

“Women in Politics, Public Administration and Civil Society” Project **Final Narrative Report**

Section 1: Project Context and Objectives

This section provides a succinct narrative description of the action’s context and rationale, its objectives or key outcomes, and how these outcomes were envisioned to be achieved. This section also documents, if applicable, any significant changes that were introduced during implementation. This section is descriptive, not evaluative and should be as concise as possible.

Upon successful completion of the “Women in Politics” (WiP 1.0) Project in 2022 funded by the UK Good Governance Fund, the decision to continue advancing women empowerment agenda through a more comprehensive approach was made. This implied that in addition to the work launched through the WiP 1.0 project, which was implemented in partnership with the OxYGen foundation and was primarily geared towards ensuring that local women leaders are equipped with skills and knowledge to run for the local elections¹, a new dimension – the public administration – was added to the project intervention logic.²

This new addition was meant to ensure that systems, mechanisms and regulatory framework are in place to further promote women empowerment at the national level through various avenues, prioritizing targeted work with the national level agencies, including Human Rights Defender Office, Office of the Prime Minister (through the Civil Service Office), Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, as well as several line ministries³. Thus, “Women in Politics, Public Administration and Civil Society” (WiP 2.0) project was launched with the overall goal to contribute to the stronger systems and mechanisms for equal opportunities and rights for women and men to participate in local and national decision-making processes at local and national levels. The goal was intended to be achieved through the tailored programmatic interventions in

- Strategic Focus 1: Advancing women’s leadership and political participation in local decision-making via public or civic roles,
- Strategic Focus 2: Strengthening gender sensitivity and gender responsiveness of public administration system and gender mainstreaming in public institutions at national and local levels,
- Strategic Focus 3: Strengthening the role of civil society in setting agenda, contributing to decision-making and monitoring of governance processes on gender equality, women rights and women empowerment in Armenia.

The project aimed to attain its goals by strengthening the capacity and network of local women leaders through a blend of continuous learning and COM-B⁴ approach (Strategic Focus 1), engagement with the partners from the national government to improve gender-responsive policy making (Strategic Focus 2) and capacity development of the civil society organizations to act as a driving force in advancing inclusive governance approach in the bottom-up policy making (Strategic Focus 3).

The approach and tools adopted by the project proved to be fit-for-purpose and effectively applied. Several resulted in a number of collaborations leading to the tangible changes in the relevant areas:

¹Following the adoption of the 30% gender quota, a new cohort of women local leaders joined the community (local) councils within their communities.

² This decision was grounded on the successful experience and lessons learned of the UNDP’s Gender Equality and Public Administration in Armenia project (2019-2022).

³ Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁴ An integrated model, which implies that when (C)apabilities are advanced and (O)pportunities are provided, (M)otivation is enhanced leading to the (B)ehavioral changes.

- COM-B approach for [local women leaders](#)⁵ was introduced and expanded to shape their skills and knowledge through offering Women [Leadership Schools \(WLS\)](#), [Women2Women \(W2W\) Mentorship Scheme](#), [Women and Youth Advisory Councils](#) adjunct to the Head of Community (WYAC), Women Policy Club and Coaching Scheme.
- With the endorsement of the Prime Minister of Armenia, [Gender Equality Seal](#) for Public Institutions initiative⁶ was launched in the Human Rights Defender Office to serve as a tool to promote gender-responsive and inclusive governance within the public sector.
- In collaboration with the Civil Service Office (CSO), new gender mainstreaming and social inclusion approach to the [core competencies for civil servants](#) was incorporated. This creates foundation for conducting assessments that better reflect inclusive organizational practices.
- In collaboration with the Deputy Prime Minister Office, and in the context of the Republic of Armenia Public Administration Reform, elaboration of the Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion guide was completed to ensure gender dimension and inclusivity components are embedded in the national strategies at the design phase. This guide is part of the [Government's Strategic Governance Procedure](#), which is at the approval stage.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia, expansion of the participatory budget modality by implementing innovation challenges across the communities of Armenia was done through the WYACs and W2W Mentorship Scheme planned (See Indicator and Knowledge Database – ([See Indicator and Knowledge Database - IKDb, UNDP, "3. Community Initiatives" Sheet](#))).
- In collaboration with the expert community, the [Gender Glossary](#) to be served as a unified vocabulary for the area practitioners was developed and publicised.
- The Project contributed to the development of the 2025-2028 National Gender Strategy and Action Plan, by providing 66 recommendations to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, of which 59% were accepted ([IKDb, UNDP "6. Policy Documents" Sheet](#), [IKDb, OxyGen, "4. Policy Documents" Sheet](#)).
- In collaboration with the National Assembly of The Republic of Armenia, line ministries and Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the Republic of Armenia recommendations to the legislative drafts were provided (8 packages, 79 recommendations out of which 32% accepted) ([IKDb, UNDP "6. Policy Documents" Sheet](#)).

The project was implemented within a challenging context, making it necessary to adopt an agile and adaptable management approach, adjusting plans and instruments to accommodate the evolving circumstances (the aftermath of the military escalation in and around NK and subsequent refugee crisis)⁷. These circumstances prompted adjustments to the initial course of actions, resulting in the project substantive revision in 2023-2024.⁸ Despite these challenges, the project achieved tangible results, and in some areas exceeded initially set targets.

Section 2: High Level Results

In addition to normal progress reporting for the final reporting period, the final report should include an assessment of whether and how the expected outcomes and contribution to target impact(s) were achieved. In addition, any unintended/unexpected effects should be reported. A final assessment of whether indicator targets were achieved or not should be provided, referring to the annexed results framework. In cases where there is significant under or over achievement an explanation should be provided. This section should also include a description of key project successes and failures and explanation of how they connect to the results framework.

⁵ See transformational stories of local women leaders in shares Stories Folder (English)

⁶ Designed for the UNDP initially, the Gender Seal Methodology was later on adjusted for the public sector institutions to serve as a "self-diagnostic" tool to help the institutions identify potentially discriminatory practices within the institution and beyond, in the work with external partners. The methodology has formally been piloted in the South Caucasus region in HRDO in Armenia in April, 2024.

⁷ In the result of a large-scale military escalation on September 19, 2023 and a following mass exodus, more than 100,000 Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh had to flee their homes, becoming refugees.

⁸ The revision was approved by the Project Board in March, 2024. For details on the adjustments introduced, refer to the Section 3: "Reflections on the Project Intervention Logic / Theory of Change (ToC)" of the present report.

The project successfully accomplished intended outputs and made a significant contribution towards achieving the higher-level outcome. The detailed implementation status with explanations at the output and outcome level can be seen in the Project Results Framework (ANNEX 1).

Summary of the Impact and Outcome Level Achievements:

The Project's expected impact as defined in its revised Project Document and its Results Framework is formulated as follows: 'Systems and mechanisms to ensure equal opportunities and rights of women and men to participate in decision-making processes at local and national levels.' It is aimed to be measured by the project Results Framework indicator "Armenia's score on political empowerment in Global Gender Gap Index is improved with at least 0.040 points". The baseline [score from 2021](#) for Armenia was set to 0.091, with a target of an increase to 0.131 (0.040 points). During the lifespan of the project, Armenia has increased its [score to 0.316 \(2025\)](#); an increase of 0.225 points. WiP and WiP 2.0. projects contributed to the improvement in Armenia's ranking—from 114 in 2021 to 59 in 2025 by the effective implementation of project interventions, addressing key barriers and gaps in women's political participation, strengthening institutional capacities, and contributing to the ongoing reforms. Additionally, strong stakeholder engagement, adaptive management, and alignment with national priorities further accelerated results beyond initial expectations. This is a remarkable achievement, increasing Armenia's ranking from 114 in 2021 to 59 in 2025. The project has undoubtedly contributed to that, as also attested by the Project Final Evaluation⁹ (ANNEX 2).

At the Outcome level (Outcome 1.1), the target of 30% (28.5%) of the women local councillors' representation in the consolidated communities was practically maintained. Outcome 1.2 target indicator on the number of policies and practices improved through local women voice, decision-making, action and policy dialogue was surpassed with the aggregated sixty-five achieved vs. sixty-two planned ([IKDb, UNDP, "Summary" Sheet](#)), for the aggregated result). Outcome 2.1 and Outcome 2.2 defining the progress in promoting gender-sensitive practices, mechanisms and policies within the public sector have both been surpassed, offering a variety of tools, mechanisms and resources for the public servants to further enhance capacities in inclusive governance and favourable work environment. In particular, 14 vs. ten solutions have been offered under the Outcome 2.1¹⁰ and two vs. one module for civil servants have been elaborated (Outcome 2.2) ([IKDb, UNDP "8. Knowledge Products" Sheet](#)). Finally, civil society, advocacy and awareness raising component of the project have made noticeable contributions to advancing bottom-up policymaking as one of its main directions with 45% of recommendations provided being either adopted or included in the final draft documents (Outcome 3.1) ([IKDb, OxYGen, "4. Policy Documents" Sheet](#)), as well as further boosted self-confidence of women to engage in the community affairs through continuous advocacy and capacity development [recording 68%](#) against the planned 30% (Outcome 3.2).

Some other prominent project achievements include:

1. **48 innovation challenges/grants** (25 WLS, 12 WYAC and 11 W2W Mentorship Scheme) have been distributed, and led by 56 women leaders covering a large array of topics, including, promotion of citizen engagement in the community budget design, bottom-up policy making, awareness raising on LSG processes, monitoring of LSG processes, community development sectoral projects, capacity building events, etc.). The innovation challenges covered 189 settlements of 12 communities¹¹ in nine regions (marzes)¹² of Armenia. (Output 1.1.2; 1.3.2). **Participatory budget modality** has been promoted and initially applied in the context of WYACs,¹³ as a mandatory pre-condition, requiring local municipality to provide at least 20% of the total funding for the WYAC innovation challenge. 12 WYAC

⁹ See Executive Summary, p.5. (English)

¹⁰ Also Output 2.1.2a. Gender Equality committee established within the HRDO; Legal package for the quota in the Executive drafted; Competencies for the Civil servants have been updated; Parties Roadmap and Situational Assessment drafted; Hate speech campaign /posters/ with the MoJ implemented; ToR for Gender Focal Points within the public Institutions has been prepared; Dedicated package of documents and links for Gender Section for public institutions has been prepared; Unified Gender Glossary drafted; Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Methodologies / in one doc/ drafted; Package of recommendations for the Gender Strategy and Action Plan -Pillar 1 provided; Gender Machinery recommendations package compiled; Gender Seal Action Plan for the CSO drafted; Gender Seal Action Plan for the MoJ drafted; Gender Seal Action Plan for the YM drafted.

¹¹ Sevan, Masis, Pambak, Khoy, Noyemberyan, Artik, Gavar, Ashtarak, Areni, Aparan, Hrazdan, Ani

¹² Besides Syunik

¹³ Formed by the Decree of the Local Council (consisting of local women leaders and active youth) to operate adjunct to the Head of the Community with a broad mandate to address issues of community concern.

community initiatives recorded an aggregated value of 47,034,000 AMD, of which 15,305,000 AMD is the local contribution (33%) ([IKDb, UNDP, “3. Community Initiatives” Sheet](#)).

2. **The Women2Women Mentorship Scheme put in practice** during 2023-2024 created links between 72 women (mentees and mentors) from the local level and national levels (Government and the National Assembly). While all the pairs were involved in job shadowing, discussions, experience and knowledge sharing, 11 mentor-mentee pairs implemented innovation challenge projects, including the elaboration of budget guidelines for community councils, eco-education for youngsters, community (social) cohesion, local leadership and refugee integration, as well as the access to job market, to name but a few. (Output 1.4.3).¹⁴ Additionally, tangible local municipality funding was attracted to the Mentorship Scheme. With the total value for all 11 Mentorship innovation challenges amounting to 11,731,700 AMD, where the local funding stands for 2,315,000 AMD (around 20%). The innovation challenges covered 43 settlements of seven communities¹⁵ in five regions (marzes)¹⁶ of Armenia. The Results Framework envisages three successful cases of Mentorship projects, which should have been presented to public institutions for further replication and funding. However, local municipalities became increasingly interested in the projects operating in their communities and expressed willingness to fund the projects. In the result of this, five projects (three in Khoy, one in Artik and one in Masis) were provided additional funding through their municipalities to be sustained and expanded (Output 1.2.) ([IKDb, UNDP, “3. Community Initiatives” Sheet](#)).
3. **Contribution to the national level policymaking** through the Women Policy Club meetings as part of COM-B approach, allowed women local leaders to “raise their voices” and contribute to the improvement of the regulatory framework of the country by engaging in the discussions of the draft laws and by-laws (open for the public feedback and available on the e-draft platform). Eight packages (“Law on Temporary Unemployment and Maternity Benefits”, “Electoral Code”, “Code of Corporate Conduct”, two packages for the “Youth Policy Law”, “Strategic Governance Procedures of the RA Government”, “RA Territorial Development Strategy 2024-2030”, Joint Decree of Minister of Interior and Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia “On torture or ill treatment of detained persons”) containing 79 substantive recommendations have been submitted to the responsible state agencies for further address. Out of those 79 recommendations 32% were accepted surpassing the initial target by 13%. (Output 1.4.2) ([IKDb, UNDP “6. Policy Documents” Sheet](#)).
4. In addition to the review and update of the core competencies for the civil servants, **two dedicated training modules on [Gender-Sensitive Communication](#) and [Gender-Sensitive Monitoring](#)** have been accepted by the Civil Service Office.¹⁷ The modules have been elaborated in consideration of the latest global developments in strategic business communication, healthy work environment, respect for diversity and are in line with the vision of the Republic of Armenia Government to further promote citizen-centric, equitable and transparent civil service. The modules will be located on the dedicated page of the CSO and will be available for all the civil servants (Outcome 2.2; Output 2.1.2).
5. **Women representation at the appointed positions** at national and local levels has been advanced by the elaboration of comprehensive package of [amendments to five laws](#) (Law “On Structure and Functions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia”, Constitutional Law “On the Rules and Procedures of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia”, Law on “Territorial Administration”, Law on “Local Self-Governance” and Constitutional Law on “Political Parties”) to promote and advance women at the appointed positions at national as well as local levels has been elaborated in support of the 2024-2028 National Gender Strategy and Action Plan (*Priority 1, clause 5*). The package was submitted to the state agencies in charge (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Civil Service Office) for further action. Once adopted, the amendments will become mandatory to observe and

¹⁴ This Output Indicator relates to one large network of women leaders, which also includes Women Leadership School Participants, Coaching Scheme Participants, female members of WYACs and Policy Club members. Due to the continuous learning approach, the network members occasionally overlap, being participants of several formats.

¹⁵ Abovyan, Artik, Vanadzor, Khoy, Spitak, Vagharshapat, Masis

¹⁶ Kotayk, Shirak, Lori, Armavir, Ararat

¹⁷ In support of the Pillar 4: Human Resources Management of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) strategy.

comply with¹⁸ (Output 2.2.1). In parallel, the project developed a dedicated Parties Situational Assessment and Roadmap research to inform advocacy for women's advancement in political parties (Outputs 1.5.1 and 1.5.2). UNDP has constantly worked with female members of the parliament, as well as non-parliamentarian members of the Civil Contract Party through the Women Leadership School, Policy Club, Mentorship, WYACs formats, and dedicated sessions on gender-sensitive policymaking, contributing to shaping parties' approach to advancing women including through gender quota. Additionally, the collaboration with the woman-led party "Country to Live" further strengthened efforts to promote the gender quota agenda. Currently, only Civil Contract – has committed to a voluntary gender quota to be applied in its nominations.

6. **Four public institutions applied UNDP Signature Gender Seal Methodology** as a mechanism for a strong, accountable and inclusive public service: three at the national level (CSO, HRDO¹⁹, MoJ) and one at the local level (Municipality of Khoy, Armavir marz). All the mentioned institutions have already gone through two fundamental stages of the assessment cycle (baseline setting and the action plan design²⁰). All of them have addressed selected solutions²¹; several solutions have been co-funded by the respective institutions to further strengthen commitment, ensure continuity and ownership. The project Results Framework envisaged funding of the solutions by the public institutions, which was challenging to source in full due to contextual challenges the country was facing. Instead, partial funding was sourced for the following four activities: HRDO Scoring Matrix meeting; Capacity development on gender and Gender Seal for the community of Khoy; CSO capacity development for at least 17 General Secretaries; CSO core competencies workshop (Output 2.1.1; 2.1.3) ([IKDb, UNDP “8. Knowledge Products” Sheet](#)).
7. A series of advocacy meetings were conducted to present and promote **policy recommendations** developed through **the dialogue events and subsequent analysis**. These meetings aimed to ensure that local insights and evidence-based proposals reached national stakeholders and were considered within reform processes. A key mechanism for this advocacy work was the revitalized Civil Society Organizations-National Assembly (CSO-NA) platform. Two meetings of the platform were convened on the topics of (1) the role of public policies in shaping non-stereotypical portrayals of women in media and (2) the empowerment of Yezidi girls and women in decision-making. These meetings brought together MPs, CSOs, experts, media representatives, and members of the Ombudsperson's Office. The combined advocacy efforts of the project not only contributed to national policy development but also strengthened the position of civil society as a credible actor in shaping inclusive governance and institutional reform. Altogether, 31 events were organized bringing together a total of 637 participants, including 14% men and 29% representatives of vulnerable groups, ensuring broad and inclusive participation across all activities, with representation from 44 regional and national CSOs (Output 3.1; 3.2) ([IKDb, OxYGen, “2. Events” Sheet](#)).
8. **Six targeted advocacy campaigns** were conducted to raise awareness, shift public perceptions, and promote inclusive narratives around gender equality. These initiatives were carried out in collaboration with grassroots CSOs, regional partners, and minority media outlets, and reached diverse target audiences through multimedia storytelling, local actions, and social media campaigns (overall, around 90,000 reaches in social media). Three campaigns run within the 16 days of Activism Against Gender-

¹⁸ For instance, one of the amendments stipulates that the Government (Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers) cannot have more than 60% of representatives of either gender; the same approach is applied for appointing deputy ministers. Also, while appointing Chairs of the Standing committees in the National Assembly, a 70/30 ratio should be respected.

¹⁹ HRDO hosts the formal process, endorsed by the Prime Minister of Armenia. Output 2.1.2b. is the only indicator not addressed in full by the project completion due to the workload of the HRDO and key staff turnover. However, as assured by the HRD at the project closing ceremony, the HRDO will continue the process up till the external evaluation, which will decide on the status of the institution to have a Gender Equality Seal.

²⁰ Action Plan for the HRDO is in the validation stage. This institution is going through the formal process; thus all its submissions are being checked by the HQ.

²¹ Civil Service Office – training modules, competency framework update, capacity development to conduct assessment for the CSO staff, workshop for the General Secretaries from regions to build and lead inclusive teams; MoJ – hate speech campaign against women at the decision-making positions; HRDO – establishment of Gender Equality Committee, capacity development to conduct assessment, two internal surveys (self-Assessment on gender competencies; favourable working environment); Khoy municipality – capacity development on core gender concepts. Four solutions (capacity development (CSO, HRDO, Khoy) and workshop (CSO) have been co-funded by the respective institutions).

Based Violence (2022-2024)²², two campaigns were dedicated to the International Women Rights Months (2023, 2024)²³ and one campaign (Really Equal; 2023) featured six compelling video narratives of women with disabilities, highlighting the barriers they face and the solutions they have implemented in their communities (Output 3.3.) ([IKDb, OxyGen, “2. Events” Sheet](#)).

9. To strengthen the capacities of CSOs to **monitor gender-responsive policies**, promote collaboration, and support the development of monitoring reports and policy recommendations a five-months Mentorship Programme for 10 CSOs was conducted. The programme focused on two areas: **Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)** and **Gender-Responsive Policy Monitoring (GRP)**. The GRB component built participants’ analytical, research, and advocacy skills, leading to practical, data-driven recommendations on resource allocation, service delivery, and local governance. The GRP track enhanced CSOs’ policy monitoring abilities, provided hands-on tools, and encouraged collaboration. Each CSO focused on a specific gender-sensitive policy area. Overall, the programme deepened theoretical knowledge, improved practical skills, and supported evidence-based advocacy (Output 3.5) ([IKDb, OxyGen, “2. Events” Sheet](#)).

In conclusion, the WiP 2.0 Project has demonstrated a strategic alignment with the country's development strategies and the Government of Armenia's priorities²⁴, in advancing gender equality and governance reform. Most of the indicators set at the project's revision were met or surpassed, indicating the success and effectiveness of the project's implementation. The project's effective leadership advancement modalities and learning-by-doing approaches allowed to form a cadre of competent women capable of mobilizing their communities for local development, participatory governance, and direct democracy, as well as accountability and integrity. Mechanisms proposed for the public sector to improve inclusive governance proved to be relevant and provoked engagement. Finally, grass-root level initiatives sparked interest and demand for continuity and application.

Section 3: Project Intervention Logic / Theory of Change (ToC)²⁵

Did the intervention logic, supporting evidence and assumptions hold up against implementation experience? Did the project assumptions hold true / were any assumptions missing? Did any key contextual changes occur that impacted on the project? Were any adaptations made during the project lifetime, and if so, what were they (and in response to what)?

The implementation of the WiP 2.0 project confirmed the validity of the project intervention logic, supporting evidence, and underlying assumptions, as most of the intended outcomes were successfully achieved. The

²² 16 Days of Activism 2022 – “Promoting Women’s Leadership to Prevent Violence”: This campaign combined an online photo series with one grassroots regional, emphasizing women’s leadership in political and decision-making processes at local levels as a tool for preventing gender-based violence. Launched in November and concluding on December 10, it reinforced the link between women’s empowerment and the reduction of violence.

16 Days of Activism 2023 – “UNiTE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls”: Centered on the challenges stemming from the 2023 refugee influx from Nagorno Karabakh, this campaign spotlighted the self-organization, volunteerism, and leadership of women navigating crisis conditions. Stories of unity and resilience were shared across platforms to inspire broader solidarity and action.

16 Days of Activism 2024 – “Towards Beijing+30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls”: Organized with regional CSOs as localized initiatives, this campaign highlighted women professionals and activists from Vanadzor, Gyumri, and Armavir who are actively involved in GBV prevention. Three women, each representing a regional CSO (Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities NGO; Kanani NGO; and Youth Avangard NGO), were profiled in professionally produced videos with Armenian narration and English and sign language translations. 3 videos were prepared, and their short versions (reels) were shared on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube pages, as well as on the pages of community-based organizations mentioned above.

²³ International Women’s Day 2023 – “Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality”: Launched on March 8 and running until April 7, this campaign utilized visual storytelling across social media platforms, sharing daily posts that spotlighted women’s leadership and innovation in addressing gender inequality, particularly in the context of violence prevention.

International Women’s Day 2024 – “Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress”: Implemented in collaboration with Xirat Media, this campaign focused on the experiences of women and girls from ethnic minorities in Armenia. It featured six powerful stories from Yazidi, Kurdish, and Assyrian communities, emphasizing hope-based communication and demonstrating the transformative power of women’s leadership. Armenian Public TV produced a reportage on the campaign.

²⁴ This includes the Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050, which references the importance of “Equal participation of men and women in nation and statehood building decision-making processes;” the Armenia 2014 – 2025 Strategic Programme of Perspective Development; Programme of Government of the Republic of Armenia 2021 – 2026; Territorial and Administrative Reform 2015 – 2022; the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022 – 2024; and the National Gender Strategy 2019 – 2023 as well as the current draft National Gender Strategy and Action Plan, which is pending adoption. The project also aligns with Armenia’s legislative framework pertaining to gender equality including the Law on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. See ANNEX 2: Final Evaluation, p. 22

²⁵ The project Theory of Change suggests that: (i) when the women cadre is capacitated, motivated and advanced in leadership and enjoys opportunities and channels to voice and influence the decision-making; (ii) and if the national and local public institutions have systems and mechanisms for gender-sensitivity and responsiveness in place towards better gender balance; (iii) and the civil society is mobilized and capacitated as a collective intelligence and force for voice and action on gender equality, women’s rights and affairs; decision-making and governance processes in Armenia will be more inclusive, gender-balanced and gender-responsive at all levels (Project document, p. 7).

project Theory of Change, as became evident upon the project completion, adequately captured the reality at the same time allowing for certain level of flexibility to stay relevant to the changing context.

Within this approach, the project's consistent focus on [i] advancement of female leadership, [ii] continuous learning and COM-B, [iii] enhancement of gender-responsive environment within the public administration, [iv] contributions to the national level policy making and [v] strengthening the capacities of the civil society in formulating and monitoring the implementation of gender-responsive policies – was crucial for the intended impact: the introduction of the systems and mechanisms to ensure equal opportunities and rights of women and men to participate in decision-making processes at local and national levels.

Thus, the project was structured around the overarching assumption that the intervention will resonate with all stakeholders – female local leaders, local and national government, as well as civil society, resulting in the efficient implementation and ensuring sustainability.

In particular, it was assumed that the female local leaders would eagerly engage in the continuous learning modalities to establish themselves as “change agents” in their respective communities. This assumption was supported by the active participation of 273 project beneficiary women in Women Leadership Schools, Women and Youth Advisory Councils ²⁶, W2W Mentorship Scheme, Women Policy Club, as well as Coaching Scheme formats. Around 20% have benefited from at least two project formats. Concurrently, female local leaders lead the implementation of forty-six²⁷ innovation challenges within the Women Leadership Schools, WYACs, and W2W Mentorship formats. ([IKDb, UNDP, “3. Community Initiatives” Sheet](#)). The public administration system has been strengthened by the revised core competencies and gender-responsive modules for the civil servants, Actions Plans to enhance gender equality at the workplace for the Civil Service Office, the Ministry of Justice, and Yerevan Municipality ²⁸, official launch of the Gender Equality Seal Methodology in the Human Rights Defender's Office and the Hate Speech campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice ([IKDb, UNDP “8. Knowledge Products” Sheet](#)). National level policy-making was enhanced both as a component of the COM-B and a continuous learning approach through project beneficiaries (79 recommendations provided to the eight legal drafts²⁹), as well as through the civil society and project expert contribution to the 2025-2028 National Gender Strategy and Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia. Additionally, Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Methodology was requested by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to be used as a mandatory guide for the design of strategies and policies. Finally, the capacities of civil society in formulating and monitoring the implementation of gender-responsive policies was enhanced through a series of capacity development activities, the major one being the dedicated Mentorship Programme for the CSOs in gender-responsive budgeting and gender-responsive policy monitoring ([IKDb, UNDP “6. Policy Documents” Sheet](#)).

At the same time, there have been serious contextual challenges within the lifespan of the project: tensions and escalations at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in September 2022, refugee crisis in the result of massive exodus of the Armenian population from NK in 2023, as well as devastating floods in Lori and Tavush in 2024. The situation has predictably exacerbated existing inequalities and has deepened socio-economic vulnerabilities, making recovery and resilience more difficult to achieve. To better fit into the context and stay relevant, in the second year of its implementation (2023), a substantive revision of the project was initiated with the following outcome:

1. Several activities (Model government, Center for Transformational leadership, “Learning by Doing” modality for civil servants, self-support networks for women, Yerevan Municipality Gender Seal component, capacity development of the Advisory Council by the DPM) have been removed as repetitive or irrelevant.
2. Several other interventions recorded changes in indicators (WLS innovation challenges/grants, number of WYACs and WYAC innovation challenges/grants, Mentorship scheme participants, policy club recommendations, Gender Seal recommendations). It was decided to decrease the number of WLS innovation challenges/grants from 45 to 25 and supplement COM-B model with the coaching scheme. At the same time, since the modality of WYACs has been considered a success for encouraging

²⁶ WYAC coordinators and members.

²⁷ Two out of 48 innovation challenges were led by men (WYAC grants in Gavar and Artik).

²⁸ Yerevan Municipality has been removed from the project target institutions as a result of the substantive revision.

²⁹ 32% accepted

participatory budget, it was decided to increase the number of WYACs from initial five to eight and increase the number of grant projects from five to 12 and add refugee integration and inclusion components. For the Mentorship scheme, it was suggested to reduce the number of connections from 100 to 65 and work on the quality connection, resulting in a more substantive outcome (joint projects). Finally, the number of non-formal and formal Gender Seal assessment recommendations was adjusted to the number of institutions involved in the process (four in total – Civil Service Office, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights Defender Office and Khoy municipality).

3. New activities (coaching for women local leaders, capacity development for male MPs, voluntary gender quota for appointed positions, formal Gender Seal within the Ombudsperson office, Gender Mainstreaming Methodology, Social Inclusion Methodology, Unified Gender Glossary, capacity development for General Secretaries, mapping of national gender machinery) have been added to the project in agreement with UNDP Senior management, government counterparts and the donor (FCDO). Several activities (Gender Mainstreaming Methodology, Social Inclusion Methodology, Unified Gender Glossary, capacity development for General Secretaries, mapping of national gender machinery) have been added in accordance with the government priorities in the context of PAR to enhance gender dimension of policy making, enhance staff capacities at the highest level of civil service and define the gender machinery within the country³⁰.

Additionally, the project contributed to addressing the needs of refugees and host communities through several dedicated activities. Some examples include the interventions in Pambak, Masis, Artik, Garni, Martuni, Ashtarak and Tsakhkadzor³¹. These activities engaged both adult and young refugee population in different formats of citizen participation, bottom-up policy making, inclusive community activities, etc.

To conclude, the project ToC proved to be valid and relevant throughout the whole project lifespan. The substantive revision was conducted within the framework and in support of the ToC with no changes to the overall logic and rationale.

Section 4: Sustainability

This should discuss financial and institutional sustainability, any work taken forward by other actors, further resources committed etc. (with supporting evidence where possible)

- *How will the initiative be sustained beyond the lifetime of this project?*
- *How have stakeholders taken on ownership of the initiative and what is the likelihood of the work being sustained and the results continuing to have impact?*
- *What risks exist that will prevent this initiative's outcome being sustained?*

The project was designed with a strong emphasis on sustainability, aiming to ensure that the impact of interventions would extend beyond the project's lifetime. At the same time, to structure and visualize subsequent actions in the areas of WiP 2.0 project intervention, a comprehensive Exit Strategy has been elaborated in November 2024, submitted to the donor and approved for further action. It details the approach of the Gender Equality Portfolio towards the key activities implemented within the WiP 2.0 project. Below are some examples of how the project intervention results will be sustained beyond the project completion:

Capacity Development for the local councillors: Gender Equality Portfolio offered a country-wide capacity building initiative for all the local councillors (male and female) in collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Development and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia under a dedicated project funded by the NORAD. New comprehensive modules have been developed in cooperation with the MTAI and publicised on their website for further reference and use by other local and international partners and was based on the modules developed within the WiP 2.0 and Women and Youth for Innovative Local Development (SDC³² funded) projects.

³⁰ The revision was endorsed at the project Annual Board Meeting on March 5, 2024.

³¹ Pambak WYAC project offered tapestry courses for twenty participants, of which eight were refugee women. The three-months course helped to develop a solid skillset and to be better integrated in the social life of the host community; Masis community WYAC project focused on the improvement of healthcare services by renovating vaccination wards in Khachpar and Ranchpar settlements, which are currently homes for 653 refugees; "Crossroads of Traditions" project in Artik within the W2W Mentorship Scheme, which connected local women with refugee women through a women discussion club for mutual support; "Citizen Engagement in Youth Policy Law development" implied participation of local youth in discussion and provision of recommendations to the draft Youth Policy law. Eight young refugees so far have participated in the discussions from Ashtarak, Tsakhkadzor, Garni and Martuni.

³² Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Women Leadership School innovation challenges: These innovation challenges/grants have been the first and initial step of the “learning by doing modality”, further refined through the other, larger engagements (WYAC and W2W Mentorship grants, Policy Club interventions, Coaching scheme). Thus, for this modality, a phase-out approach will be applied. This means that the activity will be closing down, lessons learned will be consolidated, and no continuation is intended.

W2W Mentorship Scheme innovation challenges: The Mentorship Scheme has been taken forward by the policymakers (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia) and included in the National Gender Strategy and Action Plan (Action Plan, Strategic Priority 1, point 8). The policymakers intend to apply the Mentorship Scheme through various formats, one of which may be the innovation challenge. Furthermore, UNDP advances the leadership of 100 mid-career women in public administration within the framework of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) funded project, LSG, and private sector through COM-B model, mentorship, and coaching, including innovation challenges to improve family-friendly practices in both public and private sectors.

WYACs’ institutionalization: To strengthen the role of Advisory Councils in community affairs UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio submitted a package of recommendations to the Council of Europe to make mandatory the establishment of Advisory Council adjunct to the Head of Community and composed of vulnerable population in the new Draft Law on the Local Self Government (LSG) of the Republic of Armenia.

Participatory budget modality: The modality will continuously be promoted, including through the “Supporting Basic Infrastructure and Social Integration for Displaced Persons from Nagorno-Karabakh and Host Communities” project funded by the Government of Japan. Several WYACs throughout the country will be implementing projects on the improvement of municipal services.

Increased representation of women at the elected and appointed positions: The Gender Equality Portfolio presented a package of recommendations to the Council of Europe on draft LSG law, introducing two modalities for quotas at the local level. This includes the quota for the Deputy Heads of communities and Administrative Heads (both appointed positions). In addition, the project has developed the legal package with amendments to five laws on advancement of women in appointed position, which will touch upon nominations/appointments at the national level, local level and political parties.

Gender Equality Seal in the Human Rights Defender Office: The institution has committed to carry out the assessment beyond the WiP 2.0 project lifespan with the technical support of UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio.

Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Methodology: The methodology has been incorporated into [Government’s Strategic Governance Procedure](#), which has been circulated and validated with the representatives of the ministries. Currently it is in the process of discussion and adoption at the Prime Minister’s office.

Gender Machinery: Recommendations provided by the project aim to refine the functional engagement of Council on Women’s Issues and Standing Committee on Gender Issues within Regional Administration and Yerevan Municipality. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia has accepted all 26 recommendations, of which 13 have been prioritize for further address. Once implemented, they will form the basis for new ToRs for these institutions, clearly delineating the scope of work and the areas of intervention.

National Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2028: 14 recommendations were accepted in the 2025-2028 National Gender Strategy and Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia including those related to measures to strengthen women’s participation in executive decision-making; introduce gender- impact assessment and mainstreaming methodologies in strategic documents; develop and implement gender equality and sensitivity training modules for public servants; institutionalize continuous gender-sensitive training; enhance core competencies of civil servants with an inclusive and gender-sensitive focus; and establish a system for identifying and tracking children excluded from compulsory education.

Policy Assessment and Evidence Accumulation: The policy assessment and evidence accumulation events, along with advocacy meetings and national forums, have laid a solid foundation for ongoing continuous dialogue and collaboration for local level community members and national level decision makers. The CSOs and community members already have experience and are equipped to engage decision-makers and advocate for gender equality issues. By empowering CSOs and providing replicable tools, the project outcomes will continue to drive gender equality advocacy beyond its completion. OxYGen will also continue to utilize its various dialogue platforms for its advocacy efforts and CSO empowerment. Moreover, the outcomes of the advocacy meetings and dialogue events are used across various projects implemented within the Gender Portfolio of the organization.

Targeted Recommendations for Policy Change: While those specific recommendations were developed as a project activity, CSOs were actively involved in the process as a result of the bottom-up policy making procedure. The mentorship scheme was later designed to build the capacities of CSOs in policy monitoring, giving them an opportunity to monitor the further implementation of the recommendations independently. OxYGen will remain engaged in policy planning and policymaking and advocacy efforts to promote gender-responsive legislation and ensure gender mainstreaming.

Advocacy Materials and Data Generated: The materials developed during the project will continue to be used to raise awareness and create regular content. These resources will be archived on accessible platforms, ensuring they remain available for future use. The materials will be integrated into ongoing communication efforts, extending the reach and impact beyond the project's lifespan.

For the actions presented above, no major risks have been identified. Most of the actions have already been taken forward. However, there is a potential risk for the policy documents to stay on the agenda of the policy makers without a serious intention for adoption due to changing priorities. This can particularly affect the Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Guide and Legal Package of Amendments to increase women representation at the appointed positions. Besides, depending on the priorities of the municipalities, participatory budget modality may at some point lose its attractiveness. Finally, if no new elements are added to the W2W Mentorship Scheme, it may not be pursued by the line ministries as an efficient means for peer-to peer learning and for bridging national and local level expertise.

Section 5: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Description of how the project has contributed to gender equality and/or social inclusion, including any intended and unintended outcomes. This can be done with reference to project indicators disaggregated by gender, age, income-level or other population break-down where relevant. Potential learning around GESI should be reflected (what went well / less well, what should be done differently next time?).

Please note: If main focus of the project has been on Gender Equality – then maybe narrow down to avoid confusion by mentioning Social Inclusion at this final stage.

WiP 2.0 is a gender equality project at its core, targeting gender equality in a comprehensive manner as outlined in the relevant framework documents. In particular, the project responds to the following strategic outcomes/outputs: **UNSDCF 2021-2025 Outcome 8:** All persons benefit from gender equality and equal opportunities to realize their human rights; fulfil their economic, political, and social potential; and contribute to the sustainable development of the country; **CPD 2021-2025 Outcome 3: Output 3.3:** Systems/ mechanisms to ensure equal opportunities/ rights to participate in decision making; **Strategic Plan 2022-2025: Signature Solution 6: Output 6.2; SDG 5; 5.5:** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.³³

An independent Evaluation has assessed the project based on the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES)³⁴. The aim of the GRES is to deepen the gender lens by providing

³³ The WiP 2.0 project is highly relevant to and aligned with Armenia's national development priorities as reflected in various national level strategies. This includes the Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050, which references the importance of "equal participation of men and women in nation and statehood building decision-making processes;" the Armenia 2014 – 2025 Strategic Programme of Perspective Development; Programme of Government of the Republic of Armenia 2021 – 2026; the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022 – 2024; the National Gender Strategy 2019 – 2023, as well as the newly adopted National Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2025 - 2028. The project also aligns with Armenia's legislative framework pertaining to gender equality, including the Law on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

³⁴ Project Final Evaluation, p.14. (English)

operational definitions and marking distinctions between different types of results. The GRES enabled the evaluator to speak in more granularity about results; for example, whether the result primarily focused on counting the number of men or women (gender targeted) or is it truly moving to shifting power and gendered social norms in communities or institutions (gender transformative).

The evaluation revealed that the explicit objective of the project was indeed on gender equality and women's empowerment, with the project being allocated a gender ranking of GEN-3 (the highest gender marker). This has also been supported by the scoring against the GRES scale, where the majority of its results are gender sensitive or gender responsive, with many results showing the potential to be gender transformational. For example, five out of six Outcome Indicators are assessed as gender-responsive with the potential to become gender-transformative³⁵; several output indicators are assessed as gender-sensitive, etc.³⁶ *(for a full attribution of the GRES scale to the Outcome and Output Indicators please see "Log frame- Results Framework" section of this report).*

The project has made concerted efforts to reach rights-holders at heightened risk of vulnerability including persons with disabilities and minorities; both rural and remote communities; has made significant efforts to engage with men (Yezidi community mobilizers to serve as a bridge between the local residents; targeted interventions for men; stories featuring ethnic minority women; ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities at the project activities, e.g. National Forum "On the Path of Mentoring: From Experience to Success"; engaging refugees in the innovation challenges projects in Masis, Pambak, Aparan, etc.). In particular, the following strategies were applied to improve outreach and engagement, tailored for each group:

- a. for capacity development activities and events, a tri-step engagement strategy was put in place to ensure a higher turn-out. Potential participants were first invited by the formal e-mail, containing the invitation, brief project information and an agenda, which was followed by a phone call, and a reminder e-mail. This approach helped to secure and surpass several indicators in terms of turn-out and participation.
- b. for a wider inclusion of female beneficiaries with young children, places with specific facilities (children playing room, nursery room, etc.) have been considered as project venues at the event/activity design phase and participants were informed of those opportunities.
- c. for ethnic minority, refugee, people with disabilities inclusion, a separate close was added to the WYACs membership and innovation challenges call, as well as Mentorship Scheme innovation challenges call, encouraging participation of the mentioned groups of population. Additionally, grants implementers and WYAC coordinators were continuously nudged to promote this approach.

Finally, at a higher level, upon the request of Deputy Prime Minister's Office, in the framework of the Public Administration Reform of the Republic of Armenia the elaboration of the Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Methodology was completed, to serve as a mandatory document for all the strategic level policy documents and strategies, ensuring that the gender dimension and social inclusion components are embedded in the documents at the design phase.

Section 6: Value for Money (VFM)

- *Performance against the VFM indicators should be assessed. If an appropriate benchmark or target was set, the results should be compared with this. The results should be supported by a narrative explanation.*
- *Implementing partners should identify, in a short narrative, aspects of implementation that represented good VFM and how this was achieved. They should also identify areas where VFM could have been better and the factors that prevented this.*

³⁵Outcome 1.1. Women's representation at the local level is maintained or surpassed; Outcome 1.2. Number of policies and practices improved through local women voice, decision-making, action and policy dialogue; Outcome 2.1. Number of all adopted gender sensitive practices, mechanisms, policies (at the national level) through project contribution; Outcome 2.1. Number of all adopted gender sensitive practices, mechanisms, policies (at the national level) through project contribution; Outcome 2.2. Number of capacity development modules on gender equality and/or social inclusion accepted by the government; Outcome 3.1. Ratio of suggested local and national actions, solutions and recommendations by civil society are adopted/taken forward by the decision-makers.

³⁶ Indicator 1.1.1: Number of trained women and men with advanced leadership or gender sensitive policy-making; Indicator 1.1.2: Number of democratic and innovative initiatives led by women (as a result of small grants scheme applied in activities 1.1.A; 1.1.C); Indicator 1.1.4: Number of women leaders engaged in coaching.

- Metrics – unit costs of outputs delivered.

The project was carried out within the framework of the approved budget. No amendments to the budget have been entertained, and the project was implemented and completed within the agreed timeframe: 1 July 2022 – 31 March 2025.

According to the Project Results Framework, the VfM is measured through **effectiveness, efficiency and economy**:

For the **effectiveness**, the following indicators are selected:

Outcome Indicator 1.1.: Women's representation at the local level is maintained or surpassed: This indicator has been almost maintained at 28.5% vs. 30% set.

Outcome Indicator 2.1: Number of all adopted gender sensitive practices, mechanisms, policies (at the national level) through project contribution: 14 vs. 10 planned³⁷.

Outcome Indicator 3.1.: Ratio of suggested local and national actions, solutions and recommendations by civil society are adopted/taken forward by the decision-makers: 45 % vs. 30% planned.

Output Indicators 1.1.3: Percentage of beneficiaries with a positively changed leadership role in community affairs: The indicator has been successfully achieved. 45.9% of beneficiaries demonstrated measurable positive changes in their leadership roles within community affairs. This result exceeds the program's target threshold of at least 30% of beneficiaries showing positive change, confirming that the indicator has been met.³⁸

Output Indicators 2.3., 3.6.³⁹ Knowledge increase: Overall, across all the capacity development events (WLS, WYAC, female and male parliamentarians, female civil servants, civil servants participating in the gender mainstreaming and social inclusion methodology workshop, Civil Service Office Staff, HRDO staff, civil society organizations), an uneven knowledge increase has been recorded, with the most consistent being female civil servants capacity development⁴⁰ (Output 2.3; 27,95% and 29,56% for two events), whereas the WLS have recorded the biggest range of fluctuations (Output 1.1.3; from 15,7% to 47,2%). For other categories of the events participants, the average knowledge increase is within the 25-28% range. Civil society organizations exhibit an uneven increase as well (Output 3.6.; 50% in 2022 and 37% in 2024).

Output Indicator 1.4.2.: Percentage of recommendations adopted from women-led bottom-up policy dialogue activities and recommendation packages: Eight packages ("Law on Temporary Unemployment and Maternity Benefits", "Electoral Code", "Code of Corporate Conduct", two packages for the "Youth Policy Law", "Strategic Governance Procedures of the RA Government", "RA Territorial Development Strategy 2024-2030", Joint Decree of Minister of Interior and Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia "On torture or ill treatment of detained persons") containing 79 substantive recommendations have been submitted to the responsible state agencies for further address. Out of those 79, 32% accepted.

The **efficiency** is assessed through:

Output Indicator: Number of activities implemented in synergy/complementary efforts with parallel Women and Youth for Innovative Local Development (WYILD) Project (SDC-funded), as well as across the Strategic Focus areas optimizes the invested resources (at least five). WYILD⁴¹ project synergies have mainly evolved around engaging four WYILD-project established WYACs⁴² in Aparan, Areni, Khoy, Noyemberyan in innovation challenges, as well as around two WYAC capacity development activities. Besides, WYILD beneficiaries have also been a part of the six online discussions and presentations through the Virtual community of practice events (total for WYILD: 12) In collaboration with Women Economic Empowerment in the South Caucasus (WEESC II)

³⁷ Formal adoption of some documents is underway.

³⁸ See the End-line Assessment Report

³⁹ Indicators have been paraphrased for convenience.

⁴⁰ The events took place in 2022; however, the figures are presented to show the overall dynamics.

⁴¹ Women and Youth for the Innovative Local Development project was concluded in 2023.

⁴² In addition to the nine WYACs established through the WiP 2.0 project.

project⁴³, FemInno conference in 2023 was organized (total for WEESC: 1). With the Platform#5: Accelerating economic opportunities for women in Armenia project⁴⁴, FemInno Conference, 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, Gender-Responsive Budgeting Event within the Women's Right Month were conducted (total for Platform #5: 3). Additionally, Parallel Report on the Assessment of the Current situation of the Implementation of the Beijing Plan of Action in Armenia was designed in collaboration with the Platform#5: Accelerating Economic Opportunities for Women in Armenia, Resilience from the Start project⁴⁵ and the OxyGen foundation (Strategic Focus 3) (total counted as 1). Project also partnered with the other Portfolio projects, especially, with the Police Reform Project around Gender Equality Seal Methodology⁴⁶ for the Police staff, as well with the Modern Parliament for Modern Armenia (MAP) project to organize Mentorship Scheme second phase (engage female mentors from the NA), training for thirty male members of political parties, Draft Youth Policy Law discussion at the National Assembly and discussion of the amendments to the legislation on education (total for Police Reform and MAP: 5).

Output Indicator 1.1.1: Number of trained women and men with advanced leadership or gender sensitive policymaking (150 women elected to/working at LSG, 30 female members of political parties; 30 male members of political parties): This indicator has been surpassed: 154 vs. 150; 38 female MPPs vs. 30; 33 male MPPs vs. 30.

Output Indicator 1.1.2: Number of democratic and innovative initiatives led by women (as a result of small grants scheme applied through 25 WLS and 10 Mentorship): This indicator has been surpassed: 25 WLS; 11 Mentorship.

Output Indicator 2.3.: Number of a) civil servants, b) female civil servants (MoJ, MLSA, CSO); c) General Secretaries with around 30% knowledge increase verified through tests in gender mainstreaming, leadership and soft skills: This indicator has been surpassed: a) 141 vs. 100; b) 115 vs. 50; c) 5 vs. 50.

e) **Output Indicator 3.6.: Number of CSOs to increase their capacities for 30%⁴⁷.** Overall, there are 89 CSOs with the average of 47.04% knowledge increase.

For the economy, the following indicators are suggested:

Indicator 1: National staff/trainer unit cost does not exceed GBP 200.00 per day:

Local trainers list (LTA) for the Gender Equality Portfolio thematic directions was updated in December 2023, and the unit cost for trainers lays within the USD 128 – USD 192 range. Additionally, if the expert is not on the LTA list, however, possesses unique expertise, according to the UNDP internal regulation on the subject matter, direct purchases of goods, services and works (without the formal procurement procedures) cannot exceed USD 500 per month.

Indicator 2: Cost of international trainer/consultant does not exceed GBP 500.00 per day (2 international experts vs. 25 national experts):

There have been three international experts within the project's lifespan⁴⁸, and only one was engaged for the daily rate of 570 GBP. The expert who was tasked to work on the Project's Final evaluation, was hired from the UNDP international consultant pool, possessed over 20 years of professional experience in the provision of policy, technical and analytical advisory services to international multi- and bi-lateral organisations and had previously worked in the conflict, post-conflict and fragile/transitioning states including post-Soviet countries.

Indicator 3: The most regular the average cost for regular three-days face-to-face training, including experts' fee, accommodation, travel, fee and catering does not exceed GBP 200.00 per person per training:

⁴³ Concluded in 2024.

⁴⁴ Funded by Austrian Development Agency, one of the UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio projects.

⁴⁵ Funded by the Government of Serbia, one of the UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio projects.

⁴⁶ WiP 2.0 project staff acted as the liaison between the experts and the Police Reform project to assist in delivering the task.

⁴⁷ The indicator has been paraphrased for the ease of reference.

⁴⁸ Alla Skvortova (Inputs for the Gender Mainstreaming methodology), Elinor Bajraktari (Project Mid-term Evaluation), Joanna Brooks (Project Final Evaluation).

The unit cost under this category had fluctuated between USD 310 – 385 per person per training within 2022-2025. The situation affected the UNDP Long-Term Agreement (LTA) modality for translation/ interpretation, photo and video services, as well as editing and graphic design prompting revision of the previous arrangements and signing of new LTAs with increased price rates (August 2024; January 2025).

Indicator 4: Average innovation challenge/grant size in the range of GBP 700-6,000 per grant, per implementor:

There are three types of innovation challenge/grants envisaged by the project activities, ranging from AMD 300,000 for WLS grants to AMD 2, 600, 000 for WYAC grants. 12 WYAC community initiatives recorded an aggregated value of 47,034,000 AMD, of which 15,305,000 AMD is the local contribution (33%).

Section 7: Lessons learned

What lessons does the project offer? Did any unintended consequences occur? What would the partner do differently/keep if they were to do a similar project again? What would they recommend to others working in the same area? Lessons can relate to design, implementation, GESI, VFM etc.

The main lessons learnt throughout the project implementation can be clustered in three main categories, pertaining to: 1. Project Design and Monitoring; 2. Programmatic Implementation and 3. Future Outlook:

1. Project Design and Monitoring:

Realistic timeframe to achieve SMART results: Achieving tangible results in initiatives aimed at empowering women and enhancing their political participation requires a longer timeframe than that allocated for WiP 2.0. Extending the project duration by an additional 1-2 years would allow for the reinforcement and embedding of results and provide essential support to women candidates during elections, slated for 2026, allowing them to demonstrate their values and capabilities beyond quotas and fostering a more genuine transformation in the political landscape.

Effective Implementation and MEL: The combination of efficient implementation strategies with robust MEL mechanisms has been essential in enhancing project success. The Indicator Tracking Matrix, coupled with the Activity Tracking Tool allowed for the detailed progress monitoring at the activities and the indicator level, which were reported at the Weekly Portfolio Meetings. This focus allowed for continuous assessment of progress, enabling timely adjustments and ensuring that project objectives align with the evolving context of programmatic initiatives.

2. Programmatic Implementation:

Volatile political situation and refugee crisis have affected a) engagement of project beneficiaries from the host communities, b) funding capacities of the local municipalities, and c) governmental priorities. To secure unimpeded course of action, the following mitigation measures have been put in place:

- a. activities with the project beneficiaries were organized online or in smaller groups (*e.g.* policy clubs, WYAC, WLS and Mentorship scheme grants proposal discussion, WYAC proposals writing, some meetings between mentors and mentees)
- b. flexible innovative challenge modalities were applied to secure a swifter “buy-in” from the local municipalities
- c. engagement with the governmental partners was done in a mixed mode and more often (online and offline) to stay tuned to the emerging needs.

Advocacy Strategies: During the planning of advocacy strategies and activities, the need for direct discussions with national-level decision-makers became evident. To tackle this, the project revamped the CSO-NA platform meetings, creating a mechanism to facilitate meaningful dialogues between grassroots-level CSOs and decision-makers at the national level. This was supplemented with the targeted engagement of the UNDP Modern Parliament for Modern Armenia project (please see point 7 of this section).

Knowledge Enhancement and Sustainability: A tangible segment of project activities was dedicated to the capacity development for both the national and local level beneficiaries. To continuously enhance theoretical and practical knowledge transferred, in addition to the conventional training didactic materials (PPTs, hand-outs, checklists), the participants were provided by the professional literature on the relevant training subject, including leadership, management, emotional intelligence, teamwork, strategic communication, etc., as well as useful links.

Relevance and Ownership: A co-design modality, implying a wider participation of the community of intervention in the selection of the area of address and elaboration of the project, was applied within the innovation challenges (grants) projects. As a result, projects were fine-tuned to the needs of the local population, sourced local funding and are regarded as the community-driven initiatives (e.g. library services improvement in Artik, Shirak; developmental kindergartens in Ashtarak, Aragatsotn, etc.).

Communication and Partnership Building: Regular meetings with Government and local partners helped to maintain synergies and agile workflow. Due to this, several important initiatives have been implemented (targeted work with the CSO on competencies, modules and capacity development; Hate speech campaign with the MoJ; Gender Seal with HRDO and Khoy, Armavir; Gender Machinery review and provision of recommendations to the Draft National Gender Strategy and Action Plan with the MLSA; engagement of 18 female MPs in the Women2Women Mentorship Scheme, discussion of legal drafts and capacity development for the 34 male political party members with the National Assembly; 12 Mentorship Scheme projects with female Government representatives⁴⁹). Additionally, all WYAC and Mentorship Scheme innovation challenges have been finalized in close collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure.⁵⁰

3. Future Outlook:

Mentorship Format: The mentorship model that connects women at the national and local levels proved to be effective in raising awareness on both sides. Central-level mentors gain insights into community issues, while local participants learnt about navigating and addressing these issues within broader governance frameworks. This exchange of knowledge enhanced the capacity for collaborative problem-solving and strengthens advocacy efforts.

Tangible Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming can often seem abstract to stakeholders; thus, it is essential to connect it to tangible actions and outcomes. Initiatives like policymaking for civil society and the introduction of the Gender Seal provide concrete frameworks that help stakeholders understand the relevance of gender policies, promoting deeper engagement and commitment.

Planning for Transformational Change: For transformational change to occur, it is essential to incorporate strategic planning from the outset of the project. Establishing clear goals, benchmarks, and methods for achieving sustainable impact needs to be an integral part of the project design process, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned, and objectives are realistically attainable. It is not realistic to expect transformational change after 2.5 years, and a limited budget.

Linking CSOs and Government: Establishing connections between CSOs and government entities has proven crucial for enhancing the recognition of CSOs as strong actors in the policymaking process. This collaboration fosters trust and dialogue, allowing for the development of policies that are more inclusive and responsive to community needs.

⁴⁹ Deputy Prime Minister's office, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure.

⁵⁰ Utilising grants to build the skills and capacities of women, through the provision of opportunities and motivation is vital for translating training into practical applications. By clustering grants to create collective outcomes, the project was able to maximise resources and leverage results more effectively, demonstrating that strategic allocation can lead to more significant impacts. While not their primary purpose, the grants were also able to bring about some community-level change.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: WiP 2.0 Results Framework

ANNEX 2: WiP 2.0 Final Evaluation Report

ANNEX 3: WiP 2.0 Project Public Events Links

ANNEX 4: WiP 2.0 Women in Local Self-Governance in Armenia: Endline Assessment

ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
COM-B	Capacity, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPMO	Deputy Prime Minister's Office
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GGF	Good Governance Fund
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
GRP	Gender-Responsive Policy Monitoring
GS	Gender Seal
HRDO	Human Rights Defenders Office
IKDb	Indicator and Knowledge Database
LSG	Local Self-Government
LTA	Long-Term Agreement
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MP	Member of Parliament
MTAI	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
NA	National Assembly
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VFM	Value for Money
WEESC	Women Economic Empowerment in the South Caucasus
WiP	Women in Politics
WLS	Women Leadership school
WYAC	Women and Youth Advisory Council
WYILD	Women and Youth for the Innovative Local Development
W2W	Women 2 Women
UK	United Kingdom