
Gender Assessment

SAP014: Forest Resilience of Armenia, Enhancing Adaptation and Rural Green Growth via Mitigation

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GENDER ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

FOREST RESILIENCE OF ARMENIA, ENHANCING ADAPTATION AND RURAL GREEN GROWTH VIA MITIGATION

PROJECT

2020

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADHS	Armenia Demographic and Health Survey
AMD	Armenian Dram
AWHHE	Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FHH	Female Headed Households
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GG	Gender Gap
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HDI	Human Development Index
HH	House Holds
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NFMA	National Forest Monitoring and Assessment System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSS	National Statistical Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RoA	Republic of Armenia
TVET	Technical and vocational education institutions
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USD	United States Dollar (\$)
WEF	World Economic Forum

I. Introduction

“Gender equality is central to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ (FAO’s) mandate. FAO can achieve its goals only if it simultaneously works towards gender equality and supports women’s diverse roles in agriculture and rural development. Gender equality is not only an essential means by which FAO can achieve its mandate, it is also a basic human right.”¹

Gender equality is a key to eliminating poverty and hunger, as it has been demonstrated by the FAO throughout its research across the world. The FAO is committed to contribute to the reduction of gender inequalities through its interventions, and this assessment has been implemented as part of its efforts on generating evidence and knowledge in compliance with the FAO Policy on Gender Equality.

The FAO Policy on Gender Equality² identifies gender mainstreaming and women-targeted actions as a twin-track strategy for the achievement of gender equality in the agricultural and rural sector. In this regard, the Policy sets out a number of minimum standards for gender mainstreaming. These include a requirement to undertake a country gender assessment for the formulation of country programmes established between FAO and member country governments, articulated as Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) and to carry out gender analysis at the identification and formulation stages of technical assistance projects³.

At the same time as countries begin to turn their commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change into actions, the GCF is focused on ensuring that a gender-responsive approach is fully integrated into the design and implementation of all projects and programmes. In fact, the GCF is the climate fund mechanism that put gender mainstreaming in the corner of its operations.

This assessment presents the major gender issues including gender inequalities found within available data from studies conducted by the Armenian National Statistical Service, international and local organizations and research institutions. The assessment was conducted with a view to fostering the understanding of the gender situation, identification of the gender issues that are relevant to the project, and proposing opportunities for gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment.

The Assessment is largely based on the report titled “Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Armenia”, produced by FAO in 2017, based on official data and statistics,

¹ FAO Policy on Gender Equality <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf>

²ibid

³This is also in line with the recommendations of the FAO Guide to the Project Cycle (2012), which calls for gender analysis in the preparation of programme and project concept notes, and of the REU/SEC Stocktaking Report carried out in 2012, which recommends that a gender assessment should be carried out before any project is formulated to be a baseline gender-related information on the sectors of competence of FAO

interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD)s. The report is available online and is the first of its kind produced in the country. The report analysed gender issues in rural context of the country and identified key challenges which largely served as a base in preparation of the current proposal. The GAP also includes data from a specific survey commissioned by FAO to the Armenia NGO - Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment. The survey targeted women in project areas to understand energy needs at the rural household level and climate change vulnerability of rural households.

This Gender Assessment will serve as a resource for the Project Implementation Unit, FAO country office and the Government of the Republic of Armenia during the project implementation and some elements will be used as an awareness-raising tool for the wider public. In addition to the work conducted during the preparation of the funding proposal, a series of consultations with diverse groups, including grass root women's groups, women farmers and women from female headed households will be held under various project components throughout the project cycle. Similarly, the surveys planned at mid-term and conclusion of the project will ensure that the questionnaires are developed in a gender sensitive manner, and gender analysis is conducted based on the survey results. Consultations with diverse groups, including grass root women's groups, women farmers and women from female headed households will be organized prior to the survey, and for validating its results.

II. Proposed Project

Armenian forests are among the most impacted ecosystem by Climate Change and main engines of carbon sequestration. Reduced productivity and degradation, due to limited adaptation capacity of rural population and incomplete policy frameworks, are preventing the country to fulfil its NDCs and sustainable development targets. FAO and its partners will support Armenia in (i) reaching targets via tailored investments in forestry and forest, (ii) reducing forest degradation drivers (fuel wood foraging) and (iii) creating an innovative and enabling governance framework to secure fulfilment of commitments and creating conditions for low emission sustainable development pathways maximizing synergies between mitigation and adaptation in rural environment.

The main root causes and barriers to address are:

- (a) extreme rural poverty where - according to the World Bank (2015) - 29,9% of the population is poor, 10.4 % very poor and 2% extremely poor
- (b) lack of alternatives for rural populations that are degrading forests to fulfil their primary energy and livelihood needs with inefficient and costly practices and appliances;
- (c) gender vulnerability in rural areas is acerbated by seasonal and permanent male migration with women becoming de facto heads of the households but becoming more vulnerable due to dependency from male remittances and lower wages than men;
- (d) lack of technical capacities and institutional coordination of institutions to address climate change in the forest sector and ensure law enforcement;
- (e) lack of adequate policy frameworks to apply the NDC's aimed ecosystem approach and ensure stakeholders participation in forest's governance; communities and local administration are not yet included in the policy framework.

The project will address each of the reported barriers and will partner with existing initiatives active in the Climate Change domain in Armenia and in the region.

III. Existing Gender Inequality in Armenia

Gender situation in Armenia is characterized, on the one hand, by a de jure favorable legislative framework in terms of equal rights of citizens as enshrined in the Armenian Constitution, in the *RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper*⁴ and in the *RoA Law on provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men* adopted in 2013 and, on the other hand, by a de facto lack of the mechanisms tasked with ensuring the attainment of gender equality goals declared by the State. It is explained mainly by a lack of political will as well as absence of functional and efficient gender equality mechanisms and national machinery in the public administration system that would be responsible the formulation and implementation of the national gender equality policies based on the principles outlined in international and national documents.

Armenia is a member of more than 40 international organizations, including the United Nations; the Council of Europe; the Asian Development Bank; the Commonwealth of Independent States; the World Trade Organization; World Customs Organization; the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; and La Francophonie. During the independence Armenia signed and adopted almost all the international documents and treaties on gender equality. Below is the list of Republic of Armenia legally-binding laws and political commitments to reduce gender inequalities ratified by the country:

Year	International Instruments and actions and national Laws
1993	Accession to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and its optional protocol
1994	Accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
1994	Ratification of the Equal Remuneration Convention
1998	Decree No. 242 "On the Basics of the Programme for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Republic of Armenia"
1998	Decree No. 406 "On Approving the National Plan for the Improvement of Women's Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for the Period 1998-2000 in the Republic of Armenia."
2002	Ratification of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
2003	Ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized crime and related protocols
2004	Adoption of the "National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in the Society for the Period 2004 -2010."
2006	Accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
2008	Republic of Armenia Government Program for 2008-2012
2010	<i>RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper</i>
2011	Protocol Decree № 19 "On approving the 'Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015"
2013	<i>Law of the Republic of Armenia on provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men</i>
2015	Amendments to the Constitution

⁴*RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper* approved by the Armenian Government in February 2010
http://www.gov.am/u_files/file/kananc-xorh/Gender-hayecakarg.pdf

2015	Commitments at the Global Leader’s Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in September 2015 on Beijing +20
2015	Republic of Armenia’s commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

Despite women’s high educational level, they are virtually excluded from administration and development processes. Such situation is characterized as ineffective use of human resources and as a deficit of democracy⁵, which has a direct impact on the country’s development processes and on its competitiveness.

The 2017 UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) scored Armenia as 0.743, falling within the high human development category and placing it in 85th place out of 188 countries⁶ and 2015 OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index⁷, which ranked Armenia a country with very high discrimination score for son bias.

The correlation between gender imbalance and the country’s competitiveness is reflected through the Gender Gap / Inequality Index⁸, according to which Armenia ranks 97th among 144 countries (2017).⁹ As evidenced by the indicators, the best situation is in education sector. The smallest gap in the country is in the access to education, thereby securing Armenia the 42th rank in the WEF ranking.

The most problematic in the Gender Gap Index are spheres of economy, politics and health. In “health and survival” sector, where differences in life expectancy and in sex ratio at birth are also taken into consideration, Armenia ends up with the 143rd (out of 144) rank¹⁰ because of the practice of sex-selective abortions. Nevertheless in this area some positive changes took place. The reported boy preference has decreased significantly, being replaced by a response favoring no gender for any future child. According to the National statistical service data for 2017, unlike 2011, when 59.3 percent explicated reported believing that the environment (that is the reference network) preferred a boy over a girl, this number has declined to a level of 36.7 percent. The real situation has been also changed: in 2016, the birth ratio of boys to girls dropped to 112 boys per 100 girls instead of 115 boys per 100 girls, as it was five years ago¹¹. However, for the shift in social norms there is a need for reframing of girl child image as now a girl child is still

⁵ “Democratic deficit” is the absence or underdevelopment of key democratic institutions, but it may also be used to describe inadequate participation of citizens in policy making and lack of mechanisms of representation and decision making.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/democratic-deficit>

⁶ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ARM>

⁷ <http://genderindex.org/sites/default/files/datasheets/AM.pdf>

⁸ The Index is calculated by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in four key areas of economy, politics, education and health. The index reflects most accurately the problem of ineffective use of human capital and proves that the countries that make ineffective use of the half of their labor resources risk diminishing competitiveness.

⁹ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS 2017, p. 27

regarded as a loss, instead of being associated with the winner's image.

*Table 1. Demographic statistics disaggregated by sex*¹²

Demographic profile	Women # (in thous.)	Men # (in thous.)	Women %
Total population	1 567 380	1 418 771	52,5
rural	549 995	534 703	50,7
urban	1 017 385	884 068	53,5
Life expectancy at birth - rural	78,1	71,3	
Life expectancy at birth - urban	78,4	71,7	
Total births 2016, girls and boys	19 147	21 445	47,1
Number of pensioners	285 151	183 377	61,0

Women have a higher life expectancy at birth – 78.3 years compared to 71.6 years of men.

Studies demonstrate that men more rarely realize their exposure to the risk of getting ill, infliction of traumas and emergence of different problems with health than women. In spite of the fact, that men's risk of developing drug addiction or alcoholism is much higher, men of all ages underestimate, to a large degree, the risks associated with smoking and use of alcohol and narcotic substances. Contemporary researchers consider one of the social factors of men's morbidity to be the traditional masculine ideology which ascribes to men and expects from them a certain standard of behavior: not to turn to doctors, not to accept one's weaknesses, to avoid self-revelation, etc¹³.

According to the RoA NSS, the 2016 poverty headcount ratio, percentage of the population living below the national poverty line, was 29.4 percent¹⁴, which means that almost every third person lived in a household below the upper poverty line of **40 867 AMD/month** (or USD 85.1/month)¹⁵. This indicator, nevertheless, exceeds the pre-crisis period data of 27.6% (2008), including in terms of the gap and severity of the poverty¹⁶. The poverty gap and poverty severity in 2016 was still at a higher level than in 2008 (4.3% and 1.1 % versus, respectively, 5.1% and 1.4%)¹⁷. Women comprise 56.6 %

¹² Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS 2017, p. 13-27

¹³ [Men and Gender Equality in Armenia](#), Report, UNFPA 2016, P.187

¹⁴ World Bank, Armenia Overview, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/armenia/overview>

¹⁵ The poor are defined as those with consumption per adult equivalent below the upper total poverty line; the very poor are defined as those with consumption per adult equivalent below the lower total poverty line, whereas the extremely poor or the undernourished are defined as those with consumption per adult equivalent below the food poverty line. In 2015, the total – both upper and lower – and the extreme ore food poverty lines per adult equivalent per month were estimated to be AMD 41 698 (or USD 87.2), AMD 34 234 (or USD 71.6) and food poverty line AMD 24 109 (or USD 50.4), respectively.). In 2015 the nutritious monthly food basket was prescribed as AMD 30 742 (USD 64.2) per person, 2412 kcal per day

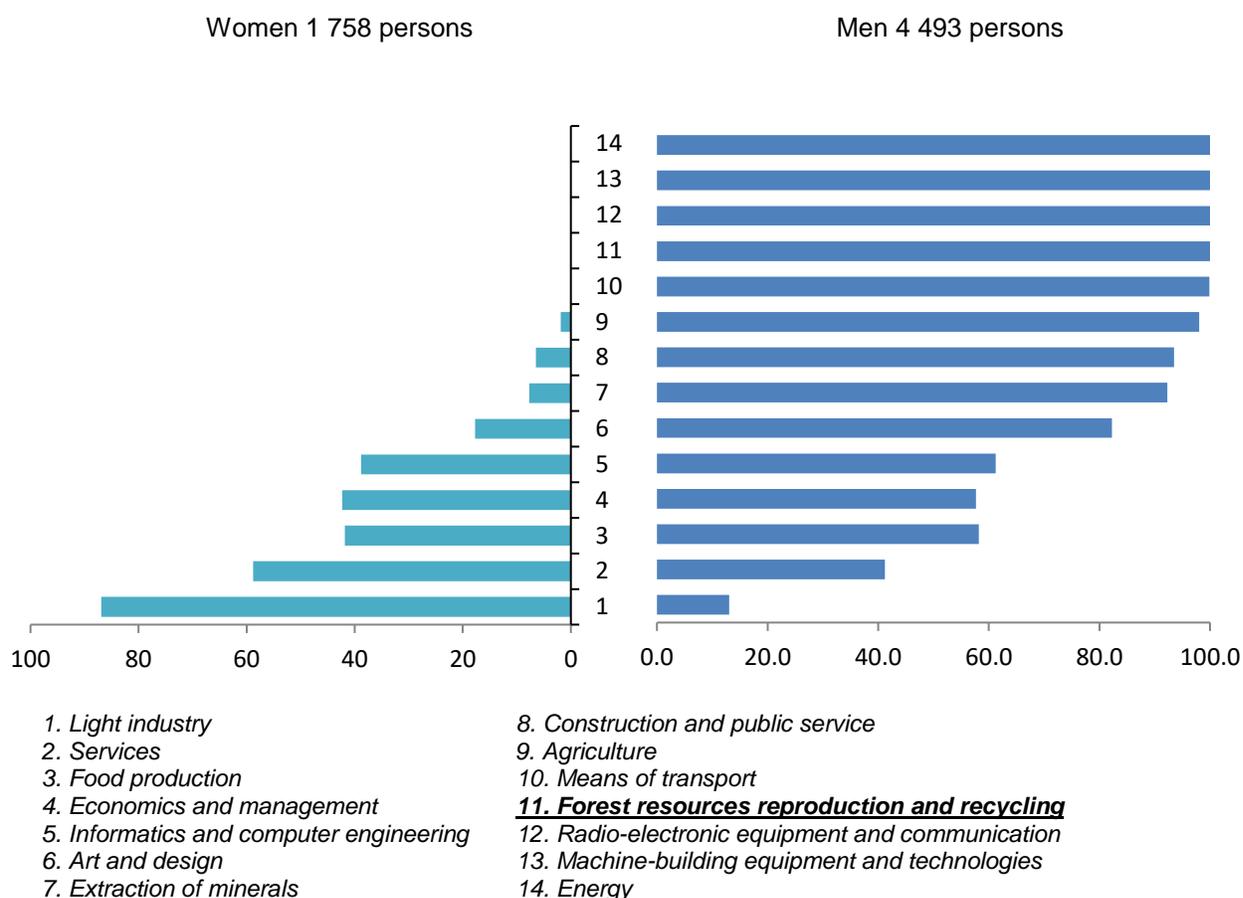
¹⁶ Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, Yerevan: NSS, 2017 http://www.armstat.am/file/article/poverty_2017_a_2.pdf

¹⁷ Ibid

of the poor population, men 43.4%.¹⁸

According to the ADB¹⁹ “Armenia exhibits gender parity in enrolment rates from primary to higher education, with the only significant deviation occurring when students enter vocational or professional education. Boys more often enter vocational education after having completed basic or general education”.

Table 2. Students in Preliminary Vocational Educational Institutions by Specialization, 2016/2017²⁰



The situation is different at Higher/ University education level, where women make up to 54% of enrolled persons. However, despite women’s high level of educational attainment, this has not resulted in corresponding gains in the labor market. As with employment, there are clear gender patterns in subjects of study at the postsecondary level. Young women dominate the “traditionally female” areas of study (i.e., education, social sciences, services, and health) while young men are concentrated in technical fields (i.e., energy,

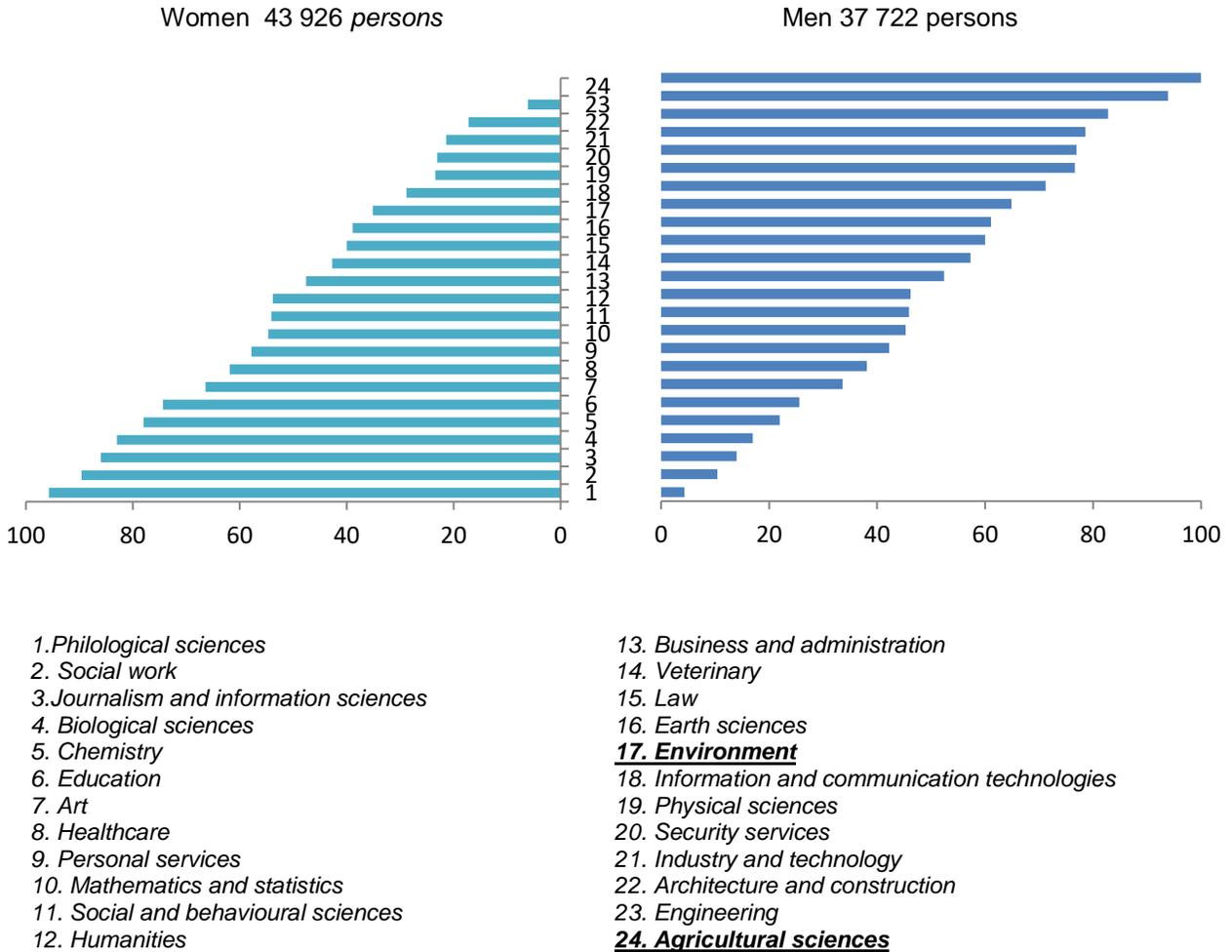
¹⁸ Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, Yerevan: NSS, 2017 <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1988>

¹⁹ Asian Development Bank. Armenia country gender assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2015

²⁰ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical booklet, NSS, 2017, p.57

transport, and construction). These technical fields generally correlate with jobs in higher-paying sectors, while the humanities lead to work in lower-paid public sector jobs.

Table 3. Students in Higher Educational Institutions by the Specialization, 2016/2017²¹



Among the numerous young women who complete higher education, many do not become employed after graduation, either because their qualifications do not meet labor market demands or because they marry and are expected to take on a family focused role.²²

Stereotypes remain influential in Armenia. For instance, overwhelming majority of the public surveys indicated that 85% of respondents agreed with the statement that “a man

²¹ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical booklet, NSS, 2017, p.58

²² Asian Development Bank. Armenia country gender assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2015

should normally be the breadwinner” (only 14% thought this role should be shared equally and 1% that this was women’s role).²³

As to the indicators of a gender imbalance in the economic sphere (employment rates for men and women, men’s and women’s pay for equal work, the proportion of men and women among specialists and technical staff), Armenia ranks 71th.²⁴

The total share of women in labor resources is bigger than that of men. However, only 52.5 % of women are economically active, while among men the percentage is 71.2 % Women comprise 47.5% and men 52.5% of the total employed population. At the same time women make up 62% of the Long-term unemployed and 67,8% of the officially registered unemployed in the Republic of Armenia, whereas labor migration occupies a significant place in the employment structure of men²⁵.

In 2016 gender gap (GG) in activity rates of women and men is 26.4 percent. GG is especially high in the 25 to 34 age groups (in average - 40%), mainly due to engagement of women in family responsibilities (pregnancy, childbirth, child care, etc.)²⁶. Married men are more than twice as likely as married women to be employed (89% versus 42%). Employed men are more likely to be paid in cash (87%) than employed women (65%). Similarly, employed women are more likely to be unpaid (9%) than employed men (1%)²⁷.

At the same time the situation on the Armenian labor market²⁸ is characterized by the existence of *vertical* (unequal access to career hierarchies) and *horizontal* (in jobs and employment spheres) segregation of the labor market, which brings about a significant gender pay gap. According to the 2016 data, the women’s average wages was about 66,4% of men’s wages ²⁹. The gender pay gap is not always reduced due to women’s high level of educational attainment because of obstacles to women’s career growth. Thus, vertical segregation remains even in the spheres where women’s employment traditionally predominates such as health care, education, culture, social welfare and agriculture.

In 2016, 67% of women and 33% men were economically inactive. The difference of 1.7 times between inactivity rates of women and men is equivalent to 39.4 percent gender gap (GG) in inactivity rate. GG is especially high in the 25 to 49 age groups (64,9% - 71,5%), mainly due to engagement of women in family responsibilities (pregnancy,

²³ Caucasus Research Resource Centers–Armenia and UNDP. 2011. 2011 Social Cohesion Survey. <http://www.crrccenters.org/20598/ Social-Cohesion-Survey>

²⁴ Gender Cap Index http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf

²⁵ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2017; P.56-65 <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

²⁶ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet , NSS, Yerevan 2017P.64; <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

²⁷ 2015-16 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS), P.16 <http://armstat.am/file/article/adhs-himnakan-2015-english.pdf>

²⁸ The problematic nature of the labor market in Armenia is revealed by the 2013 Human Capital Index. As to the Index, according to the *Human Capital Report 2013* of the World Economic Forum (WEF) (<http://www.weforum.org/issues/human-capital> http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_HumanCapitalReport_2013.pdf) Armenia ranks 73rd out of 122 countries. This is accounted for by an extremely low (113th) rank in the “workforce and employment” category.

²⁹ Global Wage Report 2016/17 <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-wage-report/2016/lang--en/index.htm>

childbirth, child care, household workload, etc.).³⁰

A gender analysis of the unemployment also reveals high rate of unemployment among youth. Almost 47% of female and 23% of male youth aged 15 to 29 are neither in education, nor in employment.³¹

Here it is important to point out that the youth in Armenia is defined as the citizens aged 18-30 and according to the National Statistical Service the number of young people living in Armenia is 905.2 thousand people which accounts for 27.9 % of the population. The ratio between male and female is accordingly 49.4 and 50.6 per cent, and the ratio of urban and rural youth is 62 % to 38 %. The major challenges Armenian youth is facing now are the high level of poverty (20.4 per cent of poor and 3.1 per cent of extremely poor) and unemployment. The high rate of youth unemployment (55.9 %) is connected not only with the hard socio-economic situation of the country but also with the inconsistency between education system's products and the requirements of the labor market.

Similarly, according to the official statistics, the proportion of elderly people (65+) in Armenia currently is at 11.8 % . While currently much lower than the levels seen in Western European countries, the proportion of older persons in Armenia is rapidly catching up, and this fast rate of increase makes the changes especially challenging. According to expert estimates, by 2050, almost one third (31.5 percent) of Armenia's population will be over 60. A high degree of vulnerability can be observed among older people living alone, especially women. A significant factor that has quickened the pace of change is the massive emigration of young people: around two thirds of Armenians live outside of the country and net migration out of the country is about 0.5 per cent of the total population each year. Combined with a total fertility rate of 1.74 children per woman — well below the level of about 2.1 required for long-term generational replacement — and a gain in life expectancy of almost six years since 1990, the phenomenon of demographic ageing in Armenia is now striking .

The state measures to support women to balance work and -family responsibilities, are minimal. As a result, there are 2.4 times more men in managerial positions as compared to women³²

Table 4. Employed population by types of economic activity, 2016³³

Economic sector	Percent of women and men in the sector out of total	Proportion of women and men within the
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³⁰ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet , NSS, Yerevan 2017 P.56-73; <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

³¹ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet , NSS, Yerevan 2017 P.56-73; <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

³² Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet , NSS, Yerevan 2017 P.56-73 NSS, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

³³ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical booklet, NSS, Yerevan, 2017, p.62

	employed (%)		sector (%)	
	W	M	W	M
Agriculture	37	31	52	48
Industry	8	15	30	70
Construction	0.2	8	3	97
Trade and repair, Transport and storage, Accommodation and food service activities	14.4	19.5	40	60
Information and communication	1.2	2.4	32	68
Financial and insurance activities	1.5	1.1	54	46
Real estate activities	0	0.2	0	100
Professional, scientific and technical activities; Administrative and support service activities	2.3	1.5	58	42
Public administration, education, human health and social work activities	30.9	18	61	39
Other services	4.6	3.6	54	46
Total	100.0	100.0	48	52

Approximately 35 %³⁴ of all employed population are involved in the area of agriculture, of which 52% are women, moreover, in men's employment structure the share of agriculture stands at 31% and in women's employment structure it comprises 37%, which makes women a rather important actors in agriculture development. In addition, the number of women engaged in non-formal employment in agriculture is 82 percent.

In family farming, a strong gender-based segregation of tasks exists. Men tend to be more present in those tasks that are capital-intensive, involving higher amount of machinery and technology, and in those tasks that are better paid. Women from rural communities are strongly involved in livestock farming, particularly in dairy production (including milking, milk processing, and the marketing of milk and other dairy products). Poultry production in Armenia is also almost completely the responsibility of women, including feeding, watering, slaughtering and trade in small scale (of both poultry and eggs). Both women and men are deeply involved in the crop production sector, with clear-cut roles and responsibilities. Women are generally responsible for seeds - including buying, sowing and marketing, and are strongly engaged in harvesting of most crops where this is done by hand, as they do not usually drive tractors or operate other agricultural machinery. Regarding the two main cash crops cultivated in Armenia, apricots and grapes, women are mainly responsible for picking up the apricots and putting them in boxes and for processing apricots, producing dry fruits, juices and jams.³⁵

³⁴ Labour market in the Republic of Armenia, 2011-2015 http://www.armstat.am/file/article/6.trud_2016_1.pdf P.12

³⁵ Even though there is no official statistic, the fact was registered by different research conducted throughout Armenia, including Gender assessment report of the "Development of Agriculture in Syunik marz" project ACIDI/VOCA, and Gender approaches of "Water to market" activity, MCA-Armenia, January 2011, as well as voiced by the participants of the focus groups conducted within the framework of the Assessment.

In its Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia, the UN CEDAW Committee³⁶ expressed concern by the lack of social, health and economic infrastructure in rural environments, as well as by the concentration of rural women in the informal sector.

Also, in Armenia recognition of violence against women (VAW) as a serious problem was prompted by the findings of the first Nationwide Survey on Domestic Violence against Women in Armenia (2008-2009)³⁷, UN CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations regarding the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Armenia³⁸ as well as the last Nationwide survey on Men and Gender equality (2016)³⁹. According to these official research VAW in Armenia vary from 1% of sexual violence and 8% on physical up to 24% on psychological violence and 61% of controlling behaviour.

The main gender differences in employment status relates to employer status, with only 16.2 percent of registered employers being women, and the category 'other' which would include unpaid family workers and informal employment.

Table 5. Employed population by status in employment, 2016⁴⁰

	Proportion of total # of men and women (%)		By sex (%)	
	W	M	W	M
Wage-earner (employee)	59	57	48	52
Employer	0.4	2	18	82
Own-account worker	31.7	37	43	57
Contributing family worker	8.9	4	69	31
Total	100.0	100.0	48.0	52.0

The Government regards the advanced development of the entrepreneurship, in particular of small and medium size businesses, as an effective way for solving employment and social problems. According to the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia, women account for not more than 10 percent among entrepreneurs in small and medium sized and big businesses. In micro businesses, the number of women constitutes 20-25 percent⁴¹.

³⁶ Concluding observations to the 5th and 6th Armenia's State Periodic Reports Armenia CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6, Distr.: General, 25 November 2016, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6&Lang=En

³⁷ Report on Nationwide Survey on Domestic Violence against Women in Armenia (2008-2010). Yerevan: UNFPA and RoA NSS, 2011.

³⁸ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Armenia. Geneva, 2009. UN Document CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1

³⁹ Report on Nationwide survey on Men and Gender equality in Armenia, UNFPA, Yerevan 2016, <https://armenia.unfpa.org/en/publications/men-and-gender-equality-armenia>

⁴⁰ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical booklet, NSS, Yerevan, 2017, p.67-68

⁴¹ Gender policy in Armenia and the right of women entrepreneurship <http://employers.am/News.aspx?NewsId=39&lang=eng>

The obstacles that women have to overcome before they go into business include lack of confidence and risk management skills, the lack of business contacts, entrenched and perpetuated stereotypes about women's role and their participation in economy and in business in particular. Objective reasons include limited access to funds, difficulties in obtaining loans, the absence of savings and property for collateral, burdensome interest rates, unfavorable business environment and informal payments to officials to facilitate business⁴².

In its Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia, the UN CEDAW Committee recommended to reinforce measures to expand women's access to microfinance and microcredit at low interest rates, enabling women to engage in income-generating activities and to start their own businesses⁴³. Due to the limitations towards women employment and their discrimination in the labor market, Armenia suffers an annual GDP loss equal to 50-60 million dollars⁴⁴.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2017, with respect to the political empowerment indicator (which is based on gender representation in decision-making structures) Armenia is ranked 111th. Meanwhile as a result of the parliamentary elections, the representation of women in the National Assembly of Armenia increased to 18 percent, improving in the rating list of the Inter-parliamentary Union, from 160 to 110, in the list of 193 countries. This result may be considered as one step forward in the elections if not the expectations from the quota of at least 25 percent representation of each sex stipulated in the Electoral Code that was not met again. In this regard, this quota provision worked more effectively in Yerevan municipal elections with 28 percent% of women elected to Yerevan city council.

Although the number of women MPs has increased as compared with the previous convocation from 14 to 18, nevertheless, only 2 women were elected in the National Assembly's leading positions⁴⁵.

In April 2018 as a result of a series of anti-government protests in Armenia, a new Prime Minister was appointed. Armenia's new government is a technical cabinet to administer the country until new parliamentary elections. Almost all the officials of the former government were changed and it provided opportunity to women to be appointed to some decision making positions. Nevertheless, there are only 2 women (11.7 %) in the political

⁴² Gender Assessment USAID/Armenia. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACR978.pdf

⁴³ Concluding observations to the 5th and 6th Armenia's State Periodic Reports Armenia CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6, Distr.: General, 25 November 2016, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6&Lang=En

⁴⁴ Gender Gap: analysis of the discriminatory approaches towards women (Գեներացիայի ճեղքվածք. Կանանց նկատմամբ խտրական դրսևորումների ակտորոշիչ ուսումնասիրություն) // 2016 // UNFPA http://www.un.am/up/library/Gender-Gap_arm.pdf

⁴⁵ Information-analytical portal Womennet.am <http://womennet.am/%D5%AB%D5%B6%D6%86%D5%B8%D5%A3%D6%80%D5%A1%D6%86%D5%AB%D5%AF%D5%A1/>

position (Ministers)⁴⁶ and 10 women (16%) in discretionary positions of a Deputy Minister in the executive branch of the Government. There are no women among the governors (marzpets)⁴⁷, with only 5 of women out of 29 Deputy Regional Governors, and only one woman acting as a head of urban communities. Other data available points to only 1.6 percent of heads of rural communities, 11.7 percent of local council members, 27.6 percent of the Yerevan City Council⁴⁸ and 24 percent in the city council of Gyumri being women. In the project target areas (provinces of Syunik and Lori), women comprise only 1.0 percent of community leaders and 4.0 percent of City Council members.

Table 6. Women in leadership and decision-making positions, 2017

	# women	# men	% women
Number of Deputies in the National Assembly of RA ⁴⁹	19	86	18
Ministers and Deputy Ministers ⁵⁰	12	80	15
Judicial bodies at national level - Judges ⁵¹	58	173	25
Judicial bodies at national level - Lawyers ⁵²	656	925	41
Members of the Constitutional Court ⁵³	2	7	22
Council members of the Central Bank ⁵⁴	0	5	0
Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives ⁵⁵	4	44	9
The highest posts of the Civil Service ⁵⁶	20	100	17
Members scientific councils, state/non-state universities ⁵⁷	623	1063	37

Table 7. Women in regional (provincial) administrations

Provincial offices' staff, 2018	Chief ⁵⁸		Deputy chief ⁵⁹		Chief of Staff ⁶⁰		Staff ⁶¹	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
	-	10	5	29	0	9	534	698

During the 20 years of the existence of local self-governance bodies in Armenia, women's number among community heads has almost remained unchanged staying within 2%

⁴⁶ As to the Armenian legislation, the hierarchy in the public administration system includes 3 categories: political, discretionary positions and civil servants.

⁴⁷ Head of regional authority in Armenia

⁴⁸ After Yerevan Municipal Elections, held on September 23, 2018

⁴⁹ <http://parliament.am/deputies.php?lang=arm>

⁵⁰ <http://gov.am/am/structure/>

⁵¹ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2017, p.92

⁵² Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2015, p.145

⁵³ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2017, p.92

⁵⁴ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2017, p.98

⁵⁵ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2017, p.96

⁵⁶ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2015, p.153

⁵⁷ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2015, p.153

⁵⁸ According to the 2018 data <http://www.mtad.am/hy/>

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Women and Men in Armenia, Statistical Booklet, NSS, Yerevan 2015, p 155

limits over the years. During the same period, women’s number among councilors has almost doubled. According to the results of local elections held in 2016 women make up 11.7% of the total number of the elected members of the local councils. At the same time all the local elections taken place in cluster communities in 2016 resulted in two-threefold decrease of women community heads and councils' members. According to the 2018 data, only 8 out of 502 rural communities are headed by women (1.6%) and 10% of the municipal councilors were women.

Table 8. Local self-governance bodies 2002 -2016 the

	2002		2005		2008		2012		2016	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Members of the local councils	6.1	93.9	6.2	93.8	6.1	93.9	9.6	90.4	11.7	88.3
Heads of Communities	2	98	2.1	97.9	2.5	97.5	2	98	2.1	97.9

During the entire period of the democratic transition women never ran for the position of the Armenian President and never held a position of the Prime Minister or Speaker of the National Assembly.

Thus, the governance pyramid, which is primarily male-oriented and which does not reflect the existing gender balance in the society, inequality of women’s and men’s rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres and the maintained and even constructed by some media outlets⁶² the division of gender roles hinders the processes of societal democratization and is an obstacle to the country’s full-fledged integration into international structures.

IV. Legal and Administrative Framework on Gender Equality in Armenia

Since independence, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has been steadily incorporating the international *acquis* on gender equality, and establishing a number of laws and policies to address gender inequalities. In 1998, the Armenian Government issued Decree No. 242 “On the Basics of the Programme for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Republic of Armenia” and Decree No. 406 “On Approving the National Plan for the Improvement of Women’s Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for the Period 1998-2000 in the Republic of Armenia.” In April 2004, the Armenian Government adopted the first National Action Plan on Improving the Status of

⁶²Woman’s image as represented in Armenian media. Analytical report on monitoring. ProMedia-Gender NGO with support from UNFPA, 2011. <http://www.unfpa.am/publications-women-image-in-media>.

Women, and, since then, increased efforts have been carried out to contribute to the reduction of gender inequalities in the country.

The main document that reflects current Armenia's commitment to gender equality policy is the *RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper* approved by the Armenian Government in February 2010⁶³. The mission of the *Gender Policy Concept Paper* is to facilitate *gender mainstreaming* in all spheres of socio-political and socio-economic life and in policies at all levels of government as a *tool* for ensuring sustainable democratic development of the society and for consolidating democratic, open and just civil society and the rule-of-law State.

On 20 May 2011, the Armenian Government adopted the Protocol Decree № 19 “On approving the ‘*Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015*’⁶⁴. The Action Plan was in line with the main directions of the *RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper* and set, *inter alia*, an objective of “improving agricultural and rural infrastructures and of expanding women's opportunities for participation in socio-economic development of rural communities”.

Of great significance for gender policy implementation and for addressing the issues of imbalanced rights and opportunities was the *Law of the Republic of Armenia on provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men*⁶⁵ that was adopted in 2013. It regulates the issue of ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men in the fields of politics, public administration, labour and employment, entrepreneurship, health care and education.

In line with the recommendations established by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2010⁶⁶, amendments to the Constitution made in December 2015 included important articles and provisions such as: *General Equality before the Law* (Article 28), *Prohibition of Discrimination* (Article 29) and *Equality of Rights for Women and Men* (Article 30)⁶⁷.

In the recommendations of 2010 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women⁶⁸, worse discrimination of women in rural areas was raised, and called to make specific efforts to reduce gender stereotypes and socially implicit and accepted subordination of women in rural areas, as well as improving access of women and girls from rural areas to education, healthcare and economic empowerment. The General Recommendation number 35 on the rights of rural women, approved by the Committee

⁶³ *RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper*, 2010 (in Armenian) http://www.gov.am/u_files/file/kananc-xorh/Gender-hayecakarg.pdf

⁶⁴ http://www.un.am/res/Gender%20TG%20docs/national/2011-2015_Gender%20Policy_NAP-Eng.pdf

⁶⁵ Armenian version <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=4761>

⁶⁶ <http://www.refworld.org/publisher.CEDAW,.ARM.52dd05054.0.html>

⁶⁷ Amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, December 2015, Armenian version

<http://www.president.am/hy/constitution-2015>

⁶⁸ *Ibid*

on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women the 4th March 2016⁶⁹, is a useful guideline to support the government of the Republic of Armenia in pursuing gender equality in rural areas.

In the context of the Beijing +20 and the establishment of the new Sustainable Development Goals, the government of Armenia made a commitment at the Global Leader's Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in September 2015 to ensure the effective implementation of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on "Equal Rights and equal opportunities of women and men", and to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

The 2010-2020 Strategy of Sustainable Development of Armenia's Agriculture is the main current framework for development of the agricultural sector and rural areas, and identifies the following as major priorities for the development of the country's agro-food sector⁷⁰:

In 2014, based on the results of the Mid-Term Review of the Strategy of Sustainable Development of Armenia 2010-2020, a new Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development for 2015-2025 was developed. The draft version of the Strategy passed through gender mainstreaming and was submitted to the RA Government for approval at the time of the finalization of this report. The interlinkage between the National Gender Action Plan and the Strategy for Sustainable Development needs to be strengthened in order to ensure effective implementation of the National Gender Action Plan in rural areas.

All these documents are important because they not only provide a framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment but also advocate gender mainstreaming and demonstrate how the gender component can be integrated into the national policies and programs.

Since independence, also amended were other laws and Codes that aim to protect exclusively women's rights as well as to secure gender equality. It is unfortunate that insignificant and occasional amendments have not yet brought about a dramatic change in the situation. The real practices do not match the broad rights of women that are codified in legal norms. The mismatch between the rights and opportunities is a main obstacle to ensuring equality. Thus the existence of functional and efficient gender equality mechanisms and National machinery in the public administration system is

⁶⁹ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_7933_E.pdf

crucially important for the formulation and implementation of the national gender equality policies grounded in the principles outlined in international and national documents.

According to the CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 6, the machineries should be endowed with professional capacity and authority to be able to advice on the impact on women of all government policies, to monitor the situation of women comprehensively and to help formulate new policies and effectively carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination⁷¹.

During the independence several institutional mechanisms were set upon the initiative of the RoA Government:

- *the Division on Family, Women’s and Children’s Issues, which was established in the Ministry of Labor & Social Issues (in 1997);*
- *the Women’s Council, which was established under the Prime Minister’s Decree in 2000 as an advisory body acting on a pro bono basis;*
- *by the Prime Minister’s Decree in 2000 the functions of a Deputy Minister included also coordination of activities related to women’s and gender issues;*
- *by the 9 June 2005 RoA Prime Minister’s Protocol Decision № 747 in each Ministry and Agency a Deputy Minister (only in two instances a Head of a Division) and in each regions (including the city of Yerevan) a Deputy Regional Governor was appointed a focal point for the implementation of the National Action Plan.*

After the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (held in New York in February-March 2005) the Armenian Government took additional measures to improve effectiveness of the existing institutional mechanisms or to establish new ones:

- *In 2006, the existing at Regional Governors’ Offices “Child Protection Departments” were renamed as “Departments for Children’s, Family and Women’s Issues”,*
- *In 2011, the gender policy implementation commissions were established by the Government Decree in the Yerevan City Hall and in the country’s Regional Governors’ Offices; the commissions are headed by the Deputy City Mayor and the Deputy Regional Governors respectively.*

Even despite the fact that in 2014 the *Council on Issues of Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Armenia* was established under the Prime Minister⁷² none of these structures could be accepted as national machinery. As a result of the absence of the

⁷¹ General recommendations made by the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*. General Recommendation No. 6 “Effective National Machinery and Publicity” (seventh session, 1988).
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/index.html>

⁷²Established by the Prime Minister’s 2 decrees : №1152–A dated November 19, 2014, and № 178-A dated March 9, 2015

national machinery and existing situation with institutional mechanisms the fulfilment of the obligations under the international instruments is held back, effective implementation of the national documents on gender equality is slowed down, coordination of operation of the existing institutional mechanisms is impeded, Awareness raising and PR actions to promote gender equality and equity meet with logistical and organizational predicaments, and finally gender dynamic is not tracked and the emergence of problematic situations is not given due consideration.

Therefore there is a growing realization that the national machinery is absolutely indispensable and, hence, that it has to be established to perform its main function to effectively mainstream a gender perspective into legislation, state policies, national programs and projects.

V. Gender Issues in the target area of the project

*The Foundation of Doing Business*⁷³ by World Bank Group has traditionally assumed that the entrepreneurs or workers discussed in the case studies were men. This was incomplete by not reflecting correctly the *Doing Business* processes as applied to women—which in some economies may be different from the processes applied to men. Starting this year, *Doing Business* measures the starting a business process for two case scenarios: one where all entrepreneurs are men and one where all entrepreneurs are women. Within the registering property indicators, a gender component has been added to the quality of land administration index. This component measures women’s ability to use, own, and transfer property according to the law.

Armenian law provides equal property rights to women and men, but in practice women are in more unequal situation due to the following reasons/peculiarities: 1) Since independence the Government of Armenia privatized land in 1991 and 1992 by dividing it among households. Land ownership was awarded to the person who was identified as the “head of the household”. Although in the context of Armenia, both women and men play equally important role as breadwinners, the majority of land was registered on the name of men as “household head by default”. Women received land titles only in case of absence of a male head of the family. As a result of this situation only 1/3 of women headed households have land property in Lori and Syunik provinces. 2) Limited knowledge by women and whole communities about women’s ownership rights over land contributed to the problem. This includes limited knowledge about rights and of the

⁷³ The Foundation of Doing Business by World Bank Group measures aspects of business regulation affecting domestic small and medium-size firms defined based on standardized case scenarios and located in the largest business city of each economy. Doing Business covers 11 areas of business regulation across 190 economies. WBG, 2017
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/~media/WBG/DoingBusiness/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB17-Chapters/DB17-About-Doing-Business.pdf>

consequences of not having land registered also in their name; 3) another reason is “inheritance practices” widely accepted in Armenia. - parents usually grant the house, vehicle and other property to sons, and daughters are having nothing or less from their parents and almost nothing from the husbands’ families; 4) women have limited access and control over financial resources that’s why are less able to purchase land and other property than men; 5) Lack of control over their own earnings - only 34 in urban and 11 percent of women in rural areas decide about their earnings.⁷⁴

Households headed by men are more likely to keep livestock, and to have a larger number of animals across all categories, than female-headed households. When female headed households have livestock, they tend to have cattle and poultry, possibly because dairy farming is traditionally “female” work or because selling extra milk and eggs is a relatively simple way to supplement the household income. Men have greater involvement in grazing, feed production and purchasing and sales of livestock.⁷⁵

Limited access to productive resources is a serious constraint to rural women’s agricultural activity. For instance, rural women have little or no direct access to farm equipment such as tractors, combines and harvesters. Traditionally, these are operated only by men. Even female heads of household do not personally use these resources, they hire in assistance or ask male relatives to help.⁷⁶

Markets accessibility depends greatly on the mobility of the producer or the accessibility of the community. Cars and machinery are rarely owned by women. In rural areas, in more than 95 percent of car and machinery owners are men, as are 100% of agricultural machinery operators in the marzes. Female car owners and female drivers are increasingly prevalent in urban areas, especially in Yerevan, but continue to be rare in rural areas.⁷⁷

Lack of access to transportation impedes women’s income earning opportunities, through sale of their agriculture and other production. Dairy products are mostly sold at place rather than in other rural or urban markets. In the absence of dairy products collection systems, there is a need to take the products directly to the urban market. As a result, women, and mostly lonely women and even women heads of households have no opportunity to do that due to stereotypical practices and lack of transportation.⁷⁸

Women are known as primary users of forests and main gatherers of forest products. They play an important role in the protection of forests, though it goes unnoticed most of

⁷⁴ Prevalence of and Reasons for Sex Selective Abortions in Armenia, UNFPA 2012, http://unfpa.am/sites/default/files/Sex-selective-abortion-report_Eng.pdf ; Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia: Demographic Evidence and Analysis Report, UNFPA 2013, http://unfpa.am/sites/default/files/Sex-Imbalance-report_Eng_final-with%20cover-final.pdf ; Missing Girls in the South Caucasus, World Bank, CRRC 2014.

⁷⁵ ACDI/VOCA “Development of Agriculture in Syunik marz” project documents, 2011

⁷⁶ From the gender analysis of the project on “Water-to-Market Activity (2006-2011)” carried out in 2007 within the framework of the Millennium Challenge Account: <http://www.mca.am/files/publications/13079458990.pdf>

⁷⁷ ibid

⁷⁸ “Gender and Transport” Background materials of the 2011 International Transport Forum, Leipzig, Germany, 2011

the times. This is because women are aware of the adverse effects of forest destruction and its negative impact on their lives. Though women play such an important role in the protection of forests, their participation and presence in decision making bodies is often seen to be insignificant.⁷⁹

According to the household survey commissioned by the FAO and conducted by the *Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE)* NGO for this particular project proposal⁸⁰ wood is the most widely used fuel for heating and cooking. Despite the fact that, generally, gas is used more than wood for cooking during the summer and warm seasons the use of gas, electricity and liquid gas during the cold season is reduced due to wood consumption. The women from both gasified and non gasified villages usually use woodfuel during the cold season, in order to parallel heating and cooking and to reduce expenses.

At the same time the biggest challenge for women participation in the forest and pasture management is the lack of awareness as well as low level of public and particularly women participation in issue related decision-making.

In provinces women seem to be more active in decision-making in the following circumstances: (a) when women have to assume responsibility as head of the household, (b) when women are employed or are engaged in public activities, and as a result are more independent; (c) when there is a participatory setting in the culture of decision-making in an individual family.

According to the National Statistical Service women constitute 53.8 % of Lori and 48.8% of Syunik province population. The number of women headed households in the project targeted marzes makes average 29.2%. The prevalence of women headed households increased in Armenia due to high rate of long-term labor migration of men, as well as divorce factor. In 2016 the share of women headed households was 34.3% (in urban areas 37.7 and in rural 27.8%)⁸¹. Given the more limited range of employment and income opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas, and continuing gender inequality in income and salary levels, female-headed households are more likely to be in extreme poverty than other households (in 2016, 39,8% of women-headed households with children is poor, and 4.1% is extremely poor, which exceeds the average indicator by almost two times). It might partly be the result of the more limited range of income opportunities for women, but mostly because female headed households tend to be single

⁷⁹ ACHARYA, B.P. 2007. Practice and implementation of community forest certification in Nepal: Case study from some CFUGs in Dolakha district. Master thesis. University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna.

⁸⁰ The survey was conducted in 28 villages in three Armenia's marzes: Tavush, Lori and Syunik. The selection of interviewees was made based on village/ household structure as well as location of the villages compared to forested areas. A total of 280 people were interviewed of which 140 people were interviewed in 14 villages in location in proximity of relevant forest resources and 140 people interviewed in 14 villages, where forest resources were not available in the radius of 15 km. Among respondents were also the representatives of local public authorities. The survey was conducted on a one-to-one individual basis addressing women as the main target (appx 65% of all respondents were women).

⁸¹ Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, National statistical service. 2017;p.57;
http://www.armstat.am/file/article/poverty_2017_a_2.pdf

headed households, what limits the number of persons in working age who can contribute to income generation of the family. Female-headed households in 2016 comprised 30% and 27% of, respectively, of the poor population and the total population. Within female-headed households, those with children up to 6 years of age were exposed to a higher risk of poverty (by 1.4 times) compared to the national average. The risk of poverty for such families in urban communities was lower than in rural communities (39.8% and 48.4%, respectively)⁸². Thus, in rural communities of Lori and Syunik provinces the poverty rate among women headed households makes 47.5%.

In most of the households the husband is the main decision-maker. However, the Decision-making at household level can vary - there are also households where decisions are taken jointly by the husband and wife.

Only twenty-eight percent of women are the main decision makers about their own *health care*, 14% decide mainly themselves about major *household purchases*, and decisions about *visits to the woman's family or relatives* are also mostly made jointly (80 percent), with 13 percent of women making this decision by themselves, - in all other cases the decision are taken jointly.⁸³

Women's participation in decision making can vary in accordance with age, residence, and education.

- The percentage of women participating in all three decisions increases with age from 51 percent among women age 15-19 to 89 to 92 percent among women age 35-49;
- Participation in all three decisions is somewhat lower among women in rural areas (79 percent) than among those in urban areas (84 percent);
- The proportion of women who participate in all three decisions increases from 69 percent among women with basic education to 84 percent among women with secondary special or higher education.⁸⁴

The significance of community managed forests is its participatory approach and equal benefit sharing among the forest users. In other words equal rights and opportunities to use the forest products, share the benefits and participate in decision making. However, in Armenia where the structure of the society is predominantly hierarchical and patriarchal, exclusion of some disadvantaged groups of people such as women, young and poor people exists. According to AWHHE survey more than 35% of female and 20% of male respondents believe that community participation in decision making on the issue is important and most important.

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16, Report, National Statistical Service Armenia, Yerevan 2016, *Table 15.8*

⁸⁴ Ibid

Table 9. Community participation in decision making

IMPORTANCY		RESPONENT SEX		Total
		Male	Female	
not important at all	% within	41.70%	58.30%	100.00%
	% of Total	1.80%	2.50%	4.30%
not important	% within	27.90%	72.10%	100.00%
	% of Total	4.30%	11.10%	15.40%
may be important	% within	21.70%	78.30%	100.00%
	% of Total	4.60%	16.80%	21.40%
important	% within	41.00%	59.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	15.40%	22.10%	37.50%
most important	% within	33.30%	66.70%	100.00%
	% of Total	6.80%	13.60%	20.40%
No answer	% within	66.70%	33.30%	100.00%
	% of Total	0.70%	0.40%	1.10%
Total	% of Total	33.60%	66.40%	100.00%

Moreover, almost 58% of respondents (females), underlined the importance of fair and equal access to forest products for all member of the community.

Table 10. Fairness/ equity in access to forest products

IMPORTANCY		RESPONENT SEX		Total
		Male	Female	
not important at all	% within	57.10%	42.90%	100.00%
	% of Total	1.40%	1.10%	2.50%
not important	% within	12.50%	87.50%	100.00%
	% of Total	0.40%	2.50%	2.90%
may be important	% within	23.10%	76.90%	100.00%
	% of Total	1.10%	3.60%	4.60%
important	% within	29.50%	70.50%	100.00%
	% of Total	10.00%	23.90%	33.90%
most important	% within	35.90%	64.10%	100.00%
	% of Total	19.60%	35.00%	54.60%
No answer	% within	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%
	% of Total	1.10%	0.40%	1.40%
Total	% of Total	33.60%	66.40%	100.00%

Another group of answers given by the AWHHE' s survey participants provided with the opportunity to judge about *Women's readiness to be involved in forest use management processes.*

Table 11. Women participation in forest use management

RESPONDENT SEX		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Male	% within	48.90%	21.30%	29.80%
	% of Total	16.40%	7.10%	10.00%
Female	% within	52.70%	12.40%	34.90%
	% of Total	35.00%	8.20%	23.20%
Total	% of Total	51.40%	15.40%	33.20%

Thus women have a desire and the right to participate in decision making in the communities as well as in forest use management processes, but are lacking the opportunity to do so.

Decision making in the community level depends on the following three aspects, and women face discrimination in all. These areas are as follows:

1) *Cultural norms and stereotypes* which affect women's participation in the decision making: Women are not generally prominent in local community-level decision making, and are very rarely elected as members of community councils. The Gender assessment conducted by USAID in 2010 pointed out that while "there is evidence that societal views of the "appropriate" roles for men and women are quite rigid and influenced by patriarchal traditions"⁸⁵, there is significant variation within Armenia, and some marzes appear to be more socially conservative than others in relation to gender roles and women's status. Nevertheless, the perception of men as the main decision-makers and leaders in society is prevalent and influences women's access to political positions and participation in public life overall. The influence of traditional roles affects women's own confidence and perception of what is appropriate.

2) *Knowledge*: on management and productive farming is depending on the level of education and/or experiences, accessibility to consultancies; on average, women enjoy less education than men; consultancies focus in general on men. There is no Government policy in place to promote women education in management and entrepreneurship. No efforts have been made to offer training, retraining or vocational education to women to equip them with adequate skills and competence and to match those with the existing challenges and opportunities. The Government policies to promote small and medium businesses have yet to become gender-sensitive.

3) *Access to financial resources*, and financial independence. Given the more limited range of employment and income opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas, and continuing gender inequality in income and salary levels. The overall level of professional qualification of rural women is low in comparison with urban women. Veterinarians and

⁸⁵ Gender Assessment, USAID/Armenia, Yerevan 2010

agronomists are mostly men. Apart from the agricultural sector, rural women are also employed in educational and in health care institutions - mainly in middle-level posts, yet in low paid sectors. The main causes of gender inequality in rural areas could be considered cultural norms and stereotypes which affect women's participation in the labour market. In fact, some husbands do not allow their wives to work, even if a household could use the additional income. Women face more difficulties in receiving a loan and in having access to the family budget. Sometimes women have no own funds even to register her candidacy for the local elections, which means that they should check their availability with other members of the family.

VI. Recommendations

- ❖ The analysis of the existing gender inequalities, men labor migration, as well as demographic situation in the rural areas showed that it is highly recommended to involve women, into the process of the project implementation. Women's participation in the project will be twofold: 1) Women will be considered as agents and main advocates for behaviour and attitude change in the families, as well as on community and at the national level. This function *inter alia* could be paralleled with monitoring activities implemented by them; and 2) Women will be involved in the project as active participants: staff and/or providers of the planting material through tree nurseries and farming cooperatives organized and administered by them. Both functions shall be based on their participation in educational and awareness raising activities.
- ❖ Women shall be also involved as project beneficiaries - participating in capacity building activities and receiving vocational education, as well as FHHs will be among recipients of the special equipment and knowledge on wood/ non wood fuel usage. While the risks of escalating the level of VAW due to the project implementation are assessed as low, to avoid any negative implications, caused by the involvement of women in the project activities, the project should dedicate specific attention to a profound awareness raising work with communities and families, especially men. Media resources will be also used for this purpose and profound awareness raising on VAW will be integrated into the overall community level work.
- ❖ Considering the demographic structure of rural communities and the vulnerability faced particularly by elderly and young female Armenians, the project shall pay special attention to the involvement of lonely elderly, especially women as beneficiaries. Similarly, the proposed intervention will work with the National educational institutions to introduce a curricula on new technologies and practices among the long term vocational education area, shall *inter alia* increase education and employment opportunities for rural youth.
- ❖ In this context, the project implementation shall ensure periodic collection of sex and age disaggregated data and analysis in the area (e.g. study in Gender-responsive Action, to identify gender issues in energy efficiency in Armenia), as well as use of gender expertise to further develop gender balanced approaches and to adjust the proposed Gender action plan.
- ❖ The project team shall follow the UN principles and standards, as well as FAO requirements that are outlined in the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines. In particular, the Environmental and Social Standard 8 (ESS 8) on Gender Equality, which has an objective to: - "Provide equal access to and control over productive resources, services and markets; - Strengthen women and men's participation in decision-making in rural institutions; - Ensure that all stakeholders benefit equally from development interventions and that inequality is not reinforced or perpetuated".
- ❖ The project shall set a minimum target at 30 percent of all beneficiaries of the project to be women, as this is the UN recommended quota to ensure critical mass of women's representation. However, this represents just a target, and not a goal. The goal should be 50

percent or even more depending on demographic representation in the project area. Also, actual participation can be higher, and the project team will apply all possible efforts to achieve that.

- ❖ The project shall recruit a national gender expert who will work in close collaboration with the project team, under technical guidance of the Gender team based in the FAO Regional office for Europe and Central Asia. Gender expert will be providing support to the project team in mainstreaming gender concerns into the project activities and provide support in gender-specific activities.
- ❖ The guidelines produced within the framework of the project shall be based on gender analysis and explicitly address gender considerations and constraints, recognizing multiple vulnerabilities of project participants, beneficiaries and community members, as women, youth and the elderly.

Based on this assessment, a Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan (GAP) was prepared to implement the gender strategy and to ensure inclusion of disadvantaged groups (poor families, elderly, single-headed households and youth). The GAP is in line with the overall project implementation plan and timeline, thus all activities are incorporated into the relevant components of the project.