

**Environmental,
Gender and Social Impact Analysis
(EGSIA) and the development of a Risk
Management and
Sustainability Plan (RMSP) for the
programme Sustainable Development of
the Area of Aragvi
Protected Landscape and the Local
Communities**

Risk Management and Sustainability Plan (RMSP)

CONSULTANT

Integra Consulting s.r.o.
Sudoměřská 1243/25
Prague 3
130 00
Czech Republic

IČ: 275 66 617
DIČ: CZ275 66 617
office@integracons.com
+420 774 541 484



Naviga Advisory and Evaluation s.r.o.
Křížíkova 2987/70b
Brno
612 00
Czech Republic

IČ: 25342282
DIČ: CZ25342282
gill@navigae.cz
+420 603 535 132



Authors of the report (in alphabetical order):

Dita Jahodová, Nino Javakhishvili, Irakli Kobulia, Lukáš
Maláč, Michal Musil, Martin Smutný, Tamar Tskhadadze

CLIENT

Czech Development Agency
Nerudova 3
118 50 Prague 1
Czech Republic

+420 251 108 130
info@czechaid.cz

Table of Contents

1	Background	2
1.1	Objectives of the project	2
1.2	Purpose of Risk Management and Sustainability Plan	2
2	The overview of the risks.....	4
2.1	Risks identified by EGSIA	4
2.1.1	Risks related to environmental issues	4
2.1.2	Risks related to gender issues.....	5
2.1.3	Risks related to socio-economic issues.....	5
2.2	Risks associated with the management and coordination of the Programme's implementation.....	6
3	Risk Management.....	8
3.1	Risks identified by EGSIA	8
3.2	Risks associated with the management and coordination of the Programme's implementation.....	17

1 Background

This draft Risk Management and Sustainability Plan (hereinafter also 'RMSP') represents the working output of the third phase of the project 'Environmental, Gender and Social Impact Analysis (EGSIA) and the development of a Risk Management and Sustainability Plan (RMSP) for the programme Sustainable Development of the Area of Aragvi Protected Landscape and the Local Communities' (hereinafter also 'EGSIA Aragvi').

1.1 Objectives of the project

The assignment 'Environmental, Gender and Social Impact Analysis (EGSIA) and the development of a Risk Management and Sustainability Plan (RMSP) for the programme Sustainable Development of the Area of Aragvi Protected Landscape and the Local Communities' aims to carry out a participatory assessment of the development programme implemented jointly by Czech Development Agency and Austrian Development Agency in Dusheti Municipality, Georgia (hereinafter also the 'Programme'). The assignment should ensure that any substantial negative environmental, gender and/or social risks and/or adverse impacts are avoided, minimized, mitigated and managed, and that environmental, gender and social opportunities and benefits are enhanced. The findings and conclusions of the assignment will also serve for validating the logframe indicators of the programme as well as all baseline and target values for these indicators.

1.2 Purpose of Risk Management and Sustainability Plan

An RMSP is developed based on the EGSIA (one of the previous outputs of the project) and further elaborates and operationalizes the measures formulated by EGSIA for avoidance, minimization, mitigation and management of identified risks and adverse impacts, and reducing imbalances and inequalities. Equally, the RMSP identifies measures and approaches for harnessing the potential of benefits and opportunities from an environmental, gender and social perspective.

The measures included in the RMSP are described in detail allowing for practical implementation of all necessary steps to ensure the expected effect, including the indication of costs as well as – wherever relevant – identification of the actor(s) responsible for each required action and indication of other relevant stakeholders/partners.

The draft RMSP will be submitted to the Czech Development Agency and a feedback received will be reflected in the final version of the document.

2 The overview of the risks

This section summarizes the risks identified by the Project team. It includes both risks identified by EGSIA related to the likely effects of the Programme on the key environmental, gender and socio-economic aspects of the Aragvi Protected Landscape as well as the risks associated with the management and coordination of the Programme's implementation including the way of implementation of the specific projects supported by the Programme.

2.1 Risks identified by EGSIA¹

2.1.1 Risks related to environmental issues

Habitats and biodiversity: Risks related to the tourism-related interventions stemming from the potential increase of the human presence in the area which can cause disturbance to wildlife and sensitive habitats.

Conditions of mountain meadows and alpine grasslands: Risks associated with an overall increase of tourism, which may have negative impacts on the ecologically sensitive area such as the alpine meadows.

Erosion (and other natural hazards): Risks associated with an overall increase of tourism and development of tourism-related infrastructure.

Forest management: The increased presence of tourists may increase risk of forest fire.

Waste management: Risks related to the tourism-related interventions stemming from the potential increase of the human presence in the area, which may result in increased amount of municipal waste, tossing of wastes along the tourist trails as well as illegal deposition of tourism-generated wastes.

¹ For more detailed information, please see the Environmental, Gender and Social Impact Assessment (EGSIA) Report.

Water: Risks related to increased tourists' presence and related accommodation capacities development, which will likely increase pressure on water resources.

Landscape protection: Risks associated with an overall increase of tourism and development of tourism-related infrastructure.

2.1.2 Risks related to gender issues

Economic activities of women and men: Risk that the Programme may provide unequal financial support to the men and women.

2.1.3 Risks related to socio-economic issues

There is no need for an additional specific budget allocation to mitigate the risks related to socio-economic issues. The activities were designed considering the main risks in this category. Successful mitigation of the following risks will be based on the sustainable practices, especially in the tourism, inclusive participation (applying the LEADER approach) and transparent communication with all the community members.

Tourism related socio-economic risks

Due to the significantly decreasing and aging population in the area, there is a risk of inevitable damage and transformation of cultural heritage, which could be enhanced by the fast-growing and uncontrolled tourism. However, the Programme is designed to support only sustainable tourism and no significant negative impacts on the cultural heritage are expected. There is even a specific support for small local businesses in the sector (guesthouses, local crafts, tour guiding, etc.). The activities within the forest management project could lead to the limited access to the firewood. This will most probably be prevented, since the project teams have good knowledge of the region and the projects are implemented in close cooperation with the local representatives.

There is a specific tourism-related socio-economic risk in the area of the land ownership. The new tracks for tourists or any new infrastructure can potentially affect local people because not all the land in the LAG is officially registered. Therefore, the project teams should be well informed about the ownership situation in the localities, where there will be planned any new tourist tracks or new infrastructure. They must always consider the specific interests and communicate actively with the potential owners. One of the projects is suggesting to encourage registration of the land to avoid any future problems in this matter, which can mitigate this risk even for the future activities.

Inequal access to information

The Programme should ensure equal access to information about the new opportunities, training and relevant activities. A special communication strategy should be applied for various target group in close cooperation with the LAG. The Programme implementation manager should know when and where to contact specific groups and what is the best way to communicate current information about the planned or implemented activities. The combination of online and offline platforms will ensure the equal access. However, the assigned personnel should specifically ensure, that the vulnerable groups (e.g., women, elderly, people with disabilities) are always informed.

Low participation of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process

As reflected in the Programme document and the Project documents, there is limited public participation due to the various characteristics of the region. However, meaningful and active participation of various groups in the local decision making is crucial not only for the success of the Programme, but also for the long-term development of the APL. In case, that participation will be low or only some of the community members will be participating, there is a related risk of inequal resource distribution and potentially conflicts within the community.

Therefore, there should be broad consensus on the general Programme characteristics, including the specific activities and the budget allocation. Local representatives (including the informal ones) should be invited to relevant meetings and all the people should be encourage to express their opinions. Various groups in the region can have less opportunities to participate due to the social, economic, family or health circumstances. The participation activities should be therefore planned considering these barriers.

2.2 Risks associated with the management and coordination of the Programme's implementation

- Limited possibility of the Programme to address main existing problems representing barriers for developing the area
- Unevenly spread financial support creating grievances among various communities supported by the project

- Limited availability of the long-term financing of the project outcomes (tourism infrastructure, business and agriculture trainings, women empowerment and prevention of gender-based violence, etc.)
- Non-effective operation of the LAG due to different interests of communities
- Limited possibilities of the Programme to achieve its objective in the field of gender-based violence due to the ambivalent attitude of local people towards addressing domestic violence.
- The persistent local tradition that women do not inherit represents a risk of inequality between men and women in receiving the Programme support.

3 Risk Management

The section below outlines the management of the risks identified by EGSIA (section 2.1) it describes necessary mitigation actions, responsibilities for undertaking these actions, indicates the timeframe and – wherever possible – also budget needed for implementing mitigation actions, and suggests how the monitoring should be ensured.

For the risks related to the management and coordination of the Programme’s implementation (section 2.2) it provides details on the risks and indicates how the risks can be – at least partially – mitigated.

3.1 Risks identified by EGSIA

Risk: Tourism-related environmental risks

Given the nature of the identified environmental risks (indicated in the section above) which are all related to the impacts of tourism development on the vulnerable components of the environment of the APL, joint risk management and mitigation measures are proposed to address potential risks (i.e. disturbance to wildlife and sensitive habitats, trampling and other physical impacts on ecologically valuable meadows and alpine grasslands, erosion along the hiking paths and erosion caused by infrastructure construction, risks of forest fires, inadequate tourism waste and wastewater management, and visual impacts of the newly built objects on the landscape).

The characteristics of the risk: The risk will happen likely with moderate possible impacts, which may be reversible and irreversible (depending on a specific environmental issue to be likely affected).

Mitigation action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget estimate	Monitoring

<p>Consultation of the project proposals with the APL administration: The APL administration shall be allowed to review and screen project proposals to be supported from the Programme before the decision on the awarding a support/funding from the Programme is made. Any potential APL reservations towards a specific project shall be taken into account and adjustments made where possible to minimize relevant environmental risks</p>	<p>APL Administration (review specific projects 'proposals)</p> <p>Programme implementation manager (register APL opinions on individual proposed projects, facilitate consultations where required by the APL).</p>	<p>Throughout the Programme implementation, during the evaluation of sub-projects' proposals</p>	<p>Not specified.</p> <p>The office time of the relevant APL staff will be required. Depending on the number and nature of the projects submitted for the Programme funding, it is expected to be from several hours to several working days in total for the whole Programme period.</p>	<p>List of APL screened Projects applications is kept by the Programme implementing manager, along with the records of project-specific consultations with the APL (if any).</p>
--	--	--	---	--

<p>Field monitoring of the Programme-supported projects by the APL rangers: The activities identified as carrying potential risks to the specific vulnerable environmental assets will be monitored within the regular field presence and monitoring duties of the APL rangers to identify any unwanted irregularity or negative unmitigated environmental impact. Any such finding shall be reported to the Programme management and adequate corrective action shall be considered.</p>	<p>APL Administration (rangers) – to carry out field monitoring (within the standard scope envisaged in the APL Management plan) and to inform the Programme management about any recorded incidents of unmitigated environmental impacts from the Programme-supported projects.</p> <p>Programme management to record APL findings and initiate corrective action as necessary (e.g. requesting corrective action from the responsible project owner - a clean up of the accumulated waste dump, installation of wastewater collection tank, etc.)</p>	<p>Throughout the Programme implementation</p>	<p>Not specified.</p> <p>The worktime of the APL rangers will be used, but carrying out a field monitoring of activities and identification of negative environmental impacts should be regarded as a part of their standard duty. The additional task of reporting relevant findings to the Programme management will not require any additional resources, it should be regarded as a part of regular communication among these two key APL stakeholders.</p>	<p>Records of the reported negative unmitigated impacts of the Programme-supported projects shall be kept by the Programme implementing manager. Any follow-up actions to mitigate, manage or compensate detected impacts shall be also recorded and included in the Programme implementation reporting.</p>
---	---	--	---	--

Risk: Unequal financial support to the men and women

In consideration of the finding that the successful applicants were heavily male dominated, measures are proposed to mitigate and manage the potential risk that the Programme will benefit significantly more men than women.

The characteristics of the risk: The risk will very likely happen with significant possible impacts, which may be reversible.				
Mitigation action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget estimate	Monitoring
Consultation on project writing will be provided on regular basis in different localities across APL. Consultations will be conceived in such a way that writing and submitting applications is not a barrier for either men or women. LAG members will continuously support and encourage local women to apply for projects within their activities.	Programme implementation manager and LAG members providing consultation on writing project applications	Throughout the Programme's implementation	Not specified. There will be a requirement to increase the capacity of LAG members to consult on project applications and to provide vehicles to reach different parts of APL, including remote and hard to reach locations.	Interim reports on the number of consultations provided to men and women to prepare project applications in each location across APL. Reports will include reflection on what men and women face when writing project applications, whether and why women apply less than men, and how preparation and submission can be facilitated to increase the number of women applicants.

Risk: Ineffectiveness in addressing domestic violence

Limited job opportunities for men and women can have a negative impact on the incidence of domestic violence. Due to the identified ambivalent attitude of local people towards addressing domestic violence, and limited reach of the planned workshops about gender-based violence, mitigating measures are proposed to address the potential risk of not achieving the Programme results in this issue.

The characteristics of the risk: The risk is likely to occur with significant potential impacts, although these may be reversible.

Mitigation action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget estimate	Monitoring
<p>To implement a new project within which two brief guides (electronic) on how to address domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence will be prepared: the first one for survivors and the second one for family members and other close people. A suitable effective strategy for dissemination of both guides to the local population will be developed.</p>	<p>Programme implementation manager and the manager of the new project</p>	<p>During 2023</p>	<p>The expert team should consist of two national experts on gender-based violence, one international expert on gender-based violence, a graphic designer, a national expert on media communication and two LAG members.</p> <p>Scope of work: Approximately 55 working days for each expert, approximately 8 working days for the graphic designer, approximately 20 working days for the national media communication expert</p>	<p>Evidence of the creation of a brief guide (electronic) on how to address domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence for survivors.</p> <p>Evidence of the creation of a brief guide (electronic) on how to address domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence for family members and other close people.</p> <p>Report on the dissemination of the two guides through the</p>

			and approximately 20 days for the two LAG members.	channels identified in the strategy.
--	--	--	--	--------------------------------------

Risk: Tourism-related socio-economic risks

Given the nature of the identified socio-economical risks (indicated in the section above) which are all related to the impacts of tourism development, joint risk management and mitigation measures are proposed to address potential risks (i.e., increased pressure on timber resources for heating and cooking by increased number of tourist service providers, potential conflict with the new forest management rules, land rights of local people affected by the tourism development).

The characteristics of the risk: The risk will happen likely with moderate possible impacts, which may be irreversible.

Mitigation action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget estimate	Monitoring
Consultation of the project proposals with the members of the local community: The relevant members of the community shall be allowed to comment on the project proposals to be supported from the Programme before the decision on the awarding a	Project team of the implementing partner (provide relevant information to the potentially affected members of the community) Programme implementation manager (register LAG opinions on individual proposed projects, facilitate	Throughout the Programme implementation, during the evaluation of sub-projects' proposals	Not specified. The office time of the relevant project team staff will be required. Depending on the number and nature of the projects submitted for the Programme funding, it is expected to be from several	List of screened Projects applications is kept by the Programme implementing manager, along with the records of project-specific consultations with the members of the community (if any).

<p>support/funding from the Programme is made. Any potential reservations towards a specific project shall be taken into account and adjustments made where possible to minimize relevant risks.</p>	<p>consultations where required by the LAG).</p>		<p>hours to several working days in total for the whole Programme period.</p>	
<p>The project teams should be well informed about the ownership situation in the localities, where there will be planned any new tourist tracks, new infrastructure or forest management practices affecting the access to the firewood. They must always consider the specific interests and communicate actively with the potential owners.</p>	<p>Project team of the implementing partner (communicate actively with the potentially affected members of the community)</p>	<p>Throughout the Programme implementation, especially before starting any new activities related to the tourist tracks, infrastructure or forest management</p>	<p>Not specified. The office time of the relevant staff will be required. Depending on the number and nature of the projects submitted for the Programme funding.</p>	<p>Not specified.</p>

Risk: Inequal access to information

All the members of the community should have equal access to the information about the Programme, e.g., relevant opportunities, training, plans.

The characteristics of the risk: The risk will happen likely with moderate possible impacts, which may be irreversible.

Mitigation action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget estimate	Monitoring
<p>The assigned personnel should ensure, that all the relevant people, especially people from the vulnerable groups (e.g., women, elderly, people with disabilities) are always informed about planned, ongoing and finalized activities. The communication should work both ways and the community members should be informed how to contact the Programme/Project team with their questions, suggestions or complains.</p>	<p>Project team of the implementing partner (provide relevant information to the potentially affected members of the community and process any questions, suggestions or complains)</p> <p>Programme implementation manager (register LAG opinions on individual proposed projects, facilitate consultations where required by the LAG).</p>	<p>Throughout the Programme implementation, especially during the evaluation of sub-projects' proposals</p>	<p>The office time of the relevant project team staff will be required. Depending on the number and nature of the projects submitted for the Programme funding, it is expected to be several working days in total for the whole Programme period. In the addition, there will be costs for the communication materials, which are already budgeted.</p>	<p>Information about the communication (communication materials, meeting minutes) in line with the official reporting requirements</p>

Risk: Low participation of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process

The Programme should ensure access for all members of the community to participate.

The characteristics of the risk: The risk will happen likely with significant possible impacts, which may be reversible.

Mitigation action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget estimate	Monitoring
<p>Local representatives (including the informal ones) should be invited to relevant meetings and all the people should be encourage to express their opinions. The specific participative activities should be planned considering the social, economic, family or health barriers (considering location and timing of the events, accessibility of the public transport or financial costs of the potential participants).</p>	<p>Project team of the implementing partner (provide relevant information to the potentially affected members of the community)</p> <p>Programme implementation manager (register LAG opinions on individual proposed projects, facilitate consultations where required by the LAG).</p>	<p>Throughout the Programme implementation</p>	<p>The office time of the relevant project team staff will be required. Depending on the number and nature of the projects submitted for the Programme funding, it is expected to be from several hours to several working days in total for the whole Programme period.</p>	<p>Indicators measuring the participation of persons belonging to the groups, which tend to be underrepresented (women, persons with disabilities, youth and persons from remote communities)</p>

3.2 Risks associated with the management and coordination of the Programme's implementation

Limited possibility of the Programme to address main existing problems representing barriers for developing the area: The main development problem of the APL is accessibility. Some villages are located on the main road, like Korsha (Khevsureti), or Magharoskari (Pshavi), however, even these villages lack inner roads. Gudamakari does not have roads at all. The public transportation is insufficient and does not meet the needs of the aging population. Limited transport connection of the region has negative effect on the tourism and business development. Therefore, the planned Programme objectives will be achieved only within these limitations. This problem of the APL is a long-term and has significant impact on all the residents, which discourages them from living and working in the region.

This risk can be to certain extent mitigated by including additional objectives and expected results focused on improving the transport connection (e.g. studies of the potential transport system development, support to the planing and design of the road infrastructure, etc.) to the Programme in its update and/or follow-up programme.

Unevenly spread financial support creating grievances among various communities supported by the project: All the new potential financial support could cause tension and perception of omission or injustice related to the budget allocation or to the individual grant support. Therefore, the Programme implementation team and the project teams should apply the 'Do no harm' approach at the planning and implementation phase. Possibly diverging or incompatible interests must be considered. The Programme implementation and project teams should ensure equal access to the information and transparent communication. The activities localized only in limited area (e.g., one village) or benefiting only specific group (e.g., women, youth) should be always justified and communicated to the local population.

Limited availability of the long-term financing of the project outcomes: The outcomes achieved by the projects supported within the Programme may require long-term financing to ensure its financial sustainability. The Programme should reflect the donor (CzDA) exit strategy. All the planned activities should be promoting sustainable and low-cost solutions and continuous know-how transfer. The local stakeholders should take over the Programme outputs and continue with the implemented activities (tourism infrastructure maintenance, trainings, awareness campaigns, businesses development). Also, the coordination with other potential donors, which

would support the activities initiated and outcomes achieved by the Programme after the closure of the Programme may mitigate this risk.

Non-effective operation of the LAG due to different interests of communities: In the addition to the Do no harm approach mentioned above, the Programme should be implemented in line with the LEADER approach, which is specifically designed for the rural development projects. It promotes bottom-up measures, cooperation between local population, business and public structure and strategies tailored to specific local needs. According to our knowledge, the People in Need team (one of the implementing partners) is actively applying this approach in the region.

Limited possibilities of the Programme to achieve its objective in the field of gender-based violence due to the ambivalent attitude of local people towards addressing domestic violence: This risk can be (partially) mitigated by implementing the action described in the previous subsection (i.e. developing electronic guides on how to address domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence).

The persistent local tradition that women do not inherit represent a risk of inequality between men and women in receiving the Programme support: The local tradition that women do not inherit has an impact not only on their economic independence but also on the conditions under which they run guesthouses – often they do not own the properties themselves and pay rent to other men. Thus, men often benefit from the Programme's support for guesthouses run by women. This risk can be (partially mitigated) by supporting the awareness raising on the legal provisions (which do not distinguish between men and women regarding this issues) and identification and disseminating the model examples of good practice, when the families respected among the local community do not follow traditional approach. The LAG may play an important role in mapping examples of good practice as well as in their subsequent dissemination and gradual change of attitude towards this local tradition.

