative factors, long administrative procedures within MEPA/the GoG, repeatedly led to avoidable delays (e.g. non-decision on the topic and timing of RD conferences). Within UNDP, delays occurred in contracting consulting services because of: a) offers with too low quality (e.g. MAR), and b) offers at exorbitant cost (e.g. quantitative survey). With respect to economic factors, the exchange rate fluctuations brought some, but manageable difficulties in budget planning.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Conclusions

Overall, the project has been very effective at producing the intended outcomes. It demonstrated a number of objectively verifiable results, with beneficiaries providing many examples where they confirmed those made a qualitative difference. Stakeholders repeatedly emphasized that the support provided to MEPA, the primary beneficiary, was essential, and the Evaluation Team is convinced that capacity has been enhanced, awareness created on many issues related to rural development and agriculture sector and ministries and institutions have been supported in a myriad of ways.

Almost all the project targets have been achieved and clear progress made in critical areas. Project started in July 2016 and generated momentum without any difficulty in providing technical support and building capacity of stakeholders in key areas required to achieve the objectives of ENPARD II. Results show that the project has demonstrated substantial success with regard to efficiency and effectiveness while constant support is required for sustainability of initiatives undertaken. Project activities have been well received by the intended target groups; beneficiary needs were properly highlighted by the implementation partners. Stakeholders' interest, particularly of MEPA in the project appeared to be high.

Stakeholders interviewed repeatedly emphasized that the support provided to the ministries, departments, various institutions, CSOs and communities, was essential and timely. The evaluation mission is convinced that the necessary functional and technical capacity required to implement RDSs and APs, has been effectively built, concept of rural development cleared and awareness created about many potentials of agriculture sector and local agro-business, and rural communities have been supported in a myriad of ways. The project supported the GoG and Ajara AR in the creation of highly effective forum, IACC representing apex management of the partner and line ministries and institutions. The project also provided assistance in the strengthening local institutions including CSOs, LAGs and AMAGs. However, sustainability of LAGs and AMAGs should be taken into account in ENPARD III.

Since this was a continuation of ENPARD I with main focus on capacity building of the partner ministries and organizational restructuring of MEPA, the project was successful in achieving its targets without any major difficulty. Linking project objectives to on-going reforms and national priorities has proven effective through the years and should be further applied to ENPARD III. It has safeguarded project initiatives in cases of senior management change in many cases. Recent changes in the government could serve as a valid example.

The evaluation mission found a strong beneficiary satisfaction with the programme and there was high praise for the programme at all levels including national and regional level administration, stakeholders and beneficiary levels. There was a strong element of gender mainstreaming and involvement of youth. Overall, the systematic approach and multi-stakeholder efforts of the project forged alignments in terms of project synergies, which attracted complementarity.

The multi-dimensional nature and multi-stakeholder dynamics of the catalyzed changes need continued support of UNDP SRDG/EU and a clear process of institutionalization. If not in place the risk of losing the investment made by funding agencies and staff as well as trust developed by the project is risked.

3.2. Key lessons learned

- Organizational and institutional change is the pre-requisite of the development and implementation of any new strategy and policy. Merging of the MoENRP and MoA to form MEPA and creation of new

units in the partner ministries will be instrumental in successfully implementation RDSs and achieving tangible results.

- Capacity building - An effective transfer of skills and knowledge is vital for the sustainability of the learning achievement of trained staff that allows for investments to have maximum impact and life-span. However, building sustainable initiatives should be thought of as a iterative process.
- When dealing with different layers of the government in project in the delivery of project activities, care must be taken to endeavour to engage with a broad range of executive decision makers. In case of IACC and RDC the apex management (Deputy Minsters) are members.
- Linking project objectives to on-going reforms and national priorities has proven effective through the years and should be further applied in SRDG Project. It has safeguarded project initiatives in cases of senior management change in many cases. Recent changes in the government could serve as valid example.
- Participatory approach and consensus building from the beginning and needs identification, lead to the ownership, beneficiaries' capacity building, increase in Project's effectiveness and cost sharing. Where a project or activity is a multiyear one with financial or other contribution implications, it is important that early engagement occurs with public sector bodies so that they can plan their contributions in forward revenue and expenditure plans. Citizens' participation at all levels of development is imperative for governance, accountability and transparency purposes. They should be motivated to change their behaviour to become active participants of the decision-making process and owner of the projects and facilities.
- Facilitating a culture of mutual understanding and collaboration among stakeholders at different levels through genuine participatory and consultation processes requires a persistent and systematic approach, good leadership skills and dedication that need to be sustained over a long period of time to reach the overall objective.
- Although RDS has been accepted by GoG even more political support, understanding of RD and in the end ownership of the policy is required to ensure effective implementation of RDS and its AP. It is unclear how long GoG's commitment with RD will last if clear ownership will be missing. Objectives are not adequately translated into shorter-term operational solutions, in the form of measures, each with their distinct rationale. Pros and cons of different options have not been assessed for their likely consequences, especially impact and sustainability. Underlying assumptions, pre-conditions and risks affecting the prospects for its measures are not described. Criteria for selecting/designing measures are missing.
- Ensuring sustainability of project results through already established mechanisms and exploring new practices should be continued since it is an embedded risk of any government institution support project. Given risk can be considerably decreased by focusing on specific types of activities that can further promote the sustainability such as institutional development, ToT approach, investment in long-term planning.
- Existence of baseline information should be ensured at all stages. Unless baseline data is available evaluation of the change/impact as a result of any initiative would lack the validity.

- Systematized mechanism of M&E should be applied within Project initiatives, which would ensure quality monitoring of the activities, on the one hand and provision of valid information for impact assessment, on the other hand.
- IACC members have submitted monitoring reports with delays and often without appropriate data. It was perceived as ‘additional burden’ in many cases. It is unclear for evaluation can be conducted without impact indicators. Annual monitoring report of RDS AP 2017 was developed with rigorous efforts to overcome the quality shortcomings of draft versions. IACC members lack the capacities and motivation of monitoring and often there is lack of communication with financial/budgetary departments.

3.3. Recommendations

- SRDG project should continue to use cross-cutting capacity development approach mainstreamed throughout the whole set of project interventions. In current context national counterparts are more enthusiastic to cooperate when a single intervention provides evidence for future planning and is a component of a longer-term initiative linked to high importance reforms at the national agenda. The majority of initiatives supported within ENPARD II provided evidence for such judgment. ([SRDG project/UNDP](#))
- Though the necessity of clear RDS boundaries was recognized, MEPA and IACC members take limited steps to set a clear demarcations and consistency of RDS with other national policies by having few indecisive discussions on the subject. e.g., infrastructure component in rural development is a concern by MRDI. MRDI has its own strategy, it also has budget for ‘Rural Development’ programme. RDS is still ambiguous and not consistent with other national policies. The purpose, objectives, policy focus, tools and approach of RDS still lacks consistency and clarity. The charter of IACC which is also broad may also be reviewed. ([IACC member ministries](#))
- Participation in the implementation of RDS activities by some ministries is considered as an extra work with no reason. Similarly, some public sector employees are still not motivated to deliver quality reports in time. These issues need to be considered by IACC. ([IACC member ministries](#))
- RDS is very broad and difficult to manage. The activities may be narrowed down to effectively manage and achieve tangible results. Emphasis of RDS initiatives should be on job creation. Also, APs contain groups of activities which were already being implemented by the partner and line ministries. There is a scope to further improve the APs through well designed innovative activities and adopting good practices of other EU member countries. ([IACC member ministries/SRDG project/FAO](#))
- There is a need to make the MEPA Rural Development M&E system as an essential part of an overall M&E system. Also, the knowledge and capacity may be enhanced to provide result-oriented reporting / improve analytical part of report writing. Improvement in the areas of data collection mechanism and evaluation approaches in order to measure not only quantitative, but qualitative achievements of the RDS AP. ([SRDG project/partner ministries](#))
- The staff turnover trained under the project is also the project’s concern. Two of the IACC secretariat staff (Policy Department of the MEPA) moved to other departments. The concerned ministries should ensure that the staff trained by the project is retained to apply and disseminate their knowledge and skills in their jobs. ([IACC member ministries](#))

- Ministry of Justice of Georgia has more than 60 community centers in the country and plans to establish 4-5 community centers in Ajara (Khulo, Shuakhevi, Kobuleti, etc.). This is a good platform for the rural community to hold various events. Some strategy should be devised to integrate these community centers in rural development. (MoJ and partner miniseries)
- There is a great concern about the future of LAGs. LAGs should not assume continued EU funding beyond ENPARD and should scope out options for their own future based on sustainable principles for development. The LAGs need to drive this forward and work out options for themselves and the formation of the Georgian Association of LAGs (GALAG) is an encouraging sign that they are doing this. Creation of Rural Development Fund for LAGs to strengthen and become regional and national stakeholder groups. Explore some other donors or projects to support LAGs for funding. There would need to be a transition period for the LAGs, to go from being a fully donor-funded body to their new status, and support from MEPA and the Government of Georgia would be crucial in this period. There would need to be a transition period for the LAGs, to go from being a fully donor-funded body to their new status, and support from MEPA and the GoG would be crucial in this period. Some of the possible options could be, a fee-based service level organization, operating at the regional level, tapping into regional, national and potentially international markets, from the public and private sectors, for technical and strategic advice and consultancy, expertise in rural development, community mobilization, and the development of 'local' strategies.³⁴ (GLAG/MEPA)
- AMAGs introduced by the MoA Ajara AR are at the stage of infancy and need to be operated in a collegiate way. October 2018 Mission Report³⁵ suggests that in future the AMAGs should evolve so that rather than having 46 in Ajara operating on broadly similar lines as at present, they could differentiate their roles, so that for example, 5 lead AMAGs could prove effective operating at the Municipal Level and beyond, and eventually the cohort of AMAGs may be complemented by a single policy-influencing AMAGs representing at the regional level in Batumi. Concept of a lead AMAG working directly with the municipality could inject some momentum into the system – AMAGs with strong leadership and drive should not be held back by poorly run AMAGs. (MoA Ajara/municipalities, RDC)
- The linkages between AMAGs and municipalities appear to be weak. There is a need to help AMAG and municipalities develop and implement projects jointly to strengthen cooperation. Another area that needs to be addressed to develop networking and share the experience among LAGs and AMAGs is the non-availability of broadband/internet facility in the rural areas. (RDC/municipalities/AMAGs)
- The GRDN has been branded, a MoU signed and discussions are underway to establish the governance and operational framework. The value of networks is determined by its users and this will drive options for sustainability. With much of the function of an NRN currently provided by the EUD, and the GALAG emerging as the network of choice for the LAGs, it will be challenging for the GRDN to demonstrate added-value and find a role. Currently the resource for the GRDN is provided from within the ENPARD II programme and beyond this support further options should be explored. Evaluation Team endorses the options which could be to integrate it within MEPA, sponsorship from other RD focused programmes or sponsorship from commercial organizations who have a stake in rural business e.g. farm input suppliers.³⁶ (GRDN/MEPA)
- One of the concerns of the government is to discourage the exodus of members of the farming households, particularly the rural youth. There were encouraging results of rural youth support

³⁴ Ibid 25

³⁵ Notes on Ajara meetings, Annex 5: October 2018 Mission Report, Ciaran Gannon, SRDG, UNDP Georgia

³⁶ Annex 9: October 2018 Mission Report, Cairan Gannon, SRDG, UNDP Georgia.

initiatives in Ajara. This support should be continued for rural youth in the form of training in various skills, internship and apprenticeship programmes that will provide employment opportunities particularly for those small-scale farmers who opt to quit the farming activities. (SRDG project/RDC)

- There is a scope for improvement in the progress reports. Too frequent reporting on progress may be curtailed to save more time for the team to work on project activities. The progress reports may also present a qualitative description of successes at activity and output level. The reports should also embrace information on issues (management, financial, human resources, coordination, etc.) that emerged during various stages of implementation and how those were resolved. Further, lessons learnt and any recommendations will also help the decision makers to take appropriate actions for smooth implementation of project activities. (SRDG project)

Options of agriculture and rural development

- Agriculture will remain major source of income for majority of the population of the in the rural areas, especially for vulnerable and socially excluded groups. This sector is also seen by the municipalities as the main area for future employment generation, and demonstrated interest in attracting external financing for long term investments in this sector. Although the municipalities expressed strong interest to support those willing to start agricultural business, the lack of any strategic or systematic approach to doing so is evident. The initiatives in the area of agriculture such as the agro-food sector, stimulation of agricultural production, for which programmes exist, but financial means are lacking and expected. External technical support is requested for the development of agriculture sectors. (MEPA/MoA Ajara/FAO)
- At strategic level, in collaboration with the MEPA, municipalities should design future agricultural strategies keeping in view the EU countries requirements. The municipalities need to determine their roles to be played in agriculture and rural development – strategic and institutional linking with resource allocation. Also, there is a need to promote horizontal integration among municipalities to develop agriculture and rural development strategies. (MEPA/MRDI/SRDG project)
- One of the reasons for this seemingly narrow horizon may be that agriculture can be a safe refuge in contrast to what might be more challenging or daunting sectors. The lack of processing industry, job opportunities and management / specialized knowledge, may contribute to the perspective that agriculture is a safe industry to develop. (MEPA/MoA Ajara/MRDI)
- Diversification of agriculture sector should be designed to provide equal economic opportunities to wider range of target groups of on-farm and off-farm entrepreneurs, thus to increase the likelihood for capturing innovation in Georgia and Ajara region. The approach should be generic and open for different sub-sectors and opportunistic to put efforts on the most promising enterprises. Value chains may be strengthened for the high value crops, dairy products and honey which have high demand locally and in European countries. (MEPA/MoA Ajara/LAGs/MRDI)
- Off-farm enterprise development may be promoted for employment generation through provision of business development services to MSMEs such as business management training, access to new technologies, product design, introduction of standards and certification, targeted wage/on-the-job training, subsidy schemes, etc. (MRDI/municipalities)
- Fruit production: Fruit production is likely to become a large source of income for a certain number of households in the three municipalities. For this to occur, it is necessary to focus, by means of extension services and incentives, the municipalities looking at this sub-sector as their future strategy.

Introduction of EU required standards for fresh fruits and vegetables such as IP (Integrated Production) and Global GAP (Global Good agriculture Practices) etc. may be promoted. (MEPA/MoA Ajara)

- Climate change – (long spells of drought and flash floods). Climate change is and will remain one of major challenges for the agriculture sector in the country. Exposure to environmental hazards and a lack of evidence-based adaptation measures to reduce disaster risk, combined with the impact of climate change, have exposed communities to significant risks, especially in rural areas and river basins. Over the last 40 years, 70 per cent of Georgia has suffered repeated hydro-meteorological and geological events, with economic losses exceeding \$14 billion, while the country is particularly exposed to earthquakes, floods and conflict.³⁷ The climate change impacts include lower crop yields, soil degradation, and more pests and diseases - all bringing potentially significant economic losses to the farmers and economy as a whole. Mitigation measure include promotion of new farming practices - for example, different crop varieties such as drought resistant ones, shift of planting time, increase of share of winter crop, introduction of anti-hail nets for fruits, new efficient soil management techniques, and more efficient use of pesticides (integrated pest management) and fertilizers (fertigation). It also entails investment in improved water harvesting, management and conservation (efficient and cost-effective irrigation systems and investments in water catchments), flood defence, enhanced extension, veterinary and photo-sanitary capacities, better weather forecast services, and tailored agricultural research. An important outcome to these risk mitigation efforts is the effective risk management through activation and promotion of crop and livestock insurance. The climate change issue should be given due consideration while preparing future strategies. (MEPA)
- At the same time, the municipalities must take account of both the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change and ensure same are reflected in their spatial and strategic plans as well as the design and implementation of their regulatory roles and responsibilities. There is a need of infrastructure to enhance the municipal preparedness to meet these challenges. ENPARD III may launch an awareness campaign. (SRDG project)
- Creation of Commissions for Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI) in collaboration with UNICEF may be piloted in some municipalities under ENPARD III. The SPI model, in line with a general programmatic approach, facilitates and improves communication among service providers from different relevant social sectors (health, education, social welfare, police, judiciary, NGO sector and media) and policy makers at local level with final beneficiaries/vulnerable children and their families. This model is designed to support local authorities to contribute to eradication of social exclusion, poverty, discrimination and inequality in accessing basic social protection services in local communities. That will not only create awareness among parents of children with special needs and disabilities about the opportunities for development for their children but also encourage them to participate in the social and economic development. (SRDG project/UNDP/Partner ministry/UNICEF)
- Diaspora- a detailed study may be conducted to assess their investment potentials (possibilities of rebate on duties, fees, taxation to attract investment by diasporas) in the rural areas. (SRDG project)

³⁷ Ibid 31

A N N E X E S

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ANNEX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The United Nations Development Programme on behalf of its programme “Support to Rural Development in Georgia” is making a recruitment for the position of an International Consultant (Team Leader) in Rural Development.

Post Title:	International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP “Support to Rural Development in Georgia” Project
Contract:	Individual Contract
Duration:	Up to 23 working days within a 2 months period (November/December 2018) (maximum 8 days in the mission, 1 trip)
Duty station:	Home based on mission trips to Tbilisi and Batumi
Starting date:	ASAP
Supervisor:	UNDP Economic Development Team Leader



1. Background and context

The signing of the Association Agreement (AA) with EU in June 2014 earmarked a new stage of cooperation between EU and Georgia. The AA aims to deepen political and economic relations between the EU and Georgia and to gradually integrate Georgia into the EU's internal market. This entails, as one element, creating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the EU and Georgia. Article 333 of the Association Agreement (Cooperation between the Parties in the field of agriculture and rural development) provides with the clauses on ‘facilitating the mutual understanding of agricultural and rural development policies’. This is the basis for the formulation of a National Rural Development Strategy for Georgia which will in turn yield identification of measures to be funded under the European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD).

Project “Support to Rural Development in Georgia”, which is part of a wider 55 million EUR support program (ENPARD II), was launched in June 2016 with the end date of December 2018. The project budget is 2,622,591.38 EUR o/w 2,500,000EUR is funded by the European Union and 122,591.38 EUR is co-financed by Ajara Government. UNDP is EU implementing partner of ENPARD II Programme in Georgia, including Ajara AR. The main objective of the given project is the establishment and implementation of Rural Development Strategies for Georgia and its Ajara region respectively, with associated capacity building for institutions charged with administering rural development in Georgia.

The project strives to achieve 2 outputs:

Output 1/ Institutional capacity in place for the development and implementation of a National Policy on Rural Development in Georgia.

The target results for this output are:

- 1.1: An integrated Rural Development strategy for Georgia developed and adopted
- 1.2: An integrated Rural Development Action Plan for Georgia developed and adopted
- 1.3: Capacity built amongst the public sector and stakeholders to deliver rural development policy

Output 2/ Institutional capacity in place for the implementation of the Rural Development in Ajara AR:

The target results for this output are:

- 2.1: An integrated Rural Development Action Plan for Ajara developed and adopted
- 2.2: Enhanced capacity within the public sector and stakeholders in Ajara AR to effectively deliver rural development policy
- 2.3: Enhanced understanding of the critical success factors for effective rural development to deliver improved employment and rural conditions in rural areas through the diversification of the rural economy in Ajara.

UNDP is the leading development partner to key public institutions on National and Ajara AR levels, including Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ajara Government (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Council).

Additional information on the project can be accessed at <http://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/projects/enpard-2--promoting-rural-development-in-georgia.html>.

2. Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

UNDP Georgia is looking for an International Consultant (Team Leader) to perform the Final Evaluation of the project ENPARD II UNDP “Support to Rural Development in Georgia” (SRDG) project.

The overall purpose of the proposed assignment is to assess progress (and challenges), measure achievement of the project results, assess gaps and lessons learned and provide recommendations to guide implementation of the next phase of the project.

The specific objectives of the final evaluation are:

- To evaluate the project’s objectives and target results,
- To evaluate how much-delivered activities of the project enabled achieving its objectives and delivering its intended outputs,
- To assess the effectiveness, efficiency and added value of the project in terms of achieved outputs and results and its contribution to Country Program Document (CPD) outcome
- To assess the project’s contribution to ENPARD II programme result indicators and the EU Results Framework (Level 1 and Level2)
- To provide lessons learned and good practices.

The scope of work for consultancy will include, but may not be limited to:

- xv. Review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports, project files, national strategic and legal documents, contractors and UNDP implementing partners’ files, records, management, and clients’ responses and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment.
- xvi. Elaborate an evaluation matrix with evaluation criteria, the related evaluation questions (and, where needed, sub-questions), the data sources required to answer the questions, the data collection and data analysis methods.
- xvii. Familiarize himself/herself with current standings of rural development Georgia and Ajara as well as with latest developments and achievements within ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project.
- xviii. Frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and gender. The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, UNDP Country Office, project team, and other key stakeholders.
- xix. Analyze the key objectives of the project and assess to what extent these objectives have been attained.
- xx. Evaluate the overall scope ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project has contributed to the ultimate objective of rural development in Georgia and the Ajara Autonomous Republic the
- xxi. Assess the effectiveness of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project `s interventions in achieving its stated objectives and contributing to the relevant outcomes as stated in the project document
- xxii. Identify the key stakeholders and hold discussions with them. Develop interview forms, questionnaires and other forms of communication tools for facilitating discussions and documenting stakeholders positioning towards ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project goals and results.
- xxiii. Collate evidence of what has worked and what has not worked (and why) from ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project initiatives, as well as programming approaches and strategies yielding the most effective results.
- xxiv. Assess the relevance, effectiveness, appropriateness, efficiency and sustainability of the ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project as part of the broader ENPARD Georgia engagement in supporting agriculture and rural development in Georgia.
- xxv. Assess ENPARD II UNDP SRDG project’s contribution towards the revised EU Results Framework (Level 1 and Level 2) including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Where possible, provide quantitative estimates.

- xxvi. The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of conclusions, recommendations, and lessons.
- xxvii. Analyze the project's contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- xxviii. Prepare a Draft Evaluation Report providing descriptive overviews, laying out the facts, outlining risks and lessons learned, and providing conclusions and recommendations.
- xxix. Finalize an Evaluation Report based on solicited feedback from the UNDP team and key stakeholders.
- xxx. Present the documents at a national consultation and donors.

During assignment period an International Consultant (Team Leader) is expected to be based in Tbilisi and conduct a field missions to Batumi and various municipalities of Ajara, Georgia according to needs.

3. **Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions**

The incumbent will be tasked to conduct the evaluation as per UNDP Evaluation Policy³⁸, focusing on seven areas of evaluation (evaluation criteria): relevance, appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and gender.

Relevance & Appropriateness:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the CPD outputs, CPD outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs, considering EU Results Framework? ▪ To what extent was the project in line with the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia, phase II (ENPARD Georgia II) modalities of complementary support? ▪ To what extent does the project contribute to the Theory of Change for the relevant CPD outcome and ENPARD II Results Indicators intervention logic? ▪ To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design? ▪ To what extent were perspectives of those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during the project design processes? ▪ To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent were the project outputs achieved? ▪ What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended CPD outputs, CPD outcomes ENPARD II results indicators and SDG as specified in the EU Results Framework? ▪ To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective? ▪ What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness? ▪ In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? ▪ In which areas does the project have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they or could they be overcome? ▪ What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives? ▪ Are the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame? ▪ To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation? ▪ To what extent is project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards the achievement of the project objectives? ▪ To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities? ▪ To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the relationship between input of resources and results achieved appropriate and justifiable? What is the cost-benefit ratio? ▪ To what extent have individual resources been used economically?

³⁸ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2016/Evaluation_policy_EN_2016.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any alternatives for achieving the same results with less inputs/funds? To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the Project Document efficient in generating the expected results? To what extent has UNDP's project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective? To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supported the strategy been cost-effective? To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? To what extent do the monitoring and evaluation systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the political, organizational, human resource, and financial sustainability of the sub-project/consultancy. What threats to sustainability exist, and how has the risk of these threats been mitigated/anticipated? Are the positive effects or impacts sustainable? How is the sustainability or permanence of the intervention and its effects to be assessed? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs? To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project? Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to CPD outputs, CPD outcomes, ENPARD II results indicators and the SDG as specified in the EU Results Framework? Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder's ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained? To what extent do mechanisms, procedures, and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development by primary stakeholders? To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the project contribute to the CPD outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, considering ENPARD II Results Indicators and EU Results Framework, UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities? What is the forecasted impact of the project? Did the interventions contribute to reaching higher levels of project outputs and outcome? What is the impact or effect of the intervention in proportion to the overall situation of the target group or those effected?
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?

4. Methodology

The International Consultant (Team Leader) will work together with the project team in the preparation of a methodology to answer the key research questions outlined above, as well as any other pertinent questions that may arise to adequately assess the overall picture. The incumbent must take into account the UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines and relevant programmatic documents, which will be supplied to the consultant at the beginning of the assignment. The final methodology should be approved by UNDP.

The study will utilize two major forms of research: background and primary.

- a) Background research:
 - a. Document Review of all relevant project documentation: Project Document, Logical Framework, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Theory of Change, Annual/Semi-Annual/Quarterly Reports and other relevant knowledge products.
- b) Primary research – aimed at forming new knowledge by collecting information through:
 - a. Key informant interviews (KIIs), semi-structured interviews, stakeholder consultations, and other participatory methods;
 - b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with different Government and non-government institutions, donors and external stakeholders;

The International Consultant (Team Leader) will develop a report with the assessment of the Project performance in close cooperation with UNDP and EU. UNDP Georgia will provide the consultant with a list of key stakeholders, draft schedule of the meetings and will facilitate communication of the consultant with EU, MEPA Georgia and Ajara Government and the Project Beneficiaries. UNDP will also support the consultant in arranging transportation, hotel reservations, an organization of workshops, the arrangement of meetings, etc.)

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

- Inception report including the evaluation matrix, evaluation methodology, and evaluation plan
- A draft Evaluation report prepared per template provided in Annex 1 Final Evaluation report.

6. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The International Consultant (team leader) will work in cooperation with local Consultant (to be hired locally by the project) on this assignment.

Required Qualifications and competencies for International Consultant (Team Leader) envisage the following:

Education:

- At least Master's degrees (or equivalent) in Economics, Agriculture/Rural, business, Sociology, Social Policy, Public Policy or Analysis, or related discipline; *minimum requirement*.

Experience

- At least 10 years of practical experience in a similar professional role (i.e. Consultant/ Evaluator for the projects); *minimum requirement*
- Experience of evaluation at least two projects related to agriculture and/or rural development; *minimum requirement*.
- Demonstrated Working experience in areas of agriculture and/or rural development would be an asset.
- At least 15 projects on conducting baseline, mid-term and final evaluations, out of which at least 3 is in an international setting (minimum requirement).
- Familiarity with the region (particularly Georgia), its overall governance features, development needs, and directions.
- Knowledge of evaluation methodologies.
- Experience of working in Georgia and/or knowledge of the region's context is an asset.
- Experience with the UN organization is an asset.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Language:

- Excellent command of written and spoken English

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Understanding the mandate and the role of UNDP would be an asset;

- Promotes the vision, mission and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism.

Functional competencies:

- Strong communication and analytical skills;
- Demonstrated skills in drafting reports;
- Ability to work under pressure with several tasks and various deadlines;
- Actively generates creative, practical approaches and solutions to overcome challenging situations;
- Excellent writing, presentation/public speaking skills;
- A pro-active approach to problem-solving;
- Computer literacy.

Leadership and Self-Management skills:

- Builds strong relationships with the working group and with the project partners; focuses on impact and results for the project partners and responds positively to feedback;
- Cooperates with the working group effectively and demonstrates strong conflict resolution skills;
- Consistently approaches work with energy, positivity and a constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates strong influencing and facilitation skills;
- Remains calm, in control and good humored under pressure;
- Demonstrates openness to change, new ideas, and ability to manage ambiguity;
- Demonstrates strong oral and written communication skills;
- Demonstrates ability to transfer knowledge and competencies;
- Is able to work independently and manage competing priorities.

7. Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The International Consultant (Team Leader) 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 it data. The International Consultant (Team Leader) 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 partners.

8. Implementation arrangements

The International Consultant (Team Leader) will work under the direct supervision of the UNDP Economic Development Team Leader and the Project “Support to Rural Development in Georgia” Technical Team Leader.

The service provider will be directly responsible to, reporting to, seeking approval from, and obtaining certificate of acceptance of outputs from the above-mentioned persons. In addition, the respective SRDG team will be responsible to share relevant documents, contact details and other necessary information with the service provider.

During the final evaluation, the service provider is expected to interact with/interview the implementing partners of the “Support to Rural Development in Georgia” project, including: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (including IACC Secretariat and the Department of Food Safety and Rural Development), Inter-Agency Coordination Council (IACC) Ajara Government (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Council) and other line ministries, public agencies, and civil society organizations (including LAGs, AMAGs), whose list and contact details will be provided to the service provider by the commencement of the contract.

9. Time-frame for the evaluation process

It is expected that the evaluation will be conducted no later than November-December 2018, over a period of 23 working days.

Task/Deliverable	Timeline (days)
1- Inception phase (up to 1 day)	
Inception report including the evaluation matrix, evaluation methodology, and evaluation plan	1 day
2- Research & Data Collection Phase (up to 12 days)	
Meeting with ENPARD Georgia Team (including Ajara team), UNDP	2 days
Desk review of existing documents	4 days
Field visits, interviews with partners, and key stakeholders	6 days of field visits in Ajara
3- Report Writing Phase (up to 10 days)	
Drafting and debriefing with UNDP and EU on preliminary findings, main recommendations, challenges, opportunities, lessons learned.	2 days, the evaluation team
Finalizing the evaluation report (home based) (refer to Annex 1 for proposed format)	8 days

ANNEX 1

Evaluation Report Template

This **evaluation report template** is intended to serve as a guide for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports that meet quality standards. It does not prescribe a definitive section-by-section format that all evaluation reports should follow. Rather, it suggests the content that should be included in a quality evaluation report.

The evaluation report should be complete and logically organized. It should be written clearly and understandable to the intended audience. In a country context, the report should be translated into local languages whenever possible. The report should also include the following:

- Title and opening pages**—Should provide the following basic information:
 - Name of the evaluation intervention
 - Time-frame of the evaluation and date of the report
 - Countries of the evaluation intervention
 - Names and organizations of evaluators
 - Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation
 - Acknowledgments
- Table of contents**—Including boxes, figures, tables and annexes with page references.
- List of acronyms and abbreviations**
- Executive summary (4-page maximum)**; A stand-alone section of two to three pages that should:
 - Briefly describe the intervention of the evaluation (the project(s), programme(s), policies or other intervention) that was evaluated.
 - Explain the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audience for the evaluation and the intended uses.
 - Describe the key aspect of the evaluation approach and methods.
 - Summarize principle findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
 - Including the evaluators quality standards and assurance ratings
- Introduction**

- Explain why the evaluation was conducted (the purpose), why the intervention is being evaluated at this point in time, and why it addressed the questions it did.
 - Identify the primary audience or users of the evaluation, what they wanted to learn from the evaluation and why, and how they are expected to use the evaluation results.
 - Identify the intervention of the evaluation (the project(s) programme(s) policies, or other intervention—see the upcoming section on intervention.)
 - Acquaint the reader with the structure and contents of the report and how the information contained in the report will meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report's intended users.
6. **Description of the intervention**—Provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results. The description needs to provide sufficient detail for the report user to derive meaning from the evaluation. The description should:
- Describe **what is being evaluated, who seeks to benefit**, and the **problem or issue** it seeks to address.
 - Explain the **expected results model or results framework, implementation strategies**, and the key **assumptions** underlying the strategy.
 - Link the intervention to **national priorities**, UNDAF priorities, corporate multi-year funding frameworks or strategic plan goals, or other **programme or country-specific plans and goals**.
 - Identify the **phase** in the implementation of the intervention and any **significant changes** (e.g., plans, strategies, logical frameworks) that have occurred over time, and explain the implications of those changes for the evaluation.
 - Identify and describe the **key partners** involved in the implementation and their roles.
 - Identify **relevant cross-cutting issues** addressed through the intervention, gender equality, human rights, marginalized groups and leaving no one behind
 - Describe the **scale of the intervention**, such as the number of components (e.g., phases of a project) and the size of the target population for each component.
 - Indicate the **total resources**, including human resources and budgets.
 - Describe the context of the **social, political, economic and institutional factors**, and the **geographical landscape** within which the intervention operates and explain the effects (challenges and opportunities) those factors present for its implementation and outcomes.
 - Point out **design weaknesses** (e.g., intervention logic) or other **implementation constraints** (e.g., resource limitations).
7. **Evaluation scope and objectives**; The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation's scope, primary objectives, and main questions.
- **Evaluation scope**; The report should define the parameters of the evaluation, for example, the time period, the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
 - **Evaluation objectives**; The report should spell out the types of decisions evaluation users will make, the issues they will need to consider in making those decisions, and what the evaluation will need to achieve to contribute to those decisions.
 - **Evaluation criteria**; The report should define the evaluation criteria or performance standards used.³⁹ The report should explain the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
 - **Evaluation questions**; Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. The report should detail the main evaluation questions addressed by the evaluation and explain how the answers to these questions address the information needs of users.
8. **Evaluation approach and methods**⁴⁰—The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis; the rationale for their selection; and how, within the constraints of time and money, the approaches and methods employed yielded data that helped answer the evaluation questions and

³⁹ The evaluation criteria most commonly applied to UNDP evaluations are the OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

⁴⁰ All aspects of the described methodology need to receive full treatment in the report. Some of the more detailed technical information may be contained in annexes to the report. See Chapter 8 for more guidance on methodology.

achieved the evaluation purposes. The report should specify how gender equality, vulnerability and social inclusion were addressed in the methodology, including how data collection and analysis methods integrated gender considerations, use of disaggregated data, and outreach to diverse stakeholders groups. The description should help the report users judge the merits of the methods used in the evaluation and the credibility of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The description on methodology should include discussion of each of the following:

- **Evaluation Approach**
 - **Data sources;** The sources of information (documents reviewed and stakeholders), the rationale for their selection and how the information obtained addressed the evaluation questions.
 - **Sample and sampling frame;** If a sample was used: the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria (e.g., single women, under 45); the process for selecting the sample (e.g., random, purposive); if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of sample for generalizing results.
 - **Data collection procedures and instruments;** Methods or procedures used to collect data, including discussion of data collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their appropriateness for the data source, and evidence of their reliability and validity, as well as gender responsiveness.
 - **Performance standards**⁴¹; The standard or measure that will be used to evaluate performance relative to the evaluation questions (e.g., national or regional indicators, rating scales).
 - **Stakeholder participation;** Stakeholders' participation in the evaluation and how the level of involvement of both men and women contributed to the credibility of the evaluation and the results.
 - **Ethical considerations;** The measures are taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants (see UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators' for more information).⁴²
 - **Background information on evaluators**—The composition of the evaluation team, the background and skills of team members, and the appropriateness of the technical skill mix, gender balance and geographical representation for the evaluation.
 - **Major limitations of the methodology;** Major limitations of the methodology should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.
9. **Data analysis;** The report should describe the procedures used to analyze the data collected to answer the evaluation questions. It should detail the various steps and stages of analysis that were carried out, including the steps to confirm the accuracy of data and the results for different stakeholder groups (men and women, different social groups, etc.). The report also should discuss the appropriateness of the analyses to the evaluation questions. Potential weaknesses in the data analysis and gaps or limitations of the data should be discussed, including their possible influence on the way findings may be interpreted and conclusions are drawn.
10. **Findings;** Should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. They should be structured around the evaluation questions so that report users can readily make the connection between what was asked and what was found. Variances between planned and actual results should be explained, as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results. Assumptions or risks in the project or programme design that subsequently affected implementation should be discussed. Findings should reflect a gender analysis and crosscutting issue questions.
11. **Conclusions;** Should be comprehensive and balanced, and highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes of the intervention. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically connected to evaluation findings. They should respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to the decision-making of intended users, including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.

⁴¹ A summary matrix displaying for each of evaluation questions, the data sources, the data collection tools or methods for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question was evaluated is a good illustrative tool to simplify the logic of the methodology for the report reader.

⁴² UNEG, 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', June 2008. Available at <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>.

12. **Recommendations**—The report should provide practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. Recommendations should be reasonable in number. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation. They should address the sustainability of the initiative and comment on the adequacy of the project exit strategy, if applicable. Recommendations should also provide specific advice for future or similar projects or programming. Recommendations should also address any gender equality and women’s empowerment issues and priorities for action to improve these aspects.
13. **Lessons learned**—As appropriate and/or if requested by the TOR, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation, that is, new knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (intervention, context outcomes, even about evaluation methods) that are applicable to a similar context. Lessons should be concise and based on the specific evidence presented in the report.
14. **Report annexes**—Suggested annexes should include the following to provide the report user with supplemental background and methodological details that enhance the credibility of the report:
 - ToR for the evaluation
 - Additional methodology-related documentation, such as the evaluation matrix and data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.) as appropriate
 - List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted and sites visited. This can be omitted in the interest of confidentiality if agreed by the evaluation team and UNDP.
 - List of supporting documents reviewed
 - Project or programme results model or results framework
 - Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets, and goals relative to established indicators
 - Code of conduct signed by evaluators

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Data collection methods / tools	Data sources
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the projects' objectives and outputs relevant to the needs of the country and consistent with the partner government's policies and priorities, EU Accession Agenda, Agenda 2030 and other effective strategic frameworks? • To what extent the projects' objectives addressed the real needs and interests of the targeted groups in the specific geographic area? • Whether the activities are in line with the local needs and national priorities (as well as with donor policies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth desk review of relevant documents and literature • Structured interviews with key informants, partners and stakeholders • Vigorous consultations • Field visits, observations and personal judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project document • Annual work plans and periodical progress reports, Results Framework, MTRs • UNDP-BiH documents including UNDAF 2010-2014 and 2015-2020, Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP): 2010-2014 and CPAP evaluation
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the outputs achieved derive from efficient use of financial, human and material resources? • How much time, resources and effort it took to manage the portfolio and where were the gaps, if any. More specifically, how do UNDP practices, policies, decisions, constraints; capabilities affect the performance of the outcome? • To what extent M&E contributed to increased outcome efficiency? What were the roles, engagement of and coordination among various stakeholders in the Sector in programme implementation? • To what extent project was successful in developing synergies between national institutions for UNDP support in project and implementation including between UNDP and donors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth desk review of documents and literature relevant to project • One-on-one interviews • In-depth consultations • Interview protocols and questionnaires • Vigorous consultations • Field visits verification • Personal observations and judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodical progress reports (annual, quarterly), annual work plans, budget revisions, project files, minutes of Project Board • /Steering Committee • Perceptions of key informants, and stakeholders, government staff members • Budget revisions • Audit and evaluations
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the projects' actions to achieve the projects objectives effective • The extent which objectives have been achieved? • To what extent the projects' intended results (outputs and outcomes) have been achieved? • How these outputs and outcomes contributed to higher level changes or to the achievement of UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)? • To what extent initiatives were successful in the capacity development of public and private institutions? • What are the achievement in terms of positive changes in the knowledge, attitude, practices and skills of the municipality staff? • What are the foreseen restraints on sustaining the achievements at the local level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth desk review of project and UNDP documents • One-on-one interviews • Interview protocols and questionnaires • Vigorous consultations • Personal observations and judgment • Focus group discussion with target beneficiaries • Field visits verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual work plans and periodical progress reports (annual, quarterly) • MTRs. • UNDP CO, Embassy of Netherlands, UNICEF, other partners, • local governments, Civil society organisations, local communities (MZ), private sector companies, national and entity governments • Projects target beneficiaries – farmers. SMEs •

Evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Data collection methods / tools	Data sources
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the positive and negative, intended and unintended effects of project in terms from a broader development and system building perspective? What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes the projects brought about on various stakeholders? To what extent the economic growth of the target region, measured through jobs created and improved income streams in agriculture as well as improved business environment, can be attributed to the projects? To what extent the projects managed to institutionalize and anchor the public-private dialogue and local action group mechanisms to address key challenges to economic development and employment in the specific geographic area? How successful were the projects' strategies for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions, local governments, private sector, farmers and rural dwellers? How much are public and private sectors equipped to further specialize/professionalize business development services? Did the projects manage to spur investments in growth-oriented industrial and agricultural activity, resulting in the increased competitiveness of the region? To what extent has the projects' approach (intervention strategy) managed to create ownership of the key national stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth desk review of project documents One-on-one interviews Interview protocols and questionnaires Vigorous consultations Personal observations and judgment Focus group discussion with target beneficiaries Field visits verification and personal judgement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual work plans and periodical progress reports (annual, quarterly) MTRs UNDP CO, Embassy of Netherlands, UNICEF, other partners, local governments, Civil society organisations, local communities (MZ), private sector companies, national and entity governments Projects target beneficiaries
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the intended projects results sustainable? Are local capacities, including the recently established Local Action Group, set in place for sustaining achieved results and maintaining economic growth trends while ensuring a more inclusive economic development with strong involvement of social actors? Will the projects results lead to potential actions beyond the lifespan of the projects? To what extent are environment, gender equality and human rights principles respected and mainstreamed within the project implementation? To which extent Project was successful in establishing mechanisms to ensure sustainability of the interventions? What and to what extent are the outputs that may be sustained and mainstreamed or used for future programming? What are the key lessons learnt during the project implementation process? What results and successful practices of the projects could be scaled up/replicated to other regions of the country? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth reviews One-on-one interviews Vigorous consultations Field visits and surveys Focus groups discussion Direct observations and personal judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant documents, other donor reports Perceptions of the representatives of participating ministries, donors, local government, SMEs, local communities (MZ), CSOs, target beneficiaries Internal assessments Evidence from project technical reports Mid-term review and assessment reports

Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed

UNDP - Support to Rural Development in Georgia Project

- 2nd Interim Progress Report July 2017 – June 2018, ENPARD II, SRDP, UNDP Georgia
- Annual Progress Reports July 2016-June 2017
- Assessment report of the relevant state strategies and international programs – A Baseline Study, 2017.
- Ciaran Gannon, Notes on Ajara meetings, Annex 5: October 2018 Mission Report.
- Ciaran Gannon, Options for achieving sustainability of LAGs, Annex 8: October 2018 Mission Report.
- Monthly Progress Reports June 2016 to May 2018.
- Multi-Year Work Plan.
- Organizational Capacity Assessment, A Baseline Report, May 2017
- Project Document, SRDG - Project 00087576, UNDP Georgia 2016
- Quarterly Progress Reports, Q1 and Q4 2017. Q1, Q2, Q3 and 2018
- Regional Profiles of Rural Development Strategy of Georgia, 2018.
- Rural Community Capacity Building Programme in Ajara, Georgia, Final Report. May 14, 2017.
- SRDG Project's Results Framework including Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix, Indicator/Activity Tracking.
- Terminal Evaluation of ENPARD Ajara, Support to Agriculture Development in Ajara, June 2016.

UNDP Georgia

- Country Programme Document for Georgia (2016-2020), UNDP, Georgia.
- Sustainable Development Goals, UNDP Georgia.
- United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (Framework Document), Georgia 2016-2020.
- UNDP's Evaluation Policy, Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, July 2016.
- UNDP Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, 2009/ Addendum June 2011.
- UNEG's Guidelines for Impact Evaluation in UN Agency Evaluation Systems, Aug. 2013.
- UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2017.
- UNEG Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation -Towards UNEG Guidance, UNEG/G (2011)2, March 2011.
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNEG, March 2008.
- United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (Framework Document) Georgia 2016-2020. UN Tbilisi 2016.

Government of Georgia

- GeoStat (2015) Women and men in Georgia.
- Georgia's BDD 2017-2020 and BDD 2018-2021.
- Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2017-2020.
- Rural Development Action Plan for 2018-2020.
- Social-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia – Georgia 2020.

Ajara AR

- Ajara AR Rural Development Action Plan for 2018-2020.
- Ajara AR Rural Development Strategy for 2016-2020.
- AMAGs (Active Citizens' Local Union) Needs Assessment, Ajara AR, October 2017.

Other documents

- Theory of Change, Methodological Briefs Impact Evaluation No. 2 Office of Research – Innocenti, UNICEF, 2014.
- <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/919&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
- <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3529522>

Annex 4a: Questionnaire for participating Ministry

(December 2018)

Name of the Ministry:

Persons met with designation:
.....

Q. 1. Project assistance starting date: End date:(Month/year)

Q.2. What type of assistance did the ministry receive from the UNDP project?

- Financial (URO)
- Equipment
- Technical assistance
- Capacity building/training, in which areas
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)

Q3. How did the ministry participate in the project? Was there a participatory approach applied in the formulation of project interventions?

Needs identification, planning, implementation

Q4. Did the project design address the government priorities?

Q5. How did the ministry/staff benefit from the Project?

- formulation of Rural Development Strategy (RDS)
- Preparation of Annual plans for (RDS)

Q 6. Does ministry staff now apply skills and knowledge that they learned from project?

Q 7. What is the impact on the individual staff level of the ministry?

- In terms of capacity (knowledge about LEADER approach, rural development, skills, working environment, etc.)
- In terms of efficiency/time taken to perform the task
- In terms of quality of documents, plans, proposals
- In terms of delivery of services
-

Q 8. What changes and impact the project has brought about in the following areas in the ministry?

- Institutional/organizational,
- Strategic planning (rural development)
- In terms of meeting the EU requirements
- Benefit to agriculture sector
- Benefit to farmers and agro-businesses
- Development and institutionalization of LAGs/AMAGI
- Delivery of services to the farmers and agri-businesses
- Governance
- Economic,

- Infrastructure,
 - Social,
 - Businesses/trade/export,
 - Partnership with private sector/businesses
 - Collaboration with other ministries, private sector, academia, CSOs, donors
 - Employment,
- Q 9. Were following cross-cutting issues addressed in the project design and at implementation stage?
- Gender equality
 - Ethnic
 - Vulnerable
 - Human rights
 - Youth development
 - Environment/climate change
- Q 10. Did you observe any change in the attitude of communities and awareness about rural/economic development opportunities, etc.
- Q 11. What is your opinion about the project's performance?
- Q 12. Did the ministry encounter any problem/hurdle in the implementation of project activities and show were they resolved?
- Q 13. Has any strategy been developed to sustain and expand the activities started and how?
- Q 14. Do you foresee any problem in future to sustaining the activities?
- Q 15. What issues do you foresee in the sustainability of LAGs/AMAG?
- Such as funding, capacity, institutionalization
- Q 16. How those issues could be resolved for the sustainability and viability of LAGs/AMAGI?
- Q. 17. Any lessons learned/any message?
- Q. 18. Do you have any recommendations for the future strategy?

PART A

1. Name of thematic working group:
2. Rural Development IACC Working Group (WG) involvement:

Participant	Name of the Institution	Starting Date	Internal document re assigning the person to the WG
Participant 1			
Participant 2			
Participant 3			
Participant 4			
...			

1. When this working group was formed?
2. What is the objectives, mandate and role of this working group in the development and implementation of the National Rural Development Strategy?
3. Which objectives and strategies did you work on?
4. Describe the process of working on the National Rural Development Strategy (NRDS)? For example, participatory development?
5. Was a bottom-up approach adopted in the development of NRDS?
6. Has this working group been empowered to implement its mandate? Did you have authority delegated by your institution to contribute your ideas or was there a process at your institution for preparation of basis/guiding principles to be used in contributing to the strategy/action plan formulation? Is the process formalized?
7. Has this working group the full support of IACC/ apex management?
8. To what extent the recommendations of this working group been accepted by the IACC?
9. What is the frequency of the IACC working group meetings?
10. How did the WG consider gender equality, human rights and ethnic issues when working on the strategy?
11. Was feedback to the draft strategy/action plan generally positive or negative?
12. Did you make changes to the draft strategy/action plan as a result of the review of the feedback?
13. Looking back, will you change anything with regard to your involvement in the WG?
14. What kind of issues, if any, arose during the process? Were they solved? How?
15. Did the WG consider alternative strategies and actions? If yes, please discuss a few of them.
16. Are you involved in the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanism for delivering the strategy/action plan? If yes, how.

17. Will you be involved in formulation of strategy 2021-2026 and annual plans? When the process will start?

PART B

18. What type of support this working group has received from the UNDP SRDG project? How did the project facilitated in the above mentioned processes.

19. What is impact of SRDG assistance in terms of capacity building at individual level (confidence, awareness, improved skill, knowledge, etc.)

and at the institution level?

20. In your opinion have the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights and ethnic been adequately addressed in the selection of training participants.

21. Are you satisfied with the project's assistance/contribution?

22. Is there any scope in the improvement of the project support? Suggestions.

23. What lessons have learned during your involvement in the above mentioned process?

24. Describe how the results could be sustainable with regard to the strategy/action plan development and further capacity building.

25. What would have happened without the project support?

Annex 4c: Questionnaire for participating municipalities

(December 2018)

Name of Municipality:

Persons met with designation:
.....

Q. 1. Project assistance starting date: End date:(Month/year)

Q.2. What type of assistance did the municipality receive from the UNDP programme?

- Financial (URO)
- Equipment
- Technical assistance
- Capacity building/training, in which areas
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
 - iv)

Q3. How did the municipality participate in the project?

Needs identification, planning, implementation

Q4. How did your municipality/staff benefit from the Project?

- Q 5. Does municipality staff now apply skills and knowledge that they learned from project?
- Q 6. What is the impact on individual staff of municipality?
- In terms of capacity
 - In terms of efficiency/time
 - In terms of quality of documents, plans, proposals
 - In terms of delivery of services
 -
- Q 7. What changes and impact the project has brought about in the following areas in the municipality?
- Institutional/organizational,
 - Municipality revenues
 - Strategic planning,
 - Preparation of budget
 - Delivery of services
 - Governance
 - Institutional capacity
 - Economic,
 - Infrastructure,
 - Social,
 - Businesses/trade/export,
 - Partnership with private sector/businesses
 - Collaboration with other municipalities, private sector, CSOs, donors
 - Employment,
 - Human rights
 - Gender equality
 - Youth development
 - Ethnic reconciliation
 - Quality of life
- Q 8. Any change in the attitude of communities and awareness about rural/economic development opportunities, rights, etc.
- Q 9. What is your opinion about the project's performance?
- Q 10. Did municipality encounter any problem/hurdle in the implementation of project activities and show were they resolved?
- Q. 11. Has any strategy been developed to sustain and expand the activities started and how?
- Q 12. Do you foresee any problem in future to sustaining the activities?
- Q. 13. Any lessons learned/any message?
- Q. 14. Do you have any recommendations for the future strategy?

Annex 5: List of persons met

NAME	POSITION	INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
UNDP Country Office			
George Nanobashvili	Economic Development Team leader	UNDP	george.nanobashvili@undp.org
ENPARD 2 – Support to Rural Development Project			
Nodar Kereselidze	National Project Manager	SRDG	nodar.kereselidze@undp.org
Stephan Schmitt-Degenhardt	Project Technical Leader	SRDG (ENPARD 3)	stephan.schmitt-degenhardt@undp.org
Natia Berdenishvili	Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator	SRDG	natia.berdenishvili@undp.org
Ivane Shamugia	Sectoral Coordinator: Capacity Development	SRDG	ivane.shamugia@undp.org
Irma Khvedeliani	Network Development Consultant	SRDG	Irma.khvedeliani@undp.org
Malkhaz Adeishvili	Sectoral Coordinator: Environment	SRDG	malkhaz.adeishvili@undp.org
Giorgi Tsimintia	IACC Coordinator	SRDG	giorgi.tsimintia@undp.org
Liliana Gureshidze	Liaison and Admin-Financial Assistant	SRDG	liliana.gureshidze@undp.org
ENPARD 2 SRDG Project Staff – Ajara			
Vakhtang Kontselidze	Ajara Project Manager	SRDG	
Merab Svanidze	Ajara Project Officer	SRDG	
EU Delegation to Georgia			
Ketevan Khutsishvili	Programme Manager for Rural Development	EUD	ketevan.khutsishvili@eeas.europa.eu
National Government			
Nodar Kereselidze	First Deputy Minister	MEPA	
Mikheil Sarjeladze	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Justice	msarjeladze@justice.gov.ge
Ekaterine Zviadadze	Head of Policy and Analysis Department	MEPA	
Salome Oboladze	International Relations Department	MEPA	
Archil Partsvanadze	Rural Development Division	MEPA	
Rezo Kakulia	Head of Euro integration Department	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure	

NAME	POSITION	INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
Davit Kalatozishvili	Deputy Head of Euro Integration Department	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia	
Giorgi Kiknadze	Researches Junior Coordinator, LEPL Enterprise Georgia	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia	
Giorgi Kvashali	Head of Projects' Reporting Department, Agricultural Projects Management Agency	MEPA	
Government of Ajara			
Tite Aroshidze	Minister	Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR	
Zurab Chikhladze	Head of Rural Development Department	Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR	
Irma Apkhazava	Head of Policy and Analysis Department	Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR	
Tea Chanturishvili	Head of the Department of Culture	Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Ajara AR	
Ekaterine Bakhtadze	Head of Economic Development Department	Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara AR	
Jambul Abuladze	Head of Agro Projects Management Center	Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR	
Ramaz Surmanidze	Laboratory Research Center, LEPL	Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR	
Local Government, Ajara AR			
Levan Gorgiladze	Keda Governor	Ajara AR	
LAGs, AMAGs and Project Beneficiaries			
Giga Sarukhanashvili	Head	Georgian Association of Local Action Groups (GALAG)	
Giorgi Bokeria	President	Lagodekhi LAG	
Juba Maruashvili	Project Manager	Lagodekhi LAG (CARE)	
Mikheil Lomidze	Project Manager	Borjomi LAG (CARE)	
Maia Katamadze	Director	NGO BEDEC	
List of AMAG members Ajara			
Nino Gabriadze	AMAG Akalsheni - Chairwoman	gabriadze1982@gmail.com	
Lela Dzirkvadze	AMAG member, Dekanashvilebi, Khulo	dzirkvadzelela06@gmail.com	
Rusudan Shantadze	AMAG member, Dekanashvilebi, Khulo	shantadzerusudan123@gmail.com	

NAME	POSITION	INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
Archil Rijvadze	AMAG member, Khelvachauri	597 01 61 92	
Revaz Putkaradze	AMAG Mareti, Chairman, Shuakhevi	591 71 20 66	
Amiran Tsetsckhladze	AMAG Zamleti, Chairman, Shuakhevi	591 98 55 70	
Jimsher Beridze	AMAG Mziuri, Makhinjauri Khelvachauri	551 581 000	
Giorgi Salvaridze	AMAG Machakhela, Khelvachauri, Mchakhela	salvaridze87@mail.ru	
Naira Makharadze	AMAG Kobuleti, Kobuleti	nairamakharadze50@gmail.com	
Jumber Gogitidze	AMAG Peranga, Keda	591 98 84 19	
Ednar Kejeradze	AMAG Uchamba, Shuakhevi	edo.kejeradze@gmail.com	
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Bidzina Dumbadze	AMAG Narinji, Chairman	Bidzinadumbadze67@mail.ru	
Malkhaz Kenchadze	AMAG Ertoba Gvara, Chairman	Kenchadzemalkhaz17@gmail.com	
Batumi Development and Employment Center - Youth for Positive Chang			
Tamar Kamadadze	Shuakhevi		
Tarash Kamadadze	Shuakhevi	577 79 00 31	
Lika Gundadze	Shuakhevi	577 27 81 42	
Aneti Beridze	Keda	555 337 283	
Ana Takidze	Kobuleti	577 23 24 16	
Rena Tavdgiridze	Shuakhevi	558 116 733	
Tatia Gogrichidze	Khelvachauri	593 33 02 24	
Davit Dumbadze	Kobuleti	568 428 656	
Mariam Surmanidze	Khelvachauri	568 44 95 11	
Imeda Lortkipanidze	Khelvachauri	557 279 290	

Annex 6: Summary of Field Visits

Tbilisi, December 17, 2018

Participants:

- George Nanobashvili, Economic Development Team Leader, UNDP;
- Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant/ Team Leader- Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
- Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project

The last year's annual report and final report of the project are being redrafted (impact assessment). Project Board was formed on the suggestion of EUD, instead monthly meetings were held. Project board is planned in January with participation of: MEPA; EU; and UNDP. There were some delays in the clearance of funds. Initially, rural development approach was not well accepted by the stakeholders. The Government approved the strategy in 1 month. The RDS was shared with LAGs. Sustainability of the RDS and Action Plan – at this stage the beneficiary is capable of preparing Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan on its own though they still need some help, eg., with regard to risk management. Secretarial support for Impact Stakeholder Committee (EU, FAO, Government and UNDP) is provided by FAO. Municipalities prepare their own strategies, they do not have enough budgets, and they were supported in developing/improving rural development profiles. Stakeholder engagement and cooperation strategy for MEPA. Consulted network of NGOs, LAGs; conducted meetings at regional level to discuss strategy and receive feedback.

Tbilisi, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), December 17, 2018

Participants:

- Rezo Kakulia, Head of Euro integration Department, MRDI;
- David Kalatozishvili, Deputy Head of Euro integration Department, MRDI;
- Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) Evaluation of ENPARD II
- Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project

According to the respondents ENPARD 2 was more about LAGs and capacity development and its asset is population involvement. ENPARD 3 is broader than its predecessor project and the Ministry is more involved. MRDI leads integrated territorial, place-based development, coordinating line Ministries, including MEPA. There is working group for coordinating various institutions involved in Regional Development Strategy implementation. MRDI is coordinating with municipalities as well; municipalities provide update regarding progress of ongoing projects. MRDI manages Regional Development Fund – projects for financing are selected on objective criteria (e.g., number of beneficiaries, compliance with program objectives, etc.). Regional development agencies coordinate with LAGs. MRDI is satisfied with the ENPARD SRDG project, though it had little involvement in ENPARD 1 and ENPARD 2. Regional Development Strategies (2014-2021) were created for 9 regions; beginning 2014 strategy stipulates closer alignment with the EU Policy; 2018-2021 strategy includes all pillars.

Tbilisi, Hotel Ambassador, December 19, 2018

Participants:

- Giga Sarukhanashvili, Georgian Association of Local Action Groups (GALAG), Head of Borjomi LAG
- Giorgi Bokeria, President, Lagodekhi LAG
- Juba Maruashvili, Project Manager, Lagodekhi LAG, (Care)
- Mikheil Lomidze, Project Manager, Borjomi LAG (CARE)
- Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG
- Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG

Have been cooperating with UNDP since it started working on RDS and Action Plan. LAGs contribute to preparation of local development strategies. One of the important outcomes of the cooperation is establishment of the Georgian Rural

Development Network. Sustainability of LAGs is a concern. This is opportunity for networking and channel for communication with various stakeholders, including central government. There was a significant synergy with UNDP and other stakeholders involved in rural development. UNDP does not have direct connection with LAGs; they mainly work with government at policy level. Indirect financial support for LAGs. Some workshops and seminars were organized for the LAGs. LAGs are adopting EU approach to rural developing (LEADER). Supported Borjomi LAG in drafting proposal to apply for smoke alarm system to prevent forest fires. Estonia is willing to provide EUR 113,000 if local donors provide additional EUR 109,000. ENPARD 3 – could have a component related to LAGs to directly finance their operational costs in order to ensure sustainability of LAGs. LEADER must be focused on cooperation with LAGs from foreign countries. To host 2023 LINK conference even though Georgia is a non-member country. 3 oldest LAGs – Lagodekhi, Borjomi and Kazbegi (established in 2015); 5 LAGs established later - 1 LAG was established in 2016, 4 more LAGs In 2017, next year 4 more lags will be established. So far there are 8 lags, next year there will be 12 LAGs. Three projects will be finished (Lagodekhi, Borjomi and Kazbegi). Without the support to LAGs, bottom-up approach will be finished in Georgia; without support the momentum will be lost. One local government allocated sum funds (GEL 300 thousand) to co-finance LAG activities. LAGs have 160 members, 16 board members. Actually, local government personnel are members of LAGs.

Tbilisi, SRDG Office, December 20, 2018

Participants:

- Giorgi Kvashali, Head of Projects' Reporting Department, Agricultural Projects Management Agency, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia;
- Giorgi Kiknadze, Researches Junior Coordinator, LEPL Enterprise Georgia, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia;
- Davit Kalatozishvili, Deputy Head of Euro integration Department, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
- Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG
- Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG

All involved ministries are members of the IACC. MRDI is identifying needs and then mobilizes resources under Regional Development Program. Project facilitates coordination, provides trainings for capacity building. Extension Service of the MEPA will become part of APMA. Cooperation contributes to increase of land plots. APMA has seven programs, including preferential loans, insurance, etc. Rural Development Action Plan is compilation of existing budget programs/activities at the moment. Skill level and capacity of employees is quite high but number of employees is not enough. Salaries are not competitive and public sector staff are leaving for better paid jobs.

Tbilisi, SRDG Office, December 20, 2018

Participants:

- Irma Khvedeliani, SRDG Consultant, Network Development Consultant
- Ivane Shamugia, Sectoral Coordinator: Capacity Development, SRDG
- Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG
- Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG

The establishment of Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN) is in line with EU practices. Conducted studies and established the network. All EU members have National rural networks. Concept, objectives, functions, governing body, etc. were defined for the GRDN Based on the study of the EU experience. Mapping stakeholders and attract them, including municipalities and LAGs. LAGs and partner NGOs are interested in establishment of the Network. In network training for LAGs and NGOs held in 2018 July in Batumi, 25% of AMAGs participated. Several events followed, organized by partners and the project. Last week participated in training arranged by GALAG and delivered by ENPARD. Next year plan to prepare strategy for GALAG and GRDN sustainability; LAGs are members of GRDN network. Bottom-up approach, cooperation with EU LAGs. NGOs implement projects (agriculture, tourism, social infrastructure) with LAGs; LAGs are not direct beneficiaries of the project but the project cooperates with them as members of the GRDN. MEPA, Ajara Ministry of Agriculture and the project agreed to sign memorandum on establishment of the GRDN; it will be chaired by elected Steering Group. Charter of the Network will be prepared. Decision would be made regarding the Network Support Structure. Impact: skills and capacities at municipalities

improved; Impact on public sector. Impact on local level: involve stakeholder from 8 pilot municipalities in the Project trainings and discussions; project was active only in Ajara – provided capacity building program for AMAGs; 46 AMAGs in Ajara – to contribute to rural development; engage in local decision-making, participate in grant competitions, etc. The project has about 20 pilot projects. Supported scientific – research institution in fully using capacity of their existing modern equipment. Establishment of LAGs started in 1997 in Europe. The project focused on organizational capacity development, less on individual capacity development. Inception training made it possible to functional analysis. Inception trainings functional analysis and on the job, consulting were priorities at national level. IACC was donor driven. Action plans basically represent mechanical compilation of existing programs/activities of various ministries; now a Rural Development Division, Agriculture, Food and Safety Development Department is working on designing rural development programs. It is meeting with LAGs (similar process undergoes in Ajara). Rural Development Agency, LEPL will be established under the Ministry. Merger of APMA (Agriculture Project Management Agency) with ACDA (Agriculture Cooperative Development Agency). Policy and Analytics Department is in charge of planning (Strategy), monitoring and evaluation. Ministry requested LAGs to support in designing long-term cooperation policy with them. Stakeholder Communication Strategy; action plan stipulates public officials to consult with LAGs. Capacity assessment of 8 local self-government bodies is completed. ENPARD 3 will continue working with local municipalities.

Tbilisi, MEPA, December 20, 2018

- Participants:
- Eka Zviadadze, Secretary of the Interagency Coordination Council of Rural Development of Georgia, Head of Policy and Analysis Department, MEPA
 - Salome Oboladze, International Relations Department, MEPA;
 - Archil Partsvanadze, Rural Development Division, MEPA
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project

Worked together with SRDG, UNDP to establish the IACC, IACC meetings are held four times per year, Working also on monitoring system; Published booklet on government programs related to rural development; APMA and ACDA (Agriculture Cooperative Development Agency) to merge under these reforms to establish so called Paying Agency in accordance with the EU practice; Moving towards electronic system for monitoring and evaluation; MEPA had some meetings with LAGs to share experience under the project; 6 months monitoring report 2018 was prepared in cooperation with the project; Rural development strategy is very broad, difficult to manage; in future we should somehow curtail the activities and remove the ones that are lesser important. Rural Development Division was under the Policy and Analysis Department but now it is under Agricultural Development, Food Safety and Rural Development Department; MEPA will be part of the Rural Development Network; leading agency for the RDN is not yet identified; Dec 19 – overview of communication at the conference, how to deliver information to farmers; Preliminary results show that objectives of the activities under the Action Plan are 100% achieved; At the moment MEPA does not have any additional resources to support them;

Institutional support might be provided to LAGs. MEPA has Information Consultation Services (Extension service) in each municipality; as a result of undergoing restructuring this service will be under the Rural Development Agency; MEPA has ‘early warning system’ (weather forecast, advise via sms) in some districts and trying to extend coverage; special department for climate change working on resilience; food safety agency, etc. Main lesson learned: rural development should not be broad, emphasize activities contributing to job creation; We will have electronic monitoring system; “Scientific-research Center” of the MEPA is working on agronomy practices and new varieties; we will establish “Paying Agency”.

Batumi, Ajara Tourism Department, December 21, 2018

- Participants:
- Tinatin Zoidze, Tourism Product Development Agency, Ajara Tourism Department
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project;
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Semi-governmental organization under the Tourism Department; Support locals to create tourism products and support tourism development in mountainous Ajara; Close relationship with UNDP: Mtirala Management plan was prepared with support from UNDP; Machakhela National Park – marking tourism paths, trails around (they had trail for main trail) the Park; UNDP financed some guesthouses; Number of visitors increased by 71% by 2017 compared to 2014; Rural Development Strategy – we are involved, we are members of the WG; the project is kind of a mediator between stakeholders; They received training from international organizations regarding development of tourist products (eg., marking trails); they study by themselves in general, as no lectures are provided by the higher education institutions or vocational educational institutions; Developing mountainous and rural tourism; With regard to labeling system there is no regulation in Georgia; UNDP is always ready to know about these projects; this year UNDP accepted 4 proposals; UNDP provided trainers; Interactive maps for Mtn Ajara (the project has not started yet); Book of recommendations for guest houses (size of balcony, rooms, etc.); will start working next year; Study one village to identify means for establishment of eco village in Ajara; Potential of rural tourism in mountainous Ajara: cultural heritage potential (historical monuments, fortresses, ancient bridges (12th century) in every district) `if you have not visited Khikhani fortress (Khulo), you have not seen Ajara`; 30% of Ajara is forests; opportunities kayaks, rafting, etc. Alpine botanical garden; Kobuleti has protected areas (Kintrishi, Mtirala Protected Areas), proposed to list on UNESCO cultural heritage list; old towns Petra, Machakhela region, Keda – Chkhaveri and Keda Tsolikauri; Shuakhevi – adventure, wild nature, unique food; Khulo & Shuakhevi – marking beautiful trail (six lakes on one trail), presentation will be arranged next year; Khulo – winter resort, Goderdzi; summer resort as well. 9 tourism information centers around the region; information (booklets, etc.) is free of charge; Preparing specific, detailed recommendations for tourists, which would be uploaded to a web-page; Events calendar is being prepared as well; Last year received letter from Shuakhevi AMAG; on their request they are preparing Chana development plan; We help, support AMAG. One AMAG opened information service for tourists and asked for promotional materials;

Lessons learned: good platform; this project helped me to understand what local authorities (ministries, etc.) plan for mountainous Ajara; this enabled them to plan better their actions and communicate with relevant authorities; e-reporting; I would like to add or develop (we have more tourists than we can accommodate) rural tourism, local wine making – we cannot present local wine to int. tourists as it is not properly packaged; programs should be tailored for individual municipalities; Tourism Development Strategic Plan is being prepared.

Batumi, SRDG Ajara Office, December 21, 2018

- Participants:
- Vakhtang Kontselidze, Ajara Project Manager, SRDG, UNDP
 - Merab Svanidze, Ajara Project Officer, SRDG, UNDP
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

First project started in 2008. ENPARD I – 2013 focused on pure agriculture support. Action plan and M&E system development was discussed on the council meeting. The RD Council has one working group; The WG will start preparation of the new strategy after National strategy preparation is started; Instead of revising the existing strategy they prefer to start working on new one; Out of 10 projects 6 projects were selected for implementation: Agro Kiosk (extension); Training Agro Lab staff to enable them to fully use capacity of the existing modern lab equipment; Keda – fishery; MoA study shows that out of 100 fish farms only 10 operate; Project will prepare manual for fish breeding for fish farms; With ACT support conducted meetings at Ajara municipalities to select AMAG proposals; 15 of them were selected; Batumi incubator; AMAGs are registered as Non-entrepreneurial (Non-commercial) Legal Entities; Some AMAGs are conducting some trainings by themselves and provide ideas to local municipalities.

Batumi, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Ajara AR, December 21, 2018

- Participants:
- Tea Chanturishvili, Head of the Department of Culture, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Agriculture development in Ajara is important; I'm Member of Intergovernmental Commission of Ajara; Rural dev is related to infrastructure development, like water supply, roads; eg. impossible to raise livestock without water; Lack of professionals at municipalities' level working hard to solve infrastructure problems; Support development of folklore – the best team receives support to travel and perform around Georgia; this low budget (GEL 30,000 annually) program was eliminated this year; Lesson learned: ENPARD financed trainings, very good trainer; trainings contributed to development of capabilities and skills; I used to work for central government and really think that this commission is working very well; When you are working on the commission it helps you to understand whole picture; Have not seen last version of the strategy. It should emphasize infrastructure development (water, roads), Wi-Fi.

Batumi, Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR, December 21, 2018

- Participants:
- Tite Aroshidze, Minister of Agriculture of Ajara AR
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Even if it were for UNDP and its programmes we would have been able to accomplish only half of what we did; thank you for this; all UNDP activities are important and our budget reflects those activities; Agriculture Dev. Council, RD AP, and strategy that was prepared in 2017; Implementation will be effective; We are planning to start working on longer term strategy with UNDP support and we are ready to discuss with you all activities; Donor support could not continue permanently; Ministry will have Strategy and Action plan, which would mean that UNDP efforts were fruitful; Trainings were important: project mgmt, public policy monitoring, risk assessment; we prepare needs assessment document annually and based on this; Its notable that AMAGs were established; we established a new department which coordinates AMAGs and works with donors; Several AMAGs projects were financed; this will improve AMAGs; We cooperate under ENPARD 2; precondition of LAGs was AMAGs; LAGs in line with the EU; No overlap between public and grant proposals; Grant proposals will be co-financed by ministry together with municipalities; ENPARD 1 was also very important; started with financing cooperatives; AMAGs capacity, accountability; are they institutionalized:

Answer: 46 AMAGs are established; government does not finance them; we consider in budget needs assessment documents prepared by them; their org. structure is not finally developed; only 30% were officially registered; 25 out of 46 AMAGs will remain in cooperation with us Elections for selecting AMAG members; each has Manager and Deputy Manager; about 10-20 members are also elected by the community.

Trainings are not planned or implemented chaotically; we use this opportunity effectively; its important with regard to development of capabilities; e.g. Audit Department uses the system of the training; about 90% ministry staff are involved in the trainings; We are the only ministry that has representatives at municipalities to identify needs regarding agriculture; AMAGs is also a channel for cooperation; We will have extension service at municipalities (vet and ??); out of 6 we work with 5 as the City has own resources; continuous learning for extension; also, we will have two labs;

Any suggestions for improvement? UNDP programs are synchronized with our efforts; as Ajara has small land plots, it would be beneficial if cooperative support is resumed; existing efforts with regard to capacity building should continue; finance cooperatives, operation. Firstly, informing why cooperatives are important and then large scale financing of cooperatives; we have central gvmt programs but it would be recommended to finance the cooperatives; Experience sharing for AMAGs; to invite from EU to deliver master classes or arrange study tours for our AMAGs. Existing state programs helps farmer to provide free seedlings, agro park – 2.5 ha, each 500 m² (50 greenhouses); interested parties

can take it in management and produce goods for export; capacity is low, e.g., 100 MT citrus; so, we can produce bio products; high potential of ecologically clean products; mainly labs and specialists problem; eg., in bee raising.

Batumi, Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR, December 21, 2018

- Participants:
- Zurab Chikhladze, Head of Rural Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara AR
 - Irma Apkhazava, Head of Policy and Analysis Department, , Ministry of Agriculture of Ajara, AR
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Project was successful; more than 30 trainings with the project support; several strategic documents: institutional development of AMAGs; In general Rural. Dev. Dep was created only 2 years ago;

Policy and Analysis department is also new; Rural. Dev. Dep works on strategic docs, Grant program 2018, successful, motivation for AMAGs; Should be noted involvement of Natia with regard to Ajara Rural Development Council (M&E Part); With regard to policy development involvement of AMAGs is very important; strengthening AMAGs will be beneficial; Were you involved in identifying training needs for your department? Trainer would visit, assess our skills, knowledge, experience, discussion with minister, HR; policy planning and management; Vakho was working individually with each department to conduct needs assessment; then UNDP announces tender, selects trainer who would provide training;

What change did the trainings brought to your department: all trainings were very good; to have meetings with them and convert information; We use skills and experience in our work; Rural dev is new; not professional in the field in public sector; minister saw this and helped in enhancing my capabilities; One of the policy document, “monitoring & evaluation of implemented programs”.

Did this project help you in cooperation with other stakeholders? Rural Dev. Council has WG; members of the WG are employees of various ministries; working together enabled to better cooperate with each other and improvement of cooperation; SRDG supported in institutional development of the stakeholders; Support in Ministry’s Risks and Management Document. Beneficiaries selection process was very transparent; apart from us two NGOs were involved (AMAGs); Trainings were designed in a way not to distract Ministry staff from their activities; We would like the project to continue support to AMAGs and also trainings on specific themes that we’ve selected.

Batumi, Agro Projects Management Center, Ajara MOA, December 22, 2018

- Participants:
- Jambul Abuladze, Head of Agro Projects Management Center
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Personally, involved in agriculture 2014 and government became active in the field at that time; ENPARD Ajara and state programs coordinate their activities among themselves; UNDP office under the ENPARD – demo plots, sharing experience then implementing on a larger scale; more flexible than state budget; risks were reduced; Extension issues were emphasized; Several strategies were established, e.g. regional development, agri development and rural dev strategies; main directions were identified; We are one of the main organizations with regard to implementation of agr programs; 80% of state budget is spent through us; planning; implementation stages; Qualification and professional knowledge enhancement is being emphasized (for our staff); some trainings were already undertaken; on Monday program management training; risk management trainings was already conducted; qualification of our staff is improved, which is reflected in their effectiveness The organization (Agro Projects Management Center) was established in 2017; we overcome some issues.

Batumi, LEPL (Legal Entity of Public Law) Laboratory Research Center, Ajara MOA, December 22, 2018

- Participants:
- Ramaz Surmanidze, Laboratory Research Center, LEPL, Ajara MoA
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project

The trainings were very useful; We have modern, complicated equipment; 100 labs staff participated in lab research and we won in 2 competitions; Pay participation fee; they receive materials for lab analysis, the lab analysis the samples and send back results; Learning in general is a continuous process; we are moving towards EU integration, and this support is important; if we do not develop such labs our products will not be competitive on international market; We face chemical, biological, phyto-sanitary challenges; Only 20 % of agricultural produce meets criteria for international markets; Regarding potatoes we analysis hematomas (18-20) at three customs points; as for potato ‘cancer’ another lab does it.

Sanitary, vet and Phyto-sanitary reps studies all ships before entering the port. We are preparing needs assessment; what kind of support we need; We should start study of soil and plants beginning early spring but not we do not have equipment to do this (mobile labs); we need retraining of staff re phyto-sanitary lab analysis; On-job training is needed; Three years ago three specialists were send to Lithuania for trainings but results were not satisfactory; (different equipment); Similar trainings but in different fields (Phyto-sanitary training); Would like to buy some equipment for analysis honey, fish, etc. for export (about GEL 500 thousand); Ichthio-pathology disease specialists; out of 28 fish farms only 4 farms are in operation.

Batumi, Rural Youth Support Project, NGO BEDEC office, December 22, 2018

- Participants:
- Maia Katamadze, Director of NGO BEDEC
 - 10 youngsters
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Received support from municipalities and Ministry as well; Continued for 4 months but we reached out to many villages. The project is completed but we established network and still daily communicate with each other and prepare new proposals, which are submitted to municipalities; They are “For Positive Changes”. Components: trainings, Advocacy, Business learning, Poverty reduction, Development of youth for the benefit of rural areas. It was targeted improvement to become not dependent and participate in decision-making. Whole Region was covered; Up to 29 years old public officials were also involved Better youth policy with participation of youth. Business skills improvement for start-ups, business development; Trainings on motivation, CV preparation, youth from various villages participated Volunteers were involved and they themselves give trainings to other re healthy lifestyle, business, gender equality (peer education); Meetings with municipalities, various galleries; youth from a district visit other districts; Information was available on the project (from Sakrebulo, schools, application through social network); Helped in fighting stereotypes; Selection criteria: age 14-29 years and willingness to share acquired knowledge to others; Each participants talked about their experience under the project and told their success story.

Batumi, SRDG Ajara Office, December 22, 2018

- Participants:
- Ekaterine Bakhtadze, Head of Economic Development Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara AR
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

The ministry has some activities in rural Ajara; Trainings provided under the project was useful; We are planning to implement entrepreneurs support program in mountainous Ajara; UNDP will support implementation of the project; Last year we worked on strategy, this year we work on implementation, e.g. Eco-tourism development in Ajara; My colleagues participated in the trainings; they are satisfied; The colleagues shared information after the training; specific staff members were selected for specific trainings; Training on How to Develop Budget Programs; Trainings have two benefits: 1. skills improvement, enhance knowledge; 2. improved motivation; the Ministry itself is unable to provide such trainings; We have self-assessment procedure at the ministry; the assessment process includes identification of training needs; Member of the RDC Working Group; we discuss projects, indicators, etc. at the WG meetings; Suggestion for ENPARD 3: trainings, feasibility studies for assessing projects for implementation; specifically, for example, very specific research skills training for the economic observatory staff under her department; research skill are important for budget work, to better manage indicators; No issues with regard to working with the Project.

Batumi, UNDP Ajara Office, December 23, 2018

- Participants:
- Ajara AMAG Members
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Kobuleti AMAG (school Director), first time NGO involvement; no preschool kindergarten in the community; proposed a project to arranged outdoor facilities for the kindergarten; the issue was that the organization was not registered.

Jumber Goglidze, Keda, Peranga AMAG Chairman; project – (GEL 6,000) wood processing equipment; as you know we have migration problem; this is an opportunity for the village youth to learn carpentry and stay in the village.

Giorgi Salvaridze, Machakhela AMAG; very good project; our AMAG has planned to arrange a 'Tourist House'; thank you to UN for this opportunity; this will be a place for gathering for the community and beneficial tourists as well.

Jimsher Beridze, Khelvachauri AMAG; Kobuleti and Khelvachauri AMAGs had trainings together and they together decided to create a tourists network and invite low budget tourists from former CIS countries; for that reason they decided to develop a base for the low budget tourists; developing about 100 m² area saloon in Makhinjauri with piano, children care, natural products for tourists; conference room for 24 persons, guides will be trained; they will advertise on the web (booking.com); application was prepared for GEL 41,500 (furniture and installation, outdoor arrangement will be done by the AMAG); there will also be a wine cellar; sulphide baths are being developed nearby and a hotel is being constructed.

Amiran Tssetskhladze, Amleti Amag, Shuakhevi; 1) we used to have non-political youth organization (High mountainous Youth Union) that did not have facilities to operate; arrange facilities purchase of equipment for the Youth Union and stop their migration from the village (municipality contributed land plot and a building); 2) they also have proposal for spirits production mini-plant.

Uchamba AMAG, SHuakhevi Municipality; agro-tourism – wine production, guest house; bottling, packaging; at the moment does not have appropriate equipment; three story bld- 1st floor, wine production, spirit; 2nd floor – restaurant with traditional Ajarian dishes; 3rd floor – 6 rooms for rent (GEL 30,000.);

Revaz Putkaradze, Amagi Mareti, SHuakhevi; livestock is a leading agr. activity; feed is supplied from Georgia; hay processing (eg, pressing) equipment; the project was not financed at this stage but he hopes to get it financed next time as he is planning to improve the project proposal (eg., indicate co-financing);

Archil Rikbadze, Khelvachauri, Alioni Amagi (four villages) mainly orchard; nor spraying; decided to purchase dry fruit processing facility (cutting, packaging); addressed the UNDP project and received financing; they have already made arrangement regarding selling their produce.

The MoA will invite a specialist for drying fruit from Poland for three days.

Khulo, Dekanashvilebi AMAGI, teachers; includes several villages; training center for pupils (tuition for preparation for high education institutions); we have qualified teachers; furniture and equipment as well as books, maps, etc. will be provided under the project for the facility; they already started trainings in English; 16 students so far; thank you to the project and the Ministry and municipality also (who provided building for two years, free of charge).

Nino Gabriadze, Akhalsheni AMAG, Khelvachauri District; fruit chips production; worked 4 years at an insurance company re fruit insurance; noticed that small fruits were dumped and decided to produce fruit chips; co-financed (GEL 2,500) (cutting, washing and packaging using vacuum).

All AMAGs represented at the meeting are officially registered; Required trainings: drying, refrigerating, hospitality business. Requesting assistance in realization of their produce, especially on EU markets.

Keda Municipality, December 24, 2018

- Participants:
- Levan Gorgiladze, Keda Governor, Ajara AR
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

Grant financing under ENPARD 2; I think it would be successful even though I also applied but did not won. Especially liked the approach, because Keda capabilities were considered in the process; Establishment of the AMAGs was positive as well; Some trainings are required and provided.

Certain meetings were held in the community regarding project proposals by AMAGs; municipality was involved in case support was requested; Municipality was approached for support; eg., road to the proposed tourist attraction; Agriculture direction: 1. Chkhaveri grape; AR tourism dep. prepared medium term development plan according to which Keda is considered as wine production; hazel nuts production; Keda tomato is popular, but the variety is being lost and replaced by other, easier varieties; bee raising; tobacco production (direct consumption, not for processing); kiwi production; there was a good berries production program; Agriculture needs long term investment; population are hesitant in making long-term investments; ENPARD 1 supported by handing over already established plots with plants; Population was provided seedlings free of charge; Extension project is quite interesting; individual approach is more useful; our reps inform village population that an agronomist will come and talk (give lecture) on a certain plant; but farmers prefer needs-based consultation; MOA is establishing extension service (opposite to outsourcing, as it did not work); At that time, I was deputy health minister and was involved in coordination council member; We have self-developing tourism zone – Makhuntseti. We are not helping but tourists come anyway. Infrastructure is not well developed. Various owners of land plots – hampers development of tourism infrastructure; MOE of Ajara AR took responsibility to develop Makhuntseti; Wine tourism is being developed very actively; almost all guesthouses are based on this; Keda can provide agricultural produce to support existing/future hotel demands (excluding meat); Learning how to develop their business; trainings needs; use existing ‘culture club’ buildings for training, even informal peer training among farmers themselves.

Keda Municipality, December 24, 2018

- Participants:
- Nino Gaprindashvili, CENN Representative
 - LAG members of Keda Municipality (the list is attached)
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

The LAG did not receive support from the ENPARD 2 SRDG. One and half year ago CENN and its partner organization ‘Institute of Democracy’ started implementation of Rural Development project under the ENPARD 2 through the establishment of LAG (Local Action Group); development of local development strategy together with LAGs and financing sub-projects. 2 months ago grant competition was announced for local beneficiaries and around 310 ideas were received. Out of these 125 ideas were selected; trainings were conducted for preparation of project proposals. Proposals received by CENN include, guesthouses; beauty salons; agriculture (eg. vineyards), etc. The projects will be selected on the bases of the proposals and the strategy. LAG Board consists of 15 members; it has Chair and two Co-chairs. 100 families receive direct support while 500 families will receive tangible benefits. Trainings are being provided to even more persons. We are already trained group, received trainings in strategic plan preparation, etc. and if we cooperate you will not need to spend resources on similar trainings. Only 2 AMAG projects were they are financed. 4 AMAGs undertook all trainings, 1 of them was disappointed because his project proposal was not approved and did not receive

even refusal letter; they were thinking even about leaving AMAGs. 5 logistic centers will be established in all 5 districts in AR.

Improvement suggestions: to finance pilot projects; AMAGs are volunteers, they need more attention. Attitude of government has impact on AMAGs. One LAG member suggested that environmental protection through waste management. He also noted that they are aware that the project supported govt. in preparation of strategy and feels like indirect beneficiary. Commercial crops (excluding grape and wine-making): tobacco, hazelnut and orchards and planning to start produce berries.

Tbilisi, SRDG Office, December 26, 2018

- Participants:
- Giorgi Tsimintia, IACC Coordinator, SRDG
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project

IACC meetings are held quarterly; since May 2017, when I joined the project 4-5 IACC meetings were held. Charter of the IACC is broad; basic functional structure. Probably some changes will be made to the IACC charter to move to next stage of rural development. The project is thinking how the rural development can be managed at the government level. WGs should deliver some advice. Biggest change in rural development at this stage is that govt. has not taken real ownership of the concept; gradually we are moving towards them understanding the concept. Lack of clearance with regard to rural development, demarcation of mandates among ministries; e.g., infrastructure component in rural development concerns Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI) and MRDI has its own strategy. it also has budget program 'Rural Development'. It's a common problem, Poland is still having this problem. Ministries now fully understand the problems we are facing. Rural Dev. Strategy has 4 components. Intensive reporting requirements comes mainly from EUD, now we are moving from monthly reporting to quarterly reporting. We have GANT Chart and meetings with EU project manager to keep them updated. Turnover of staff trained under the project: two of the IACC secretariat (Policy Department of the MEPA) moved to other departments. Activities under the AP are not well designed, they are activities that those ministries were implementing, compiled in the AP. Some ministries might have a feeling that they are getting extra work for no reason (eg. Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs). Some government employees were not motivated enough to deliver quality reports on time.

Tbilisi, Ministry of Justice of Georgia, December 26, 2018

- Participants:
- Mikheil Sarjveladze, Deputy Minister of Justice of Georgia
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

The ministry is actively involved in implementation of the strategy. Development of rural areas is crucial for the country. Government implemented programs for development of mountainous and other parts of Georgia. Government supports also tourism infrastructure. MoJ has 11 LEPLs responsible for delivering of various services to population all over the country, including rural areas. Public Registry undertakes land registration; now we launched sporadic registration program and more than 600 thousand land plots were registered; this will be used as a bases for the WB irrigation project's implementation. Pilot project at 12 villages at various, different locations; the project is being completed; based on the results we will have completely different land registration process. Community centers at regional centers; community centers demonstrate how gvmt bodies can cooperate among themselves to improve service; the objective is to eradicate the gap between living standards in big cities and rural areas; banks and some agricultural services are present at the community centers; the library service provided by the centers should be noted – free access to internet and books; children can even work on their homework at the centers. It also provides place for having meetings, which contributes to realization of the LAG ideas. LAGs will be the bases for development of municipalities. We daily communicate with MEPA, MRDI and MoECSD. Next year we will have 5 new public service halls. At the community centers we have training centers; we have Memorandum of Understanding with the British Council for teaching English

language; any type of training can be provided; we are trying to involve private sector as well. Capacity of the municipalities is not sufficient. MRDI's one of the priorities is to enhance their capabilities. In terms of making lags sustainable and strong, success stories will be very useful. Practical education (vocational education) is not developed in the country, especially in the rural areas. We have more than 60 community centers and all municipalities are asking for more community centers. They also carry out activities aimed at enhancement of public awareness regarding their rights. 4-5 community centers will be established in Ajara (Khulo, Shuakhevi, Kobuleti, etc.). IACC is useful mechanism for sharing experience and keeping commitments taken; this is a fruitful platform for cooperation (maybe unlike other commissions). Suggestion: to find financial resources for different activities, e.g., for LAGs, who lack support. We are trying to give equal opportunity for population in remote areas for example to have equal opportunity to communicate with government.

Tbilisi, EUD Office, December 26, 2018

- Participants:
- Kety Khutsishvili, Programme Manager for Rural Development, EUD
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP

We aim at changing policies in the area of rural development. With political will it goes quicker. Extended the project for 6 months, due to contextual circumstances, sometimes over planned. UNDP has added value. Overall, I would not say that there are any major issues that can hamper implementation. Next year we will have emphasis on results; instead of activity level reporting. How to integrate community centers in rural development (the recommendation was appreciated). Requested recommendations regarding non-agricultural activities.

Tbilisi, SRDG Office, December 26, 2018

- Participants:
- George Nanobashvili, Economic Development Team Leader, UNDP
 - Nodar Kereselidze, National Project Manager, SRDG Project, UNDP
 - Natia Berdzenishvili, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, SRDG Project, UNDP
 - Ivane Shamugia, Sectoral Coordinator: Capacity Development, SRDG
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Hamid Chaudhry, International Consultant (Team Leader) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project
 - Kartlos Gviniashvili, Local Consultant (team member) for Evaluation of ENPARD II UNDP SRDG Project

Hamid thanked for this opportunity. No major limitation encountered, except duration of the mission. Draft report will be provided in the first week of January. Overall the project was run smoothly and was able to achieve all of its objectives. There might be some scope for improvement. National and local varieties were taken into account. Objectives are in line with the UNDP and EU requirements. Progress reports were provided during the project implementation – monthly, quarterly and annual. Excessive reporting, to much details; takes extra time of the staff. Good efforts on capacity development.

Impact: high praise of the project by stakeholders including CSOs, LAGs, etc. UNDP has successfully established as trusted partner for future projects. Capacity building of government staff boosted cooperation among them. Project led to merging some units at the MOA. Sense of ownership by partner ministries, efforts in this regard should continue. Overall a behavioral change among the government staff and stakeholders and recognition of rural development as a vehicle for improving living standards of rural community. LEADER approach was well understood by the stakeholders. The mechanism of LAGs has brought all the agents of change in the rural areas together. Developing regional chapters contributes to decentralization. Cross cutting issues were taken care of. Development of Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN) is a positive step towards the achievement of RDS.

Plethora of lessons learned. Capacity building activity should continue. Participatory approach and consensus building from the beginning contributes to stronger ownership. Project proposals selection and funding was conducted transparently and fairly. For LEADER approach major success factor is LAGs and their cooperation with municipalities. Emphasis should be made on few fields of agriculture (eg. high value-added production). Recommended also Commission for Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI) in collaboration with UNICEF. Study on diaspora. Assessment of ENPARD 1, post evaluation. Honey production (exportability, not meeting local demand). Second tier cooperatives (GN). Problem of legal trade, some honey export goes on illegally (NK). Marketing is an issue for farmers. Tourism has highest multiplier impact in the least developed areas (GN). We will provide management response to your draft report; maybe a skype conference with UNDP and EUD high officials. Municipal Assessment Report will be completed soon and provided to us. News just received: SRDG was awarded for its contribution to tourism development in Ajara.

Annex 7: Results and Resource Framework

Intended Outcome in the Country Programme Document (2016-2020) Results and Resource Framework:
CPD Outcome 2/UNPSD Outcome 3: Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, creating employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded
Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme Document (2016-2020) Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:
Indicator 1. Number of new policies, systems, institutional measures at national and subnational levels to generate/strengthen employment and livelihoods Baseline (2014): 3 policies/ programmes to support private sector development, including agricultural loan programmes (Ministry of Agriculture), support for cooperatives, ICCs and produce in Georgia (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development), EDA and GNITA programmes; Target (2020): At least 2 new policies for supporting inclusive business development, application of innovations and rural development
Indicator 2. Unemployment rate (disaggregated by sex, youth, rural/urban); Baseline: 15 (2013); Target: 12 – Georgia 2020 target
Indicator 3. Percentage (self) employment among vocational education (VET) graduates disaggregated by sex, people with disabilities, economic and other vulnerabilities; <i>Baseline</i> (2015): to be confirmed in 2015; work net data, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA); <i>Target</i> (2020): 10% increase vs. 2015
Applicable Outputs from UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-17: Outcome 1. Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor & excluded/ Output 1.1. National and sub-national systems and institutions enabled to achieve structural transformation of productive capacities that are sustainable and employment - and livelihoods-intensive
Title and ID (ATLAS Award ID): SUPPORT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA (project 00087576/output 00094527-00101137)

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)				DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	2016	2017	2018	FINAL	
Output 1: (00094527) Institutional capacity in place for the development and implementation of a National policy on Rural Development in Georgia	1.1: Rural Development Policy implementation mechanisms in place	Administration of the Government of Georgia Report of the MoA of Georgia Third parties' reports	1.1: No National Rural Development Policy in place	2016	1.1 Approval of the National Rural Development Strategy	1.1 Institutional Framework for National Rural Development Policy is on place		1.1/ A National and subnational mechanisms for implementation of Rural Development Strategy for Georgia are in place	Method: Obtaining legal act of Government of Georgia, third parties' reports and evaluations Risk: No risk identified
	1.2: Rural Development Action Plan approved and its implementation mechanisms in place	Administration of the Government of Georgia	1.2: No Action Plan in place	2016	1.2 Draft Action Plan of the National Rural Development Strategy is developed	1.2 Action Plan of the National Rural Development Strategy is approved	1.2 Implementation of the Action Plan of the National Rural Development Strategy is started	1.2/ Rural Development Action Plan implementation mechanisms based on an integrated model for delivery are on place	Method: Obtaining legal act of Government of Georgia Reports of MoA of Georgia Risk: No risk identified
	1.3: Level of skills and knowledge of rural development policy and delivery mechanisms within the public sector and other stakeholders.	Special assessments (through surveys and studies) implemented by contractors	1.3: Baseline information on the capacity of the public sector is identified stakeholders will be provided in the inception period (1-6 months) including through Training Needs Assessments.	2016	1.3a Baseline study/survey for collection of information on capacity of the public sector stakeholders is performed 1.3b An Intra-Agency Coordination Council (IACC) is established to enable integrated policy decisions on RDS development	1.3a Relevant regulations, HR, financial resources, coordination mechanisms and leadership are in place)*. 1.3b The capacity of the IACC to take integrated policy decisions is enhanced through a learning and development programme	1.3a Main institutions lead the process of the RDS and its AP implementation, risk management, monitoring and evaluation in accountable and open manner*. 1.3b The IACC are enabled to undertake and deliver an informed mid-term review of the implementation of the RDS	1.3/ Enhanced capacity within the public sector and stakeholders to effectively deliver rural development policy.	Method: Results of annual reassessment of capacities of the main stakeholder institutions Risk: quality of methodology and application of the annual reassessment

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)				DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	2016	2017	2018	FINAL	
Output 2: (00101137) Institutional capacity in place for the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy in Ajara AR	2.1: Formal decree approving the Rural Development Action Plan for Ajara	Legal Act of the Government of Ajara AR	2.1: Ajara Rural Development Strategy was approved by the Government, but no Action Plan in place	2016	2.1 Ajara Rural Development Strategy Action Plan is elaborated and approved	2.1. Ajara Rural Development Strategy Action Plan is reviewed and adjusted as needed	2.1. Ajara Rural Development Strategy Action Plan is reviewed and adjusted as needed	2.1/ An Integrated Rural Development Action Plan for Ajara developed and adopted	Method: Obtaining legal act of Government of Georgia Risk: No risk identified
	2.2: Level of skills and knowledge of rural development policy and delivery mechanisms within the public sector and stakeholders in Ajara AR	Special assessments (through surveys and studies) implemented by contractors	2.2: Baseline information on the capacity of the public sector and identified stakeholders will be provided in the inception period (1-6 months) through Training Needs Assessments.	2016	2.2 Baseline study/survey for collection of information on capacity of the public sector is performed	2.2 Level of skills of rural development policy and delivery within the public sector is improved	2.2 Level of skills of rural development policy and delivery within the public sector is improved	2.2/ Enhanced capacity within the public sector and stakeholders in Ajara AR to effectively deliver rural development policy.	Method: Results of annual reassessment of capacities of the main stakeholder institutions Risk: quality of methodology and application of the annual reassessment
	2.3: Level of knowledge of the critical success factors (monitoring and evaluation) for effective delivery of the Action Plan among Ajara AR public sector and relevant stakeholders	Special assessments (through surveys and studies) implemented by contractors	2.3: No evidence-based knowledge on the critical success factors (monitoring and evaluation) for effective delivery of rural development Action Plan	2016	2.3a Baseline study/survey for collection of information on knowledge of critical factors (monitoring and evaluation) among public sector and relevant stakeholders is performed 2.3b Pilot projects including TA and funding support are scoped (inception phase) and designed to demonstrate RD on the ground ⁴³	2.3a Relevant regulations, HR, financial resources, coordination mechanisms and leadership are on place)*. 2.3b Pilot projects established with clearly identified outcomes and measurable indicators	2.3a public sector and relevant stakeholders apply monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for implementation of RDS Ajara and its AP 2.3b. Pilot project results' replication and upscaling mechanism are designed for enhancement of RD impact on the ground	2.3/ Enhanced understanding of the critical success factors for effective RD to deliver improved employment and rural conditions in rural areas through the diversification of the rural economy in Ajara	Method: Results of annual reassessment of knowledge of critical success factors of the public sector and other stakeholders Risk: quality of methodology and application of the annual reassessment

* Note: The progress of indicators 1.3.a and 2.3.a will be performed primarily through application of UNDP methodology provided in the report "Measuring Capacity" (UNDP, 22 June, 2010, available at: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-paper-on-measuring-capacity/UNDP_Measuring_Capacity_July_2010.pdf?download). The methodology is based on the study of good practices and methodologies applied for measuring progress of result oriented institutional capacities development practices. Other relevant methodologies will be applied as well to make the assessment traceable in terms of measurable and in terms of a set of quantifiable indicators.

⁴³ Potential activities for direct support would include measures identified in the RDS for Ajara, including: Support for the establishment of a machinery ring to service small to medium sized producers; Enhancing the Extension Services and application of Rural Advisors' services, Assessing the feasibility of enhancing value chains, including establishing a collection centre (wholesale market) at municipal level through a private-public sector partnership.