



# STRENGTHENING FOREST KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK IN AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan has prioritized an increase in forest cover and the restoration of degraded lands. In addition to anthropogenic pressure, the country's forests are vulnerable to a wide variety of natural hazards, including erosion, soil loss and landslides, desertification and increased salinity. The aim of the project was to support the sustainable development of the forestry sector in the country. Specific areas to be addressed were the lack of institutional experience in forest inventory and planning, inconsistent approaches to the operation of forest nurseries, ineffective policy and legal frameworks, and a lack of national capacity to monitor and assess forest resources.



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## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project achieved its goal by supporting the government to effect change in the forestry sector and by contributing to the improvement of the quality of existing forests. It established a forest resources information management system providing detailed, up-to-date information for improved forest management in the country. The system will also help to efficiently manage and store collected inventory data. The guidelines and manuals developed, and the knowledge and skills acquired during the conduct of the national forest inventory (NFI) will allow local foresters to apply modern methodology and approaches to sustainable forest management (SFM). Degraded land was rehabilitated and reforested, and income-generating activities, such as beekeeping and horticulture, were demonstrated to local small farm holders. The forest management planning methodology developed and the showcases on forest management plans (FMPs) conducted in the pilot regions will lead to pasture and forest rehabilitation, restoration, afforestation and the provision of ecosystem services such as recreation, soil protection and water protection.

The project contributed to building the capacity of national, regional and local forestry experts by organizing capacity-building events on forest management planning, the development of FMPs and NFI data collection. In addition, a wide range of information and awareness-raising materials promoting the importance of forest ecosystems was developed and disseminated by the project.

## KEY FACTS

### Latest Approved Budget

USD 1 484 247

### Duration

October 2017 – December 2021

### Resource Partner

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

### Partners

Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR)

### Beneficiaries

MENR, other governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the sustainable development of forests, and communities dependent for their livelihoods on pastoral farming systems in Agdash and Qakh regions

## IMPACT

Overall, the project has laid the foundation for SFM in Azerbaijan. The wide range of lessons learned and experiences gained from project activities will make a significant contribution to the planning and implementation of new strategies and initiatives in the forestry sector, as well as to the livelihoods of community members. Amid Mustafayev is a young farmer from the village of Ibakhly, Gakh region. Born with a back impairment, he refuses to let his disability impede his farming career. Amid was provided with 500 hazelnut bushes to plant in his garden, which proved an ideal location. He expects to collect 5-10 kg of hazelnuts from each bush and to sell them. "I would love to see many opportunities like this given to farmers like me," he said.



## ACTIVITIES

- SFM General Coordinating Committee established, and national SFM criteria and indicators identified, developed and approved.
- Forest Information Centre established.
- NFI manual developed.
- Countrywide data and information collected, analysed, classified and reported.
- Two forest management planning teams, including ten local foresters, formed and trained.
- Government officials, specialists and foresters trained in forest management planning, FMP development, and NFI data collection and methodology.
- Study tours organized to Turkey to train ten local foresters in practical skills in forest management planning and best international practices.
- 103 000 ha improved under SFM practices.
- 1 000 ha of pasture rehabilitated.
- SLM practices replicated on over 900 ha of pasture.
- Income-generating activities demonstrated for ten farmers.
- 3 438 ha of degraded forest rehabilitated.
- 101 ha reforested at project demonstration sites.
- 3 523 ha of deforested land reforested.
- Modernization of nursery unit and seed laboratory conducted and seedlings provided.
- Communication Strategy and Action Plan developed.
- Awareness-raising campaign and activities conducted.
- Collect Earth Assessment Report published in two languages.
- FMPs developed.
- Web page based on MENR Web portal developed.



### Project Code

FAO: GCP/AZE/007/GFF

Donor: 9795

### Project Title

Forest Resources Assessment and Monitoring to Strengthen Forest Knowledge Framework in Azerbaijan

### Contact

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