

## United Nations Development Programme



### Country: Armenia Initiation Plan

**Project Title:** Strengthening Stability and Resilience of the Bordering Communities in Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik and Syunik Regions- phase 2

**Expected UNDAF/CP Outcome 1:** People, communities and regions benefit from equitable economic opportunities, decent work and sustainable livelihoods, enabled through competitiveness and inclusive green growth

**Expected CPD Output 1.2 :** Capacities at national/sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive local economic development (LED) and deliver inclusive public services

**Initiation Plan Start/End Dates:** 11.01.21 – 31.03.21

**Implementing Partner:** UNDP

#### Brief Description

The Project represents a joint UNDP-UNICEF effort to advance stability and safety in the bordering communities of Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions, directly affected by Nagorno Karabakh (NK) conflict. The project will implement activities to deliver transformation at institutional (local governments, CSOs, businesses) and human development levels (skills, services, behaviour). The Project will provide evidence-based interventions, addressing conflict entailed instability and vulnerabilities in the remote and isolated bordering communities to enhance human wellbeing with specific focus on the most unsafe families and groups.

The project is implemented in small phases until the envisioned full-fledged project will start. The current second phase is the logical continuation of the initial/first phase and is derived from its results.

Programme Period:	2021-2025
Atlas Project Number:	00128546
Atlas Output ID:	00124097
Gender Marker:	GEN2 (OECD-DAC GEM1)

Total allocated resources:	331,963 USD
	245,653 GBP
• Regular	_____
• Other:	
○ Donor, FCO	245,653 GBP
○ Donor	_____
○ Government	_____
Unfunded budget:	_____
In-kind Contributions	_____

Agreed by UNDP: Dmitry Mariyasin, UNDP Resident Representative

## I. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

For Armenia the Nagorno Karabakh (NK) conflict remains a major source of tension and instability, which risks spilling over beyond the region, if not contained. This impacted large segments of affected population in bordering regions, suffering the consequences of the NK conflict in their everyday lives. The recent escalation of fighting on the state border between Armenia and Azerbaijan in July 2020 as well as impacts of COVID-19, has brought an urgent need of strengthening the safety, stability and resilience of these bordering communities. The residents of the regions adjacent to conflict zones routinely experience various forms of deprivations, safety risks, poverty, limited job opportunities, depopulation and deteriorating human capital, gender inequalities, vulnerability of youth and children, and hindered access to basic public services and social protection. All this has been exacerbated by COVID-19, undermining the stability and resilience of the bordering communities in the long run.

UNDP and UNICEF are currently jointly implementing a CSSF-funded short-term project in these three bordering regions with focus on COVID-19 response and with the aim of gathering evidence, establishing baselines and generating relevant data to inform a longer term intervention on development of new and resilient models of public service delivery to ensure well-being, socio-economic stability and resilience of bordering communities of these three regions. While the results of the short-term project are not yet finalized, the outcomes, along with outputs and planned activities of this Project Proposal build on interim results of the short-term project, addressing the issues above as described below.

This second phase of the project is a joint endeavor of UNDP and UNICEF, and the full comprehensive document with an overall description of activities and total budget is annexed to this document. While total budget is 245,653 GBP (331,963 USD), UNDP share is 158,909 GBP (214,742 USD) and UNICEF- 86,744 GBP (117,221 USD).

### ***Output* Increased resilience and socio-economic security of the bordering communities in Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions**

#### **UNDP Activities:**

#### **Activity 1.: Capacity building of stakeholders to use electronic data toolkit and apply it in the community/regional policy development**

Based on the findings of the assessments conducted over the project's 1<sup>st</sup> stage in 64 communities an electronic Local Level Risk Reduction (LLRM) and Socio-Economic Impact (SEI) assessments unified toolkit (dashboard) was developed and presented to the communities' administrations and other stakeholders.

- a) The project will deliver trainings to local community administrations to build their ability to apply the above mentioned toolkit in the community development planning, as well as in responding to different type of emergencies and shocks.
- b) The project will design the adapted mobile application for IOS and Android, to ensure user engagement, better information processing, and interactivity, making the collected database an easily accessible portable tool. This will allow the stakeholders and all those interested to use the dashboard in a user-friendly and flexible ways - both offline and online assessment and data collection module.
- c) The project will continue updating and maintaining the data visualization dashboard to ensure quick access to the collected data, presenting the complex picture of COVID-19 impacts, disaster and conflict vulnerabilities with clarity to different stakeholders.
- d) The project will establish a broad partnership with the Disaster Risk Management National Platform<sup>1</sup> (DRRNP) to ensure sustainability of the digital tools beyond the life of the project. DRRNP will maintain the digital system and provide relevant expertise to the Communities as needed.

#### **Activity 2 : Development of conflict-sensitive future-oriented development scenarios in 1 consolidated borderline community**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.arnap.am/>

- e) UNDP will rollout its conflict-sensitive, future-oriented scenario development approach in 1 consolidated borderline community, through integration of the results of SEIA and LLRM assessments, and building on the findings and lessons learned of pilot actions in 2 communities covered over the first short-term phase of the project. Scenario building will enhance the qualitative dimension of the preceding assessments conducted by UNDP and UNICEF, adding more prospective insights to possible solutions.

The activity also aims at sustainable behavioural shift in the target communities, sensitizing both the population and local government bodies in opportunities and challenges of the future.

**Activity 3: Capacity building of local VET institutions to adjust education content and modality to the needs of conflict-affected population in the COVID19 context.**

- a) Survey of needs and current situation of VET providers.  
The vocational education and training (VET) is a fast-track solution for the deprived populations where employment gap is growing, and the population lacks employable skills. UNDP will capitalize on the existing VET capacity in the bordering areas to create educational and reskilling anchors for the purposes of the project. The activity will be aligned with VET institutional building initiatives of other development partners in the country, such as GIZ, ILO, adding a new community-oriented angle. Particularly in the remote and conflict-affected communities, the VET can serve as the safety belt for the deteriorating human capital due to restricted access to quality education and growing outmigration of the skilled workforce. VET is a means of equipping people with the skills and competences and can be effectively used by the project to support the local population, especially the youth and women in the target communities to meet the demands of the changing labour market under the influence of COVID-19. VET institutions, where present, have a strong social mobilization and cohesion power, by being often the knowledge centre of the region. To measure the transformation of the VET institutions in COVID reality, the Project has envisaged **a survey** to identify the challenges, current practices, gaps and support needs of the VET institutions in Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions within the context of the COVID-19 crises. The data collected through the Survey will allow to provide targeted support to the VET institutions in Vayots Dzor, Syunik and Gegharkunik regions towards providing the continuity and quality of TVET education during the crisis. Results of the Survey on TVET Providers will be validated and recommendations along with an Action Plan will be developed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 on the TVET system on the regional level.
- b) Capacity building of VET providers, based on the findings of the survey  
Improved human capital through education and skills development is instrumental in strengthening community resilience. Skilled local workforce is essential for ensuring productive economic sectors, human development and resilience in the communities enabling bigger agility, flexibility, smarter and faster response to crisis and shocks; which in its turn bring to safety and stability. With this in mind and capitalizing on the results of Survey on TVET Providers, the Project will support the local TVETs to develop a blend of online and offline modular courses, build the capacities of the faculty and management of TVET entities to better respond to the COVID-19 crises and the challenges that it created for the labor market and delivery of education services. The capacity building offered by the Project should enable the TVET staff to educate a cohort of specialized workforce who will meet the changing requirements of the labor market, is aware of the new digital learning sources for lifelong education and can easily access them. The activity will enhance the capacities of TVET system to develop curricula relevant to the labour market and support students to acquire technical, business and entrepreneurial skills through appropriate outreach programmes.

**Activity 4. Expanding disaster risk assessments; developing recommendations for 5 year community plans and 2 DRM plans; establishing Community Resilience Teams.**

- a) UNDP in partnership with a civil society organization will expand assessment of disaster risks (including conflict-related) to additional 21 settlements, in addition to the 21 settlements assessed at the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the project. In these conflict-affected communities where disaster risks are disproportionally high, risk assessment is needed to inform the disaster response strategies on the local level.

### **Activity 5. DR assessment and DRM development of kindergartens and health facilities, as a first step of handing over the local level resilience building model to the Community Administrations**

- a) DR assessment and DRM and contingency plans development for kindergarten and health facilities, for conflict escalation, earthquake, fire, spread of acute infectious diseases, as well as for human resource management) with integrated data management system, which will assess and review mentioned safety dimensions, facilities, relevant solutions, roles and responsibilities (SOPs) and its monitoring. The process will be initiated in close cooperation with the MES, DRR National Platform, regional governments, local NGOs and the local communities.  
This exercise will also serve as the first step of handing over the local level resilience building model to the Community Administrations with special attention to community critical facilities. The assessment will help to design short, medium and long-term response strategies towards building resilience in these settlements.
- b) Capacity development of local NGOs and civil society to formulate and implement risk mitigation projects based on the identified needs and recommended actions. *The projects will be selected in competitive manner and will be supported by UNDP with provision of small amount for the project implementation, which may include capacity building trainings, advisory support, establishment of early warning systems, development of gender-sensitive health provision or information management services, risk mitigation projects etc. This will ensure the strengthening of cooperation network and trust between the local administration and civil society, as well as will establish a well-functioning cooperation platform based on local capacity for further replication of similar projects and building resilience.*

### **Activity 6 Delivery of gender-sensitive upskilling/reskilling trainings with further job placement.**

- a) Delivery of gender-sensitive upskilling/reskilling trainings with further job placement, especially the unemployed youth and women with focus on arrivals from NK. These reskilling and upskilling courses will develop their capacities and inform their choices in the labour market, which rapidly changes under the influence of COVID-19 restricting some opportunities and opening up new ones.

#### *UNICEF Activities:*

### **Activity 1 Expanding school coverage of DRM plans; supporting implementation of DRM plans in selected communities; capacity building of teachers**

- a) Preparation/Update of School Disaster Risk Management and COVID-19 Response Plans in additional 60 schools of bordering communities of the target regions based on the results and lessons learned of the roll out of the exercise in the first 5 schools during short-term project.
- b) Support to implementation of the School Disaster Risk Management Plans in the selected communities (selection criteria will be developed in partnership with the MES, UNDP and responsible CSO partner).
- c) Capacity building of teachers in the areas of first aid, PSS and GBV risks. Teachers will be provided with gender – sensitive practical tools and methodologies for prevention and response to risk situations, including conflict escalations.

### **Activity 2 Capacity building of professionals; establishment of educational e-platform; establishment of peer support groups in the most remote settlements.**

- a) Building on the results and lessons learned of the short-term project, UNICEF will continue capacity building of professionals (social workers, social pedagogues, psychologists and other social service workforce professionals) engaged in state-run or state-supported organisations delivering social services. This includes mental health and psychosocial support services to the population of bordering communities (regional and community-based family and child support centres under MLSA and MoESCS, CSOs delivering respective services, social services, schools).

- b) An E-learning platform equipped for distant learning courses will be established and made available for all professionals to make use of the learning and training materials, developed during the short-term project and in the course of this Project. This platform will enable opportunity of distant learning also for new professionals.
- c) Peer support volunteer groups will be established, trained and supported in the most isolated borderline communities, where there are no other mechanisms for delivery of and access to support services.
- d) In this phase UNICEF will also support delivery of parenting support services to families through kindergartens to ensure sustainability of the service.

**Activity 3 Expanding the coverage of the helpline for different groups of professionals** most exposed to the psychological shocks of COVID-19 (social service workforce, primary health care professionals, teachers). UNICEF will also support the hotline for reporting cases of violence against children for parents and adolescents with a strong referral system in case of need for specialized services arises. The hotline will be supported through enhancing capacities, coverage and building a strong referral system to prevent and respond to cases of violence.

**Activity 4 UNICEF will continue the recruitment and training of foster families for emergency alternative care arrangements** to ensure that quick quality emergency alternative care can be provided in case of need to children and adolescents left without parental care due to COVID-19 and other emergencies in bordering communities. As a result, children will not be relocated to other regions, thus decreasing the risk of depopulation of borderline communities.

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## II. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The main stakeholders relevant to the project are the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI), Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MoESCS), Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), regional and local government of Syunik, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor, civil society organisations working in the target regions.

UNDP will be the main implementing partner and will transfer respective funds (86,744 GBP) to UNICEF through agency to agency agreement. The project will be implemented in Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). UNICEF will provide report for its part to UNDP in accordance with the schedule for consolidation and final reporting to donor. The project teams will be based in Yerevan with outreach to regions/communities for programmatic activities.

Management of UNDP component of the Project will be ensured via supervision from the UNDP Socioeconomic Governance Portfolio, which will include quality assurance, oversight and technical support, with elements of Direct Project Cost (DPC) reflected in the budget.

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## III. MONITORING

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation:

- Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs quarterly based on UNDP Armenia Monitoring and Standard Progress Report tool.
- Specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results will be Identified and monitored through risk management actions using a risk log.
- 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.
- Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.
- On-going site visits will be conducted by both Project Team and Project Assurance to monitor implementation and address current issues.

- Final report will be developed at the end of the project to reflect on the achievements, results and lessons learned.

## IV. WORK PLAN

Period January-March 2021<sup>2</sup>:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS <i>And baseline, indicators including annual targets</i>	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME			RESPONSIBLE PARTY	Funding Source	PLANNED BUDGET			
		Q1					Budget Description	Amount USD	Amount pound	
<b>Output 1</b> <b>Increased resilience and socio-economic security of the bordering communities in Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions</b>  <i>Baseline: 1. 2</i> 2. 0 3. 21 4.0 5.0 <i>Indicators:</i> 1. N of development scenarios through scenario building exercise 2. Survey of needs and current situation of VET providers conducted in 3 regions	1. Capacity building of stakeholders to use electronic data toolkit and apply it in the community/regional policy development	X			UNDP	CSSF	72100 74500 75100	10,810.8 540.5 908.1	8,000 400 672	
	2. Development of conflict-sensitive future-oriented development scenarios in 1 consolidated borderline community	X			UNDP	CSSF	72100 74500 75100	26,351.4 675.7 2,162.2	19,500 500 1,600	
	3. Capacity building of local VET institutions to adjust education content and modality to the needs of conflict-affected population in the COVID-19 context	X			UNDP	CSSF	72100 74500 75100	44,594.6 1,108.1 3,656.2	33,000 820 2,706	
	4. Expanding disaster risk assessments; developing recommendations for integration of DRR and civil protection into 5 year community plans and 2 DRM plans; establishing Community Resilience Teams.						71300 72100 74200 74500 75100	6,486.5 37,837.8 3,378.4 564.9 3,861.41	4,800 28,000 2,500 418 2,857	
		5 .DR assessment and DRM development of kindergartens and health facilities, as a first step of handing over the local level resilience building model to the Community						71300 72100 74500 75100	7,432.4 5,810.8 675.7 1,113.5	5,500 4,300 500 824

<sup>2</sup> Maximum 18 months

3. Number of settlements where LLRM assessment is conducted 4. Number of disaster management plans for kindergartens and ambulatories 5. Number of people received skilling/reskilling <i>Targets:</i> 1. 1 2. Survey conducted in 3 marzes 3. 21 4. 20 5. 70 <i>Related CP outcome:</i> People, communities and regions benefit from equitable economic opportunities, decent work and sustainable livelihoods, enabled through competitiveness and inclusive green growth	6. Delivery of gender-sensitive upskilling/reskilling trainings with further job placement						71300 72100 74500 75100	2,702.7 29,054.1 675.7 2,594.6	2,000 21,500 500 1,920
	7. Project management	X			UNDP	CSSF	64300 71400 71600 72400 74200 74500 75100	4,864.9 11,756.8 473 810.8 810.8 1,418.9 1,610.8	3,600 8,700 350 600 600 1,050 1,192
<b>TOTAL</b>								<b>214,742</b>	<b>158,909</b>



## Risk Analysis

#	Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner
1	Increasing numbers of new COVID-19 cases may lead to another wave of imposing lockdown and mobility restrictions, which may affect all activities, requiring face-to-face interaction	Jan, 2021	Other	Difficulties/security restrictions for operating in certain communities and impose risk for sustainability of actions. P = 5 I = 5	All the communication, surveys and interviews will be transmitted to online modality. Focus groups will be replaced with additional key informant interviews and desk review	Project Coordinator
2	Escalation of the border conflict and security situation still has medium to high probability, which will make it hard, if not impossible to ensure Project continuity.	Jan 2021	Political	Difficulties/security restrictions for operating in certain communities and impose risk for sustainability of actions. P = 5 I = 5	The implementing agencies should follow the business continuity plan, preparedness measures in case of a conflict scenario and the security advisory.	Project Coordinator