

# Management of Natural Resources and Safeguarding of Ecosystem Services for Sustainable Rural Development in the South Caucasus (ECOserve)

## Commissioned by:

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), European Union (EU), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

**Partner organisations:** Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure in Armenia, Ministry of Agriculture in Azerbaijan and Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture in Georgia

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**Countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE, OPPORTUNITIES

for people and nature



## Armenia

Young Tsaghik chose to challenge the traditionally held view in the community that girls cannot express their opinion, cannot be change-makers, and that, teenagers cannot make decisions or discuss what is needed for community development.

**"The sustainable development of our community is the mission of my life. And I'm eager to struggle interminably to achieve that mission. Why do I call it struggling? Because at the beginning this was nothing, but a struggle for gender equality, for young people to be heard and for making community members responsible", said Tsaghik.**

Tsaghik is a member of KATIL initiative group from Ayrum community (Tavush Marz). She joined KATIL since the beginning of its establishment and was actively encouraging other young community members to join the group.



## Azerbaijan

Adjustment to the new reality became one of the successful experiences for the ECOserve Azerbaijan team. Due to the COVID-19-pandemic, an earlier planned event for discussing environmental-related topics was cancelled. However, in order to initiate exchange anyhow, ECOserve organized a webinar to discuss and agree on the outcomes of the initial research with participation of 13 relevant stakeholders: Ministry of Agriculture, Agrarian Research Center, Agrarian Service Agency, Parliament, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. Usage of pastures and commons, losses of water resources in irrigation, utilization of plastic waste in agriculture together with other acute topics were identified for further research and development or improvement of legal acts.

The webinar was not only a good mean to get in exchange during a pandemic situation and, it was also a very good opportunity, to strengthen our partners in digital literacy.



## Georgia

Tamuna Gioshvili linked her life to her passion-forestry. Being the only female student in her group, together with other future foresters at education program on Forest Work Specialist at TVET college AISI, it was not an easy beginning. However, she claims that despite the challenges there are quite professional female foresters in this field. "Well, there are no limitations to choose the professions for women in Georgia. However, it is more difficult to succeed and find a place in this profession when you are a woman. I feel that it is our responsibility to change this attitude." Tamar Gioshvili claims.

Considering the fact that Georgia is rich with its forests, Tamar is sure that her profession has a crucial role in the country's prosperity.

**"According to the National Forestry Agency, 40.6% of Georgia's territory is covered with forests. Georgia needs professional foresters to manage and protect this treasure", Tamar said.**

## Challenges:

The dominant land-use systems in the three South Caucasus countries (grazing land in Armenia, agriculture in Azerbaijan, and forests in Georgia) are subject to progressive degradation. Moreover, energy supply in rural parts of Armenia and Georgia is based on the unsustainable use of natural resources. There is a lack of robust data, rules, practices and expertise at all levels. Holistic approaches to the sustainable and biodiversity-friendly use of natural resources are also lacking.

## Activities:

Exchange of information among experts in the three countries.

We are advising our partners on how they can gather and make available reliable data to facilitate sustainable management of natural resources.

We are demonstrating what better management of forests, agricultural land and pastures might look like.

We are supporting the development of digital information systems for processing environmental data and the adaptation of legal frameworks to enable sustainable use of natural resources.

Since there is little awareness of the importance of the environment, we are helping to improve information and educational services.

## Selected Results and Impacts



In the three countries of the South Caucasus, environmental data for more than **33,240** km<sup>2</sup> of forest and pasture land has been collected as a basis for sustainable management practices, using satellite imagery and field surveys.



18 pieces of legislation and procedures have been developed that will foster the sustainable management of lands and conserve ecosystem services. For example, an entirely new Forest Code was adopted in Georgia in 2020.



Comprehensive country-wide polls on the knowledge, attitude and practices of the people towards environmental topics (KAP studies, such as <https://biodivers-southcaucasus.org/uploads/files/5b9fab91d9d9c.pdf>) were conducted in the three countries and used as an information basis for designing project interventions such as awareness raising campaigns.



Around **700** people have received on-the-job-trainings in the fields of forest management and -monitoring and the construction of energy efficient stoves. 6 academic and vocational training programs have been established mainstreaming sustainable natural resource management and other ecological aspects.



ECOserve is implementing the Greenovation Challenge [www.greenovation.hypeinnovation.com](http://www.greenovation.hypeinnovation.com) to collect and support innovative ideas for a Green Recovery in the South Caucasus after the Covid-19 pandemic.



Energy efficient stoves, manufactured by local craftsmen, were introduced to around 50 rural households in Armenia and 41 households in Georgia for testing, later large-scale replication is envisaged.



To mitigate the socio-economic consequences of the Corona pandemic, more than **900** people are employed temporarily, protecting their local environment through different activities such as forest protection and waste collection.

This Project contributes to:



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