



CASE
(Civic Action for Security and Environment)

Small Grants Programme

Strategic plan

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Office in Yerevan, 2009

List of Acronyms

CASE	Civic Action for Security and Environment
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CO	Country Officer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENVSEC	Environment and Security Initiative
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NA	National Assembly
NFP	National Focal Point
NSB	National Screening Board
OCEEA	Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental activities
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RA	Republic of Armenia

Table of Contents

1.1 Launching of CASE	3
1.2 Strategic Background for CASE	4
1.4 Participation of Republic of Armenia in UNECE Environmental Conventions	6
2. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC FOCUS	7
2.1 Environmental safety and main threats in Armenia	7
2.2 Problems and Ecological Danger Connected with the Safety	9
2.3 Social-Economic Conditions and Tendencies of Development	12
2.4 Policy and Action Priorities	14
2.5 Thematic focus of CASE in Armenia.....	16
2.6 Cross-cutting Themes	16
3. OUTCOMES OF THE ENVSEC AND OTHER RELEVANT REGIONAL INITIATIVES	18
4. ROLE OF CSOS AND AARHUS CENTERS IN ARMENIA	20
5. ROLES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS	22
6. TARGET BENEFICIARIES	22
7. CASE INITIATIVE - DESCRIPTION	23
7.1 Capacity Building Strategy	23
7.2 Eligibility criteria for projects	25
8. GRANT-MAKING PROCEDURES	26
8.1. CASE Project Cycle: Summary of Basic Steps	26
8.2. Application for Small Grants.....	26
8.3. Call for Project Concepts.....	26
8.4. Preparation of Project Concepts.....	27
8.5. Selection of Projects	27
8.6. Provision of Small Grants to Projects.....	29
8.7. Disbursement of Grants	29
9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING.....	30
10. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY	31
11. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	32

1. Background information about CASE

1.1 Launching of CASE

Armenia is a mountainous, landlocked country with 3.2 million inhabitants of which 64% are urban. After several years of hardship since its independence in 1991, Armenia successfully switched to a market economy with double-digit GDP growth rates since 2000, accompanied by significant poverty reduction. The Republic of Armenia since 1991 was actively involved in global and regional processes of the environmental sector. Armenia took active steps in terms of enlarging environmental cooperation in the Caucasus region. The Republic of Armenia is a party to 15 global and 11 regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). Currently the participation in some other agreements is under discussion.

Armenia participates in a number of European regional environmental processes, which include inter alia “Environment for Europe” and “Environment and Health”. The Republic of Armenia has actively participated in the development of the Environmental Strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), which was approved in 2003. The Republic of Armenia is one of the founders of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) for the Caucasus. Since 1994, with the support of International Organizations (GEF, WB, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNFAO, EU, USAID, OSCE, etc) and donor countries numerous projects have been and are being implemented in Armenia, which cover various environmental issues and are considered to be of serious support for solving environmental problems of Armenia.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), being the world's largest regional security organization with 56 participating states from Europe, Central Asia and North America, is one of the major donor organizations supporting Armenia’s development in respect of Environment and Security and acts as pre-eminent instruments for early warning, conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict rehabilitation. As part of its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE is concerned with economic and environmental matters, recognizing that co-operation in these areas can contribute to peace, prosperity and stability.

OSCE deals with three dimensions of security, namely the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimension. Activities in the economic and environmental dimension include the monitoring of developments in this area among participating States, with the aim of alerting them to any threat to security and stability, while assisting in the creation of economic and environmental policies and related initiatives to promote security and co-operation in the OSCE region.

Within the OSCE region, three different aspects of environment and security interactions are observed to be relevant to the specific conditions of Armenia. These are security implications of environmental problems, improving security through environmental cooperation and environmental implications of security measures.

Acknowledging the multifaceted character of environmental sources of human insecurity, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has established partnership with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Regional Environment Centre (REC) — within the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is also an associate member of the ENVSEC Initiative.

Among the array of environment-security interactions, ENVSEC seeks to identify and map those situations where environmental problems threaten to generate tensions – among communities,

countries or regions. Through its involvement in the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, OSCE has been addressing a variety of environmental problems. Issues related to “environment and security” offer a distinctive entry point for OSCE to establish a strategic, mainstreamed partnership with CSOs. In this respect, since 2009 OSCE has developed and launched **CASE – Civic Action for Security and Environment** in Armenia, which has been designed as a small grants program.

The overall objective of CASE is to create an enabling environment for CSOs to be a strong partner primarily to the governments as well as to other stakeholders in collaboratively addressing environment and security challenges.

This objective will be achieved primarily through awareness programmes on the linkages between environment and security, capacity building of CSOs particularly on these linkages, and providing grants for projects that demonstrate such linkages.

In line with these basic means of attaining its overall objective, the target outputs of CASE are identified as follows:

Output 1: Increased public and political awareness on the linkages between environment and security;

Output 2: Strengthened capacity of CSOs in the field of environment and security;

Output 3: Rendering financial and technical assistance to CSOs on projects demonstrating cooperation in the field of environment among governmental organizations, NGOs, private sector and international financial organizations.

This paper represents CASE Armenia Strategy based on national policies, strategies and priorities in the area of environment, sustainable development and security, taking into consideration regional and global commitments of Armenia. This paper has been prepared based on ENVSEC national consultations held in June 2009 in Yerevan which brought together representatives from national Government authorities, civil society, academia and international bodies. The main purpose of the consultations was to discuss country specific ideas, contents, suggestions and perceptions related to CASE Armenia Strategy.

1.2 Strategic Background for CASE

The OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted at the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council identified the challenges and threats in these areas and provided the direction for OSCE response and actions. Cooperation for enhanced development, security and stability, strengthening good governance, ensuring sustainable development and protecting the environment are the major areas where OSCE has been tasked to take action. The Maastricht Strategy identified, among various other issues, weak civil society as one of the challenges in the economic and environmental dimension and called for enhanced cooperation with civil society in addressing governance and sustainable development challenges.

The OSCE Economic and Environmental Forums provide an annual focus for activities by targeting major issues of economic or environmental concern by bringing together high-level representatives of the OSCE participating States. These forums have addressed the need for cooperation between different actors (Government agencies, NGOs, private sector, international finance institutions) and have promoted political dialogue between these actors on various topics of the Forums. Through these forums, the OSCE has been advised to ensure effective involvement of NGOs on various sustainable development and environmental security related initiatives.

The Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security adopted at the 2007 OSCE Ministerial Council has pioneered in the sense that for the first time the linkages between environment and security has been recognized at the Ministerial level. Through the Madrid

Declaration, the Ministerial Council affirmed that cooperation on environmental issues might serve as a tool to prevent tensions, to build confidence and to promote good neighborly relations in the OSCE region. The Ministerial Council also called the OSCE to utilize more effectively its institutional capacity and its transboundary co-operative arrangements in environmental matters and to work towards raising awareness on the potential impact on security of environmental challenges.

The declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe recognized that addressing common environmental problems offers opportunities for cooperation amongst governments diffusing tension and contributing to a greater cooperation and security, and that environmental cooperation may contribute to peace-building process, and noted the work of the Environment and Security Initiative in participating States. Furthermore, the Ministerial Declaration called on international organizations to pursue action-oriented partnerships among government and civil society organizations as a mechanism for advancing their objectives and implementing their commitments concerning the environment and sustainable development.

1.3 Key actors on addressing Environment and Security challenges

Environmental security is a term used for problems linking environmental conditions and national security interests. It is an issue of increasing concern in world affairs, though there is currently little coherence around the world in terms of its definition, threats to its stability, and policy responsibilities.

Threats to national security include resource and environmental problems that reduce the quality of life and result in increased competition and tensions. Many issues, such as ethnic differences, economic activity and trade barriers, political positioning, and environmental degradation affect the relationships between States, and within States. Only when these issues drastically threaten national conduct over a recognizable time span do they become security issues.

Therefore, to avoid confusion, it may be better to speak about environment and security, meaning environment in the security context, and security in the environment context.

As mentioned above, there is currently no universally recognized definition of environmental security. However, in general, it might be said that environmental security refers to the relative safety of the public from environmental dangers caused by natural or human processes due to ignorance, accidents, mismanagement, or design, and originating within or across national borders.

Environmental security includes the amelioration of resource scarcities, environmental degradation, and biological threats that could lead to conflict. Among the methods of amelioration are environmentally sound technologies (utilizing renewable resources aimed at decreasing consumption of resources in general, waste minimization and recycling, etc.), sustainable development policies, legal and economic environmental instruments, etc. Although sustainable development and environmental security are mutually reinforcing concepts and directions for policy, they are not the same. Sustainable development focuses on environmentally sound socio-economic development, while environmental security focuses on preventing conflict related to environmental factors, as well as the additional military needs to protect their forces from environmental hazards and repair military-related environmental damage. The condition of environmental security is a state in which social systems interact with ecological systems in sustainable ways, all individuals have fair and reasonable access to environmental goods, and mechanisms exist to address environmental crises and conflicts.

The national governments play the key role in ensuring environmental security. National governments bear the highest responsibility because legally they are the main actors in international relations and they have full sovereignty over their respective territories. They have a variety of measures at hand: they determine a State's policies, they are able to increase public awareness, they

have the option of legislative initiative to bring forth environmentally friendly changes in legal norms, etc. – they “set the rules”. Governments should assume the responsibility of protecting public resources and the environment. Environmental security must also be an integral part of a nation’s foreign policy. It cannot be pursued in isolation by lower level organizations. Environmental security threats often involve transboundary and/or global impacts that would require international cooperation.

At the same time, it is clear that Nation States acting alone cannot provide environmental security, and international organizations, in turn, do not have the capacity to address the threats. Therefore, corporations, NGOs, government agencies, and international agencies should be involved in the discussion to formulate, promulgate, expedite, and implement policy instruments. There is a need to enhance current policy development tools to respond to environmental threats to regional and country stability, within the context of exercising “preventive defense” through confidence building and tension-reduction measures – preventive diplomacy.

A number of government agencies and non-governmental organizations have expertise that can help enhance policy development tools and processes currently available to policy makers. To be effective, new policy development tools will need to utilize a multi-disciplinary approach. They also act as important public participative and advisory bodies.

Global environmental security is considerably endangered by: the drive for short-term profit at the expense of long-term sustainability; multinational corporations which exploit, destroy, and then move on to “greener pastures”, leaving environmental degradation and destruction of communities in their wake; the tradition of the open ocean being fair game for any country that wishes to exploit its resources, regardless of the cost to the rest of the planet; and the perception in developing countries that it is only fair that they be free to squander their natural resource capital just as First World countries already have. The threats and challenges that environmental security will possibly have to face in the near future include the following: human population growth and loss of bio-diversity; climate change and global warming; water scarcity and its pollution including ground water contamination; food security; environmental refugees; deforestation; industrial contamination of air and water; soil conservation/erosion; nuclear safety issues; and ozone depletion. Fundamental changes in assumptions about life, economics, and culture are necessary to assure environmental security.

1.4 Participation of Republic of Armenia in UNECE Environmental Conventions

To address environmental issues as well as its security challenges the Republic of Armenia signed numerous international treaties. Multilateral Environmental Agreements ratified by the Republic of Armenia are the integral part of national legislation and have the utmost legal effect. Although the embodiment of their general requirements into the national legislation was not considered as mandatory in the past, some legal acts that have been adopted in the country over the last years contain provisions for implementation of the ratified conventions. Although the environmental law enforcement, implementation of environmental rights remains to be a major concern.

UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

The Convention was adopted in 1979, Geneva. The National Assembly (NA) of the Republic of Armenia (RA) certified it in 1997. The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution is one of the central means for protecting our environment. It has, over the years, served as a bridge between different political systems and as a factor of stability in years of political change. It has substantially contributed to the development of international environmental law and has created

the essential framework for controlling and reducing the damage to human health and the environment caused by transboundary air pollution. The Convention obliges the Parties to collaborate in relevant joint projects, which address the issues like information exchange and air pollutants assessment and monitoring.

UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context

The Convention was adopted in 1991, Espoo, Finland. RA, National Assembly certified it in 1997. The Espoo (EIA) Convention stipulates the responsibilities of signatory countries with regard to proposals that have transboundary impacts, describes the principles, provisions and procedures to be followed, and lists the activities, content of documentation and criteria of significance that apply. It sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It also lays down the general obligation of States to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries.

UNECE Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

The Convention was adopted in 1992, Helsinki. RA National Assembly certified it in 1996. By this convention RA took legal, administrative, environmental and other obligations to promote active international cooperation among the States concerned before, during, and after an accident, to enhance appropriate policies and to reinforce and coordinate action at all appropriate levels for promoting the prevention of, preparedness for and response to the transboundary effects of industrial accidents.

UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, “Aarhus” Convention

The Convention was adopted on June 25, 1998 in Aarhus. It entered into force on 30 October 2001. RA, NA was certified it in 2001. It aimed to protect the rights of everyone to live in the environment and to be informed on environment. According to this Convention, the public shall have access to information, have the possibility to participate in decision-making and have access to justice in environmental matters. Parties to this Convention undertake to adopt necessary legislative and regulatory measures in the field of access to information on the environment and promote environmental education and raising public awareness about environmental issues.

UNECE Convention on Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

The Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) is intended to strengthen national measures for the protection and ecologically sound management of transboundary surface waters and groundwater. The Convention obliges Parties to prevent, control and reduce water pollution from point and non-point sources. The Convention also includes provisions for monitoring, research and development, consultations, warning and alarm systems, mutual assistance, institutional arrangements, and the exchange and protection of information, as well as public access to information. The convention entered into force in 1996.

2. National environmental priorities and thematic focus

2.1 Environmental safety and main threats in Armenia

Armenia has taken quite big steps expanding international partnership in the sphere of security and environment in recent years. This has become the basis for developing the Strategy of

National Security, the Military Doctrine and National Strategy on Sustainable Development. The first national consultations on Environment and Security were conducted in November 2003 in Yerevan, hosted by the OSCE Office in Yerevan and UNDP Country Office in Armenia, which overview of issues and areas where environment is seen as a *factor contributing* to potential escalation of existing conflicts or, as a trigger of a potential conflict on the sub-national, national or international (cross-border) level.

In 2005, the “Safety in the South Caucasus” seminar was held in the framework of Rose-Roth Programme of NATO Parliamentary Assembly together with National Assembly of RA. Number of subjects and reforms of defense sphere in the South Caucasus region and on internal situation in Armenia were discussed. According to the results of the seminar and in conformity with the principles of ecological safety in CIS countries and conception of collective security, priority ways of cooperation were outlined. The solution of ecological problems outlines a new platform for cooperation on safety and security.

Armenia as one of the developing countries of the South Caucasus that attracts special attention in the context of ensuring safety of the region and its sustainable development. The unique diversity of life supporting ecosystems, types of vegetation, rich historical-architectural and cultural-natural heritage (33 thousand cultural and architectural monuments situated in 4500 complexes) are the national property. Resource potential includes materials determining basis of economic development. For the last 5-10 years, the rapid economic growth in Armenia has been simultaneously attended by the sustainable tendency of worsening environmental conditions, public health and decline in life quality.

High degree of man-made pressure on environment, ecologically unsustainable use of resources and also natural disasters (earthquakes, landslips, droughts, floods) led to impoverishment of resource potential, environment, population health quality and formation of conditions for social-economic discomfort. By the beginning of the nineties of XX century, synergism of social-economic “unfavorable condition” of population and insufficient ability of state institutional structures/environmental management authorities has led to the **infringement of economic and ecological interest**. Ineffectiveness of state eco-policy and “inadequacy” of perception of safe development problems are displayed.

With the adoption of independence, ecological stress entered into the new stage of development. **The spectrum of risk factors** has broadened, quality of life has changed, unemployment and destitution level has risen, negative demographical tendencies have formed, migration processes that are undesirable in the context of geopolitical status and security strategy of the republic have intensified. This was the starting situation of proceeding Armenia to the market economics (1991-1996). During the last decade, the country registered two-digit annual economic growth (10-14%). Such growth creates a potential for positive socio-economic outcomes. It generates additional financial resources both at the government and at the household level. These resources could be also used to address the country’s environmental concerns. The rate of environmental investment in the total share of environmental spending was also increasing. The per capita environmental grants or concession loans are gradually decreasing. This means that more attention has to be paid to the mobilization of internal funding. The situation drastically has been changed due to the global financial crisis, which influenced environment as well as its security implications and has affected not only the environmental sector such as water, land, biodiversity and forest resources protection, atmosphere protection, and waste management but also major important adjacent areas related to energy, industry, transport, agriculture and health.

In transboundary context, the issues of security and impact on environment are somewhat connected with the results of regional conflicts, the dragged on blockade of Armenia, the necessity of regulating of custom policy, the processing of waste and polluting of “related” watercourses (the

Kura - the Araks). **Solving the problems** of national and transboundary character makes the basis of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development. Adoption by the Government of the Second National Environmental Action Programme demonstrates new approaches in the development of environmental policy for meeting current and forthcoming challenges. The new NEAP will also give renewed impetus to mitigation of burden on the environment and natural resources, as well as to promoting sustainable development in Armenia. Simultaneously, the Government adopted the European Neighborhood Partnership Initiative seeking regional cooperation in deferent fields including environment and security.

2.2 Problems and Ecological Danger Connected with the Safety

The spectrum of ecological problems of Armenia is varied. Many of them have transformed from the past, found new quality and are of a certain danger for the sustainable and safe development of the republic. Among them are land degradation, ecosystem safety, biosafety and biodiversity management, sustainable use of the forest and water resources, environmentally sound waste management, control over the air pollution, mitigation of the climate change impact and adaptation measures on preventing and mitigating environmental risks. Strengthening of capacities of all environmental institutions on national and local levels in the country including trainings for professionals, knowledge of the best experiences is another issue concerning environmental security.

Among the ENVSEC priorities is the Lake Sevan rehabilitation problem. The Law on Lake Sevan (2001), as well as the laws on annual and complex programmes for restoration, reproduction and use of Lake Sevan ecosystem (2001) were passed in the National Assembly (parliament). A number of sectoral policies, strategies and action plans have been adopted in the country, e.g. related to biodiversity, protected areas, desertification, forest resources management, water resources management, environment and health, etc.

The Lake **Sevan** (Gegarkounik region) is the high-mountain reservoir of drinking water, which has significant national and regional importance. During 2000-2008 years, the level of the lake rose by about 3m and reached to the level of 1898.85m. Notwithstanding the raising of the lake's level does not improve the quality of water and the degree of their polluting by domestic wastewater flow remains alarming. Absence of the drainage station, new construction around the lakes and agriculture aggravate the situation. Above mentioned problems are increasing risk to the lake's ecosystem, leading to loss of endemic types of flora and fauna (biodiversity), and reduction of fishery and change of ecological-hygienic situation to the worse.

Another threat to security is the **critical situation** of forest resources. Armenia is one of the *low forest-covered countries*, as its forests cover less than 10% of the total land area. Hence, the continuing deforestation of already scarce forest resources presents a significant environmental threat, combined with destroying consequences for habitats, irreversible losses of biodiversity, lost revenue of the government.

Logging for industrial wood products and fuel wood is a key cause of deforestation. Much of this logging takes place in violation of the Forest Code and other legislation designed to protect forests against exploitation. The volume of illegal logging is intertwined with the wood processing industry and the livelihoods of the households. The rate of forest use exceeds the rate of restoration. Large forest areas of **regions of Taoush, Lori, Kotaik, Ararat, Gegarkounik, Aragatsotn and Vayots Dzor** remain "hot spots". The condition of forests in the above-mentioned regions is an indicator of environment quality, public health and social well-being of local inhabitants. Forest data has not been updated since 1993.

The problems of treatment, storage and disposal of industrial and municipal **waste** are of no less danger to security. According to the statistics 102.1 kg of waste per capita is generated annually. The mining companies are the biggest contributors to the waste generation like in **Syunik region**, at the gold-mining pits, concentrating mill of **Kotaik region** and in the production of building materials in **Shirak region**. The tendencies of waste accumulation in Lori and Ararat regions remain alarming as well.

With the adoption of the Law on Waste in 2004, positive developments have been displayed in the system of state accounting of waste and the factories' security registration certificates. Only 0.6 thousand tons out of 12,065 tons of dangerous industrial waste (2007) is treated. This has led to considerable economic losses. **Technical condition of 12 tailing dumps** that are containing over 300 million m³ of mining industry waste (Syunik, Lori, Ararat) are of great danger for the environment and public health. The tailing dumps are situated in the vulnerable natural complexes. The dams need to be properly monitored for safety issues. The current volumes of waste generation, the absence of modern "experimental ranges" of their treatment and processing/disposal **does not still exclude the risk of environmental disasters**. Technologies of treatment and safe liquidation of over 120 tons of expired drugs and obsolete pesticides have been put into operation in the republic.

It is essential to strengthen cooperation with European environmental Non-Governmental organizations (in Germany, Austria, and Sweden). Their experiences and practical knowledge can easily be adapted to local conditions.

It is indispensable to stress the importance of the role of community and local self-governmental bodies within the context of environmental governance. Communities and local self-government institutions have a dual role. As the majority of them are in rural areas, they are often the direct and main consumer of natural resources and therefore, the regular economic activities have an anthropogenic impact on the environment. Hence, environmental degradation harms their livelihood level.

As communities are the direct users of nature and natural resources it is necessary to encourage these communities to participate in the management of protected areas, forests and water resources, involve them in the protection and corresponding monitoring and supervision activities, through legislation and by clearly defining their jurisdictions, duties and responsibilities. It is important to provide the local self-governing bodies with the authority and where relevant, develop economic tools and mechanisms to enable them to supervise land use, which conforms to environmental laws, and to involve the local communities in projects relating to protection of nature and natural resources.

There should be an emphasis on institutional strengthening of administration and local self-government, which is then used as a basis for gradual enforcement of environmental security. There should be a strengthening of all enforcement mechanisms to enforce all environmental protection principles laid down in the series of Environmental Laws; to integrate environmental considerations and the principles of environmental security into the programmes of particular sectors. Use of all the means on raising environmental awareness of general public (television, radio, internet, newsletters) is not sufficient, the digest reader-friendly environmental informational is still a challenge, educational and training materials for communities and local NGOs are not available, in spite of the national Law on permanent environmental education.

Special attention needs the **solution of ecological problems of Yerevan**. The rates of town building that has led to change of architectural appearance and ecological condition of the capital have sharply grown for the last years. In the scientists- architects' opinion "incompetent combination of green space with the building objects, grass violation of perspective plan of planting trees and shrubs" and have led to infringement of the principle of landscape organizing of the

territory of Yerevan. General cutting out of trees in the parks and public gardens has turned “light cities” into a chain of architecturally unacceptable structures. Instead of permissible 7 %, over 50 % has been built on. The soil is polluted with ions of heavy metals. An important town building concept, a point of interesting aspect of environment, is being ignored.

An uncontrolled garbage jam is being observed in the capital. Drinking water supply doesn't meet the standards and air pollution isn't controlled yet. The emission of dangerous substances caused by means of transportation (90-95% of the whole amount of emission) has roughly risen. Bringing ecological public transport down to a minimum had a negative effect on urban environment quality especially according to indicators of noise, safety and risk. The environment quality has changed. Aesthetic perception of town landscape is replaced by psychological strain of the inhabitants of the capital.

Ararat plain is the main agricultural zone of Armenia (density of population is over 190 people per km²). The process of ground erosion and pickling (including secondary), initiating desertification developed on the territory of the plain. There are atrophied areas.

The plain is constantly undergoing anthropogenic influence of Yerevan and city agglomerations. Ararat cement factory and gold-mining factory (Ararat region), Armenian Nuclear Power-station and International Airport Zvartnots are situated on its territory. The pointed out objects are the sources of air, water and agricultural lands pollution and are conducive for deterioration of soil quality and bioproductivity, polluted with ions of heavy metals.

The population of the plain undergoing the influence of negative factors of environment is liable to man-made ecological diseases. The social status of the population, the difficulties of privatizing process, the deficit of profitable markets of agricultural production and tendencies of changes of environment quality lead to violation of basis for sustainable land tenure and the development of migration process. The activities of local NGOs are not effective enough. It must be aimed at the development of social monitoring systems, social ecological expertise and application of the principles of ecological insurance on risk and safety.

Preservation of biodiversity is one of the priority problems of national environmental strategy. Its solving leaves the limits of exclusively national interests and is of strategic importance for keeping and sustainable use of resources of vegetable and animal kingdom of Caucasus. Positive tendencies of cooperation, especially on biosafety and GMO have been outlined in this sphere. It is necessary to use the potential of protected territories of Armenia, creating there stations of social monitoring and research with the participation of schoolchildren and students.

Mass deforestation made ecological threat for national use of fruit, berry, medicinal, volatile oil, honey-bearing, ornamental and other plants of economic importance. It is necessary to create social centers of ecological monitoring and safety. Agro biodiversity is also involved into the zone of active man-made influence that is not safe for preservation of valuable genetic fund and endemic species of biodiversity.

The problem of atmosphere pollution and the character of emission of dangerous substances are caused by the changes of infrastructure industrial sector, quality and variety of means of transportation, the conditions of their exploitation. Systematic exceeding of maximum single concentration of dust, sulphur anhydride and nitric oxide are fixed in Yerevan, Alaverdi, Ararat, Vanadzor and Hrazdan. “Hot-spots” are Ararat and Hrazdan, where 73 000 residents are living and exposed to the influence of cement dust. There is high risk of population morbidity and soil fertility reduction and damage of vegetation (biota on the whole) in the above-mentioned towns and in the adjoining territories. Transport remains the main atmosphere polluter. However, the cases of monopoly and ecologically quite dangerous use of these recourses have become frequent.

The problems connected with **the polluting of water resources** are especially topical. The wastewater treatment plant exists only for Yerevan city, which is implementing only physical

treatment of wastewater. In other regions of Armenia, there are no wastewater treatment plants. The quality of water in the rivers is not always up to normative indices. Almost all surface water bodies in Armenia has transboundary importance in the region as outflow from Armenia by joining the Araks or the Kura Rivers. According to the national data on surface water resources quality monitoring, the cases of MPC exceedance for heavy metals, Ph, ammonium ions, oil products and other parameters are very frequent. The most polluted transboundary rivers are the Debed, Agstev, Araks, Voghji, Hrazdan, Akhuryan and Vorotan Rivers and their river basins. Water systems are in unsatisfactory technical condition. Often emergencies are leading to the rise of common morbidity of intestinal infections. The risk connected with the danger of infectious diseases outbreak is not excluded as well. Public discontent may cause assuming increase in the prices of drinking water and irrigation water use. The activities of NGOs ecological and public health character, their participation in independent ecological expertise, etc. must be stimulated.

Among the objects of power engineering, the problem of safe functioning of **Armenian Nuclear Power-station (Armavir region)** attracts public attention. According to the experts' appraisals, technical state, exploitation conditions, systematic monitoring of environment and the professionalism of working staff exclude the risk situations and conflicts. The information about the power-station activity is accessible to public. Nevertheless, the problems of risk and safety are still in the limelight in the context of transboundary influence. The governmental efforts are aimed at developing of alternative energy sources (wind, solar and geothermal in the perspective). This is ecologically acceptable policy, though the strategy of development of small hydropower plants is not always reasonable from the point of view of safe application and negative impact on biodiversity. The shortcomings of environmental impact assessment of small hydropower plants projects and unsatisfactory public participation level in decision-making lead to unproved decisions and often to conflicts for water use among various types of users. The level of information on the problems of safety and risk of exploitation of such entities is low. It is necessary to carry out social ecological expertise on indicators of safety to adapt to the advanced know-how of European countries (Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, etc.).

2.3 Social-Economic Conditions and Tendencies of Development

Social-economic conditions in Armenia are defined by peculiarities of market relations and applied economic reforms. The purpose of reforms is to enable the environment for sustainable development, which in turn include preservation of environment natural-resource potential and ensuring the ecological security. The availability of natural-raw base and concrete actions for the last years has led to macroeconomic stabilization and rise in GDP.

“Strategic Program of Overcoming Poverty” for the period of 2015 has been adopted by the Government of RA in 2003. The Program was aimed at ensuring the annual increase in GDP for 2004-2008 years by 6% then to stabilize it on 5% level. The actual proofs up to 2007 exceeded the predicted ones significantly and reached to 12-13%.

Economic rise is being provided mainly at the expense of agricultural production, jewelry and food industry, and construction. The inequality of income assignment withstands the rise in life quality. The population quantity with an income below living wage minimum is growing. About 48-50 % of population still lives beyond the poverty limit. The migration tendencies of male population leaving the country for job seeking purposes have remained high. The social sustainability is infringed. Positive tendencies in economic rise have not practically led to the improvement of environment quality. Environmental outlay does not still make 1 % of GDP.

Overview

Armenia is particularly vulnerable to the global financial and economic crisis for the following reasons:

- Its economy relies heavily on European and Russian markets. The slowdown in exports and foreign capital inflows can mainly be observed in the **construction sector**, a key driving force of the past economic growth (24.7% of the GDP in 2007); **the mining sector**, affected by the steep fall in international prices of metals; **and the chemical industry**.
- **Remittances** account for 20 percent of GDP. More than one-quarter of households received remittances in 2007, contributing on average to 60% of their total income. More than 80% of Armenia's labour migrants (seasonal and long-term) are in **Russia**, most of them working in the construction sector that is heavily hit by the crisis.

What is the macro-economic impact on Armenia?

The financial crisis is affecting Armenia through reduced trade, foreign direct investments, and remittances caused by the economic slowdown in source countries. The impact of the crisis has been felt immediately with increasing unemployment, slowdown in economic growth and a sharp negative growth projection for 2009.

- **Economic growth started** slowing down in September 2008. In the first quarter in 2009, GDP **decreased by 4.3% compared** to the same period in 2008. Current growth projections for 2009 **range from minus 5.0% to minus 10.0%**.
- There is already a reversal of the gains in poverty reduction which is still continuing. **Extreme poverty** could reach levels not seen since the early 2000s. According to the **World Bank**, the **crisis** could push 172,000 people below the poverty line in 2009-10, increasing the **total number of poor** to 906,000, out of which 297,000 people will be extremely poor.
- **Official remittances** dropped by one third in the first quarter 2009 compared with one year earlier. **Departures** to Russia and other CIS countries in March 2009 decreased by 25% compared to the previous year.
- During the first quarter, **exports** declined by 47% and **imports** by 22% compared to the previous year.
- In early **March**, as a measure to support the export sector, the **local currency depreciated** by 22% against the USD. This, however, also led to significant increases of the prices for some **basic food commodities, medicines, fuel and transport**.

From the "Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the Global Financial Crisis in Armenia"

Permanent structural changes and the division of jurisdiction spheres assumed a protracted character and influence negatively on the Ministry of Nature Protection of RA and its inspection service. This is the case for protection and management of water and forest resources as well as bioresources. The transboundary environmental issues on water resources management has been addressed within the framework of several projects implemented in the South Caucasus with financial support of international organizations (TACIS, USAID/DAI, USAID/ARD, BMZ, OSCE and others).

Economic rise is not able to compensate the losses connected with the quality of public health yet. Natural increment of population index is going down. Diseases of blood circulation and new formation are preponderating. Infectious diseases have become more frequent. Nevertheless, the average life expectancy is 66.6 years and is one of the longest in the NIS.

The accessibility of environmental information to public and its participation in the decision making on the issues of environment protection is being regulated by the Aarhus Convention, national legislation and other international conventions ratified by Armenia.

The adoption of the uninterrupted environmental education system in the RA promotes the improvement of public participation mechanisms in the environment and security issues discussion. In 2001 RA Law on Environmental Education and Public Awareness was adopted. The problems of ecological safety and environment are included into the system of high education. Present efforts are aimed at the realization of the principles of European education strategy for the sustainable development. National education strategy has been developed. New prospects in realization of educational modules on environment and safety are outlining. The cooperation of national, regional and NGOs of EC must be carried out especially in this context.

2.4 Policy and Action Priorities

Principal actions within the framework of environmental policy implemented in the republic are directed to stabilization of ecological-economic situation and prevention of further degradation of environment and ensuring safe development. The national environmental policy defines the priorities for environmental issues as well as aimed at meeting the obligations of 17 ratified international conventions and protocols.

Presently the efforts are directed to the working out the **synergic mechanisms of solving problems** in the framework of global international conventions on climate change, biological diversity, combat desertification. Studies on greenhouse gas emission forecast in Armenia are going on. Appropriate cadastres and registers of dangerous chemical substances are being kept. Resourceful actions on biological security of Armenia are being realized. Public opinion is forming on participation of Armenia in WTO specifically on food safety issues. Certain progress has been achieved in realization of some obligations according to the “Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants” (Stockholm, 2001; ratified in 2003), “Convention on the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemical and pesticides in the international trade” (Rotterdam, 1998; ratified in 2003), “Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal” (Basel, 1989; ratified in 1999).

In 2007, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the State Security Doctrine, which consider safety environment as a part of the National Security. In 2008, the Republic of Armenia adopted the Sustainable Development State Program, which addresses environmental and security issues. In 2008, the Government adopted the National Environmental Action Plan. The development of new editing of RA Law “On Environment Protection”, revision of RA Law “On Expertise of Impact on Environment” are slowed down. It is necessary to raise the status of community participation in decision-making processes. The development and adoption of new RA Laws “On Ecological Information” and “On Ecological Safety” are of high priority. These initiatives must be included in the National Strategic Activity Plan on environment and safety. However, the activity plan has not been developed yet. The urgency of its development is obvious, though the efficiency of its implementation is vitally dependent on involving in the process ministries, scientific potential and other stakeholders.

Regional cooperation is carried out on programs and agreements in the framework of NIS, Black Sea Economic Cooperation and a complex of programme proposals that are supported by OSCE, UNDP, CEF, WB, USAID, UNIDO, IDA, BMZ, UNITAR, WWF, UNFAD and other donor organizations. Armenia is an active participant in all of the environmental initiatives of the Regional Environmental Center of the Caucasus, especially on management of water resources, sustainable development of mountainous regions, environmental education and informational provision.

Especially perspective is regional cooperation on seismic protection, management of emergency situations and provision of regional environmental safety.

The following **priorities of strategic actions** are recommended:

1. To develop a united regional strategy of ecological-economic security and development
2. To develop a National Strategic Activity Plan on environment and safety
3. To develop the policy and mechanism of combination of priorities of national safety, individual and society safety
4. To develop a strategic activity plan ensuring ecological, economic, food and biological safety
5. To develop concepts, policy and activity plan of Yerevan and the regions` safe development
6. To develop a state strategy of ecological-seismic protection and safety
7. To develop a system of indicators of environment quality and safety
8. To carry out cartography of the territory of Armenia according to danger and risk indices, create GIS
9. To create a united system of monitoring of environment quality and public health
10. To create informational technologies for decision making on population safety provision
11. To develop a strategic activity plan on developing cooperation between NGOs of EC and the Caucasus
12. To broaden the spheres of scientific and technical cooperation to ensure industrial safety
13. To develop and adopt new RoA Laws “On Ecological Safety”, “On Ecological Information” and “On Ecological Insurance”
14. To facilitate the development and adoption of new editing of RoA Law “On Environment Protection”
15. To revise RoA Law “On Environmental Impact Assessment” and reinforce the status of public participation in decision making
16. To develop educational modules on environmental problems and safe development
17. To conduct awareness campaign, inform the community on problems of safety and climate change, combat of desertification, preserve biodiversity
18. To create network of social safe development centers, to provide expert and consulting services
19. To develop educational modules on safety and environment for all levels of educational system and the community
20. To develop a manual on socially oriented and ecologically safe business

Putting the recommendations into practice foresees working-out regional conception/strategy of ecological safety of the Caucasus as a document for non-conflict solution of problems.

2.5 Thematic focus of CASE in Armenia

Given that Armenia is a small land locked country with around 65% of urban population, 50% of which (or about 35% of total) is concentrated in the capital Yerevan, CASE Armenia will give priority to the projects in rural communities and towns with comparatively small population with the exact thematic focus. It is believed that with this approach, the Programme will increase impact of its limited investments and reach out the most vulnerable levels of the population.

The analysis of current environmental situation and priorities specified above served as basis for Armenia CASE National Screening Board to identify the following thematic priorities:

- Sustainable management of natural resources (water, bio-diversity, bio-security, mountains, etc)
- Tackling climate change
- Combating land degradation
- Natural and man-made disasters
- Hazardous waste and hazardous chemicals management
- Reduction of the negative impacts of mining
- Sustainable use of energy
- Sustainable transportation
- Environmental education
- Strengthening of Armenian CSOs capacities for environmental actions

2.6 Cross-cutting Themes

It is envisaged to build and network the capacities of CSOs in Armenia in addressing the prioritized issues. Coupled with the possible priority themes listed above, a number of all-important cross-cutting themes have been identified as follows:

- Environmental governance
- Social aspects of environmental security, including migration, gender equality etc.
- Role and participation of women
- Role and participation of youth

The cross-cutting theme of ***Environmental Governance*** should be addressed by the proponent CSOs through, *inter alia*, seeking improved dialogue between different stakeholders on priority themes, targeting incremental improvements likely to pave the way for longer-term institutional and policy changes, streamlining with the activities of the Aarhus Centres, stimulating the implementation of relevant UNECE Environmental Conventions, seeking tangible improvements in the rather fragmented and incoherent areas of environmental governance in Armenia, introducing innovative tools and approaches to strengthen co-operation for addressing environmental sources of stress, etc.

The environmental policy in Armenia was mainly formulated based on the requirements of international treaties and are allocated by legal acts and implemented by relevant institutions. In 1998 Armenia developed its first National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), a key environmental policy document, which set as priorities: air, land and water pollution; over exploitation of natural resources and threatened ecosystems; and environmental health problems and hazards. Based on NEAP-1 implementation assessment, the government developed Second NEAP in 2006-2007, which was approved in 2008 by a protocol decision. The NEAP-2 is a second generation environmental strategic action programme for 2008-2012. The approved action programme covers both environmental media (land, bio-resources, water, air, underground resources, hazardous waste and substances) and cross-media issues (environmental economics, environmental legislation,

institutional issues, environmental monitoring, international cooperation, environmental education, public awareness, environmental research and development). It also refers to cross-sectoral issues in the energy, industry, transport, agriculture, and health sectors. It is envisaged that the Government of Armenia will handle implementation of the NEAP-2 by means of state budget, international organizations and donor countries.

A National Environmental Health Action Plan (NEHAP) was approved in 2002. The Poverty Reduction Strategic Program (PRSP-2) or as it is renamed – National Strategy on Sustainable Development approved in 2008, likewise PRSP-1 (2003) also define environment as a priority area. One of the major differences between PRSP-2 and PRSP-1 is the steep expansion of the policy measures aimed to ensure the lasting economic growth.

With regard to *Social Aspects of Environmental Security*, this cross-cutting theme should be addressed through, inter alia, considering the potential impacts of environmental security on migration, seeking to contribute to the initiatives toward transforming environmental risks into co-operation in pertinent areas, introducing innovative tools and approaches to highlight social aspects of environmental security, etc. The importance given to this cross-cutting theme is based on the current social-economic situation in Armenia. In particular, According to Country Development Situation Assessment for Armenia (2008) in 2003-2007 there was on average 13.1% economic growth compared with PRSP-1 envisaged 6.2%. Sustainable Development Program of Armenia (initially PRSP-2) adopted in October 30, 2008 reports that successfully implemented PRSP-1 (2003) resulted in a substantial reduction of poverty. In 2005, for instance, it decreased to 29.8%, in 2007 to 25%. As of the extreme poverty, it decreased to 4.6% and 3.8% respectively (Social Snapshot and Poverty of Armenia, 2008, NSS). Despite these remarkable results and Sustainable Development Program of Armenia assumption that poverty is mostly solved and became less severe, the issues of extreme poverty still remains a serious social issue and its elimination continues to remain the key objective for Sustainable Development Program of Armenia as 25.0% of the population (more than 800,000 people) are poor, and among them, about 123,000 are extremely poor.

The article 14.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, proclaims everyone's equality of under the law. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited." As per article 35, "The family is the natural and fundamental cell of the society. Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and found a family according to their free will. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and divorce." However, Armenia does not have any laws that specifically prohibit discrimination against women.

According to OSCE estimations, there is no gender discrimination in terms of literacy and employment. However, the level of women's participation in politics is extremely low and inequalities between men and women are demonstrated in low political participation of women and low participation of women in socioeconomic life including employment in the labour market. Consequently, this target was nationalized to best reflect Armenia's gender equality needs. The participation of women in the political life is believed to be a positive factor in the nation's fight against corruption, and a good tool to improve governance.

Therefore, the *Role and Participation of Women* is considered as a pre-conditional cross-cutting theme in terms of the assessing the eligibility of projects. The proponent CSOs may address this cross-cutting theme through, *inter alia*, ensuring that women's organizations are consulted during the course of the project, ensuring that the project design provides opportunities for women to participate equally, highlighting the gender perspective in all events, incorporating gender

perspectives/analysis in projects, obtaining women's opinions and perspectives on environment/security issues and concerns, etc.

In the same manner, the *Role and Participation of Youth* is also considered as a pre-condition for the eligibility of projects. The proponent CSOs may address this cross-cutting theme through, inter alia, ensuring that youth organizations are consulted/involved during the course of the project, targeting the youth as a major group amongst the beneficiaries of the project, obtaining the opinions and contributions of the youth on environment/security issues and concerns, involving special activities for awareness-raising and capacity building of the youth in pertinent priority themes, etc.

3. Outcomes of the ENVSEC and other relevant regional initiatives

Since the 1990s with the support of International Organizations (GEF, WB, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNFAO, EU, USAID, OSCE, etc.) and donor countries numerous projects have been and are being implemented in Armenia, which cover various environmental issues and are considered a serious support for solving environmental problems of Armenia.

The United States is the largest bilateral donor. Other bilateral donors, in order of levels of assistance, include Germany (energy, infrastructure development, SME development and health), Japan (energy, health and agriculture), the Netherlands (agribusiness, energy), United Kingdom (customs, social sector, public sector reforms), Italy (health, culture).

The largest multilateral donor is the World Bank (enterprise development, energy, water, education, health, agricultural reform, municipal development, and judicial reform). In particular, both the IMF and the World Bank have provided the country with concessional funds and large-scale technical assistance.

In 2006, the Republic of Armenia has received a \$250,000 grant from the World Bank/GEF Small Grants Programme aimed to implement and finance biodiversity conservation projects in Gegharkunik and Tavush marzes. The key outcomes of SGP were increased abundance and conservation of threatened species and income generation from sustainable use activities at local level. The grants programme was implemented through Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction Project Implementation Unit as a subcomponent under the Project.

Other multilateral donors include the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (credit and energy), European Union (civil society, social sector, energy, education, private sector development, land titling, agriculture, statistics, transport and environment), and the United Nations network of agencies, e.g. UNDP (socio-economic, democratic and environmental governance), UNHCR (refugee support), UNICEF (health, education, social sector) and World Health Organization. The Soros Foundation is also active in

Armenia (civil society, education, public health, culture, media, and judicial reform) There are also several Armenian Diaspora donors, the largest of which is the Lincy Foundation (SME development, road network, tourism and earthquake recovery).

Armenia is eligible to receive assistance in a form of a grant from the United States through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. A Compact was signed in March 2006 to support a five year Programme of strategic investments in irrigation and rural roads network, aimed at increasing agricultural production in poor rural areas of the country in an amount of \$235,650,000. This Programme targets two main directions: i) the Rural Road Rehabilitation Project; and (ii) the Irrigated Agriculture Project.

Several other bilateral donors have been active in Armenia, including substantial assistance from EU Member States.

Other relevant donor organizations and programmes include:

- The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus), independent, not-for-profit, nonadvocacy foundation, established by the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the European Union. REC Caucasus assists the Caucasus states in solving environmental problems and supports in building the civil society through promotion of public participation in the decision-making process, development of free exchange of information and encouragement of cooperation at national and regional level among NGOs, governments, businesses, local communities and all other stakeholders.

- Armenia Tree project, Armenia Tree Project (ATP), a non-profit programme based in Watertown and Yerevan, conducts vitally important environmental projects in Armenia's impoverished and deforested zones and seeks support in advancing its reforestation mission. The programme is mainly supported by the Armenian Diaspora. ATP manages three tree nurseries and two environmental education facilities, partners with villagers to create tree-based micro-enterprise opportunities, creates urban green belts for public use, restores degraded forest lands, and employs hundreds of part-time workers to plant new forests.

- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - a global conservation organization began its activities in the Caucasus in 1992 and extended its conservation work by establishing a local office in Yerevan in 2001 (registered as official branch office in 2006). WWF implemented a number of activities in the Caucasus, including development of the Ecoregional Conservation Plan and participation in establishment of the Caucasus Protected Areas Trust Fund. Currently, WWF-Armenia implements and overall coordinates about 10 projects focused on biodiversity conservation, protected areas, climate change, environmental education/awareness raising and others. The projects are funded by different governmental aid agencies (German Government, Norwegian Government) and international organizations/foundations (WWF, CEPF, WB).

- Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus (TJS) (supported by KfW - Development Bank on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) - facilitates cooperation in the field of biodiversity conservation between the three Southern Caucasus Countries - Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan - in the framework of the German Government's Caucasus Initiative. Activities of TJS include support to national parks projects, Ecoregional Conservation Plan, nature protection in spatial planning and Biosphere reserves.

Besides, Armenia currently has the following GEF Projects:

- Armenia - Improving the Energy Efficiency of Municipal Heating and Hot Water Supply Project
- Enabling Activities for the Preparation of Armenia's Second National Communication to the UNFCCC
- Developing Institutional and Legal Capacity to Optimize Information and Monitoring System for Global Environmental Management in Armenia
- Development Protected Area Network system in Armenia
- Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts in Mountain Forest Ecosystems of Armenia
- 2010 Biodiversity Targets National Assessments

Generally, it can be concluded that Armenia has sufficient donor funding in environmental field, however resources directed through non-governmental organizations are rather limited.

The uniqueness of ENVSEC initiative is proved by its character of being a joint effort of several dominant donor organizations that are aim to enable CSOs capacities in addressing environmental issues through CASE allocation of funds with the exact thematic focus. Since 2003, the ENVSEC Initiative has been helping the governments of these countries in their efforts to assess and address environmental and security risks by making them visible and promoting solutions,

oriented dialogue and cooperation. OSCE, UNEP, UNDP, UNECE, REC and NATO committed to continue their joint efforts in assisting countries to identify environment and security risks, living up to the related challenges, and entering in solution-oriented partnership arrangements, moving increasingly from the initial assessments to actual programme and project implementation during the second ENVSEC programming period from 2007 to 2009.

Throughout the process, ENVSEC's work is supported by the field and country offices of the OSCE, UNDP, and the REC. As the Initiative explicitly recognizes that environment and security issues are often trans-boundary in nature, therefore require sustained and coordinated action between states, the ENVSEC partners work with, and facilitate dialogue and collaboration between policy makers, environmental experts, and civil society actors across borders. The assessments and the work programmes and project portfolios are developed in close consultation with national experts from various ministries and national agencies as well as NGOs and research institutes.

The work programmes are built around three inter-related pillars:

- In-depth vulnerability assessment, early warning and monitoring of environment and security risks;
- Improving awareness on the interrelation between the environment and security, strengthening environmental policies, and improving the capacities and the roles of environmental institutions;
- Providing technical expertise and mobilizing financial support for clean-up and remediation.

4. Role of CSOs and Aarhus Centers in Armenia

In Armenia, the legal status of Civil Society Organizations is regulated under the provisions of Civil Code of RoA adopted in 1998, the RoA Law on Civil Society Organizations adopted in 2001 and the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, ratified in 2001. Civil Code of RoA creates legal basis for establishment of CSOs. According to the RoA Law on CSOs "A civil society organization is a type of (not for profit) public association which does not pursue the purpose of gaining profit and redistributing this profit among its members, and into which (the organization), based on their common interests, in the manner prescribed by the law, physical persons, including RoA citizens, foreign citizens and those without a citizenship, have joint for satisfying their non religious spiritual and non material other needs; for protecting their and other persons' rights and interests; for providing material and non-material assistance to certain groups and for carrying out other activities for public benefit" (Art. 3 point 1). This definition falls within the scope of Aarhus Convention which considers "The public" as one or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organizations or groups".

By 2008, around 3500 NGOs were registered at the Ministry of Justice of Armenia, out of which approximately 120 NGOs have environmental focus, or else deal with environmental and or sustainable development issues one way or another. Environmental NGOs are unevenly distributed over the country.

Around 70% of existing environmental NGOs are based in the capital Yerevan, 25% in smaller cities and only about 5% in village communities. Environmental NGOs highly contribute to the formation of ecological vision, to promotion of sustainable development concept and principles among the population in Armenia. It should be mentioned that most of them were established and managed by scientists and experts from universities. However, their current activities are limited by a lack of funds, which means that most environmental NGOs function within the framework of grant program, cooperating primarily with donor organizations.

According to NGO sector survey conducted by REC Caucasus in 2004¹, the followings are the top 3 priority areas for the environmental NGOs in Armenia:

- Environmental education (75%),
- Environmental protection (75%), and
- Environmental impact assessment (63%).

Majority of NGOs are based and primarily function in the capital Yerevan, which is mainly conditioned by unavailability of information, lack of funding opportunity (grants) and weak institutional set-up in provinces (marzes).

Following the 1992 Rio Conference, NGOs have contributed greatly to the introduction of sustainable development ideology and raising public awareness about this issue.

Following the ratification of Aarhus Convention by Armenia in 2001, the cooperation between NGOs and the government has significantly broadened. The participation of NGOs, especially the environmental NGOs, in national and regional programmes has grown considerably.

New level of cooperation and consolidation of civil society has been appeared by the creation of the *Aarhus Centers network and the Centre on Environmental Rights*. Since 2002 according to the Understanding Memorandum signed between RA Ministry of Nature Protection and OSCE office in Yerevan Public Environmental Information /Aarhus/ Centers started to act in the Republic of Armenia. From 2002 until now there were opened 14 Aarhus Centers in different regions of Armenia and the Centre on Environmental Rights at the Yerevan State University faculty of law. In virtue of their activities information concerning environmental problem is component for Armenian habitants. Aarhus Centers also promote the public participation in environmental decision making process and in managing activity. (www.aarhus.am)

Aarhus Centres:

- Promoting more democratic values and practices in the environmental field
- Acting as an inspiration for greater transparency and accountability in all spheres of government
- Improving the state of the environment
- Contributing to the protection of the right of every person, of present and future generations, to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being.

CASE has a big potential to strengthen the Aarhus Centers further through enabling CSOs capacities and funding various environmental projects. Aarhus Centers will serve as coordinating units for activities of CSOs by providing them with office facilities for meetings and discussions, with appropriate resources for obtaining the necessary knowledge and with project related information needed to focus on particular issues. This will have feedback for Aarhus Centers by forcing them to act actively, increase their role in the region, establish appropriate communication networks for stakeholders and serve as a dialog initiator for solving the environmental issues.

Generally, there is an established and constructive relationship between the government and NGOs involved in environmental issues in Armenia. Majority of the environmental NGOs in Armenia are “active” or “very active” in cooperation with the Government, the rest are cooperating with the government on “periodic” way. Environmental NGOs based outside of Yerevan are also active in building relationship with the governmental authorities and, in some instances, are even ahead of their peers in the capital. Last several years have been more productive in building positive relations between the government and the environmental NGOs. Pursuant to the principles of Aarhus Convention, ratified in 2001, a Public Relations Department was established at Ministry of Nature Protection to improve contact and cooperation with NGOs and the public at large. In 2002

¹ First edition of South Caucasus NGO Directory was issued by REC Caucasus in 2002; the second edition of the directory was updated in 2004.

the public information centre on environment was established (Aarhus Centre) in Yerevan which has been further expanded into a network in different provinces/marzes.

Following obligations under the Rio process Armenia has established National Council for Sustainable Development in 2002 including 8 relevant Ministers and civil society (NGO, Academia, youth and business) representatives. As of today, a concept of Sustainable Development has been developed by the NGO and scientific sector, which was accepted by the government as a baseline for development of the national SD Concept.

Currently, many environmental NGOs are represented in some of the major Steering Committees, Working and Expert Groups, etc. Government and donor agencies regularly solicit partnerships with NGOs but their capacity to support implementation is not adequate to needs.

5. Roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders

The stakeholders are all the groups, inside and outside of government, which may have a strong interest in particular environmental issues. These include the following types of persons or organizations:

- I) Stakeholders that possess expertise, creativity or local information.
- II) Stakeholders who possess important resources for implementation: funding, legal authority, good personal connections.
- III) Stakeholders who can block decision-making or implementation, by withholding approval, by legal action, by political pressure, or by subverting decisions.
- IV) Stakeholders, such as the local rural population, and landowners, who may not have power, but who must be involved in making implementation a success.

For CASE projects, it is particularly important not to exclude the third and fourth groups. Environmental decisions typically affect a very broad range of the population, because everyone is a nature user at some level. Groups that are excluded from the planning and decision-making process can easily withhold their future cooperation, making success in improving environmental management difficult at best.

In general, the stakeholder groups for CASE, at a minimum, will include: natural resources user groups, operators of hydro-power and other hydraulic facilities, business and industry representatives, non-governmental groups (environmental groups, neighborhood or citizen groups), local and national government agencies working in agriculture, health, planning, territorial administration, and local municipalities (village or town mayors).

The CSOs must make a concerted effort to invite all the pertinent groups to participate. Obvious stakeholders can identify other stakeholders who are less known or less obvious. If groups appear after the process has started, and ask to be included, it is likely best to accommodate them.

6. Target beneficiaries

Primary target beneficiaries are the CSOs operating in Armenia. For the purposes of CASE, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are defined as *non-state actors whose aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power*. They comprise the full range of formal and informal organizations within civil society, including but not limited to NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs), academia, journalist associations, trade unions, and trade associations. Besides local and national CSOs, the OSCE will also collaborate with the internationally

recognized, professional CSOs in design and implementation of transboundary projects and training and capacity building activities.

7. CASE Initiative - Description

7.1 Capacity Building Strategy

The CASE Program is designed to increase regional cooperation in the sound management of natural resources by strengthening institutional capacities, scientific capabilities, and community participation in and amongst South Caucasus countries. As a key part of the CASE, the Small Grants help to further program goals by:

- Fostering activities that build trilateral relations among the three South Caucasus countries.
- Strengthening the participation of civil society in natural resource management to achieve stewardship and measurable social, economic, and environmental security results.
- Helping revitalize basic environmental management functions at the transnational, national, and community levels.
- Strengthening the capacity of national agencies and local users through the demonstration of best management practices and the promotion of private sector involvement towards environmentally sound transboundary activities.
- Increasing decision-making power and involvement of underrepresented society members, often women and minorities, in water resource stewardship.

To ensure the awareness on the CASE objectives, a number of public forum meetings will be organized in Aarhus centers throughout Armenia. During these meetings, among other issues, the technical and operational aspects of implementation will be elaborated in detail for further development.

The OSCE Yerevan office will develop the Training Tool Kit for CASE. It will include information on conceptual framework, thematic and cross-cutting areas, project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting, as well as specific chapters on integration of gender and youth perspectives.

Technically weak proposals/concepts with potentially good ideas/content will not be turned down categorically, but be given a specific time for their improvement and backed up with appropriate technical assistance.

Importance will be given to those projects, which plan to include environment/security topics in the official training curricula of academic institutions.

7.2 CASE Institutional Settings

7.2.1 CASE Country Officers

CASE Country Officer (OSCE ENVSEC representative) is responsible for country-specific CASE implementations, including the coordination, Management, and Evaluation of the country programme to ensure the technical and substantive quality of CASE grants and projects. This responsibility is expected to include, *inter alia*, the following:

- Identifying programming areas and requirements at the country level.
- Coordinating and contributing to the drafting (and revision) of Armenia CASE Strategy, which is discussed and finalized by the CASE National Screening Board.
- Coordinating and contributing to the process of the establishment (and subsequently, effective functioning) of Armenia CASE National Screening Board (including the identification of potential constituents, forwarding of invitations, preparing the agenda and minutes of meetings, making logistical arrangements, etc.)
- Announcing the CASE “call for project concepts” through CSO networks, Aarhus Centres, media and other channels.
- Working in close partnership with CSOs to help them formulate their project concepts.
- Responding to requests for information and guidance from CSOs in relation to CASE implementations.
- Reviewing/pre-screening the project concepts and informing the relevant CSOs (if needed) to revise and complete their project concepts before their evaluation by the National Screening Board.
- Subsequent to the selection of project concepts, notifying the proponent CSOs of this decision and asking to develop their full project proposals.
- Providing assistance to CSOs in the formulation of full project proposals (if required).
- Reviewing/pre-screening the project proposals and informing the relevant CSOs (if needed) to revise and complete their proposals before their final evaluation by the National Screening Board.
- Subsequent to the selection of projects, notifying the grantee CSOs of this decision and providing guidance on the next steps of the CASE project cycle.
- Signing respective Memoranda of Agreement with grantee CSOs (copies to be forwarded to OCEEA).
- Authorizing and disbursing grant instalments to grantee CSOs on the basis of performance reporting.
- Ensuring sound programme monitoring and evaluation, in particular on the basis of the criteria and indicators developed/refined in relation to CASE.
- Coordinating and contributing to the organization of country-specific capacity building programmes under CASE.
- Overseeing the implementation of the country-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.
- Promoting the goals and activities of CASE at the country level.
- Promoting the establishment of partnerships and the mobilization of additional resources in relation to Armenia CASE implementations.
- Organizing regular and occasional site visits (to be accompanied by relevant members of the National Screening Board) to overview and support the grantee projects.
- On the basis of the CASE Communications Strategy, coordinating the development and implementation of Armenia Communications Strategy.

7.2.2 National Screening Board

CASE National Screening Board established in the country as a broad-based participatory mechanism for policy guidance, project screening and programme promotion. Members of CASE National

Screening Board serve on a voluntary basis and represent the respective government authorities, ENVSEC NFP, the academic and technical institutions, OSCE Office, UNDP, civil society organizations.

CASE National Screening Board have, among others, the following roles and responsibilities in relation to CASE:

- Participating in and contributing to the development and revision of Armenia CASE Strategy.
- Establishing country-specific eligibility criteria for projects based on the general CASE Guidelines, that are stated in this Strategy.
- Evaluating/selecting the project concepts on the basis of the selection criteria specified in this Strategy.
- Subsequent to the selection of the project concepts, evaluating/selecting the grantee projects on the basis of the selection criteria defined in this Strategy.
- Ensuring that the relevant Board members participate in and contribute to site visits to be conducted by the Armenia CASE Country Officer in relation to grantee projects.
- Contributing to and taking active part in the development and implementation of Armenia CASE Communications Strategy.

7.3 Eligibility criteria for projects

The selection and award review will be conducted according to a competitive process. The grant selection committee will evaluate applications based on technical, social, and financial merit, using the selection criteria detailed in this document. Successful grantees will be notified in 10 days after announced deadline. The maximum duration of a project shall be twelve months, starting immediately upon the award.

The eligibility criteria for the proposed project will consider the following specificities:

- Problem to be addressed by the project should be linked to at least one of the priority themes in relation to the interface of environmental and security issues
- The project should address cross-cutting themes, in particular the integration of youth and gender concerns under the targeted priority theme(s)
- The project should not duplicate other ongoing efforts. In particular, projects previously supported by similar grant programmes will not be deemed as eligible
- The project should introduce an innovative approach to the interface of environmental and security issues, and have the potential of constituting a “best practice” in developing and expanding such an approach within the country and in the region
- The project should incorporate basic tools and mechanisms for ensuring the sustainability of its impacts
- Project beneficiaries shall be deeply involved in all stages of the project cycle, including development, implementation and monitoring. This will ensure the community “ownership” of the project
- The project implementation will be subject to strict monitoring, to ensure correct use of CASE funds and coherence with country Programme Strategy
- Transparency is a key for all activities of CASE. The stakeholders will be notified of CASE Armenia Programme progress, projects' status, news and other relevant information via OSCE Yerevan office official web-site (www.osce.org/yerevan) as well as other electronic networks and media if needed.
- Duration of the project normally will not exceed 12 months.
- Maximum size of the grant cannot exceed EUR 6,000 Armenian dram equivalent.

8. Grant-making procedures

8.1. CASE Project Cycle: Summary of Basic Steps

CASE Armenia Project Cycle consists of the following basic steps:

- Announcement of the “Call for Project Concepts”.
- Submission of the Project Concepts by CSOs.
- Review of the Project Concepts by National Screening Board (endorsement/elimination).
- Formulation and submission of full project proposals by CSOs.
- Review of Project Proposals by the National Screening Board (endorsement/elimination).
- Signing of the Memoranda of Agreement with CSOs for approved projects.
- Release of the first grant installment.
- Commencement of project implementation.
- Interim project reporting and subsequent grant disbursements.
- Site visits by the CASE Country Officer and/or members of the National Screening Board.
- Final project report, followed by the final grant disbursement.

8.2. Application for Small Grants

The application for small grants under CASE is open to the full range of CSOs in Armenia. The process of announcement of the call for Project Concepts, preparation and submission of Project Concepts and their review (endorsement or elimination, as appropriate) by the National Screening Board is delineated hereunder.

8.3. Call for Project Concepts

Subsequent to the formulation and endorsement of CASE Armenia Strategy, the announcement of the CASE call for Project Concepts will be made by the COs through CSO networks, Aarhus Centres, media and other channels.

The announcement for the call for Project Concepts should include, *inter alia*, the following:

- Background information on CASE.
- Eligibility criteria for applications (eligible CSOs).
- Eligibility criteria for projects.
- Priority (and cross-cutting) themes.
- Deadline for applications.
- Ceiling of grants to be provided to projects.
- Amount/percentage of cost-sharing/co-funding to be required from applicants (if applicable).
- Evaluation criteria in relation to Project Concepts.
- Information on the evaluation process and calendar in relation to the review/selection of Project Concepts.
- Standard fiche for Project Concepts (to be filled out by proponent CSOs).
- Guidance/complementary information on how to prepare and submit Project Concepts.

8.4. Preparation of Project Concepts

The Project Concepts should include the following:

- Basic information on the proponent CSOs (separately for the lead and partnering CSOs, including the allocation of responsibilities under such partnership).
- Curriculum Vitae of the Project Manager.
- Priority theme(s) targeted by the project.
- Primary goals/objectives and targeted outputs.
- Summary description on how the project would contribute to the interface of environment and security issues under the targeted priority theme(s).
- Summary description on how the project would address cross-cutting themes, in particular the integration of youth and gender concerns under the targeted priority theme(s).
- Brief description of the linkages of the project with the CASE Armenia Strategy.
- Brief description of the linkages with OSCE-supported initiatives in the respective country, in particular with ENVSEC and Aarhus Centres.
- Summary of project activities and timetable/work plan.
- Brief description of how the sustainability of project would be achieved.
- Assessment of cost-sharing/co-funding arrangements by the beneficiaries (if applicable).
- Summary project budget (distribution of the project budget in terms of main expenditure items should be indicated).

Project Concepts to be prepared by CSOs will be submitted before the indicated deadlines to the CASE Country Officer. Prior to their evaluation by the National Screening Board, the Project Concepts will be reviewed by the CASE Country Officer to ensure their compliance with the required format and content. Project Concepts that are incomplete in certain aspects will not be categorically rejected, but instead, the applicant CSOs will be notified of the deficiencies and be requested to remedy them within a given deadline. Regardless of the extent to which the applicant fully addresses the deficiencies (or, if no revisions are made by the applicant in due time), the Project Concepts will be submitted to the Board in their present state.

8.5. Selection of Projects

Project Proposals submitted by CSOs will be subject to the review and selection by the National Screening Board in Armenia. Based upon its review, the National Screening Board will decide to eliminate or endorse, as appropriate, the Project Proposals.

In relation to the Project Proposals selected/endorsed by the Board, the following alternative paths may be followed: (1) The Board may finalize its decision to award a grant to the selected project; or (2) the Board may only provisionally select the Proposal, subject to its reformulation for further improving its content and remedying the identified deficiencies. In the latter case, the CO will notify the proponent CSOs of the Board's request and provide them with appropriate guidance and assistance for the reformulation of the Proposal within the specified deadline. Regardless of the extent to which the deficiencies are remedied, another request for reformulation will not be asked, and the Board will make its final decision based on the reformulated Proposal as to select or eliminate the project, as appropriate.

Evaluation and selection of projects by the National Screening Board will be done on the basis of the following criteria:

- Assessment/cross-checking of whether the key information provided in the respective Project Concept that enabled its selection manifests a basic continuity in the Project Proposal (i.e., whether there are changes in the lead organization, composition of partnership, theme, objectives, etc.)
- Assessment of whether the Project Proposal clearly articulates its potential contribution to the interface of environment and security issues under the targeted priority theme(s).
- Assessment of the proposed project activities as to whether they would be adequate to attain its objective(s) and target outputs.
- Assessment of the project calendar/workplan as to whether a realistic time frame and deadlines are provided to undertake the proposed activities.
- Assessment of the project budget as to whether it is adequate to attain its objective(s) and target outputs, and whether the budget items and cost estimates are realistic vis-à-vis the activities.
- Assessment of cost-sharing/co-funding arrangements by the beneficiaries (if applicable).
- The overall evaluation of the Project Proposal (general quality of the Project Proposal, its comprehensiveness in addressing environment and security challenges, the coherence and integrity of its content, etc.)

In addition to the criteria delineated above, the following points will be taken into consideration as an integral aspect of the evaluation and selection process, with a view toward providing extra or “bonus” points, and having a positive impact on the “score cards” to the extent of their realization:

- *Participation*: The extent to which the project has been developed (as well as designed to be implemented and monitored) through a participatory process involving the partner CSOs, constituents of relevant CSO networks, and the representatives of target groups and stakeholders.
- *Partnership*: The extent to which the project is based upon a “partnership” arrangement (i.e. the collective strength and potential synergy of the proposed partnership should be considered during evaluation.)
- *Networking*: The extent to which the project provides a practical opportunity to build and strengthen a network of CSOs (and other stakeholders, as appropriate) around the identified priority theme(s) should be considered in this respect.
- *Cross-cutting themes*: The extent to which the project adequately addresses the cross-cutting themes identified in the CASE Guidelines and in this Strategy, and particularly the integration of youth and gender concerns under the targeted priority theme(s) should be considered during evaluation.
- *Innovative approach*: Whether and the extent to which the project introduces an innovative approach to the interface of environment and security issues should be considered as a justification for warranting CASE support to the project.
- *Outstanding features*: Whether and the extent to which the outstanding features of the project display a potential for being a “best practice”, as well as a potential to augment the visibility and credibility of the CASE Initiative should be considered.
- *Explicit/direct linkages with OSCE-supported initiatives*: The extent to which the project includes specific activities/component aimed at establishing direct linkages between CASE and ENVSEC Initiatives, as well as specific activities/components aimed at contributing to the activities of the Aarhus Centre(s) in Armenia.
- *Sustainability*: The extent to which adequate means and mechanisms are introduced to ensure the sustainability of the project subsequent to the termination of CASE grant should be given due consideration.

8.6. Provision of Small Grants to Projects

- Database will be created in Aarhus web site (www.aarhus.am) for the implementation of CASE Initiative. Database will include the whole package of small grant proposals, announcement of small grants projects (which will include the information about CASE objective, eligibility criteria for projects and CSOs, and application deadline), CASE project proposal Format, CASE strategy and other relevant documents.

- National Screening Board will evaluate and select the Project Concepts taking into account evaluation criteria for Project Concept.

- National Screening Board will decide to eliminate or endorse the Project Concepts.

- The *Memorandum of Agreement* will be signed between the grant recipient CSOs.

- Grants will be provided step by step and it will depend on the implementation reports.

8.7. Disbursement of Grants

On the basis of the maximum grant amount that is EUR 6000, the CO shall be responsible for the disbursement of grants for selected projects in Armenia. The schedule indicating the grant disbursements for each selected project shall be included in the respective Memorandum of Agreement.

Prior to the release of the grant installments, the CO shall prepare a table indicating the total grant disbursements for that country, and forward it to OCEEA for consent. The grant disbursements table should include, inter alia, project names, project identification numbers, grant recipients, total amount and the breakdown of grants, and copies of Memoranda of Agreement encompassing the duration of projects/grants, disbursement schedules, etc.

Based on the endorsed grant disbursement tables, grants shall be disbursed by the CO in installments based on performance reporting.

For practical reasons, alternative arrangements for grant disbursements may be considered for longer/larger projects and shorter/smaller projects. In this context, projects encompassing 3-4 quarters of actual implementation (as well as having a budget near to the specified ceiling), the following disbursement schedule should be applied:

- 30% upon signature of the Memorandum of Agreement, as advance payment.
- 30% upon the review and acceptance of the first interim quarterly technical and financial reports.
- 30% upon the review and acceptance of the second interim quarterly technical and financial reports.
- 10% upon the review and acceptance of the final technical and financial reports, as the final installment under the project.

With regard to projects encompassing a relatively short duration (around or less than 6 months) of actual implementation (as well as having a considerably smaller budget), it would not be practical to apply the schedule above, and therefore the following typical disbursement schedule may be considered:

- 40% upon signature of the Memorandum of Agreement, as advance payment.
- 40% upon the review and acceptance of the first (and only) interim technical and financial reports.

- 20% upon the review and acceptance of the final technical and financial reports, as the final installment under the project.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an essential component of the CASE Programme and intends to measure progress and achievements at projects and country programme levels. Both, at the project and country programme levels, M&E will be conducted in the course of implementation of the different stages: planning, execution and completion. M&E identifies implementation problems and helps to assess whether targets are being achieved. M&E activities are represented through different types of reports that help the Programme and its projects to maintain accountability, achieve sustainability, allow for replicability and provide opportunities for extracting and communicating lessons learned. The results and/or lessons learned from M&E will be used to improve the Programme and projects design and implementation, and will enable CASE grantees to carry on project activities after the grant period is over.

Monitoring focuses at tracking the progress of project activities and achievement of planned outputs. It allows project participants to keep track of project activities, to determine whether project objectives are being met, and to make the necessary changes to improve the project's performance. Evaluation refers to a periodic activity aimed at assessing the relevance, performance, effects and impact of a project within the framework of the stated objectives. The evaluation includes an explicit appraisal on whether the project has met its stated objectives in terms of the CASE focal area and prioritized themes and if not, it analyses the reasons.

It is one of the CASE principles that the grantees deeply involve local communities and other stakeholders in a participatory self-monitoring and assessment/evaluation process at the project level. It is believed that the involvement of project beneficiaries in M&E process will promote mutual understanding about the project's approach, contribute to community "ownership", as well as enable capacity building and apply lessons learned from project and programme experience.

At the country level, the M&E process mainly involves: development and implementation of the Programme M&E plan; compilation and communication of lessons learned, and reporting to the CO. OSCE's CASE Guidelines describes the logical framework approach of the CASE Strategy both at country and project levels, which provides the basis for M&E. It indicates expected results at all levels of the Programme (Objective, Outcomes and planned Outputs) along with respective Outcome targets and indicators, baseline data and means of verification. In effect, these are the key elements of the M&E framework to track Programme implementation progress and assess the performance within the set time.

Both at the project and programme levels, the baseline data refers to the "starting point" from which change can be measured at different results levels - before the project or programme activities implemented. Through the indicators, programme/project progress and accomplishments can then be compared with the baseline, and hence evaluated. An indicator should be logically connected with the baseline and easily measurable. A good indicator, as a rule, should answer the following questions: what? (what is changing); when? (within what period of time); where?; and by how much? (to what extent something is changed).

Indicators to measure the expected results at country level (Outcomes) are agreed with the National Screening Board (NSB), while for the project level the CO and grantees determine results (Outputs) indicators. Thus, at the project level, M&E process implies planning, coordination, systematic reporting, and agreement upon these and other issues by all project participants before projects are undertaken.

The CASE Country Officer (CO) will undertake at least two monitoring visits per project realization, preferably at the intermediate reporting(s) and at final reporting. Upon necessity and as possible, respective members of the NSB will also participate in site visits. The site visits will give the CO/NSB the opportunity to observe the actual implementation of the project and confirm the information contained in the interim and final reports of grantees. During the site visits, the CO will collect materials, information, make digital photos, etc., in order to document lessons learned and to demonstrate the environmental and sustainable livelihood impacts of the CASE activities. After each site visit, the CO/NSB member(s) will prepare a monitoring record indicating observations, recommendations and respective measure to be taken. This report will be provided to the grantee and the NSB if requested.

Reporting

Apart from the interim progress reports, the grantee will prepare a final report upon completion of the project. The final report must cover the life of the project, objective reached, expected and actual results, lessons learned, perspectives or replication and other interesting aspects of the project. The report should also include the project sustainability aspects. If necessary, the CO will ask for additional information or clarification.

After approving the reports, the CO will prepare project completion report and register the conclusion of the project in the CASE project database.

10. Resource Mobilization Strategy

Resource mobilization is a key part of the CASE Armenia strategy and therefore, a priority task for the country team and the NSB. Through the CASE projects minimum 20% co-funding ratio should be ensured, in a way that co-funding part is evenly allocated between cash and in-kind. Co-financing is also important for increasing the number, size and impacts of CASE funded projects. Mobilized partnerships and resources are vital for strengthening income-generating and other livelihood components of the projects that would foster community “ownership” of projects and thus ensure sustainability.

CASE Armenia will consider partnership and co-funding opportunities from both traditional and nontraditional sources. Resource mobilization activities will be carried out through the following directions:

- Assessment of interests and priorities of international donor and development agencies and identification of opportunities for partnership and co-financing;
- Attraction of private sector in CASE projects co-financing, also as a part of corporate social responsibility;
- Involvement of Armenian Diaspora in CASE projects co-financing;
- Mainstreaming CASE projects with UN agencies and OSCE-funded larger projects;
- Mainstreaming CASE projects with Millenium Development Goals and poverty reduction programmes for expanded co-financing;
- Exploring opportunities for complementarity and cost sharing with state-funded projects and initiatives at local level.

CASE Armenia will target all possible sources to provide in-kind and cash co-financing for SGP both at country and project levels. To this effect, the CASE aims to establish and maintain strong partnership relations with bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, UN agencies, Armenian Diaspora, as well as private sector and government.

11. Communication strategy

The CASE Communication Strategy is intended to establish and maintain clear and regular channels of communication with the broad spectrum of OSCE partners at all levels, including CSOs in pilot countries as well as other stakeholders toward attaining the goals and target outputs of the CASE Initiative.

- Disseminate and share a common understanding of the goals of OSCE in general and CASE initiative in particular.
- Inform all target audience, including the OSCE network and CSOs in Armenia as well as external organizations, in relation to the goals and target outputs of CASE.
- It will be identified the CASE target group, that are directly linked with and expected to be an integral part of the CASE initiative (“internal” groups), and other groups that do not necessarily have direct linkages but for varying reasons and multi-purpose benefits, will be kept informed in all stages of CASE implementations (“external” groups). The “internal” target groups consist of the OCEEA staff, OSCE Field Operations in Armenia, CASE Country Officer, the constituents of National Screening Boards, and the full range of CSOs, ENVSEC Initiative and Aarhus Centers. The “external” target groups include the United Nation Agencies, International Financial Institutions, the European Commissions and related Institutions and other potential donors.
- Promote collaboration with strategic partners and develop regional and country level network.
- The OSCE/OCEEA leadership acknowledges that, efficient communication is not just giving out information, but it is important to encourage *exchange* and *feedback*.
- Promote the emphasis of CASE on the interface of environment and security issues, and enhance community-level understanding of respective linkages.
- Identify the key CSOs and other institutions that are expected to play an important role in the effective implementation of the Strategy.
- Enhance the sharing of experiences, learning from each other and networking among CSOs in Armenia, particularly in relation to the interface of environment and security issues.
- Promoting the effective sharing of the lessons learned from the CASE Initiative, not only within each pilot county but also in other countries in the OSCE region.
- Raise the media’s level of interest and responsiveness to the CASE Initiative in order to increase and sustain positive media coverage.
- Develop and present consistent messages about the CASE Initiative to all partners and stakeholders.
- Identify the specific communication tools (publications, news conferences, e-mails, cellular phones and letters) to be used for various/different target groups delineated above.
- Develop and prepare printed materials (Training Tool Kit, brochures, booklets) in regional and country level. Those materials will be prepared in both Armenian and English languages.
- Provide information about CASE Initiative by media and radio programs. It is planned to have following media-oriented tools new conferences, press releases, media visits and advertisements.