



**“Fostering Community Forest Policy and Practice in Mountain  
Regions of the Caucasus”**

**Brief information on implemented activities  
(2009 - June 2010)**

## ***General Information***

### **Location(s):**

Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijan Republic, Georgia and the Russian Federation (Republic of North Ossetia/Alania)

**Total duration of the action:** 36 months

### **Partner(s):**

Russian Regional Environmental Centre, the Russian Federation, Moscow

### **Target group(s):**

State authorities at the central/autonomic republic levels (i.e. ministries of environment, agriculture, territorial planning, economic development in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the RF); local authorities/ self-governance; local farmers and communities; local NGOs & CBOs.

### **Final beneficiaries:**

State authorities at the central/ autonomic republic levels; local authorities/ self-governance.

### **Objectives of the action:**

The overall objective of proposed action is fostering community forest policy and practice to address deforestation and climate change issues, secured land tenure and forest rights, rural poverty reduction, diminishing regional and national tensions and the risks of insurrections let by alienated elements, conservation and sustainable development needs of local communities.

Specific objective is respond to current demands of the 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.

## **Implemented activities according to the Project Action Plan**

### **1.7.1.1. Selection of pilot communities**

In August 2009 the REC Caucasus ABO relevant letters sent to the ministry of nature protection of RA, “Hayantar” SNCO of the ministry of agriculture of RA and Tavush regional governor for the selection of pilot communities.

RECC ABO together with the representatives from the Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and “Hayantar” SNCO on the basis of regional criteria jointly have elaborated approaches (national criteria) for the selection of pilot communities in Armenia.

The national criteria for the selection of communities in Armenia are the following:

- The presence of former “kolkhoz-sovkhoz” forests
- Environmental and socio-economic high importance of forests adjacent to communities.
- The experience of successful projects with similar tasks. The interest of population (knowledge of forest problems and issues, experience of participation in community forestry projects).
- The presence of NGOs and community organizations. Communities' experience with international organizations.
- The potential for development of small businesses (crafts, environmentally clearly agricultural products)
- Availability of resources for the development of eco and agro tourism and recreation
- The presence of historical and architectural monuments, ethno-cultural traditions and originality of biodiversity.

In response to the letters based on national criteria, the proposal received in September concerning including communities Djujevan and Koghb of Tavush region in "Fostering Community Forest Policy and Practice in Mountain Regions of the Caucasus” project as pilot communities.

Proposals based on the need that during 2002-2007 in Tavush region in the frame of “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction” project implemented community forest management activities such as reforestation draft of former kolkhoz-sovkhoz forests based on the administrative borders of the communities, implemented reforestation activities on 7,2 ha area of Koghb community and on 1,0 ha area of Djujevan community. By the project financial

support “Mshkavank” LLS in Koghb community and “Djujevan Forestry” LLS were established.

Giving importance to the continuation of those activities REC Caucasus ABO selected Koghb and Djujevan communities of Tavush region as pilot communities for the project.

#### **1.7.1.2: Elaboration of TORs**

In August 2009 ToR’s of national experts have been developed by the REC Caucasus ABO according to the project Action Plan.

#### **1.7.1.3: Selection and recruitment of staff**

On the basis of ToR’s announcements for the positions of the national team experts were given interviews were organized and selection of the experts was conducted.

The following experts were selected within the project:

- Expert of Legal Aspects of the Community Forests Management
- Expert on Community Forest Management Pilot Plans Development
- Expert on Program Implementation of Raising Awareness
- Expert on Restoration of Forest Landscapes
- Expert on Natural Resources Management and Land use Planning
- Expert/ Facilitator on Mobilizing Communities/ Meetings within Awareness Raising Program
- Communication expert
- Project Team Assistant
- Translator/ Editor

#### **1.7.3: Legal analysis**

According to the project AWP 1.7.3.1 point analysis were done of RA Forest Code; the decision of RA Government, nominated on May 4, 2006, N 583 "Transfer of state forests in the authorized management to community-based organizations without tender to community forest management arrangements; RA Forest National Policy and Strategy; RA Forest National Project; RA Structural Reforms Project in forest sphere; Action Plan of supporting to the Solution of illegal logging issues; RA legislation on Community Forest Management; RA Land Code; RA law on self governments; RA Governmental decision N 806-N, May 24, 2007 on “Definition of the Order on Provision of State Forests and Forest Lands for Use”; Instruction on development of forest management plans approved by the Minister of

Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia in August 10, 2005, N 130 and the list of forest-related legislation acts. In the frame of project also were analyzed a number of legislation gaps of forest sphere, such as the absence of pivotal concerns and legislation basic principles of community forest management, the absence of clauses on the elaboration of community forest management plans in the instruction of development of forest management plans and etc.

#### **1.7.2.4 Public relations component**

##### **FSFP project workshop**

FSFP project workshop took place in November 17, 2009. EU ambassador Raul De LUZENBERGER participated at the meeting, who greeted the project and valued the importance of project implementation by regional level.

EU delegation, REC Caucasus Armenian branch office director, FSFP project expert's team, representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Nature Protection, the representatives international (World bank, UNDP, FAO) and NGO (Armenian tree planting, Sustainable development, Eco sustainability) organizations, representatives from the Institute of Botany of National Academy of Sciences, Community leaders of Koghb and Jujevan communities and other participants were participated at the meeting.

FSFP project main objectives, activities and expected results were presented during the meeting and the current situation of Armenian forests was discussed, suggestions and recommendations were presented related to reforestation plans. The community representatives expressed willingness to support to the project implementation.

There is a video on project workshop.

##### **Field visits within the program**

During 2009-2010 a number of field visits were implemented by the project experts. During field visits meetings organized with community leaders and their staff, community population, community based organizations (“Jujevan forest economy” LLC and “Mshavanq” LLC).

During field visits the project overall objectives were presented, clarified the possibilities and needs of community forest management, detailed studies were done and clarified community forest management pilot areas as well as the nature and volume of reforestation activities.

Analysis were elaborated which will enable communities to identify local population's approaches to preservation, restoration and management of community forests, as well as a number of activities that will increase effectiveness of forest use.

In order to disseminate information and to raise awareness in two pilot communities the following activities were implemented:

- Collection of preliminary information on the social and economic situation of the communities,
- Current study of 4-year state “Community development strategy project”
- Meetings with community leaders and their staff for presentation of project main objectives.
- Meetings with community population and CBOs on the needs and possibilities of community forest management

### **Trainings in “Zikatar” training centre, March 2010**

In March 2010 REC Caucasus ABO in cooperation with the “Forest Research and Experimental Centre” SNCO organized trainings in “Zikatar” training centre for the community population of Koghb and Djujevan communities.

21 participants were participated in the trainings (10 participants from Djujevan community and 11 participants from Koghb community).

FCFP project expert’s team, community leaders of Koghb and Djujevan communities, representatives of CBOs (Mshkavanq LLS and “Djujevan Forestry” LLS) participated at the trainings.

The aim of the training was to organize practical trainings and to give preliminary knowledge on community forest management to the participants of Koghb and Djujevan communities which were selected in the result of preliminary studies done in Koghb and Djujevan pilot communities.

The trainings included the issues of forest legislation, biodiversity protection, community forest management and non timber forest usage.

During the trainings presentations on the following topics were made: the protection and main issues of Armenian north-eastern forests; reforestation and afforestation; biodiversity and natural ecosystems; forest protection; the methods of forest protection; forest Code of RA;

artificial forest planting; implementation of care cuttings in the mountainous forests; organization of recreation, ecotourism; the demands of community forest management activities; establishment of forest nursery; forest mechanisms and equipments; the chain-saw safety usage; sustainable management, improvement and restoration of postures and meadows; establishment of walnut plantation; forest management activities; caring of young forests; the impact of global climate change on RA; the issues of sustainable forest management;

the protection of forest biodiversity; environmental high value forests; non timber forest usage; the role and importance of side forest usage on community forest management and general information on GIS system.

### **Meeting of international and national experts in REC Caucasus ABO, June, 2010**

On June, 2010 in REC Caucasus ABO organized a meeting with project national experts and international expert Maik Garforth.

REC Caucasus ABO director, “Hayantar” SNCO chief forester, FCFPP project team leader, project national experts and project international expert participated at the meeting.

The aim of the meeting was to introduce the project international expert to the project national experts team and to exchange practice on community forest management.

During the meeting the project national expert’s team presented to international expert the current situation of Armenian forests, the Armenian legislation on community forest management, discussed a number of issues on the improvement of RA Forest Code and RA forest legislation, suggestions were made on the project approaches of community forest management, on the establishment of CBOs, on the reviewing of forest management instruction, on the translation of RA forest legislation. During the meeting also were exchanged opinions on the community forest management National Guideline.

### **Establishment of project Steering Committee**

In May 2010 the list of project Steering Committee members was formulated. Representatives from the MoA, MNP, MTA, MUD and representatives from the international organization (UNDP) and NGO representative (Armenian Tree Project) were selected in the list of Steering Committee members.

#### **1.7.4.3. Development of pilot community forest management plans**

The community forest management plans of former kolkhoz-sovkhoz forests based on the administrative borders of Koghb and Djujevan communities, envisaged activities and their forest inventory descriptions and geographical materials were studied within the project “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction” during 2007-2008.

In Koghb and Djujevan communities were also studied the current situation, usage issues and existing cadastre dates of arable lands, pastures, meadows, forest landscapes and degraded community areas.

A reforestation draft was elaborated for the Koghb and Djujevan communities, which includes the reforestation areas, species, values and time table of implemented activities, as also the package of estimated budget for the implementation of activities.