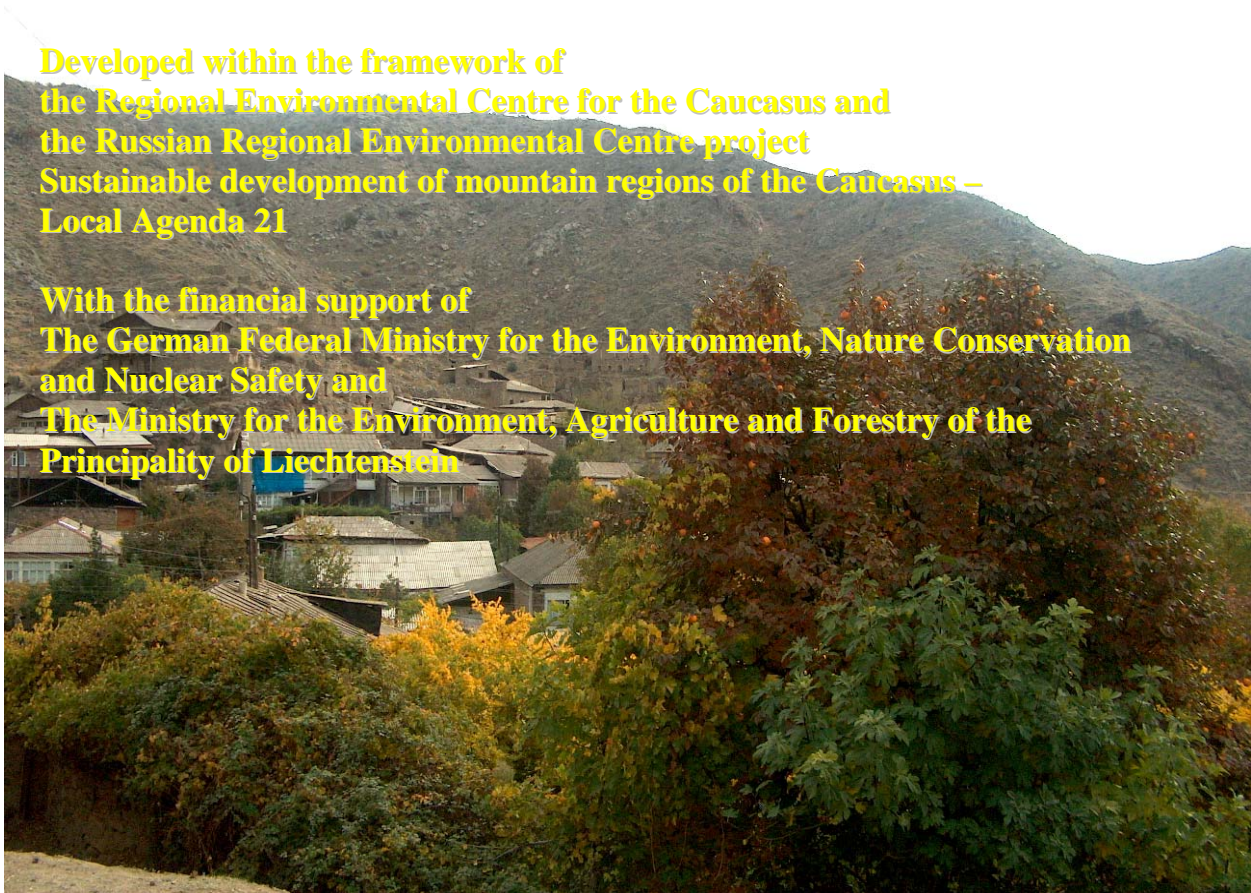

LOCAL AGENDA 21

FOR THE COMMUNITY OF SHVANIDZOR, SYUNIQ MARZ, REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

**Developed within the framework of
the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus and
the Russian Regional Environmental Centre project
Sustainable development of mountain regions of the Caucasus –
Local Agenda 21**

**With the financial support of
The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety and
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*The Local Agenda 21 of the Community of Shvanidzor
was developed in 2007
The given document is a translation from Armenian*

CONTENT

A. PASSPORT OF THE SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY	7
B. STATE OF SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY’S DEVELOPMENT	14
SECTION ONE: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS	14
1. ACCESSIBILITY AND DISTANCE FROM THE MAIN MARKETS.....	16
1.1. Remoteness from main national markets.....	16
1.2. High transportation cost to the main markets	16
1.3. Market regulation policies	17
2. LIVING STANDARDS AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT.....	17
2.1. Living standards.....	17
2.2. Access to Resources.....	17
2.3. Changes in Access to Resources Patterns.....	18
2.4. Social Policies for the Population of Mountain Regions.....	19
2.5. Self-sufficiency of First Necessity Products.....	19
2.6. Average Annual Income	19
3. MARKETING AND SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES	19
3.1. Limited Household Management Options.....	19
3.2. Low Awareness Level on Sustainable Natural Resource Management	20
3.3. Inactive Search for Alternative Income Sources	20
4. DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION.....	20
4.1. Low Population Growth.....	20
4.2. Youth Migration	20
5. COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE.....	21
5.1. Shortcomings of Hygiene and Sanitary Conditions.....	21
5.2. Access to Medical Care	21
6. COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO MODERN FACILITIES	21
6.1. Shortcomings of Cultural Heritage Management	21
6.2. Construction of the Highway Disregarding Protection of Natural and Cultural Landscapes and Local Benefits.....	22
6.3. Limited Access to Modern Facilities	22
7. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	22
7.1. Consumer-oriented Life-style	22
SECTION TWO: CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT	23
8. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES.....	23
8.1. Poor Management of Land Resources	23
8.2. Lack of Crop Rotation	23
8.3. Absence of Environmental Component in Agriculture	23
9. COMBATING DEFORESTATION.....	23
9.1. Logging due to the Road Construction	23
9.2. Usage of Forests as Pastures	24
9.3. Forest Protection Policy	24
10. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN REGIONS	24
10.1. Insufficient Attention to the Management of Alpine Landscapes	24
11. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	24
11.1. One-sided Development of Agriculture.....	24
11.2. Lack of Mechanisation and Agro-technical Activities	24

11.3. Inefficient Use of Water Resources	24
12. PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY	25
12.1. Low Awareness Level on Biodiversity.....	25
12.2. Nature Protection Policy	26
13. MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY	26
13.1. Low Awareness Level on Modern Agricultural Technologies and Loss of Traditional Knowledge	26
13.2. Absence of Traditional Farming	26
14. POTABLE WATER SUPPLY AND MANAGEMENT	27
14.1. Shortcomings of Water supply and sewage systems	27
14.2. Absence of Modern Irrigation Systems	27
14.3. Waste Removal and Processing.....	27
15. SOLID WASTE AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT.....	27
15.1. Poor Management of Wastewaters	27
15.2. Poor Management of Solid Waste	27
SECTION THREE: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS.....	28
16. WOMEN’S ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	28
16.1. Women Participation in the Decision-Making Process	28
17. ROLE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.....	28
17.1. Low Awareness Level.....	28
17.2. Need for Supplementary Environmental Trainings	29
18. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF LOCAL POPULATION	29
18.1. Traditional Local Authorities.....	29
18.2. Low Level of Institutional Development of Local Organisations	29
18.3. Internal Disagreements	29
19. COOPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS	29
19.1. Cooperation with International Organisations	29
20. LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE	29
20.1. Lack of Finances	29
20.2. Formality of Democracy	29
20.3. Lack of Community Development Planning and Management Justification	29
21. COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL UNIONS	30
21.1. Absence of Professional Unions in the Community.....	30
22. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF FARMERS	30
22.1. Absence of Farmers Unions.....	30
SECTION FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION METHODS.....	31
23. FINANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	31
23.1. Absence of Knowledge on Community Fund Organisation and Alternative Budget Sources	31
23.2. Absence of Information on the Local Deposit Mechanisms (Common Cash Box)	31
23.3. Insufficient cooperation with international donor organisation.....	31
23.4. Low level of fundraising skills and attraction of investments	31
24. TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGIES	31
24.1. Lack of Finances and Information on New Technologies	31
25. SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	31
25.1. Lack of Information on Sustainable Development	31
26. PROMOTING EDUCATION, TRAININGS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	32
26.1. Inactiveness of the Community in the Search of Complex Solution.....	32
27. NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	32
27.1. Absence of Specialists, Low Level of Professionalism and Skills.....	32

28. LEGISLATION	32
28.1. Enforcement Difficulties of Environmental Legislation.....	32
28.2. Contradictions between Different Environmental and Non-environmental Legal Acts	32
29. INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKING	32
29.1. Absence of Materials on Sustainable Development in the National Language.....	32
 C. GROUPING PROBLEMS OF SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY AND RANKING THEM	
ACCORDING TO THEIR URGENCY	33
PROBLEMS RANKING OF SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY	33
PROBLEMS GROUPING AND CLASSIFICATION	36
1. High Cost of Transportation to the Main Markets	36
2. Inefficient Management of Natural Resources	36
3. Absence of Sustainable Agriculture	36
4. Absence of Income Source Diversification.....	37
5. Shortcomings of Healthcare System.....	37
6. Low level of environmental education and lack of access towards information.....	37
7. Absence of Solid Waste Management.....	38
8. Absence of Activeness in the Decision-Making Process	38
9. Insufficient Cooperation with International and Local Organisations.....	38
 D. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY.....	39
1. HIGH COST OF TRANSPORTATION TO THE MAIN MARKETS	41
Strategy 1	41
Strategy 2	41
Strategy 3	41
2. INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.....	41
Strategy 1	41
Strategy 2	41
Strategy 3	41
3. ABSENCE OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE	42
Strategy 1	42
Strategy 2	42
Strategy 3	42
4. ABSENCE OF INCOME SOURCE DIVERSIFICATION	42
Strategy 1	42
Strategy 2	42
Strategy 3	42
5. SHORTCOMINGS OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEM	42
Strategy 1	42
Strategy 2	43
Strategy 3	43
6. LOW LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION	43
Strategy 1	43
7. ABSENCE OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT	43
Strategy 1	43
8. ABSENCE OF ACTIVENESS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	43
Strategy 1	43
9. INSUFFICIENT COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS	43
Strategy 1	43

E. THE ACTION PLAN FOR SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	46
ACTION PLAN - STRATEGY 1 (1-3 YEARS)	48
F. SYSTEM OF MONITORING, REVIEWING AND INTRODUCING CHANGES IN LOCAL AGENDA.....	54
INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	56
MONITORING	56
MONITORING PLAN.....	57
MONITORING VISITS	57
MONITORING REPORT (FORMAT).....	57
DOCUMENT REVISION	59
CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT	60
MEMBERS OF THE REVISION TEAM	60
WHAT IF THE RESULTS ARE NOT ACHIEVED.....	60

LIST OF DIAGRAMS:

Diagram 1: Land composition in Shvanidzor in hectares

Diagram 2: Types of domestic animals in Shvanidzor

LIST OF PICTURES:

- Picture 1: Medieval constructions
- Picture 2: Medieval bridge
- Picture 3: St. Stepanos church
- Picture 4: Old and new community houses
- Picture 5: Traditional tonir
- Picture 6: Crops of pomegranate
- Picture 7: Grape, mainly used for wine-making
- Picture 8: Location of kahrezes
- Picture 9: Local kid helping to carry water
- Picture 10: Carrying water
- Picture 11: European rosebud
- Picture 12: Wild pomegranate
- Picture 13: Community women
- Picture 14: Community children
- Picture 15: Community library
- Picture 16: Gathering in the Cultural Club

LIST OF TABLES:

- Table 1: Distance from the main markets
- Table 2: Transportation of fruits
- Table 3: Socially insecure groups in Shvanidzor
- Table 4: Quality of lands in Shvanidzor
- Table 5: Economy components in Shvanidzor
- Table 6: Demographic situation
- Table 7: The crops of certain fruits in 2005

A. PASSPORT OF THE SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY



Location: Yelpin community is situated in the South-East of Armenia (Syuniq *marz*¹). It borders with Islamic Republic of Iran. Geographic coordinates: 38.9427778' lat. N, 46.3769444' long. E.

Administrative subordination: Republic of Armenia, Syuniq *marz*, Meghri district.

Ethnic group: Armenians (100%).

Religion: Christianity (Armenian Apostolic Church)

Population: 358 residents (*de facto* 296). Number of families – 110

Altitude: Community lands stretch from 450 to 2864 m above sea level, on the southern slopes of Meghri mountain range (Tsav-Shvanidzor pass), whereas the settlement itself is located in the forestry area at the bottom, at 630-760 m above sea level, in Astghadzor (Astazor) gorge.

Accessibility: Distance between the community and Yerevan – 410 km, distance between the community and Kapan regional centre – 102 km, distance between the community and the main highway - 17 km. In summer time it takes about 20-30 minutes to reach the nearest town of Meghri by car, during the winter time - about 45 minutes. Close to the community there is a newly-built strategic Tsav-Shikahogh highway, which fully functions during the winter time.

COMMUNITY

Village status: Community.

Legal institutions of governance: Community Council and Syuniq *marzpetaran*²

Main actors: State authority is Syuniq *marzpetaran*. Local authorities are Community Council and Head of the community. Community Council consists of 5 members, which are elected for 3 years. Administrative body consists of Head of the community, Accountant, Secretary, and 4 Support Staff Employees.

NGO/CBO's: There is 'Shvanidzor-Jur' NGO, which cares for the potable and irrigation water supply issues.

Legal Background/National Regulation Laws: Community is subject to the *Constitution of RA*, specifically *Land Code*, *Forest Code*, *Election Code*, such laws as *Laws "On Local Self-Government"*, *"On Community Service"*, *"On State Taxation"* *Governmental decision N 507 "On property taxation privileges for the border-adjacent communities or RA"*, *Governmental decision N 246 "On state programme of the priority to border-adjacent and mountainous communities problems"*, etc.

¹ *marz*- province in Armenia.

² *marzpetaran*- governing body of *marz*

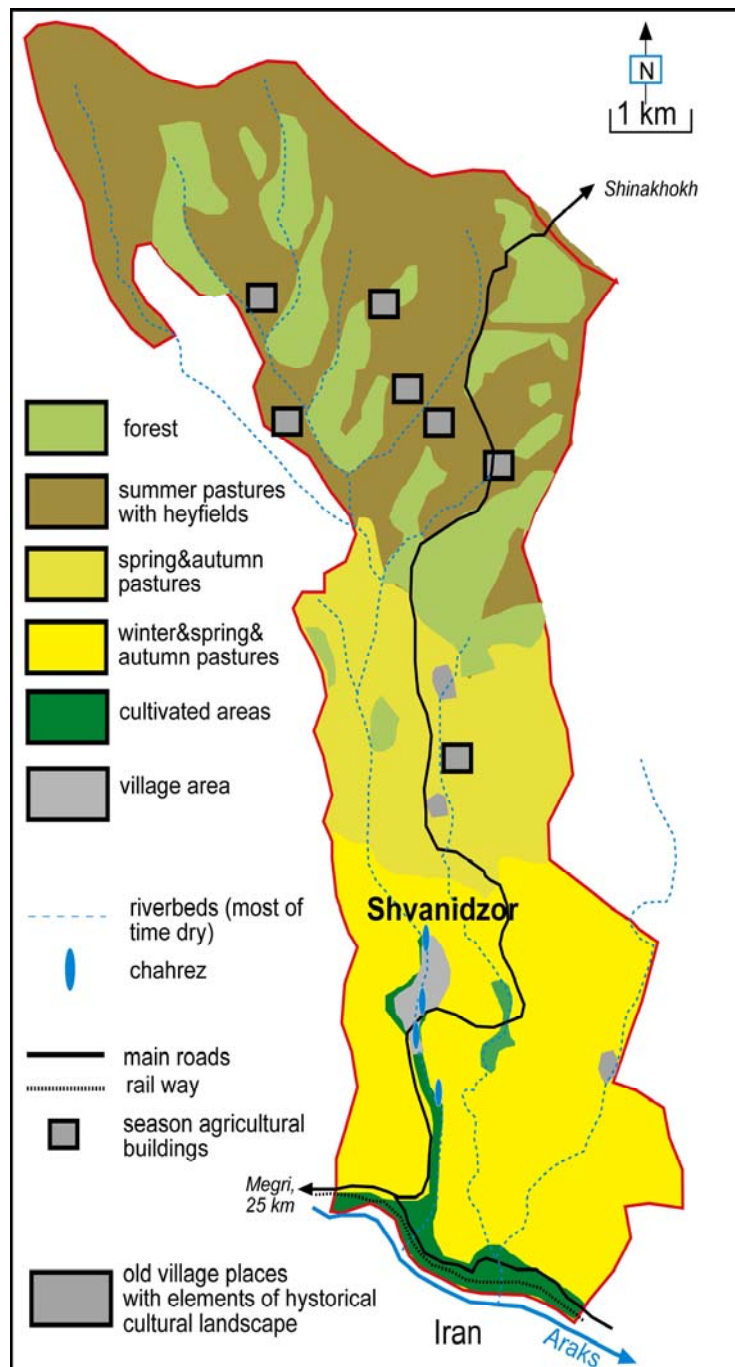
Community budget: Community budget is regulated by the legislation relating to community budget formation. It feeds from registered incomes, such as taxation – taxes on water, property, rent payments, local taxes, state subsidies etc. In 2007 community budget comprised AMD 5,434,200 (EUR 12,000).

Alternative income: Seasonal employment migration, road construction.

Livelihood: Gardening, animal husbandry, bee-keeping.

Social infrastructure of common use: Secondary School (43 pupils), library (over 1000 books), 2 churches, 2 shops, medical centre, telephone (85% of the villagers are connected, Viva Cell and ArmenTel mobile providers started to cover the village territory in 2008), postal service.

Industry Enterprises: There are no industries in the community. However, there are a number of other organisations: Water Consumers Union CJSC (deals with irrigation issues); Forestry CJSC (deals with forest protection); Haypost CJSC (postal service); 2 small shops



ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USE:

Administrative area: The administrative territory of the village is 4 222 ha, the settlement itself occupies 98 ha.

Land Resources: In Shvanidzor community land privatization was implemented in 1991. The ownership certificates were distributed in 2004. On average, each household got 1 ha land plot. About 90% of the lands are privatized, whereas 10% are community land, which can be rented.

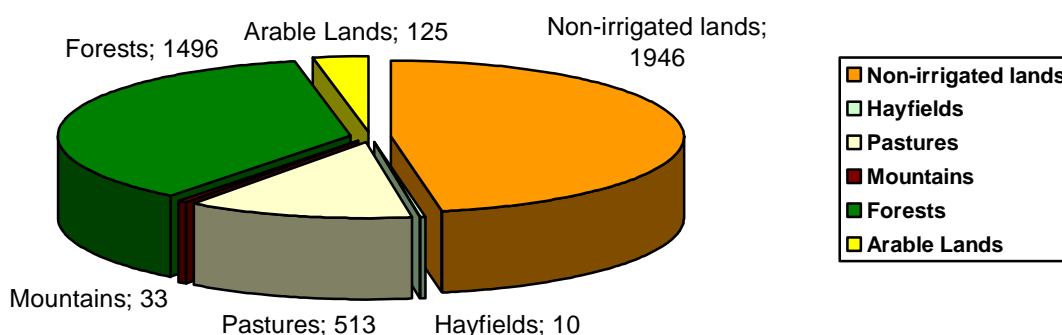


Diagram 1: Land composition in Shvanidzor in hectares

Climate: The community is located in the subtropics. The winter is mild, the lowest degree recorded was -24°C , the highest $+40^{\circ}\text{C}$. The total number of days with temperatures above 0° per year is 240. Average precipitation is 293 mm, out of which 48.5 fall during the summer time. Draught probability is 68%.

Animal husbandry, poultry, bee-keeping:

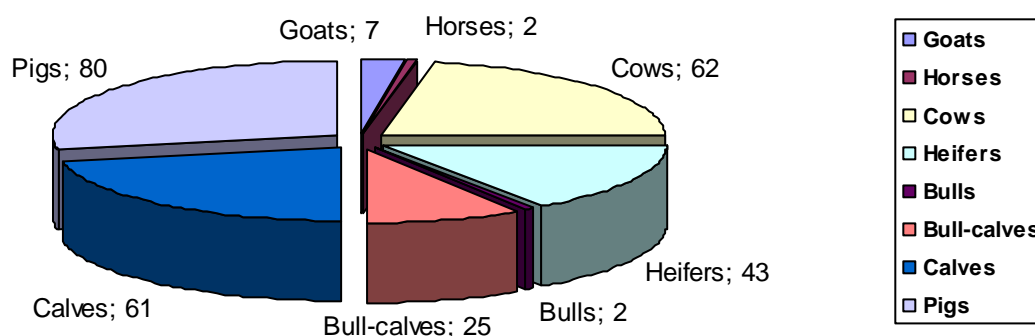


Diagram 2: Types of domestic animals in Shvanidzor

Number of bee-hives in the community is 108, poultry – 400 (chicken - 95%, ducks - 5%).

Environmental Risks: Logging, soil erosion, cultural landscape degradation, land fertility decline, draught, biodiversity loss (Red Book species).

PROSPECTS AND POTENTIAL OF ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Economic Development Potential: Rich historical and cultural heritage, beautiful landscapes, diversity of wild and cultivated plants, herbs, animals, traditional transportation etc.

History: According to historical sources, Shvanidzor community was founded in XIII A.D. and used to have more than 700 households. The location has been changed several times throughout history. There are numerous remnants of XVII-XVIII A.D. dormitories as well as houses with carved wooden balconies.

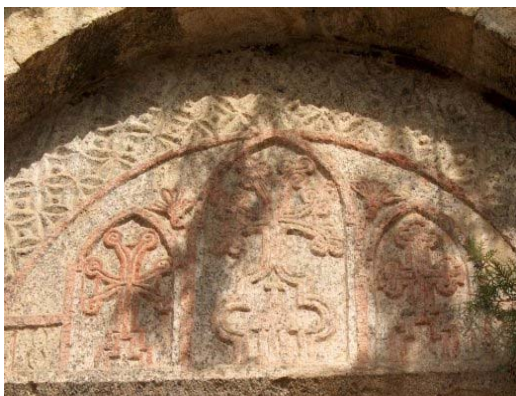


Pic. 1: Medieval constructions

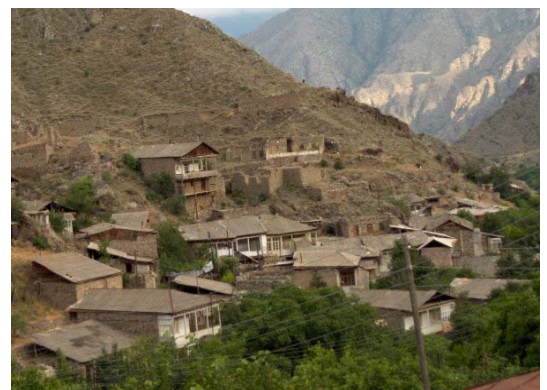


Pic. 2: Medieval bridge

Architecture: Shvanidzor is famous for its historical monuments. Close to the community there is an old bridge (XVII century), as well as Gyumerants, St. Stepanos (XVII-XIX centuries), Berdikar (XII-XIII centuries) churches. There is also an aqueduct of XVII century. Aqueducts are first mentioned in Armenia in 721-725 A.D. It is the oldest water supply system, which was used in Ancient Egypt. The aqueduct of Shvanidzor is made of polished basalt stones. Besides, it has an interesting shape and architecture specifics. This currently functioning aqueduct is the most important historical monument of its type remaining from the medieval times in Armenia.



Pic. 3: St. Stepanos church



Pic. 4: Old and new community houses

Ethnographic Value: Shvanidzor is located in the place of historic settlement of Areviq and has preserved several specific traditions and rituals. The most celebrated holidays were Easter, Palm Sunday, Wine Blessing etc. Pilgrimage was also quite spread among the inhabitants. For many centuries Shvanidzor has been a residence of *meliks*, which is reflected in many legends and traditions.

Traditional Activities: The community members were traditionally engaged in hunting, fishing, animal husbandry, gardening, winery. Part of the community were skilful craftsmen, especially smiths, tailors, carpenters, masons, mat weavers etc.



Pic. 5: Traditional tonir

B. STATE OF SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY'S DEVELOPMENT

Developed using content and characteristics of the Agenda 21 accepted in Rio-de-Janeiro in 1992

SECTION ONE: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

1. ACCESSIBILITY AND DISTANCE FROM THE MAIN MARKETS

1.1. Remoteness from main national markets

Table 1. Distance from the main markets

Nearest Border	Distance from the capital	Distance from the district centre	Distance from the marz centre
Islamic Republic of Iran, 1.5 km	410 km	17 km	102 km

1.2. High transportation cost to the main markets

Community members trade about 25% of their crops. Due to the long distance to the main markets and processing centres, the transportation of fresh fruits is not reasonable. Therefore, the majority of the community members are preparing dry fruits, getting 40 kg of dry fruit from 150 kg fresh ones. The price of dry fruits is incomparably high in winter, whereas the transportation is easy.

Table 2. Transportation of fruits

Transportation	Fuel	Fuel consumption	Price per 1 kg*	Revenue
cars (150 kg fresh fruit can be transported per trip)	petrol	80	date 1,2- 1,6	100 – 160
			pomegranate 1,1- 1,5	85-145
			peach 1,1- 2,0	85-220
			persimmon 1,0 -1,5	70-145
cars (150 kg fresh fruit can be transported per trip)	gas	23,5	fig 1,2- 1,6	126,5– 175,5
			pomegranate 1,1- 1,5	111,5 -171,5
			peach 1,1- 2,0	111,5 - 246,5
			persimmon 1,0 -1,5	126,5 -115

* EUR 1- AMD 447 (as of 24 December 2007)

During the Soviet times transportation of fruit was carried out by railway, which does not function today. At present, fruits are being transported by cars, owned or rented by the community members. In Shvanidzor, 22 households own a car. The products are also transported by small buses (PAZ) which run from Shvanidzor to Meghri ones a year. The fresh as well as dry fruits are being sold also outside the border of Armenia, which is quite profitable for the community members (average price EUR 6.47) and the demand is quite high.

The types of fruit trading are the following:

1. Trade with the *mediators*, who offer prices, 50-100 times lower than on the markets (EUR 0.1-0.19).
2. *Barter*. The fruit is bartered for coffee, clothes and other minor products.
3. Trade with the large *food processing companies*. Mainly the community deals with 'Noy' juice-producing company.



Pic. 6: Crops of pomegranate



Pic. 7: Grape, mainly used for wine-making

1.3. Market regulation policies

There are several documents regulating the market in the border-adjacent and mountainous communities:

1. Land Code of RA (15.06.2001)
2. Forest Code of RA (24.10 .2005)
3. Governmental decision N 507 “On property taxation privileges for the border-adjacent communities of RA” (06.07.1995),
4. Governmental decision N 246 “On state programme of the priority to border-adjacent and mountainous communities problems” (21.04.1999),
5. Law of RA “On Protection of Economic Competition” (06.11.2000)

2. LIVING STANDARDS AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Living standards

Previous research in the community has shown that average annual income per family comprises AMD 50,000 (EUR 111.85), thus making it AMD 14,286 (EUR 31.96) per person. The living standards of the vulnerable groups (see table 3) are lower.

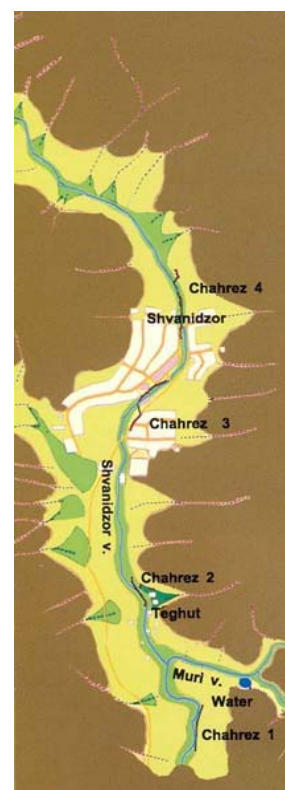
Table 3. Socially insecure groups in Shvanidzor

Socially insecure groups	Number of families	Number of family members
Refugees	6	18
Handicapped	-	8
Single mothers	1	2
Families of perished soldiers	2	4
Sectarians	-	2

2.2. Access to Resources

The community members have access to education, healthcare, as well as communication and transport. However, the access to the natural resources, such as lands and water, is unequal. Only 62% are connected to water supply system. Generally speaking, one group of the inhabitants have access to water all year round, whereas others deprived of stable supply of potable and irrigation water during the summer time.

The main water source for Shvanidzor community is the system of underground water channels and intake facilities- *kahrezes* (also known as *qanats*). These deep channels are located at a distance of 50-60 meters from each other. There are 5 kahrezes in Shvanidzor. Four of them were constructed in XII-XIV centuries, even before the village was founded. The fifth kahrez was constructed in 2005. Potable water runs through I, II and V kahrezes. Kahrez III and IV are in a quite poor condition. In summer, especially in July and August, the amount of water reaches its minimum, creating critical situation in the water supply system. Kahrez V was reconstructed by Meghri-1 NGO, in the framework of 'Rehabilitation of Meghri Kahrezes' programme, with the support of Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency. Water supply system was improved by REC Caucasus as well, through the water rehabilitation project implemented with the support of German Federation. As a result, the households located in the highlands were also connected to the water supply system.



Pic. 8: Location of kahrezes



Pic. 9: Local kid helping to carry water



Pic. 10: Carrying water

Complex mountainous relief, lack of mechanisation and irrigation water hinder land cultivation in the highlands. Non-irrigated lands comprise 1,946 ha, 6 ha of which are arable lands. Low land quality (IV class) results in the low fertility.

Table 4. Quality of lands in Shvanidzor

Class	ha	%
1-class	0	0
2- class	0	0
3- class	1422	34
4- class	800	19
5- class	2000	47
TOTAL	4222	100

2.3. Changes in Access to Resources Patterns

There are no activities towards the change in the resource accessibility patterns. The current patters have become habitual and 'natural', and the community members have no vision of changes.

2.4. Social Policies for the Population of Mountain Regions

There are several privileges for mountainous and border-adjacent communities, guaranteed by the legislation of RA. These are:

1. According to the Article 64 of the Land Code of RA, “On gratis provision of the governmental and community lands” lands belonging to the government or the community can be granted without any compensation (with the property rights) for agricultural activities and for construction of a dwelling house.
2. To the families who live in border-adjacent, mountainous, alpine, earthquake-suffered and desolated areas (the list ratified by the government) and who have no privatized lands and have not been granted (bought) any lands for house construction and its services.

2.5. Self-sufficiency of First Necessity Products

The community produces only agricultural products - fruits, vegetables, dairy products, home-brewed wine and vodka. Other type of products, such as flour, bakery, sugar, etc., is imported from other communities.

During the Soviet times, the community could provide itself with cereals, which nowadays became impossible due to the lack of irrigation and climate change. These factors have seriously affected the soil fertility.

2.6. Average Annual Income

The main community income source is agriculture, comprising 82%. The average monthly household income is AMD 50,000.

3. MARKETING AND SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES

3.1. Limited Household Management Options

The main branch of agriculture in the community is gardening. Gardens comprise 61 ha, out of which 28 % are under pomegranate and peach, 16 % - grapes, 7- figs and persimmon.

Animal husbandry is not well developed. Only 52 families out of 103 keep cattle (193 heads). There are only 7 heads of sheep and goats. Bee-keeping is also practiced, 11 families keep 108 beehives.

Arable community lands are mainly used for growing alfalfa. However, due to the lack of irrigation, productivity is very low. There are also other difficulties for agriculture, such as difficult accessibility to the highland fields, lack of mechanisation and others.

Despite of variety of products (fruits, vegetables, honey, dairy products, meat etc), there are no processing enterprises.

Table 5. Economy components in Shvanidzor

Economy components	%
Agriculture	78
Services	6
Enterprises	5
Business	6
Communications	4
TOTAL	100

3.2. Low Awareness Level on Sustainable Natural Resource Management

Due to the low level of awareness on sustainable use and management of the natural resources there is obvious biodiversity decline, especially because of uncontrolled collection of herbs, decorative and edible plants, many of which are endemic and endangered, included in the Red Book.

Low level of awareness also results in pollution of the community territory by solid waste, including organic waste. However, only 10% of the community composts the organic waste in their back yards. The community members are also not aware about the gas producing potential of manure, despite its daily quantities are enough for steady gas supply. It is also quite important due to the absence of gasification in the community.

3.3. Inactive Search for Alternative Income Sources

Diversity of natural landscape, rich historical and cultural heritage, as well as proximity of main highway creates lots of opportunities for tourism development. There is a need to raise awareness on changing legislation, planning, business administration etc. Revival of traditional wood carving, embroidery, carpet weaving, pottery and other handicrafts will help to promote village as a tourist destination.

It is also possible to start organic food production, especially of traditional dairy products such as *chortan* and *matsoun* as well as others.

Solving the problem of irrigation will enable to grow variety of pomegranates and grapes, produce jams, wine, liquors and numerous other products.

There are also necessary prerequisites of pig-breeding, however, only few community members have the necessary knowledge and skills.

All the abovementioned activities will support the sustainable development of the community.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

4.1. Low Population Growth

There have been no births in 2005. On average, there are 1-2 births per year. There are 16 children under 6 years, which proves the low birth rate in the community. The index of the population growth is negative (Table 6).

Table 6. Demographic situation

Indicators	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Births	1	4	6	6	1	0	2
Deaths	4	9	9	7	6	5	3
Growth index	-3	-5	-3	-1	-5	-5	-1
Natal mortality	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

4.2. Youth Migration

Youth emigration is a serious problem for the community. Young people emigrate for their education and as a rule do not return (6 people left the community in 2006). In 2005, 3 inhabitants of working age left the community. However, 2 women immigrated because of their marriage.

5. COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

5.1. Shortcomings of Hygiene and Sanitary Conditions

The community members keep in cleanness and neatness their homes and yards. However, there is no organised waste removal and composting experience, which results in unregulated waste disposal in desolated houses, rivers etc. During summer, the rivers and brooks dry and in spring the water carries the accumulated waste downstream.

The *kahrezes* are also in contact with rotting piles of waste, which create favourable conditions for pest proliferation. The community members realize the possible negative consequences of this situation, but no steps are taken for the solution of the problem.

Despite the difficult financial situation, the community members are ready to allocate certain sums to organise a regulated waste removal.

Waste from cattle and sewage are also the source of pollution of the inner channels, which makes the water unfit for irrigation. From time to time, the water from the *kahrezes* is sent to laboratory for expertise, however there is no permanent control. Community school is not connected to the water supply system, the toilets do not function.

However, despite the poor sanitary conditions, there have been no cases of epidemic diseases in the community.

5.2. Access to Medical Care

The community has an equipped medical centre, but experiences lack of specialists. During the Soviet times, the doctors from Meghri visited the community on special days. Nowadays, there is a family doctor from Meghri who treats the patients in the district centre. Children are treated by a nurse. The elderly are reluctant to visit doctors due to expensiveness of services. Medicines are sold in the drugstores, however, the community members prefer to take herbs, the qualities of which are well-known to them.

The elderly of the community mainly suffer from hypertonic diseases. In 2007, the medical centre had 1500 visitors, 60% of which complained on hypertonic diseases. Ambulatory treatment is also received by 10 patients, suffering from cardiovascular diseases and 7 patients, suffering from diabetes.

In order to make the medical care more accessible for the community it is necessary to establish the Community Health Rotation Fund, with the assistance of local and international organisations.

6. COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO MODERN FACILITIES

6.1. Shortcomings of Cultural Heritage Management

Shvanidzor is famous for its historical monuments. There is a bridge (XVII century) near to the settlement, Gyumerants, St. Stepanos (XVII-XIX centuries) and Berdikar (XII-XIII centuries) churches. The locals realize the historic importance of monuments, however do not treat them adequately. Cattle freely roam in the buildings, leaving manure there.

There are numerous medieval dormitories in the community (XIII –XVII centuries), which have not been reconstructed but are still inhabited.

Despite the community is located quite far from the main touristic routes, construction of the new road will increase the tourism development potential in the community. Absence of bed & breakfast still hinders development.

6.2. Construction of the Highway Disregarding Protection of Natural and Cultural Landscapes and Local Benefits

The road within the community stretches by 2-3 km, which needs reconstruction. The road, connecting the community with the main highway is 2 km long and has a regional importance. There are also 60 km of municipal roads, out of which only 24 km are asphalted. The distance between the community and newly built Tsav-Shikahogh highway (which is an alternative way to Iran) is 700 meters.

The old roads could accommodate 36 tonnage trucks, whereas the new one ensures the traffic of 80 tonnage trucks. According to the community members, the construction of the new highway was accompanied by damaging a number of channels and brooks, feeding the *kahrezes*. The construction machines also damaged the community pastures.

6.3. Limited Access to Modern Facilities

There is no Internet access in Shvanidzor. Moreover, the number of TV channels is very limited (only the First Russian Channel can be received without a special antenna). The community Culture Club is equipped with one satellite antenna, in the framework of the REC Caucasus project.

7. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

7.1. Consumer-oriented Life-style

Decisions on the community long-term development are made by the Community Council and the local authorities. However, environmental issues are usually ignored, as was demonstrated during the construction of the highway, by felling of trees and damaging the pastures. Unsustainable management of land resources result in productivity decline and soil degradation.

SECTION TWO: CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

8. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES

8.1. Poor Management of Land Resources

The community land resources comprise 4,222 ha, out of which only 3% (126 ha) are cultivated, mainly being the fruit gardens (66 ha). In the 1970s, the pump stations were constructed for the irrigation of gardens. On the rest of the lands cereals and vegetables are cultivated. The community members also own privatized lands, which were cultivated during the Soviet times and produced high crops. Nowadays, however, these lands are not cultivated due to a number of reasons, such as long distance from the settlement, absence of machinery etc. This brings to land degradation and fertility loss.

8.2. Lack of Crop Rotation

In the community, as well as throughout Armenia, the crop rotation has been one of the traditional agriculture methods. However, it is not applied nowadays, which is one of the reasons for the fertility loss.

8.3. Absence of Environmental Component in Agriculture

Shvanidzor, as well as the whole Meghri district, is located in the dry subtropics, which creates favourable conditions for cultivation of numerous fruits and vegetables, with the perspective of processing them as high quality dried products.

Table 1. The crops of certain fruits in 2005

Fruit	Average crops ha/t	Maximum crops ha/t
Pomegranate	10	14
Fig	15	18
Persimmon	20	30
Peach	10	12
Apricot	5	5
Grapes	6	6

It is worth mentioning that the fruits grown there can be generally considered organic. Due to financial constraints, the farmers do not use fertilisers, which, however, results in relatively low crops (table 9). Small amount of pesticides and lime is applied to the fruit trees for protection.

The fruits are dried in the sun, which creates most favourable conditions for organisation of this activity. An organic fertiliser (manure) is also applied in small amounts.

9. COMBATING DEFORESTATION

Forests comprise 1496 ha of the community lands (see diagram 1). Illegal logging was quite common in not so distant past, since the wood was the only energy source for the community. Today, the illegal logging is minimal. Only sanitary cleansing is implemented and the wood is sold by reasonable price.

9.1. Logging due to the Road Construction

The new Tsav-Shikahogh road passes through territories, covered with forests, which naturally cause deforestation. Moreover, the road construction can have negative effect on the community water supply, as well as cause soil erosion.

9.2. Usage of Forests as Pastures

Grazing of cattle in the forest damages natural growth and causes soil erosion. Recently, there has been a vision to start reforestation, by organising tree-planting activities.

9.3. Forest Protection Policy

Forest protection is ensured by a number of international agreements, such as UN Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio-de-Janeiro, 1992), and The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Cartagena, 2001), UN Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar 1971), European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne 1979), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris 1994), European Convention on Landscapes etc. as well as by the legislation of RA and National Forest Programme (21.07.2005).

Despite there is sufficient legislation, its enforcement is still imperfect. The reforestation activities in the community are highly insufficient.

10. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN REGIONS

10.1. Insufficient Attention to the Management of Alpine Landscapes

Shvanidzor was founded in XIII century. At that time there were up to 700 households. The community lands were cultivated during seven centuries, which resulted in formation of agro-landscapes. Due to the lack of irrigation and low land fertility the community was later relocated. Thus, the community and its surroundings are rich in interesting landscapes from the point of view of agro- and community-based tourism organisation.

11. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

11.1. One-sided Development of Agriculture

The main occupation of the community is gardening. Besides, there are all the necessary conditions for animal husbandry, poultry farming, bee-keeping and different forms of land cultivation. However, according to the observations, only 50% of the families take any advantage of this potential. For example, there are only 7 heads of small cattle, and only 11 families are engaged in bee-keeping. However, the revival of the traditional agriculture would be the best premise for the development of agricultural and community-based tourism.

11.2. Lack of Mechanisation and Agro-technical Activities

Lack of mechanization is one of the main problems for efficient agricultural development. There is only 1 tractor in the community (100 horse power), which is not fit for highlands. There are also caterpillar tractors. The agro-technical activities are not implemented on the sufficient level.

11.3. Inefficient Use of Water Resources

The community has irrigation water problem. In the recent years, 3-4 km of 45-year-old water supply lines have been damaged due to intensive floods. Pump stations, which supply irrigation water from Aras river, are also in a quite poor condition. Due to absence of supporting pumps, the damage of one pump stops the whole irrigation system. This situation hinders the agricultural development and aggravates sanitary conditions in the community.

12. PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY

12.1. Low Awareness Level on Biodiversity

Shvanidzor is located in dry subtropics. The indicators of subtropics are wild pomegranate, wild fig and numerous other plants. The majority of the plants are xerophile, represented by xeromorphous shrubs. Green leafy plants are represented by araxian (*Quercus araxina*) and oriental oaks (*Q. macranthera*), Georgian maple (*Acer ibericum*), as well as plane-tree, ash-tree, beech etc.

Shvanidzor and its vicinities are the only places in the South Caucasus, where 2 types of European redbud (Judas tree) - *Cercis griffithii* Boiss. and *C. siliquastrum* L grow. Dry alpine meadows are covered with scarce shrubs and are desert-like. However, there are numerous wild herbs, including officinal, edible as well as wild relatives of cultivated plants.

The biodiversity of the region is greatly damaged by the uncontrolled collection of plants, which gets more and more catastrophic with each year. The problem is also aggravated by the lack of awareness on biodiversity.



Pic. 11: European rosebud



Pic. 12: Wild pomegranate

According to the data provided by S. K. Dahl (1954), the district of Meghri belongs to the Irani-Armenian area. Here there is a concentration of more than half of all the invertebrates of Armenian fauna. The invertebrates are not well studied and no holistic picture is available.

The local community is well aware of the animals that are objects to hunting and poaching. Those are mainly mammals, such as Caucasian bear (*Ursus arctos syriacus*), Bezoarian goat (*Capra aegagrus aegagrus*), Armenian mufflon (*Ovis orientalis gmelinii*), Persian leopard (*Panthera pardus tullianus*), as well as badger, lynx, wild boar, roe, which are listed in the Red Book. Besides, there are also long-eared hedgehog and 3 types of bats that are listed as endangered. What refers to birds, the community members are well aware of quails and partridges, which are also hunted. It has to be mentioned that hunted licenses are issued by the Hunter's Union, in accordance with the decrees and the listed of species of the Ministry of Nature Protection. Regarding mammals, it is allowed to hunt only foxes and hares.

The locals have very consumerist vision of the nature. The animals and plants which are not object of hunting and collection are quite unknown to the locals. Out of 66 bird species listed in the Red Book, 15 can be met in Shvanidzor, which are *Acciper Brevipes*, *Circaetus gallicus gallicus*, *Aquila rapax orientalis*, *Aquila chrysaetos fulva*, *Gypaetus barbatus aereus*, *Gyps fulvus fulvus*, *Merops superciliosus persicus*, *Sylvia hortensis crassirostris*, *Oenanthe xanthoprigna chrysopygia*, *Monticola saxalitis saxalitis*, *Luscinia svecica occidentalis*, *Remiz pendulinus menzbieri* *Parus lugubris*. The 7 types of snakes from the 11 listed in the Red Book are found in Shvanidzor: *estudo graeca*, *umeces schneideri*, *Mabuya aurata*, *Rhynchocalamus*

melanocephalus, elescopus fallax ibericus, Elaphe hohenackeri , Vipera raddei , all of which are unknown to the locals.

A number of rare, endemic and beautiful insects can also be met in this area.

The rich biodiversity of the community and its vicinities creates favourable conditions for the development of ecotourism. The community is situated 10 km away from Shikahogh State Preserve, and the lack of awareness on biodiversity can have negative effects on nature protection.

12.2. Nature Protection Policy

1. UN Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio-de-Janeiro, 1992), The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Cartagena, 2001)
2. UN Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar 1971),
3. Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne 1979),
4. Land Code of RA (2001)
5. Law of RA 'On Flora' (28.11.2002),
6. Law of RA 'On Fauna' (28.11.2002),
7. Governmental decision N 54 'On state strategy and national action plan of specially protected nature areas development' (12.12.2002),
8. Governmental decision N 13 'On national action plan to combat desertification in RA' (28.03.2002),
9. Law of RA "On hunt and game preserves" (09.04.2007)

Despite the existence of quite a firm legislative basis, effective protection of flora and fauna is still difficult to implement. Besides, quite important for the biodiversity conservation is Governmental Decision N54, on the establishment of 'Arevik' State Preserve.

13. MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

13.1. Low Awareness Level on Modern Agricultural Technologies and Loss of Traditional Knowledge

Local community members have no information about modern agricultural technologies. Traditionally only local sorts of fruits were grown in the community. However, control of the planting and sowing material is very low; the possibility of planting of unknown species as well as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is not excluded. Traditionally used seeds are increasingly replaced by the new ones, which are more productive and resistant to pests, draught, and other unfavourable conditions, whereas community members have no information about their origin, quality etc.

13.2. Absence of Traditional Farming

Since there is no certification of the organic food, its production is not promoted. Despite they have higher prizes at the international markets, the farmers are primarily interested in the farming methods, ensuring high productivity rates.

14. POTABLE WATER SUPPLY AND MANAGEMENT

14.1. Shortcomings of Water supply and Sewage Systems

The water share per person reaches 100 liters per day, but is unequally distributed. The main reason is the poor condition of water supply system, which results in 70-80% loss.

The kahrezes, which are the main source of the potable water, have not been renovated for dozens of years.

No water meters are installed, therefore water consumption is uncontrolled. The sanitation control of the water quality is also insufficient.

The community has no sewage system, the wastewater is simply discharged into the river. The toilets in the backyards are potential sources of infection.

14.2. Absence of Modern Irrigation Systems

There are no modern irrigation systems in the community. The irrigation is implemented in following ways:

1. The lands are irrigated by waters of river Aras, supplied by the pump station. The service is paid and implemented by the Water Consumers' Union. However, the system is in quite a poor condition, which results in lack of irrigation for more than 50% of arable lands.
2. Household plots and gardens are irrigated by water from kahrezes. Due to the growing intensity of draught, the water sources of several households are also drying out in the summertime. In order to solve the irrigation problem of Shvanidzor lands (situated 600m above sea level), the Millennium Challenges Programme envisages construction of Meghri gravitation water supply system and Lichk water reservoir in 2009-2011. The efficient use of kahrez water is also an issue in the community. The water intake system does not allow collecting additional amount of water and the absence of output pipes makes it impossible to be used for irrigation.

14.3. Waste Removal and Processing

Waste removal in the community is organised once a year, which is not sufficient for solving waste-related problems. There is no waste processing and no composting experience. This situation has its negative impact on the groundwater.

15. SOLID WASTE AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

15.1. Poor Management of Wastewaters

The sewage system is used only by 19 households of the community. The sewage system does not have any branches, which makes it impossible to be connected by the rest of the community. The community administration envisages support from international donors, in order to connect the households as well as the administrative buildings to the network. However, there is also a need to establish a wastewater treatment station.

15.2. Poor Management of Solid Waste

There are no specially organised landfills in the community. Waste dumping is not controlled. Each part of the village has special areas, where the community members dump their waste and occasionally burn it.

SECTION THREE: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS

16. WOMEN'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

16.1. Women Participation in the Decision-Making Process

There is a comparative gender balance in the community. There are 3 women members in the community administration. Principal of the only school in the community is also a woman. However, the heads of the village have traditionally been exceptionally men.



Pic. 13: Community women

Processing of agricultural products and homestead works are mainly implemented by women. Women of working age (16-54 years old) comprise 27% of the community, women of non-working age - 22%. Women are more actively engaged in organised meetings and other public events (e.g. women comprised about 60% of the participants of REC Caucasus events).

17. ROLE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

17.1. Low Awareness Level

There are 72 children under 16 years and 50 children of 16-29 years. Number of pupils in the school is 43. The majority of the children are involved in agricultural activities; however have no basic knowledge on environmental protection. There is also not enough knowledge on the history of the community, cultural values and the need for their preservation.



Pic. 14: Community children

There have already been attempts to improve the situation. A number of educational events have been organised by REC Caucasus and WWF. However, the consumerist approach towards the

natural resources is still dominating among the youth (which is of course the result of their low social security level).

17.2. Need for Supplementary Environmental Trainings

Since tourism development is one of the priorities for Shvanidzor, it is necessary to include the environmental lessons in the curricula. It is also necessary to raise the awareness of youth on the Red Book species, their habitats and methods of their conservation.

18. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF LOCAL POPULATION

18.1. Traditional Local Authorities

Despite there are quite a lot of active and respected community members, who want to see their community developing and prosperous, the community governance is mainly concentrated with the Head of the Community.

18.2. Low Level of Institutional Development of Local Organisations

There is only one 'Shvanidzor Jur' organisation, the main goal of which is to improve the quality of potable and irrigation water. Currently, the organisation is not functioning.

There are no other organisations. This is the result of low awareness level, lack of finances and disbelief in the power of the community by its members.

18.3. Internal Disagreements

The social inequality is the main source of unequal distribution of water and land resources within the community.

19. COOPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

19.1. Cooperation with International Organisations

There are a number of international organisations (NATO, REC Caucasus, CDRF, NFSAT, WWF), who implemented different projects in Shvanidzor. However, all the implemented projects had common shortcomings: the continuity of the projects is not assured and the initiative always comes from the outside.

20. LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

20.1. Lack of Finances

In 2005 the community income comprised AMD 3,546,000 (EUR 6,755). The main sources were: 470,00- land taxes, 1,250,000- property tax, 250,000 - rent, 76,000 -local taxes- and 1,500,000 –state subsidies. Obviously, it is not enough to cover the community needs.

20.2. Formality of Democracy

The basic principles of democracy are violated in the community on a regular basis. According to the observations, the majority of the community members are not involved in the decision-making process.

20.3. Lack of Community Development Planning and Management Justification

Since the community is comprised of separate households, they function independently and do not see the necessity of the unified planning for the whole community development. The only

exception is the Head of the community, who understands and accepts the necessity for the community development plan. It has perspectives for the improvement of social-economic situation in the community.

21. COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL UNIONS

21.1. Absence of Professional Unions in the Community

There are no professional unions and similar organisations in the community, which results in failures in the economic development, e.g. difficulties in the transportation of fruits to the markets etc.

22. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF FARMERS

22.1. Absence of Farmers Unions

Despite the community is a village, and the main occupations of its members are gardening and animal husbandry (both comprising 78% of the overall income), there are still no farmers' unions or networks. There is only one pig-breeding farm. Other households are engaged in mixed farming. The only exception is the bee-keepers, since they have an organised market. The rest of the households functions independently and have trading constraints.

SECTION FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

23. FINANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

23.1. Absence of Knowledge on Community Fund Organisation and Alternative Budget Sources

Community members have no clear ideas about the concept of community fund and how it can be used for the benefits of the community. The fund can be established on the basis of volunteer contributions, donations and later be used for the community needs.

23.2. Absence of Information on the Local Deposit Mechanisms (Common Cash Box)

In the community there is an absence of the knowledge on the mechanisms of deposits and establishment of common cash box.

23.3. Insufficient cooperation with international donor organisation

The communication and initiatives are mainly one-way. The population is actively involved only with those organisations who have their presence in the community or in the *marz*. Insufficient activity in cooperation with international donor organisations is also caused by its remoteness and isolation.

23.4. Low level of fundraising skills and attraction of investments

Youth population of the community has no knowledge, skills and tools to attract funds to their community. This is the result of community passiveness, lack of modern communication technologies and access to information, lack of cooperation with international donor organisation. A number of organisations, e.g. REC Caucasus, have organised trainings for the community youth, which is however, not enough for effective fundraising. Absence of initiatives is also a result of broken promises by several organisations in the past.

24. TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGIES

24.1. Lack of Finances and Information on New Technologies

Lack of information on the new technologies and insufficient finances hinder the technological development of the community. The main issue in the community is the lack of potable and irrigation water. It is necessary to apply dripping irrigation approach, replicate the success experiences etc. However, due to the lack of finances it becomes impossible to solve these problems. The communication systems are also quite underdeveloped, which hinders the information dissemination on the technology etc.

25. SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

25.1. Lack of Information on Sustainable Development

In the frames of their projects, WWF and REC Caucasus have implemented a number of trainings, educational programmes and such. However, the main obstacle on the way to promote sustainable development is that the trainings have been dedicated only to the issues of biodiversity conservation, without proper attention to social and economic issues.

26. PROMOTING EDUCATION, TRAININGS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

26.1. Inactiveness of the Community in Search of Complex Solution

There are 14 teachers and 43 pupils in the only school of the community. However, the community meetings and trainings are attended only by representatives of higher school classes and relatively active youth. The community is ready to attend trainings only if they deal with the solution of economic problems. Generally, the community members are indifferent to pure educational programmes.



Pic. 15: Community library



Pic. 16: Gathering in the Cultural Club

27. NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

27.1. Absence of Specialists, Low Level of Professionalism and Skills

For the sustainable use of natural resources, it is necessary to have a number of qualified professionals, lack of which is obvious in Shvanidzor. This fact does not contribute to the development of long-term development projects for the community.

28. LEGISLATION

28.1. Enforcement Difficulties of Environmental Legislation

In case of construction of strategic objects, as happened with road construction, the environmental issues are totally neglected.

28.2. Contradictions between Different Environmental and Non-environmental Legal Acts

There are several contradictions among different legal acts regulating the same subjects (water, land, landscapes conservation etc), which have to be overcome for the successful enforcement.

29. INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKING

29.1. Absence of Materials on Sustainable Development in the National Language

There is sufficient information on sustainable development in the capital. However, they are not available in other regions, especially villages, due to their isolation. The problem is aggravated by the limited number of TV channels, absence of Internet and periodicals.

**C. GROUPING PROBLEMS OF SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY
AND RANKING THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR URGENCY**

PROBLEMS RANKING OF SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY

In order to determine the opportunities for sustainable development in Shvanidzor community, it was necessary to analyze the current situation by joint efforts of local population and the experts. As a result, the following problems have been identified:

1. High Cost of Transportation to the Main Markets

The distance between the community and the main markets and processing companies creates great difficulties for sustainable development of the community.

2. Inefficient Management of Natural Resources

The community members do not have equal access to the potable and irrigation water, arable lands and gardens. The biodiversity is treated only from the consumerist point of view.

3. Absence of Sustainable Agriculture

The community does not have a sustainable development plan. The existing arable lands are not sufficiently used due to the steepness, absence of mechanization, low fertility, limited irrigation and crop rotation.

4. Absence of Income Source Diversification

Despite there are historical, religious and cultural monuments, the community members do not pay sufficient attention to their protection and do not view them as a potential for economic development.

5. Shortcomings of Healthcare System

Poor quality and insufficient quantity of potable water, absence of solid waste management result in serious sanitation problems.

6. Low Level of Environmental Education and Lack of Access to Information

The sources of information within the community are extremely limited.

7. Absence of Solid Waste Management

The community does not have official landfill and there is no regular waste removal.

8. Absence of Activeness in the Decision-Making Process

The majority of the community members are indifferent towards the decision-making process. The ideas about the community-based non-governmental organisations and their role are still in their germinal stage.

9. Insufficient Cooperation with International and Local Organisations

The experience of the cooperation with international and local organisations is very small.

PROBLEMS GROUPING AND CLASSIFICATION

The problems listed below can be divided as short-term and long-term, evaluated from 0 to 3 points. 0- the problems which have no feasible solution; 1- the problems, which can be solved in long-term perspective; 2- the problems, which can be solved in mid-term perspective; 3- the problems, which can be solved in short-term perspective with small investments

1. High Cost of Transportation to the Main Markets

1.1.	1.1	Border-adjacent location	0
1.2.	1.1	Remoteness from regional and national markets	2
1.3.	1.2	High cost of fruit transportation	3
1.4.	1.2 3.1 3.3	Absence of fruit processing enterprises	2
1.5.	1.2	Absence of railway	1

2. Inefficient Management of Natural Resources

2.1.	2.2 2.3	Unequal access to the potable and irrigation water	2
2.2.	2.2 8.1	Unequal access to irrigated lands and highland gardens	1
2.3.	3.2 5.1	Unsustainable use of water, land and biodiversity resources	2
2.4.	6.2 9.1	Inefficient planning during the road construction and harming natural landscapes	1
2.5.	8.3 10.1 27.1	Absence of environmentally friendly land use	2
2.6.	9.2 9.3	Using forests as pastures	3
2.7.	8.1 8.2 8.3	Land degradation	1
2.8.	11.2	Absence of agricultural machinery	2
2.9.	10.1	Inefficient use of mountainous landscapes	3
2.10.	11.3 14.2	Absence of modern irrigation system	2
2.11.	5.1	Absence of water intake and supply system	3
2.12.	12.1	Disappearance of Red Book flora and fauna species	3

3. Absence of Sustainable Agriculture

3.1.	3.1 11.3 14.2	Loss of crops due to irrigation problems	2
3.2.	11.1	One-sided development of agriculture	3
3.3.	8.3	Absence of organic production	3
3.4.	23.1	Insufficient income source diversification	3
3.5.	1.2 3.1 3.3 22.1	Absence of fruit processing opportunities	3
3.6.	3.3	Limited production of honey	3

	11.1		
3.7.	13.1	Absence of knowledge on modern agricultural technologies	3
3.8.	13.2	Absence of traditional crafts and products	3
3.9.	1.2	Limited marketing opportunities	1
3.10.	2.2 8.1	Land degradation as a result of absence of ameliorative activities	3
3.11.	21.1 22.1	Absence of agricultural cooperatives, increasing the productivity	3

4. Absence of Income Source Diversification

4.1.	3.3 6.1 13.2	Absence of rural and ecotourism development, loss of traditional crafts and products	3
4.2.	12.1 12.2	Absence of officinal plant farms	2
4.3.	3.1 3.3	Absence of traditional animal-breeding methods	3
4.4.	6.1 20.3	Absence of B&B services and inns	2
4.5.	3.3 6.1	Insufficient care for cultural monuments	2

5. Shortcomings of Healthcare System

5.1.	5.2.	Absence of stationary health care	2
5.2.	2.2. 5.1. 14.1	Poor quality of potable water	3
5.3.	5.1. 5.2.	Sanitation problems	3
5.4.	5.2.	Absence of community health care rotation fund	1
	14.1	Poor condition of sewage system and resulting sanitation problems	1

6. Low level of environmental education and lack of access towards information

6.1.	17.1	Limitations to Armenian and Russian TV channels broadcasting	3
6.2.	6.3	Absence of internet connection	3
6.3.	3.2 12.1 25.1	Lack of awareness on the rare and endangered species of the community and its vicinities	3
6.4.	24.1 27.1	Absence of knowledge on modern agricultural techniques	3
6.5.	14.2 24.1	Absence of drip emitting irrigation skills	3
6.6.	11.1 13.1	Absence of knowledge on organic farming	3
6.7.	12.1	Lack of knowledge of proper officinal plant collection and drying	3
6.8.	2.4 9.3 12.1 28.1 28.2	Absence of knowledge on legislation	3

6.9.	6.1 6.3	Absence of income diversification	3
6.10.	20.2 25.1	Lack of knowledge on democracy and civil rights	3
6.11.	3.3 22.1 23.2	Lack of knowledge on business organisation	3
6.12.	26.1	Absence of youth mobilization for community development	3
6.13.	26.1	Absence of skills of complex problems solution	3
6.14.	29.1	Absence of information on sustainable development in the school and the media.	3
6.15.	23.2 23.3 23.4	Absence of fundraising skills	3

7. Absence of Solid Waste Management

7.1.	15.2	Absence of official landfills	3
7.2.	3.2 14.3 15.2	Absence of municipal solid waste removal	3
7.3.	5.1	Absence of composting experience	3

8. Absence of Activeness in the Decision-Making Process

8.1.	18.1	Indifference towards decision-making process	3
8.2.	18.2	Absence of the NGO role in the decision-making process	3
8.3.	17.1	Youth mobilization	3
8.4.	18.2	Low development level of institutional mechanisms	3
8.5.	23.3	Insufficient cooperation with international and local organisations	3
8.6.	4.2	Youth emigration	3

9. Insufficient Cooperation with International and Local Organisations

9.1.	1.1	Remoteness of the community	0
9.2.	23.3	Information isolation	3
9.3.	2.2 23.3	Limited knowledge on international and local organisations, engaged in rural development	3
9.4.	23.4	Lack of knowledge on project proposal writing	3
9.5.	23.2 23.3 23.4	Absence on fundraising skills	3

D. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY

The community development strategy is based on the intention to fill the development gaps in the priority fields identified in the Chapter C. The strategy is broken down into long-term (1 - 3 years), medium-term (4-6 years) and long-term (6-9 years) actions.

1. HIGH COST OF TRANSPORTATION TO THE MAIN MARKETS

Strategy 1

In the short-term perspective it is recommended to establish local farmers' unions, which will enable to reduce the cost of fruit transportation and marketing in Yerevan, as well as other major markets.

Strategy 2

In the mid-term perspective it is proposed to establish a small fruit-processing enterprise for Shvanidzor and the neighbouring communities, which will enable the community members to efficiently trade their crops, such as pomegranate thickener, used for preparing jams and juice by large companies. It is also proposed to establish sheep-breeding farms. The community is situated near the border with Iran, which has quite a big demand for mutton.

Strategy 3

In the long-term perspective it is necessary to develop alternative markets for the community. The newly-built highway passing by the community will enable the farmers to trade their products there.

2. INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Strategy 1

Considering the condition of water supply system in the community and the need for sustainable water use, it is necessary to improve the water resource management, by construction of water intake reservoirs and introduction of water meters. Considering the limited water supply, the community members should implement unified planning of the consumption, in order to ensure efficient water use and equal distribution among the households. Construction of the water reservoirs will ensure access to water during summer months, when most of the kahrezes dry out.

To ensure the efficient water use it is proposed to rehabilitate the internal water supply system and distribute water meters.

The biodiversity protection issues are proposed to be solved via improvement of environmental education.

Strategy 2

In the mid-term perspective it is proposed to introduce drip emitting irrigation system, which will ensure maximal water conservation and increase soil productivity. In order to decrease water consumption, it is proposed to increase mechanization of the agriculture, which will be owned by the farmers' unions. The community members will use the tractor as a paid service, according to the plan and schedule.

Strategy 3

In the long-term perspective it is proposed to create an alternative water supply system.

3. ABSENCE OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Strategy 1

In the short-term perspective it is proposed to develop bee-keeping, using the existing potential. The main factor for success is the establishment of bee-keepers' union and organisation of joined activities. The strategy also involves trainings on bee-keeping and organic agriculture. For development of organic agriculture it is necessary to establish funds, certification and marketing activities.

Strategy 2

The climate and nature specifics in Shvanidzor create favourable conditions for organic agriculture development. One of the necessary prerequisites is provision of knowledge and skills on crop rotation and its application.

Strategy 3

To establish organic agriculture in the long-term perspective, it is necessary to seek for marketing opportunities, by participating in different fairs etc.

4. ABSENCE OF INCOME SOURCE DIVERSIFICATION

Strategy 1

It is necessary to develop the rural and ecotourism opportunities, based on the rich biodiversity, proximity to the Shikahogh natural reserve and cultural heritage of the community. It is proposed to develop traditional crafts and household production. The products can be traded on the highway and in different markets of Armenia.

Strategy 2

It is proposed to increase the community capacities in growing and processing of officinal plants. There is quite a big experience in trading officinal plants not only in Armenian but also in the international markets. Taking into consideration the rich biodiversity, presence of rare plants and their accessibility, this will serve an additional income source and will decrease the illegal collection.

It is also proposed to develop the traditional animal husbandry, while keeping in mind the threat of overgrazing.

Strategy 3

It is envisaged to increase the production volumes and the quality of industries, mentioned in the Strategies 1 and 2 as well as to identify the agricultural diversification options.

5. SHORTCOMINGS OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Strategy 1

In the short-term perspective it is envisaged to improve the sanitary conditions of the community by creation of sanitary belts around the kahrezes as well as elimination of garbage piles, which can be the reason for a number of infectious diseases.

In order to ensure the equal access to the health care, it is proposed to establish the Community Health Care Rotation Foundation, with the support of international and local organisations.

Strategy 2

It is proposed to ensure visits of a family doctor from Meghri at least once a week. This will be ensured by the community fund and will improve the health care in the community.

Strategy 3

In the long-term perspective it is envisaged to rehabilitate the sewage system, in order to prevent epidemics among the children.

6. LOW LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND LACK OF ACCESS TOWARDS INFORMATION

Strategy 1

It is envisaged to improve the access of information in the community by ensuring access to more international and local TV channels and Internet. It is also proposed to organise a number of events to increase public awareness on sustainable development and civil society. It is also necessary to ensure the dissemination of publications and press in the national language.

7. ABSENCE OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Strategy 1

It is proposed to mobilize the community for waste collection and other activities regarding the waste processing.

8. ABSENCE OF ACTIVITY IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Strategy 1

Considering the indifference of the community members towards the decision-making process, it is proposed to focus the activities on the community mobilization, as well as establishing local non-governmental organisations, such as farmers' unions, youth council, etc.

Another important issue is the youth migration. This problem can be mitigated by creation of jobs, agricultural diversification, establishment of youth union etc.

9. INSUFFICIENT COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Strategy 1

The remoteness and isolation of the community cause difficulties for the cooperation with different organisations. In the short-term perspective it is proposed to establish different civil organisations, joint implementation of projects, support to partnership development, organisation of relevant trainings.

For the organic agriculture development it is proposed to:

- Introduce planning to the environmental-friendly land use
- Ensure irrigation of the fruit gardens
- Construction of a fruit drier
- Raise awareness on the organic farming among the farmers

E. THE ACTION PLAN FOR SHVANIDZOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Plan includes short-, medium- and long-term goals. The structure of the Action Plan corresponds to the problem grouping in the classification stage. All the Projects are targeted to the solution of the identified problems and consequently, to the sustainable development of the community in the long-term perspective.

ACTION PLAN - STRATEGY 1 (1-3 YEARS)

		Existing Problem	Project Name	Goal	Activities	Implementer	Responsible side according to the legislation	Possible donor	Required sum in USD	Timeframe	Success indicators
1	High cost of transportation to the main markets										
1.3	1.2	High cost of fresh fruit transportation	Establishment of farmers' unions	Organisation of joint transportation and marketing of fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings on business organisation • Establishment of farmers unions • Market assessment • Establishment of contacts with large trading and processing enterprises • Support of the experts and monitoring 	Farmers, invited experts	Farmers, invited experts, agriculture management agencies	Donor organisations, local authorities, REC Caucasus, community members	5.000 USD	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills on business and marketing • Decrease of product price by 10% • Income increase by 10-20% • Presence of agreements
2	Inefficient management of natural resources										
2.1	2.2. 2.3.	Unequal access to potable and irrigation water	Improving the water supply system	Ensure 24-hours water supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of water-intake reservoirs • creation of sanitary belts around the kahrezes • Introduction of water meters 	Farmers, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Farmers, local authorities, invited experts, agriculture management agencies	Donor organisations, community administration	15.000 USD	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of reservoirs and sanitation belts • 100-% supply of potable and irrigation water • 40% of the population have installed water meters
2.12	12.1	Disappearance of endemic and endangered flora and fauna species	Trainings on biodiversity protection	Biodiversity protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainings on biodiversity protection ▪ Trainings on goals, problems and conservation regimes of Shvanidzor State Reserve 	Invited trainers, REC Caucasus	International organisations, NGOs	International organisations	7.500 USD	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness oo the endangered Red Book species increased by 80%

2.8	11.2	Absence of agricultural machinery	Provision of mechanization for Shvanidzor and 2 neighbouring villages	Land cultivation and cattle breeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of intercommunity union with the help of the community representatives • Buying the machinery • Renting of the machinery by the members of 3 communities • Ensuring the proper functioning of the machinery 	Farmers, intercommunity unions, 3 community administrations	Farmers, intercommunity unions, 3 community administrations	Farmers, intercommunity unions, 3 community administrations, REC Caucasus	28.000 USD	2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of intercommunity organisation • Presence of agricultural machinery • Increase of cultivated lands by 30% • Income increase by 10%
3 Absence of sustainable agriculture											
3.3	8.3	Absence of organic farming	Development of organic honey production	Development of organic honey production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of bee-keepers' union • development of methods for organic honey production • enriching the bee-hives • establishment of community rotation development fund • Fixed interest payments from the rotation fund • implementation of regular audit 	Bee-keepers' union, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Bee-keepers' union, community administration	Donor organisations, community administration	10.000 USD	3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of bee-keepers' union • Awareness raising on the organic farming by 30% • Increase of the bee-hives quantity by 50% • Presence of Rotation Fund • Number of the communities using the fund
3.7	13.1	Absence of knowledge on organic farming and modern agricultural technologies	Trainings on organic farming	Awareness raising on the organic farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organic farming, certification, marketing ▪ trainings on organic farming 	invited experts, farmers	Community members, community administration	Donor organisations, REC Caucasus	7.000 USD	2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50% of the population will apply the organic farming methods

4 Absence of income source diversification											
4.1.	3.3 6.1 13.2	Absence on rural and eco-tourism development, loss of ethnic crafts, limited household products	Trainings on rural and ecotourism development	Increase the community capacity on rural and ecotourism development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation of practical trainings on rural and ecotourism for the community members 	Community members, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Community members, community administration	Community members, experts, REC Caucasus	4.500 USD	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of the community members on rural and ecotourism increased by 50%.
4.3	3.1 3.3	Absence of traditional animal husbandry	Development of small cattle breeding	Provision of alternative income sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of goat breeding farm training on sheep-breeding trading of mutton 	Community members, invited experts	Community members, farmers	Donor organisations, 3 community administrations	8.000 USD	3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presence of goat-breeding farms Increase of sheep heads amount of traded mutton
5 Shortcomings of health care system											
5.2	2.2 5.1 14.1	Issues related to poor water quality	Establishment of sanitary belts	Protection of water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment of sanitation belts activities to eliminate garbage piles 	Community members, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Community members	Community members, invited experts	11.000 USD	2 years	100% cleaning of the kahrezes surrounding area
6 Low level of environmental education and lack of access towards information											
6.1	17.1	limited number of national and international TV channels	Ensure broadcasting of TV channels	Stable information flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> installation of satellite antenna 	Community members, REC Caucasus	Community members	Donor organisations, community members, experts, REC Caucasus	3.000 USD	1 year	50% of the community members have access to the TV channels
6.10	20.2 25.1	Absence of knowledge on civil society and democracy	Trainings on civil society and democracy	Raising awareness of the population on civil society and democracy	Organisation of trainings	Community members, REC Caucasus	Community members	Community members, experts, REC Caucasus	1.500 USD	1 year	Awareness of the community members raised by 50%

6.14	29.1	Absence of materials on sustainable development in the national language in the community library and school	Provision of publications	Raise public awareness on SD	Provision of materials on SD in national language	Community members, REC Caucasus	International and local NGOs	International and local NGOs, Ministry of Agriculture, donor organisations	500 USD	1 year	Presence of publications on sustainable development in the community library
6.15	23.2 23.3 23.4	Absence of fund-raising skills	Increase community skills on fundraising	Increase capacities of fundraising	Organisation of trainings aimed to raise fund-raising skills	Community members, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Community members, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Community members, experts, REC Caucasus	2.500 USD	1 year	Increase of fundraising knowledge and skills by 30%
7	Absence of solid waste management										
7.2.	3.2 14.3 15.2	Absence of solid waste collection	Trainings of composting skills	Raise awareness on composting among the community	Practical trainings, lessons	Community members, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Community members, REC Caucasus	REC Caucasus	2.500 USD	1 year	Awareness raised by 100% Decrease of organic waste by 50%
8	Absence of activeness in the decision-making process										
8.4.	18.2	Low awareness level on institutional mechanisms	Increase the role of local organisations	Increase the capacities of the local organisations	Increasing capacities by trainings and providing equipment	Community members, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Local authorities, invited experts	Donor organisations, REC Caucasus	3.500 USD	3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of computers • Increase of local capacities by 30%
8.1.	18.1	Indifference towards decision-making process	Involving community members in the decision-making process	Involvement of community members	By joint efforts ensure public participation in the decision making process	Community administration, invited experts	Community members, community administration	REC Caucasus	500 USD	2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions made by joint efforts

8.3.	17.1	Lack of youth mobilization	Establishment of the Youth Club	Ensure active cultural, social and educational life	Renovation of the community Culture Club and organisation of different interest groups for children	Community members, community administration	Local authorities, community	Donor organisations, REC Caucasus	6.000 USD	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in the Club renovation process • Presence of educational groups for kids
9 Insufficient cooperation with international and local organisations											
9.3.	2.2 23.3	Lack of information about the donor organisations, active in the region	Implementation of activities aimed at information dissemination	Increase the awareness of the community members on the different organisations functioning in the region	Provide the community with brochures about the organisations functioning in the region. Organise a meeting bringing together the community members and the donors	Local authorities, local NGOs, REC Caucasus	Local authorities, community, NGOs	Community administration, REC Caucasus	2.000 USD	1 year	Awareness about the donor organisations active in Syunik raised by 40%
9.4.	23.4	Lack of knowledge on project-proposal writing	Organisation of trainings on project-proposal writing	Increase the capacities of the community members and administration on project writing	Organisation of trainings on project-proposal writing	Local authorities, local NGOs, invited experts, REC Caucasus	Local authorities, community, NGOs	Donor organisations, REC Caucasus	2.500 USD	1 year	Presence of project proposals to the donor organisations

F. SYSTEM OF MONITORING, REVIEWING AND INTRODUCING CHANGES IN LOCAL AGENDA

The system of monitoring and reviewing the document is based on success indicators given in the Action Plan, as well as indicators presented in Chapters B and D.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Indicators of success are presented in Chapter E. Almost all indicators are measurable though their use implies using data from passport and Chapter B.

MONITORING

Monitoring will be conducted by specially selected respected members of the community.

Main aims of the monitoring are as follows:

To provide an ongoing overview of the progress:

Information about the impact of the work on the progress towards meeting objectives, so that the activities can be adjusted if necessary

To maintain high standards

Information about the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of activities as well as the volume of the work

To make sure resources are used effectively

Information of resources that are required to produce a certain effect or how resources can be distributed differently to be more effective.

To plan work

Information to show what and who will be available, when and how work could be affected by seasonal trends in labour availability, disease, rainfall, market processes etc

To identify problems and find solutions at an early stage:

Information to make sure problems can be discussed and tackled before they become too serious.

To identify opportunities:

Information to help take advantages of strengths and opportunities

To look at the “process” of development

Information about the style of work, whether this is the best way of working to achieve more self motivation, capacity building and sustainability

To provide an information base for future evaluations:

Information about what has been done and why, and to show trends over time

To help staff feel their work has a definite purpose

Information about objectives, progress, impact and quality of work, that will help staff feel motivated and involved in the work.

Project performance monitoring

The purpose of project monitoring is to ensure:

- a) Activities detailed in the approved proposal are being managed in professional and timely manner
- b) Activities are in compliance with regulations
- c) Implementing agencies have established procedures to effectively measure impact
- d) Appropriate technical assistance is provided to strengthen areas in need of improvement.

Through the process of project monitoring, project management systems that require strengthening are identified and appropriate technical assistance to improve them is provided.

To enhance the outcome of a project, monitoring must be proactive. If monitoring focuses on an after-the fact review of management processes, little can be done to improve the outcome of any given activity. In addition, after-the fact oriented monitoring increases Implementing Agencies' perceptions that it is a policing activity rather than a technical assistance and support function.

This procedure outlines the following elements of project monitoring:

- 1.1 Preparation of monitoring plans
- 1.2 Preparation for monitoring visit(s)
- 1.3 Reporting

MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring Plan is developed from the approved project proposal. This process involves:

- Identification of key management components to be undertaken by the Implementation Agency for each project activity
- Establishment of dates by when each management process should be developed by the Implementing Agency
- Compilation of monitoring worksheets_ for reviewing each management process.

The Monitoring plan consists of two interrelated Component Parts. The first part is a list of systems that the Implementation Department/Agency will need to have in place to carry out different management activities: Beneficiary selection criteria, documentation for administering the program, management systems, etc. The second part is a list of each monitoring visit's objectives with tentative dates that correspond to the project timeline. Over the course of project implementation the objectives may be revised due to approved project revisions (such as a new activity) and the actual progress of the project implementation.

MONITORING VISITS

Monitoring visits will be undertaken by monitors appointed by the community at least twice per project implementation period. One field visit ("Mid-Term Monitoring Visit") will take place upon achieving by the project mid-way in its implementation. The other field visit ("Final Monitoring Visit"), earmarked for summarizing results of the project, is to be undertaken immediately prior to project completion. Other (ad hoc) visits will be conducted as necessary.

MONITORING REPORT (FORMAT)

Grants monitor will develop the Monitoring report after the field visits within 3-4 days. The monitoring reports will bring attention to positive aspects of project's implementation and / or areas that may need strengthening.

MONITORING WORKSHEET

<i>Project title:</i>					
Project budget:					
Project location:					
<i>Time frame:</i>					
Number of direct and indirect Beneficiaries					
Information concerning objectives					
Objective:	1) 2) 3)				
<i>Progress towards objective:</i>					
<i>Comments:</i>					
<i>Planned Activities (intermediary tasks to be fulfilled)</i>					
	<i>Done</i>		<i>Comments</i>		
	yes	no			
a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					
g.					
<i>Planned Inputs (resources employed)</i>					
	<i>Project Budget</i>				<i>Comments</i>
	Projected Unit/ Amounts	Projected Costs	Actual Unit/ Amount	Actual Costs	
a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					
g.					
Note:					

MONITORING REPORT FORMAT

To: Programme Manager

From: Grant Project Monitor

Subject: Monitoring Report # of Project Title Conducted on (Date)

Objective: This will specify the area identified by Grants Monitor or review as shown on the performance-monitoring plan.

Findings: This is a summary of Grants Monitor’s findings about strong and weak areas based on the information collected in each section of the worksheet utilized during the monitoring visit. More detailed information will be presented in the monitoring worksheets that should also be reviewed by program related personal.

Recommendations: Based on the findings above, recommendations could be issued and it’s fulfilment could be monitored as well

DOCUMENT REVISION

After achieving goals and completing success indicators the first document revision shall take place after 3 years, the second – after 5 years and the third one – after 10 years.

The First revision

The first revision shall include summarizing and annual report according to success indicators.

Necessary actions during the First revision

During the revision it should be clarified whether the picture of the development level has changed. If it has changed the Chapter B shall be revised according to the current situation. New projects are added to 5-years action plan and/or modified (quite probably some priority projects

from intermediate term Strategy 2 will be already executed). Also it is possible that projects from Strategy 3 will be included in the new action plan.

The Second revision

The second revision as the first shall include summarizing and reporting on expired term (5 years) according to the success indicators.

Necessary actions during the Second revision

During the revision it should be clarified whether the picture of the development level since the last revision has changed. If it has changed the Chapter B should be changed according to the current situation. If 5-year action plan has been completely executed, a New action plan will be written for the following years i.e. for additional 5 years.

During two years prior to the expiry of Strategy 3 action term, if all criteria are met and all goals achieved, community leaders shall initiate launch of new long term community strategy.

The Third revision

The third revision, just as the second one, shall include summarizing and reporting on expired term (10-15 years) according to the success indicators.

Necessary actions during the Third revision

After the expiry of the of Strategy 3 term, LA 21 Chapter B should be changed according to the current situation and achieved goals. Community leaders should offer new community development plan and long-term development strategy for the consideration to the local population. New long-term strategy and the action plan should be approved by 60 % of community inhabitants.

CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT

Changes are prepared by the community leaders on the monitoring basis. Any changes to the document are made during community meetings and approved by 60% of local residents. Prior to the modifications in the document local authorities and informal leaders should ensure that a minimum of 60 % of the population (adults and youth) are familiarised with these changes before community meetings take place.

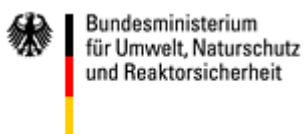
MEMBERS OF THE REVISION TEAM

60 % of the community population shall participate in the revision: representatives of all main groups (women, youth, NGO's, farmers, local self-management, district and regional authorities, etc.).

WHAT IF THE RESULTS ARE NOT ACHIEVED

Local authorities and informal leaders organise meetings on summarizing of LA 21 implementation at the end of each year and summarize the activity results. If given tasks are not achieved, as it was mentioned above the community leaders shall prepare changes to the document and offer them for the consideration of the general community meeting.

DONORS:



IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:

