

Design & Appraisal Stage Quality Assurance Report

Form Status: Under Review

Overall Rating:	Satisfactory
Decision:	Approve: The project is of sufficient quality to continue as planned. Any management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.
Portfolio/Project Number:	00129871
Portfolio/Project Title:	EU4Sevan
Portfolio/Project Date:	2020-09-10 / 2024-10-01

Strategic

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

1. Does the project specify how it will contribute to higher level change through linkage to the programme's Theory of Change?

- 3: The project is clearly linked to the programme's theory of change. It has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcome level change and why the project's strategy will likely lead to this change. This analysis is backed by credible evidence of what works effectively in this context and includes assumptions and risks.
- 2: *The project is clearly linked to the programme's theory of change. It has a change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcome-level change and why the project strategy will likely lead to this change.*
- 1: The project document may describe in generic terms how the project will contribute to development results, without an explicit link to the programme's theory of change.

Evidence:

Theory of Change (TOC) of the project is based on the understanding that the pathway to environmental sustainability and resilience requires systemic changes in decision-making across multiple sectors that will help the country transition towards: (i) resource efficient, resilient and socially inclusive economy; (ii) ability to properly manage its rich ecosystems and natural resources within a limit of natural capital, and (iii) adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change and disasters. The UNDP's interventions will be geared towards strengthening national capacities in reshaping its long terms vision, policy development and implementation and resilience building as well as identifying, piloting and scaling data-driven and gender-responsive smart policies and solutions that are environmentally and climate friendly, risk-informed, people-centered and long lasting.

List of Uploaded Documents

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No documents available.

2. Is the project aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan?

- 3: The project responds to at least one of the development settings as specified in the [Strategic Plan](#)¹ and adapts at least one [Signature Solution](#)². The project's RRF includes all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project responds to at least one of the development settings as specified in the [Strategic Plan](#)⁴. The project's RRF includes at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true)*
- 1: The project responds to a partner's identified need, but this need falls outside of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Also select this option if none of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF.

Evidence:

The project address structural transformation for sustainable development aspects through introduction of new systemic approach in basin planning and management. Gender-responsive legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and institutions will be strengthened, sustainable solutions demonstrated to address conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing of natural resources.

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No documents available.			

3. Is the project linked to the programme outputs? (i.e., UNDAF Results Group Workplan/CPD, RPD or Strategic Plan IRRF for global projects/strategic interventions not part of a programme)

- Yes
 No

Evidence:

Project results are in line with UNDAF Outcome 7 “By 2020 Sustainable Development principles and good practices for environmental sustainability resilience building, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and green economy are introduced and applied”, as well as feed to CPD Output 7.3 that is “Government uses innovative mechanisms and tools for evaluation and decision-making over the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources”. See ProDoc pages 7, 14

List of Uploaded Documents

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No documents available.			

Relevant

Quality Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

4. Do the project target groups leave furthest behind?

- 3: The target groups are clearly specified, prioritising discriminated, and marginalized groups left furthest behind, identified through a rigorous process based on evidence.
- 2: The target groups are clearly specified, prioritizing groups left furthest behind.**
- 1: The target groups are not clearly specified.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 5, Paragraph 15

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	Prodoc_EU4SEVAN_UNDP_Prodoc_Dec2020_GA_6325_104 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/Prodoc_EU4SEVAN_UNDP_Prodoc_Dec2020_GA_6325_104.docx)	georgi.arzumanyan@undp.org	12/31/2020 7:29:00 AM
2	SESP_final_6325_104 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SESP_final_6325_104.docx)	georgi.arzumanyan@undp.org	12/31/2020 7:31:00 AM

5. Have knowledge, good practices, and past lessons learned of UNDP and others informed the project design?

- 3: Knowledge and lessons learned backed by credible evidence from sources such as evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, and/or monitoring have been explicitly used, with appropriate referencing, to justify the approach used by the project.
- 2: *The project design mentions knowledge and lessons learned backed by evidence/sources but have not been used to justify the approach selected.*
- 1: There is little, or no mention of knowledge and lessons learned informing the project design. Any references made are anecdotal and not backed by evidence.

Evidence:

At the design stage, the project has been already built on the experience and knowledge of several initiatives, namely utilized knowledge accumulated within the framework of EU Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) project in Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries for the period of 2016-2020. The knowledge management strategy forms a core element of the project. While budgets and activities are mainstreamed across the four outputs, in operational terms the implementation of the knowledge strategy will be managed centrally within the core project team with the Project Coordinator playing an oversight role in coordination and delivery of the strategy, as well as in coordination with EU-GIZ. The Project has no specific dimension or component for South-South exchange, but it will build upon the successful experience of other countries and will consider the examples and lessons learned from similar projects in the wider region and from EU countries.

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No documents available.			

6. Does UNDP have a clear advantage to engage in the role envisioned by the project vis-à-vis national / regional / global partners and other actors?

- 3: *An analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area where the project intends to work, and credible evidence supports the proposed engagement of UNDP and partners through the project, including identification of potential funding partners. It is clear how results achieved by partners will complement the project's intended results and a communication strategy is in place to communicate results and raise visibility vis-à-vis key partners. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have been considered, as appropriate. (all must be true)*
- 2: Some analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area where the project intends to work, and relatively limited evidence supports the proposed engagement of and division of labour between UNDP and partners through the project, with unclear funding and communications strategies or plans.
- 1: No clear analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area that the project intends to work. There is risk that the project overlaps and/or does not coordinate with partners' interventions in this area. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have not been considered, despite its potential relevance.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 9

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

Principled

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

7. Does the project apply a human rights-based approach?

- 3: The project is guided by human rights and incorporates the principles of accountability, meaningful participation, and non-discrimination in the project's strategy. The project upholds the relevant international and national laws and standards. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were rigorously identified and assessed as relevant, with appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project is guided by human rights by prioritizing accountability, meaningful participation and non-discrimination. Potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were identified and assessed as relevant, and appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into the project design and budget. (both must be true)*
- 1: No evidence that the project is guided by human rights. Limited or no evidence that potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were considered.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 12

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

8. Does the project use gender analysis in the project design?

- 3: A participatory gender analysis has been conducted and results from this gender analysis inform the development challenge, strategy and expected results sections of the project document. Outputs and indicators of the results framework include explicit references to gender equality, and specific indicators measure and monitor results to ensure women are fully benefitting from the project. (all must be true)
- 2: *A basic gender analysis has been carried out and results from this analysis are scattered (i.e., fragmented and not consistent) across the development challenge and strategy sections of the project document. The results framework may include some gender sensitive outputs and/or activities but gender inequalities are not consistently integrated across each output. (all must be true)*
- 1: The project design may or may not mention information and/or data on the differential impact of the project's development situation on gender relations, women and men, but the gender inequalities have not been clearly identified and reflected in the project document.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 5

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

9. Did the project support the resilience and sustainability of societies and/or ecosystems?

- 3: *Credible evidence that the project addresses sustainability and resilience dimensions of development challenges, which are integrated in the project strategy and design. The project reflects the interconnections between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Relevant shocks, hazards and adverse social and environmental impacts have been identified and rigorously assessed with appropriate management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true)*
- 2: The project design integrates sustainability and resilience dimensions of development challenges. Relevant shocks, hazards and adverse social and environmental impacts have been identified and assessed, and relevant management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget. (both must be true)
- 1: Sustainability and resilience dimensions and impacts were not adequately considered.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 11

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

10. Has the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) been conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks? The SESP is not required for projects in which UNDP is Administrative Agent only and/or projects comprised solely of reports, coordination of events, trainings, workshops, meetings, conferences and/or communication materials and information dissemination. [if yes, upload the completed checklist. If SESP is not required, provide the reason for the exemption in the evidence section.]

- Yes
- No
- SESP not required because project consists solely of (Select all exemption criteria that apply)
 - 1: Preparation and dissemination of reports, documents and communication materials
 - 2: Organization of an event, workshop, training
 - 3: Strengthening capacities of partners to participate in international negotiations and conferences
 - 4: Partnership coordination (including UN coordination) and management of networks
 - 5: Global/regional projects with no country level activities (e.g. knowledge management, inter-governmental processes)
 - 6: UNDP acting as Administrative Agent

Evidence:

Please find attached.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Risk Category	Risk Requirements	Document Status	Modified By	Modified On
1	SESP_EU4 Sevan.docx_6325_110 (http://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/AFormDocuments/SESP_EU4Sevan.docx_6325_110.pdf)	Low		Final	armine.hovhannisyan@undp.org	1/20/2021 11:11:00 AM

Management & Monitoring

Quality Rating: **Satisfactory**

11. Does the project have a strong results framework?

- 3: The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the key expected development changes, each with credible data sources and populated baselines and targets, including gender sensitive, target group focused, sex-disaggregated indicators where appropriate. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators, but baselines, targets and data sources may not yet be fully specified. Some use of target group focused, sex-disaggregated indicators, as appropriate. (all must be true)*
- 1: The project's selection of outputs and activities are not at an appropriate level; outputs are not accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the expected change and have not been populated with baselines and targets; data sources are not specified, and/or no gender sensitive, sex-disaggregation of indicators. (if any is true)

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 14 (RRF)

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

12. Is the project's governance mechanism clearly defined in the project document, including composition of the project board?

- 3: The project's governance mechanism is fully defined. Individuals have been specified for each position in the governance mechanism (especially all members of the project board.) Project Board members have agreed on their roles and responsibilities as specified in the terms of reference. The ToR of the project board has been attached to the project document. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project's governance mechanism is defined; specific institutions are noted as holding key governance roles, but individuals may not have been specified yet. The project document lists the most important responsibilities of the project board, project director/manager and quality assurance roles. (all must be true)*
- 1: The project's governance mechanism is loosely defined in the project document, only mentioning key roles that will need to be filled at a later date. No information on the responsibilities of key positions in the governance mechanism is provided.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 23

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

13. Have the project risks been identified with clear plans stated to manage and mitigate each risk?

- 3: Project risks related to the achievement of results are fully described in the project risk log, based on comprehensive analysis drawing on the programme's theory of change, Social and Environmental Standards and screening, situation analysis, capacity assessments and other analysis such as funding potential and reputational risk. Risks have been identified through a consultative process with key internal and external stakeholders, including consultation with the UNDP Security Office as required. Clear and complete plan in place to manage and mitigate each risk, including security risks, reflected in project budgeting and monitoring plans. (both must be true)
- 2: *Project risks related to the achievement of results are identified in the initial project risk log based on a minimum level of analysis and consultation, with mitigation measures identified for each risk.*
- 1: Some risks may be identified in the initial project risk log, but no evidence of consultation or analysis and no clear risk mitigation measures identified. This option is also selected if risks are not clearly identified, no initial risk log is included with the project document and/or no security risk management process has taken place for the project.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 29 (annex 3).

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

Efficient

Quality Rating: Exemplary

14. Have specific measures for ensuring cost-efficient use of resources been explicitly mentioned as part of the project design? This can include, for example:

- i) Using the theory of change analysis to explore different options of achieving the maximum results with the resources available.
- ii) Using a portfolio management approach to improve cost effectiveness through synergies with other interventions.
- iii) Through joint operations (e.g., monitoring or procurement) with other partners.
- iv) Sharing resources or coordinating delivery with other projects.
- v) Using innovative approaches and technologies to reduce the cost of service delivery or other types of interventions.

- Yes
- No

Evidence:

In order to be cost-effective and work with high effectiveness the project management will rely on evidence-based approach in order to deliver maximum results with available resources. By using the theory of change analysis, different options to achieve the maximum results with available resources will be explored. UNDP Environmental Programme management mechanism will be used to improve cost effectiveness by sharing resources, knowledge and leveraging activities and partnerships with other ongoing country office projects, as well as through synergized efforts with the projects and agencies working in the same direction in the target area. Joint monitoring missions (with GIZ) will be organized to increase the effectiveness. Wider engagement of local consultants and contractual services will be ensured at the extent possible to reduce service and transaction cost.

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No documents available.			

15. Is the budget justified and supported with valid estimates?

- 3: *The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, and is specified for the duration of the project period in a multi-year budget. Realistic resource mobilisation plans are in place to fill unfunded components. Costs are supported with valid estimates using benchmarks from similar projects or activities. Cost implications from inflation and foreign exchange exposure have been estimated and incorporated in the budget. Adequate costs for monitoring, evaluation, communications and security have been incorporated.*
- 2: The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, when possible, and is specified for the duration of the project in a multi-year budget, but no funding plan is in place. Costs are supported with valid estimates based on prevailing rates.
- 1: The project's budget is not specified at the activity level, and/or may not be captured in a multi-year budget.

Evidence:

See ProDoc Chapter VII, page 19

List of Uploaded Documents

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No documents available.			

16. Is the Country Office / Regional Hub / Global Project fully recovering the costs involved with project implementation?

- 3: *The budget fully covers all project costs that are attributable to the project, including programme management and development effectiveness services related to strategic country programme planning, quality assurance, pipeline development, policy advocacy services, finance, procurement, human resources, administration, issuance of contracts, security, travel, assets, general services, information and communications based on full costing in accordance with prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL.)*
- 2: The budget covers significant project costs that are attributable to the project based on prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL) as relevant.
- 1: The budget does not adequately cover project costs that are attributable to the project, and UNDP is cross-subsidizing the project.

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 19

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

Effective

Quality Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

17. Have targeted groups been engaged in the design of the project?

- 3: Credible evidence that all targeted groups, prioritising discriminated and marginalized populations that will be involved in or affected by the project, have been actively engaged in the design of the project. The project has an explicit strategy to identify, engage and ensure the meaningful participation of target groups as stakeholders throughout the project, including through monitoring and decision-making (e.g., representation on the project board, inclusion in samples for evaluations, etc.)
- 2: *Some evidence that key targeted groups have been consulted in the design of the project.*
- 1: No evidence of engagement with targeted groups during project design.
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

See ProDoc page 23

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

18. Does the project plan for adaptation and course correction if regular monitoring activities, evaluation, and lesson learned demonstrate there are better approaches to achieve the intended results and/or circumstances change during implementation?

- Yes
- No

Evidence:

A results-based monitoring system will be established to generate data on the progress of the overall Project. UNDP, in partnership with GIZ, will monitor the implementation progress and results based on the overall EU4Sevan European Union Action's log-frame and work plan. UNDP will be responsible for the monitoring of its respective outputs, indicators and activities, while GIZ will be responsible for compiling and submitting the overall report to the EU including the results at the outcome level. The log frame will be used as management tool, allowing the GIZ and UNDP for adjustments and revisions at the output, activity and indicator level in order to effectively achieve the expected specific objective.

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No documents available.			

19. The gender marker for all project outputs are scored at GEN2 or GEN3, indicating that gender has been fully mainstreamed into all project outputs at a minimum.

- Yes
- No

Evidence:

Databases, analyses, instruments and decision-support tools developed by the Project will be based on gender-disaggregated data, and developed and applied with a significant participation of man and women as researchers, planners, trainers, lecturers etc. Formation, training and awareness raising measures and materials will target at both, women and men, and reflect the different needs and interests of both sexes. The project will support the quantitative and qualitative participation of women in decisions on the elaboration, implementation and control of management plans (e.g. basin management plan, national park management plan, etc.).

List of Uploaded Documents

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No documents available.			

Sustainability & National Ownership

Quality Rating: **Needs Improvement**

20. Have national / regional / global partners led, or proactively engaged in, the design of the project?

- 3: National partners (or regional/global partners for regional and global projects) have full ownership of the project and led the process of the development of the project jointly with UNDP.
- 2: *The project has been developed by UNDP in close consultation with national / regional / global partners.*
- 1: The project has been developed by UNDP with limited or no engagement with national partners.

Evidence:

The project has been developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, in close partnership with GIZ and EU. The project will work closely with project partners, main governmental and non-governmental institutions in the identification of key policy findings, development perspectives, and dissemination of knowledge products. Consultations with these partners ensure that they are all committed to building and disseminating knowledge on subject related issues beyond the project framework.

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No documents available.			

21. Are key institutions and systems identified, and is there a strategy for strengthening specific / comprehensive capacities based on capacity assessments conducted?

- 3: The project has a strategy for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions and/or actors based on a completed capacity assessment. This strategy includes an approach to regularly monitor national capacities using clear indicators and rigorous methods of data collection, and adjust the strategy to strengthen national capacities accordingly.
- 2: A capacity assessment has been completed. There are plans to develop a strategy to strengthen specific capacities of national institutions and/or actors based on the results of the capacity assessment.
- 1: Capacity assessments have not been carried out.
- Not Applicable*

Evidence:

The project does not imply any capacity assessment activities.

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No documents available.			

22. Is there a clear strategy embedded in the project specifying how the project will use national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluations, etc.,) to the extent possible?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

The UNDP CO will ensure project accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in implementation. UNDP will be responsible for the following main functions in accordance with UNDP corporate regulations: (i) Identification and recruitment of project personnel; (ii) procurement of goods and services; (iii) financial services. More specifically, UNDP will:

- a. Be accountable for delivering on the expected outputs within the time required, manage risks and sustain results after the project ends;
- b. Ensure national ownership and broad stakeholder engagement;
- c. Provide sensitivity and neutrality in project implementation as required;
- d. Ensure the key technical, financial and administrative capacities required for the project are in place; and
- e. Deliver good value for money and accountability for resources.

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No documents available.			

23. Is there a clear transition arrangement / phase-out plan developed with key stakeholders in order to sustain or scale up results (including resource mobilisation and communications strategy)?

- Yes
- No

Evidence:

Main provision for sustainability and scale up are indicated in the project document, while clear transition or phase-out plan will be designed at the full implementation stage.

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No documents available.

QA Summary/LPAC Comments

The project document with necessary Annexes, including SESP has been designed and pending signature. The document has been distributed to national counterparts but final discussions were delayed due to the crisis situation. LPAC and signature process will be finalized by January 30, 2021.