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**UNDP/GEF Project: “Developing the Protected Area System of Armenia” (PIMS 3986)**

**Management Response to Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) Recommendations**



| MTE Recommendations  | Response/Action Taken   | Responsible                                   | Timing         |
|--|---|---|----------------|
| <p>➤ <b>Key recommendation 1.1.:</b> Review the requirements of the PD and activities assigned under each component. If the project implementation needs significant amendments it should be thoroughly designed and introduced to the project SC. This equally refers to amendment of activities, re-allocation of activities and outputs, and their implementation timetable, which should be strictly defined. Specific activities that are pending to be implemented in the last year and half of the project should be very clearly and unambiguously designated to each implementing agency.</p> | <p>The project team (WWF Armenia, EPIU SA and PMU) at its working meeting will review the requirements of the PD and activities assigned under each component with the following purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) To reveal, if the project implementation needs significant amendments;</li> <li>(2) Regardless, whether the project implementation needs significant amendments or not, strictly define implementation timetable and deadlines and responsible implementation partner for each pending action;</li> <li>(3) Discuss the issue of whether respective amendments should be made or not in contracts concluded between implementing partners and UNDP;</li> <li>(4) Establishment of respective monitoring and enforcement tools (See response on <b>Key recommendation 1.2.</b>);</li> <li>(5) Establishment of communication rules between the implementing partners and with third parties (See response on <b>Recommendation 1.5.</b>);</li> </ol> <p>The PMU will inform SC members on outcomes of the review at SC regular meeting in November 2012 or, if</p> | <p>CO<br/>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> | <p>2012/08</p> |

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|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
|  | required, will convene SC extraordinary meeting in September 2012  |   |                               |
| <p>➤ <b>Key recommendation 1.2.:</b> Time-bound results tracing tools should be applied to monitor exact and real progress achieved by implementing partners.</p>  | A relevant chart tracing time-bound results matrix will be developed in addition to approved work plan.  | PMU   | 2012/08                       |
| <p><i>Ceteris paribus</i>, this can be even a simply Gantt chart having percentages in the cells showing the extent of the achievement of results.</p>   | Strict monitoring and enforcement mechanism to ensure timely delivery of outputs will be elaborated and introduce in the practice. (See response on <b>Key recommendation 1.1.</b> )   | CO<br>PMU<br>EPIU SA<br>WWF Armenia   | 2012/08                       |
| <p>➤ <b>Key recommendation 1.3.:</b> It is recommended to revise the project SRF: it needs to be reviewed. Target indicators should be more achievable. Indicators that seem to be harder to achieve at this stage of the project implementation are suggested to be reviewed and modified.</p> <p>The project must do its best to invite the RA MoNP BMA, or the NAS, or another relevant institution (not directly involved into project implementation) to undertake the full responsibility of the preparation of METTs.</p> | <p>Some Project Target Indicators in Strategic Results Framework indeed are very ambiguous. However, the issue of revision and adjustments of target indicators will be discussed with the project partners and relevant national authorities and consequent measures will be taken upon necessity.</p> <p>Indeed, METT scorecards were prepared by implementing partner due to extremely limited practical experience in conducting METT analysis in the country, However, the management will do its best to involve other institutions into METT scorecards, as well as Capacity scores revision at the final stage of the project.</p> | -<br><br>-  | -<br><br>-                    |
| <p>➤ <b>Recommendation 1.4.</b> Intensification of links and communication with civic society institutions and local communities should be ensured. The project implementers should serve as a buffer between communities and the Government and international organizations.</p> <p>Similarly, links with other ongoing and planned projects should be continuously developed and enhanced.</p>   | <p>Project will intensify communication with broad range of stakeholders not only at regional and local, but also at national level. Several thematic round tables and public hearing campaigns will be organised with involvement of sector related NGOs, Academia and other institutions.</p> <p>Cooperation is established with, TJS-Caucasus, KfW funded Open Support project, smaller projects implemented by WWF-Armenia, etc. In particular, possibilities for financing management of envisaged Gnishik community managed protected area were discussed with positive</p>  | <p>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> <p>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> | <p>2012/10</p> <p>2012/10</p> |

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|   | results with UNDP/GEF/ CPAF TJS/KfW funded project Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of Armenia's Protected Areas System.  |   |                |
| <p>➤ <b>Recommendation 1.5.</b> Effective communication rules between the implementing partners and most importantly with communities should be established. Communities must know which project is addressing them (instead of implementing partners), implementing partners must have common strategy, common objectives, and apply respective instruments. Communities should not get different messages from partners.</p>  | <p>The issue of implementing partner's common strategy in frame of this project has been discussed during the working meeting of 21 July 2011. To dissolve existing problems, clear communication rules for the project will be developed and distributed to the project partners. In the future all planned communications and visits to communities (dates, venues, agenda, topics for discussion and documents, expected outcomes) should be discussed between the partners and approved by the PM.</p>   | <p>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p>        | <p>2012/08</p> |
| <p>➤ <b>Key recommendation 2.1.:</b> The project should seek additional opportunities to accompany the implementation of the "soft" measures (such as drafting Law and regulations, trainings, assessments, etc.) with activities resulting in tangible assets. This is especially important in case of communities that will be involved in full community management and co-management of envisaged PAs. First steps towards such an approach are already done: cooperation was established with TJS-Caucasus, KfW funded Open Support project, smaller projects implemented by WWF-Armenia, etc. Since the project cannot invest in tangible assets itself it should intensify those links and leverage the results in order to keep the local stakeholders motivated.</p> | <p>Possibilities for financing management of envisaged Gnishik community managed protected area were discussed with positive results with UNDP/GEF/ CPAF TJS/KfW funded project Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of Armenia's Protected Areas System. The project will seek additional opportunities for alternative funding sources to keep the local stakeholders motivated during and beyond the project life, in particular on-going "Support Programme for Protected Areas in the Caucasus, Open Programme Armenia" funded by the German Government through KfW.</p> | <p>CO<br/>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> | <p>2013/12</p> |
| <p>➤ <b>Key recommendation 2.2.:</b> Having the MTE results at hand the PMU is recommended to conduct internal revision of implementing and operational issues that may have negative impact and create risks for successful achievement of the project outcomes.</p>   | <p>A risk and issue log (UNDP format) will be maintained more regularly. The PMU will try to identify additional factors that may inhibit smooth implementation of the project. Identified issues will be indicated in the progress reports and presented to stakeholders on quarterly basis.</p>  | <p>PMU</p>                                    | <p>-</p>       |

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| <p>The first aspect to be addressed is the solution of uncertainty of the work plans and mis-coordination between implementing partners. The revision should result in a well thought and designed new work plans, including unambiguously defined activities assigned to each implementing partners, timetables (with strictly defined deadlines) of implementation, and exact outcomes expected.</p> <p>If necessary, respective amendments should be made in contracts concluded between implementing partners and UNDP. <i>Inter alia</i>, this will also mean strengthening and intensification of a project management function (e.g. better application of the monitoring tool).</p> | <p>Updated work plans with consideration of respective recommendations will be developed and agreed among project partners at the working meeting and will be further formally approved by the SC. (See response on <b><u>Key recommendation 1.1.</u></b>) under agenda item (1).</p> <p>The issue of whether respective amendments should be made or not in contracts concluded between implementing partners and UNDP will be discussed during the working meeting (See response on <b><u>Key recommendation 1.1.</u></b>) under agenda item (3).</p> | <p>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> <p>CO<br/>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> | <p>2012/11</p> <p>2012/08</p> |
| <p>➤ <b><u>Key recommendation 2.3.</u></b>: The actual results of the project implementation are quite modest, so far. This may be legitimate since many processes are ongoing and results yet to be expected. By all means, currently the efforts should be concentrated on completion of the Component 1 activities since they widely condition the success of other activities, too.</p>   | <p>The package of draft laws ensuring implementation of the project objectives are submitted to the MNP and responses from respective divisions received. After reviewing the comments and suggestions received the revised version will be submitted to the MNP for further submission to respective organizations.</p>  | <p>PMU<br/>EPIU IA</p>   | <p>2012/08</p>                |
| <p>Long delays in achievement of assigned outputs under the Component 1 may bring to a situation when part of project outcomes will not be achieved until the project end.</p>  | <p>Possibilities for no-cost extension of the project will be considered along with appropriate budget revision and the proposal for no-cost extension of the project will be submitted to SC for approval, if required.</p>  | <p>PMU</p>   | <p>2012/11</p>                |
| <p>➤ <b><u>Recommendation 2.4.</u></b>: Currently the project uses financial monitoring tools that follow Atlas Award system requirements. In order to improve the financial management and monitoring it is recommended to introduce new reporting instrument that will summarize expenses/investments made for each line of activity. This will create good ground for measuring the cost efficiency of the project and determine which exact</p>   | <p>In order to improve the financial management and monitoring, relevant templates indicating breakdown of planned and actual expenses for each activity were introduced in the beginning of 2012. Until now these sheets were filled on quarterly basis, however in order to increase effectiveness of financial expenditures implementing partners were requested to fill the forms on a monthly basis.</p>   | <p>PMU</p>   | <p>2012/08</p>                |

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|---|---|---|----------------|
| <p>activities requested the most investments. Moreover, it was confirmed that such templates (budget breakdown) sheets were prepared and introduced to implementing partners recently. The PM should be strict enough to receive actual expenses in accordance with planned.</p>  |   |   |                |
| <p>➤ <b>Recommendation 2.5.</b> It is recommended to continue awareness raising and capacity building among local communities and PA management.</p> <p>Training materials should be developed and delivered also for sanctuary managers and personnel. Relations with communities should be intensified and specific aspects of PAs establishment (such as purpose, ways of operation and management, restrictions, utilization of new opportunities, etc.) should be uncovered and better explained on regular bases.</p> | <p>PMU and implementing partners will continue awareness raising and capacity building among local communities and PA managers. See response on <b>Recommendation 1.5</b> for more details.</p> <p>Training activities will schedule as soon as new sanctuaries will established and appropriate staff defined. The training topics to be included correspond to the major capacity gaps relevant for sanctuaries (for more details see Project Document, Outcome 2.1).</p> | <p>PMU<br/>EPIU SA<br/>WWF Armenia</p> <p>EPIU SA</p> | <p>2013/09</p> |
| <p>➤ <b>Key recommendation 3.1.:</b> Major risks tracing model should be prepared, introduced, and followed in order to develop ongoing understanding of the environment the project is implemented in.</p>   | <p>A risk log is maintained regularly by the PMU and posted on Atlas. Each risk linked with the implementation of the project is reviewed twice a year and any negative change is being addressed immediately through mitigation actions.</p>   | <p>-</p>  | <p>-</p>       |


  
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