

The 7 Most Endangered 2016

Project Fact Sheet

<u>Project Title</u>	Archaeological Site of Ererouyk and village of Ani Pemza, ARMENIA
<u>Location</u>	Shirak region, Armenia
<u>Initial input date</u>	15.07.2017
<u>Current status</u>	Post follow-up
<u>Latest input date</u>	10.09.2018

Summary, status, prognosis

Renovation of an historic basilica, preservation of archaeological remains and rehabilitation of the nearby village to promote cultural tourism.

Major works to be undertaken in two phases with the first one slowly starting with some small components under way. Assuming/hoping that further funds are obtained, this phase could be completed before 2020.

The second phase may follow later but with these works the essential objective of the project will have been achieved. A promising outcome, active participation and further monitoring suggested.

Classification: **B Good progress**

Basic data

Nominator:

Mrs Gaianè Casnati. Head of Architecture and Restoration department Organisation. Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena.

Brief description:

Historical buildings, place of worship, archaeological sites, parks-gardens and cultural landscapes.

Owner:

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia (the basilica and archaeological site) – Private individuals and the Community of ANI (the village and surrounding lands).

Administrator:

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia (the basilica and archaeological site) – Community of ANI¹ (the village and surrounding lands).

Context, description.

The Ererouyk site, identified as one of the “7 Most Endangered Sites” of Europe in 2016, is situated to the North West of Yerevan on a rocky plateau next to the Akhourian River. It holds

¹ The Community of Ani has been recently established in Maralik and administer Anipemza together with other 16 villages that totalize 22.000 inhabitants in the whole. The formers Mayors of the villages maintained a representative role and some minor functions. In 2019 there will be new elections that may bring new people.

an extraordinary important but ruined basilica built during the VI Century and numerous other archaeological remains from different periods.

Adjacent to the archaeological site is located the relatively well preserved village of Anipemza, built between 1926 and 1938 to host the workers of a near quarry/mine that was closed in 1994. It has been designed by a renowned Armenian architect and constitutes an important testimony of the architecture and social organization over the Soviet period in Armenia.

Issues, problems, threats.

Ererouyk and Anipemza, now lying in a poor state of abandonment although having a relevant cultural interest and certain tourism potential, could instead be enhanced and even become the first step for the promotion of a more sustainable cultural tourism development in the Shirak region, as well as pave the way for achieving a long-term strategy consisting of creating a trans-national Akhurian river archaeological park.

Status pre-mission

The main components of the project had previously been roughly identified by the nominator and, after some clarifications during the assessment period, they consist of: (i) scientific studies, environmental feasibility assessment, setting standards and rules for the protected area, devising a management plan and project design, (ii) civil works corresponding to the conservation of the Ererouyk basilica, the preservation of the archaeological sites, the enhancement of the Anipemza village and several complementary works, (iii) realization of two museums (iv) promotion of little commercial activities and training for local population; (v) promotion of the site and implementation of communication actions, including the organization of an international dissemination event.

Summary EN/EIBI mission recommendations, action programme:

The EIBI Technical report was issued in March 2017 (on EN website). It revised the scope of the project, its implementation programme (divides into two phases) and costs, notably of the first phase. It recommended a long list of actions, as follows:

- the creation of a dedicated strong Project Implementation Unit, including (i) close collaboration with the local authorities (ii) open participation of stakeholders and (iii) participation of local experts to favour the exchange of ideas and inputs.
- a system of norms and regulations should be established as a priority, taking into consideration the ownership of the lands and village buildings.
- an International Scientific Committee should be set up to provide the necessary technical advice.
- to consider the project as an integrated action, taking into account its major objective is to attract culturally interested tourists to the area.
- preservation works should be based on rigorous studies
- to carry out an Environmental Feasibility Assessment
- the realization of the museums, restaurant and other public spaces should go in parallel with training activities for the future staff, completed with promotion and communication actions.

Progress on recommendations and latest status

The report and its conclusions and recommendations were well received in general.

The nominator has been very active in promoting the project at different levels and trying to mobilize different sources of funds:

- an application for obtaining an EU grant for the Shirak region aiming at creating new jobs and increasing competitiveness was submitted and selected but could not be financed due to the change of legal status of one of the local co-applicants.
- a proposal to nominate the project into the 2018 World Monuments Watch was prepared.
- the EIB has looked at the possibility of funding the water component of the project under an investment loan, possibly co-financed with the EBRD. However, the water sector has

recently been the object of a concession to a private company and, for the time being, it is not possible to guarantee that Anipemza forms part of the investments planned by the concessionaire in the short term.

- after a high-level visit in Yerevan in September 2016, some letters have been interchanged between Europa Nostra and the Ministry of Culture. As a result, the authorities have accepted the main recommendations of the project, namely collaborating very closely under the advice of a Scientific Committee, which has been created. A MoU has been prepared.

In agreement with the Armenian Ministry of Culture a Scientific Committee has been set up. A first skype meeting of the Scientific Committee took place on 9th October 2017. The minutes reflect a set of activities to promote the project, as well as urgent actions to be taken immediately in relation to the scientific study on the status of the basilica and the archaeological areas. The need for a direct involvement of Armenian authorities (Ministry of Culture, different academia, Mayor of Anipemza) is emphasized. Other aspects (web site, fund raising) were also evoked.

- In April 2018 a political change of the Armenian Government implied also the election of a new Minister and new Vice Ministers of Culture (in May) that have a completely different approach. The nominator met the new Minister Makunts and Vice Ministers Garibyan and Galstyan in July 2018 and invited them to visit the place.
- In preparation of the visit the nominator, together with a number of villagers, cleaned the interiors of the House of Culture and reorganized its spaces in order to be usable and to show its potential as a venue for the creation of the first museum to illustrate the life during the soviet times. The sewing works made by the local women during a previous training have been exhibited.
- A visitors' book and some souvenirs (postcards, greeting cards and little block notes) have been created and put on sale.
- The Minister's visit took place on July 22nd, 2018 and highlighted the new approach of the actual Government. The highest attention has been given to the life conditions of the local population and the project for Ererouyk – Anipemza has been inserted in the list of priorities of the Armenian Ministry of Culture. Furthermore, Minister Makunts personally committed herself to donate 10 sewing machines to the women of the village.
- The statute of a foundation having as founders both the Villagers and the Municipality is under study to allow receiving the sewing machines and managing in a sustainable way the further development of the project.
- Several meetings have been held with the representatives of the Smithsonian Institution that is present in Armenia with a project of tourism development (My Armenia). They provided training in sewing and clothes design for 4 women of Anipemza and are evaluating possible further support to the project such as contributing to the design of the Anipemza museum, promoting the destination, including it in their promotional materials, etc.
- One of the main donors in Armenia, Idea Foundation, is planning to invest 5 mln. dollars in the realization of a belvedere towards the ancient capital Ani (located in Turkey but visible from the shores of Akhurian river in Armenia 5 km from Anipemza. They agreed that Anipemza could constitute a perfect "pit stop" for tourists travelling toward the belvedere. They do not intend to finance any component of our project but they gave a great help by putting the nominator in touch with other possible donors such as UNDP and suggesting their involvement in the project:
- UNDP has a program for the creation of a certain number of infocentres all around Armenia. The program is financed but still not designed in detail. Several meetings have been held with the representatives of UNDP and with the director of the Armenian Tourism Development Foundation in order to convince UNDP to finance the rehabilitation of the house of Culture in Anipemza to serve as infocentre; a final answer hasn't still been given. The new Italian Ambassador in Armenia is also supporting to the initiative.

- some funds have been mobilized by the Ministry of Territorial Administration through the Community of Ani for the rehabilitation of the access road (works started in mid-August and are still in progress in September 2018),
- The nominator is preparing a project proposal to be submitted to the presidency of Regione Lombardia that is likely to have the possibility to finance a 100.000 € intervention for the development of the village of Anipemza.
- In case it will be possible to proceed further in the activities for enhancing Anipemza, ICOM Armenia promised to give room to the official presentation of the Museum of Anipemza during a major international event that will be organized in Yerevan on 12-19 November 2018.

Impact of EIB/EN intervention

Nominator's Comments:

The role played by EN and the EIB Institute was crucial for achieving the current status of the project. Their political support, together with a direct intervention of EN executive president, guaranteed a real endorsement of the project vision by the Ministry of Culture of Armenia and allowed the setting of an international Scientific Committee, including as a member the Vice Minister of Culture besides all the experts suggested by EN and EIB. The experts selected by EN and the EIB are participating in the project implementation and proved to have high and complementary skills that really enriched the work and promise a positive development.

The key issue remains the total lack of funds that makes unrealistic the possibility of implementing the project in the two phases identified by the EIB. Therefore, the nominator devised a report in which are identified many activities, all connected, that can be implemented one by one with small or medium-sized funding.

Many initiatives have been taken and several contacts have been explored with results still not matching the efforts and the needs. Nevertheless, it appears that with the new Government of Armenia, the environment is really changing, and new possibilities are opening. The activities implemented during the summer demonstrated the huge importance of creating alliances between different stakeholders that appear to work in a coordinated way.

In this framework, the eventual inclusion of Anipemza in one or more ongoing projects by EIB would increase the attention on the site, highlight the EIB's role and magnify the possibilities of success of new fundraising initiatives that will eventually be organized.

The EIB Institute may play a very important role in attracting the attention of the investors on this remote but important site and in starting some activities aimed at improving the villagers' quality of life but also at increasing its potential as a tourist destination (i.e. the availability of water in the houses and the creation of a sewage system). The involvement of international organizations should continue to play a crucial role as international support appears to be crucial and urgently needed to save the site.

Support in the creation of a business plan coherent with the actual prospective of tourism development in Armenia and in line with the most innovative models of community driven and culture based sustainable development would also constitute an important plus for this project in particular and, eventually, for other 7MEs in the future.

Appraisal Team's Comments:

An important project combining heritage and tourism development, which had been well prepared and strongly supported by the nominator and several academic institutions.

Overall a satisfactory outcome since the EIBI report was issued. Hopefully to be continued in the near future. This will be critical in terms of obtaining further funds and implementing the project.

A lot of efforts still remain but the strong engagement of all different actors seems quite promising.

The celebration of an international event to promote the project is also a promising issue but perhaps the right time for its celebration has not arrived yet.

Lessons learned:

Achieving the current status was largely due to the strong and well-coordinated support from the nominator (the real “gem” of the project).

The EN/EIBI mission’s conclusions were made clear during the mission itself and immediately afterwards with the recommendations being transferred in writing to the parties, well before the issuing of the Technical Report. This timely feed-back was effective and important.

The existence of such a program and the presence of Europa Nostra experts in Armenia had a role in favouring a greater interest for cultural issues from by the Delegation of EU. This aspect may be in future enhanced in order to magnify the impact of the 7ME programme in countries of the EU neighborhoods.

Data on inputs & timing	Dates, Participants
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Appraisal

Nomination form submitted	July 2015
Project selected as 7 ME:	May 2016
Questionnaire from EIBI	June 2016
Response to questionnaire	August 2016
Appraisal mission	July 2016
Participants: EN EIB Institute	Gaiane Casnati, Paolo Vitti, Maria Berza, Visnja Kistic, Mariacristina Giambruno, Patrick Donabédian, Tudor Berza Guy Clausse
Feedback letter post mission	August 2016
Response to further questions	October 2016
Technical report issued	March 2017

Follow-up

Request for progress report	July 2017
Response on progress	n/a
Follow-up visit	June 2017
Participants: EN EIB Institute	Gaiane Casnati Mario Aymerich
Report on follow-up visit	July 2017

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