



Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus

www.ecfcaucasus.org

Announcing the Final Meeting of Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus Regional Consultative Forum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tbilisi, Georgia – **Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus** is announcing their **Final meeting of the Regional Consultative Forum** in **Tbilisi at the Hotel Moxy on November 26, 2019** marking the final formal gathering of the programme.

Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus (ECF) is proud to bring together representatives from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), KfW German Development Bank and WWF Caucasus as well as governmental delegate from Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The meeting will provide an **overview of the ECF's actions** that have led to nineteen conservation agreements between WWF and local communities in the three countries of the South Caucasus, securing community-based conservation on 75.000 hectares of landscapes. The results of recently completed programme evaluation will also be shared.

Presentations will be followed by a **facilitated panel discussion** involving representatives of participating local communities and independent experts. The discussion will focus on the lessons learned through the programme related to opportunities for community conservation of biodiversity and opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development of rural communities of Caucasus based on nature conservation and sustainable use of resources.

The meeting will close with statements on the **future outlook** of the ECF programme, finalizing the start-up phase of the programme, and marking the commencement of the implementation phase.

ECF is a funding instrument supporting community-based biodiversity conservation in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Eco-corridors connect various classifications of parks, protected areas and community-managed landscapes across the three countries. ECF uses simple steps and processes to engage communities in nature conservation, leading to contractual nature conservation agreements that provide funding for ecologically sustainable land use in specific regions and selected communities. The result is an interconnected mosaic of managed and unmanaged habitats under various land categories and classifications. **These community-managed landscapes protect, connect and support healthy native ecosystems while ensuring the socio-economic status of the communities is not diminish, and in many cases is improved.**



The project is based on two parallel and interlinked processes: scientific identification then prioritization of critical eco-corridors and target species; and community-based approaches which develop trust, awareness, ownership and motivation for sustainable livelihood activities and long-term commitment for protection of these prioritized areas through conservation agreements implemented over a period of 10 years.

"First, the eco-corridors are important for migration of species and the connection of protected areas. Second, the social conditions of people are important. In the project it was very visible how it supports the environmental factors as well as the socio-economic situation. The local people are the main beneficiaries." - **Juri Nosadze, MEPA, Georgia**

"Overall ECF is one of the successful projects for WWF. It is new, innovative and the involvement of local people in nature protection is a key factor." - **Karen Manvelyan WWF, Armenia**

"(The) best achievement of the project is the involvement of the communities into the conservation measures; the land users and resource users have in many cases a negative impact and now this project is turning the communities into collaborators and sometimes friends." - **Hikmet Alizade Ministry of Environment, Azerbaijan**

More details at www.ecfcaucasus.org in the Evaluation of ECF Start-up Phase report.

For general inquiries: info@ecfcaucasus.org

ECF Georgia
+995 32 2 23 75 00
11 Aleksidze St.
0193 Tbilisi, Georgia

ECF Armenia
+374 10 54 61 56
11/1 Proshyan St.
0019 Yerevan, Armenia

ECF Azerbaijan
+994 12 440 35 64
5 Vagif Ave.
Baku, Azerbaijan

rusudan.chochua@gopa.de
mrobitashvili@wwfcaucasus.org

armen.shahbazyan@gopa.de
hhakobyan@wwfcaucasus.org

malak.shukurova@gopa.de
fhatamov@wwfcaucasus.org

The programme is implemented by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Caucasus Programme Office with funds provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank and by WWF Germany. The consortium of GOPA Consultants, DFS and HessenForst are providing consulting services for implementation.
