



Environment

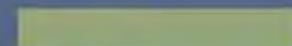


ENVSEC

in the

South Caucasus

An overview of projects



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This publication is intended to highlight some past and present ENVSEC activities in the South Caucasus. It is not meant to provide a comprehensive overview of all related activities in the region, nor is it inclusive of potential future projects.

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Partners of ENVSEC



Environment and security

Changes in the environment and competition over natural resources can lead to political disputes and threaten stability of societies. Human security is also vulnerable to environmental disasters.

Environmental co-operation in vulnerable situations can act as a bridge for improved mutual understanding, and lay the foundations for agreements on transboundary environmental management.

The concept of environmental security has been in use since a series of international reports in the 1980s and the 1990s linked environmental stress to conflicts and confidence building. The Brundtland Commission of 1987 argued that the concept of security “must be expanded to include the growing impacts of environmental stress locally, nationally, regionally, and globally”. Principle 25 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environmental Development states that “peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.”

The ENVSEC Initiative

The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative was founded against the backdrop of this growing acknowledgement of the link between environment and security. It was launched at the fifth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Kiev in May 2003 as a joint initiative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which were active in the transition countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Jointly, the partner organizations provided an integrated response to the challenges posed by the close links between environmental degradation, natural resource scarcity and conflict.

The three founding ENVSEC organizations were later joined by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as an associate partner.

Each of the organizations brings its own attributes and expertise to the partnership. The OSCE, with its comprehensive security mandate and field operations, provides important political support. UNEP contributes environmental expertise. UNDP, together with its country offices, provides expertise in human security and sustainable development. UNECE, the holder of five multilateral environmental conventions, provides legal frameworks of co-operation. REC leads several environmental efforts particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. NATO, as an associate partner, contributes to capacity building and awareness-raising by using its standard mechanisms for cooperative grants under the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme.

The ENVSEC partners co-operate on projects focused on protecting the environment and assessing risks that stem from it when left unprotected.

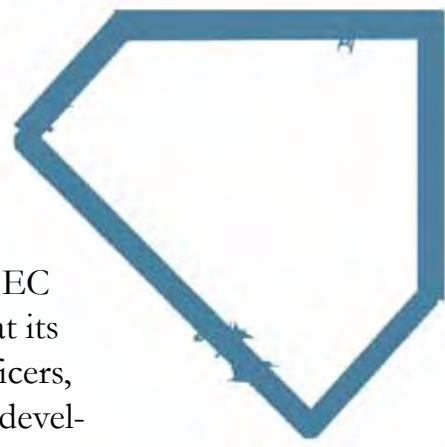
ENVSEC

The purpose of the ENVSEC Initiative is to contribute to the reduction of environment and security risks and strengthened co-operation among and within countries. ENVSEC pursues this goal through (a) in-depth vulnerability assessments of environmental and security risks; (b) strengthening policies, awareness and participation; (c) joint management of environmental and security risks; and (d) solutions for safe environment and sustainable development.

Methodologically, the Initiative's approach is to advocate multi-stakeholder participation during the assessment, definition and implementation stages of projects and is based on the principles of local ownership, integration of co-operation services and harmonization of donor policies and action.

ENVSEC works in four areas: natural resources and security risk management; hazardous substances and environment and security risk reduction; population pressure on environmental security and climate change adaptation; and information on environment and security and participation in risk management.

The ENVSEC Management Board is the key decision-making body of the Initiative, which is composed of representatives from each of the partner organizations with an annually rotating chairmanship. It provides direction to the Initiative on overall strategy, regional priorities, its work programme and budget.



Day-to-day activities of the Initiative are co-ordinated by the ENVSEC Secretariat, consisting of the Co-ordination Unit hosted by UNEP at its Regional Office for Europe in Geneva, and four Regional Desk Officers, appointed by ENVSEC partner agencies, which are responsible for developing, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of regional work programmes and sharing information among different actors.

The Regional Desk Office function for Central Asia is performed by UNDP, for Eastern Europe by UNEP, for South-Eastern Europe by REC and for the South Caucasus by the OSCE.

In each country where ENVSEC is active, the ENVSEC National Focal Points are the backbones of the Initiative. Representing the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in each country, these National Focal Points participate in planning and monitoring the ENVSEC work programmes and projects and provide complementary expertise.

The implementation of each project is the responsibility of one or several ENVSEC partner organizations, designated by the Management Board based on their respective mandates and capacities.

At the country level, country and field offices of the OSCE, UNDP and REC participate actively in project planning and monitoring, with the support of national agencies, NGOs, academia and research institutions.

ENVSEC

South Caucasus

The ENVSEC Initiative became active in the countries of the South Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, in 2004. Its engagement in the region is motivated by the ambitious vision of facilitating co-operation and reducing the security risks related to environmental degradation. Viewing environmental concerns not only in terms of responding to immediate threats but also in terms of protecting common natural resources at risk has opened the door to co-operation with the aim of overcoming differences and finding common ground to tackle environmental and security challenges.

Armenia

Total population: 3.3 million (2010)-Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia
Total area: 29,743 km²
Population density: 109.7 per km²

Platform
for
dialogue

Azerbaijan

Total population: 9.0 million (2010)-Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Total area: 86,600 km²
Population density: 103.9 per km²

Building
confidence



Work Programme

The work of the ENVSEC Initiative in the South Caucasus is based on national consultations, in which a wide range of representatives from several ministries, state agencies, civil society organizations and scientists provided information on national environmental and security issues. These country consultation processes formed the basis of the South Caucasus Regional Assessment Report, which was endorsed by the Ministers of Environment of each country at the South Caucasus sub-regional Environment for Europe Meeting in Tbilisi in October 2004.

The ENVSEC Work Programme in the South Caucasus is based on the priorities identified in the South Caucasus Regional Assessment Report. These priorities are:

environmental degradation and access to natural resources in areas of conflict;
management of transboundary natural resources, natural hazards and industrial and military legacies;
population growth and rapid development in capital and other major cities; and public awareness and participation in environmental decision-making.

The partner organizations of the Initiative offer countries their combined pool of expertise and resources towards those priorities.

Transboundary
environmental
co-operation

Georgia

Total population: 4.4 million (2010)-Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia

Total area: 69,700 km²
Population density: 68.1 per km²





Wildfire Disaster Risk Reduction in the South Caucasus

Wildfires are posing an increasing threat to ecosystems, livelihoods and even human health worldwide. Effects of global climate change, in particular heat waves

that coincide with low precipitation and strong winds, are contributing to the increasing incidence of wildfires.

Nevertheless, the majority of wildfires are caused by human behaviour.

WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

Natural resources and security risk management

ENVSEC's involvement in the field of wildfire management is based on the OSCE-led Environmental Assessment Mission to fire affected territories in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2006 and the Joint OSCE/UNEP Environmental Assessment Mission to Georgia in 2008.

The assessments showed that the damage caused by wildfires in the South Caucasus can partially be attributed to the absence of effective forest fire management systems.

To assist the South Caucasus countries in enhancing their fire management capacities, the OSCE, within the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative, launched the project "Enhancing National Capacity on Fire Management and Wildfire Disaster Risk Reduction in the South Caucasus". The project is conducted in partnership with the Global Fire Monitoring Centre based in Germany.

The focus of the project is threefold: capacity building, policy development and regional and international co-operation. Active participation in regional and international networks provides the countries of the region with up-to-date expertise and access to fire suppression assistance during large fire emergencies.

In an initial stage, the project focused on national and regional training and international co-operation within the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Regional

Southeast Europe /Caucasus Wildland Fire Network. Experts from all three South Caucasus countries engaged in sub-regional seminars and consultations and international conferences on wildfires.

In the project's second phase, forest fire vulnerability assessments were conducted in Armenia and Azerbaijan for the development of national forest fire management policies. In Georgia, after intensive consultations with national stakeholders, a draft policy document on wildfire management was prepared in 2011 and submitted to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources for adoption.

A fire management training workshop was held in Antalya, Turkey in 2010, with the participation of 30 representatives from the fire-fighting agencies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The training was organized in co-operation with the Turkish Forestry Directorate.

In a third phase, the project will focus on further developing and implementing national fire management policies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. This will include a regional fire management training course and support for the participation of the South Caucasus countries in major international events on wildfire management.