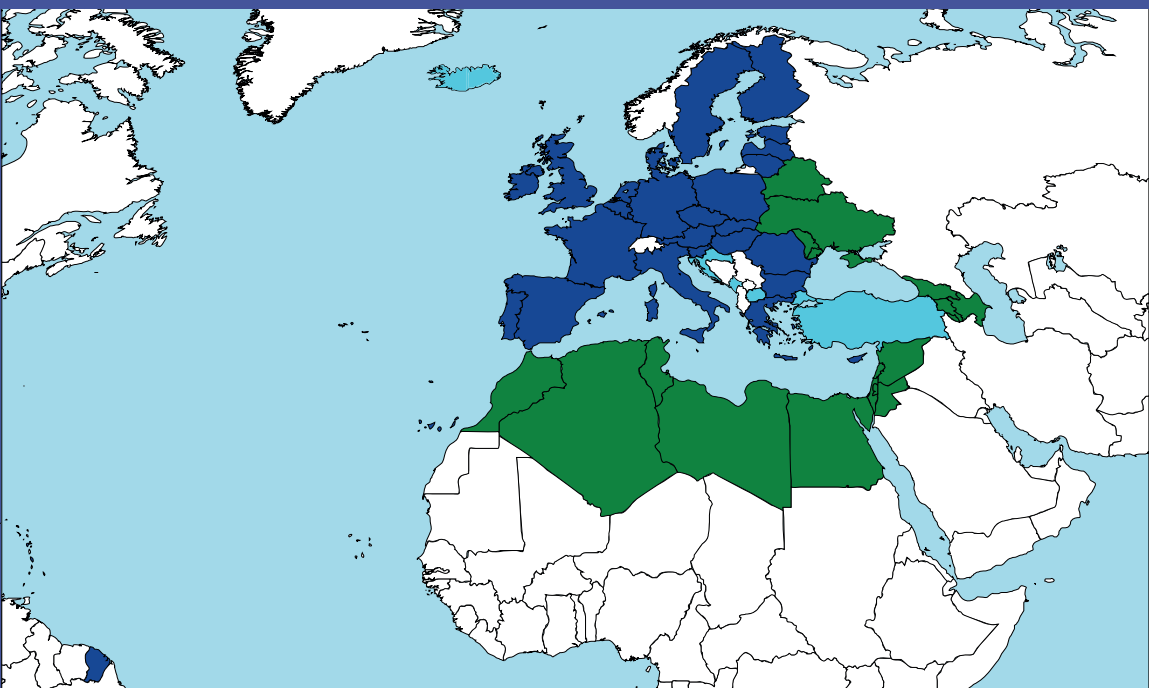




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## Capacity Building of Local NGOs in the South Caucasus Region on European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)



Cover Photo: Map of European Union, candidate and ENP countries - BlankMap-World6.svg / 2010-03-21 16:50 (UTC)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:European\\_Neighbourhood\\_Policy\\_member\\_map.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:European_Neighbourhood_Policy_member_map.svg)

Description for Cover Photo :  EU countries  Official candidates  ENP countries

## **Capacity Building of Local NGOs in the South Caucasus Region on European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)**

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# **Capacity Building of Local NGOs in the South Caucasus Region on European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)**

## ***European Neighbourhood Policy and Civil-Society Involvement***

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has developed rapidly since the process was launched by the European Commission in March 2003, with several public communications and later on, in 2006 and early 2007, with adoption of ENP strategy and seven ENP National Action Plans (AP) for neighbouring countries, then a Communication on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy and assessments of the first ENP Action Plans.

Although the Commission strategy papers referred to the importance of sustainable development, WWF and its partners were concerned that ENP's objectives did not give sufficient priority to the promotion of sustainable development in the EU's neighbours. Despite the EU's long-standing commitment to civil-society consultation, the preparation of the strategy paper and the negotiations for the first Country Action Plans (CAP) were carried out without civil-society participation.

Steps were not taken to ensure that civil society has free access to information and participation. Although sustainable management of natural resources, environmental governance, and the importance of civil-society involvement were mentioned in the AP, there were no clear mechanisms for implementation. In all the neighbourhood regions, the lack of environmental awareness within civil society (especially on the immediate challenges and opportunities of ENP) and the low level of awareness and professionalism of decision-makers were major problems.

This included a lack of understanding of the importance of environmental protection and obligations under various treaties, as well as

the general requirements of EU policies and legislation. In view of all this, improved management of natural resources and cooperative relationships amongst neighbouring countries where ecological systems straddle borders would be crucial. However, this would not be achieved without strong civil-society organizations which open the debate and monitor legislation, regulations, and action plans.

Therefore, in 2006 WWF proposed a project aimed at strengthening the policy and communications capacity of a group of NGOs in the South Caucasus countries to enable them to participate actively in the ongoing ENP process. The project was financially supported by DEFRA (UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and implemented in 2006-2007.

### ***WWF Project Partners***

The project was planned and administered by the following WWF Project partners:

### **WWF Caucasus Programme Office (WWF CauPO)**

WWF started its mission in the Caucasus in the early 1990s and in 1992 in Georgia. The first initiatives of the new WWF Georgia office involved a protected-areas network and an environmental education system. In 2002, WWF Georgia widened its activity to the entire Caucasus ecoregion and became the WWF Caucasus Programme Office. By working throughout the Caucasus region for more than 10 years, WWF CauPO has acquired credibility through a strong field presence in most countries, and developed strategic alliances with key stakeholders. WWF CauPO activities include the promotion of cross-border cooperation and protected areas, as well as the conservation and sustainable use of forest and freshwater habitats, the protection of endangered species, the improvement of legislation, and the strengthening of civil-society organizations.

## **WWF Mediterranean Programme (WWF MedPO)**

In the early 1990s, WWF set up a Mediterranean Programme with a mission to promote the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of natural resources in the countries of the Mediterranean basin. From the start, WWF MedPO was particularly concerned with helping to build the capacity of Mediterranean conservation activists, with a strong focus on grassroots environmental groups in the south and east of the region. To this end, WWF initiated the capacity-building programme known as Across the Waters (ATW) in 1994. ATW is one of the best known capacity-building programmes in the entire WWF network and has trained hundreds of NGO members over the past 11 years. The ATW capacity-building team led the development of the three training modules.

## **WWF European Policy Office (WWF EPO)**

Established in 1989, WWF's EPO works on nine priority issues: toxics, fisheries, water, energy and climate change, agriculture and rural development, regional policy, external development, trade, and investment. It has established long-lasting relations with European institutions and is considered to be a key player in policy debates, including those on the sustainable dimension of external EU policies – specifically on the “greening of the ENP”. EPO provided contributions to ENP and the communications part of the training modules and workshops.

### ***Training for Civil Society in the South Caucasus Countries***

The project consisted of two main building blocks: the development of three training modules for NGOs and the organization of training in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The focus was on developing the capacity of NGOs through selected WWF partner organizations – namely, Association for Sustainable Hu-

man Development in Armenia and Ecolex - Ecological Law Center in Azerbaijan.

Capacity building was therefore defined as: “Actions taken to increase the knowledge, skills, and motivation of a target group, to help deal with a specific situation or to develop, implement, and monitor a specific action.” The project aimed to build the capacities of individual actors to work with others, and bring about the structural and social changes necessary for sustainable development. A key element was to link each training action to field, policy, and advocacy work, to apply knowledge and skills through concrete experience.

WWF’s approach to capacity building was: responsive by being oriented towards concrete local needs; contextual by taking into account local knowledge and regional setting; flexible by adapting to the requirements of partners and beneficiaries; and replicable by empowering partners and beneficiaries. The methodology provided a combination of “hands-on” experience where the learning process is based on real-life situations with work on knowledge and skill.

The planned capacity-building process aimed to promote policy analysis and deduction, as well as generate new insights, improved practice, and a sense of shared commitment that maintains motivation.

**The training activities had four specific objectives:**

- To increase the knowledge of NGOs in Armenia and Azerbaijan on ENP and the European policy process
- To strengthen NGO capacity to raise public awareness on policy issues
- To strengthen national and regional policy networks
- To strengthen NGO capacity to design, manage, and implement environmental projects.

## ***The Training Programme and Training Modules***

The training programme was dynamic process in which three modules were linked. It was strongly recommended that NGOs participate in all three. This did not necessarily mean that the same person always participated, but that the most interested members of the NGO participated. For example, in training on effective communications strategies, it was beneficial to have NGO participants who were involved in communications work.

### **Training Module 1:**

#### ***European neighbourhood process – opportunities and challenges for civil society***

The first module prepared the ground for the participation of NGOs in the learning process and, at the same time, offered opportunities to get involved right at the start of the ENP process.

As a first step, NGOs were introduced to the ENP process and background. The module helped in understanding the historical background, the main objectives, and ENP's impact on different environmental policy fields. The module also highlighted the important role which civil-society organizations could play to make ENP more environmentally friendly.

The first session produced recommendations from NGO representatives concerning the ENP process in their country. This documents then were delivered to the representatives of the European Commission (EC) and relevant national decision-makers.

The 1st training workshop was organized on February 23-25, 2007 in Armenia (Tsakhkadzor) and on March 30-April 01, 2007 in Azerbaijan (Zaghalba).

## **Training Module 2:**

### ***Effective communication to reach policy goals***

The second module focused much more on the skill level; participants learnt how to develop an effective media strategy and acquire the skills to design a successful campaign or similar events.

The module was based on the assumption that the media is essential for NGOs to communicate with different sectors of society and to advocate for concrete change.

The module dealt with communications basics, such as the selection of target groups, the framing of clear messages, and the identification of communications tools for different messages and target groups. The module used examples of specific NGO campaigns and lessons learned, to relate the training contents to real-life situations.

During the training, participants had produced first draft of a communications tool, such as a campaign outline, which then was used for concrete work on ENP.

The 2nd training workshop was organized on 21-23 April, 2007 in Armenia (Yerevan) and on May 04-06, 2007 in Azerbaijan (Pirgulu, Shamakhi).

## **Training Module 3:**

### ***Design and management of environmental projects***

In the ENP framework, new funding opportunities also emerged. NGOs should be prepared to utilize them. The third and final module dealt with the design and management of, and fund-raising for, environmental projects. The participants learnt the basics of project-cycle management and how to develop projects on conservation and sustainable natural-resource management.



The training presented funding opportunities and related processes. The plan was to involve EU representatives to facilitate a first exchange of views between decision-makers and NGOs.

To continue the learning process, the trainings also presented existing support-tools for the preparation of environmental projects. In small working groups the participants had produced project concepts which they finalized with the support of WWF afterwards.

The 3rd training workshop was held during 14-16 July, 2007 in Azerbaijan (Guba) and during 14-16 July, 2007 in Armenia (Yerevan).

### ***Methodology for the Training Programme***

The methodology consisted of a combination of “hands-on” experience in which learning was based on real-life situations and specific work on knowledge and skill.

The learning process aimed to promote policy analysis and deduction, as well as generating new insights, improved practices, and a sense of shared commitment that maintains motivation.

The trainings were participatory and interactive to allow participants to share experience and knowledge and seek effective solutions to problems. According to WWF’s educational vision, exchanging conservation knowledge has a practical and ethical purpose. The courses, which lasted three full days, gathered a maximum of 12-15 participants from selected NGOs in each country - Armenia and Azerbaijan.

All the courses combined lectures and group work. Confronted with real-life situations, participants analysed and discussed a range of solutions. At the end of each course, an evaluation was held and contents and modus operandi adapted.

The core of the training methodology was description of the whole ENP process in combination with environmental issues and their

possible interactions. This had been reached through a step-by-step detailing on the topics below.

## ***Introduction to ENP***

The European Neighbourhood Policy provided the framework for closer cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the newly enlarged European Union.

The ENP financial instrument, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) (2004), was approved by the Council in autumn 2006. The ENPI strategies (national, regional, cross-border, and thematic) were being circulated by the EC to the Council and the European Parliament. They were adopted by the Commission and put in place during 2007.

ENP's starting point was a new approach to EU relations with non-EU countries bordering the Community that replaced the previous "enlargement" process.

The ENP gave neighbouring countries the opportunity to take a "stake in the internal market" and participate in relevant Community programmes. Cooperation was based overall on a set of shared principles such as democracy and the rule of law.

The ENP applied to southern neighbouring countries (formerly the "MEDA countries" and to eastern neighbouring countries (formerly the "Tacis countries").

## ***The ENP and the environment***

The ENP regions enclosed important natural areas, three of which (Caucasus, Mediterranean and Danube-Carpathian) were featured on WWF's Global 200 list of the most important ecoregions on Earth.

Many of the last remaining natural and semi-natural ecological systems in Europe are found in EU neighbouring countries and are not only a source of biodiversity but also of livelihoods and of other socio-economic benefits.

Thus, naturally functioning ecosystems add great socio-economic value that should be maintained for future generations. For instance, in the case of freshwater ecosystems (e.g. rivers, lakes, wetlands), these functions include recycling nutrients and human and organic waste; groundwater recharge and discharge; natural flood control and flow regulation; erosion control; salinity control; water treatment; climatic stabilization and carbon sequestration.

WWF offices were and are currently working with a range of stakeholders in the neighbouring countries and with the European Union to ensure natural values and environmentally sensitive areas in the ENP ecoregions are protected.

### ***ENP policy context***

The context of ENP was defined in the several preparatory communications issued by the Commission in 2003 and 2004. The most important was the ENP strategy paper that set out the policy context and provided guidance on the principles, scope, stakeholders, and method of this new policy.

It was enhanced by a Communication on “strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy” (ENP Plus) published on 4 December 2006. This Communication reflected the EU interest/commitment to provide more attractive incentives for EU neighbours.

The Communication was accompanied by progress reports of the first seven Action Plans as well as a Communication on the general approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes.

In its Communication, the Commission committed towards increased thematic (on energy, transport, but also on environment) and regional (strengthening Black Sea Dimension) cooperation, increased civil society participation in the ENP/ENPI and an additional EUR 1 billion funding to reward the NC's good performance in their reform process.

Commission had prepared specific proposals for the implementation of the Communication that were discussed in an informal Council of Foreign Ministers on 30th-31st March 2007. A Communication on the Governance Facility and a Communication on Black Sea co-operation were issued in 2007.

This political framework was applied to the development of Action Plans with individual ENP countries. Each plan constituted an agreement between the EU and an individual country.

**It included commitments from both the EU and the partner country on six major issues:**

- political dialogue and reform
- economic and social development and reform
- regulatory and trade-related issues
- justice and home affairs
- the key sectors of transport, energy, information society, and the environment
- people-to-people contact

The plans proposed national, regional, and cross-border measures not necessarily supported by EU funds. They included a chapter on sustainable development and a chapter on the environment. The latter includes commitments on environmental governance and legislation, and the state's contribution to regional environmental initiatives.

It was supposed that, in the future, ENP Action Plans would be used by international financial institutions in their operations in oth-

er countries and to determine whether proposals fit partners' ENP priorities.

### ***The ENPI financial instrument***

It was clear that the EU would only support part of the measures included in each plan. To regulate the use of the funding allocated to ENP countries, the Commission in 2004 put forward proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council for a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The ENPI was one of the new sets of external instruments for EU external cooperation proposed by the Commission in heading, entitled "The EU as a Global Partner", of the EU financial framework 2007-2013, aiming to simplify EU financial instruments and procedures.

Other new instruments in this chapter were the Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument (DCECI), the Stability Instrument (SI), and the Instrument for Structural Policies and Pre-Accession (ISPA), as well as a thematic programme on human rights. Implementing procedures for all these tools were similar.

The ENPI applies to the eastern and southern countries (for regional programmes), but not to the other members of the Northern Dimension.

ENPI Regulation adopted by the Council on 17 October 2006. A total of over EUR 11.1 billion under the EU's 2007-13 financial framework would be provided from the Community budget for implementation of the regulation, of which at least 95 per cent would be allocated to country and multicountry programmes, and up to 5 per cent will be devoted to cross-border cooperation programmes. As stated in the Communication on ENP Plus, there would be, in addition to the EUR 11.1 billion, two financing mechanisms: a Governance Facility (EUR 300 million) and a Neighbourhood Investment Fund (EUR 700 million).

## *The ENPI implementation*

The ENPI regulation foresaw EU assistance being implemented through national and international strategies and indicative programmes lasting several years which covered:

- National programmes for each partner country. These are negotiated by the Commission with national authorities
- Regional and subregional cooperation between two or more partner countries.

There were three different regional (transboundary) programmes under the ENPI: one for the eastern ENP countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia), one for the Mediterranean ENP countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Israel, Lebanon and Syria) and one trans-regional for both the Mediterranean and the Eastern countries.

**Cross-border cooperation programmes.** These programmes were, in principle, developed by the regions concerned following a ground-up approach. They were co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and allowed the implementation of joint programmes covering both regions consisting of groups of Member States and of partner countries sharing a common border. The Commission adopted programmes for, firstly, land borders and sea crossings of significance and, secondly, sea basins. Three major sea basins programmes were identified (Mediterranean, Black, and Baltic seas) that should allow multilateral cooperation with ENP and non-ENP countries. Total funding available for ENPI-CBC programmes for the period 2007-2010 amounted to €583.28 million.

**Thematic programmes.** They are common to partner countries and to development countries. These programmes were integrated in the Commission proposal for the ENPI. But later share of the ENPI in these new tools became uncertain and would depend on the thematic programme. A thematic programme on the environment and energy was foreseen but the benefit to the ENPI countries

was not fully certain. In 2007, the Commission submitted the Strategy Papers and Indicative Programmes to the Council and the European Parliament, but only for an opinion. The Commission adopted them and defined implementing rules and criteria. The Commission also worked out Annual Action Programmes for the countries.

## ***ENPI programmes and the environment***

The European Commission recognized the importance of the environment in the ENP context, given the resources and ecosystems shared by the EU and its neighbours. It seemed that support for the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources would be allocated under each of the ENPI programmes: national, regional, cross-border.

**The national programmes** could include an environmental component, but its importance would depend on the influence of the environmental authorities in each country. The Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) included a Country Environmental Profile (CEP) annex that identified the major environmental problems and threats, made a brief assessment of the national environmental legislation and the local capacity, and recommends priority environmental issues to be supported.

The CEPs were an important tool to prevent negative environmental impacts and to measure environmental integration and governance during implementation of the CSP.

The added value of the **regional programmes** were to provide the framework for international and cross-border cooperation on environmental issues and contribute to achieving international environmental objectives. The ENPI regional strategy for the eastern ENP prepared by the Commission set out the following environmental priorities: climate change, regional seas, water, and forestry.

The **CBC programmes** focused on environment, sustainable development, and people-to-people cooperation, two of the four

major objectives of CBC identified in the early stages of the ENP process. The draft guidelines for the preparation of the CBC joint programmes required a previous description and analysis of the geographical areas concerned, including on the environment and nature (pollution, environmental protection).

Within the **thematic programmes**, the Commission in 2006 proposed programmes on the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources including energy (ENRTP) to the Council and the European Parliament. In its communication, the EC considered that “a thematic approach is an essential tool for a more coordinated, coherent and effective EU approach and the sustainable management of natural resources”.

The priorities proposed by the Commission were: the promotion of environmental sustainability (through capacity-building, support to civil society, etc.); the implementation of EU initiatives and internationally agreed commitments (on water, energy, forest, illegal logging, climate change, biodiversity, etc.); and better environmental integration in EU programmes (EIAs, SIAs, policy coherence, etc.). Although the Commission highlighted the “particular importance” of environmental and energy cooperation in the ENP context, “given our shared resources and ecosystems the extent to which the ENTRP will benefit ENP countries is not clear yet”. The Commission conducted a public consultation in September 2006 before adopting this instrument.

### ***The major challenges with regard to ENP***

Two of the major challenges facing ENP implementation were:

#### **1. Inadequate fulfilment of environmental commitments.**

As explained above, ENP and its financial instruments gave high priority to environmental objectives and measures at all programme levels. But this was threatened by a lack of awareness, weakness in environmental administrations, and strong competition from other priorities amidst limited funding.



## **2. Effective public participation in the elaboration, implementation, and assessment of ENPI.**

Similarly, in the implementation phase, EU commitments on public participation were far from being properly fulfilled. Despite the EU's long-standing commitment to civil-society consultation, the preparation of the strategy papers and the negotiations of the first Action Plans were carried out without civil-society participation.

The ENPI was considered particularly opaque. No steps had been taken to ensure that civil society had free access to information and participation. Although sustainable management of natural resources, environmental governance, and the importance of civil society involvement were mentioned in the ENPI regulation and Action Plans, there were no clear mechanisms for ensuring implementation.

### **The Main Outcome of the WWF Project**

The main outcome of the WWF Project was increased capacity of more than 35 environment related selected NGOs in two South Caucasus countries through series of trainings (see complete list of training workshops below).

As a result, selected civil society organizations became able to open the debate and monitor the respective legislation, ENP action plans and their implementation could play an active role in environmental protection as their effectiveness depended on NGOs' knowledge of ENP and their capacity to act.

## **Copmlete List of ENP Training Workshops:**

### in Armenia:

1st Training Workshop in Armenia  
(Tsakhkadzor, Armenia - February 23-25, 2007)

2nd Training Workshop in Armenia  
(Yerevan, Armenia - 21-23 April, 2007)

3rd Training Workshop in Armenia  
(Yerevan, Armenia - 14-16 July, 2007)

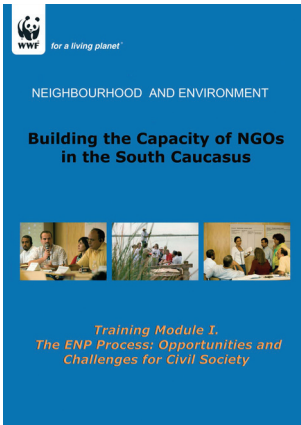
### in Azerbaijan:

1st Training Workshop in Azerbaijan  
(Zaghulba, Azerbaijan - March 30-April 01, 2007)

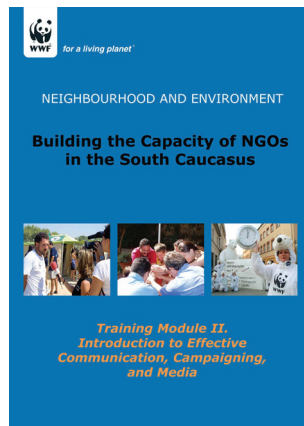
2nd Training Workshop in Azerbaijan  
(Pirgulu, Shamakhi, Azerbaijan - May 04-06, 2007)

3rd Training Workshop in Azerbaijan  
(Guba, Azerbaijan - June 21-24, 2007)

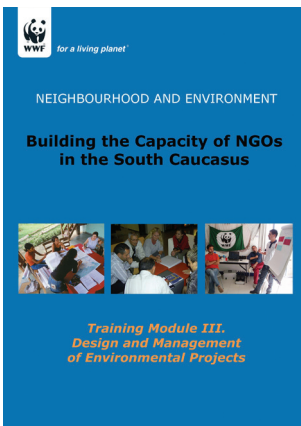
**Full texts of all 3 training modules bellow are available at:  
[www.panda.org/caucasus](http://www.panda.org/caucasus)**



Training Module 1 : The ENP Process – Opportunities and Challenges for Civil Society



Training Module 2 : Effective Communication, Campaigning and Media



Training Module 3 : Design and Management of Environmental Projects

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WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption



**WWF** *for a living planet*<sup>®</sup>