Docusign Envelope ID: 6880192C-CD18-4C9D-B808-FAE604F2CAC6

United Nations Development Programme

Country/Region/Global: Armenia

Initiation Plan

Project Title : Promoting Human rights, Orchestrating Equitable access to justice, Building Unity and Support for refugees and host communities (PHOEBUS)

Expected UNSDCF/CPD Outcome(s) : UNSDCF Outcome 6 /CPD 3: People benefit from effective and accountable governance systems and institutions that safeguard human rights, uphold the rule of law, and public administration that ensures effective and human-centred service delivery for all

Expected CPD Output(s) : Output 3.2: Capacities, functions and financing of rule of law, national human rights institutions/systems strengthened to protect human rights, expand access to justice and combat discrimination, with a focus on women and marginalized groups

Initiation Plan Start/End Dates : 05/11/2025 – 04/11/2026

Implementing Partner : UNDP

Brief Description

In the context of Armenia's ongoing displacement and refugee crisis national institutions face growing challenges in ensuring equitable integration, inclusive justice and the protection of fundamental rights. To address this need, the initiative focuses on strengthening legal aid services, promoting social cohesion and enhancing institutional capacity to better support both refugees and host communities.

The project will promote the provision of free legal aid service, helping refugees connect with qualified legal professionals and improving access to justice, including in remote areas. Mobile outreach teams will provide on-the-ground legal consultations, documentation support and referrals. Public awareness initiatives will boost legal literacy among refugees and host communities. In parallel, the project will strengthen the capacity of legal aid providers, judges and law enforcement to address refugee-specific issues, promote mediation as an alternative dispute resolution tool, counter hate speech and support social cohesion across communities.

Programme Period:	2025-2026
Quantum Project Number:	01005107
Quantum Output Number:	_____
Gender Marker:	GEN2

Total resources required	USD 165,000
Total allocated resources:	USD 165,000
• Regular	_____
• Other:	
○ Donor	USD 165,000
○ Donor	_____
○ Government	_____
Unfunded budget:	_____
In-kind Contributions	_____

Agreed by UNDP: Natia Natsvlishvili
UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia

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Date: 30-Oct-2025

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I. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

Since 2020, Armenia has been navigating a complex and prolonged crisis landscape. The combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, renewed hostilities over Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), and ongoing regional instability have significantly strained national systems. The most recent escalation in September 2023 resulted in the arrival of over 115,000 ethnic Armenians fleeing NK – creating one of the most acute displacement situations in the region's recent history.

These overlapping crises have redirected national attention toward humanitarian response and early recovery. However, the scale and protracted nature of displacement have revealed deeper systemic challenges. Refugees and host communities face growing barriers to legal protection, social inclusion, and access to essential services – underscoring the urgent need for durable, development-oriented solutions that go beyond immediate relief.

At the same time, Armenia has embarked on an ambitious reform trajectory, particularly within the justice sector. The 2022–2026 Strategy for Judicial and Legal Reforms outlines key priorities, including strengthening judicial independence, expanding access to justice, institutionalizing free legal aid, and promoting alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms. Notably, the establishment of the Arbitration and Mediation Centre of Armenia (AMCA) marks a significant step toward embedding ADR practices within the justice system. The Strategy also calls for the development of pro bono legal aid mechanisms, aiming to improve access to justice for vulnerable and underserved populations.

Complementing these efforts, ongoing police reform initiatives – including the creation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the introduction of community policing models – are designed to foster greater public trust and enhance the accountability and responsiveness of law enforcement institutions.

Within this evolving context, the UNDP Project responds to the dual challenge of addressing displacement-related vulnerabilities while supporting systemic transformation. It aligns with Armenia's justice, human rights, and governance reform agendas and is anchored in key pillars: expanding access to justice and legal aid (including pro bono services), promoting access to justice and police reform and fostering social cohesion through combating misinformation and hate speech in communities affected by displacement.

The Project also contributes to broader UN strategic frameworks, including the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD), and is positioned to inform cross-sectoral programming through knowledge generation and policy engagement.

By empowering national institutions and advancing people-centred rule of law solutions, the Project directly supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) – while upholding the core UN principle of "Leaving No One Behind".

This proposed initiative builds on the ongoing EU funded Advancing the Human Rights Agenda and Enhancing National Authorities (ATHENA) project, implemented by UNDP Armenia. The ATHENA project aims to strengthen the protection of human rights and the rule of law by, inter alia, enhancing national mechanisms and institutional capacities to facilitate access to justice and deliver quality free legal aid, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Building on this foundation, the new initiative introduces a targeted focus on the legal empowerment and protection of refugees. It seeks to expand inclusive legal aid services and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that are tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of crisis-affected populations.

The project design is informed by the latest sectoral research and analysis and is grounded in the understanding that sustainable peace, social cohesion, and inclusive development in Armenia require a transformative shift in the way justice, human rights, and governance systems respond to displacement and crisis. The large-scale displacement of over 115,000 ethnic Armenians from NK in 2023 has placed significant pressure on national systems and highlighted persistent structural barriers to legal protection, inclusion, and access to services.

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The central challenge the Project aims to address is the limited access of refugees and host communities to inclusive, rights-based legal services – compounded by institutional constraints in delivering equitable justice and managing emerging social tensions.

Thus, the Project adopts an integrated, multidisciplinary approach, structured around four interlinked outcomes designed to improve access to justice, strengthen legal protection mechanisms and promote social cohesion among refugees and host communities:

Expected Result 1: **A National Pro Bono e-Platform Established and Functional**

The establishment of a National Pro Bono e-Platform is critical to addressing systemic barriers to legal aid in Armenia, including geographical, financial, and informational gaps. This accessible digital infrastructure will connect refugees with pro bono legal professionals, ensuring vulnerable populations can overcome barriers to justice effectively and efficiently. A comprehensive, regularly updated registry of participating lawyers, NGOs, and legal aid providers will support transparency and ensure high-quality referrals. The platform will be developed and maintained in close cooperation with key national stakeholders, including the Public Defender's Office, the Chamber of Advocates, the Ministry of Justice.

Key activities include: (1) develop and launch an online platform to connect refugeess in need of legal assistance with pro bono lawyers, featuring a case-matching system and a regularly updated registry of participating legal professionals, NGOs and legal aid providers, including feedback loop from users on the design and improvement of the platform; (2) establish an online directory of lawyers categorized by their areas of specialization to ensure relevant and effective referrals for refugee-specific needs.

Expected Result 2: **Legal Outreach Services and Capacities Expanded**

The project will ensure access to inclusive, timely, and responsive legal aid in refugee-hosting regions, helping refugees and vulnerable host communities resolve legal issues, reduce exclusion, and strengthen trust in justice institutions. Outreach will be coordinated with legal clinics, municipalities, and community groups to ensure locally grounded, refugee-sensitive services. Mobile legal aid deployments will be preceded by community consultations to jointly identify priority legal issues and preferred modes of service delivery.

In line with the Gender Equality Output (GEN 2), at least 50% of mobile legal aid participants will be women and girls, with a focus on addressing gender-specific issues such as GBV and access to social protection. The project will also strengthen the capacity of judges, police, and legal aid providers to uphold refugee rights and counter hate speech, using needs-based approaches. Women professionals will be actively engaged in training—as both participants and trainers—to promote diversity and gender balance, positioning them as key agents of change in justice and protection systems.

Key activities include: (1) deploy mobile legal aid teams to 4 refugee-hosting and underserved regions, providing accessible services in remote or hard-to-reach areas and offer on-site legal consultations, assistance with documentation (including for gender equality, civil status, residence and social protection) and referrals to appropriate services; (2) support in establishing or refurbishing at least one office of free legal aid providers in a key region to facilitate access for refugee and displaced population; (3) strengthen the capacity of at least 50 legal aid providers, judges, and law enforcement to protect refugee rights and counter hate speech and discrimination through tailored, needs-based approaches including to build feedback loops or performance surveys for users to complete for legal services provided.

Expected Result 3: **Legal Awareness Among Refugees and Host Communities Improved**

The project will foster legal awareness and social cohesion through community outreach and communication campaigns. It will build the capacity of frontline workers, media, youth, and refugees to counter hate speech and disinformation, while supporting institutions in promoting tolerance. Gender-sensitive conflict and resilience analyses will guide early recovery efforts, particularly engaging women and youth. Strategic communication training will also be provided to judges, legal aid providers, law enforcement, and other key stakeholders to better advocate for the rights of refugees and vulnerable groups.

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Key activities include: (1) develop and disseminate at least 2 sets of public awareness materials on refugee rights, legal procedures and human rights framework; (2) partner with at least 7 local media and community centers to expand outreach and ensure visibility of free legal aid services; (3) strengthen the strategic communication capacities of at least 50 judges, legal aid providers, law enforcement bodies, including community police, as well as other relevant stakeholders to respond to the specific needs of refugees and host communities; (4) launch tailored public awareness campaigns to increase refugees' understanding of their rights and available support mechanisms reaching up to 300 000 beneficiaries

Expected Result 4: **Support Provided to the Implementation of the Newly Established Mediation Mechanisms**

Established in 2023, the Arbitration and Mediation Centre serves as a platform for promoting innovative ADR mechanisms. The Project will raise awareness among refugee-hosting communities about the benefits of ADR, while providing targeted training to legal aid providers and community focal points on case identification and referral to mediation.

To ensure sustainability, specialized training and Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes will build a pool of professionals capable of delivering responsive mediation services. The Project will also initiate a structured process to track trends and challenges in refugee-related mediation cases, using the findings to strengthen case-handling practices and inform policy improvements.

Key activities include: (1) Raise awareness on mediation as an ADR mechanism in at least 4 refugee-hosting communities; (2) provide at least 2 training and orientation sessions for at least 25 legal aid providers and community focal points on identifying and referring cases to mediation; (3) conduct a TOT for at least 25 mediators to build internal capacity for delivering future mediation trainings independently; (4) map trends and challenges from cases, including refugee-related mediation cases in the first year to inform future practice.

II. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Direct implementation modality. The Project will be implemented through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), fully managed by UNDP Armenia.

Management structure. Project implementation will be led by the existing UNDP ATHENA team, ensuring continuity, operational efficiency, and institutional knowledge. Major coordination components of the Project that may have an impact on or linkages with ATHENA implementation may also be reviewed within the framework of the ATHENA Project Board to ensure synergies between the two initiatives, alignment and complementarity of efforts, and to avoid any potential duplication of activities**.**

The Human Rights, Justice and Rule of Law Programme Manager maria.silvanyan@undp.org will exercise overall supervision of implementation and lead coordination and consultations with key national partners and other stakeholders, while direct implementation will be carried out by Justice Officer anahit.santrosyan@undp.org. In accordance with corporate regulations, UNDP will be responsible for: (i) deployment of project personnel; (ii) procurement of goods and services; and (iii) financial services, for which the Project will incur Direct Project Costs as per UNDP 2025 Universal Price List (UPL). UNDP will ensure that the approved resources are used in line with the conditions and instructions by the donor as well as in accordance with UNDP financial rules and regulations as set out in the Financial Resources Management Section of the Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures.

Implementation structure. The Project will be implemented by Democratic Governance Portfolio. The Portfolio Manager will provide general project implementation support and quality assurance as necessary.

Delivery capacities. The Project implementation will benefit from project implementation infrastructures existing on a national and subnational level, their fast delivery capabilities, in-depth sectoral knowledge and experience, local experts', and service providers' networks and make full use of UNDP's institutional comparative advantage as well as strong partnerships at national and sub-national levels, both with government and non-governmental actors and private sector entities.

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Key in-country partners. Close and regular communication and coordination will be ensured with government partners, especially the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Chamber of Advocates, Public Defender's Office, entities of the private sector, CSOs and sister UN agencies operating to ensure harmonization of approaches, synergies, and complementarities. The government led coordination and technical working groups will be fundamental for this aspect.

UNDP's POPP. All UNDP's operations are implemented based on UNDP's Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) and must adhere to quality standards which ensure that operations are strategic, relevant, and principled. This applies also to the M&E system which is in charge of monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed project along with its performance in terms of sustainability and national ownership.

III. MONITORING

Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Cost (if any)
Track results progress	Progress data against the results indicators will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.	N/A
Monitor and Manage Risk	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to mitigate.	N/A
Learn	Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	Quarterly	Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions	N/A
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project.	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.	N/A
Project Report	A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk long with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.	At the end of the project (final report)	Project report	N/A

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IV. WORK PLAN

Period[1]:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS *And baseline, indicators including annual targets*	PLANNED ACTIVITIES *List activity results and associated actions*	TIMEFRAME					RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
Output 1 **A National Pro Bono e-Platform Established and Functional** ***Indicator 1.1:*** *Number of registered pro bono cases* *Baseline: 0* *Target: 10 cases registered, by August 2026* *Source of data: Platform Analytics Tools* ***Indicator 1.2:*** *Directory of lawyers is established* *Baseline: 0* *Target: 50 profiles registered, by August 2026* *Source of data: Platform Analytics Tools* *Related CP outcome: UNSDCF Outcome 6 /CPD 3*	1. A National Pro Bono e-Platform Established and Functional - 1.1. Develop and launch an online platform. - 1.2. Establish an online directory of lawyers.	10,000.00	30,000.00	10,000.00	-	-	UNDP	FW	Contractual service companies	50,000.00

[1] 12 months

Output 2 **Legal Outreach Services and Capacities Expanded** ***Indicator 2.1.*** *Percentage of judges, mediators, legal professionals, law enforcement that reported increase in their knowledge and skills for effective performance of their functions to deliver quality services* *Baseline: 0* *Target: 50% (50% women), by August 2026* *Source of data: Project reports, UNDP reports, pre-post assessment results* ***Indicator 2.2:*** *Number of new regional Public Defender's offices established and equipped* *Baseline: 1* *Target: 2 (1+1), by August 2026* *Source of data: Project reports, Reports of the PDO, UNDP reports* *Related CP outcome: UNSDCF Outcome 6 /CPD 3*	2. Legal Outreach Services and Capacities Expanded - 2.1. Deploy mobile legal aid teams to 4 refugee-hosting and underserved regions. - 2.2. Support in establishing or refurbishing at least 1 office of free legal aid providers in a key region. - 2.3. Strengthen the capacities of at least 50 legal aid providers, judges and law enforcement."	-	19,300.00	7,000.00	-	-	UNDP	FW	Contractual service companies International Consultants Local Consultants Trainings, Workshops & Conferences	26,300.00

Output 3 **Legal Awareness Among Refugees and Host Communities Improved** ***Indicator 3.1:*** *Number of persons reached by the public outreach campaign* *Baseline: 0* *Target: 300,000 (50% women)* *Source of data: Project reports, Reports of the PDO, UNDP reports, social media* *Related CP outcome: UNSDCF Outcome 6 /CPD 3*	3. Activity Result - 3.1. Develop and disseminate at least 2 sets of gender sensitive public awareness materials on refugee rights, legal procedures, women's rights and gender equality and human rights framework. - 3.2. Partner with at least 7 local media, community centers and women's organisations. - 3.3. Strengthen the strategic communication capacities of at least 50 judges, legal aid providers, law enforcement bodies. - 3.4. Launch gender sensitive public awareness campaigns reaching up to 300,000 beneficiaries, including 200,000 women and youth.	13,780.00	20,690.00	5,670.00	5,670.00	1,890.00	UNDP	FW	Contractual service companies International Consultants Local Consultants Trainings, Workshops & Conferences	47,700.00
Output 4 **Support Provided to the Implementation of the Newly Established Mediation Mechanisms** ***Indicator 4.1:*** *Number of trainers reported increase in their internal capacity for delivering future mediation trainings independently* *Baseline: 0* *Target: 80% (at least 50% women)* *Source of data: Project Report, MOJ reports, AMCA reports, pre-post assessment results* *Related CP outcome: UNSDCF Outcome 6 /CPD 3*	4. Activity Result - 4.1. Raise awareness on mediation in at least 4 refugee-hosting communities. - 4.2. Provide at least 2 training and orientation sessions for at least 25 legal aid providers and community focal points. - 4.3. Conduct a ToT for at least 25 mediators. - 4.4. Map trends and challenges from cases."	-	15,000.00	5,000.00	-	-	UNDP	FW	Contractual service companies International Consultants Local Consultants Trainings, Workshops & Conferences	20,000.00

	Project Management Costs (across all proposed countries) - Office rent - Consumables - office supplies - ICT Support	-	4,320.00	2,060.00	1,465.61	710.00	UNDP	FW	Rental & Maint-Premises Supplies Communication & Audio Visual Equip	8,555.61
	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning	-	600.00	600.00	450.00	-	UNDP	FW		1,650.00
	General Management Support (7% of FWs programmable budget)									10,794.39
TOTAL										165,000.00

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V. RISK ANALYSIS

Risk type	Risk description	Risk assessment (Impact, Likelihood & Risk Level)[2]	Mitigation measures
Compound crises (e.g., pandemic, outbreak of the conflict, political instability) may affect government's priorities and impede the timely execution of Project activities.	As a result of recent developments in the country and tendencies in the political arena, change of power is likely, as are disruptions caused by compound crises such as pandemics, armed conflicts, and political instability.	This may overshadow reform agendas and slowing down the pace and directions of reform efforts in all areas and aspects of the country, create an overwhelming workload for staff of the institutions. Likelihood: **4 - Highly likely** Impact: **4 - Extensive** Risk level: **SUBSTANTIAL (equates to a risk appetite of OPEN)**	The Project will develop comprehensive contingency plans, identify critical project activities and establish alternative plans and resources to mitigate the impact of crises, set buffer periods within the project schedule and adjust deadlines as necessary. Project will strengthen communication and coordination mechanisms, by establishing regular communication channels, including emergency meetings, to ensure continuous information flow.
High staff turnover, including turnover in the leadership of the institutions, may impact the timely implementation and long-term sustainability of the planned efforts.	As a result of low levels of remuneration, the competent and qualified staff are leaving for better positions with higher salaries.	This may impact suboptimal utilization of project resources and hinder implementation effectiveness. Likelihood: **3 - Moderately likely** Impact: **3 - Intermediate** Risk level: **MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)**	Contingency plans and ongoing consultations with the Project beneficiaries will ensure continuity of Project activities in case of staff turnover; regular reviews and transparent communication channels with state institutions will further strengthen the efforts to keep and maintain the continuity of the Project activities even in case of staff turnover; adaptive management approaches to address evolving needs and challenges will be encouraged. Encourage knowledge sharing through regular team meetings, debrief sessions, and knowledge repositories.
Project beneficiaries may face challenges in receiving and implementing new knowledge and skills due to limited capacity, human resources and lack of motivation.	Due to limited capacity, human resources, low level of qualification and lack of motivation among project beneficiaries.	This may hinder effective implementation of Project activities and reduce the overall impact and sustainability of the Project. Likelihood: **3 – Moderately likely** Impact: **4 - Extensive** Risk level: **SUBSTANTIAL (equates to a risk appetite of OPEN)**	The Project will conduct TOTs to equip key personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement their functions; fostering a culture of sharing best practices will be encouraged, enabling the beneficiaries to learn from each other's successes and lessons learnt.

[2] As per UNDP's Enterprise Risk Management Policy