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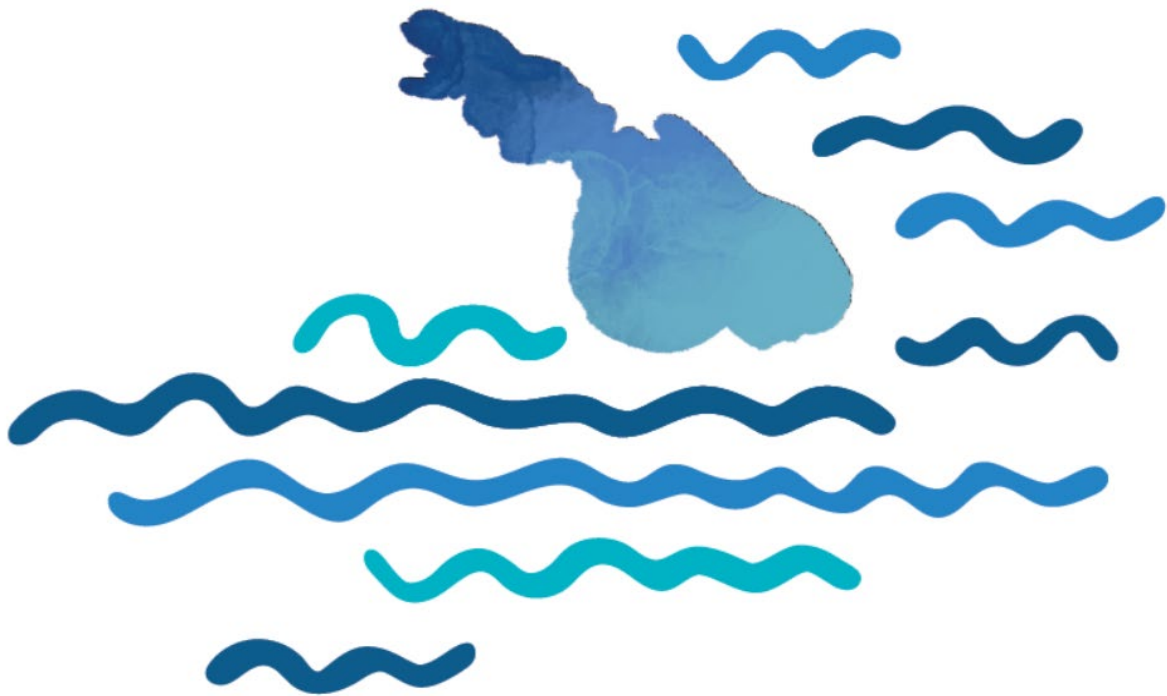
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# Lake Sevan National Vision 2020



**ADVISE**  
CONSULTING

Yerevan 2023

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**Abbreviations:**

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
HPP	Hydroelectric power plant
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RA	Republic of Armenia
SWOT	Analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
SNCO	State non-commercial organization
SME	Small and medium enterprises

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Vision goals

The Lake Sevan national vision is the summary of the Lake Sevan-related environmental, economic, and social goals acceptable for various stakeholders that must be achieved in the medium and long term. These goals have been set in particular for the period until 2050, as this timeframe coincides with various national and international planning processes, including the goals set at the national level under the Paris Agreement.

The vision which was developed through a participatory approach will serve as the basis for legislative, planning, governance, and other solutions related to Lake Sevan, and will inform their progress, becoming a landmark for the activities that will impact or be impacted by the lake one way or another. The development and implementation of an appropriate action plan and the necessary legislative changes are critical for achieving the vision.

### 1.2. Historical overview

Lake Sevan has great environmental, historic, cultural, and economic value for Armenia, as it is an important ecosystem, as well as a source of drinking and irrigation water and energy production. It also plays an important role in the organization of recreation for the population of Armenia. At the same time, as a result of extensive and unsustainable use, water quality has significantly deteriorated in recent decades.

The lake faces a multitude of environmental challenges, including loss of biodiversity. Restoration and maintenance of the ecological balance of the lake, as well as protection and sustainable use of the lake are important priorities for the RA government in the climate and environment sectors.

The Government of Armenia recognizes the importance of restoring the Lake Sevan ecosystem and for more than two decades has been investing in the development of an institutional and legislative framework and an action plan to this end. In particular, a number of steps have been taken to raise the water level in accordance with the 1996-1998 "Lake Sevan ecological balance rehabilitation project" and the provisions of the Law of the RA "On approving the annual and complex plans for restoration, protection, reproduction, and use of the Lake Sevan ecosystem." In order to replenish the water resources of the lake, two tunnels were commissioned, and limits were set for water discharge through the Hrazdan River for irrigation and energy production purposes. As a result, compared to 1 January 2002 when the level of water in the lake was 1896.32 m above mean sea level, it has increased by more than four meters. As of 1 January 2022, the level of water in Lake Sevan was around 1900.43 m above mean sea level.

The area of forests in the Sevan catchment basin (within the Gegharkunik marz) is about 17,000 ha, including 12,000 ha of artificial plantations mainly containing pine, poplar, acacia, and sea buckthorn. The recent increase in the water level has had a negative impact on the surrounding forest areas (about 4,000 ha). The negative impact of the degradation of the flooded forest plantations on the water quality of the lake is evident as well, as the inflow of organic matter produced from the rotting of terrestrial vegetation contributes to the eutrophication of the lake.

In light of this, starting from 2005, the Government of Armenia has introduced provisions on the cleaning of coastal zones into the Law of the RA "On approving the annual and complex plans for restoration, protection, reproduction, and use of the Lake Sevan ecosystem." According to these provisions, in 2005-2020, it is planned to clean about 5,000 ha of forest, including removal of stumps, and to plant new forest belts.

However, inadequate and fragmented planning, weak intersectoral coordination, ineffective monitoring, oversight and enforcement mechanisms, as well as outdated policy framework which is not harmonized between different sectors, do not allow achieving the goal of sustainable management of the Lake Sevan catchment basin as yet.

### 1.3. Lessons learned

**Systemic management.** At the institutional level, there is no single agency coordinating the activities of various agencies and structures related to Lake Sevan which would be able to efficiently coordinate the planning and harmonize the conflicting interests.

**Planning flaws.** There are often no clear frameworks, deadlines, budgets, and funding sources for policy measures, and there are no clear monitoring mechanisms for implemented programs. The planning of Lake Sevan-related activities often does not take into account long-term impact of long-term activities, which in turn can lead to additional costs.

**Lack of funding.** Over the years, the gap between actual funding and the financial requirements of monitoring, oversight, and rehabilitation measures has increased. According to the opinions voiced during the meetings with stakeholders, at the moment, objective needs significantly exceed the volume of available funding.

**Lack of pollution prevention.** In practice, no effective steps are taken toward efficient management and cleaning of wastewater and landfills, which leads to uncontrolled inflow of organic matter and other pollutants into the lake.

**Rigid construction restrictions.** Economic activity in coastal zones is significantly restricted by virtue of the Land Code and urban planning regulations. However, in practice this does nothing to solve the problems of reckless and irregular construction in and economic exploitation of coastal areas and at the same time does not allow flexible solutions for regulated and controlled

construction and economic exploitation of land, which would allow the state and the private sector to implement new economic projects (recreation areas, hotels, etc.) in a predictable manner.

**Need to study relevant international practices.** Although Lake Sevan problems are quite specific as a whole, we need a deeper study of the know-how of other countries related in particular to the management of systems requiring work with a large number of diverse stakeholders, efficient governance of ecosystem services, "reconciliation" of conflicting interests, and other issues related to Lake Sevan.

**Lack of financial and economic assessment of alternative solutions.** Alternative solutions and their financial and economic indicators have often not been studied during decision-making. As a result, their benefits and associated costs have not been compared.

**Insufficient participation in decision-making.** Decisions related to Lake Sevan have mostly been made without discussions with a wide range of stakeholders. As a result, problems often arose when implementing the decisions.

**Lack of Lake Sevan-related provisions in sectoral policies.** The policies and planning tools developed for the sectors that have a direct or indirect impact on Lake Sevan or are affected by the lake generally do not contain provisions on the lake and do not reveal the possible impact of Lake Sevan or the impact of the decisions on the lake. As a result, these policies contain conflicting goals and targets, which has a significant negative impact on the effectiveness of the work.

**Flaws of interagency cooperation.** In performing their functions, state authorities often do not want to be involved in work related to "other" functions, especially if there are no clear instructions on these. And in case of such instructions, participation is often formal in nature.

**Lack of coordinated communication.** Lack of coordinated approaches to periodic organization of communication between stakeholders related to Lake Sevan problems. This in turn brings about problems in the awareness-raising process.

**Inadequate level of communication of legislative requirements.** Interested parties including the communities of Gegharkunik marz and the public at large often do not have enough information about many laws, draft laws, prohibitions, and rights that have a direct impact on the quality of life of Lake Sevan and of the abovementioned target groups.

**Underutilization of socio-economic potential.** The socio-economic potential of the population of the Lake Sevan catchment basin has not been fully discovered and utilized. At the same time, people in the Sevan basin mostly live in the grip of poverty.

## 1.4. Legal and governance frameworks

The analysis of the legal framework shows that there is a large number of legal acts that regulate the main issues related to Lake Sevan, including water resources, water quality, biodiversity, urban development, and economic activities and control, but they are not in line with the current challenges or have significant gaps.

The legislation directly related to Lake Sevan attaches greater importance to the role of the lake as a source of freshwater, and then as an ecosystem with pertinent environmental issues. Economic and social issues are given lower priority, which does not correspond to the principles of sustainable development and creates unfavorable conditions for the management and resolution of conflicting economic, environmental, and social interests. But in practice, the opposite is true, and environmental issues are often subordinated to economic and social issues.

On the program level, the Law of the RA "On approving the annual and complex plans for restoration, protection, reproduction, and use of the Lake Sevan ecosystem" requires the government to set the annual proportions of implementation of the work planned in the complex plan and to reflect them in the annual plans. However, actual annual plans normally do not contain information about the degree of actual execution of planned work and the planned proportions of execution by years. Furthermore, the abovementioned law and the by-laws adopted within its framework do not prescribe for a monitoring procedure, conditions, and methodology.

There are no clear oversight and liability mechanisms in the regulations on the negative impact on the ecosystem. Furthermore, the existing regulations on substances that have a negative impact on the ecosystem do not clarify whether the ban on the use of separate substances is absolute or not, and whether it is geographically applied to the entire catchment basin or not.

Wastewater regulations do not have effective enforcement mechanisms for facilities built prior to their adoption and do not set standards for wastewater discharge into the lake.

According to Articles 16 and 17 of the Law of the RA "On specially protected areas of nature," a number of actions and types of activities that can damage the ecosystem are prohibited in the territory of a reserve (especially a national park). Taking into account the fact that certain actions and types of activities are problematic for the entire area of the Lake Sevan catchment basin, from the point of view of mitigating their impact, it is necessary to study the expediency of extending some of the restrictions over the entire Lake Sevan catchment basin area. Regarding this law, there is also uncertainty as to the extent to which ecosystem nature utilization and natural habitat protection regimes are applicable to the immediate zone of influence.

In terms of oversight, the control of the permissible amount of whitefish extraction and the maximum permissible amount of prohibited substances in the Lake Sevan ecosystem is problematic, both in terms of the capacity and equipment capability of the oversight agencies, and in terms of separation of roles of different agencies and efficient cooperation with joint use of human and material resources.

Solutions related to legislative, strategic planning, and governance uncertainties and inefficiencies are among the most important elements in developing the vision and achieving the goals set in it, so they will receive special attention during the next steps planned by EU4Sevan project.



## 2. Vision development methodology

The development of the Lake Sevan vision was carried out through a highly participatory process which involved different layers of society, different levels of government, and other stakeholders with often opposing interests and opinions. Thus, it was possible both to identify different perceptions of the future of the lake and at the same time to inform key stakeholders about the goals and the process of developing the vision, thereby mitigating to some extent possible future resistance to the steps to be taken towards achieving the vision.

### 2.1. Data collection and analysis

At the first stage of vision development, the baseline information related to Lake Sevan was summarized, the relevant legal framework was analysed, and the scope of existing and future problems that must be solved in order to restore Lake Sevan and to use its ecosystem services in a more sustainable and efficient manner, was outlined. The objective limitations, the available data, and the information on the inference of causal relationships which should be the basis for the further steps of developing the vision, were also presented.

Further, an analysis of stakeholders was done according to their roles and the issues and concerns raised, Lake Sevan governance successes were studied, the conflicting interests related to the lake were analyzed, and the current and anticipated challenges and lessons learned were identified.

Discussions with stakeholders were carried out in several steps, the first of which mainly served the purpose of collecting various data related to Lake Sevan using a pre-developed questionnaire, ensuring the unity of the key elements of the discussions with various stakeholders.

After summarizing and analyzing the results of the discussions, three scenarios of the possible development of Lake Sevan were drawn up in order to reveal the insights of the stakeholders regarding the future of the lake. Though separately controversial, these scenarios have stimulated debate and helped uncover often conflicting perceptions of the lake and its future and reasons behind these perceptions.

At this stage, meetings were held with the representatives of academia, state authorities, and NGOs, as well as five consolidated communities of Gegharkunik marz and "Sevan" National Park" SNCO. The three scenarios were presented at these meetings, after which the participants were broken into three groups in order to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each scenario (SWOT analysis). Each group then presented the results of the respective scenario analysis, followed by an exchange of opinions.

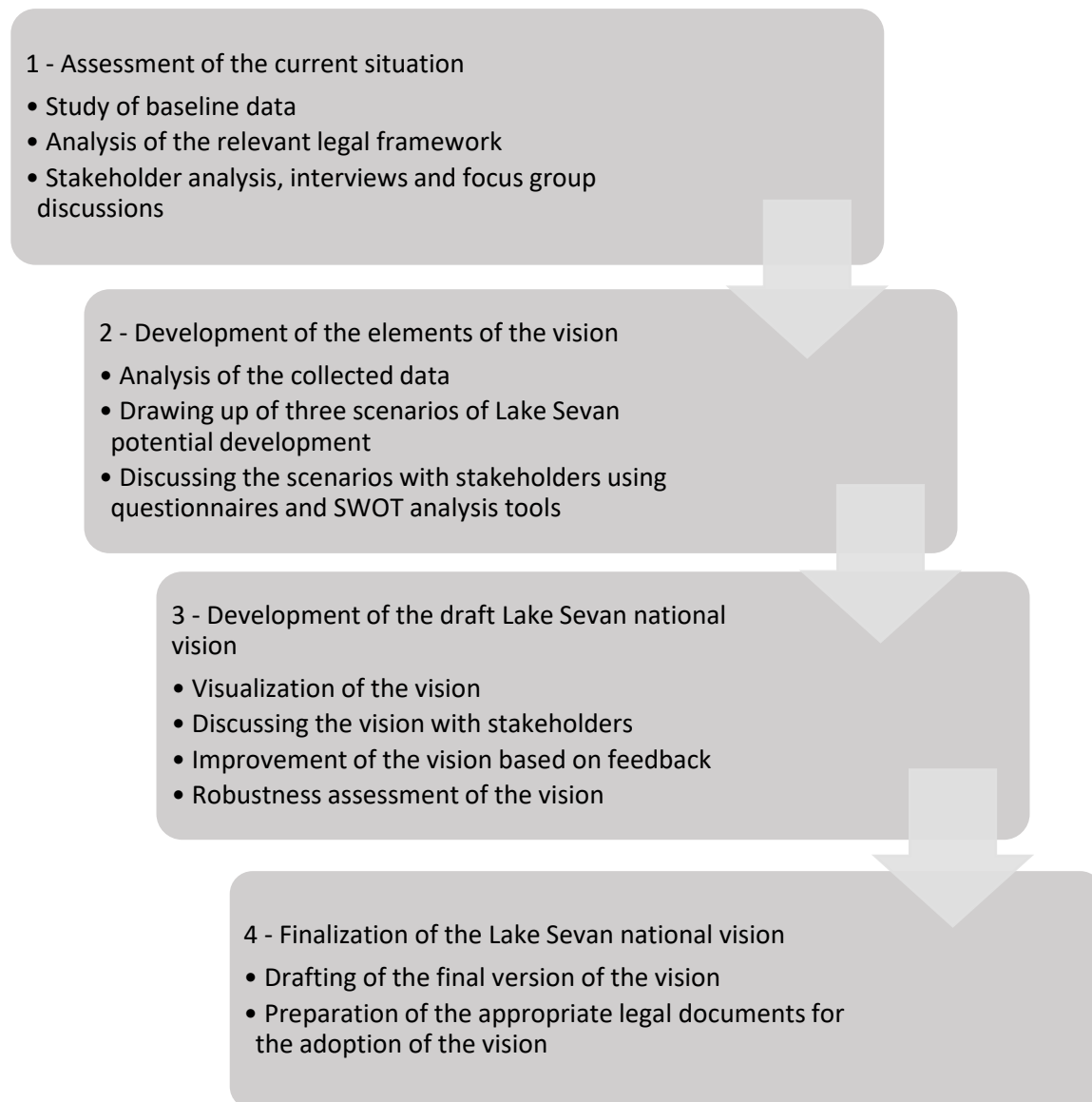
In order to collect the individual opinions of the participants of the discussions on the scenarios and their separate elements, a survey was conducted through a pre-developed questionnaire. In

particular, it was proposed to evaluate the overall level of impact of all the elements of the three scenarios as well as the nature of that impact, from very negative to very positive.

The SWOT and questionnaire results analyzes have become one of the key elements underlying the development of the Lake Sevan national vision, together with the recommendations and insights of the scientific community.

The process of developing the Lake Sevan vision by steps is given below:

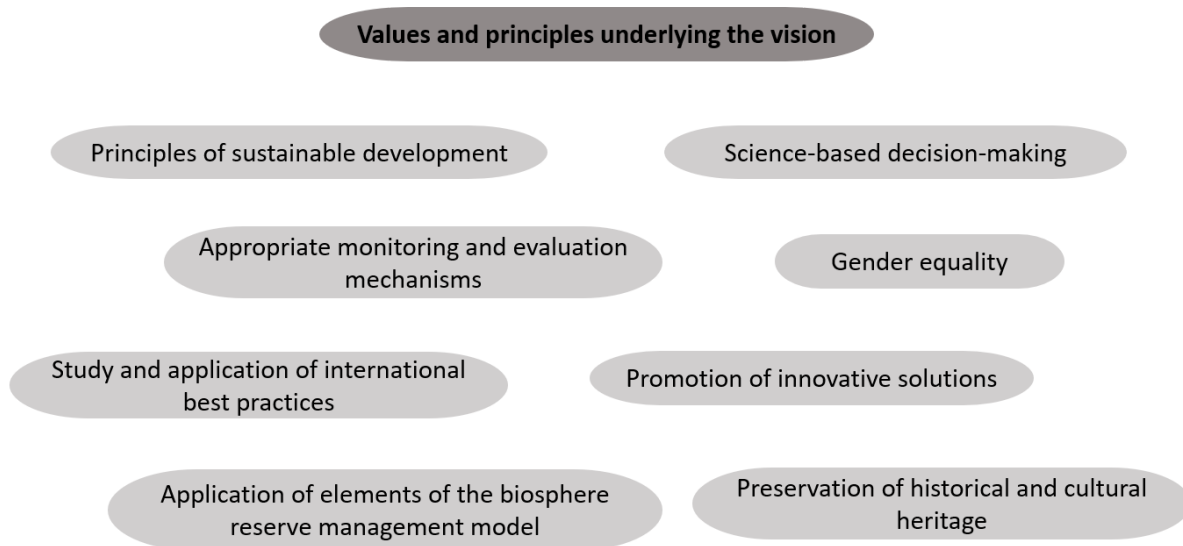
*Figure 1. The steps of development of the Lake Sevan national vision*



## 2.2. Values and principles underlying the vision

The values and principles underlying the development of the Lake Sevan national vision and selected as a result of baseline analysis and discussions with stakeholders, include the following:

*Figure 2. Values and principles underlying the vision*



### 3. Lake Sevan National Vision 2050

Based on the results of discussions organized in various formats with representatives of stakeholders, including state and local authorities, scientific institutions, and NGOs, as well as the analysis of existing studies on Lake Sevan, planning documents, and documents defining the sectoral priorities of the Republic of Armenia, the Lake Sevan national vision was defined as follows:

***Lake Sevan is the ultimate value for the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people/all Armenians.***

***Lake Sevan is a healthy, sustainable ecosystem and a strategic resource, and the important components of its science-based, modern and inclusive governance are the wellbeing in the lake's catchment basin communities, as well as the security, environmental, cultural, economic and social priorities of the Republic of Armenia.***

The national vision reflects the opinion voiced in all the discussions that Lake Sevan is one of the greatest values of the Armenian people, ranking among the key elements of its historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

It belongs not only to the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, but also to all the Armenians who live in different countries and are foreign citizens. This is also proved by the fact that given names Sevan and Sevana are widespread especially in the Armenian Diaspora.

Figure 3. Lake Sevan national vision 2050<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Each level in the illustration symbolizes each of the components of the vision. The first (external) level is scientific. All the other approaches are built on the basis of this level which symbolizes the process of science-based decision-making. The second level is the promotion of innovative solutions and modern governance. This level symbolizes economic and social priorities. On the third level, at the heart of the Lake Sevan vision and the illustration that symbolizes the vision, is the well-being of the community and the ecosystem, cultural and environmental priorities, and gender equality. This level also symbolizes the inclusive decision-making model.

### 3.1. Definitions of concepts used in the vision

Considering the importance of a uniform understanding of the wordings and concepts used in the Lake Sevan national vision for further development and implementation of Lake Sevan-related projects, the definitions of the mentioned wordings and concepts are given below:

**Lake Sevan ecosystem:** in the context of the vision, Lake Sevan ecosystem is the volume of the lake itself as a hydrological object, the catchment basin of the lake, the biodiversity of these two environments, the sediments of a composition characteristic of Lake Sevan, the chemical composition and physical parameters, as well as certain indicators of biological productivity and unique conditions.

**Healthy ecosystem:** in this context, "healthy" means a condition typical of oligotrophic lakes with low mineral and nutrient content.

**Sustainable ecosystem:** regardless of whether they are lacustrine or not, ecosystems in their natural state are in a certain state of balance. This balance is not static and has a certain range of fluctuations. This range characterizes the stability of the ecosystem, which, among other factors, is important for the existence of the ecosystem. Since the 2000s, the increase in the water level of Lake Sevan has been accompanied by highly pronounced ecosystem instability. In particular, the annual fluctuations in the water level of the lake are around 50 cm, which from the point of view of ecosystem stability makes the lake a seasonal storage reservoir.

**Science-based governance** is the process of making science-based decisions. It implies a sequence of actions by selecting the best possible options and is based on the availability of comprehensive and comparable data, data-based analyzes, analyzes-based studies, and the results of these studies. Data must be collected continuously and with a frequency sufficient for comprehensive monitoring.

**Inclusive governance** is based on two important components. The first is to ensure the influence of stakeholders, including NGOs, local authorities, communities, community institutions, research centers and others. The second is continuous awareness-raising, which presumes a variety of activities aimed at stakeholders and designed and tailored for each target audience. Awareness-raising measures should be taken not only by the state, but also by local authorities.

**Modern governance** implies the continuous study and application of international best practices within governance (always taking into account local peculiarities), in particular in terms of intersectoral coordination and separation of functions, in order to achieve and balance environmental, social, and economic priorities more effectively.

Governance also inevitably includes **regulation** (including both legislative regulations and existing law enforcement practices in their regard). Taking into account the best practices studied (including in terms of inclusiveness), as well as the requirements of Article 78 of the RA Constitution, regulation should be applied to and should affect people only inasmuch as it is

necessary to achieve the legitimate goals of the regulation (in a broad sense, governance). A regulation should be chosen by first assessing its social (including impact on public health, territorial development, and labor market), economic (including impact on competition and SMEs), and environmental impacts and its impact on state and community budgets (regulation impact assessment) as well as the same impacts of its possible alternatives (other regulations, lack of regulation). Furthermore, assessment should be carried out not only before the introduction of the regulation, but also periodically during its application.

**Catchment basin** defines not only the natural catchment basin of Lake Sevan, but also the upper reaches of the Arpa and Yeghegis rivers from where water is transported to Lake Sevan through the Arpa-Sevan tunnel. If the Vorotan-Arpa tunnel is commissioned, the catchment basin should also include the upper reach of the Vorotan River.

**Strategic resources** are the means necessary for sustainable and long-term solutions to the problems of the state (e.g. food security, satisfaction of the basic needs of citizens, conservation of water ecosystems, etc.).

**Environmental priorities** are the directions and activities included in the medium-term and long-term strategic development plans of the Republic of Armenia which are aimed at preserving the environment, solving environmental problems, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**Cultural priorities** in the context of this document first and foremost presume the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage thanks to which the characteristic features of the Sevan catchment basin and its connection with historical values is preserved, which in turn contributes to the improvement of the quality of life. Preservation of cultural heritage is based on the the sacrosanctity of the physical and traditional heritage against factors aimed at the destruction or modification of that heritage.

**Economic priorities** are the directions and activities emphasized in the medium-term and long-term strategic development plans of the Republic of Armenia (including sectoral strategies) through which the economic stability and development of the country is to be ensured.

**Social priorities** are the directions and activities emphasized in the strategies and programs related to the sector of social security of the population of the Republic of Armenia.

**Security priorities** are the principal national interests of Armenia laid down in the national security strategy of the Republic of Armenia<sup>2</sup>, including:

- Ensuring the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Armenia, and the security of Artsakh;
- Peace and enhanced international cooperation;
- Securing democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; and

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.primeminister.am/u\\_files/file/Different/AA-Razmavarutyun-Final.pdf](https://www.primeminister.am/u_files/file/Different/AA-Razmavarutyun-Final.pdf)

- Ensuring the security and well-being of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the state's sustainable economic development.





### 3.2. Robustness of the vision

The connection of the Lake Sevan national vision with the Sustainable Development Goals and national planning processes and legislation is given below.

#### 3.2.1. Sustainable Development Goals

The connection of the Lake Sevan national vision with the Sustainable Development Goals was evaluated per each goal, taking into account the definitions used in the vision and those of the goals. The relevant connections are described in more detail in the table below.







*Table 1. The connection of the Lake Sevan national vision with the SDGs*


	No poverty	<p>In 2020, poverty rate in Gegharkunik marz was 48.1% which is the highest in the country.</p> <p>The vision presumes that Lake Sevan governance processes should take into account the well-being of the communities of the catchment basin of the lake, as well as the economic and social priorities of the Republic of Armenia.</p>
	Zero hunger	<p>In 2020, extreme (food) poverty rate in Gegharkunik marz was 1.9%.</p> <p>The vision presumes that Lake Sevan governance processes should take into account the well-being of the communities of the catchment basin of the lake, as well as the economic and social priorities of the Republic of Armenia.</p>
	Good health and well-being	<p>The intensification of blue-green algae blooms in Lake Sevan in recent years may have a negative impact on human health.</p> <p>The vision presumes that Lake Sevan governance processes should take into account the well-being of the communities of the catchment basin of the lake, as well as the social priorities of the Republic of Armenia.</p>
	Quality Education	<p>The vision presumes that Lake Sevan governance should be science-based, modern, and inclusive, which will require the development of appropriate quality education in the RA.</p>



	Gender equality	The vision presumes that Lake Sevan governance should be inclusive, and gender equality is one of the principles underlying the development of the vision.
	Clean water and sanitation	<p>The almost universal lack of wastewater treatment (8.8% of wastewater was treated in 2018) remains a major problem that has a direct impact on the water quality of Lake Sevan.</p> <p>The vision presumes taking the necessary steps toward the application of modern wastewater treatment solutions in Gegharkunik marz, as well as toward significant improvement of the quality of management of the water use sector.</p>
	Affordable and clean energy	The construction of small hydroelectric power plants in recent years can have a negative impact on biodiversity, including on Lake Sevan, due to improper maintenance of the quality of fishways and the volume of ecological discharge.
	Decent work and economic growth	Despite the 44-day war and the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy of the RA has in general made progress towards this SDG. The level of unemployment is more problematic; in Gegharkunik marz, it was 9.3% in 2019. An increase in the level of employment and a corresponding increase in income can contribute to the reduction of illegal use of nature, such as, for example, illegal fishing in Lake Sevan.
	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	The indicators of articles published in scientific and technical magazines (0.2 articles per 1,000 people in 2018) and research and development expenses (0.2 percent of GDP in 2018) which are of fundamental importance in solving Lake Sevan-related problems, are quite disconcerting.
	Reduced inequalities	Income inequality remains a major problem. Thus, in 2017 the RA Gini coefficient was 47.5, and the Palma ratio in 2018 was 1.4. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The Palma Ratio compares the income or wealth share of the top 10% of the population (the richest) to the income or wealth share of the bottom 40% of the population (the poorest).

	Sustainable cities and economies	Armenia still has a lot to do toward this goal. In terms of solving Lake Sevan-related problems, the issue of municipal domestic solid waste management, which remains problematic, is most important.
	Responsible consumption and production	Armenia has reasonably good results, but this is probably mostly a consequence of relatively low income; therefore, action is needed to avoid shifting to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption along with rising income.
	Climate action	<p>Armenia is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, which also affects Lake Sevan where increase in water temperature leads to the intensification of eutrophication phenomena.</p> <p>One of the important components of the vision is the increase of the water level in the lake, the implementation of which may be more difficult in the face of climate change. At the same time, it can become one of the most important tools of coping with climate change.</p>
	Life below water	One of the most important components of Lake Sevan restoration is the sufficient volume and diversity of underwater fauna and flora. A lot of work will be needed on that front.
	Life on land	In terms of achieving the national vision of Lake Sevan, of great importance will be the terrestrial ecosystems of the coastal areas and of the catchment basin which serve as a filter for the water flowing into the lake and as a most important factor improving qualitative and quantitative standards.
	Peace, justice and strong institutions	Although Armenia in general has satisfactory results in terms of this goal, the consequences of the 44-day war in 2020, the continuous violations of the borders of the Republic of Armenia by Azerbaijan, including in Gegharkunik marz, as well as the regular armed clashes at the border are serious challenges that do not allow focusing fully on solving other important problems, including those related to Lake Sevan.

	Partnership for the goals	This goal is of paramount importance for solving Lake Sevan-related problems, considering the multi-layered nature of the problems and the lack of necessary professional knowledge and experience in Armenia.
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### 3.2.2. Government programs, legislation, and international commitments of the RA

The vision is consistent with the main approaches reflected in current national program documents. However, some of the approaches and legislative regulations will need to be adjusted.

The importance of the Lake Sevan problem, the commitment to solve it, and the need to take into account the environmental, social, and economic factors within the framework of the Lake Sevan problem are already prescribed by the laws of the RA.

In addition, the Republic of Armenia has undertaken a number of international commitments with which the Lake Sevan national vision has been harmonized.

The list of Lake Sevan-related national and international documents the commitments stem from is given below.

*Table 2. RA national legislation and international commitments related to the Lake Sevan national vision*

<div data-bbox="280 1092 587 1131" data-label="Section-Header"> <h4>RA national legislation</h4> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Lake Sevan"</li> <li>• Environmental management priority directions of the RA government plan</li> <li>• Law of the Republic of Armenia "On approving the annual and complex plans for restoration, protection, reproduction, and use of the Lake Sevan ecosystem"</li> <li>• RA national security strategy</li> </ul>
<div data-bbox="280 1428 786 1463" data-label="Section-Header"> <h4>International commitments of the RA</h4> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationally Determined Contribution 2021-2030 of the Republic of Armenia to Paris Agreement, RA Government Decision No. 610-L of 22 April 2021</li> <li>• RA commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity</li> <li>• Ramsar Convention</li> <li>• Republic of Armenia-European Union Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed in 2017</li> </ul>

The current legislation will need to be approximated to the vision. For example, it may be necessary to reflect the vision in the preamble of the Law of the RA "On Lake Sevan." In order to ensure the necessary level of monitoring, the Law of the RA "On approving the annual and complex plans for restoration, protection, reproduction, and use of the Lake Sevan ecosystem" will need to be amended.

In addition, goals and priorities stemming from the vision will need to be included in the strategic documents of related sectors (agriculture and tourism at the very least) which currently do not directly address the problems of Lake Sevan.

## 4. Conclusions

Further steps necessary to achieve the vision include discussion of the vision with state authorities which according to the requirements of the laws of the RA should be organized by the Ministry of Environment. Considering the extensiveness of the project and the limited experience of developing visions in Armenia, the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns by the Ministry will be important to ensure the effectiveness of the process.

These campaigns will allow presenting to the state authorities the purpose of developing the vision, the place of the vision in the management processes, the importance of developing the Lake Sevan national vision, and the interconnections of the problems of the lake with different branches of state authorities, economic and social priorities, and other factors.

It may be useful to establish a group coordinating the process in the Ministry of Environment which will develop a schedule for organizing discussions with other state authorities and will accordingly ensure the process of agreeing on the vision, preventing the omission of provisions important for the restoration of the Lake Sevan ecosystem from the project.

At the same time, such discussions will serve as basis for reconciling the action plan for achieving the vision (the development of which is under way), as state authorities will form a sufficiently deep understanding of the Lake Sevan problems.

In the discussion phase of relevant legislative drafts, comprehensive discussions will be of great importance. These discussions should be held not only online, but also with thematic focus groups, both in Yerevan and in the marzes, thus ensuring the most extensive support for the project and the lowest possible level of resistance to the planned steps during implementation.

From the point of view of achieving the Lake Sevan national vision, the following issues among others should be highlighted:

- Improving the system of continuous collection and analysis of quality data necessary for the assessment of the condition of Lake Sevan, including through international cooperation and training of local specialists in the best international educational institutions, in case of lack of human or technical capacity in Armenia.
- Development of a scientific description of Lake Sevan as a healthy ecosystem by the Republic of Armenia and relevant international institutions with as clear quantitative indicators as possible, identification of anthropogenic factors hindering the achievement of these indicators, and development of steps with an appropriate timeline aimed at the elimination of these obstacles.
- Development of effective institutional solutions that will allow establishing an agency in the state administration system with powers and leverage equivalent to the most serious and, in many cases, most pressing problems related to Lake Sevan, which will be able to

work unhindered toward solving the problems of Lake Sevan, in cooperation with relevant scientific institutions, including internationally.

- A comprehensive analysis of the long-term financial and economic impact of the problems of Lake Sevan and their possible solutions, including taking into account the predicted impact of climate change on the water resources of the Republic of Armenia and neighboring countries, the impact of increasing the level of water in Lake Sevan on the priority branches of economy of the Republic of Armenia, including agriculture and construction, the social and economic impact of the relocation of the infrastructures of Gegharkunik marz resulting from this increase on local communities, the possible increase in tax revenues, etc.

## Annexes

### ***Annex 1. Situation assessment report (ARM)***



Հավելված 1  
Իրավիճակի գնահատ

### ***Annex 2. Values underlying the development of the Lake Sevan national vision, possible scenarios, and stakeholder expectations, report (ARM)***



Հավելված 2  
Սևանա լճի ազգային

### ***Annex 3. Report on the Lake Sevan national vision (ARM)***



Հավելված 3  
Սևանա լճի ազգային