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FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

2025 – Revised Template

Period covered: 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Table of Contents

[1. BASIC PROJECT DATA](#)

[2. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING PROJECT OBJECTIVE\(S\) \(DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE\)](#)

[3. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS \(IP\)](#)

[4. SUMMARY ON PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES](#)

[5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS \(ESS\): RISKS FROM THE PROJECT](#)

[6. RISKS TO THE PROJECT](#)

[7. FOLLOW-UP ON MID-TERM REVIEW OR SUPERVISION MISSION](#)

[8. MINOR PROJECT AMENDMENTS](#)

[9. STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT](#)

[10. GENDER MAINSTREAMING](#)

[11. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES](#)

[12. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVEMENT](#)

[13. CO-FINANCING TABLE](#)

[14. GEO LOCATION INFORMATION](#)

[Annex. Monitoring Area-based GEF Core Indicator Commitments and Progress with FERM](#)

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER:

The final version of this PIR will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat.

The report will then be publicly available on the GEF website (click here).

Sensitive information should be submitted in Annex to be uploaded separately.

In such cases, please contact faogef-pir-support@fao.org for guidance.

1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	Europe and Central Asia (REU)
Country(ies):	Armenia
Project Title:	Implementation of LDN commitments through sustainable management and restoration of degraded landscapes
FAO Project Symbol:	GCP /ARM/010/GFF
GEF ID:	10365
Type of Trust Fund(s):	GFF
GEF Focal Area(s):	Land Degradation
Project Executing Partners:	Environmental Project Implementation Unit (EPIU) SA
Initial project duration (years):	4.5 years

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	16/09/2021
Actual Agency Approval Date	24/06/2021
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD:	01/08/2022
First Disbursement Date	30/11/2022
Planned Project End Date/NTE1:	11/02/2025
Revised project implementation End date (if approved)2:	31/07/2026
Actual Completion Date:	N/A
Expected Financial Closure Date:	31/08/2027

Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	\$	2,183,105.00
Total GEF grant delivery (as of June 30, 2025 (USD):	\$	1,422,409.00
Total Co-financing amount (USD)3:	\$	12,018,000.00
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 20254:	\$	2,239,370.00

M & E Milestones

Date of Last Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:	12/05/2024
Expected Mid-term Review date5:	16/09/2024
Actual Mid-term review date (if already completed):	N/A
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date6:	31/01/2026

Overall ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes (cumulative):	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Overall implementation progress rating:	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Overall risk rating:	Low

Status

Implementation Status (1st PIR, 2nd PIR, etc. Final PIR):	3rd PIR
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1 Date that was originally foreseen at the project’s operationalization and indicated in FPMIS.
2 If NTE extension has been requested and approved by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.
3 This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO Document/Project Document.
4 Please refer to the Section 13 of this report where updated co-financing estimates are requested and indicate the total co-financing amount materialized.
5 The Mid-Term Review (MTR) should take place after the 2nd PIR, around half-point between EOD and NTE. The MTR report in English should be submitted to the GEF Secretariat within 4 years of the CEO Endorsement date.
6 The Terminal Evaluation date should be discussed with OED 6 months before the project’s NTE date.

Project Contacts

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Coordinator (PC)	Gevorg Ter-Grigoryan	gevorgtergrigoryan@gmail.com
Budget Holder (BH)	Raimund Jehle/ FAOR, REU	raimund.jehle@fao.org
GEF Operational Focal Point (GEF OFP)	Hakob Simidyan, Minister of Environment	h.simidyan@env.am
Lead Technical Officer (LTO)	Starr, Carolina/ FAO, REU	carolina.starr@fao.org
GEF Technical Officer (GTO)	Kaan Evren Basaran, GEF Support Specialist	kaan.basaran@fao.org

Key Project Management Unit Personnel

Please indicate the composition of the PMU as per the Terms of Reference in the ProDoc. If any new position was established during the project implementation, please insert it accordingly.

Position planned (as per ProDoc)	Position filled (Yes/No)	Start date, Name, Contact	Comments
Project Coordinator	Yes	22.03.2025 Gevog Ter-Griggoryan	
Project Asistant	Yes	02.06.2025 Hasmk Yeghiyan	
Communication Expert	Yes	Stella Khachatryan	
Policy & Land Tenure Expert	Yes	Ani Mkrтчhyan	
SLM Expert	Yes	Gagik Tovmasyan	
VC Development Expert	Yes	Artyom Tserunyan	
Gender Expert	Yes	Sona Hakobyan	
Communication Expert	Yes	Sona Hakobyan	
Community Facilitators (Tumanyan community)	Yes	Sevada Vardanyan	
Community Facilitators (Sisian community)	Yes	Norayr Harutyunyan	
Raising awareness expert	Yes	Meri Hovhannisyan	

2. Progress towards Achieving Project Objective(s) (Development objective)

(All inputs in this section should be cumulative from project start, not annual)

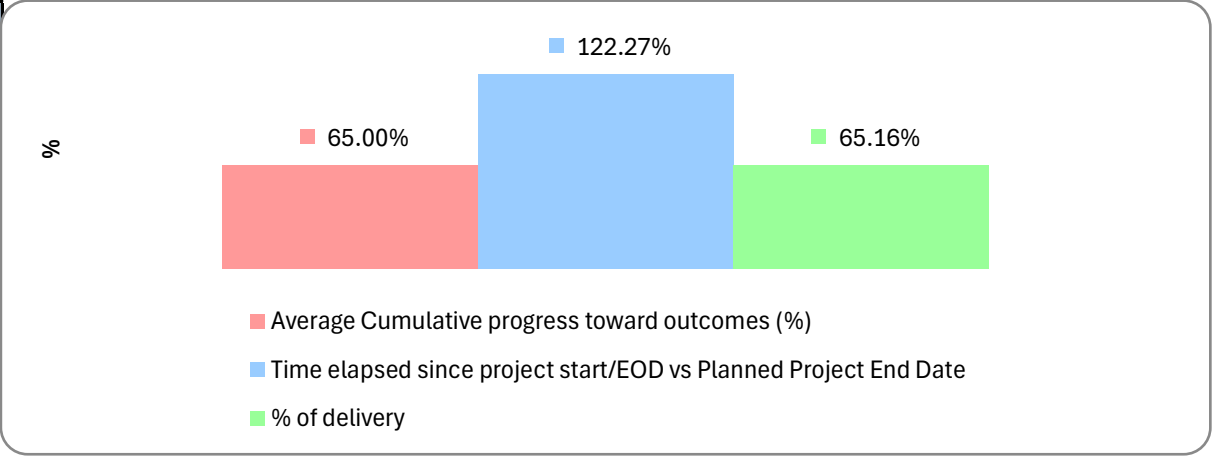
Please indicate the project's main progress towards achieving its objective(s) and the cumulative level of achievement of each outcome since the start of project implementation.

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Outcome 2.1: Resilient SLM practices and investments introduced on degraded land in target Regions	Number of ha of land with restored grasslands Number of ha of land with restored forest land Number of ha of land under SLM, including forest land, grasslands and croplands Amount of carbon sequestered through restoration and SLM Number of beneficiaries (households in pilot districts)	A baseline FAO/GCF project is supporting forestry investments in the two target districts, but SLM and restoration using an integrated landscape approach is not practiced in the two target districts	LD trends and drivers mapped using a gender lens; LDN local baseline established and mapped	4,000 ha of degraded grasslands restored 7,300 ha of forest lands restored within the State Forest Fund and established in abandoned lands 166,000 ha under SLM practices in target regions (of which: 110,000 ha forests; 50,000 ha grasslands; 6,000 ha croplands) 32,274,507 tCO2-eq sequestered 2,500 beneficiaries (target households in Lori and Syunik districts)	Twelve pasture management and livestock development plans, along with two Integrated Land Management (ILM) plans, were developed for all stakeholder communities. All plans were presented to farmers, community governors, and other stakeholders. Both printed and online versions of the documents were made available to the stakeholder villages and communities. The plans cover the total of 166 000 ha of abandoned lands under SLM practices. To improve degraded arable land and establish a stable feed base, the project supported sawing of sainfoin, alfalfa, spring barley and oats. As a result: a) 100 hectares of degraded arable land were improved in the Sisian community. Pastures and meadows improvement works have been completed: b) 80 hectares of degraded pastures and meadows were improved in the Tumanyan community; c) 40 hectares of degraded pastures and meadows were improved in the Sisian communit; d) 1.2 hectares of orchards were established in the Tumanyan community. Improvements were achieved through the use of organic and mineral fertilizers, as well as the sowing of locally adapted grass species. For the first time in the target areas, drone fertilization technology was introduced. An additional 49 hectares of degraded arable land were improved in Tumanyan, and 251 hectares in Sisian region; 170 hectares of degraded pastures and meadows were improved in Tum0anyan community and 130 hectares in Sisian community. All improved land areas have also had a positive effect on the nearby territories, resulting in an estimated additional 50% of surrounding land being indirectly improved. 2921 beneficiaries (750 women) received trainings and awareness packages on sustainable land management and degraded land restoration. Activities for the forest lands restoration have not been completed yet, since the project will co-benefit from the inputs of GCP/ARM/008/GCF project , currently experiencing certain delays. To support household-level food production and resilience the project completed distribution of 76,000 seedlings of tomato, hot and sweet pepper, broccoli, and 2.156 kg of cucumber seeds were distributed to residents in the Tumanyan and Sisian communitites. These improvements were again supported by the use of organic and mineral fertilizers, and the sowing of native grass species.	80.00%	Satisfactory (S)
Outcome 2.2: Key land-based value-chains strengthened and made more resilient and equitable	Number of value chains strengthened; number of VCs focused on women Number of value-chain actors with enhanced capacity in value-chain management	Value addition to agricultural products from the two selected districts is limited which negatively affects income generation and equity	Draft at least on value chain for each target region	Two value chains improved (at least one focused on women) 350 value-chain actors with strengthened capacity (disaggregated by gender and youth)	1.2 hectares of berry orchards have been established in the Tumanyan community. 1. "Population awareness activities have been implemented to acknowledge population and increase the level of knowledge regarding the program and the scheduled activities., 262 beneficiaries participated in awareness raising courses. 2. 491 beneficiaries participated in training of "Development and implementation of training programs on value chain and sustainable land management for farmers, women's groups and youth in the administrative units included in the project of Tumanyan and Sisian communities". Information leaflets, booklets were developed, courses were held in all settlements. All participants were provided with certificates of participation. As a part of the course, three university curricula were developed for the National Agrarian University of Armenia, in which relevant LDN topics were introduced. In Syunik and Lori regions, the value chain expert provided detailed information about value chains to the leaders of the settlements and the staff members of the local self-government bodies. The value chains that are most acceptable for the settlements were discussed. To develop value chains, 120 beehives along with all necessary tools were provided to the beneficiaries.	90.00%	Satisfactory (S)
Outcome 3							
Outcome 3.1: Project monitoring and evaluation and monitoring and assessment of global environmental benefits and LDN	M&E system in place for monitoring of project progress and GEBs	No system in place, No monitoring system for LDN exist	Implementation of the project based on adaptive results based-management	Project delivers expected results and GEBs and co-benefits established	Project staff conduct periodic monitoring	60.00%	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

	Outcome 3.2: Lessons learned and dissemination of knowledge to support scaling up of LDN	Direct and indirect beneficiaries with improved knowledge and increased awareness on restoration and SLM in line with LDN principles	0	5 knowledge products and training/awareness raising materials on SLM and LDN	10 knowledge products and training/awareness raising materials on SLM and LDN Public awareness raising campaign reaches 2,500 people	Under Outcome 3.2, significant efforts were made to enhance the knowledge and awareness of both direct and indirect beneficiaries on land restoration and sustainable land management (SLM), aligned with Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) principles. While baseline awareness was limited, the project successfully developed and distributed five knowledge products and training/awareness-raising materials focused on SLM and LDN. Six brochures were published on value chain development, along with two Integrated Land Management (ILM) plans and twelve pasture management plans, all of which were distributed to relevant stakeholders. In addition, three university curricula were developed for the National Agrarian University of Armenia, incorporating key LDN topics. A total of 236 people participated in trainings on value chains, integrated land management plans, and sustainable land management practices. Furthermore, a public awareness campaign was conducted, reaching approximately 2,500 people across the targeted regions. As part of this campaign, project-related social media publications were viewed over 25,000 times.	60.00%	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
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Average Cumulative progress toward outcomes (%)	Time elapsed since project start/EOD vs Planned Project End Date	% of delivery
65.00%	122.27%	65.16%



Development Objective (DO) Ratings, and Overall Assessment

Please note that the overall DO ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported above. The ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of results since project start

FY2025 Development Objective rating ¹	Project Manager/ Coordinator	Budget Holder	Lead Technical Officer13	GEF Operational Focal Point	GEF Technical Officer (GTO)
	Satisfactory (S)	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)		Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Comments/reasons¹² justifying the ratings for FY2025 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period	The project has demonstrated substantial achievements during the current fiscal year, with the revised annual workplan progres as scheduled. Implementation quality remains high, driven by strong and effective collaboration among all partners, including FAO, project experts, and other stakeholders. This close coordination has enhanced overall outcomes. The project team also actively engages with similar initiatives in Armenia to exchange knowledge and best practices. Stakeholder engagement has notably increased, supported by heightened awareness and communication efforts. Although some activities are still underway, the progress to date gives strong confidence that the project's objectives will be successfully achieved.	The newly appointed project coordinator has enhanced the implementation of project activities, making every effort to recover delays from earlier phases. However, due to substantial setbacks, a no-cost extension has been arranged in line with the approved workplan by the Steering Committee and in agreement with PTF members. As a result, the project has been extended until 31 July 2026 without any financial implications for the budget.	The project implementation has demonstrated substantial improvement since the hiring of the new project coordinator. The activities are moving forward and the project is catching up. The impact of activities on the ground is also strong, and the engagement with beneficiaries is very tight.		The project has been having greater progress towards achieving its targets; but needs to still bring together all the work in the field for a more coherent framework of lessons learned and how the good practices and positive results can be upscaled. More systematic engagement with the beneficiaries; highligting and collecting the benefits they are obtaining from the project and how any additional support can be provided to spread project's perspectives and contributions in the most effective manner to initiate the transformation of the behaviors, activities and the environmental context within which the communities in pilot regions maintain their livelihoods will stregngthen the achievements of the project and bring them together for higher visibility, lessons learned and influence for more widespread changes both through the policy support and uptake of similar rural communities and community members
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Measures to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings on Section 2 above

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By When?
1.1. Enhanced enabling environment for LDN at national level	Targets: - Two cross-sectoral policies/One law integrating LDN principles - Functioning intersectoral coordination mechanisms for LDN (horizontal and vertical) reflectin the role of LDN in seeking synergy between the three Rio conventions	Policy & Land Tenure Expert SLM expert Gender Exper	01.08.2025
1.2. Enhanced understanding of land degradation drivers informs LDN target setting at the national and community levels	Targets: - Land degradation trends and drivers mapped and its costs assessed; LDN local baseline established and mapped - LDN targets (Anticipated future losses versus Anticipated future gains) established in target Communities	Policy & Land Tenure Expert SLM expert	2025
1.3. Enhanced capacity to implement LDN at national and local levels	Targets: - 100 people trained at national level and 500 at sub-national level (of which 50% are women)	A specialized organization will be chosen, which will implement the training program together with the program experts	2025 Q3/Q4 (in process)
2.1. Resilient SLM practices and investments introduced on degraded land in target Regions	. Integrated land-management plans developed using participatory approaches and integrated with existing Community land use planning processes in target regions.	SLM expert and contractor companies	Completed 12 SLM Plans finished for 12 stakeholder villages and 2 ILM plans for communites were finished and presented to the stakeholders

2.2. Key land-based value-chains strengthened and made more resilient and equitable	Targets: - Two value chain (at least one focused on women) improved through LDN principles - Three university Curricula modified to include relevant LDN topics - 350 training certificates obtained (disaggregated by gender and youth) - 2,500 direct target beneficiaries (50% women)	Value-chain expert and contractor	Trainings completed, but planning to add some additional trainings in Q3
3.1. Project monitoring and evaluation and monitoring and assessment of global environmental benefits and LDN	Targets: - Functioning M&E system and GEBs and co-benefits established - Functioning LDN reporting to the UNCCD		
3.2. Lessons learned and dissemination of knowledge to support scaling up of LDN	Targets: - 10 knowledge products and training/awareness raising materials on SLM and LDN (50% tailored to women)	Communication expert Raising awareness expert	In progress (Q3,Q4 2025 and Q1, Q2 2026)

7 Some indicators may not identify mid-term targets at the design stage (refer to approved results framework) therefore this column should only be filled when relevant.

8 Use GEF Secretariat required six-point scale system: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

3. Implementation Progress (IP)

(Please indicate progress achieved during this FY as per the Implementation Plan/Annual Workplan)

Outcomes and outputs	Indicators (as per the logical framework)	Main achievements in the last 12 months (please DO NOT repeat results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance 9 in delivering outputs
Outcome 1. New cross-sectoral policies/laws Intersectoral coordination mechanisms for LDN			
Output 1.1.1	LDN Policy assessment Policy framework supporting LDN	Cross-sectoral policies and laws package are ready. Discussions were held with the interested parties. Currently the packages circulates in the ministry of enviroemnt. The feedback received was taken into consideration, and the necessary changes were made.	N/A
Output 1.1.2	Horizontal intersectoral coordination mechanism at national level Vertical intersectoral coordination mechanisms	A draft version of gender-balanced horizontal and vertical intersectoral coordination mechanisms has been developed at both the national and sub-national levels.	N/A
Output 1.2.1	LD assessment and cost assessment that specify how gender differences and inequalities contribute to land degradation	The research regarding the gender differences and inequalities have been done. LD assessment and cost assessment that specify how gender differences and inequalities contribute to land degradation have been made, wusing the global standard tools, such as LADA/WOCAT. The report have bees uploaded to the WOCAT newtwork.	N/A
Output 1.2.2	LDN indicator assessment and maps from target regions	The sampling of soil were been collected and analayzed in th laboratory. : LDN indicators (land cover, land productivity, and soil organic carbon) in target Regions assessed and mapped.	N/A
Output 1.3.1	LDN training modules, including one dedicated to gender issues	The trainings were held in all stakeholder villadges. The main traing planned for Q3/Q4 2025.	N/A
Output 1.3.2	Nataional capacity building programme in LDN Number of people trained, including women	The capacity building works has been started. In the first phase the capacity building needs assesmant under the process to understand and higlighth the main imprtant points for the LDN capacity building.	N/A
Output 1.3.3	DSS for intersectoral and gender equitable governance of land and natural resources for LDN	In the process.	N/A
Outcome 2 LD mapping that specify how gender differences and inequalities contribute to land degradation LDN targets set in Lori and Syunik			

Output 2.1.1	Number of ILM plans that reflect priorities of both women and men Number of ha covered by ILM plans	Two Integrated land-management plans developed using participatory approaches and integrated with existing Community land use planning processes in target regions (Lori, Siunik)	N/A
Output 2.1.2	Number of learning landscapes established Ha of land covered by restoration and SLM	In additon of 2024 works, 100 ha of degraded arable lands were restored in Sisian community, and 120 ha of degraded pasture and grazing lands were restored using the new technology - drone fertilization with organic fertilazors both in Tumanyan and Sisian communites.	N/A
Output 2.1.3	Number of resource mobilisation plans that prioritize approaches that benefit/are accessible by women as well as men	Three resource mobilization plans have been developed to support the scaling up of best practices and ensure the sustainability of project outcomes. These include one national resource mobilization plan for Armenia and two regional plans tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of the Lori and Syunik marzes.	N/A
Output 2.2.1	Number of life cycle assessment of value chains (SLCAs and LCSAs) Number of business plans for the	Two land-based value chains were established as part of the project. A 1.2-hectare berry orchard was developed in the Tumanyan community, serving both as a demonstration site and an income-generating opportunity for local stakeholders. Additionally, 120 beehives, along with the necessary tools and equipment, were provided to selected beneficiaries to support and expand sustainable beekeeping practices. These initiatives contribute to livelihood improvement, land restoration, and the long-term sustainability of local economies.	N/A
Output 2.2.2	Number of curricula modified to include management of the whole value chain Number of value-chain actors with enhanced capacity in whole value-chain management	In 2024 the 3 university Curricula were modified and adopted at Armenian National Agrarian University. The trainngs regarding marketing and bussiness development were held in the target communities.	N/A
Outcome 3.			
Output 3.1.1	Mid-term evaluation Final Evaluation3	Mid term evaluation is in progress. Final Final evaluation is planned upon the project completion	N/A
Output 3.1.2	M&E system ensuring timely delivery of project benefits in terms of GEBs and gender disaggregated co-benefits	Project M&E framework is being followed by the project team and FAO. The ITT is maintained by FAO. Training on the M&E framework and gender disaggregated data collection has been deliveredby FAO staff in February 2025.	N/A
Output 3.1.3	Monitoring system established under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment	The land cover data collecting is in process currently.	N/A

Implementation Progress (IP) , and Overall Assessment

Please note that the overall IP ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported above. The ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of results during the fiscal year (July 1 2024, to June 30, 2025)

	Project Manager/ Coordinator	Lead Technical Officer	Budget Holder	GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP)	GEF Technical Officer (GTO)
FY2025 Implementation Objective rating ¹⁰	Satisfactory (S)	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Satisfactory (S)		Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Comments/reasons justifying the ratings for FY2025 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period	The project has demonstrated substantial achievements during the current fiscal year, with the revised annual workplan progres as scheduleed. Implementation quality remains high, driven by strong and effective collaboration among all partners, including FAO, project experts, and other stakeholders. This close coordination has enhanced overall outcomes. The project team also actively engages with similar initiatives in Armenia to exchange knowledge and best practices. Stakeholder engagement has notably increased, supported by heightened awareness and communication efforts. Although some activities are still underway, the progress to date gives strong confidence that the project's objectives will be successfully achieved.	The progress of the project in this fiscal year was outstanding. With the hiring of the new project coordinator, the project was moving forward and delivering toward the results. Several delayed activities were put on track and massive results on the ground were achieved.	The newly appointed project coordinator has enhanced the implementation of project activities, making every effort to recover delays from earlier phases. However, due to substantial setbacks, a no-cost extension has been arranged in line with the approved workplan by the Steering Committee and in agreement with PTF members. As a result, the project has been extended until 31 July 2026 without any financial implications for the budget.	Comments	The project has been having greater progress towards achieving its targets; but needs to still bring together all the work in the field for a more coherent framework of lessons learned and how the good practices and positive results can be upscaled. More systematic engagement with the beneficiaries; highlighting and collecting the benefits they are obtaining from the project and how any additional support can be provided to spread project's perspectives and contributions in the most effective manner to initiate the transformation of the behaviors, activities and the environmental context within which the communities in pilot regions maintain their livelihoods will stregngthen the achievements of the project and bring them together for higher visibility, lessons learned and influence for more widespread changes both through the policy support and uptake of similar rural communities and community members

9 Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.
10 Implementation Progress Rating – A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project’s components and activities is in compliance with the projects approved implementation plan.

4. Summary on progress and challenges

Please provide a summary paragraph on project implementation progress consistent with the information reported in section 2 and 3 of the PIR (Max 400 words) (This section will be uploaded to the GEF portal)

The Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) project in Armenia has made steady and impactful progress across all expected outputs during the reporting period. Key milestones have been achieved in national-level policy support, land restoration, capacity building, gender mainstreaming, and value chain development. Cross-sectoral policy and legal frameworks supporting LDN were finalized and are currently under review by the Ministry of Environment. A draft of gender-balanced horizontal and vertical intersectoral coordination mechanisms has also been developed, enhancing national and subnational collaboration.

Substantial progress was made in assessing the drivers of land degradation through gender-sensitive methodologies using global tools such as LADA and WOCAT. The resulting reports have been shared with the international WOCAT network. Soil samples were collected and analyzed, enabling the mapping of LDN indicators—including land productivity, cover, and soil organic carbon—in the Lori and Syunik regions.

On-the-ground restoration activities have been scaled up significantly. In total, 100 hectares of degraded arable land in Sisian and 120 hectares of degraded pastures and grasslands in Sisian and Tumanyan were restored using innovative drone-assisted organic fertilization techniques. Integrated Land Management (ILM) plans were finalized for target areas using participatory approaches. 12 sustainable land managment plans were developed for all stakeholder villadges.

Three resource mobilization plans were developed—one national and two regional (Lori and Syunik)—to ensure sustainability and scale-up of project benefits. A monitoring system under the Ministry of Environment has begun collecting land cover data, supporting national M&E efforts. Final evaluation and gender-sensitive co-benefits monitoring systems are in preparation.

Overall, the project is on track and demonstrating high-quality implementation through strong institutional partnerships, innovative techniques, and active community participation, contributing meaningfully to Armenia’s LDN targets and the global goals under the UNCCD and GEF.

Please provide a summary paragraph on challenges of project implementation consistent with the information reported in section 2 and 3 of the PIR (Max 400 words) (This section will be uploaded to the GEF portal)

Although cross-sectoral policy packages were finalized, their formal adoption has been slower than anticipated, pending internal ministerial review. This has slightly delayed the mainstreaming of LDN priorities into national regulatory frameworks. Similarly, while the gender-balanced intersectoral coordination mechanism was drafted, operationalization at sub-national levels remains limited due to capacity constraints and the need for further consensus-building among stakeholders.

The development of the Decision Support System (DSS) for equitable land governance is still in process, partly due to the complexity of integrating gender and LDN indicators across data systems and ministries. Moreover, although a significant number of trainings were delivered, the full roll-out of the national capacity-building program required more time to complete a comprehensive needs assessment, particularly to ensure the effective inclusion of women and marginalized groups.

In summary, while none of the challenges significantly compromised project outcomes, they did necessitate revised timelines, enhanced stakeholder coordination, and ongoing capacity development. The project team continues to apply adaptive strategies to ensure timely delivery, with an emphasis on institutional strengthening, flexible field implementation, and inclusive participation.

Implementation of Exit Strategy

Has the project developed an Exit Strategy? If yes, please describe the

Yes, the project has initiated an Exit Strategy focused on ensuring sustainability through institutional integration, capacity building, and resource mobilization. Three resource mobilization plans (one national, two regional) were developed to support long-term financing of LDN actions. LDN principles have been integrated into cross-sectoral policy packages and community land-use planning processes. University curricula were revised to build future capacity, and local trainings and demonstration sites (e.g., berry orchards, beekeeping) support continued community engagement. Coordination with the Ministry of Environment and other partners ensures ownership of tools such as monitoring systems and the Decision Support System (DSS). Full implementation of the Exit Strategy will

progress to implement it.	and the Decision Support System (DSS). Full implementation of the Exit Strategy will continue through the final year, including formalizing stakeholder responsibilities and institutional handover.
How is the project enhancing institutional capacities to foster country ownership for more durable / sustained results?	The project is strengthening institutional capacities by integrating LDN principles into national policies and planning frameworks, ensuring alignment with country priorities. Cross-sectoral policy packages and coordination mechanisms have been developed with the Ministry of Environment and other relevant institutions. Capacity-building activities, including targeted trainings and university curriculum revisions, are enhancing technical knowledge at national and local levels.

5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS): risks from the project

Initial ESS Risk Classification (at CEO Endorsement/Approval Stage)	Low Risk
New environmental and social risks.	No significant new environmental or social risks have been identified during the current reporting period. All project activities continue to be implemented in alignment with national environmental regulations and social safeguards.
Progress made towards implementing the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) (only for Moderate and High Risk Projects)	N/A
Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)	Although no official greivance mechanism is in place the project ensures the permanent contact with stakeholders take place during the projet implementation. Posters with information about the project along with a QR code that links to the project's social media pages were placed in all village administration to enable stakeholders and villagers to easily contact the project team.

6. Risks to the Project

The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified during the project implementation.					
	Type of risk	Risk rating ¹¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Description of Risk	Mitigation measure implemented
1	Institutional	Low	Yes	Project execution under the new government that is reviewing procedures for management of international funds	The Ministry of Environment (Executing Entity) has assured that changes will only involve the legal definition of the Project Implementation Unit and it will not change its functions or composition
2	Institutional	Low	Yes	Weak cooperation between key institutional stakeholders (i.e. Environment and Agriculture sectors)	This risk will be mitigated under Component 1 of the project that will strengthen the intersectoral coordination mechanism to enhance cooperation on LDN.
3	Political	Low	Yes	Lack of political support to LDN and SLM in the context of grasslands and pastures	Political support is high in Armenia for SLM and LDN, which is demonstrated by policy reform processes initiated both in the agriculture and forestry sector. This project will provide an opportunity to strengthen the LDN framework that requires inter-sectoral coordination and to demonstrate good practices in the field.
4	Institutional	Low	Yes	Low technical capacity in operationalising LDN at national, regional and landscape level affecting project implementation	Capacity development for LDN will be provided under Components 1 and 2, which will mitigate the risk. Component 3 will in addition provide capacity building for replication of the LDN in other regions.
5	Environmental	Moderate	Yes	Natural changes in agro-ecological zones due to gradual changes in climate and the incidence of extreme events	SLM practices to be demonstrated and scaled up by the project are proven to enhance resilience to climate change, such as improved grazing rotation and multi-purpose agroforestry practices.
6	Partnership & Coordination	Low	Yes	Lack of local stakeholder engagement and commitment to adopt SLM to achieve LDN	Implementation will be undertaken through community-based participatory approaches that address local cultural, socio-economic and ecological concerns. The project will provide incentives to farmers to engage in various activities that target LDN, involving both capacity building, awareness raising, and value chains strengthening.

7	Environmental	High	Yes	Impacts of climate change and associated hazards threatens agricultural production and peoples livelihoods	The condition of the land is highly variable temporally, largely due to climate variability. Progress toward LDN will take climate change impacts into consideration in both the monitoring of drivers of LD and the implementation of SLM practices that will be selected based both on their productivity enhancing impact as well as their resilience to climate change.
8	Partnership & Coordination	Low	No	Different approaches to operational processes and communication styles can cause inefficiencies within the partnership.	Ensure transparent communication channels are in place. Regularly monitor the performance od partners, assess the beneficiary satisfaction for early identification and addressing the arising issues

Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):		
FY2024 rating	FY2025 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2025 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
LOW	Low	No changes against Prodoc

11 Risk ratings means a rating of the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High.

7. Follow-up on Mid-term review or supervision mission

If the project had an MTR or a supervision mission in 2024, please report on how the recommendations were implemented during this fiscal year as indicated in the Management Response or in the supervision mission report.

MTR or supervision mission recommendations	Measures implemented during this Fiscal Year
Recommendation 1:	
Recommendation 2:	
Recommendation 3:	
Recommendation ...	
Recommendation...	

MTR is in process, therefore no recommendations are available

8. Minor project amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines 12. Please describe any minor changes that the project has made under the relevant category or categories and provide supporting documents as an annex to this report if available. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)

Category of change	Provide a description of the change	Indicate the timing of the change	Approved by
Results framework			
Components and cost			
Institutional and implementation arrangements			
Financial management			
Implementation schedule	The project No-cost extension has been approved. An extension until 31 July 2026, will allow sufficient time to complete remaining activities, monitor results, and finalize the project outcomes without any additional budgetary impact. . The only budget related adjustment is a redistribution of funds between 2025 and 2026	The original Project NTE was 11 Feb, 2025, which has been extended till 31 Jul, 2026	UN FAO and SC
Executing Entity			
Executing Entity Category			
Minor project objective change			
Safeguards			
Risk analysis			
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%			
Co-financing			
Location of project activity			
Other minor project amendment (define)			

9. Stakeholders' Engagement

Please report on progress, challenges, and outcomes on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan) included at CEO Endorsement/Approval during this reporting period. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)

[illegible]

10. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on Gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable) during this reporting period. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)		
Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.
a. Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	Yes	During this reporting period: 1) the project conducted focus group discussions with women and men from target communities to deepen understanding of gender disparities in access to and control over natural resources. These qualitative insights, combined with data collected through the WOCAT Gender Questionnaire, enabled the identification of critical gender-specific barriers and priorities. The results have been systematically integrated into project planning and implementation, enhancing the gender-responsiveness of natural resource management interventions and ensuring that both women's and men's needs are effectively addressed. 2) the project completed and published 12 community-based pasture management plans that incorporate dedicated gender-responsive sections. These sections recognize both the traditional and evolving roles of women in pasture use, outline the challenges they encounter in accessing resources, and recommend specific actions to ensure more inclusive and equitable management structures. Each pasture management plan contains a dedicated gender section, developed in consultation with local women users and stakeholders. These sections outline specific measures to ensure women's access to seasonal pastures, water points, and fodder resources. 3) Targeted training sessions were held to strengthen women's knowledge of sustainable land use practices and their rights related to land and natural resource management. This has led to increased engagement and leadership among women in land stewardship activities.
b. Improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	During this reporting period, 750 women and youth received training on business management, marketing, processing, and certification across key value chains under the LDN Armenia project. The training also included sessions on equitable household decision-making, emphasizing the important role of women in managing profits and running businesses. Through awareness campaigns and partnerships with local youth organizations, the project has encouraged the participation of young women in environmental decision-making. During this reporting period, women were actively engaged in the development of resource mobilization plans, ensuring that gender perspectives and priorities were fully integrated. Their involvement contributed to the design of more inclusive and effective strategies for sustainable natural resource management. Following the development of these gender-responsive plans, targeted training sessions were conducted to strengthen women's capacity and encourage their meaningful participation in local resource management and mobilization activities.
c. generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	Yes	Trainings were conducted across all key value chains of the project – including beekeeping, dairy production, and cultivation of medicinal herbs and herbal teas. Based on the outcomes and expressed needs of participants, it was decided to organize additional targeted trainings on marketing and sales for women who already run their own small-scale production businesses (such as herbal teas and dairy products). Furthermore, for women in the Syunik region, a business plan has been developed for processing sheep wool into carpets and handcrafted products, creating new economic opportunities while preserving cultural heritage and promoting women's economic empowerment. In addition, seedlings were distributed to women beneficiaries, and the project is preparing to distribute light hand tools for gardening and small-scale farming. These tools will support improved productivity and harvests, contributing to higher incomes and better livelihood opportunities for women and their families.
Any other good practices on gender	No	

11. Knowledge and Learning Activities

Knowledge activities/products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management (and Learning) Approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval, during this reporting period. (This section will be uploaded to the GEF Portal)	
Knowledge management and Learning (KML): Does the project have a KML strategy?	Yes
If YES, what is the implementation progress? In your answer, please describe how the project is fostering knowledge sharing and learning among stakeholders at national and sub-national level.	The project is actively fostering knowledge sharing and learning through multiple channels. At the national level, it has supported the development of LDN-related training modules, policy dialogues, and university curriculum updates to embed long-term institutional learning. At the sub-national level, community-based trainings, demonstration plots (e.g., pasture restoration, berry orchards, beekeeping), and participatory planning processes have enabled stakeholders to apply new knowledge directly. Regular coordination meetings and joint implementation with local authorities further strengthen cross-level learning and replication.
If NO, how does the project identify, collect and document good practices?	N/A
Please list good practices, including key-technical and/or institutional innovations, from the project thus far.	Drone-based organic fertilization – Introduced for restoring degraded pasture and arable lands, increasing precision and efficiency while reducing environmental impact. Use of LADA/WOCAT tools – Applied for land degradation assessments, ensuring standardization and integration into global knowledge platforms. Establishment of demonstration plots – Including 1.2 ha of berry orchards and 120 beehives, serving as practical, on-the-ground learning sites for communities.
Communication strategy: Does the project have a communication strategy?	Yes
Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this fiscal year.	The project successfully raised awareness on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) through community events, stakeholder workshops, and field demonstrations in Lori and Syunik. Videos were produced and disseminated to showcase restoration practices and gender-inclusive planning. Engagement with local media and social platforms helped increase public visibility and support for project activities.
Human-interest story: Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits.	Most of our beekeeping stakeholders have significantly increased their honey production. Thanks to the beehives provided by the project, many beneficiaries have not only maintained the initial support but expanded it. For example, one stakeholder increased their number of beehives from 12 (received in 2024) to 18 in less than a year. This is a strong example of how the project is positively impacting livelihoods — beneficiaries are not only utilizing the resources provided but actively investing in growth. It demonstrates that the project is achieving one of its key objectives: ensuring sustainability and continuation of results beyond the initial support.
Please provide links to related website, social media account	https://www.facebook.com/share/1JRtZ2HsKh/?mibextid=wwXlfr
Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web, if any.	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AokaZJPqk/?mibextid=wwXlfr https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1JccJiu6sk/?mibextid=wwXlfr https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1HzwmrFxFN/?mibextid=wwXlfr https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BJJ6FxsW2/?mibextid=wwXlfr https://www.facebook.com/share/r/161Freknfj/?mibextid=wwXlfr

Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details.	Meri Hovhannisyan
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12. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communitess Involvement

Are Indigenous Peoples and local communities involved in the project (as per the approved Project Document)? If yes, please briefly explain.

If applicable, please describe the process and current status of on-going/completed, legitimate consultations to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the indigenous communities.

There are no Indigenous Peoples in the project target areas as defined by the national context and the approved Project Document. However, local communities, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, are actively involved in the planning and implementation of project activities. The project ensures meaningful participation through inclusive stakeholder consultations, participatory land use planning, and community-based capacity building. All activities are implemented with full transparency and informed consent, ensuring that local voices shape decisions and that benefits are equitably distributed. Community feedback mechanisms are also in place to maintain accountability and strengthen trust throughout implementation.

Do indigenous peoples and/or local communities have an active participation in the project activities? If yes, briefly describe how.

Local communities play an active role in the project's implementation. They are directly involved in various activities, including land restoration, sustainable agriculture, pasture management, and value chain development such as beekeeping and berry production. Community members participate in trainings, planning workshops, and field demonstrations, ensuring that their knowledge, needs, and priorities shape project outcomes. Women and youth are especially encouraged to take part, promoting inclusive and gender-responsive development. This participatory approach not only builds local ownership but also strengthens the long-term sustainability of project results.

13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement/approval (in USD)	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2025 (in USD)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia	In-kind	100,000.00	\$ 60,000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia	In-kind	1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000
Recipient Country Government	"Environmental Project Implementation Unit" (EPIU) State Institution	In-kind	48,000.00	\$ 50,000
Recipient Country Government	Forest Committee of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia	In-kind	10,000.00	\$ 10,000
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	10,800,000.00	\$ 1,079,370
Recipient Country Government	Sisian Community (Gorayk village)	In-kind	50,000.00	\$ 30,000
Recipient Country Government	Armenian National Agrarian University	In-kind	10,000.00	\$ 10,000
Total		Total	\$12,018,000	\$2,239,370

Please explain any significant changes in project co-financing since CEO Endorsement/Approval, or differences between the pledged and materialized co-financing amounts.

14. Geo Location Information

This section should be completed ONLY by projects with 1st PIR and in case the geographic coverage of project activities has changed since last reporting period.
This information is required by GEF Secretariat in GEF Portal

Are there any changes in the geographic coverage of the project activities since the last PIR report?

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description*
Tumanyan	41.0019	44.6494	616132	Tumanyan community
Atan	40.92972	44.84302	616873	Administrative unit of Tumanyan community
Ahnidzor	40.90764	44.82041	617000	Administrative unit of Tumanyan community
Shamut	40.93894	44.79424	616237	Administrative unit of Tumanyan community
Lorut	40.93717	44.77142	616465	Administrative unit of Tumanyan community
Karinj	40.97237	44.68979	616568	Administrative unit of Tumanyan community
Gorayq	39.681417	45.761429	174896	Administrative unit of Sisian community
Spandaryan	39.622441	45.906247	174758	Administrative unit of Sisian community
Rsghuk	39.667395	45.856399	174943	Administrative unit of Sisian community
Sarnakunq	39.648383	45.884858	174788	Administrative unit of Sisian community

Annex. Monitoring Area-based GEF Core Indicator Commitments and Progress with FERM

The Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM), developed by FAO, is the official monitoring platform for tracking global progress and disseminating good practices for the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. The FERM can serve as an integrated GIS-based platform, providing GEF staff and all relevant stakeholders the chance to display the progress of committed versus achieved land under restoration or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use, along with clear results such as the percentage of project achievement. Having a common tracking and monitoring platform allows users to comprehensively assess and report on project progress. A user-friendly dashboard showcasing project results gives stakeholders a clear understanding of the extent to which project targets have been achieved. Projects with area-based GEF Core Indicators (GEF Core Indicators 1-5 and LDCF Core Indicator 2) are encouraged to register in the FFERM nplatform.

Useful links:

- [FERM website](#)
- [FERM User Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [FERM YouTube channel](#)
- [Email Carmen Morales](#)

26 It also supports countries in reporting areas under restoration for the Kunming-Montreal GBF Target 2 (areas under restoration) for which FAO is the custodian agency.