



UW College of Agriculture and Natural Resources  
**Global Perspectives Grant Program**  
Project Report Instructions

A brief written report must be submitted electronically to the AES office **within one month of returning from your trip**. Photographs supplementing the report are encouraged and are appreciated by the donor. Failure to submit a report may jeopardize future funding from AES.

In addition to forwarding these reports to our benefactor, reports will also be published on the AES website. Reports must be written in a style **understandable by the lay person** and may be edited for readability before being published to the AES website and in the University of Wyoming Foundation report.

**Format:** Use 12 point type, single line spacing, and one inch margins. Submit your report to [aes@uwyo.edu](mailto:aes@uwyo.edu) as a PDF file.

**Include the following information:**

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#### **1. COVER PAGE**

**Award Period** (e.g. Spring 2012): **Spring 2019**

**Principle Investigator(s)** **Vardges Hovhannisyan** **Department:** **Agricultural and Applied Economics** **Email:** **vhovhann@uwyo.edu**

**Project Title from Application:** **Travel Expenses to Expand the Research, Training, and Grant Writing Relationship with the Armenian National Agrarian University, the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education, the Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia**

**Amount spent:** **\$5,975**

**Non-technical summary (max 1500 characters plus spaces):** Provide a one paragraph non-technical summary that most people can understand.

This project aimed at expanding and broadening research, training, and grant writing collaborations between the University of Wyoming and the ANAU, ICARE, CRRC-A that were established in 2016. The principal investigator, Dr. Vardges Hovhannisyan, had already worked in the past with the host, Dr. Vardan Urutyanyan, the rector of the ANAU, when they conducted collaborative research to evaluate the effectiveness of the USDA-supported milk marketing cooperatives in Armenia.

I aimed at building upon this previous collaboration and expanding the working relationship with the ANAU, ICARE, and the CRRC-A in the research in the area of productivity analysis, as well as long-term development of Armenian agriculture. Post-Soviet Armenia has experienced partial breakdown in many sectors of the economy, including agriculture, which has led to drastic decreases in agricultural productivity. Therefore, there is a great need to better understand these changes and break down the drop in productivity by different production factors. This is an important research area and our findings have the promise of shedding light on

the relative importance of various agricultural productive factors in reviving agriculture, and is essential in evaluating the competitive advantages of local economy. After the political revolution of 2018 in Armenia, there has been a renewed interest in revamping the agricultural sector in the country, and the ANAU, ICARE, and CRRC-A took the lead in trying to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats surrounding this sector. I worked closely with all three institutions in Armenia and provided his expertise and resources in quantifying and analyzing the recent trends in productivity in agricultural sector of Armenia. My visit also served as a recruiting tool for students from an area that is underrepresented in the UW student population.

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**2. REPORT:** Maximum of two pages of text; please also include **photos**. Must be written in a style understandable by the lay person.

**Include:**

1. Main results of activities planned in the proposal.
  2. Describe any future plans
  3. Outline potential impacts to a) the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, b) the University of Wyoming, and c) the State of Wyoming
  4. Photos—be sure you have necessary permissions to be posted to the AES website.
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**QUESTIONS?** Contact Joanne Newcomb in the Agricultural Experiment Station office at [aes@uwyo.edu](mailto:aes@uwyo.edu) or (307) 766-3667.

## REPORT

The Global Perspectives Grant Program (GPGP) provided me with the opportunity to conduct a number of research, grant-writing and training-related activities with my Armenian colleagues, and specifically with the rector of the Armenian National Agrarian University, Dr. Vardan Urutyanyan (see the photos below) from August 13 to September 3, 2019.



*In the photos: Drs Vardges Hovhannisyan and Vardan Urutyanyan (rector, ANAU).*

I visited the ICARE, ANAU, and CRRC-A in August 2019. At the ICARE we evaluated different data sources that were available for productivity analysis, including the publicly available data provided by the Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. Further, I helped design survey questionnaires and led a group of students to a number of Armenian regions to conduct surveys of Armenian consumers regarding their food preferences. The goal of this project is to evaluate the effects of the anticipated increase in food prices triggered by the changes in the trade policy of the country and the implications thereof for consumer as a result of the country's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and establishment of uniform customs duties with an ultimate goal of creating a single market.

I also conducted two training sessions, where I introduced the local staff at the ICARE and the ANAU to some basic statistical, economic, and econometric analytical models and

techniques, such as survey design and data analysis, productivity analyses, and identification of the competitive advantages of the local economy and the agricultural sector in particular. ANAU is going through fundamental restructuring following Dr. Urutyán's election to the rector's position. Therefore, I discussed immediate needs and gaps in the curriculum in the field of economics, econometrics, and marketing with a number of faculty and at the ANAU and the Agribusiness Teaching Center (ATC) in the ICARE. Further, I offered some insights into how to design specific classes such as Agricultural Policy and Policy Analysis, Linear Regression Techniques with Applications, Quantitative Analysis of Consumer and Producer Behavior. I stayed in touch with some of the faculty and have been helping them with research.

Finally, discussed potential for future collaborative research relating to a broad range of issues that have plagued the country such as the labor emigration in Armenia, food security and safety, and the negative effects of market power exerted by local monopolies on the local economy, competition, and food prices. With rector Urutyán, we agreed that the market power issues facing small farm producers when dealing with relatively few and large agribusinesses are pressing and deserve our attention in the future.

The research collaboration resulted in three conference proposals, two of which have been accepted for presentation (annual meetings of Agricultural and Applied Economics Association and Western Agricultural Economics Association, summer 2020). With rector Urutyán and two other faculty members from the ATC and ICARE, we plan to continue working on the empirical evaluation of the effects of Armenia's accession to the EAEU. We expect this research project to generate a publication in a reputable agricultural economics journal. My meetings with officials from several other academic institutions and the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia were very promising and may well foster future collaborations and joint research projects in years to come.

My overriding impression is that my visit to Armenia helped further enhance the visibility for the University of Wyoming and my interactions with students will help me recruit new students from the Caucasus (I have already recruited two students from the ANAU and ATC/ICARE in 2017 and 2019, one of which, Magda Kondaridze, successfully completed a MS at the University of Wyoming and went on to do a Ph.D. at the Washington State University; and the second student, Meri Hambaryán, joined the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department in fall 2019).