

TEN  
YEARS  
OF  
EXPERIENCE



THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE FOR THE CAUCASUS

# TEEN YEARS of EXPERIENCE



REC CAUCASUS

## The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) is an independent, non-for-profit organisation, established to assist in solving environmental problems as well as development of the civic society in the countries of the South Caucasus.

### Mission

The mission of the REC Caucasus is determined as “to assist in solving environmental problems in the Caucasus region through the promotion of co-operation at national and regional level among NGOs, governments, business, local communities, and all other environmental stakeholders, in order to develop a free exchange of information, in line with the principles of the Aarhus Convention; offer assistance to all environmental NGOs and other stakeholders; and increase public participation in the decision-making process, thereby assisting the states of the Caucasus in the further development of a democratic civil society”.

### Founders

RREC Caucasus has been established within the framework of the “Environment for Europe Process” based on the decision made at the Sofia Ministerial Conference in 1995. The founding document of REC Caucasus – its Charter – was signed in September 1999 by the governments of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and the European Union. In March 2000 REC Caucasus was officially registered as an independent, not-for-profit, non-advocacy foundation in Tbilisi, Georgia.

### Structure

Headquarters of REC Caucasus are located in Tbilisi, Georgia. The organisation has also branch offices in Yerevan, Armenia and Baku, Azerbaijan. REC Caucasus is managed by the Executive Body – a collegial Troika consisting of representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. REC Caucasus is directed by the Board of Directors comprising representatives from the governments of the three founding states, representatives of NGOs from all three states, a donor representative and a science/ business representative.

### Donors

**The work of REC Caucasus is being supported by:**

European Commission (EC), Government of Germany, Government of the Netherlands, Government of Norway, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Eurasian Partnership Foundation, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Principality of Liechtenstein and others.



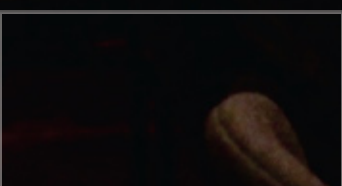
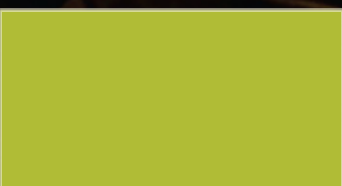
REC CAUCASUS

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus



Ministerie van Volkshuizing,  
Ruimtelijke Ordening en  
Milieubeheer

# TOWARDS GREEN ECONOMY



The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

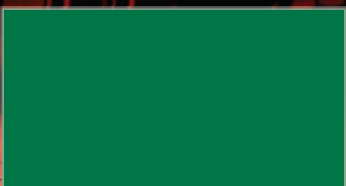
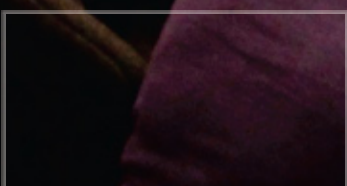
The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus



## Overall Goals

### REC Caucasus has been established:

- to serve environmental stakeholders within and outside the South Caucasus region: national and local governments, NGOs, media, business, local communities, science, international community, teachers, students, children, etc;
- to contribute to the improvement of the Caucasus environment by facilitating introduction and implementation of global, European, regional and national environmental policies;
- to provide a gateway for dialogue, networking and cooperation among environmental stakeholders and partners at global, regional, national and local levels;

## Stakeholders

The REC Caucasus serves the following stakeholders in the three countries of the South Caucasus region:

- National and Local Governments
- NGOs
- Media
- Teachers
- Students
- Business
- Science
- Community Based Organisations, as well as
- International Community.

### REC Caucasus at work: serving as a “bridge”

REC Caucasus successfully implements its mission through various programmes and projects throughout the Caucasus region. One of the tasks of REC Caucasus is to serve as a “bridge” between the public and governments. REC Caucasus assists its stakeholders in capacity building through provision of information, advice, and expertise

and to encourage dialogue, cooperation and public participation in environmental decision-making. REC Caucasus plays an active role in inter-agency cooperation, too. The organisation together with active environmental NGOs and the ministries of environment promotes the idea of environmental protection and sustainable development in the South Caucasus countries, demonstrating examples and arguments of direct links between environmental degradation/ destruction and the growth of poverty, migration, and economic recession.





## REC Caucasus at work: Improving the environment

Since its establishment the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus has implemented about 60 medium and large scale projects in the region which have contributed to policy development, capacity building, facilitation of dialogue and networking, information exchange on environmental issues and supporting the civil society in the South Caucasus states. Capacity building and training of various environmental stakeholders at regional, national and local levels have been provided throughout project implementation. REC Caucasus has strong experience in providing trainings to different interest groups and deep insight regarding their needs, demands and constraints.

REC Caucasus is well positioned in the South Caucasus region to assist various national and international organizations in implementing their activities targeted at the needs of the region, countries and specific stakeholders.

REC Caucasus has strong capacity to address environmental issues related to Rio Conventions and other international covenants simultaneously at national and regional levels. REC Caucasus has been addressing environmental challenges in the region through implementation of local and regional initiatives and projects based on a regional approach. RECC strengthens capacity regarding preservation of biodiversity, climate change (mitigation and adaptation), management of transboundary water resources, sustainable management of natural resources, fighting land degradation, disaster risk reduction, sustainable forest management, capacity development and research learning.

REC Caucasus has proven to be a viable and independent partner providing services to governments, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, businesses, international organisations and other environmental stakeholders.

### — FOCAL AREAS

- Biodiversity and forests
- Water
- Land
- Disaster risk reduction
- Green Economy
- Climate Change mitigation and adaptation
- Waste governance
- Cleaner production

### — REC CAUCASUS SERVICES

- Advising
- Expert backstopping
- International events
- Capacity Building
- Confidence Building
- Consulting



## **REC Caucasus engagement in international processes**

### **Environment for Europe and Cooperation with OECD Environmental Action Plan Task Force (EAP TF)**

Since the beginning of 2010 RECC is actively involved in the meetings of the Committee on Environmental Policy of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Most recently, the Seventh Pan-European Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in Astana in 2011 was in the focus. Based on negotiations with the European Environmental Agency (EEA) on the elaboration of a pan-European assessment on environment, RECC in partnership with other RECs and EEA, was involved in elaboration of the "Assessment of Assessment Report". RECC has finalized the regional Assessments on Water Eco-system and Green Economy. The reports are available on RECC web site, [www.rec-caucasus.org](http://www.rec-caucasus.org).

RECC has also participated at OECD EAP TF Bureau meetings. With Reference to Belgrade decisions during its annual meeting the EAP Task Force endorsed the proposed draft Consolidated Programme of Work and Budget of the EAP Task Force for 2008 that was jointly prepared by the OECD/EAP Task Force secretariat and EECCA RECs. At the same time, RECC along with other EECCA RECs and OECD, works on the post-Astana mandate and strategy of the EAP Task Force. The major inputs of EECCA RECs to the EAP Task Force will be as follows:

- Integration of the concept of Green Growth into economic development of EECCA (sub-regional approach)
- EAP Task Force input to Rio+20.

### **Environment and Security Initiative**

In light of the current political situation after the August events and taking into consideration that OSCE stopped its operations in Georgia, the potential role of REC Caucasus in coordinating certain activities/projects under the umbrella of the EnvSec has been discussed with major partners of the process, as well as with the Chairman



of the ENVSEC Board at the regional meeting conducted in Tbilisi in March 2009. The willingness to involve REC Caucasus in the process has been officially stated by the governmental representatives as well.

### **EU Eastern Partnership Initiative and the Civil Society Forum**

RECC participates in the Civil Society Forum (CSF) under the EU Eastern Partnership and is a permanent member of the third platform under the Eastern Partnership CSF on Energy and Environment. RECC has been participating in EC call under the Eastern Partnership Flagship projects; "ENPI – programme for the prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters" and in the Framework Agreement for promotion of Shared Environmental Information System.

RECC will coordinate the national energy security and environmental panel on the regional level. For this, several consultations and meetings with national SCOs have been conducted. In future years, RECC will have to strengthen the role of the regional coordinator of the Eastern Partnership Initiative.





### **Council of Europe**

RECC initiated its involvement in Council of Europe activities, particularly in the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT). Status of observer for the RECC has been negotiated with CoE. RECC sent an official letter for getting the status of observer in CEMAT which was submitted to the Head of the Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division. During the next CEMAT session the Committee of Senior Officials will discuss the possibility for RECC to be granted the status of observer.

### **International Network of Basin Management Organisations**

REC Caucasus has become a member of EECCA Network of basin management organisations as part of the International Network of Basin Management Organisation's family. Director of the International Office for Water (France) which served as a REC' sub-contractor under "Creation of Enabling Environment for Integrated Management of the Kura-Aras Transboundary Rivers Basin" project, bears the role of executive secretary for International Network of Basin Management Organisations. RECC, being a member of INBO, is taking active

participation in its annual conferences, and will organize preparatory regional meeting on World Water Forum 6 in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 14-15 November, 2011.

### **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change**

RECC is actively participating in different negotiations and CSO meetings within the UNFCCC. This engagement provides opportunities to get involved into different climate change related activities and projects. One of such initiatives was elaboration of the South Caucasus climate change and Gender strategy together with IUCN USA office.

RECC is organizing Regional VII Annual International Conference of REC Caucasus titled "Climate Change Adaptation – Challenge and Opportunity for the Caucasus" in November 2011,. The main focus of the conference is a regional approach and priorities of CC adaptation and mitigation in the South Caucasus countries. The conference, provides a forum for all interested parties for comprehensive discussion of climate change problems taking into account natural and anthropogenic factors, environmental, economic and social impacts in the region.

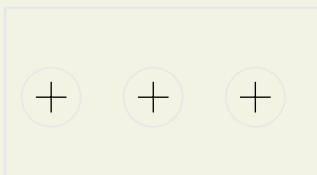
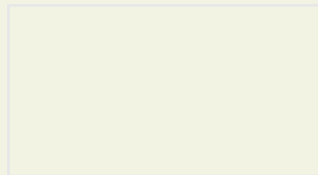
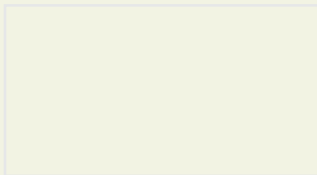
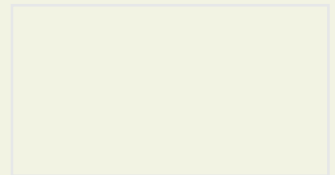
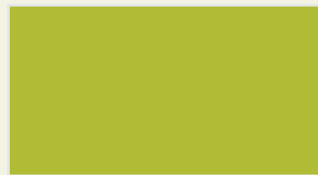
### **World Water Forum 6.**

RECC has been invited to the first regional consultations meeting in December 2010 by the International Office for Water, which is the regional coordinator for organizing the World Water Forum 6 to be held in 2012 in France. RECC has been nominated as a member of the European Regional Steering Committee. RECC have organized regional conference for the preparation to the WWF6. It will be for the first time that RECC participates in the preparation of the World Water Forum, which will gives an opportunity to be involved into the international water policy-making processes and as well to deliver messages on regional level.

### **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Reconstruction Conference**

RECC has participated in the Third Session of the Global

Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Reconstruction Conference in Geneva (May 2011) as part of the official government delegation. REC presented the outcomes of the “Views from Frontline” project piloting community disaster risk reduction in the regions. Subsequent outcome reports and recommendations on implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action were presented in different side events and plenaries, as well as to UNISDR and Global Network for Disaster Reduction. “Views from Frontline” Study has been published and presented during the “Development of DRR System in Armenia” Conference (October 2011) and “Communication workshop on developing common approach to the regional communication strategy” within EU funded project PPRD East in November, 2011, in Tbilisi.



## ***REC Caucasus for Governments***

### ***Creation of Enabling Environment for Integrated Management of the Kura-Aras Transboundary Rivers Basin***

The overall goal of the project is the creation of an enabling environment for integrated management of the Kura-Aras transboundary rivers basin. The project focuses on the elaboration of a Road Map on sustainable management of the Kura-Aras river basin through introduction of the EU Water Directives as outlined in the National Action Plans of European Neighbourhood Policy, and, also, adoption of the National Road Maps by the participating countries. Furthermore, it supports the establishment of the Regional Coordination Body, which will - based on the Road Map - assess the progress made for sustainable management of the Kura-Aras river basin in light of introduction of EU Water Directives.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Donor: European Commission

### ***Identification and implementation of adaptation response to Climate Change impact for Conservation and Sustainable use of agro-biodiversity in arid and semi-arid ecosystems of South Caucasus***

The overall objective of the project is to build adaptive capacities in the South Caucasus countries to ensure resilience of agro-biodiversity of particularly vulnerable arid and semi-arid ecosystems and local livelihoods to climate change. The project supports promotion of agro-biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change through introduction of a supportive policy framework at national and local level. Furthermore, it improves institutional and individual capacity for sustaining agro-biodiversity in arid and semi-arid ecosystems and increasing livelihood level in face of climate change. In addition, it supports the development and implementation of coping mechanisms to improve resilience of local communities to future climate change through the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices in selected regions.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Donors: European Commission, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

### ***Promoting Replication of Good Practices in Nutrient Reduction and Joint Collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe***

The project aims to consolidate and critically review, respectively assess the achievements and experience gained in nutrient reduction and multi-country cooperation of GEF's action in the CEE and EECCA regions (Black Sea - Danube, Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea). Furthermore, it documents good practices and provides recommendations for their replication and scaling up.

Project scope: multi country

Donor: Global Environment Facility (GEF)

### *Establishing a structured approach towards training of environmental inspectors in Armenia and Azerbaijan*

The main aim of the project is to introduce a structured approach towards trainings for the employees of the State Environmental Inspectorate (SEI) of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and also to establish a mechanism of information exchange that will help SEI employees to continuously learn about new developments. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, similarly to many other countries of EECCA, the development of individual capacities of the employees faces a number of problems that hinder the successful full-scale performance of the SEI. The main problems linked with capacity building of inspectors in Armenia and Azerbaijan are lack of professional training opportunities for SEI specialists, inconsistency of the knowledge flow, lack of holistic approach to SEI specialist skills development, limited access to up-to-date materials, lack of cross-country experience exchange.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan

Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

### *Waste Governance – ENPI East*

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Eastern Regional Programme Strategy Paper for the period 2007 – 2013, sets out the scope for the agreed Action Programme in which ‘environment’ and ‘waste management’ have been identified as key areas for cooperation. As stated in the Strategy Paper and confirmed in the course of the project formulation mission, “lack of proper waste management practices and infrastructure is a serious concern throughout the region. Prevention, collection, treatment, recovery and final disposal need to be stepped up”. It follows that actions are required at both the national and the regional scales. The overall objective of the project is to reduce the risks arising from inappropriate management of wastes, that create environmental pollution hazards to communities and to natural resources., through cooperation among, partner states in the region.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

Donor: European Commission

### *Administrative Monetary Penalties and Environmental Liability in EECCA*

The concept of environmental liability in EECCA countries usually applies to damage to water resources, land, and habitats and species and does not cover “traditional damage” (economic loss, personal injury and property damage). The main aim of the project is to assist EECCA countries in streamlining the design and implementation of current environmental liability. The project will develop recommendations on improving the system of assessing environmental damage and support its promotion as an instrument of environmental policy in EECCA.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

Donor: Government of the Netherlands

*Transboundary Joint Secretariat for protection of conservation of biodiversity and management and enlargement of specially protected areas*

The Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS) for the South Caucasus has been established in 2007 on the initiative of the Government of Germany to implement the BMZ/ KfW Ecoregional Nature Protection Programme (ENP) for the Southern Caucasus. The ENP is a part of the Caucasus Initiative, launched by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The ENP aims to develop a coherent strategy to ensure biodiversity conservation of the Caucasus Ecoregion in the long term and to harmonize the resource protection objectives and instruments through cross-border cooperation (Armenia-Georgia, Azerbaijan-Georgia) among the respective national environmental actors.  
Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Donor: Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)

*Caucasus convention for sustainable development*

The overall objective of the project is to reach a general agreement between the governments of the Caucasus countries to develop a convention for Sustainable Development. The project supports the preparation of the content of the convention, provides an analysis of the legal, environmental and political status quo in the participating countries and supports development of a strategy for the further support of the Convention process. Furthermore, a feasibility study for the development of a legal instrument for the protection of mountains of the Caucasus is conducted.

Donor: European Commission



## **REC Caucasus for Local Communities**

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

The overall objective of the project is to foster community forest policy and practice in mountain regions of the Caucasus to address deforestation and climate change issues, secured land tenure and forest rights, rural poverty reduction, diminishing regional and national tensions, conservation and sustainable development needs of local communities.

The project focuses on the development of new institutional, legal and technical set-up for community forest management and in particular supports securing land tenure and forest rights of local communities, implementation of institutional arrangements and land use policies for forest conservation and sustainable use. In addition, the project supports awareness raising among local communities and local authorities on sustainable forest management, its relation and impact on other fields such as climate change, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation

Donor: European Commission

---

### *Replicating Local Environmental Action Plans Experience to Three New Communities in the South Caucasus*

The project aims at improving local decision making on air quality as well as other environmental questions and strengthening regional cooperation between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to solve environmental problems. It supports decision-makers in local and regional governments, industries, and NGOs to rank environmental protection needs, develop plans of action to address priority problems, and implement, cost-effective actions that reduce pollution and save consumers and industries money. It will also strengthen regional cooperation between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in finding common solutions for environmental problems. The Project contributed to increasing awareness about best practices for local air quality governance decision-making and to building local government capacity in development of environmental democracy and public participation.

Donors: The Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM)

---

### *Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation and Reducing Poverty in the South Caucasus Region*

The overall objective of the Project is to ensure continued ecosystem functions and integrity, reduce poverty and enhance food security and income for rural farmers by combating desertification, strengthening the natural resource base and revitalizing the agricultural sector. The project strengthens policy, planning and regulatory environments for promotion of sustainable land management (SLM) in transboundary watersheds of the South Caucasus region. Furthermore, it demonstrates benefits of watershed based sustainable land management and alternative livelihood for rural people while

protecting fragile ecosystems and demonstrating lessons learned and best practices through developing a replication strategy.

Donor: European Commission

### *Introducing sustainable use of natural resources practices in local communities and strengthening their resilience towards natural disasters*

The main aim of the project is to increase the capacity of local communities of high-mountainous villages of Racha-Lechkhumi region in disaster risk prevention through training on the bioengineering methods for protection of territories heavily affected by natural disasters. The project provides training to local communities in Georgia in effective use of local land resources in villages of Racha-Lechkhumi region: Ghebi, Glola and Tchiori. Furthermore, it supports in the selection and demonstration of best methods of re-habilitation of forests and pastures, damaged by natural disaster, with the participation of the local population.

Project scope: Georgia

Donor: Eurasia Foundation

### *Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus - Local Agenda 21*

The project's main objective was to elaborate a Local Agenda 21 for the Caucasus Region; despite its local orientation, the project created a practical base at the local level for the second phase of the elaboration of the Caucasus Convention. The project contributed to improving the environmental situation by improving environment management mechanisms as well as strengthening regional cooperation between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to solve common environmental issues.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation.

Donor: Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Land Use Planning, Agriculture and Forestry of Principality of Liechtenstein.



## REC Caucasus for Local Business

### *Promotion of Cleaner Production and Energy efficiency technology through development of business planning practices for Cleaner Production and Energy efficiency projects*

The overall objective of this project is to contribute to sustainable development and minimise negative environmental impacts from the industrial sector by stimulating small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). The objective will be reached via increase of SME's capability in the preparation of financial documentation for CP and EE projects. The increased possibility for getting the financial resources from local and international financial institutions, will improve SME's operation capabilities to become more economically efficient, and at the same time becoming more environmentally friendly and reducing demand for scarce resources.

Project scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Donor: Government of the Netherlands



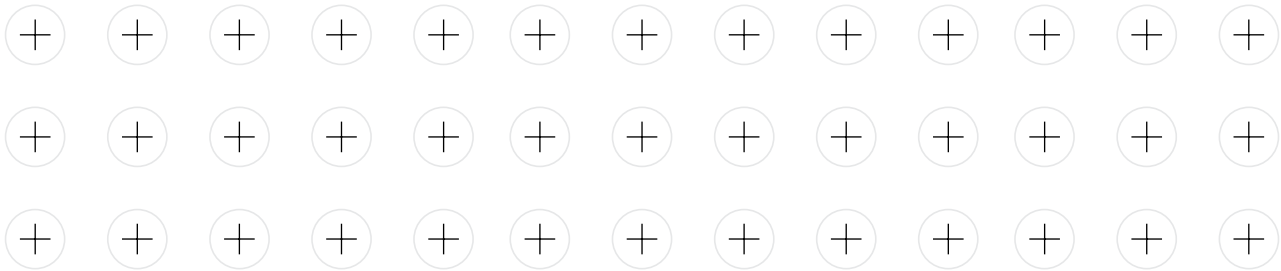
REC



## REC Caucasus for NGOs

### Electronic News

Within the framework of the Electronic News REC Caucasus offers all stakeholders an opportunity to disseminate information about their activities, projects, events. The Electronic News aim to on the one hand disseminate information about REC Caucasus activities and on the other hand to assist in strengthening capacities of regional target groups through providing access to information on available financial, informational, technical support. The Electronic News comprise news from RECC Headquarters, Branch and Project Offices as well as news from RECC grantees and partners. Furthermore, it publishes grants calls for NGOs, science, local governments, announces seminars for the above stakeholder groups and links to interesting events. Electronic News also provides information about a specific convention/ agreement implementation status in the three countries, projects run, progress made, state policy and relevance of national legislation.



### THEMATIC PUBLICATIONS

1. Guideline for Local Environmental Action Programmes in the Caucasus
2. Regional Guideline for Community Forest Management
3. Fuel Quality and Vehicle Emission standards Overview for the Azerbaijan Republic, Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Russian Federation
4. Evaluation of Local Environmental Action Programmes in the South Caucasus
5. Cleaner Production in practice





REC CAUCASUS

# TEN YEARS of EXPERIENCE



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### REC CAUCASUS HEAD OFFICE IN TBILISI, GEORGIA

23, Chavchavadze Ave., 2nd floor

0179 Tbilisi, Georgia

Tel: +995 32 2253649 / +995 32 2253648

Fax: +995 32 2916352

E-Mail: [info@rec-caucasus.org](mailto:info@rec-caucasus.org)

### COUNTRY OFFICE IN YEREVAN, ARMENIA

1, Charents Street; 2nd floor

375025 Yerevan, Armenia

Tel/Fax: +374 10 574743

### COUNTRY OFFICE IN AZERBAIJAN, BAKU

100a, B. Agayev Street

1073 Baku, Azerbaijan

Tel: + 994 12 4924173



2011

THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE FOR THE CAUCASUS