

GURAM TIKANADZE SVANETI YOUTH CENTER

Support bio-farming and eco-tourism in Upper Svaneti as one of the prospective to secure eco-stability and cultural traditions in the area.

Under Eco Awards 2011 Program, Guram Tikanadze Svaneti Youth Center implemented a project aimed at promotion of eco-farming and eco-tourism in Upper Svaneti region.

As a result of growing economic activity in Svaneti, pressure on the local eco-system is mounting. Due to poor socio-economic situation in the region, the local population's daily activities (e.g. logging) also have significant negative impact on the environment. At the same time, there is a general lack of information about modern energy saving technologies, as well eco-farming and eco-tourism, in the region. This is particularly important short-coming as both eco-farming and eco-tourism have great potential to attract tourists and, serve as means to promote the much-needed economic development in the area.



*Photo by: Guram Tikanadze Svaneti Youth Center
Constructing eco-guesthouse*

Project Objectives

- Create small and experimental eco-farm and eco-guesthouse, which will serve as examples demonstrating these new technologies
- Raise public awareness among the local residents on eco-farming and eco-tourism

Implemented Activities and Outputs

- A demonstrative eco-farm was created and a small experimental eco-guesthouse was constructed by combining old and new environmentally safe construction materials. The material consists of four components: limestone, sand, cement and sawdust and has features of both, concrete and natural wood. It breathes like wood, keeps in heat, and is durable and much cheaper than other construction materials. Material of this type has long been used in countries with severe climatic conditions.
- To gain the needed theoretical knowledge, the interested persons were provided a series of trainings on eco-tourism, agricultural cattle-breeding, eco-sanitary and sustainable agro-farming. The trainings once again demonstrated the potential of eco-tourism development in Upper Svaneti region.



*Photo by: Guram Tikanadze Svaneti Youth Center
Training on Eco-tourism*

- To study the current situation regarding the existing guest-houses, a self-assessment questionnaire for the guesthouse owners: How well do I know my guests, was elaborated by an expert on eco-tourism, Mr. Knut Gerber. About 75 respondents (guest house owners), from Becho to Ushguli, participated in the interviewing process. Consultant's recommendations were mainly focused on sanitary situation and necessary winter sport requirements. The report, together with the questionnaire was used during the trainings as a useful resource.

- Local government representatives were also trained on sustainable tourism by a trainer from WWF Germany, Ms. Petra Bollich. In parallel with describing global tourism trends and the international concern about loss of biodiversity and climate change, the current environmental and tourism situation in Georgia and Svaneti was assessed using SWOT-analysis. To show the necessity of the common approach and involvement of all stakeholders for sustainable tourism development, Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan was presented during the presentation. Training participants demonstrated their interest and understanding of possible negative impacts caused by unsustainable tourism development.
- To promote environmentally safe farming and eco-tourism, project flyers were distributed among the beneficiaries. Also a brochure was prepared, containing information on all eco-friendly technologies that were used during the project implementation. The brochure will be uploaded on the web-site www.ecosvaeti.ge which is currently under development. The web-site will serve as a tool to popularize the project's goals and objectives and attract tourists through promoting new services rendered in the area.

Project Duration

April, 2011 - December, 2011

Donors and Partners

The following 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).

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