



The regional project ``Support Development of Biodiversity Conservation Policies and Practices in Mountain Regions of the South Caucasus`` is implemented by the Regional environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC) with financial support of Government of Norway. Duration of the project is 2011 - 2014.

**Major goal** of the project is to build capacity of local communities and authorities to address biodiversity loss in forest ecosystems of mountain regions of South Caucasus in order to improve participatory biodiversity management.

**THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES ARE IDENTIFIED:**

- To raise awareness and knowledge of local communities and local authorities in mountain regions and decision-makers at national level on values of forest ecosystems services and biodiversity and the benefits from their conservation and sustainable use and to increase willingness to protect biodiversity.
- To introduce practices of biodiversity management planning at local level in participatory manner.
- To demonstrate practical application through implementation of pilot projects on restoration of degraded forest ecosystems and respective enhancement of their values.

Given that forest and high mountain ecosystems are identified as most vulnerable and priority biomes for conservation efforts at eco-region level, project activities will be focused on forest ecosystems in mountain regions of the South Caucasus countries. In particular: Racha region in Georgia, Yenyol and Shehriyar regions in Azerbaijan and Koghb and Jujevan regions in Armenia.

**TO ACHIEVE THE ABOVE MENTIONED PROJECT OBJECTIVES THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WILL BE PERFORMED:**

- Economic assessment of values of ecosystems services and biodiversity in surrounding areas of selected communities,
- Forest resource use study and development of the GIS database/maps of forest ecosystems in surrounding areas of selected target communities,
- Gap analysis of existing regional / local policies, strategies, programmes in light of reflection of issues related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and community forest management and elaboration of recommendations to mainstream biodiversity and community forest management issues into policy/regulatory documents,
- Capacity needs assessment at the local level (local communities) to mainstream biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and community forest management issues into local development policies and development of recommendations to enhance respective capacities,
- Trainings for decision-makers and local population on value of ecosystems services, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use planning (including community forest management planning and implementation), on-job trainings targeting practical needs of communities,
- Development of local plans for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, community forest management plans for target communities based on participatory approach.
- Design and implementation of demonstration projects of restoration of degraded forest ecosystems to respective enhancement of their values.

**THE FOLLOWING MAJOR RESULTS ARE ENVISAGED UPON IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES:**

- Knowledge on economic values of ecosystems services and biodiversity is created;
- Public awareness among local communities is raised on importance of biodiversity conservation, which encourages the local population to use bio-resources in sustainable manner;
- Local capacity to recognize values of biodiversity and ecosystem services is enhanced to ensure sustainable use of biodiversity;
- Biological resources are managed in sustainable manner, which facilitates maintenance of biodiversity in target communities;
- Skills of the local government and communities in participatory biodiversity management planning are enhanced so that beneficiaries are able to independently administer the process.

**THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE FOR THE CAUCASUS (REC CAUCASUS)**

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) is an independent, non-for-profit organisation, established to assist in solving environmental problems as well as development of the civic society in the countries of the South Caucasus.

The mission of the REC Caucasus is to assist in solving of environmental problems in the Caucasus region through the promotion of co-operation at national and regional level among NGOs, governments, business, local communities, and all other environmental stakeholders, in order to develop a free exchange of information, in line with the principles of the Aarhus Convention; offer assistance to all environmental NGOs and other stakeholders; and increase public participation in the decision-making process, thereby assisting the states of the South Caucasus in the further development of a democratic civil society.

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**REC CAUCASUS**

**SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION  
POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN MOUNTAIN REGIONS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS**

