


Format Activity Report



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 **Austrian**
Development Cooperation

Activity Report

Contract No.

As at June, 30 xxxx

Contractor/ applicant:

Name:
Address:
Phone, eMail:
Contact person for the action:

Project title:

“Local Actors join for inclusive economic development and government in South Caucasus” JOIN

Local project partner:

Name: Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development Foundation (CARD)
Address: 1/21 Azatutyan ave., Yerevan 0037, Armenia
Phone, eMail: CARD project coordinator for JOIN /contact: Diana Ter-Stepanyan +374 10 440550 ext. 207 dter-stepanyan@card.am

Reporting period:

Reporting period: April 1- 30, 2013	Report submitted on (date): 13.05.2013
Due date:	
Planned project duration from:	Until:
Reallocations:	Extended until:

Summary of project progress

- Narrative description of project progress, particularly with regard to the achievement of objectives, expected results and indicators, monitoring and necessary steering measures:

According to Activity plan which is integral part of the contract between CARD and CARE the activities planned for April are as follows:

A 2.2. Establish/strengthen BDICs for information to small scale farmers and local businesses in the agricultural sector

2.2.1 BDIC established in Azatan and start operating in FVSC based on a business plan

Hiring of Azatan BDIC officer.

Based on the selection process Lala Tadevosyan was hired as BDIC officer since April 15 by FVSC manager Vardan Papoyan (see Annex#1). JOIN staff conducted introductory trainings for her to provide services based on the FVSC/BDIC business plan (see Annex#2) and the grant agreement.

2.2.1. BDIC established in Stepanavan and start operating in FVSC based on a business plan

Grant agreement with Stepanavan's FVSC developed and signed. The model of Stepanavan's BDIC is also linked to the operation of Stepanavan FVSC. Stepanavan's FVSC/BDIC business plan was developed during the previous reporting period. Grant agreement based on FVSC business plan was developed and will be signed with the Manager of Stepanavan's FVSC by May 15th and BDIC will start operating.

Stepanavan's BDIC officer hired.

In order to save time the position for Stepanavan's BDIC officer was announced earlier. Taking into account lessons learned from the previous experience with announcing Azatan's BDIC officer through the popular website www.careercenter.am, in the result of which we got mostly overskilled applications, we have decided to announce it in local newspaper „Lori marz“ (see Annex #3). Thus, 4 CVs from the applicants were got. They all had more or less the same background thus all were shortlisted for the interview. Selection committee was developed and interviews with all applicants were conducted (see Annex #4). In the result Andranik Jaghinyan (see Annex #5) was selected.

2.2.1. BDIC established in Berd/Noyemberyan and operating based on a developed model and a plan

Location for BDIC establishment in Berd or Noyemberyan is selected.

As it was mentioned in the previous report the revealed most feasible options to set up BDIC was public library which had an equipped room with 5-6 computer sets and furniture provided by „Green Lane“ NGO within the “Information and communication technologies for improving agricultural activities” project . This option as the most suitable was suggested to Bers major during the meeting. Nevertheless, the mayor has some reservations with this option and promised to suggest another option. In the result of another meeting with the mayor we have some concerns related to commitment of Berd Mayor in supporting the ideas of having BDIC either within Berd Library (the most feasible option for BDIC) or under Berd municipality.

Having this concerns, in parallel, JOIN team communicated with Noyemberyan Community Working Group member Andranik Veranyan who expressed commitment in establishing BDIC in Noyemberyan. Moreover, SME DNC proposed to open its representation in Noyemberyan within which BDIC will be operating. This will assure sustainability of BDIC as SME DNC will continue provision of business development services after the project completion. In addition, SME DNC is the leader organization in Armenia that provide business development support services. In the result of negotiations CARD agreed to sign an MOU with SME DNC not only related to establishment of Noyemberyan BDIC on the base of SME DNC regional branch office, but also to provide technical support to the other two BDICs in Azatan and Stepanavan. Particularly our BDIC officers will pass comprehensive training course of SME DNC on business support service provision and may become SME DNC agents in their respective areas in the future.

The draft MoU is developed (see Annex #6) and in process of agreement with SME DNC. After it will be signed JOIN team together with SME DNC respective person will develop and conform the operational model of Noyemberyan’s BDIC.

2.2.2 Provision of tailor made TA/trainings by CARD staff

Tailor made TA/trainings to Azatan’s BDIC officer

On April 16, 2013 just after hiring the Azatan BDIC officer CARD JOIN project coordinator visited Azatan and provided the Officer with all introductory information about the Project.

1. Short introduction of donor and partner organization with provision of websites for further examination was done.
2. Presentation of the JOIN project and its concept was done. More details were provided about the ER 2.
3. Azatan FVSC’s Business plan and Activity plan of Azatan’s BDIC was introduced and details on each activity were provided.
4. Training on filing of Project document, mailing and other procedures was provided.
5. Training on how to approach BDIC visitors and to fill Feedback forms was provided.
6. Training on the monthly programmatic reporting form was provided.
7. Data base of web resources where useful information can be found was introduced for further examination. It was decided that BDIC officer will update it continuously.

Further assistance will be provided on demand base.

2.2.3 Participation of BDIC officers in Business Service providers' trainings (BSC, SME DNC etc.)

BDIC officers capacity building in Business Service provision

In the result of communication with local branch of SME DNC to find out any suitable trainings to build capacity of future BDIC officer of Stepanavan and the acting Officer of Azatan in business development a one for the start-ups was found to be conducted in Vanadzor, Lori. Thus, just after selection Andranik Jaghinyan participated in the 6-day training conducted by Lori branch of SME DNC in Vanadzor in the framework of „Start-up business support program“ and was provided with certificate (see Annex #7). The training covered topics like „Management plan“ „Production plan“ „Financial plan“ etc.

We also inquired information about trainings in Shirak marz for Azatan BDIC officer. It was found out that the closest in time training in business support will be conducted in July, 2013 in Artik (35 km from Gyumri) and the next one will be conducted in Gyumri, in October 2013.

A 2.3 BDICs organize introductory community event informing about their services

Community meetings

Preliminary processing of need assessment conducted among BDIC beneficiaries shows that most of the farmers and SMEs are interested in new processing technologies. For this reason it was decided to conduct a community meeting to introduce new technologies in milk processing.

Azatan's BDIC officer contacted people who mentioned interest in this sphere and invite them for a training/consultancy on new technologies in milk processing.

Thus, on April 25, 2013 the technologist from CHR HANSEN Company Mr. Mindaugas Vizgaitis conducted a training/consultancy "The use of modern technologies in cheese production" for dairy processors from Shirak Marz. 16 people take part in the training/consultancy of which 7 were females. (see Annex#8 and #9)

A 2.4 BDICs organize trainings for their beneficiaries on identified themes (e.g. on business-plan writing, business regulations etc.)

2.4.1 BDIC beneficiaries' needs identified and curricula developed

Azatan's BDIC beneficiaries need assessment.

In the frames of BDIC beneficiaries need assessment as well as to introduce BDIC and its services to potential beneficiaries BDIC officer with JOIN coordinator attended some

neighboring communities. Assessment was conducted via developed questionnaire. In April 23, 2013 visits to Arevik, Basen and Hatsik communities were conducted (see Annex#10). The next visit was planned in April 30 to visit Akhuryan, Hovuni, Marmashen communities as well as to conduct assessment in Azatan. In spite of the preliminary agreement with community mayors we cannot meet farmers/SMEs as after some rainy days it was sunny and favorable weather and most of the farmers were busy with field work. Questionnaires were inputted in the excel format (see Annex#11).

- Planned activities/ current status of implementation

Activity planned	Current status as at <u>date</u>	Deviations/ comments
Hiring of Azatan BDIC officer	Done	
Azatan's BDIC beneficiaries need assessment	In process	Assessment will be completed by May 20, 2013
Azatan BDIC beneficiaries needs identified and curricula developed	In process	Will be done after completing and analyzing of need assessment
Stepanavan's BDIC officer selected/ hired	Done	
Participation of BDIC officers in Business providers trainings	Done (Stepanavan's BDIC officer)	In the reporting period any suitable training for Azatan's BDIC officer were not found
Grant agreement with Stepanavan's FVSC developed and signed	Done	To be signed as of May 15, 2013
Location for BDIC establishment in Berd or Noyemberyan is selected	Done	
Berd/Noyemberyan BDIC's operational model and sustainability plan is developed	In process	Model will be developed after MoU signing.
Evaluation of capacity building needs of BDIC officers (Azatan) and provision of tailor made	TA provided	

TA/trainings by CARD		
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- Difficulties encountered during project implementation and steering measures applied to solve the problems:

The main difficulty while need assessment in neighbouring communities of Azatan was insufficient number of potential beneficiaries. Preliminary it was planned to conduct assessment in 5 communities and in the Azatan. But first visits to communities make clear that there is no sufficient beneficiaries (SMEs) in the communities as it was planned. Besides favourable weather for field work hindered gathering of farmers.

- Changes and adjustments necessary with regard to the following reporting period:

The following activities are planned for May, 2013

Activity planned for April	Comments
Azatan's BDIC beneficiaries need assessment	
Azatan BDIC beneficiaries needs identified and curricula developed	
BDIC opening community event conducted in Stepanavan	
Grant agreement with Stepanavan's FVSC signed	
Evaluation of capacity building needs of Stepanavan's BDIC officer and provision of tailor made TA/trainings by CARD	
Stepanavan's BDIC beneficiaries need assessment	
MoU with SME DNC is signed	
Berd/Noyemberyan BDIC's operational model and sustainability plan is developed	

- List of annexes to the activity report

Annex#1_ BDIC officer's contract

Annex#2_ Azatan FVSC business plan

Annex#3_ Announcement in „Lori marz“ local newspaper

Annex#4_ Stepanavan BDIC officer selection

Annex#5_ Andranik Jaghinyan's CV

Annex#6_ Draft MoU between CARD and SME DNC on BDICs

Annex#7_ Certificate_ Andranik Jaghinyan

Annex#8_ List of participants of Dairy processing training_ consultancy

Annex#9_ Pics of training_ consultancy on dairy processing

Annex#10_ Picks of need assessment in Shirak

Annex#11_ BDIC services needs assessment inputed

Request for next disbursement

Summary project budget (relevant for accounting) according to contract	Amount approved so far	Amount presented for verification as at due date	Remaining budget

Request for disbursement for the next accounting period: