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**EU4Climate**



## **Terminal Evaluation**

### **Project countries:**

**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine**

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**Evaluation carried out from June to October 2023**

**Brussels, 16 November 2023**

## EU4Climate – Terminal Evaluation

The Objective of the TE is to assess to what extent the project objectives and outcomes were achieved as specified in the Project Document and identify best practices and lessons learned.

The Scope of the TE includes the entirety of EU4Climate activities covering the project implementation period from January 2019 to June 2023.

### **Main questions**

1. *What did EU4Climate intend to achieve during the project's implementation period?*
2. *To what extent has the project achieved its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made at the outcome level?*
3. *What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?*
4. *Which project areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward for the future projects?*

**Data collection methods:** on-line interview; and desk review of project documents and reports.

33 individuals interviewed

*High adherence with stakeholders identified in the inception report*

**Data analysis method:** triangulation

**Note:** Some evaluation questions on gender and women empowerment were not addressed after discussion with UNDP IRH. They were not pertinent, they refer basically to project implemented at community level. Nevertheless, gender is considered in the evaluation report.

**TE based on the following Evaluation Criteria and 28 related Evaluation Questions:**

*Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Coherence, Visibility and Communication and Gender Equality*

### *Relevance*

The project aligns comprehensively with the specific priorities and requirements of the beneficiary countries. These aligned closely with each country's obligations under international agreements, including the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Additionally, these efforts are in line with regional accords such as the Eastern Partnership, bilateral agreements with the EU, and the Energy Community Treaty.

The project had a clear implementation path, with UNDP employing expert consultants who engaged all stakeholders in a collaborative way. This approach ensured stakeholder input and ownership of project outcomes.

UNDP's role as coordinator aligned with its mission to enhance policy development, leadership, and institutional resilience in governance, sustainable development, and climate resilience.

At the corporate level, the project is aligned with UNDP's Regional Programme for Europe and the CIS and with the individual countries' UNDP developmental frameworks:

#### **All outputs were delivered**

- 1: Implementation and update of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement.
- 2: Development of mid-century, long- term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (long-term LEDS).
- 3: Introduction of robust domestic emissions monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) frameworks.
- 4: Alignment with EU Acquis included in Bilateral agreements and Energy Community Treaty on Climate Action
5. Mainstreaming climate in policy sector
- 6: Climate investment
- 7: Adaptation planning
- 8: Assistance to Ukraine (humanitarian component) 70% of the budget spent

EU4Climate effectively achieved its objectives. Three Draft Climate Laws were as well formulated.

This can be also attributed to the observation, already included in the MTR report, that there was limited differentiation within the vertical logic or results chain of the project. In simpler terms, the delivery of outputs closely aligned with the achievement of outcomes.

All components of the project as strategically significant for UNDP's future considerations.

These components also align closely with the technical assistance anticipated from the EU in the upcoming years, as stipulated by bilateral agreements.

The project significant results in terms of gender equality and empowerment of women. The finding should be considered as aligned with the focus of the project itself. In fact, it is important to highlight that a specific attention to gender issues is mentioned in some of the project products

### *Efficiency*

The project utilized the funds at disposal for its activities efficiently. As a matter of fact, the achievements were beyond its expected results with the formulation of three draft Climate Laws. In addition, it also redirected some funds to support humanitarian needs in Ukraine.

The project relied on UNDP's capabilities to ensure the procurement of supplies that meet high-quality standards (fairness, integrity, transparency, and accountability). All national stakeholders interviewed on this matter expressed their contentment with the competencies and expertise demonstrated by the national and international experts hired by UNDP to lead the development of project deliverables.

The proactive engagement of UNDP with EU officials and national counterparts played a catalysing role in facilitating the achievement of project outcomes. This also encompassed responding to ad hoc requests made by the countries (via Project Steering Committee).

Factors hindering the implementation: (1) COVID-19, (2) the War in Ukraine; (3) the conflict Armenia-Azerbaijan; and (4) institutional reforms and frequent turnovers in personnel within national governments have been a common challenge across all project countries, albeit to varying degrees.

The request of the no-cost extension, which was also recommended by the Mid Term Review, represented a key element for the project to be able to deliver satisfactorily its outputs.

### *Sustainability*

The importance of fostering national ownership, considered essential for ensuring the project's long-term effectiveness within the recipient governments and other national partners, was a key feature of project implementation.

The project was intentionally designed to prioritize the involvement and ownership of the countries it serves, with a focus on improving their technical and institutional capabilities. The achievements of the EU4Climate project targets directly and indirectly contribute to sustainability. As a matter of fact, it aimed at supporting the development of national regulatory and planning tools and increase the mobilization of climate funding to expand and sustain efforts aimed at achieving zero-carbon development and enhancing adaptation planning.

There's no doubt that climate change-related matters have been mainstreamed into various sectors at the national level. Environmental concerns have now become part of the ministries within ministries that traditionally had limited awareness of these issues. This is a positive and significant step in the right direction.

The primary concerns primarily are about the availability of financial resources within national budgets to implement the measures included in the extensive array of planning documents delivered with the support of the project.

As per the opinions of those interviewed on the matter, the execution of these actions depends on political determination. The Terminal Evaluation is unable to gauge the long-term sustainability of the project's accomplishments. However, the project deliverables are viewed as significant for the ongoing commitment of EaP countries to their international obligations.

### *Coherence*

The project was aligned with and contributed to the UNDP country programmes of the project countries.

The project benefited from previous EU initiatives and leveraged a wealth of insights and experiences derived from various EU projects, including but not limited to the Clima East Programme, EU4Energy, EU4Environment, and Covenant of Mayors East (CoMO East).

UNDP, with its well-established history, drew upon its extensive expertise both at the regional and target country levels in addressing climate change, encompassing both mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The project's proactive handling of ad hoc requests from the countries indicates its flexibility and responsiveness in aligning project implementation with the specific institutional requirements of the recipient countries. This responsive approach also facilitated the project's ability to exceed expectations in terms of project delivery

### *Communication & visibility*

The Ministries of Environment in the five countries, which are the primary beneficiary institutions of the project, as well as the National Governments, were fully aware of the project's significance to the European Union. The visibility of the donors was also guaranteed through the active involvement of EU officials in specific project activities. EU Delegation officers took part in national events, and representatives from DG NEAR and DG Clima were members of the Project Steering Committee.

### *Gender Equality*

The project's approach to gender equality has proven to be highly effective and aligns well with its classification as GEN 1, according to UNDP's gender scales.

Country	Gender related issues are taken into consideration in the following deliverables:
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Draft Climate Law</i></li><li>- <i>Updated NDC</i></li></ul>
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Gender and Climate Change: Integration into the Energy Policy, a guideline for Decision Makers in Formulating Energy Policy</i></li></ul>
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Georgia's Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy</i></li><li>- <i>Final NDC Financing Strategy and Investment Plan</i></li></ul>
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Draft Climate Law</i></li><li>- <i>Updated NDC</i></li><li>- <i>Development of Recommendations for Mainstreaming Climate Change Issues into Energy Sector's Policies, Strategies and Programmes of the Republic of Moldova</i></li><li>- <i>National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030"</i></li></ul>
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Draft NDC finance and implementation plan</i></li></ul>

### *Conclusions*

***1. What did EU4Climate intend to achieve during the project's implementation period?***

***2. To what extent has the project achieved its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made at the outcome level?***

EU4Climate effectively achieved its objectives. Notably, the development of three Draft Climate Laws signifies that the project surpassed its original goals and exceeded expectations. The project's efforts proved to be effective. However, capacities in the field of environment and climate change are not yet fully developed.

***3. What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?***

High political and institutional relevance, the mutual respect among stakeholders, along with acknowledgment of their respective roles, the Project Steering Committee's willingness to accommodate specific country requests and the UNDP capacity to bring in relevant capacities to conduct project activities resulted to be the key factors that contributed to the good performances of the project.

***4. Which project areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward for the future projects?***

UNDP's coordination and capacity-building efforts played a key role in assisting these countries in fulfilling their international and bilateral commitments while advancing toward sustainable development. Climate action is recognized as integral to sustainable development, and capacity development activities provide a key platform for UNDP's role as the implementing agency. The TE sees this as a strategic area for UNDP's ongoing engagement in the region.

#### ***On gender***

The project's approach to promoting gender equality has demonstrated effectiveness and aligns well with its classification as GEN 1 according to UNDP's gender scales. Gender-related considerations were integrated into relevant project outputs, such as the Updated NDC and Draft Climate Laws and others.

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### Recommendations

<i>Recommendation #1: Emphasis on capacity development</i>	<b>Capacity development for Climate Action should continue to be the primary focus of both EU and UNDP support to the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.</b>
<i>Rationale:</i>	<b>Capacity at national level in the sphere of Climate Action are not yet fully developed in the beneficiary countries.</b>
<i>Responsibility:</i>	<b>EU DG Clima, EU DG NEAR, UNDP, Ministries of Environment of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.</b>
<i>Time-frame for implementation:</i>	<b>Successor projects that may be funded in the future both at national and regional level.</b>

<i>Recommendation #2: Piloting</i>	<b>Piloting implementation of delivered planning documents in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine</b>
<i>Rationale:</i>	<b>The project delivered a vast array of planning documents. Utilizing these for piloting activities focused on Climate Change adaptation and mitigation represents an ideal ground to assess and enhance existing capacities in Climate Action at both the national and local levels.</b>
<i>Responsibility:</i>	<b>UNDP and Ministries of Environment of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.</b>
<i>Time-frame for implementation:</i>	<b>Successor projects that may be funded in the future.</b>

## EU4Climate – Terminal Evaluation

### *Lessons learned*

Lesson Learned #1: Political and institutional support throughout all project phases.	<p>Political and institutional support plays a key role in the success of a project aimed at assisting in the development of planning documents, such as strategies, action plans, reporting systems, and more. These projects operate within the institutional space of the recipient country. Political will to align with the project's objectives is reflected in the acceptance of project activities by all government institutions. Consequently, these institutions are inclined to actively engage in project implementation.</p> <p>At the project management level, it is evident that the primary implementing agency, such as UNDP, should foster the country ownership of project activities and consequently of project results. This can be achieved by facilitating open dialogue and offering relevant expertise that aligns with the specific needs and interests expressed by the institutional beneficiaries of the project.</p>
Context of application	<p>The successful and efficient collaboration among project stakeholders during project implementation was contingent upon political and institutional support. This fundamental lesson learned has broader implications that extend beyond the specific project and could be applicable to UNDP projects worldwide. Furthermore, it extends its relevance to various types of technical assistance initiatives, not limited solely to those associated with climate action.</p>

Lesson Learned #2: Political and institutional support throughout all project phases.	<p>The success of a technical assistance initiative undeniably hinges on its political and thematic relevance. However, those responsible for project management must also possess the ability to capture the attention and involvement of stakeholders. Essential managerial competencies, dedication and commitment, and the capacity to actively listen and comprehend diverse interests, coupled with a willingness to engage in dialogue, are key factors for fostering effective stakeholder engagement and ownership of project results.</p>
Context of application	<p>Indeed, this lesson may appear self-evident and too general, yet it remains crucial to emphasize that projects in the international cooperation sector are not consistently managed in accordance with these principles. Recognizing and reinforcing these fundamental principles can greatly enhance the outcomes and impact of international development initiatives.</p>