

**PIMS 5195: Clima East Pilot Project “Sustainable management of pastures and forest in Armenia to demonstrate climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits and dividends for local communities”**

UNDP Management Response Template

Mid-term Evaluation Report Date: **November 2015**

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**Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1.**

Relevant activities to systematically capture experience and lessons learned and ensure use:

It is recommended that the project needs to develop a set of specific and systematic activities aimed at ensuring:

- a. the results of the project are critically evaluated and key lessons and experience of relevance for replication and for policy development are identified,
- b. document these experiences and lessons in format relevant for different stakeholders (local communities, national government, other development partners, regional / international interested parties),
- c. pursue dissemination approaches that maximize penetration and uptake of project experience.

**Management Response:**

The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1. It is already incorporated into the project work-plan that 6 months before the project end the internal assessment & evaluation of implemented activities concentrating on the lessons learnt will be conducted; publication and dissemination of analytical materials, including lessons learnt analysis will be practiced with consideration of the wider stakeholders.	By end 2015	Project Team, Regional Coordinator		Completed
1.2. the Project will make use of different communication channels in digital & print versions (e.g. analytical reports, movie, national and local TV, leaflet,	By the project end			In process

articles, event highlights etc.), including Clima East Regional website update, UNDP in Armenia official website update, Clima East Pilot Project FB page etc. for a wider dissemination of the analytical paper				
<b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2.</b>				
<p><u>Project duration extension</u>: Considering the delayed start of the project no-cost extension to mid-2017 is recommended. This additional period will cover the delay in the project start. More importantly it will allow essential time for evaluating the project results and outputs, ensuring proper monitoring of the pilot sites and documenting project experiences and lessons learned.</p>				
<p><b>Management Response:</b> The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.</p> <p>The project no-cost extension was discussed with the Clima East Pilot Projects regional coordination unit in September 2015 followed by the project current work-plan and budget analysis which revealed that 9 months no-cost extension is relevant considering the project developments and challenges. Upon confirmation from the EU the project will allocate the extended period mostly for extensive evaluation of the project outputs and results, extended monitoring of the rehabilitation pilot sites, documenting and sharing project experiences and lessons learned and project operational closure, as well as defining follow up opportunities.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
Project no-cost extension will be applied upon confirmation from the EU along with the project work-plan and budget revision to plan activities and allocate funds for the period till end of September 2017	By end 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2016	CE Pilots regional team, UNDP CO, Project team		In process
<b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3.</b>				
<p><u>Ensure capacity and conditions for sustained application of community forestry and pasture management plans</u>: Critical to sustainability of forestry and pasture initiatives of the project will be the participatory development of management such plans. However, as critical will be support to the initial application of such plans. This requires supporting the plans adjustment in the face of real world realities learned during practical application, building capacity to apply such adaptive management, and identifying what factors or potential barriers need to be addressed in order to facilitate sustainability. The project needs to factor in these issues to relevant activities in 2015 and 2016.</p>				
<p><b>Management Response:</b> The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.</p> <p>Five rotational grazing plans were developed with participatory approach, later being approved by the community "Avagani" (Elderly Councils) in 2015. Training on implementation of the plans and regular monitoring of plans' implementation have been ensured.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status

3.1. For 2016 the Project foresees development of comprehensive pasture management plans for target communities with consideration of rehabilitated settings of pasture infrastructures and surface rehabilitation. Trainings covering sustainable pasture management will be ensured.	By end 2016	Project team		In process
3.2. Current set of activities include training for Tsovak community administration and residents on maintenance of the newly planted forest belt. Besides, the development of the forest belt management plan for Tsovak community will be ensured along with training on its application.	By end 2016			In process
3.3. The Project will work closely with local community Administrations and Avagani (Elderly Councils) for adaptive management capacity building as part of planned trainings for 2015-2016.	By end 2016			In process
<b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4.</b>				
<u>Build on potential of Advisory Board to mainstream results into policy:</u> The project needs to seek ways in which to maximize uptake of experience and lessons learned into National policy and programmes. It is recommended that the Advisory Board's potential role in this process should be assessed and means to maximize the potential identified.				
<b>Management Response:</b> The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.				
<b>Key Action(s)</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsible Unit(s)</b>	<b>Tracking</b>	
			<b>Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
The Project continues seeking the support of the established multi-stakeholder Advisory Board as a valuable resource to trigger the project experience and results' dissemination on national levels. The project coordination unit will emphasize the need for more proactive actions by the Advisory Board at the planned meetings and bilateral cooperation with members.	By end 2016	Project team	This action has continuous nature	In process
<b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5.</b>				
<u>Ensure experience and lessons are mainstreamed to relevant UNDP programme:</u> the experience from the project, particularly in terms of baseline assessment, stakeholder engagement and the combined ecosystem and socio-economic approach to rural development, have relevance to a range of				

UNDPs aims and mandate. Ensuring that the results and experience of the project are not “type cast” as purely “environmental” and that they are applied in other projects is important and ways to ensure this should be identified.

**Management Response:**

The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.

Currently UNDP applies the synergetic collaboration in-between the projects with emphasis on environmental and community development components. The Project cooperates with ongoing UNDP projects & programmes, specifically potential synergies are envisioned with the “ENPARD” and “Integrated Support to Rural Development: Building Resilient Communities” projects. The cooperation with GEF SGP resulted in approval and implementation of the “Clima East Plus” project in the same target area.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
5.1. The methodology for carbon stock accounting in forest will be replicated in the upcoming UNDP-GEF SLM/SFM REDD+ project.	2015-2016	UNDP CO		In process
5.2. The project will further practices (i) sharing of its experience, particularly in national and local stakeholder engagement and the combined environmental and socio-economic approach to rural development with relevant projects in the UNDP country office as well as (ii) learning the experience of other completed and ongoing relevant UNDP projects.				In process

**Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6.**

Evaluation and realistic assessment of CC mitigation benefits of the project: Re-occurring issues for all the pasture pilots is a. the meaningfulness of any data that can be generated during their time frames regarding carbon sequestration resulting from improved management / rehabilitation, b. realistic conclusion on mitigation benefits of improved pasture use. It is recommended that, given the CC mitigation (as well adaption) objectives of the project, a balanced evaluation of the realistic carbon sequestration benefits of the Armenia project specifically, and pasture land use improvements generally, is undertaken.

**Management Response:**

The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
The applied methodology of carbon stock accounting in soil and vegetation is targeted to identification of country specific and reliable carbon calculation system to evaluate real CC mitigation benefits.	By end 2016	Project team		In process



<p>The project will ensure use of international experience in a realistic evaluation of the carbon sequestration benefits following the implemented pasture and forest rehabilitation pilots to assess the improvements towards climate change mitigation and formulation of realistic recommendation for adoption of national carbon stock accounting system.</p>				
<p><b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7.</b></p>				
<p><u>Inter-pilot information and exchange visits:</u>  There are many potential benefits to be gained from project teams and stakeholders exchanging information and experiences, including visiting and gaining insight into the situations on the ground of other pilot sites and the means / approaches used to address them. In this context Armenia and Moldova perhaps have the closest correlation in terms of forestry activities and Armenia and Azerbaijan / Georgia in terms of pasture. Ways in which to take advantage of relevant experience in those countries needs to be followed up and utilized if relevant.</p>				
<p><b>Management Response:</b>  The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
<p>The Project coordination unit has been using the opportunities of pilot projects regional events and will continue so to share and learn experience from counterparts. The project will make sure of further use of the Clima East Regional website updates from different country pilots.</p>	<p>Regularly by the project end</p>	<p>Regional Coordinator</p>		<p>In process</p>
<p><b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8.</b></p>				
<p><u>Improve Practical Functionality of ClimaEast official Website:</u> All pilot projects expressed having had difficulties and problems with uploading materials produced by the project to the ClimaEast Website. It is recommended that means by which to improve ease of use should be developed in collaboration with projects and other users.</p>				
<p><b>Management Response:</b>  The recommendation is relevant and acceptable.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
<p>The project overcome the initial difficulties with uploading info onto Clima East regional website</p>	<p>Regularly by the project end</p>	<p>Project team,</p>		<p>In process</p>

<p>through the help of the website support staff and established successful cooperation. Information on the events and news as well as necessary documents are timely updated on the website. The "Help Desk" section of the website was used upon necessity. The project will further make sure to regularly upload information on news and events onto Clima East regional website.</p>		CE Regional team		
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**Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 9.**

Increased engagement with Policy project national and regional representatives to try to find entry points for policy impact: Currently there seems few practical entry points by which the policy project can utilize the Pilot project results (in Armenia and other countries). The development of the national NAPA might be one such opportunity if that is foreseen to be supported by the policy project (not clear during MTE mission). Possibly this could be achieved via inclusion into Advisory board meetings (if not already members). However, direct meetings to discuss the practical possibilities and opportunities might also be considered. It is recommended that approaches and ways should be looked into in collaboration with the Policy Project

**Management Response:**

The recommendation is partially relevant and acceptable.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
<p>The National Coordinator of the Clima East Policy project has been involved in some of the main discussions and events organised by the pilot project. The Clima East National Focal Point is a member of the Advisory Board. Further the National Coordinator will be also involved in the Advisory Board meetings. Besides the project regularly kept informed the RoA Ministry of Nature Protection on the project progresses. However, more feedback and proactive communication from the Policy Project is advisable.</p>	By mid-2016	Project team, Clima East Policy Project Team		In process