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2ND REGIONAL WORKSHOP on integrated community development

LEADER-like approach in Armenia – the Local Empowerment of Actors for Development (LEAD) project

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Lori region

Population (as of January 1, 2020)	213,000
Rural population (as of January 1, 2020)	87,000
Region's share in national Gross Agricultural Output (%), 2020	8.1 %
Output of agriculture, millions AMD, 2020	67,200,000 (28% of total value added of the region)
Number of people employed in agriculture, 2020	19,300 (21.2% of total employed in the region)
Territory	3,799 sq. km
Agricultural land	250,904 ha
Including: arable land	42,014 ha

Priorities of the Development Strategy of Lori Region for 2017-2025:

- Export-oriented industries
- Intensive agriculture
- Rural tourism

2017-2025 Development strategy of Lori region of RA, Lori Region,
<http://lori.mtad.am/files/docs/48161.pdf>

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Tavush region

Population (as of January 1, 2020)	121 000
Rural population (as of January 1, 2020)	70,000
Region's share in national Gross Agricultural Output (%), 2020	4.3%
Output of agriculture, millions AMD, 2020	35,900,000 (30.3% of total value added of the region)
Number of people employed in agriculture, 2020	7,300 (16.8% of total employed in the region)
Territory	2,704 sq. km
Agricultural land	110,695 ha
Including: arable land	25,517 ha

Priorities of the Development Strategy of Tavush region for 2017-2025:

- Industry development based on natural resources, agricultural products processing
- Sustainable tourism
- Commercial agriculture based on modern technologies;
- Capacity building of agricultural cooperatives, promotion of cattle breeding, dairy production,
- Creation of agricultural logistical hubs and greenhouses.

2017-2025 Development strategy of Lori region of RA, Lori Region, <http://lori.mtad.am/files/docs/48161.pdf>

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FAO Component of the LEAD4Lori & Tavush

FAO is involved in all components and specifically is responsible for:

Emergency response related to Covid-19

Agricultural section of LAG's local development strategy

Capacity development of local population

Support horizontal and vertical integration of agro-producers

Support policy development to sustain LEAD approach

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Localization of the LEADER approach

1. Set up of coaching component
2. Fact Finding Missions (FFMs) in all settlements in the targeted regions
3. Community awareness meetings, regional launches, International LEADER conference
4. Review of FFM reports and preparation for LAG territories' delineation
5. Intensive field visits to settlements and communities involved in the potential LAG territories (5 LAGs, from 10 to 32 settlements, population size from 13,300 to 24,000), discussion with stakeholders on LAGs formations
6. COVID 19 impact assessment and response preparation
7. Development of WGs on LAG formation and LAG area strategy development
8. Collection of project ideas in the LAG areas (majority are agricultural projects)
9. Agricultural sector assessment in 5 LAG areas

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Delineation of LAG areas

1. **COMMON PROBLEMS/NEEDS AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
2. **CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SETTLEMENTS**
 - The state of inter-village and field roads. The pre-delineated settlements must have operational roads connecting to each other and have secure access to their agricultural lands and markets.
 - The commuting distance between the settlements and the future LAG center should not exceed 80 minutes.
3. **RETURN ON INVESTMENTS IN THE TERRITORY**
 - the settlements that traditionally attract investments will not be prioritized during the pre-delineation of the LAGs;
 - the settlements, where the possible interventions by the LEAD project will have the highest impact for the development of given territories.
4. **WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT**

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC RELATED TO FOOD VALUE CHAINS IN TAVUSH AND LORI REGIONS

- **Economies of scale:** The size of the farm and production volumes were found to be important critical resilience factors -the higher number of smallholders reported that their agricultural activity was affected and became more vulnerable to the COVID-19 induced disruptions and shocks than the non-smallholder farms.
- **Agricultural activities:** Farms involved in mixed farming (animal husbandry, crop production, and horticulture) were affected more seriously. That can be explained by the non-specialized and scattered approach to agricultural activity, and these farms are engaged in agriculture for subsistence rather than for commercial purposes.
- **Mitigation measures:** Family farms did not initiate any COVID-19 impact mitigation measures. Both smallholders and non-smallholders do not know and adopt resilience strategies and activities. The latter is not only true for COVID-19 induced shocks, but also climate change consequences, regional and international economic and humanitarian crises, etc.

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Conclusion

COVID-19 once again highlighted the need for resilient, agile and ready-to-transform agricultural value chains. Thus, the smallholder and non-smallholder households shall be equipped with dedicated resilience-enhancing tools and strategies to anticipate, cope and respond to unforeseen challenges and external environment changes.

- Collective power
- Awareness-raising and capacity building
- Upgraded infrastructure
- Alternative business models and sales channels

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Agricultural sector assessment in 5 LAG areas

Qualitative survey - preliminary results

Low productivity due to:

- Irrigation infrastructure, construction/renovation of water reservoirs, agricultural machinery
- Land degradation, inefficient use of arable lands and community pastures
- Ineffective agricultural cooperatives
- Quality of seeds and seedlings, losses due to weeds, absence of professional specialised nurseries
- Issues with set up of State subsidised agricultural insurance (1482 and 64 contracts in Lori region and Tavush regions respectively were issued in 2021 vs 5,700 contracts issued in Armavir region (Source: Report of the Government of Armenia, 2022)
- Phylloxera in grape growing communities, old vineyards with low productivity, no local quality nurseries for grape growing
- Overuse of nitrogen fertilisers, no demand for diversified fertilisers in the local or regional markets, lack of awareness

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Agricultural sector assessment in 5 LAG areas

Qualitative survey - preliminary results

Perspective areas that can address some of the highlighted issues:

- Set up of professional nurseries
- Optimisation of agricultural processes to prevent waste and losses and increase productivity with a main focus on a primary production
- Diversification of agricultural production
- Increased capacity of collection and storage facilities in both regions
- Extension services, professional consultations, capacity building
- Local professional maintenance services for agricultural machinery

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Thank you