

REC Caucasus organisation established within the framework of the "Environment for Europe Process" based on the decision made at the Sofia Ministerial Conference in 1995, support key stakeholders in the Caucasus in their work for environment and sustainable development of the region. Being member of Mountain Partnership REC Caucasus focus activities on one of its strategic direction sustainable development of mountain regions through number of the following projects:

- Since 2003, REC Caucasus jointly with the Russian REC and with the support of the ministries of environment of Germany and Liechtenstein is implementing the project "Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus – Local Agenda 21" which is aimed at supporting local authorities in enhancement and capacity building of the Local Partnerships through elaboration of Local Agenda 21 and experience exchange at local level. Currently eight Local Agendas for pilot settlements are developed, number of workshops for local authorities organised and the project is focusing on spreading of positive experience to new areas of the Caucasus.
- In 2007, REC Caucasus together with Russian REC and UNEP, and with financial assistance from EC, initiated Intergovernmental process on Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus among the six countries of the Caucasus eco-region, which aiming at evaluation and selection of possible mechanisms / areas/ institutional set-up for developing such a common instrument on sustainable development of the Caucasus. Two meetings - Meeting of High Level Officials of the Caucasus Countries, 15-16 November, 2007, Vaduz, Liechtenstein and The Meeting of Government nominated Experts on the Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus, 28-29 April, Bolzano, Italy – were organised<sup>1</sup>. Till the end of 2009 at the Second High Level Meeting governments of the countries should finally decide in what format and in which areas they will be able to cooperate.
- With support from EC, REC Caucasus together with the Russian REC, in the framework of the project "Fostering Community Forest Policy and Practice in Mountain Regions of the Caucasus"<sup>2</sup> is supporting the four countries in 1) elaboration of relevant to institutional, legal and technical set-up for community forest management, 2) awareness raising and capacity building of local communities and local authorities on sustainable forest management and 3) demonstration of best approaches/methods of immediate reforestation and landscape restoration in areas affected by land-slides, mudflows, avalanches and other natural disasters preventing measures.

Beside this currently REC Caucasus is focusing on transboundary cooperation among the South Caucasus countries in

- water governance – EC supported project "Creation of Enabling Environment for Integrated Management of the Kura-Aras Transboundary Rivers Basin" – aiming at establishment common frame for management of all existing and future projects dealing with IWRM of Kura-Aras river basin, through elaboration Road Maps on sustainable management of the Kura-Aras river basin through introduction of the EU Water Framework Directives as outlined in the National Action Plans of European Neighbourhood Policy. The governments of the South Caucasus countries endorsed abovementioned strategic objectives of the project and agreed to support REC Caucasus in its implementation at the regional level.
- sustainable land management – EC supported project "Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation and Reducing Poverty in the South Caucasus Region – with purpose of strengthening policy, planning and regulatory environments for promotion of sustainable land management (SLM) in transboundary watersheds of the South Caucasus region and demonstrating benefits of watershed based sustainable land management and alternative livelihood for rural people while protecting fragile ecosystems and disseminating lessons learned and best practices through developing a replication strategy

REC Caucasus also is facilitating EECCA countries to discussion Clean fuel and vehicles issues. 2008 January meeting organised in Tbilisi served as an initial step in engaging countries in further discussions and cooperation at the national level to create national action plans on the implementation of cleaner fuels and vehicles. As an outcome of conference was prepared "Fuel quality and Vehicle emission standards overview for EECCA countries", which was presented during 7th Global Partnership meeting in Budapest (28-29 April, 2009).

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rec-caucasus.org/recc/index.php?t=index&f=4&su=news&lang=eng>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rec-caucasus.org/recc/index.php?f=12&su=12060010012&t=index>

REC Caucasus is implementing LEAPs project since 2002. LEAPs replication to new communities of South Caucasus countries started in 2008. Three new cities of the South Caucasus countries were selected to disseminate LEAPs experience and develop Action Plans to deal with common environmental problems. All cities are located on coastal zones, in particular Black and Caspian sea, Lake Sevan.