



MAXIMIZING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF  
MIGRATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE OF ARMENIA"  
PROJECT MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT

By Paolo Dieci

CISP  
COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE  
PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI





Rome, March 25, 2016



This Report is elaborated in the framework of the project Maximizing the social and economic impact of migration for a better future in Armenia, co-funded by the European Commission. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission and are exclusively responsibility of CISP (Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli).

*Paolo Dieci is President of CISP – Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (International Committee for the Development of Peoples) and Visiting Professor on Project Cycle Management & Monitoring and Evaluation at the Post Graduate Master Courses on Development Cooperation at the Universities of Pavia (Italy), Kenyatta (Kenya) and Bethlehem (Palestine)*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

---

1. Acknowledgments.....	3
2. The project Maximizing the social and economic impact of migration for a better future of Armenia in the agendas of Armenia and of the European Union.....	4
3. Objectives, Period and Methodology of the Evaluation.....	6
4. Short Profile of the Project.....	8
Table n. 1 Key Information about the project.....	8
5. The analysis of the efficiency.....	9
Table n. 2 Status of Implementation of the Activities – Sub Activities.....	10
Table n. 3 Management of the Project, adherence to the contractual provisions and to the CISP Managerial System procedures.....	16
6. The analysis of the relevance.....	16
Table n. 4 Consistency of the General and Specific Objectives with the policy framework.....	17
Table n. 5 Opinions of the small entrepreneurs met in Vanadzor.....	18
7. The analysis of the effectiveness.....	19
Table n. 6 Expectations of the owners of small businesses in Lori Region.....	21
Table n. 7 Assessment of the assumptions of the project.....	22
8. The analysis of the impact and of the sustainability.....	23
Table 8 Impact of the Project in the perception of the small entrepreneurs met.....	23
Table n. 9 Links between project’s activities and Armenian institutions.....	25
9. Conclusions and recommendations.....	26
Table n. 10 Summary of the evaluation’s findings.....	26
Table n. 11 Recommendations for the Action Plan on Migration and Development in Armenia ...	29

## *Annexes*

- a. List of institutions and persons met during the Mid Term Evaluation (March 12 – 18, 2016)
- b. Summary of the two workshops/ SWOT ANALYSIS on the Current Migration for Development policy in Armenia with a special focus on Lori Region - June 3, 2014 in Aghveran and June 4, 2014 in Vanadzor
- c. Assessment of Migration and Development Policies, Programmes and Projects in Armenia, by Elmira and Bakhshinyan and Arpine Porsughyan, 29 October 2014, Yerevan
- d. Summary of the two international training workshops organized under “Maximising the social and economic impact of Migration for a better future in Armenia”, project co-funded by the European Union - November 5-6, 2014, Aghveran
- e. Summary of the workshop held in Yerevan on March 17, 2016
- f. Ecuador Mission Report. May 29 – June 9, 2015
- g. Georgia Mission Report. October 12-16, 2015
- h. Tentative Agenda of the Mission to the Philippines. April 4-8, 2016
- i. Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality of Vanadzor and the Lori Young Economists Association
- j. Profile of the already assisted enterprises as of March 18, 2016
- k. Labour Market Specifics and Migration from the Perspective of Development Opportunities in the Marz of Lori, by Alina Poghosyan, Mary Poghosyan and Meri Yeranosyan, 15 October 2014
- l. Guides for the meetings
- m. Comments to the Mid Term Evaluation Report, by Deborah Rezzoagli (CISP Area Manager for Asia and Middle East, Kristina Hayrapetyan, CISP Country Representative to Armenia and Serena Fusco, CISP Project Manager
- n. Proposed format for quarterly monitoring reports

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Mid Term Evaluation of the project *Maximising the social impact of Migration for a better future in Armenia* would have not been possible without the constant and invaluable collaboration of all the personnel of *Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli - CISP* in charge for the project. Deborah Rezzoagli, CISP Area Coordinator for Asia and Eastern Europe, Kristina Hayrapetyan, CISP Country Representative to Armenia and Serena Fusco, CISP Project Manager deserve the warmest thanks for having made available all the project's documents and arranged the meetings and the discussions with all the persons met (see annex a). CISP's staff in Armenia deserves also a word of thanks for the strong commitment shown during the life of the project, which is very much appreciated by all the key stakeholders met. In addition to the Country Representative and the Project Manager, I would like to thank here Mariam Gevorgyan,



Yerevan MArch 17 2016 National Workshop on the Migration and Development Action Plan

Asya Khachatryan, Areg Arakelyan, Karen Stepanyan and Siranush Manukyan.

A sincere gratitude is expressed to all the persons who have spent their time to make the evaluation possible. All of them, in Yerevan, Dilijan and Vanadzor have provided the evaluator with priceless information and made available documents and data that have been after elaborated for the sake of this final report.

It is only due to the commitment of the persons met that this report can be inspired to concrete

findings and reliable information. I wish therefore to thank here, in the order of the meetings held: Anahit Hayrapetyan, External Relations and Public Information Associate of the United Nations Agency for Refugees (UNHCR), Gagik Yeganyan, Head of the office of the State Migration Service, Stepan Petrosyan, Adviser to the Minister of the Diaspora, Knarik Petrosyan, Head of the repatriation division of the Department of Repatriation and Investigations of the Ministry of Diaspora, Arnak Harutyunyan, Assistant of the Minister of Diaspora, Tadevos Avetisyan, Head of Labor and Employment Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Haykaz Igityan, Real Sector Analysis and Forecasting Division, Monetary Policy Department of the Central Bank of Armenia, Lilya Davtyan, Head of the department of programs and foreign relations of the Municipality of Vanadzor, Vahe Sahakyan, Leading specialist of the department of programs and foreign relations of the Municipality of Vanadzor, Ani Baghdasaryan, of the Department of Development Programmes and Analysis of the Lori Region, Hasmik Mkrtchyan, Head of the Department of Development Programmes and Analysis of the Lori Region, Armen Yeghiazaryan, Vanadzor Economic Development Center - VEDC President, Suren Karapetyan, VEDC specialist, Karine Ghukasyan Narine, Vardan Mkrtchyan, Armen Matevosyan, Harutyun Zakaryan, Sergey Karapetyan, Aleksandr Grigoryan, Karen Qarhanyan, Narek Muradyan, Roman Hakobyan and Varsenik Qalashayn, entrepreneurs in the Lori Region, Ilona Ter-Minasyan, Head of Office of the International Organization for Migrations.

During a workshop held in Yerevan on March 17, 2016 a very fruitful exchange of information and ideas on Migration and Development has been occurring among people working for Non Governmental Organizations, governmental bodies, Diaspora Associations, national and international experts. Some of the ideas emerged in the course of this event are reflected in this report. All those who have attended the workshop are sincerely thanked; their names and positions are reported in the annex e.

Finally, last but not least, the days spent to undertake this evaluation have made possible to confirm once again the spirit of collaboration, friendship and hospitality of the lovely people of Armenia.

## 2. THE PROJECT MAXIMIZING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MIGRATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE OF ARMENIA IN THE AGENDAS OF ARMENIA AND OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

---



Vanadzor March 16 2018 Meeting with the Entrepreneurs

The project *Maximising the social impact of Migration for a better future in Armenia* was formulated by the *Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli* (CISP) to respond to a Call for Proposals launched by the European Commission under the “Thematic Programme of cooperation with third countries in the areas of Migration and Asylum”. As per the European Commission’s guidelines, the preliminary Concept Note was submitted by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Further to the approval of the

Concept Note, CISP submitted a full application; following the approval of the complete proposal, a Grant

Contract between the European Commission and CISP has been signed at the end of December 2013.

The general objective of the thematic programme of the European Commission is to help third countries to better manage all aspects of migratory flows in all their dimensions. The programme was designed in order to cover the following areas of action:

- foster the links between migration and development;
- promote well-managed labour migration;
- fight illegal immigration and facilitate the readmission of illegal immigrants;
- protect migrants’ rights, protect them against exploitation and exclusion, and support the fight against trafficking in human beings;
- promote asylum and international protection of refugees.

As far as the links between migration and development are concerned, in Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, particular focus was foreseen to countries highly dependant on migrants’ remittances such as Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia.

In line with the expected results of the Thematic Programme, the project was formulated as a tool to support the development endeavours of Armenia, through:

- a better use of the opportunities and potentials of migration;
- the valorisation of the potential role of Diaspora for the development of the country;
- an active involvement of national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs);
- the fostering of the dialogue and collaboration between CSOs and public governmental bodies, at national and regional level;
- the implementation of a pilot initiative that can generate immediate tangible results at the same time inspiring other future projects.

Among the tasks of the Mid Term Evaluation there was to ascertain if, after five years from the identification of the project, the above indicated priorities are still relevant to Armenia. As evidenced in the chapter 6, the perception gathered is that they are today still at the heart of the Armenian agenda.

Armenia is a country heavily dependent from remittances of its citizens living abroad, that, as per data provided by the Central Bank of Armenia, have represented the 15.4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the year 2015<sup>i</sup>. The Bank expresses its concern over the declining trend of the financial value of the remittances, that in 2014 accounted for the 18.2% of the GDP, in 2013 for the 20.7% and in 2012 for the 21.0%. This declining trend is essentially due to the decrease of the financial value the remittances from the Russian Federation, that in absolute terms were amounting to USD 1,643.99 millions in 2012 to reach the amount of USD 1,001.46 millions in 2015. It has here to be considered that 1 USD was corresponding to 30.83 Russian Roubles in December 2012 and to 66.16 Russian Roubles in December 2015<sup>iii</sup>. These fluctuations made more attractive, for many migrants from Armenia, transferring permanently the families to the Russian Federation, rather than sending money to the same families. According to the International Organization for Migration - IOM Office in Armenia, this trend is likely to develop further to the entry into force of the Eurasian Economic Union in January 2015, to which Armenia has adhered.

In any case, the declining value of the remittances reinforces the need to find concrete mechanisms to incentive their productive use, supporting through appropriate strategies and action plans the start up and the growth of income generating activities and micro businesses. Should the declining trend continue, in the absence of alternative viable income's generation opportunities, the livelihood of hundred thousands of Armenian would be at risk.

According to the National Poverty Profile for the period 2008 - 2014 of the National Statistical Service of the Armenian Republic, Armenia, with a population of 3,010,600 inhabitants in 2015<sup>iv</sup>, has witnessed, in the period 2011 – 2014, a situation where 8,9% of the households were involved in external and internal migrations. The Lori Region, where the project is promoting small enterprises development, has, after Yerevan, the highest percentage of migrants in the country (13.8). As per the same source, in the same year, the 36.4% of the 224,000 inhabitants of the region live in a status of poverty<sup>v</sup>.

In the today Armenia, and particularly in the Lori Region, three priorities co-exist with regard to Migration and Development policies and strategies.

One is to maximise the impact of migration, involving the diaspora and the migrants in development activities, through the productive use of remittances and valorising the skills and the know how of the Armenian citizens who are and/or have been living abroad. Experiences of other countries can help Armenia in this direction, in two ways: encouraging the diaspora to invest in the country and promoting voluntary repatriation of migrants. This concept has been frequently underlined during the meetings done for this evaluation.

Another priority is to prevent irregular migration, providing economic opportunities to people at “risk”. This can be done creating alternative sources of livelihood for those who are likely to choose to migrate without any work permit for the intended countries of destination.

Finally, Armenia, mainly due to the Syrian crisis, is now also a country hosting refugees and asylum-seekers. Their number amounts to 19,578 at the end of the year 2015, with 16,623 (84.91%) coming from the Syrian Arab Republic<sup>vi</sup>. These persons are mainly of Armenian origin and the effort of the government is addressed to their full integration in the society, up to the recognition of the citizenship’s status. The task therefore is well further on the provision of immediate relief and includes the social and economic integration.

All these priorities will be incorporated in the next Migration Action Plan that the State Migration Service is mandated to prepare for the period 2017 – 2021. **Part of the Action Plan will be specifically dedicated to the issue of Migration and Development and the project implemented by CISP and co-funded by the European Commission is perceived as one of the main tools to fulfil this strategic task.**

### 3. OBJECTIVES, PERIOD AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The objectives of this Mid Term Evaluation are: a) to provide CISP in Armenia with an instrument to reinforce its accountability, disclosing transparently to the various stakeholders of the project the degree of accomplishment of its results and objectives;<sup>vii</sup> b) to share among partners and stakeholders ideas and suggestions on how to reinforce the project’s impact, in view of the last period of implementation; c) to draw some lessons learnt and recommendations – for CISP and the stakeholders of the project – from more than two years of project’s implementation.

The Evaluation has taken place in Armenia from March 12 to 18, 2016 and it has been conducted through meetings, focus groups, review of the project’s documentation.

The persons met during the evaluation belong to four categories of institutions, as evidenced in the annex a. The first includes national Armenian institutions. Under this category fall the Migration State Service, the Ministry of Diaspora, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the National Bank of Armenia.

The second category includes international organizations in Armenia, such as the United Nations Agency for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

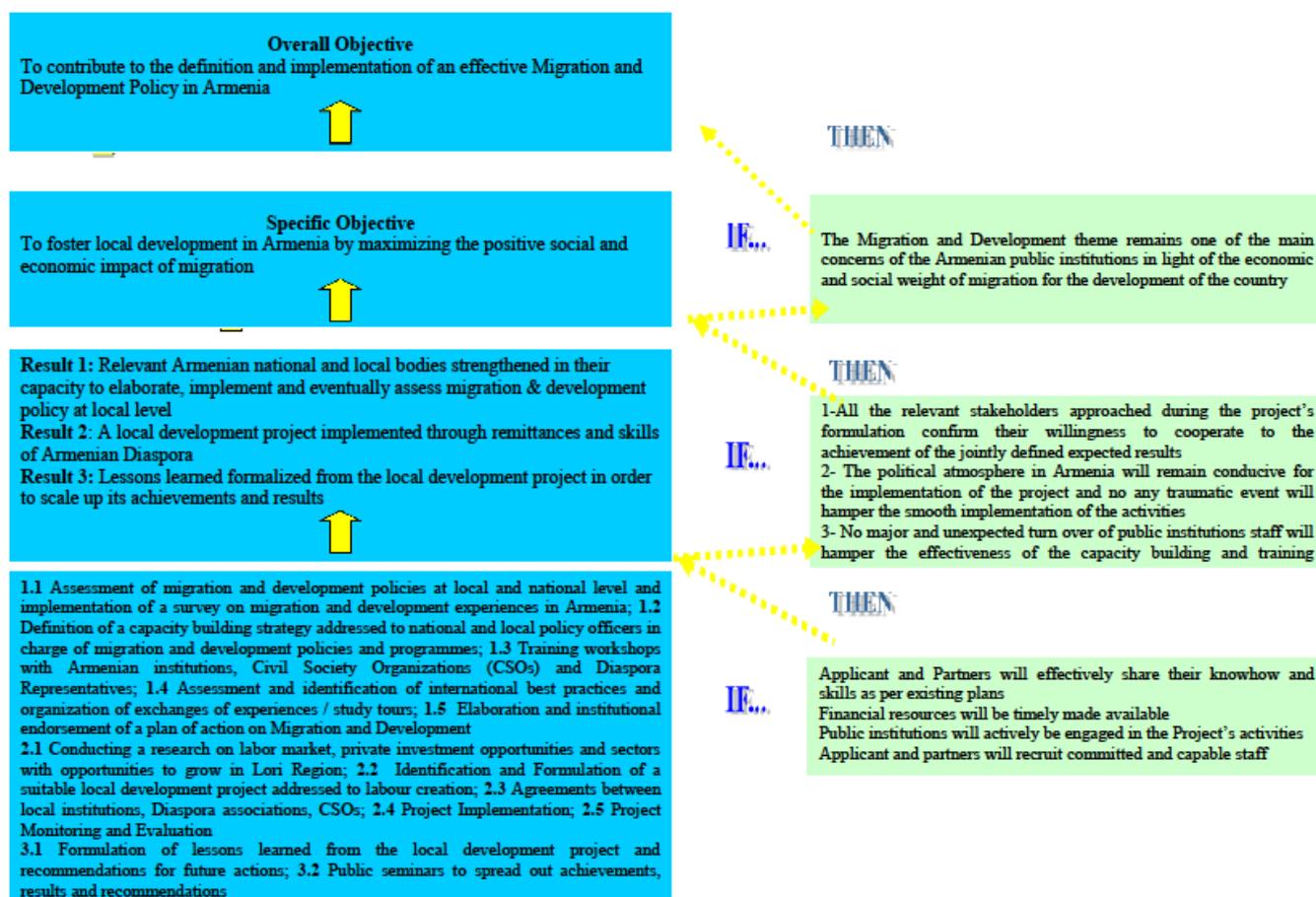
The third category comprises representatives of decentralised institutions, such as the Lori Region and the Municipality of Vanadzor.

Always in Vanadzor, focus groups with direct beneficiaries of the project have been occurring. The beneficiaries have been divided into two sub groups: those who have received already training and financial support and those who have so far been only trained and supported through technical assistance.

Finally, a meeting has been done with the staff of the Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vanadzor.

The meetings have been conducted through specific guides (see annex l) and in many circumstances, other not pre-defined themes have been discussed and information shared.

The evaluation has started from the official strategy of the project, which was developed along its logical framework, employing therefore a cause-effect theory of change based on objectives (general and specific), results, activities and assumptions. The project's logic is reported in the following diagram.



The task of the evaluator has been to assess if, according to the assessments and the knowledge of the persons met:

- The project strategy is in line with the needs and priorities of the country, of the Lori Region and of the communities and families of the region;
- The project is significantly helping Armenian institutions towards the definition and implementation of an effective migration and development policy;
- The project is making any tangible difference in the capacity to define the above policies and in the life of its direct beneficiaries;
- The initial assumptions are confirmed after more than two years of implementation;
- The project's achievement are going to be actually framed under the Armenian institutional set up;
- The project is creating any dependency from external aid.

In addition to collect and categorize information, evaluations and perceptions, the evaluator, with the assistance of the CISP staff in Armenia, has also analyzed documents and strategy

papers published during the last year on issues related to migration and poverty in Armenia. Only official public documents and data have been considered.

Once drafted, this report has been reviewed by the key CISP personnel in charge for the project's implementation. Their comments are reported in the annex m.

#### 4. SHORT PROFILE OF THE PROJECT

TABLE N. 1 KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

<i>Implementation period</i>	24 December 2013 – 23 December 2016
<i>Budget (€)</i>	Total: 902,983.70. EC co-funding: EU 722,387.00
<i>Beneficiary of the Grant and initial partners</i>	Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli – CISP, with the Armenian Young Women Association (AYWA) and Shen NGO as partners
<i>Date of signature of the contract between European Commission and CISP &amp; Date of signature and contents of Addendum n. 1</i>	The contract has been signed on December 23, 2013.  The first and only addendum has been signed on June 19, 2015. The addendum has officially included a new partner, which is the Centre for Agribusiness and Rural Development – CARD
<i>Overall objective</i>	To contribute to the definition and implementation of an effective Migration and Development Policy in Armenia
<i>Specific objective</i>	To foster local development in Armenia by maximizing the positive social and economic impact of migration
<i>Result n. 1</i>	Relevant Armenian national and local bodies strengthened in their capacity to elaborate, implement and eventually assess migration & development policy at local level
<i>Main activities for Result n.1</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment of migration and development policies at local and national level and implementation of a survey on migration and development experiences in Armenia</li> <li>2. Definition of a capacity building strategy addressed to national and local policy officers in charge of migration and development policies and programmes</li> <li>3. Training workshops with Armenian institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Diaspora Representatives</li> <li>4. Assessment and identification of international best practices and organization of exchanges of experiences / study tours</li> <li>5. Elaboration and institutional endorsement of a plan of action on Migration and Development</li> </ol>
<i>Result n. 2</i>	A local development project implemented through remittances and skills of Armenian Diaspora
<i>Main activities for Result n. 2</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Conducting a research on labour market, private investment opportunities and sectors with opportunities to grow in Lori Region</li> <li>7. Identification and Formulation of a suitable local development project addressed to labour creation &amp; Agreements between local institutions, Diaspora associations, CSOs &amp; I. Project Implementation; Monitoring and Evaluation</li> </ol>
<i>Result n. 3</i>	Lessons learned formalized from the local development project in order to scale up its achievements and results
<i>Main activities for Result n. 3</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Formulation of lessons learned from the local development project and recommendations for future actions</li> <li>9. Public seminars to spread out achievements, results and recommendations</li> </ol>

## 5. THE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICIENCY

---

The analysis of the efficiency of the project has considered three dimensions, that are: i) the status of implementation of the activities *vis a vis* the scheduled plan, as formalized in the project's document annexed to the contract signed by the European Commission and CISP and the availability of the documentation related to the accomplished activities; (ii) the outreach of the activities compared with the initial estimated targets; (iii) the adherence to the contractual provisions and the quality of the overall project's financial and administrative management.

The entire exercise has been conducted by reviewing the documentation filed by the project and through intensive dialogue with the Project Manager, in Yerevan and Vanadzor.

### 5.1 Status of implementation of the activities *vis a vis* the scheduled plan and availability of the documentation related to the accomplished activities

The data reported in the Table n.2 suggest that all the activities that had been planned till March 18, 2016 have been accomplished, with only one exception: the production of an Handbook on Training on Migration and Development adapted to the Armenian context. The original plan was to make this Handbook ready for the subsequent training packages, in the country and abroad.

The training strategy of the project has been developed along a different logic, more "demand driven", considering the results of the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis and subsequent meetings with the concerned stakeholders. Trainings have been therefore tailored on the basis of the specific needs and requests of the various interlocutors.

For the sake of this Mid Term Evaluation, only the activities indicated in the Logical Framework have been considered, without describing the significant work performed by the project's staff for preparing, following up, reinforcing each intervention.

TABLE N. 2 STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES – SUB ACTIVITIES

Activities – Sub Activities	Unit	Plan for the Whole Project		Accomplishments up to March 18, 2016		
		Initial Target	Foreseen Period (Month – Year)	Quantity	Finalised by (Month – Year)	Documentation
1.Assessment of migration and development policies at local and national level and implementation of a survey on migration and development experiences in Armenia						
1.1 Swot (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis on Migration and Development Policies in Armenia	Analysis	1	04.2014	2	06.2014	Summary of the two workshops/ SWOT ANALYSIS on the Current Migration for Development policy in Armenia with a special focus on Lori Region - June 3, 2014 in Aghveran and June 4, 2014 in Vanadzor
1.2 Research on migration and development experiences in Armenia	Research	1	04.2014	1	10.2014	Assessment of Migration and Development Policies, Programmes and Projects in Armenia, by Elmira and Bakhshinyan and Arpine Porsughyan, 29 October 2014, Yerevan
2.Definition of a capacity building strategy addressed to national and local policy officers in charge of migration and development policies and programmes						
2.1 Handbook on Training on Migration and Development adapted to the Armenian context	Handbook	1	05.2014	0	NA	The Handbook has not yet published
3.Training workshops with Armenian institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Diaspora Representatives						
3.1 First Workshop	Set of Workshop	1	11.2014	1	11.2014	Summary of the two international training workshops organized under "Maximising the social and economic impact of Migration for a better future in Armenia", project co-funded by the

						European Union - November 5-6, 2014, Aghveran
3.2 Second Workshop	Set of Workshop	1	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester of 2015	1	03.2016	The Summary Report is being elaborated. During the evaluation it has been assessed the list of attendants
3.3 Third Workshop	Set of Workshop	1	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester 2016	1	03.2016	Summary of the workshop held in Yerevan on March 17, 2016
4.Assessment and identification of international best practices and organization of exchanges of experiences / study tours						
4.1 Study Tour in Ecuador	Study Tour	1	12.2014	1	06.2015	Ecuador Mission Report. May 29 – June 9, 2015
4.2 Study Tour in Georgia	Study Tour	1	10.2015	1	10.2015	Georgia Mission Report
4.3 Study Tour in The Philippines	Study Tour	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester of 2016	0	<i>It will be done in April 2016</i>	Tentative Agenda of the Study Tour in The Philippines
5.Elaboration and institutional endorsement of a Plan of Action (PoA) on Migration and Development						
5.1 Preparation through consultative workshop of an institutionally endorsed plan of action	PoA	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester of 2016	0	NA	The PoA is under elaboration
6.Conducting a research on labour market, private investment opportunities and sectors with opportunities to grow in Lori Region						
6.1 Research on potential sectors for investment and labour market in Lori Region	Research	1	10.2014	1	10.2014	Labour Market Specifics and Migration from the Perspective of Development Opportunities in the Marz of Lori, by Alina Poghosyan, Mary Poghosyan and Meri Yeranosyan, 15 October 2014
7.Identification and Formulation of a suitable local development project addressed to labour creation. Agreements between local institutions, Diaspora associations, CSOs & I. Project Implementation						
7.1 Establishment of a Permanent Business Information and	Center	1	04.2014	1	04.2014	Memorandum of

Promotion Centre in Vandzor						Understanding between the Municipality of Vanadzor and the Lori Young Economists Association
7.2 Training (residential & on the job) of small & micro entrepreneurs	Trainees	300	From the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester of 2015	260	From the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester of 2015	Data recorded by the Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vandzor and CISP
7.3 Support to business ventures through a financial envelop of 80,000 Euro to be sub-granted with a grant's size ranging from 4,000 to 10,000. It means a maximum of 20 and a minimum of 8 projects	Small Business	8-20	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semesters of 2016	8	1st Semester of 2016	Profile of the already assisted enterprises as of March 18, 2016
7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation	Assessment	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester of 2016	1	03.2016	See this Mid Term Evaluation Report
8. Formulation of lessons learned from the local development project and recommendations for future actions						
8. 1 Elaboration of a final document on lessons learned	Document	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester of 2016	0	NA	The document has not yet elaborated
9. Public Seminars to spread out achievements, results and recommendations						
9.1 Workshop in Yerevan	Workshop	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester of 2016	0	NA	The workshop has not yet done
9.2 Workshop in Vanadzor	Workshop	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester of 2016	0	NA	The workshop has not yet done

Considering the data reported and the findings of the evaluation, it is possible to state that:

- ✓ all the activities and the achievements of the project are well documented and the related documentation properly archived. The documents have been shared with all Armenian national and local stakeholders;
- ✓ the activities have been interlinking one with another coherently; and
- ✓ the project is valorizing the partnerships and the collaborations with its stakeholders.

The first comment is substantiated by the right column of the Table n.2 which indicates the available documentation related to each performed activity.

As regards the second comment, it is worth to mention that:

- ✓ The SWOT Analysis and the Research on Migration and Development Experiences in Armenia have inspired the subsequent training activities at national and regional levels;
- ✓ The workshops undertaken in the country have been conducted considering the subsequent study tours. The first set of workshops has been facilitated by an international expert who has been working for the government of Ecuador on Migration and Development in view of the study tour in this country; similarly, a second set of workshops has been facilitated by an expert representing one of the most influential Filipino NGOs in the area of Diaspora mobilization, considering the foreseen study tour in The Philippines;
- ✓ The process of elaboration of a plan of action on Migration and Development is considering the results of the study tours, as well as the proceedings of the national and regional capacity building, training and information sharing events organized by the project;
- ✓ The update terms of reference of the Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vandzor, the training delivered to micro entrepreneurs in Lori Region and the selection of viable businesses supported by the project have been fed by the results of the research on labour market dynamics.

With regard to the third comment, it has been appreciated, reviewing the project's documentation and talking to the project's staff and the concerned stakeholders that the State Migration Service has been always involved in all activities performed at national level, including the drafting of the terms of reference for the analyses and the researches; the Ministry of Diaspora has been involved in all the training and capacity building initiatives at national level; AYWA has participated to all the training interventions delivered by the project and to the management of the activities implemented in the Lori Region; CARD has played a key role in the identification and mobilization of the micro business owners in Lori Region as well as in the delivery of the technical training; the Lori Region and the Vanadzor Municipality have taken part to all the interventions performed within the territories they administer. To these entities it can be added the variety of other institutions involved in the project, as evidenced by the documentation attached to this report. It is believed that this inclusive approach will reinforce the sustainability of the project.

In terms of timing, some activities have been re-scheduled in comparison with the initial plan. For instance, two training workshops with Armenian institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Diaspora Representatives have been conducted in the same period, during the first quarter of 2016, while the original plan foresaw to implement one workshop per year. The table n.2 gives account of all the changes occurred in the timing of implementation.

The activities not yet accomplished have been properly planned for the coming months till the end of the project. For instance, the process leading to the elaboration and institutional endorsement of a plan of action on Migration and Development is ongoing. The proceedings of the workshop held in Yerevan on March 17, 2016 give account of this process; furthermore a specific assignment

to draft a preliminary plan has been given to an expert indicated by the State Migration Service. Meetings with the expert have been conducted during the Mid Term Evaluation.

## 5.2 Outreach of the activities compared with the initial estimated targets

Many activities performed by the project have been intended as contributions to the overall development of the capacity of the country's institutions to develop and assess effective migration and development policies, without pre-defined specific targets. For instance, the researches and the assessments are not exclusively addressed to a specific group of people and institutions, as they have been conceived as instruments to upgrade and ameliorate the knowledge of the Armenian institutions for the sake of planning and strategizing their policies and plans.

Therefore, here are considered only those specific activities for which specific targets were defined in the project's document.

The training workshops with Armenian institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Diaspora Representatives were expected to reach 70 persons per year, for a total of 210 beneficiaries. These activities have been implemented in three phases. The first, in November 2014, has seen the implementation of two workshops attended by 46 persons and a seminar at the Yerevan State University attended by 20 students and scholars, representing the academia, the public institutions and the Civil Society Organizations. Totally, therefore, the first round has involved 66 people.

The second round has been developed in March 2016, with one national workshop and a seminar at the Yerevan State University. The two events have been attended by 50 persons.

Finally, always in March 2016, another set of workshops and individual meetings has been implemented in Yerevan and Vanadzor. In the later case, also representatives from the business community have been targeted, for a total number of 55 people.

The cumulative number of beneficiaries of the training workshops stands at 171. To this number have to be added those who have attended the seminars conducted in Aghveran and Vanadzor in June 2014, that have been conducted as participatory training and awareness building exercises on the existing gaps in Armenia to effectively implement migration and development policies. The two events have directly involved 50 persons. Therefore, while the initial target for the training workshop had been fixed at 210 persons, a total of 221 people has been directly targeted.

The Study Tours in Ecuador, Georgia and The Philippines were expected to see the participation of 30 persons (10 each). Considering also the already planned tour in the Philippines, the number of attendants is 21 (7 in Ecuador, 6 in Georgia, 8 in The Philippines). The lower figure is mainly due to the higher costs of travel, accommodation and internal transports per person in comparison to those initially estimated.

The outreach capacity of the project in relation to the support to local development initiatives in the Lori Region is in line with the initial expectations.

The project foresaw to target at least 300 micro business owners through guidance and on the job training. 192 persons have been already targeted and provided with technical training on agricultural related activities and small equipment to perform their activities, mainly in the agro processing area; 36 persons have been trained in two rounds on the preparation of business plans. The beneficiaries that have received already financial assistance by the project (see annex j) fall under this group. A third round of training on food safety has been delivered to 32 beneficiaries.

The participation of CARD is a value added to this activity, in view of the technical skills and the strong ties this entity has with the local communities. Considering that this activity is undergoing

and will be implemented till the end of 2016, it is possible to predict, as planned, to reach an average of new 15 beneficiaries per month from April to December. In this way at the end of the project 395 direct beneficiaries will have been targeted.

The Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vandzor is managed by the Lori Young Economists Association, on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding with the local municipality. The centre, whose organigram has been assessed during the Mid Term Evaluation, has been assisted by the project since its first year. This assistance includes the delivery of equipment, while the running costs and the routine personnel costs are covered by the Lori Young Economists Association. In addition to what already indicated, the Centre has contributed to the identification and selection of the micro entrepreneurs trained and financially assisted by the project.

With regard to the number of business owners receiving direct financial support, the project proposal foresaw 20 persons, but the specific conditions of the grant contract signed by the European Commission and CISP indicates that the total financial envelope for this activity is to be sub-granted with grant sizes ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 Euro. Being the total available amount 80,000 Euro, it means that the number of beneficiaries can range from 8 to 20. The project has already delivered financial support to 8 beneficiaries, while at least other 3 business owners are going to be selected. Therefore, no less than 11 micro entrepreneurs will have been financially supported by the end of the project.

### 5.3 Adherence to the contractual provisions and the quality of the overall project's financial and administrative management

This analysis has been facilitated by the financial audit report issued by the Grant Thornton on February 19, 2016. The audit has been undertaken in accordance with international standards and has included the verification of the accounting system in use, the eligibility of the expenditures, the transparent and correct implementation of the procurement rules, the adherence to the laws of the country, the respect of the contractual general and specific binding conditions to be followed by CISP as signatory of the grant contract with the European Commission. The audit has considered the two annual financial reports submitted by CISP to the European Commission for the periods 24 December 2013 - 23 December 2014 and 24 December 2014 – 23 December 2015 respectively. The cumulative amount spent and reported is Euro 403,161.89. The Grant Thornton categorises its audit report as unqualified with an amount of 83.18 Euro reported as not eligible under the "Human Resources" and an amount of Euro 1,606.89 under the "Local Office" as questioned expenditures. CISP is already providing the auditors with the requested clarifications. It is in any case worth to mention that also considering the pending issue, out of the total amount reported, the questioned and rejected expenses correspond to the 0.41% of the total reported expenses.

The following table provides additional information related to the overall management of the project gathered during this Mid Evaluation.

TABLE N. 3 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT, ADHERENCE TO THE CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS AND TO THE CISP MANAGERIAL SYSTEM PROCEDURES

Theme	Findings & Observations
Timely submission of technical and financial reports to the donor	Two annual and financial reports have been submitted (24.12.2013 – 23.12.2014 & 24.12.2014 – 23.12.2015) within the contractual time frame
Results of external Monitoring and Evaluation	In February 2016 a Results Oriented Monitoring has been undertaken on behalf of the European Commission by Particip GMBH. During the Mid Term Evaluation the report was not yet available
Availability and appropriateness of the documentation related to the procurement of goods, services, works and analysis of the procedures followed by the project	In addition to the findings of the audit report of the Grant Thornton, it has been reviewed the documentation of the procurement process followed for the purchase of air tickets for Ecuador, including a table comparing 5 different offers with the decision of the selecting committee (in favour of the offer with the lowest price). The offers have been acquired in collaboration with the CISP HQs in Rome
Staff Management	The organigram of the Project is available. It frames the project within the overall CISP structure, including the leading role of the Area Manager and the tasks of the Country Representative. No any conflict of power has been reported. The segregation of duties is applied. The recruitment of the staff has been done through: public announcement / networks, first screening of CV by the Project Manager, the Country Representative and the Area Manager; individual interviews conducted by the Country Representative and the Project Manager; final decision and signing of the contract. They have been reviewed the contracts of the Project Officer, the Administrator & Accountant, the Project Field Officer and the Driver. All contracts include: reference to Armenian Laws; reference to the CISP Managerial System; reference to the project co-funded by the European Commission. The contracts include also clearly identified JD coherent with the strategy of the project. and reference to values and principles inspiring the action of CISP.
Internal Operational and Financial Planning	A 2016 detailed annual operational and financial plan is available. It includes all the remaining activities
Internal Monitoring	Although there is evidence of a continuous ongoing monitoring of the project, they are not available standardized periodic internal monitoring reports
Visibility	The logos of the European Commission, CISP and other implementing partners and stakeholders appear in all the project's outcomes and publications

## 6. THE ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANCE

In order to analyze the relevance of the project, the evaluation has attempted to answer three questions:

- (i) The extent to which the project is consistent with, and supportive of, the policy and program framework within which the project is placed in Armenia;
- (ii) The extent to which the expected results of the project are consistent with the target beneficiaries' needs/priorities; and
- (iii) The level of local ownership of the project.

6.1 The extent to which the project is consistent with, and supportive of, the policy and program framework within which the project is placed in Armenia

To have a clear picture about the degree of consistency of the project with the policy framework under which it is placed, all the met interlocutors have been requested to provide their feedbacks on the overall and the specific objectives as formulated in the logical framework. A summary of the findings is reported in the following table.

TABLE N. 4 CONSISTENCY OF THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES WITH THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Overall Objective: To contribute to the definition and implementation of an effective Migration and Development Policy in Armenia	% of respondents who perceive consistency	% of respondents who do not perceive consistency	% of respondents who did not express any opinion
National Interlocutors	100	0	0
Regional and Municipal Interlocutors	100	0	0
Specific Objective: To foster local development in Armenia by maximizing the positive social and economic impact of migration			
National Interlocutors	100	0	0
Regional and Municipal Interlocutors	100	0	0

As it can be observed, all the persons met consider both the overall and the specific objectives consistent with the policy framework and the current Armenian strategies and priorities. In the course of the meetings some significant observations and information have been shared.

The government of the Republic of Armenia is likely to adopt a new action plan on Migration for the period 2017 – 2021; the lessons learned through the project and the work towards the elaboration of a specific plan of action on Migration and Development will be framed under this strategic policy paper that the government will adopt. In view of the economic crisis and the high level of unemployment, maximizing the social and economic impact of migration remains a key priority for Armenia.

According to the National Statistical Service, the unemployment rate in 2014 was 17.6%, with an increase of 1.4 percentage points from 2013<sup>viii</sup>. All the stakeholders met expressed the opinion that an effective Migration and Development policy should be integrated within a poverty reduction and labour creation strategy. Their perception is that all the jobless job seekers are potentially at risk of irregular migration.

The logic of the project’s design seems to be in line with the expectations of the Armenian institutions, particularly as concerns the link between the overall and the specific objectives. The perception is that the two objectives are extremely interlinked one with each other, since the evaluation of the level of achievement (in terms of job creation and growth of income) at local level may influence the contents of the nationwide overall policy.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is in the process of establishing regional migration information services. The regional service in Lori, according to the Ministry, can benefit from the project’s achievements and resources.

The regional and municipal stakeholders don’t have a specific mandate regarding migration but recognise that ultimately migration and development are about poverty eradication and job

creation, that are at the heart of their agendas. Both the objectives of the project are relevant as per their judgment, although, comprehensibly, they tend to identify themselves more with the specific than with the overall objective. The choice done by the project to focus in Lori is seen by both national and local interlocutors as coherent with the needs of the Region, in view of its social and economic dynamics, already described in the chapter 2 of this report.

The small entrepreneurs met in Lori have expressed a positive judgment on the consistency between the project’s design and their needs.

All those met have been supported through technical training, managerial training and tutoring; half of them (5) have also received financial assistance through sub-grants.

TABLE N. 5 OPINIONS OF THE SMALL ENTREPRENEURS MET IN VANADZOR

Entrepreneurs who have received financial assistance	Very useful / appropriate	Moderately useful / Appropriate	Not Necessary
Technical Training	5	0	0
Managerial Training	5	0	0
Tutoring	5	0	0
Financial Assistance	5	0	0
Entrepreneurs who have not received financial assistance			
Technical Training	2	3	0
Managerial Training	5	0	0
Tutoring	5	0	0

## 6.2 The extent to which the expected results of the project are consistent with the target beneficiaries' needs/priorities

All the persons met have confirmed a positive judgment on the appropriateness of the three expected results. With regard to the first result (Relevant Armenian national and local bodies strengthened in their capacity to elaborate, implement and eventually assess migration & development policy at local level) two main points have been unanimously echoed. The first is that the project is designed in a way that can contribute to develop the attitude and the capacity in the area of Monitoring & Evaluation. It is appreciated that CISP and its partners share results and inform timely the stakeholders on project’s achievement and results. The perception of the stakeholders met is that what has been lacking so far in Armenia is the sound evaluation of the level of implementation of the official policy documents. This point will be further elaborated in the final chapter where some recommendations on the formulation of the action plan are elaborated. The second point is about interinstitutional co-ordination. Promoting a stronger dialogue and complementarities among the different national institutions and between these and the regional authorities is an integral part of the first expected result. This is considered vital and badly needed by all the approached institutions.

Also the second expected result (A local development project implemented through remittances and skills of Armenian Diaspora) is considered appropriate by all the persons met. The representative of the Central Bank of Armenia has added that, although the idea is generally good, it has not yet demonstrated that remittances can be linked to the start up of new enterprises. It is considered by all the stakeholders a quite challenging result, as the remittances tend most of the time (for the 70.0% according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) to be used for not

productive purposes, when not for superfluous goods. In any case, as already evidenced in chapter 2, the need to draw a reliable scheme where public funds are matched with financial resources originated by migrants and diaspora is extremely felt, also in view of the declining trend of the value of remittances, mainly due to the depreciation of the Russian rouble.

Finally, a general consensus has been registered on the third expected result (Lessons learned formalized from the local development project in order to scale up its achievements and results). Having concrete examples of “what does it work” and can be scaled up is exactly what is lacking in Armenia with regard to Migration and Development. All the stakeholders met have expressed their wish to actively participate to the identification and formulation of lessons learned drawn from the project.

### 6.3 The level of local ownership of the project

The project is perceived by the met institutions as a concrete tool to complement and strengthen their policies and plans. As already written, the State Migration Service looks at the project as a means to facilitate the elaboration and the institutional endorsement of the 2017 – 2021 Action Plan on Migration.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs considers the project as a complementary measure to its ongoing efforts towards the implementation of sustainable employment schemes and the Ministry of the Diaspora considers the project as a measure to explore in concrete terms mechanism able to reinforce the link between the Diaspora and the Mother Land, not only in financial terms, but also valorizing the skills and the know how acquired by Armenian abroad.

At Regional and Municipal levels local authorities expressed their appreciation for the constant consultation process developed by the project’s staff, but claimed to have not been fully involved in a number of training activities, with special regard to the international study tours or exchange visits. This was apparently due to the fact that the local administrations do not have a specific mandate on migration; nevertheless they are the public bodies nearest to the citizens’ needs and priorities. This aspect is taken in serious consideration by CISP, from now till the end of the project. For instance CISP is proposing to include at least a representative from Lori Region in the planned visit to The Philippines. In any case, both the Regional and the Municipal Offices met have expressed the opinion that the project is entirely coherent with their plans and objectives, starting from the fight against poverty and unemployment. The Lori Region has also added that the focus of the project on Small Medium Enterprises and Rural Development completely fits with the regional development strategy. Their main expectation is primarily to demonstrate the impact of the project in terms of employment’s creation, in order to scale up the model of intervention through other similar initiatives and the support of the central government.

## 7. THE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS

---

While the analysis of the relevance is mainly focused on the project’s design, the effectiveness has been assessed in light of the first period (from December 24, 2013 until March 18, 2016) of implementation.

For the sake of the effectiveness’ assessment, the following dimensions have been considered:

- The extent to which the project is achieving its results and the beneficiaries make use of and benefit from the project’s achievements; and
- If the assumptions have shown to be valid.

## 7.1 The extent to which the project is achieving its results and the beneficiaries make use of and benefit from the project's achievements

In this case the analysis has to be differentiated per category of stakeholders met. National Ministries and institutions are more aware of the dynamics related to Result 1 (Relevant Armenian national and local bodies strengthened in their capacity to elaborate, implement and eventually assess migration & development policy at local level), while Regional and Municipal bodies know better the level of achievement of Result 2 (A local development project implemented through remittances and skills of Armenian Diaspora). This reality shows that some efforts are still needed – and will be done in the coming months – to narrow the distance between national and local agendas.

At national level all the persons met feel that the project is significantly contributing to empower and capacitate Armenian institutions to elaborate migration & development policies. **The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' representative has disclosed that further to the exchange visit to Ecuador an amendment has been done to the governmental Decree on Small and Medium Enterprises Development (November 2015), linking closely training to credit.** The representative of all the ministries and of the Central Bank of Armenia give a very positive judgment especially to two dimensions of the project: the exchanges with other countries in order to acquire new ideas and replicable best practices successfully tested elsewhere and the attitude to convey public fora and workshops where different actors are requested to share their plans in order to reinforce complementarities and synergies.

The exchange visits / study tours have – according to the interlocutors met – already provided Armenian institutions with some valuable ideas and suggestions for an effective migration and development policies. Just to mention some of the points emerged during the meetings related to the visit to Ecuador:

- Under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, 9 offices all over the country have been established to provide easy access to information and services. The already mentioned process of establishing similar structures in Armenia could benefit from the exchanges done with the South American country;
- The returnees to Ecuador don't have to pay taxes when coming back for the imported goods, cars, engines and tools for start-ups;
- The central bank in Quito carries out monitoring and evaluation of remittances every three and six months and eventually also an annual evaluation;
- In 2008, Ecuador passed a new constitution, which includes many different articles that officially target Ecuadorian migrants abroad and foresee the commitment of the state to formulate and implement migration policies to support migrant's universal rights and to fight discrimination against migrants. The state considers human migration as an important issue and recognizes "the right to migrate" stating that no human being will be identified or considered illegal based on their migrant status. The National Assembly is now working towards the subject of human mobility elaborating laws that will help protecting the rights of migrants.
- Along with promoting and protecting the rights of Ecuadorian migrant workers abroad, the state has taken measures to facilitate their participation in national electoral processes. The Ecuadorian migrants are represented with 6 assembly members: 2 from North America, 2 from Europe, Asia and Oceania and 2 from Latin America;
- Always in Ecuador, as for incentives and regulations of the flows of labour migrants, the parliamentarians are planning to present two laws that will assure to have permanent accessibility to loans for the interested people.

As regards Georgia, it has been considered very fruitful the participation to the "Regional Diaspora Economic Forum" organised by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora. The forum was dedicated to the role of diaspora in the national development process. The issues discussed during the forum were very much linked to the needs of Armenia. They have been:

- The implementation of the migration policies, by also emphasising that Diaspora is a powerful force for the economic and social development of host and origin countries;
- The cooperation with the migrants on the process of their return
- The Fight against illegal migration.

The regional and municipal representatives have underlined the appropriateness of the methodology followed to undertake the activities in the Lori Region and the fairness and transparency of the process of selection of the beneficiaries receiving financial assistance. This process is articulated into the following nine steps:

- The Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre of Vanadzor (hereinafter the Centre) makes an advertisement inviting interested enterprises to apply within a given deadline. This is done using local media, banks, regional and municipal structures and through contacts with the villages' heads;
- The applications are collected by the Centre;
- The Centre, CARD, AYWA and CISP make a short list out of all the applications received;
- The shortlisted enterprises are requested to participate to a training session on the preparation of the business plan, using a specific format (that has been examined and found very accurate during the evaluation);
- Further to the training a final selection is done by the same entities who have done the short list plus the Lori Region and the local branch of the State Employment Service under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs;
- Visits on the site of the selected enterprises are conducted by the Center, CARD and CISP;
- The selected enterprises are requested to open a bank account and a due diligence on the financial status of the enterprises is conducted;
- A grant contract is signed between the enterprise and CISP;
- The Center, CARD and CISP follow up the enterprises providing them with managerial and technical assistance.

In addition, as already underlined, periodic sessions of technical training are conducted for larger groups of small businesses owners. The Center has a data base where all the relevant information on the beneficiaries are collected.

The table n. 6 indicates the answers provided by the owners of the small businesses met in Vanadzor as regards the expected results of the assistance received.

TABLE N. 6 EXPECTATIONS OF THE OWNERS OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN LORI REGION

Expectations of the entrepreneurs who have received financial assistance	N° of respondents
The assistance received can allow the development of the business	4
The assistance received can allow the survival of the business	1
The assistance received is not relevant at all	0
<b>Entrepreneurs who have not received financial assistance</b>	
The assistance received can allow the development of the business	2
The assistance received can allow the survival of the business	3
The assistance received is not relevant at all	0

Despite the limited number of respondents, it seems encouraging that all those who did not receive any financial assistance expect some concrete result out of the training received, which has in any case included the provision of small items necessary for their activity. The profiles and economic activities of the persons / enterprises having received financial assistance are reported in annex j.

## 7.2 Validity of the Project's assumptions

In this case the analysis has considered the answers given by the people met during the evaluation and the results of an "ad hoc" meeting with the project's staff. All the assumptions appear valid and confirmed after more than two years of project's implementation, as evidenced in the table n. 7.

TABLE N. 7 ASSESSMENT OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PROJECT

Assumption for the Specific Objective	The Migration and Development theme remains one of the main concerns of the Armenian public institutions in light of the economic and social weight of migration for the development of the country	The objective is very relevant today in the light of the difficult economic situation and of new social phenomena, such as the influx of persons of Armenian origin from other countries
Assumption for Result 1	All the relevant stakeholders approached during the project's formulation confirm their willingness to cooperate to the achievement of the jointly defined expected results	This assumption is completely confirmed by all the stakeholders met. In addition, the annexes (minutes of the workshops, study tours and exchange visits, et.) give account of the level of participation to the project of the Armenian institutions
Assumption for Result 2	The political atmosphere in Armenia will remain conducive for the implementation of the project and no any traumatic event will hamper the smooth implementation of the activities	The assumption is confirmed. Despite its social and economic problems Armenia has remained an essentially stable country and no any traumatic event has been recorded in Yerevan and in the Lori Region
Assumption for Result 3	No major and unexpected turn over of public institutions staff will hamper the effectiveness of the capacity building and training activities	The assumption is confirmed. A physiological level of turnover has been occurring but almost all the key interlocutors of the project have not changed during the project's life
Pre-conditions for the activities	Applicant and Partners will effectively share their knowhow and skills as per existing plans; Financial resources will be made timely available; Public institutions will actively be engaged in Project's activities; Applicant and partners will recruit committed and capable staff	The pre-conditions have been confirmed. CISP, CARD and AYWA have established very effective working relations and divide their tasks as per the existing skills and know how; no any delay in the transfer of financial resources from Italy to Armenia has been registered; the public institutions have always cooperated to the activities as per the expectations; the staff has been appreciated by all the stakeholders for the competence and the commitment.

## 8. THE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT AND OF THE SUSTAINABILITY

A comprehensive analysis of the impact and of the sustainability of the project will be better done at a later stage, immediately before its end. Nevertheless, some concrete indications are obtainable from the assessment of the activities so far implemented.

The analysis of the impact has been conducted trying to answer two questions:

- Is the project on the right path towards the contribution to define a sound migration and development policy and action plan on migration and development in Armenia?
- Is the project likely to make any difference in the life of the beneficiaries?

As regards the sustainability, two main areas of analysis have been considered, that are:

- The level of incorporation of the project's outcomes into the mandates of the different Armenian Institutions;
- The level of financial dependency the project is creating from its own resources.

### 8.1 Impact

The SWOT analysis conducted by the project in June 2014 confirmed the existence of some critical factors hampering the effectiveness of migration and development policies in Armenia that had been considered when the project had been formulated.

Among them, the lack of co-ordination among the national bodies in charge for migration, employment and diaspora's mobilization and between them and the local administrative bodies.

The project – as per the perception of CISP's staff and of the public stakeholders – is certainly contributing to alleviate – if not remove – the first problem. A platform for collaboration, exchanges of information, joint planning, although not yet formalized, has been laid down and the next action plan on Migration, whose elaboration will be led by the Migration State Department, is likely to involve all the main concerned actors, starting from the public bodies met during the mid term evaluation.

Additional efforts are needed to bridge more effectively national and regional public bodies, that, although not having a mandate on migration issues, administer territories from where migrants depart and where new immigrants arrive.

The table n. 8 indicates the self-evaluation done by the entrepreneurs met in Vanadzor regarding the impact of the project for themselves and their families.

TABLE 8 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE SMALL ENTREPRENEURS MET

Main problems of the entrepreneurs who have received financial assistance	N° (Multiple answers possible)	Main problems that the project can solve to the entrepreneurs who have received financial assistance	N° (Multiple answers possible)
Excessive N° of competitors	1	Excessive N° of competitors	0
Limited Market	5	Limited Market	5
Excessive bureaucracy and taxation	5	Excessive bureaucracy and taxation	0
Lack of skills	5	Lack of skills	5
Lack of equipment	5	Lack of equipment	5

Main problems of the entrepreneurs who have not received financial assistance	N° (Multiple answers possible)	Main problems that the project can solve to the entrepreneurs who have not received financial assistance	N° (Multiple answers possible)
Excessive N° of competitors	2	Excessive N° of competitors	2
Limited Market	3	Limited Market	3
Excessive bureaucracy and taxation	3	Excessive bureaucracy and taxation	1
Lack of skills	1	Lack of skills	1
Lack of equipment	4	Lack of equipment	0

As regards those who received financial assistance, out of a cumulative number of 21 identified problems, the expectation is that the project can contribute to solve 15 of them (71.4%).

Considering the answers of those who did not receive financial assistance, the cumulative number of problems is 13 and the number of the problems likely to be solved thanks to the project is 7 (53.8%).

According to 2 of them, the technical training can solve the problem of the excessive competition, making their production more attractive in the local markets.

During the meetings it was disclosed to the beneficiaries that the project is also trying to contribute to find solutions to the problems of excessive bureaucracy and taxation, which seems in any case already identified by some national institutions met. For instance, this point has been underlined by the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and of the Central Bank of Armenia; some specific measures are to be adopted for start ups and micro and small enterprises.

The current number of people working in the 5 enterprises receiving financial assistance is 29. Out of this number there are 18 women and 11 men. The expectations is that this number will be increased to 51, with an estimated number of 32 women. Following up the development of these businesses is a key priority for CISP in the coming months.

Among the new expected employees there are also relatives of the small entrepreneurs currently living in the Russian Federation and wishing to go back home. In addition, according to the local administrations met, some of the assisted entrepreneurs can be classified as being "at risk" of irregular migration. Therefore, it exists a link between the local development initiative and migration. What so far has not been experienced is the financial support from the diaspora and the Armenian abroad, that was among the initial project's expectations. Further analyses to this regard will be necessary in the coming months.

## 8.2 Sustainability

As already evidenced, all the components of the project are framed under existing Armenian policies and institutional mandates. The table n. 9 indicates the links between the project's activities and the Armenian institutions. The institutions indicated are not all those involved (in this case many others should have been included) but only those owning the processes corresponding to the activities.

TABLE N. 9 LINKS BETWEEN PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES AND ARMENIAN INSTITUTIONS

ACTIVITIES	INSTITUTIONS IN CHARGE
<b>1.Assessment of migration and development policies at local and national level</b>	
1.1 Swot (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis on Migration and Development Policies in Armenia	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
1.2 Research on migration and development experiences in Armenia	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora
<b>2.Definition of a capacity building strategy addressed to national and local policy officers</b>	
2.1 Handbook on Training on Migration and Development	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour
<b>3.Training workshops with Armenian institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Diaspora Representatives</b>	
3.1 First Workshop	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
3.2 Second Workshop	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
3.3 Third Workshop	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
<b>4.Assessment and identification of international best practices and organization of exchanges of experiences / study tours</b>	
4.1 Study Tour in Ecuador	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
4.2 Study Tour in Georgia	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
4.3 Study Tour in The Philippines	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
<b>5.Elaboration and institutional endorsement of a Plan of Action (PoA) on Migration and Development</b>	
5.1 Preparation through consultative workshop of an institutionally endorsed plan of action	Migration State Service
<b>6.Conducting a research on labour market, private investment opportunities and sectors with opportunities to grow in Lori Region</b>	
6.1 Research on potential sectors for investment and labour market in Lori Region	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Lori Region Vandzor Municipality
<b>7.Identification and Formulation of a suitable local development project addressed to labour creation. Agreements between local institutions, Diaspora associations, CSOs &amp; I. Project Implementation</b>	
7.1 Establishment of a Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vandzor	Lori Region Vandzor Municipality Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
7.2 Training (residential & on the job) of small & micro entrepreneurs	Lori Region Vandzor Municipality Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

7.3 Support to business ventures through a financial envelop of 80,000 Euro to be sub-granted with a grant's size ranging from 4,000 to 10,000. It means a maximum of 20 and a minimum of 8 projects	Lori Region Vandzor Municipality Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation	Ministry of Labour Lori Region Vandzor Municipality
<b>8. Formulation of lessons learned from the local development project and recommendations for future actions</b>	
8.1 Elaboration of a final document on lessons learned	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia Lori Region Vandzor Municipality
<b>9. Public Seminars to spread out achievements, results and recommendations</b>	
9.1 Workshop in Yerevan	Migration State Service Ministry of Diaspora Ministry of Labour Central Bank of Armenia
9.2 Workshop in Vanadzor	Lori Region - Vandzor Municipality

The table shows that it does not exist a single activity done and / or foreseen by the project which is not under the responsibility of two or more Armenian institutions. This reality has been ascertained reviewing the project's documentation and meeting the national and regional stakeholders.

The Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vandzor is not currently financial dependant upon the project, from which it receives technical assistance. During the mid term evaluation it was learnt that the centre's running costs, including the renting, the personnel and the facilities, amount to 1,000 Euro per month. To cover this cost, the Centre and its qualified personnel undertake consultancy assignments for national and international organizations. The centre is therefore operating as a private consultancy enterprise providing services to the public, on the basis of an agreement signed with the Municipality of Vanadzor.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9.1 Summary of the findings

A summary of the findings of the evaluation is reported in the following table. Considering a value scale from 1 to 5<sup>x</sup>, the project is evaluated in terms of efficiency, relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

TABLE N. 10 SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION'S FINDINGS

Category	Score	Justification
Efficiency	4	With the exception of the Handbook, all activities that should have been accomplished until March 18, 2016 have been implemented. In some cases the outreach of the activities has exceeded or is exceeding the target, while only in one case (the study tours) the number of direct beneficiaries is lower than that initially estimated. The management of the project is sound and transparent, as

		evidenced also by an external audit conducted in February 2016.
Relevance	5	The relevance is above initial expectations for several reasons evidenced in this report. First, the project is now scheduled to terminate at the end of December 2016, immediately before the entry into force of the new Action Plan on Migration of the Republic of Armenia. Second, the need to implement an effective Migration and Development Policy is particularly felt now by all the national and local Armenian institutions, in light of the seriousness of the economic situation of the country. The declining financial value of the remittances calls for an acceleration in the identification of viable mechanisms to incentive their productive use. The overall and specific objectives and the three expected results are perceived as relevant and appropriate by all the institutions met; the assistance delivered to the small entrepreneurs in Lori Region meets the needs and is considered necessary to the life of the enterprises.
Effectiveness	4	The project's assumptions and pre-conditions have been verified and judged still valid. This, together with a good degree of efficiency, leads to a promising trend of attainment of the results. This conclusion is made possible by two levels of investigation. One is based on the answers of the stakeholders, the other on the direct observation and the reading of the project's documentation.
Impact	3	As already indicated, the analysis of the impact, which means the contribution given by the project to the fulfilment of the overall objective, will be better done at a later stage. Nevertheless, the project is contributing to maximize the social and economic impact of migration in Armenia, as it is contributing to remove some obstacles to an effective migration and development policy in Armenia. An area deserving consideration is the actual link between local development initiatives and remittances from the diaspora and the migrants.
Sustainability	4	Similarly to the impact, also the sustainability will be better understood when the project will be approaching its conclusion. Nevertheless two concrete indications have emerged from the evaluation: a) all project's activities are framed under the mandates of different Armenian institutions; b) the project has not created any financial dependency and all the key actors involved are self sustained.
Average	4,00	

## 9.2 Recommendations

### 9.2.1 Plan of action until the end of the project

- (1) To accurately elaborate a timetable until the end of the project and: (i) to merge the elaboration of lessons learned with the preparation of the Handbook on Training on Migration and Development; (ii) to elaborate quarterly monitoring reports. A specific format is suggested in this regard (see annex n);
- (2) To elaborate some specific guidelines in order to strengthen the access of the women to the various kinds of assistance delivered to micro and small enterprises. It is recalled that currently, out of 8 enterprises that have already received financial assistance, only one is owned by a woman. These guidelines can include: (i) targeting specific economic activities predominantly

performed by women in Armenia, such as, for instance, weaving; (ii) facilitating access to training to unemployed / job seekers girls and women; (iii) foreseeing in the future training courses a minimum percentage (50%) of girls and women;

(3) To actively involve all the key national and regional stakeholders of the project in the elaboration of the lessons learned. This can be done also preparing an "ad hoc" questionnaire;

(4) To carefully assess the development of the small businesses, using the monitoring tool already existing. Areas deserving special attention are the income gathered by the enterprises, the access to the markets and the evolution of the enterprises' employment's size;

(5) To precisely document, through interviews with national and regional stakeholders and the analysis of available documents, all the legislative and policy measures inspired by the project;

(6) To facilitate the utilization of the researches' findings by the national and regional stakeholders providing them with specific guidelines and underlining the key messages emerging from the researches deserving the attention of policy makers and public administrators;

(7) To update the action plan of the Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vanadzor, promoting it within the national and international organizations operating in Armenia;

(8) To collect regularly and elaborate the information gathered by the Permanent Business Information and Promotion Centre in Vanadzor regarding the training delivered to small and micro business owners. Data on the beneficiaries have always to be disaggregated per gender;

(9) To share this mid term evaluation report with all the public stakeholders and the partners requesting feedbacks on it.

#### *9.2.2 Contents of the Action Plan for Migration and Development*

(10) To include as priority areas: (i) Mobilization of Migrants' and Diaspora for the development of entrepreneurship in Armenia valorizing remittances, know-how and skills; (ii) Opportunities/Promotion for circular labour migration to be addressed to social and economic development of Armenia; (iii) Integration of newcomers to Armenia and reintegration of returnees and asylum seekers;

(11) To include as priority actions: (i) Legislative and regulatory measures; (ii) Improvement of inter-institutional arrangements in order to avoid overlapping and maximise the effectiveness of the different actions; (iii) Dialogue with International Actors/ full exploitations of the opportunities of the International cooperation including the European Neighborhood Policies;

(12) To carefully consider the evaluation conducted by experts from the State Migration Service on the existing Plan of Action;

(13) To include in the Plan a reliable Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism. To this end, two pre-conditions are necessary: (i) the formulation of "macro indicators" of achievement (such as, for instance: number of new enterprises established by migrants, returnees and/or through remittances); (ii) an institutional mechanism through which the Monitoring & Evaluation is done (for instance quarterly inter institutional working sessions);

(14) As regards the first priority area: to identify best practices and success stories in Armenia and / or in other countries showing the feasibility of mobilizing diaspora and migrants for the development of enterprises;

(15) As regards the second priority action: to include Migration and Development within the mandates of regional and municipal institutions, in view of their vicinity to the problems of migrants and returnees;

(16) Other specific recommendations for the Action Plan are summarized in the following table. They have emerged from the workshop held in Yerevan on March 17, 2016.

TABLE N. 11 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACTION PLAN ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ARMENIA

<p>General Recommendations</p>	<p>A link between poverty eradication and Migration for Development (M&amp;D) has to be recognized. A poverty eradication strategy should consider Migration, in line with the new international agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>Non Governmental Organizations, Diaspora associations, international organizations must commit themselves to disclose transparently the results and best practices that can be scaled up</p>
<p>Recommendations regarding legislative and policy measures</p>	<p>An enabling environment for investments should be created not only targeting returnees, migrants, Armenians abroad, but all Armenians</p> <p>To improve the taxation and licenses system is a must (i.e. it was proposed to ensure a tax grace period 6 months for those who want to launch new businesses)</p> <p>To promote a good image of Armenia as a reliable country to invest in, stressing its positive facets, such as security, hospitality, attractiveness</p> <p>Efforts of the government of Armenia should be addressed at establishing a Migration Resource Centre in Lori Region, with focus on information /awareness campaigns on risks and potentials of migration</p>
<p>Recommendations regarding interinstitutional arrangements</p>	<p>Identification of the main tasks and responsibilities of the national ministries and bodies should be ensured in the new Action plan, in view of a reinforcement of a synergic agenda, services should be also mandated to Non Governmental Organizations</p> <p>A proactive commitment should be requested to the Armenian Diplomatic Missions abroad. Consulates and embassies should timely receive and spread information on the job vacancies and opportunities in Armenia, acting as liaising bodies between the country of residency of Armenians abroad and Armenia (i.e. establishing labour attachés)</p> <p>Periodic consultations with Armenians abroad and private sector representatives based out of Armenia should be organized: involvement of the Private Sectors and Armenian entrepreneurs abroad is needed in the strategic development planning</p> <p>The improvement of the strategic planning at local level should also include dissemination of information packages on the potentials of the regions of Armenia (addressed also to the Armenian population and not only to those abroad)</p>

<sup>i</sup> *Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli – CISP* (in English: International Committee for the Development of Peoples) is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) established in Italy in 1983 and currently operational through relief and development projects in 25 countries worldwide. Its action is led by a Declaration of Intents titled “For the Rights against Poverty”. The web site of the NGO is: [www.developmentofpeoples.org](http://www.developmentofpeoples.org)

<sup>ii</sup> Data have been provided by the Central Bank of Armenia on March 15, 2016

<sup>iii</sup> See InforEuro. [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm)

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/5.\\_poverty\\_2015e\\_2.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/5._poverty_2015e_2.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> With regard to poverty measurement in Armenia, see: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, 2015 “Measuring Poverty in Armenia: Methodological Clarifications” [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/9.\\_poverty\\_2015e\\_6.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/9._poverty_2015e_6.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> UNHCR – United Nations Refugees Agency, Armenia Fact Sheet, December 2015

<sup>vii</sup> As per the Chart on Accountability signed by CISP in 2013, this report is going to be published on the web site of the Organization ([www.developmentofpeoples.org](http://www.developmentofpeoples.org))

<sup>viii</sup> Arka News Agency, April 2, 2015.

[http://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia\\_s\\_unemployment\\_rate\\_surges\\_21\\_percent\\_as\\_of\\_march\\_1\\_2015/](http://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia_s_unemployment_rate_surges_21_percent_as_of_march_1_2015/)

<sup>ix</sup> 1 = very poor; 2 = less than satisfactory; 3 = Average / Satisfactory; 4 = Good; 5 = Excellent, above expectations.



## CISP HEADQUARTERS

VIA GERMANICO 198 - 00192 ROME - ITALIA  
T. +39 06 3215498 - F. +39 06 3216163  
Email [cisp@cisp-ngo.org](mailto:cisp@cisp-ngo.org) - [WWW.CISP.NGO](http://WWW.CISP.NGO)