



REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE FOR THE CAUCASUS (REC CAUCASUS)

Introducing the Practice of Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in Local Communities and Increasing their Preparedness against Natural Disasters

Under Eco Awards 2011 Program, the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) implemented a project aimed at introducing a practice of sustainable use of natural resources in the local communities of Oni district and increasing their preparedness against natural disasters. The project was implemented in three villages of Racha region: **Ghebi**, **Chiora** and **Glola**.

The rate of occurrence of natural disasters has increased significantly in recent years. In addition to sensitive geological structure and complex relief, this is caused by increasing pressure from anthropogenic activity, especially in high mountainous regions of our country. There is low

level of awareness among the local population about anthropogenic activities that cause natural calamities. Neither the local community, nor self-governance bodies have any information about or experience in sustainable management of forests and pastures.



Photo by: REC-Caucasus

Project Objectives:

- Increase capacity and involvement of local communities of high-mountainous villages of Racha-Lechkhumi region (Ghebi, Chiora and Glola) in forest and pasture management planning, as well as awareness on reducing the risks of natural calamities, caused by irrational use of natural resources.
- Select and demonstrate some of the best methods of forest and pasture restoration with active involvement of local communities in zones that are heavily affected by natural disasters

Implemented Activities and Results

- A map of specific risks for such large scale natural disasters as floods, landslides and avalanche zones was drafted for the three villages (Ghebi, Chiora Glola).

Based on the GPS coordinates that were taken down during field visits, an interactive map was prepared with a scale of 1:25 000. WGS 84. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database containing ID code of the area, geographical coordinates, the nearest settlement, the type of geological process, short description of the situation and photo was also created with the map. The map was printed and handed to local municipality. Both, the map and the database are available in Georgian, as well as English language.



Photo by: REC-Caucasus

- To assess the local population's awareness about the anthropogenic factors of natural calamities and identify the concrete problems regarding forest and pasture management, interviews were conducted among the residents (60 residents in total) of the target villages. The interview results showed that the local population lack sufficient knowledge on how to act during the natural calamities.
- Reports on reducing the risks of natural calamities were prepared for all three villages
- Sustainable natural resource management plans were prepared for all three villages

- To support the natural revival of the forest, 6 hectares of the eroded land was fenced and loosening in strips (tilling about 8-10 centimeters into the soil to form strips or platforms). As seeds from some trees and plants are either dispersed by the wind or transported by birds, usually dropping them on the ground, this measure by and large facilitates natural revival. For reforestation measures, 1 hectare of land was selected. Totally, 5000 seedlings of Maples and Ash trees were planted on the territory. Both, the reforestation and natural revival measures were implemented in the surrounding territory of the village Ghebi.



Photo by: REC-Caucasus

- Under the project a Regional Guideline for Community Forest Management was published.
- In the framework of additional award acknowledging successful completion of Eco-Awards Program 2009-2011, REC-Caucasus presented project results to various stakeholders, including beneficiaries, local government representatives, through organizing two-day site visit Racha villages.

April 2011- December 2011

Donors and Partners

The given project was implemented within the framework of the 2011 Eco-Awards Program. Eco-Awards Program is initiated and financed by BP, on behalf of its oil and gas co-venturers (BTC Co. SCP Co.) and administered by Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF).

Contact Information:

REC-Caucasus
 23, Chavchavadze ave., Tbilisi, 0179, Georgia
 Zaza Zedginidze
 Tel: +995 32 2253649/+995 32 2253648
 E-mail: info@rec-caucasus.org
 Web-site: <http://www.rec-caucasus.org>

