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for Georgia
ENPARD



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**European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
In Georgia (ENPARD Georgia): Pilot Rural Development Measures (Phase II)
Reference: EuropeAid/151230/DD/ACT/GE**

STRENGTHENING RURAL DEVELOPMENT MODELS IN GEORGIA

Final Narrative Report Lagodekhi



December 2019

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List of acronyms used in the report

DG NEAR	Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
ELARD	European LEADER Association for Rural Development
EU	European Union
GAARD	Georgian Alliance of Agriculture and Rural Development
GALAG	Georgian Association of Local Action Groups
GRDN	Georgian Rural Development Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
LAG	Local Action Group
LEADER	Links between rural economy and development actions
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LINC	LEADER Inspired Network Community
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEPA	Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture
MC	Mercy Corps
NNLE	Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity
PIN	People in Need
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

1. Description

1.1. Name of Coordinator of the grant contract: CARE Austria

1.2. Name and title of Contact person: Stella Szonn, Programme Officer

1.3. Name of Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) in the Action:

Lead Agency: Mercy Corps

Partners:

- 1) CARE Austria
- 2) PIN Czech Republic
- 3) European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD)

1.4. Title of the Action: Strengthening Rural Development Models in Georgia

1.5. Contract number: 2016/379-225

1.6. Start date and end date of the action: 1st November 2017 – 31st October 2019

1.7. Target country(ies) or region(s):

Country: Georgia

Region: Kakheti

Municipality: Lagodekhi

1.8. Final beneficiaries and/or target groups:

All communities in Lagodekhi Municipality (approx. 31,236 persons, 15305 women) benefitting directly or indirectly from a diversified local economy and improved living conditions)

Lagodekhi Local Action Group (130 representatives of local authorities, civil society, private sector)

Georgian Association of Local Action Groups (GALAG) - 16 members

Businesses, cooperatives and other private enterprises

Educational, cultural recreational bodies and local CSOs

Rural communities throughout Georgia benefitting from new and effective approaches to rural development

1.9. Country(ies) in which the activities take place (if different from 1.7):

Study visits for the GALAG and LAG members and the project team were conducted in: Finland, Portugal, Spain, Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic

2. Assessment of implementation of Action activities

2.1 Executive Summary of the Action

The project “Strengthening the Rural development Models in Georgia” has been implemented by Mercy Corps (MC) and three co-applicant organizations CARE, People in Need (PIN) and European Leader Association, under the ENPARD Phase II, from 1st November 2017 to 31st October 2019.

Following the ENPARD Phase I Rural Development pilot projects in Lagodekhi, Borjomi and Kazbegi Municipalities, coordinated respectively by CARE, MC and PIN, the project continued to build on the successful work done in the creation of a bottom-up, community-led rural development model.

The launch of Phase II was followed by an extensive information campaign conducted across the municipality to once again promote the idea of community-led local development and sought to attract community members to join the Local Action Group (LAG), which led to a 30% increase in LAG membership compared to ENPARD I. 65% of LAG members are representatives from the private sector and civil society ensuring a balanced decision making process alongside public sector institutions. In May 2018, LAG was registered as Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity (NNLE).

Based on the recommendations provided by ELARD experts, Lagodekhi LAG updated the Local Development Strategies (LDS) to make it more consistent with European standards. Through engaging local population in the elaboration process of the LDS, the project managed to change the perception of rural people towards active participation in decision-making on the municipality development goals.

The project supported the disbursement of development sub-grants in order to support the realization of the LDS. During the ENPARD II project implementation period, two rounds of grant competitions were launched. The information campaign triggered an increased interest from Lagodekhi citizens towards the grant competitions and the number of social and commercial initiatives submitted during ENPARD II doubled compared to ENPARD I. 33 local initiatives (10 social and 23 economic) were selected through a two-stage selection process by the LAG grant committee for financial support with the total amount of 1,449,712 GEL (ENPARD contribution) and 1,139,939 GEL (partner contribution). The sub-grant projects facilitated the diversification of the rural economy through supporting the agricultural sector and related value chains, tourism development, environment protection and social service improvements in line with the LDS priorities.

Overall, 31,236 persons (including 15,305 women) benefitted directly or indirectly through the Lagodekhi project. The majority benefitted from the social sub-grant projects, providing improved social services to elderly, youth, PWD, women and children. 150 permanent (73 for women) and 251 seasonal jobs were created through the sub-grant projects.

Capacity building aiming to improve the ability of the LAG to independently and efficiently implement local development planning processes and grant management stood at the core of this project. Through the combination of various trainings and exchange visits within Georgia and EU countries, LAG acquired enhanced skills to independently run grant competition and perform monitoring and evaluation activities. During the project duration, CARE gradually minimized its direct involvement in grant selection process and instead was guiding LAG in the organization of information campaigns and to select strong sub-grant projects. Of particular value was that LAG members acquired enhanced skills to objectively oversee the ongoing process of project implementation, as well as to monitor and evaluate the sub-grant projects that they supported. In that way they could assess whether the aims of the LDS were being met and were driving sustainable socio-economic development in the municipality.

The project provided external support to LAG in proposal writing, in order to improve their ability to seek other funding opportunities of local as well as international donor organizations. As a result, the

LAG gender thematic group implemented an independent project funded by the Women Fund of Georgia „Women needs assessment and integration of ethnic minorities in elaborating of proper gender policy and action plan in Lagodekhi” and a transnational project with the Latvian LAG “Horse industry, possibilities today and in future”.

Aside from the three core field of actions (strengthening the LAG, elaborating/ updating the LDS and implementation of the selected sub-grant projects) the project supported the idea of the Local Action Groups Network (GALAG), to strengthen the linkages between all existing LAGs in Georgia. Based on the analytical report provided by ELARD’s experts, GALAG was officially registered by the Public Registry as a Not-for-profit (non-commercial) Legal Entity. It was founded by eight LAGs operating in Georgia under the ENPARD Rural Development project and is operational since 1 August 2018

GALAG was supported by numerous capacity building and training events, primarily provided by the project partner European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD). Through the successful formation of GALAG, Georgian LAGs are now better presented at government level and among other key stakeholders. The participation in LEADER conferences enabled Georgian LAGs to establish networks with EU member state LAGs and potential transnational cooperation.

By the end of the project, a letter of agreement between FAO and LAG was signed with regard to i) constructing an innovative and environmentally friendly greenhouse in Lagodekhi to be managed by LAG as a social enterprise and ii) involve LAG in the information campaign of the ongoing FAO grant competition. These initiatives are also a great result of the project and most importantly a significant step towards LAG’s sustainability.

ENPARD II established a high standard of cooperation and coordination which ensured effective communication between the project lead and consortia partners, other stakeholders, government, beneficiaries and the donor, which has contributed to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of this project (see ENPARD II Final Evaluation).

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
30% of respondents of the three municipalities reporting perceived improvements within their municipality as a result of the project.	71,25% of respondents mentioned positive changes in general in their village over the last 2 years.

2.2 Results and Activities

The project overall objective is to contribute to the reduction of poverty through integrated, sustainable and participatory rural development in Georgia.

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
At least 5 local/regional/sectoral policies and regulations that take into account needs and interests of rural communities as advocated by the LAGs.	Lagodekhi Local Development Strategy (LDS) Women needs assessment of the Municipality Youth needs assessment of the Municipality Lagodekhi City Park Topographic map

Four documents were produced by Lagodekhi LAG taking into accounts the needs of rural population including interests of specific groups. Besides the municipality development strategy document, a women as well as youth needs assessment was conducted for Lagodekhi Municipality (see Annex 1 and

Annex 2). A Lagodekhi city park topographic map was developed to promote strengthening of tourism sector in lagodekhi (Annex 3).

Outcome 1: The project-specific objective is to improve the quality of life of the rural population in Borjomi, Kazbegi and Lagodekhi through the continuation of a community-led local development approach.

MC, PIN and CARE elaborated the common baseline and end line survey questionnaire to conduct a general public survey in all three Municipalities to measure the progress of improvement of the quality of life of the local population during project implementation. Baseline as well as end line surveys were conducted separately in each Municipality by the contracted organizations, reaching a total number of 1200 respondents (400 respondents in each municipality). Survey findings has been summarized by MC for all three municipalities. (See baseline survey findings in Annex 4) End line survey findings not yet provided from MC.

For the end line survey in Lagodekhi Municipality, a total of 400 respondents (incl. 269 women) were randomly selected and interviewed throughout the municipality. 81 persons (20,25%) mentioned that financial conditions of their family has been improved over the last two years, 58 of them (14,5%) reported about the improvement of economic activity, 309 respondents (77,25%) mentioned improved infrastructure, 176 respondents (44%) mentioned the increased accessibility of social service provision, 285 persons (71,25%) mentioned general positive changes in their village.

Intermediary Outcome 1. Effectiveness and sustainability of LAGs in the three target municipalities is enhanced through capacity development and networking

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
100% of operational and financial management procedures and fund raising plan in place and utilized by all the LAGs	LAG elaborated the organization statute (Annex 5) Updated LDS in Georgian and English language versions (Annex 6) Grant management manual (Annex 7) Fundraising plan (Annex 8) Procurement manual (Annex 9)

Capacity building and sustainability of Lagodekhi LAG was ensured through (i) various trainings and workshops; (ii) in-country cross-visits to all existing LAGs to exchange information and experience and negotiate on joint actions to be carried out; and (iii) participation of LAG members in International LEADER events to become a part of the big LEADER family through established linkages and collaboration with the EU member state LAGs. Important stepping stones were laid to ensure LAG's sustainability and effectiveness:

LAG members elaborated the statute of the organization and has been officially registered as Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity in May 2018.

Based on ELARD's recommendation, LAG updated the Local Development Strategy, as a guiding document for social and economic development of the municipality.

Based on the lessons learned and experience gained from the first competition round, LAG board and CARE project team jointly revised the grant manual to be more consistent and feasible for the realization of LDS priorities.

Procurement manual was elaborated in English and Georgian language.

Fundraising plan was jointly elaborated by Lagodekhi, Kazbegi and Borjomi Municipalities.

Output 1.1 Public awareness is raised on Community-led Local Development

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
2500 inhabitants of each municipality participating in the public consultation and information meetings organized by LAG under ENPARD phase II	3109 local residents of Lagodekhi Municipality participated in the public consultations and informational meetings organised by LAG, among them 50% women and 51% youth under 31.

The project facilitated awareness raising on CLLD approach through large scale information campaigns, public consultations and events held in each community of the Municipality, which provided the population with a larger overview of the LEADER approach and results achieved during the project's phase I and phase II.

12 events were conducted, including public consultations on problem identification, information campaigns focusing on grant completion, target meetings with specific groups of youth, women and ethnic minorities to encourage their participation in the development process, festivals with participation of youth of different age groups, their parents and teachers, as well as general assembly meetings - covering 3.109 community members in total (for detailed information refer to activity 1.1).

Output 1.2 Inclusion of more youth, women, private sector actors, people with disabilities (PWD) and representatives from remote communities is increased in LAGs

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
Increased participation of youth, women, private sector (PS) and PWD as LAG members: - youth 20% - women 50% - PS 65% - PWD 2% - RC 0%	Target sectors represented in the Lagodekhi LAG: - youth<35 – 27 (21%) - women - 54 (42%) - PS - 85 (65%) - PWD -3 (2%) - Ethnic minorities – 11 (8%)

The information campaigns and activities performed by the project team and LAG inspired local people to join and engage in LAG activities. By the end of the project, there were 130 members of the Lagodekhi LAG, which shows a 30% increase compared to 2015 when the LAG was established. 65% of LAG members are representatives from the private sector and civil society. LAG board of directors composed of 15 persons, 5 from each sector, were elected from the General Assembly.

Output 1.3 Multi-media informational platform established and utilized

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
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Multi-media informational platform established and utilized	Lagodekhi LAG created two webpages and one Facebook page: https://visitlagodekhi.com/ was visited by 10,999 individuals from February 2018 to October 2019 https://lagodekhi.lag.ge/ was visited by 13,122 individuals from September 2018 to October 2019
Website - 4	LAG Facebook page reached 111,009 visitors and 11,547 persons were actively engaged (based on their feedback, including comments, likes, clicks, shares, etc.) https://www.facebook.com/lagodekhi.LAG/
Facebook - 4	ENPARD communication unit published a success story of the project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn1ilLpnSw&feature=youtu.be
YouTube - 1	The National TV1 channel showed video stories about the EU-supported ENPARD programme in Lagodekhi: https://youtu.be/REFf11wxW-w ;
Videos - 4	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNdEL9fGSP8
20,000 visits	MC PR group video story on project achievements is accessible at: https://youtu.be/gzwsUO8LcII .

Output 1.4 LAGs professionalism is increased

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
Percentage of key LAG members with increased knowledge after training & coaching (target 90%)	118 LAG members (72 men, 46 women), 91% of LAG members, acquired enhanced skills through various trainings and study tours.

Through participation in trainings and workshops, study tours, cross-visits and linkages established with other ENPARD stakeholders, 118 LAG members (72 men, 46 women) received various trainings and attended study tours to further strengthen the development process. Trainings covered the following topics: media relations and PR, new species and technologies in hazelnut farming, finance management, gender equality, accounting taxation, proposal writing and business planning, project proposal evaluation, participatory civil monitoring, local development planning, project management & monitoring and strategic planning, fund raising, monitoring and evaluation.

Activity 1.1 Continue to raise awareness within the three target municipalities and communities on LEADER and current phase activities of the project

CARE project team and Lagodekhi LAG ran an intensive information campaign in all 15 communities of Lagodekhi municipality to promote the principle of a bottom-up approach and to ensure that the core ideas of locally-led rural development approach are widely disseminated.

To ensure a wide coverage of the local population, a range of tools were used: meetings at municipal and community levels, events and festivals arranged under the grant component, target group discussions with youth, women and ethnic minorities, radio outlet, Facebook and web pages, as well as phone calls or messages.

CARE published LEADER brochures at the beginning (1000 copies) as well as at the end of the project (1000 copies), containing information about the benefits of the LEADER model, LAG activities and achievements, as well as the success stories from Phase I and Phase II sub grant projects. They were distributed to information meeting participants and through local authority offices, shops and at public places.

The table below shows a summary of all awareness raising activities on the LEADER approach and project activities:

	Event	Location	Duration	# of participants	# of women among	#of youth<35 among
1	Information campaign on LEADER approach, problem identification and LDS update	15 communities of Lagodekhi Municipality	7-21 December 2017	384	165	54
2	Information campaign of the I round of grant competition	15 communities of Lagodekhi Municipality	15-21 February 2018	373	166	66
3	Information campaign of the II round of grant competition	15 communities of Lagodekhi Municipality	19-29 September 2018	354	119	81
4	Official launch of independent project “women needs assessment and integration of ethnic minorities to develop proper gender policy and action plan”	Lagodekhi protected area	25 May 2019	64	40	9
5	Youth needs assessment	15 communities of Lagodekhi municipality	February-March 2019	1000	510	1000
6	Festival of positive parenting	Village Leliani	15 April 2019	537	375	250
7	Problem identification to update LDS	15 communities of Lagodekhi municipality	12-19 August 2019	196	98	40
8	The opening ceremony of the social cinema organized by NNLE “space for opportunities”	Lagodekhi “Ocho camp”	September 2019	71	34	60
9	General Assembly meetings (four meetings)	15 communities of Lagodekhi municipality	27 December 2017 13 February 2018 11 October 2018 16 October 2019	130	54	26
	TOTAL			3109	1561 50%	1586 51%

Information about project activities was regularly uploaded on the Lagodekhi LAG Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/lagodekhi.LAG/> and website <https://lagodekhi.lag.ge/> including the ENPARD programme’s official website: www.enpard.ge.

The ENPARD communication unit prepared a video about the 81-year old beneficiary in Lagodekhi, who runs a sweet potato greenhouse that supports the diversification of the potato market. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn1iLLpnSw&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn1iLLpnSw&feature=youtu.be>

The National TV1 channel broadcasted short video stories about the EU-supported ENPARD programme and social economic initiatives in Lagodekhi:

<https://youtu.be/REff11wxW-w>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNdEL9fGSP8>

CARE Communication and PR group visited Lagodekhi to interview project beneficiaries. As a result, success stories were published on the Lagodekhi LAG website: www.lagodekhi.lag.ge and Facebook page.

In September 2019, PR group of Mercy Corps visited Lagodekhi and took a video regarding LEADER models advantages, LAG achievements and successful initiatives, accessible at: <https://youtu.be/gzwsUO8LcII>



*Official launch of LAG independent project, 25.05.2019,
Administration building of the Lagodekhi protected area*



*LAG General Assembly meeting, 13.02.2018,
Administration building of Lagodekhi protected area*

Activity 1.2. Facilitate greater inclusion & diversification of LAG membership

In order to improve diversification of LAG membership targeted meetings were organized with women groups, ethnic minorities and youth.

Meetings focused on encouraging target groups to discuss problems they face and about the potential measures to mitigate them. The open dialogue was a good instrument to stimulate their participation in the local development process.

By the end of the project Lagodekhi LAG was comprised of 130 members of the following composition:

Gender ratio:

- Number of women - 54 (42%)
- Number of men - 76 (58%)

Target Sectors represented:

- Public - 45 (35%)
- Private – 47 (36%)
- Civil – 38 (29%)

Target groups represented:

- Youth <35 of age - 27 (21%)
- Number of ethnic minorities -11 (8%)

- Persons living with disabilities – 3 (2,3%)

Five thematic groups are operational in the LAG: Tourism, Social, Agriculture, Environment and Infrastructure. Members of these groups work to identify the problems and needs existing in each of these sectors and advocate to the relevant institutions to take appropriate measures addressing the needs identified. LAG Board of Directors is composed of 15 persons elected from the General Assembly, 5 from each thematic sector.



Youth working group discussion under sub grant “Youth needs assessment”. 12.03.2019, Lagodekhi



Youth working group discussion under sub grant “Youth needs assessment”. 15.03.2019, Lagodekhi

Activity 1.3. Further support more professionalization of the LAG through new trainings and capacity building

The training topics were selected according to the needs of local action groups identified on the basis of the results of preliminary meetings and consultations. An action plan was elaborated with specific trainings/ modules for LAG members to improve their ability to independently and efficiently implement their work and support them to gain long-term sustainability.

In total 118 LAG members (72 men, 46 women) enhanced their skills through the various trainings and benefited from several study tours, to further strengthen the development process. The table below shows the topics covered during the project implementation period:

Training	Location	Dates	#of LAG members	# of women
Business plan evaluation	Lagodekhi	23-24 March 2018	12	3
Project proposal evaluation	Kvareli	6-8 June 2018	12	3
Fund rising	Kazbegi	26-28 July 2018	3	1
Project management & monitoring and strategic planning.	Kobuleti	10-18 September 2018	4	1
New technologies of hazelnut farming	Lagodekhi	21 September 2018	14	2
Media communication and PR technologies	Dedoplistskaro	05 October 2018	7	4

Gender equality	Lagodekhi	15-16 November 2018	14	13
Assessment of full project proposal.	Telavi	5-6 December 2018	11	4
Fund raising	Tbilisi	18 December 2018	19	8
Monitoring and evaluation	Lagodekhi	06 February 2019	6	1
Accounting and taxation	Bakuriani	22-23 February 2019	6	2
Accounting and taxation for LAG members and grant project beneficiaries 6 groups (composed of 8 persons in each group) were provided training sessions (3 training days each group) including theoretical as well as practical exercises. In total 48 LAG members and beneficiaries (incl. 24 women) attended trainings.	Lagodekhi	24 May-27 June 2019	20	11
Participatory Civil Monitoring	Lagodekhi	24-25 May 2019	14	10
Local development planning	Lagodekhi	10-11 August 2019	14	5
Project proposal writing	Lagodekhi	9-11 October 2019	15	10



Meeting with the LAG board of directors. 03.12.2018, CARE office in Lagodekhi

Support for professionalism was also given through technical support to the LAG to improve proposal writing skills in order to develop qualitative proposals for submission to local as well as international donor organizations. As a result, the LAG gender thematic group implemented the independent project funded by the Women Fund of Georgia „Women needs assessment and integration of ethnic minorities in elaborating of proper gender policy and action plan in Lagodekhi” and a transnational project with the Latvian LAG “Horse industry, possibilities today and in future”.

A topographic map of the planned Lagodekhi City Park was developed by LAG members together with the expert from the selected architecture company. The topographic map will be further used by the Municipality to elaborate the City Park development plan, that will be reflected in the 2020 local budget.

Lagodekhi LAG board members together with a hired consultant developed and submitted a project application “Lagodekhi Municipality Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan” for the call announced by the European Fund. Unfortunately, the project was rejected by the European Fund, however it can be counted as an important learning experience for the Lagodekhi LAG fundraising group.

Activity 1.4. Promote cross-linkages between all ENPARD-supported LAGs in Georgia



Cross visit of Lagodekhi, Borjomi, Khulo and Keda LAGs, 18-19 July, 2019, Keda Municipality

In order to establish strong communication and networking with other LAGs implementing ENPARD rural development projects in Georgia, CARE facilitated cross visits between the LAG members during the project cycle. In this way an exchange of knowledge and experience about development practices from different regions was facilitated.

During the project duration, exchange visits took place between Lagodekhi LAG and respective members of Borjomi, Kazbebi, Dedoplistskaro, Tetrtskaro, Akhalkalaki, Keda and Khulo LEADER Municipalities. Experience gained and lessons learned was shared in between the trip participants and hosts. A discussion also covered topics

related to joint activities and efforts to ensure success of rural development in Georgia. One of the specific topics of the meeting was LAG/GALAG's sustainability and future cooperation activities.

CARE project staff together with Lagodekhi LAG members participated in the four kick-off events of newly established LAGs in Georgia in Akhmeta, Tsalka, Tskaltubo and Mestia. EU delegation and Donor organizations, partner organizations and LAGs from LEADER Municipalities, beneficiaries, and Government representatives attended the events. Participants shared their experience and knowledge, achievements and challenges to the audience regarding the rural development project in their respective Regions to support newly established

Lagodekhi LAG participated in an International Business Forum organized by Kazbegi LAG on 1 April 2019 in Kazbegi. Besides business representatives, LAGs from Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova attended the forum. Event participants shared good practices between Georgian and European business representatives and established mutually supportive cooperation.

Lagodekhi LAG members attended the launching of the rural development projects organized by the Association Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG) in the framework of the European Union-funded project "Rural Development for Sustainable Growth for Tetrtskaro Municipality". The attendees visited the opening of the adventure-rope park and Algeti National Park Visitor's Center in Manglisi, assisted the official equipment hand-over to the beneficiaries and visited a processing factory in Jorjiashvili village.

Intermediary Outcome 2. Rural Development priorities within the Local Development Strategies are further supported through the funding of viable, community-led projects

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
80% of commercial sub-projects creating new jobs and self-employment opportunities	21 commercial projects out of 23 (91%) created new jobs - 150 (73 women) permanent and 251 seasonal jobs were created.

40% of sub-projects establishing and extending services / resources in target communities	55% of sub-projects established new services and extended existing services
20% of sub-projects that support diversified income sources within target communities	14 sub-projects (42%) supported the diversification of income sources.

33 social and economic initiatives were supported within the project scope addressing the following LDS priorities: 1. Improve agricultural production and value chains, 2. Increase the tourist attractiveness of the territory, 3. Increase social protection and equality, 4. Improve agricultural infrastructure, 5. Improve access to local services, 6. Environmental protection. 23 (70%) of the sub-projects were commercial and 10 (30%) social initiatives. 10 start-up projects were supported, including innovative initiatives:

Sweet potato as a new agricultural product was produced for the first time in Georgia;

Day centre was arranged and equipped tailored to special needs of children with disabilities, which is the only centre in the region providing psycho-rehabilitation service.

Output 2.1 Three LDS are revised and updated

Based on the LDS review report prepared by ELARD, Lagodekhi LAG conducted two revisions of the LDS during this project to ensure their alignment with standard European structure LDS. The first update was published in June 2018, for 2016-2020, and the final update in September 2019, for 2020-2024.

Output 2.2 60 sub-projects are financed

Indicator for three municipalities	Level of Achievement in Lagodekhi
a) 60 sub-projects funded in three Municipalities b) 90% of projects implemented showing sustainability by end of project	a) 33 sub-projects funded in Lagodekhi b) 21 (64%) sub-projects are operational and have demonstrated sustainability, 12 (36%) started operation by the end of the project.

After the LDS was updated by the LAG General Assembly launched two rounds of grant competitions. In total, 410 project ideas have been received, out of which 153 have been selected by the LAG members. During the full application process 120 proposals have been received for evaluation. Eventually, 33 social and economic initiatives have been selected by LAG for sub-grant support addressing the following LDS priorities: 1. Improve agricultural production and value chains, 2. Increase the tourist attractive of the territory, 3. Increase social protection and equality, 4. Improve agricultural infrastructure, 5. Improve access to the local services provision, 6. Environmental protection.

Within the two-year period, the project managed to achieve a quite impressive number of beneficiaries. 31.236 persons (15.305 women) benefitted directly or indirectly, through the diversification of income sources and improving the availability of local services. (sub grant project initiatives, see Annex 10) Majority of the beneficiaries are counted from the social projects, providing improved social services to elderly, youth, PWD, women and children.

150 permanent (incl. 73 for women) and 251 seasonal jobs were created through the sub-grant projects.

Output 2.3 Monitoring reports produced by LAG on all implemented sub-projects

Indicator for three municipalities	Level of Achievement in Lagodekhi
a) 120 monitoring reports produced in three municipalities	86 monitoring reports were delivered throughout the project lifetime.
b) 9 LAG members capable to perform M&E responsibilities	9 LAG members capable to perform M&E responsibilities

With the facilitation of the project M&E Officer, three monitoring working groups were created in Lagodekhi LAG. Each group is composed of three members. Nine LAG members passed regular short trainings and coaching by the project's M&E Officer to apply monitoring methodologies and perform their responsibilities.

In total 86 monitoring reports were produced during the project lifetime including 53 monitoring reports to observe sustainability and a current status of the sub-projects funded under ENPARD Phase I and ENPARD phase II and 33 regular monitoring reports to assess the performance of the ongoing activities of the Phase II sub-grant projects.

Activity 2.1 Review, update & extend Local Development Strategies in the target municipalities

At an early stage of the project, partner organization ELARD selected the experts to evaluate LDSs of Borjomi, Kazbegi and Lagodekhi municipalities and provide recommendations in order to update existing LDSs and make them more consistent with European standards. ELARD experts developed a report "Results of the reviews of the local development strategy" which includes information about LEADER approach; roles and operation of the local action groups; general recommendations about LDSs structure, risk analysis; monitoring and evaluation. The report was used as a guiding document for updating the Local Development Strategies by Lagodekhi LAG.

In December 2017, the LAG undertook a process of community mobilization with the objective to update the initial established priorities. Intensive consultation process included a series of public events and meetings in every village of the Municipality from 7-21 December 2017. In total 384 local residents attended the meetings out of which 165 were women and 54 youth under the age of 30.

The project team actively cooperated with local public institutions during all phases of the LDS development, in line with regional and national strategies and policies.

The results of community mobilization for the LDS update was shared to the expert from ETEA Foundation for finalization, who was a project partner in Phase I.

The second update of LDS took place during August-September 2019, that enabled LAG to analyze whether the LDS remains up-to date and relevant to the current development contexts.

Project contracted the "Consultation and Training Centre" (CTC) to support LAG members in updating the existing LDS and to enhance local development planning skills. Again, CARE project team and Lagodekhi LAG ran an intensive information campaign in all 15 communities of Lagodekhi municipality from 12-19 August 2019 to update existing priority problems. 196 local residents (incl. 98 women) participated in the meetings. From 4-5 September 2019, a two-day workshop was conducted, where the final version of the LDS was developed by the expert and LAG members.

LDS elaboration process consisted of the following four main phases:



The final version of the strategy document was presented and approved by the General Assembly and uploaded on LAG's web page, accessible at: <https://lagodekhillag.ge/ge/23>

Activity 2.2 Hold competitive application process to identify a minimum of 60 sub-projects for support in the target municipalities



Sub grant applicants training in business planning. 09.08.2018, Administration building of the Lagodekhi protected area

After the LDS was adopted by the LAG General Assembly, two grant competition rounds were launched to support non-agricultural and agricultural initiatives in Lagodekhi municipality in compliance with the LDS priorities.

CARE project team together with LAG conducted a comprehensive information campaign in all 15 municipalities of Lagodekhi Municipality with the specific focus on the project's grant component, explaining the participants the methodology of the grant mechanism and the importance of all sub-project applications being in line with the LDS to support its realization. In order to facilitate increasing participation of ethnic minorities, an additional meeting was conducted in village Kabali, which is inhabited by ethnic minorities (Azeri population). Information was spread through

posters in Georgian and Azeri languages and a short local radio announcement (39 seconds) about the grant component 20 times a day for 15 days.

In order to apply for the grant competition, the interested applicants had to pass a two-stage selection process: (i) Business idea application stage and (ii) Full application stage. Every business idea as well as full application proposals were jointly assessed by the LAG selection committee and invited expert, using the scoring system established in the application form known by applicants. The applicants scoring above 70 points (from 100 points in total) were selected as a winner. The applicants scoring below 70 points were rejected. Prior to the final decision making, some of the applicants were invited for an interview by the LAG board members and the project staff for additional clarification. Selected applicants, who passed the business idea stage, were invited to participate in the trainings organized by the project. The trainings enabled applicants to enhance the business planning knowledge as well as ensured that applicants have improved skills to develop strong applications and implement them. Given the high number of applicants, they were divided into three categories: commercials, social and social-infrastructure groups. Each commercial group attended a five-day training in business planning and budgeting. Social and social-infrastructure groups were provided with four-day trainings in proposal writing.

All rejected applicants were notified and provided with a letter, where they could see the reasons of rejection, and were provided with recommendations on how to improve their application for the next competition scheme.

The table below shows a summary of the grant component stages:

	I round competition	II round competition
Grant competition launched	15 February 2018	19 September 2018
Dates of information meeting	15-21 February 2018	19 September-6 October 2018
Information meeting participants	373	354
Number of women in information meetings	166	119
Number of youth < 30 in information meetings	66	81
Deadline for submission business idea applications	20 March 2018	15 October 2018
Business idea applications received	204	206
Number of BI applications selected	85	68
Period of trainings provided	19-30 May 2018	17-27 November 2018
Number of training participants	94	67
Number of women participated in trainings	38	15
Deadline for submission full proposals	20 June 2018	15 January 2019
Number of full application submitted	61	59
Sub grant project selected	13	20

Out of the 68 successful applicants, 59 (87%) submitted a full proposal during the second round competition, which shows a 15% increase compared to the previous grant competition that can serve as a proof that beneficiaries in deed have improved their proposal writing skills through the trainings sessions and technical consultations delivered.

The final results were presented to the LAG's board meeting and in total 33 social economic initiatives were funded through the two rounds of grant competition within the project's duration.

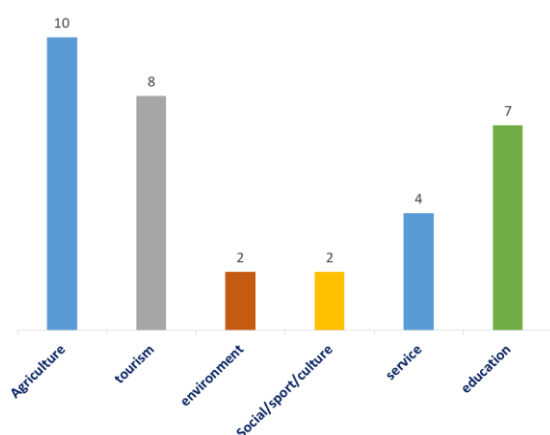


Diagram: Supported sub-projects by sector of all 33 initiatives

It has to be noted that with respect to the sub-grant application, assessment and selection process, the project evaluation committees followed a code of conduct. The code of conduct reiterates that a LAG member may not be involved in any decision-making process when there is an application from a relative, business entity or organization to which the LAG member is closely connected. In the case of a conflict of interest the LAG member must abstain from any involvement in the screening, assessment and selection of that sub-project. Evidence of conflict could be a reason for grant committee members to reject a selected application at final approval.

Activity 2.3 Provide co-financing support to the sub-projects in the target municipalities

Grant amount and co-funding margins in the frame of the grant competition had to be in compliance with the requirements defined and agreed by the project team and LAG board members as follows:

Commercial (non-agricultural and agricultural initiatives)

- Minimum amount – 5000 EUR
- Maximum amount – 30 000 EUR
- Minimum partner co-financing – with 25% cash contribution

Social Infrastructural projects

- Minimum amount – 3000 EUR
- Maximum amount – 20 000 EUR
- Minimum partner co-financing – with 40% cash and in-kind contribution

Social and Non-Agricultural Directions: advocacy, social activities, awareness raising, trainings

- Minimum amount – 1000 EUR
- Maximum amount – 10 000 EUR
- Minimum partner co-financing – with 10% cash and in-kind contribution

The 33 sub-grant projects were financed with the total amount of 1,449,712GEL (ENPARD contribution) and 1,139,939 GEL (partner's contribution). Out of the partner's co-funding 100,498 GEL was allocated by the local municipality for the implementation of three shared infrastructure projects: Rehabilitation of Social House for elderly people, rehabilitation of a Kindergarten in the village of Leliani and equipment of Lagodekhi art school with classical musical instruments.

The details of the selected projects are shown in the table below:

N	Project	Implementer	EU Grant (GEL)	Co-financing (GEL)	Total
1	Special medical equipment for the day care center of the children with disabilities.	NGO "Madli"	15,000	2,600	17,600
2	"Youth of Lagodekhi"	Georgian Civil Development Association	19,765	6,720	26,485
3	"Positive Parenthood"	Leliani Adult's Education Center	27,627	3,650	31,277
4	Classical music instruments for Lagodekhi art School	Lagodekhi Musical School	23,000	15,335	38,335
5	Rehabilitation of Kindergarten	CBO "Leli" in partnership with Local municipality.	52,6267	43,666	96,293
6	Cold storage facility	P/E Elizbar Kublashvili	88,598	156,986	245,584
7	Chicken Farm	Nino Gelashvili P/E	22,440	10,870	33,310

8	Auto service center.	Peride Alakhverdova	23,407	9,900	33,307
9	Social house for elderly people	Mayor's office or Lagodekhi Municipality	44,500	41,497	85,997
10	Recycling of secondary polyethylene	"davistvat garemo kvlavtsarmoebit" LLC	83,150	139,217	222,367
11	"Chateau Kiramala" Touristic complex and terrace	Zurab Mumladze P/E	70,292	214,906	285,198
12	Guesthouse	Mariam Kadagidze P/E	20,994	7,890	28,884
13	Irrigation system for hazelnut.	Nika Bakhtadze P/E	30,500	10,702	41,202
14	Café "Galileo"	Temur Tepnadze P/E	54,742	39,948	94,690
15	Guesthouse "Robinson Crusoe"	Shalva Mumladze P/E	15,315	5,144	20,459
16	Beauty salon	Elshad Aliev P/E	48,345	20,375	68,720
17	Producing construction blocks	Zurab Gogoladze P/E	40,000	42,051	82,051
18	Hotel "Duende"	U STUDIO LLC	58,512	25,265	83,777
19	Wine cellar - Old hereti	Manana Shalvashvili P/E	44,324	15,041	59,365
20	Cold storage facility	Besik Jajanidze P/E	24,907	18,467	43,374
21	Cold storage facility	Cooperative "Friends"	96,123	45,007	141,130
22	Cold storage facility	Begston Gurchiani P/E	88,165	70,762	158,927
23	Greenhouse (sweet potatoes)	Shota Eriashvili P/E	15,198	11,840	27,038
24	Veterinary equipment	Vladimer Ichkitidze P/E	29,490	14,610	44,100
25	Strong woman	"Anibani" NNLE	15,166	3,000	18,166
26	Promotion of Lagodekhi	Youth involvement center NNLE	12,536	15,590	28,126
27	Social cinema	Space for opportunities NNLE	14,718	6,500	21,218
28	Uniforms for Georgian folk dances	Hereti2019 NNLE	29,370	7,770	37,140
29	Wooden Cottages	Lali Grigalashvili P/E	50,000	16,549	66,549
30	Dentist equipment	Badri Golobiani P/E	78,000	39,000	117,000
31	Cheese Production	Heretuli LLC	94,401	30,000	124,401
32	Energy efficient guesthouse	Giorgi Koberidze P/E	45,045	15,581	60,627
33	Guesthouse	Epigea LLC	73,455	33,500	106,955
TOTAL			1,449,712	1,139,939	2,589,651



NNLE SAGA - Ocho camp Social cinema



P/E Shota Eriashvili - Sweet potato greenhouse



*NNLE "Madli" –
Psycho rehabilitation center for children with disabilities*



*P/E Zurab Gogoladze -
Producing of the construction blocks*

Procurements of assets for project beneficiaries was made in full compliance with the CARE procurement policy and donor requirements. By the end of the project, a list of assets was prepared for sub-grant beneficiaries for hand-over in compliance with the sub-grant scheme and CARE and EU regulations. Assets purchased above 500\$ have been transferred to a total of 22 beneficiaries (Annex 11).

Activity 2.4 Monitor ENPARD 1&2 supported sub-project implementation in the target municipalities and evaluate impact from both ENPARD Phase 1 & 2

With the facilitation of the project M&E Officer, three Monitoring and Evaluation working groups were created in the LAG with a total of 9 members (3 members per group). Each group was headed by a LAG board member. They passed regular short trainings and coaching support by M&E Officer to improve their monitoring and evaluation skills.

Upon launching the project, MC, PIN and CARE jointly elaborated the baseline and end line survey questionnaire for a general public survey, beneficiary monitoring form to measure economic and social impact of the local initiatives and customer satisfaction questioners in relation to the product or service

provided by the program beneficiaries implemented sub-grant projects under ENPARD I. These forms were applied in all three municipalities to have a clear picture of the whole project.

The general survey aimed to measure the progress of improvement of the quality of life of the local population during the project implementation period. The total number to be reached was 1200 respondents (400 in each municipality). The survey was conducted separately in each Municipality by the contracted organizations. For the baseline study, 404 respondents, including 205 women, were interviewed in Lagodekhi by the organization “Institute of Social Studies and Analysis” hired by CARE. The baseline survey findings are attached to this report as Annex 4. By the end of the project, MC contracted organization to conduct an end line survey for Borjomi and Lagodekhi municipalities. In total, 400 respondents were interviewed, 269 of which were women. Survey findings were summarized by MC for all three organizations.

In total 53 monitoring visits were conducted by Lagodekhi LAG monitoring groups for the sub-projects funded under ENPARD I and ENPARD II to measure their economic and social impact. The results will be summarized and shared by MC towards in December 2019.

The LAG technical coordinator and monitoring groups carried out customer satisfaction surveys in relation to the product or service provided by the sub-projects funded under ENPARD I. The survey aggregated the data and summarized the results for all the supported projects as a whole implemented in Lagodekhi. The survey showed a very positive feedback from the customers. Majority of the respondents (73%) reported that they received information about the new product/services at the place, or from their friends/other people, the rest of the respondents learned about it via internet and media outlets. 99% of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the quality of the new established service/product provision and would recommend it to their acquaintances as well. The survey in general showed that 99% of the projects funded under ENPARD I are operational in Lagodekhi, sustainable and fully meets the customers’ needs and requirements. Survey findings were summarized by MC for all three organizations (Annex 12).

LAG monitoring group together with project field coordinator regularly assessed the performance of the ongoing activities of the sub-grant projects under Phase II and filled out implementation monitoring forms. A total of 33 monitoring reports were produced.

Intermediary Outcome 3. Georgian Association of LAGs (GALAG) is established and operational

Indicator for all three municipalities	Level of Achievement of Lagodekhi Municipality
Minimum 3 platforms established at national level in which the GALAG is active and influences RD policy	GALAG is a member of GRDN GALAG is a member of GAARD GALAG applied for associated membership with ELARD

The project created a network of LAGs establish under ENPARD, the Georgian Association of LAGs (GALAG). The main idea behind GALAG was to establish an institutional body, that could serve as a conduit for information exchange and learning across the country, and advocate for community-led local development with key state and non-state actors. GALAG was founded by eight LAGs operational in Georgia, which is active through two platforms: the Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN) and the Georgian Alliance on Agriculture and Rural Development (GAARD).

Following ELARD’s support, GALAG applied for ELARD’s membership. The decision on the acceptance of GALAG as an Associated member of ELARD will be taken during the ELARD General Assembly by the end of 2019.

Output 3.1 Georgian Association of LAGs (GALAG) is established and is equipped with tools and resources to support Georgian LAGs

Indicator	Level of Achievement
a) GALAG is established and trained on the variety of subjects GALAG is engaged in EU LEADER network b) 5 materials produced or adapted by the GALAG to develop capacity of existing and new LAGs.	a) GALAG is officially registered as of 1st August 2018 and operational supported by the respective documents such as registration document, charter, member list. 3 capacity training modules prepared and provided by ELARD b) materials produced: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 policy document elaborated by GALAG- GALAG action plan- Suggestions for GALAG members' selection- Results of the reviews of the local development strategies in Borjomi, Kazbegi and Lagodekhi area

Output 3.2 GALAG is a key actor in rural development policy dialogue in Georgia

Indicator	Level of Achievement
15 consultations by GALAG to LAGs and other RD actors	18 consultations were provided GALAG meetings with member LAGs, Meeting with FAO; UNDP; MEPA Participation in various conferences and seminars (LINC; LEADER conferences)

Activity 3.1 Identify from ENPARD-supported LAGs and train GALAG members

In order to give a comprehensive overview about GALAG's perspective roles and operational alternatives a comprehensive report "Analytical report and expert opinion about establishment and operations of local action groups network (GALAG) in Georgia" was prepared by ELARD's expert team. The objective of this report was to propose the most suitable network model to establish and operate a network of LAGs (GALAG) in Georgia. Report included an overview about similar networks in other countries, suggestions for performing the identification of the GALAG members, proposing the structure, organizational format, modes of operations of GALAG, suggestions for co-operational activities with other EU LEADER-networks.

In early spring 2018, Mercy Corps in cooperation with CARE and PIN visited five locations of the LEADER Municipalities, to promote the idea of the creation of the GALAG to other implementing agencies and newly established LAGs, and to get their support in this process.

The idea of the establishment of GALAG, its goal, activities, benefits of LAGs and role in rural development has been discussed in detail during the meetings. The idea was fully supported both by LAGs and implementing organizations. They expressed interest and readiness to support GALAG's creation and active engagement of newly established LAGs in this process.

The meetings were followed by a workshop in Batumi with participation of all project and LAG management teams. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a statute (Annex 13) for GALAG and discuss in detail its structure and the roles of the GALAG members. It was agreed that membership of GALAG should be restricted to officially registered LAGs in Georgia. Each LAG nominated two representatives in GALAG out of which one representative nominated to the GALAG board and another representative replaced him/her during any absence at the general board meeting. However,

both representatives were equally involved in GALAG's usual activities. For the first two-year period the LAGs elected the Head of Borjomi LAG to the position of GALAG Chairperson and the representatives of Lagodekhi and Kazbegi LAGs to the Deputy Chairperson positions. The establishment was facilitated by ELARD, providing consultations and best examples of national rural networks in EU member countries.

On 1 August 2018 GALAG was officially registered by 8 Georgian LAGs to the Public Registry as a Not-for-profit (non-commercial) Legal Entity.

In order to ensure that all planned activities were well executed, Mercy Corps hired a GALAG Coordinator to support GALAG members in organizing meetings, trainings, workshops and study tours; communicate and collaborate with other ENPARD rural development implementing agencies and support successful operation of GALAG in Georgia. Capacity building of GALAG was supported by ELARD through trainings and other organizational development activities designed for GALAG members including participation in International LEADER events. ELARD prepared three training modules for capacity building of GALAG members.

The first training for GALAG as a National LAGs Network, focused on its role and responsibilities, and was delivered in mid-July 2018, in Batumi for all 16 GALAG members.

The second training session organized by ELARD focused on "GALAG as a Cooperation and Communication Platform" and took place from 14-16 December 2018 in Tbilisi, with over 20 representatives of the LAGs. The aim of the workshop was to share with Georgian LAGs European experience and knowledge in rural development, assist in the elaboration of internal and external communication plans, help in mapping main partners to build stronger platforms for advocacy and fundraising, advice on the formation of thematic working groups and on distribution of responsibilities among GALAG members.

The third training "GALAG sustainability" was delivered by the ELARD experts in June 2019 to 24 GALAG members in Tskaltubo. The training was facilitated by ELARD experts from Estonia, Sweden and Slovenia. GALAG members were able to obtain different facilitation skills, further knowledge about practical monitoring and self-evaluation procedures of GALAG activities and to create the model of financial sustainability for GALAG. GALAG first policy paper and the next steps regarding LEADER advocacy were discussed.

Activity 3.2 Facilitate GALAG engagement with EU LEADER networks

GALAG's members were able to attend networking events for LEADER-related organizations. Such experiences were important in providing GALAG members with a sense that they were part of a broader international movement and the information gathered in these study tours and conferences could be brought back and shared with LAGs in the country. These visits provided GALAG with a platform for future international cooperation and greater knowledge and access to LEADER-related policy making.

In September 2018, the Portuguese presidency of ELARD organized The LEADER RELOADED Conference in Evora, Portugal (<https://leaderconference.minhatererra.pt/>). Georgian delegation was represented at the conference by eight GALAG members (one representative per Georgian LAG), GALAG coordinator and Project Director. The conference's plenary acknowledged the vital role of non-EU member countries such as Georgia and Moldova in their aspiration to develop rural areas based on LEADER methodology and principles. The designated trans-national co-operation (TNC) session provided additional possibilities to the Georgian delegation for networking with other LAGs all over the Europe.

GALAG and partner organization's management team had the opportunity to participate in two Leader Inspired Network Community - LINC Conferences, organized by ELARD. The first LINK conference

took place on 12-14 June 2019 in Finland. It was an excellent opportunity for Georgian delegation composed with the GALAG members from three operational LAGs of Borjomi, Lagodekhi and Kazbegi and project management staff to get introduced to the work of important network partners at EU level as well as with the local LAG projects to further broaden the knowledge on LEADER approach implementation on the different governance levels.

On 10 -12 September 2019, representatives from Mercy Corps, CARE and PIN projects, as well as Borjomi, Lagodekhi and Kazbegi Local Action Groups (LAGs) participated in Leader Inspired Network Community - LINC Conference in Parnu, Estonia. In the framework of the conference organized a cooperation corner for the participants to discuss and develop project ideas for future cooperation. The event participants had an opportunity to participate in sports activities and interactive games, to visit the projects in rural areas implemented by local action groups and share best practices of rural development in Estonia.



LINC conference. 12.09.2019, Parnu, Estonia

An ELARD expert team facilitated and advised the process for the GALAG to apply for ELARD's membership. Following ELARD's support, the GALAG filled all the necessary documentation and submitted to ELARD for review. The decision on acceptance of GALAG as an Associated member of ELARD will be taken during the ELARD General Assembly by the end of 2019.

The first draft of the ELARD's publication was prepared with short profiles of MC, CARE, PIN and Georgian LAGs and a short summary of the sub-grant/LDS implementation component of the project (Annex 14).

Activity 3.3 Assist GALAG to build capacity of Georgian LAGs and increase knowledge of other rural development stakeholders on LEADER approach

In order to increase understanding of LEADER methodology of various stakeholders involved in the rural development process in Georgia, MC in partnership with ELARD and GALAG organized a high-level LEADER 4th Conference "Future of LEADER Approach in Georgia" on 26 March 2019 in Tbilisi. The speakers represented both Georgian and EU rural development authorities and the audience got a comprehensive overview about the potential and the current status of LEADER-implementation in Georgia as well as about the recent LEADER developments at the EU-level indifferent member states. Audience involved a wide range of Georgian stakeholders acting in the field of rural development from the governmental institutions, civil society and international (donor) organizations. A video on the 4th Conference can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=tvemXnlrgoE.

ELARD's representatives together with other project partners attended the 21st ENPARD Stakeholder Committee on 10 June 2019 in Tbilisi. During the meeting, ELARD representatives gave a brief overview about ELARD's and GALAG's main achievements in the ongoing project.



*ENPARD implementing agencies and GALAG joint workshop.
18.07.2019, Shekvetili, Georgia*

Lagodekhi LAG representatives in GALAG participated in a various joint workshops organized by the partner organizations. The purpose of the workshops were to discuss about GALAG's future and to elaborate an action plan for all LEADER Municipalities to address target groups and institutions responsible in bringing forward the recognition of the LAGs by the Government. As a follow-up, the GALAG one year action plan was elaborated (Annex15).

Activity 3.4 Support policy engagement between GALAG and Georgian Government

GALAG was actively involved in several consultation meetings arranged by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) of Georgia regarding the development of the new Strategy of Georgian Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027. During the discussions, GALAG representatives promoted the idea of including the implementation of the LEADER approach and its elaboration mechanism into the national Strategy.

GALAG with support of ELARD's experts elaborated two policy papers on GALAG's positions for effective implementation of LEADER approach to address Georgian rural development challenges. Documents were disseminated to all LAG's for review and the collected comments were send to ELARD for finalizing As a follow-up, GALAG's policy documents went through the final consultation process between GALAG members and GAARD network. First policy document was submitted to MEPA with the support letter of GAARD, on 5 August 2019 (Annex 16).

The second policy paper was submitted to Directorate General for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) (Annex 17).

3. Beneficiaries/affiliated entities and other Cooperation

3.1 Relationship between the Beneficiaries/affiliated entities of this grant contract

CARE has developed a strong coordination and communication system with Mercy Corps, People in Need and ELARD to support the planning and implementation of activities. At the start of the project in September 2018, a kick-off meeting for all project partners was held in Tbilisi. An overview of the work of Mercy Corps, CARE and People in Need under ENPARD Phase I was provided by the organisations' Country Directors followed by the presentation of ELARD on their experience and current activities in EU member states in relation with theoretical and practical aspects of LEADER, as well as their particular role in ENPARD Phase II. Regular coordination was maintained with all partner organizations, e.g. through quarterly meetings and various communication channels, to share updates on the project's progress and to agree on the technical support required for the project's success.

ELARD provided significant methodological support during the project implementation, including:

- Revision and updating of the LDS, producing the report "Results of the reviews of the local development strategies in Lagodekhi, Kazbegi and Borjomi municipalities
- Methodological support during the GALAG establishment process
- Training of the GALAG members

A huge contributor to the project's success was the excellent coordination set up at the early stages of its implementation with other ENPARD implementing agencies and newly established LAGs. This relationship created a favourable foundation to carry out joint activities and put mutual effort in the establishment of GALAG and its capacity building.

3.2 Relationship with State Authorities

Project team and LAG representatives were actively involved in the consultation meetings arranged by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. The meetings provided an opportunity for each partner to deliver an update on the project's progress and to hear about new initiatives planned by the government, its agencies and other donor organisations. It also provided a platform for issues and constraints raised by ENPARD beneficiaries that in this way could be brought to the national level, e.g. lack of availability to low-interest loans, and delays in registration process of agricultural land ownership. Several consultations took place regarding the development of the new Strategy of Georgian Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027, during which GALAG representatives promoted the idea of including the implementation of the LEADER approach and its elaboration mechanism as an effective tool for rural development in Georgia.



*Meeting with the Lagodekhi Municipality Mayor-Mr Jondo Mdivnishvili. 16.05.2010
Lagodekhi Municipality Mayor's office*

The regular information exchange with the regional and municipal authorities ensured their support to the project and greatly contributed to the successful implementation of the LEADER approach in the project's target municipalities.

Concerning Lagodekhi, local authorities were engaged in the project's process from its start. A Head of Lagodekhi Municipality council, as well as the Deputy Mayor of Lagodekhi are members of the Lagodekhi LAG. As a result of this collaboration, the Lagodekhi municipality allocated 100.498 GEL to co-finance three infrastructure projects under the grant component: Rehabilitation of Social House for elderly people, rehabilitation of a Kindergarten in the

village of Leliani and equipment of Lagodekhi art school with classical musical instruments.

3.3 Relationship with other organisations involved in implementing the Action

Final Beneficiaries and Target groups

Through the far-reaching information campaigns, the project covered every community within Lagodekhi Municipality to disseminate information on the project and its activities. This resulted in an increased interest to apply for LAG membership and compared to 2017, LAG membership increased with 30%. The information campaigns also encouraged more people to participate in the grant competition, which has doubled the number of applications compared to those received under ENPARD Phase I.

31,236 persons, including 15,305 women, benefitted directly or indirectly from the project in Lagodekhi, through the diversification of income sources and improved availability of local services stemming from the implemented sub-grant projects.

175 beneficiaries (including 59 women) could directly improve their skills in business development, proposal writing, accounting taxation and other technical skills relevant to the value chains involved.

Other third parties involved (including other donors, other government agencies or local government units, NGOs, etc.)

The project team collaborated very closely with the ENPARD Communication Unit providing them with information on all project activities and events, so that media outlets attended and publicised the project success stories regularly at: www.enpard.ge.

At the end of the project, Lagodekhi LAG hosted representatives of FAO Georgia to initiate the idea of constructing an innovative and environmentally friendly greenhouse in Lagodekhi, to be managed by LAG as a social enterprise. Another initiation of FAO was to involve Lagodekhi LAG in their information campaign of ongoing FAO grant competitions to reach all villages of the Municipality. All involving parties agreed on the terms and conditions of the cooperation and a letter of agreement between FAO and LAG was prepared and signed. The installation of the Greenhouse is planned to take place by the end of 2019. Both initiatives are a significant step towards the sustainability of the LAG.

LAG members from Czech Republic visited Lagodekhi in August 2019, to discuss the potential cooperation between Lagodekhi and Czech LAGs, particularly in the winemaking business and tourism sector. As a EU member state, Czech partners agreed to do fundraising for the joint project together with Lagodekhi LAG in the near future.



*EP visit in Lagodekhi, 02.10.2019,
ENPARD Terrace*

On 16 July 2018, Deputy Director-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations visited Lagodekhi ENPARD Terrace and a Book Café established with EU support. Meetings were arranged with the LAG, the Director of the Administration of Lagodekhi Protected Area and the representatives of local authorities to discuss progress, challenges and possible solutions. The meetings were highly rated by the Georgian party as it is of utmost importance to apply modern approaches and European best practices on the ground.

Permanent Representatives to FAO from the Regional Groups of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, Near East and North America paid a visit to Lagodekhi on 28 September 2019. They met with LAG members and discussed about the LEADER implementation process in the Municipality

The delegation of former members of the European Parliament paid an official visit to Lagodekhi on 3 October 2019, which included a meeting with the LAG and visits to the Lagodekhi Protected Areas, as well as rural development initiatives, including the “ENPARD terrace”, folk dance group in Lagodekhi and “Energy Efficiency Cucumber Greenhouse” in Heretiskari.

3.4 Links and synergies developed with other actions

Mercy Corps, CARE and PIN were part of the UNDP initiative to establish the Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN). From the beginning of this initiative, the project participated in the development of structure and website of GRDN. This network unifies the actors working in rural development sector, including GALAG.

GALAG is also active through the platform Georgian Association of Rural Development (GAARD), coordinated by the NGO “BRIDGE - Innovation and Development” of Georgia.

3.5 Building upon/complementing previous EU programmes

The ENPARD Phase II project was the direct extension of the ENPARD Phase I project, which was carried out in Lagodekhi, Borjomi and Kazbegi Municipalities, implemented respectively by CARE, MC and PIN during 2015-2017. The project has built on the success and lessons learned from the previous phase with a higher emphasis on the sustainability of LAGs.

4. Visibility

CARE ensured the visibility of the project and EU funding, in accordance with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. EU support was always explicitly mentioned at all meetings with government stakeholders and beneficiaries, and the EU emblem and ENPARD logo were prominently displayed on all electronic and printed documents, webpages, brochures, the Local Development Strategy, grant application forms, presentations, and on project banners and other material at workshops and events. In the beginning of the project, CARE with other implementing partners drafted the “communications and visibility plan”, approved by the ENPARD and the EU communications unit. The project ensured that the communications activities followed the plan. Throughout the project, CARE developed various visibility online and printed materials, included in the initial plan, such as leaflets, success stories, promo videos, newsletters, which were shared via social and online media channels: CARE website, Lagodekhi LAG web-page, CARE Facebook and LAG Facebook pages. The materials, including press-releases and media advisories were regularly shared with ENPARD communications unit for distributing at ENPARD web-page (www.enpard.ge) and Facebook page. The communications material developed include:

- Rural Development project update -2018
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QEfJNKe7tCH-ymNsgYkWb9GbU0MrnadV/view?usp=sharing>
- Rural Development project update-2019:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S577J5MzpCt4jniaikxZrbFHcP1CJ_iq/view?usp=sharing
- LAG newsletter: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K4HVGiVtih9Up40pAu7-gxPCx2B0oVvy/view?usp=sharing>
- The video developed on positive parenthood initiative:
<https://www.facebook.com/CAREInternationalintheCaucasus/videos/833909650307450/>
- Project beneficiaries participated in the EU days in Tbilisi and the EU days in Lagodekhi. Success stories have been produced and shared via CARE media channels: <http://care-caucasus.org.ge/index.php?m=50>

Following the visibility guidelines, CARE ensures the visibility of the rural development initiatives. The plaques were displayed for the each initiative, illustrating EU emblem and support to the project. As described above, CARE collaborated very closely with the ENPARD Communication Unit to ensure that the project activities and impact was widely disseminated across relevant media channels.

To facilitate information exchange and improved communication with beneficiaries the project supported the operation of the LAG websites and Facebook page that made the project more accessible and transparent.



EU day in Lagodekhi. 05.05.2018

- From February 2018 to October 2019 Lagodekhilag.ge web-page was visited by 10,999 individuals
- From September 2018 to October 2019 Visitlagodekhi.com was visited by 13,122 individuals
- LAG Facebook page reached 111,009 visitors and 11,547 persons were actively engaged through liking or commenting posts.

<https://www.facebook.com/lagodekhi.LAG/>

Contract number

Start date and end date of the reporting period

2016/379-225

1st November 2017 – 31st October 2019

The European Commission may wish to publicise the results of Actions. Do you have any objection to this report being published on the EuropeAid website? If so, please state your objections here.

CARE has no objection to the activities and results of this project being published on the EuropeAid website.

Location of records, accounting and supporting documents

Please indicate in a table the location of records, accounting and supporting documents for each Beneficiary and affiliated entity entitled to incur costs.

Name of the contact person for the Action: Stella Szonn, Program Officer, CARE Austria

Signature: _____

Location: Vienna, Austria

Date report due to EU: 31.01.2019

Date report sent to MC: _____

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