



“Three Alazani Rivers” Biosphere Reserve establishment in the climate-vulnerable region of Kakheti in Eastern Georgia – working towards the nomination

Biosphere Reserves (within the framework of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program, MaB) support a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable regional development. Biosphere Reserves (BR) serve as a promising tool to encounter climate change through developing and testing climate protection and adaptation measures, thus strengthening the resilience of climate vulnerable regions.

So far, there is no biosphere reserve in Georgia. However, the rich natural and cultural heritage as well as preserved traditional land use forms provide a good base for the establishment of Biosphere Reserves. Within the framework of the project "Study on the potential and feasibility of the expulsion of Biosphere Reserves in Georgia", Eastern Georgian climate vulnerable province Kakheti was selected by a national working group for a feasibility study on the development of a BR. Kakheti contains several protected areas and is most relevant for the still existing nomadic pastoralism with sheep. A biosphere reserve could help to maintain and reconcile both.

The feasibility study has identified numerous positive preconditions for a BR establishment in Kakheti. Some UNESCO criteria are already fulfilled. Together with regional and national stakeholders and decision-makers, scenarios for a Biosphere Reserve development were drafted and discussed. The scenario that envisages the establishment of two Biosphere Reserves, one in Akhmeta and Telavi municipalities (proposed Three Alazani Rivers BR) and another in Dedoplistskaro Municipality (proposed Dedoplistskaro BR) was selected as the long-term objective. This scenario strengthens the connecting corridor covering the (transhumance) sheep migration route and thus can most effectively support the traditional land use of mobile sheep husbandry in Kakheti and help solve various problems connected to it.

Main Facts	
Title	“Three Alazani Rivers” Biosphere Reserve establishment in the climate-vulnerable region of Kakheti in Eastern Georgia – working towards the nomination
Focus/ Topic	Protection of carbon sink capacities of prevalent vegetative forms
Duration	01.12.2018 – 31.03.2021
Implementer	Michael Succow Foundation (MSF)
Country of Implementation	Georgia
Overall Budget	199,999.80 €

With the project "Biosphere Reserves as model regions for climate protection and adaptation - capacity development for the establishment of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve", which was part of the International Climate Initiative, the Michael Succow Foundation implemented the preparatory work for the development of a BR through strengthening capacities of the relevant local actors and development of an implementation plan for the Biosphere Reserve establishment.

The project “Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve establishment in the climate-vulnerable region of Kakheti in

On behalf of:

Eastern Georgia – working towards the nomination” was launched as a follow up project, to continue working on the creation of the Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve in Georgia.

Project Goal

With active involvement of local stakeholders, all necessary foundations are laid for the nomination of a biosphere reserve in to UNESCO by the Georgian government as well as for its operational implementation.

Expected Results

The planned Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve in Kakheti is ready to be nominated to UNESCO by the Georgian government. The respective nomination form is finalised and signed by relevant organisations (municipality, protected areas, government, etc.). Acceptance and awareness for the planned BR among the local, regional and national stakeholders of the planned BR is raised. BR Management structure considering multi-stakeholder participation is developed.

Implemented Activities

In order to achieve the project goal, the following activities were implemented:

- Implementation of a thematic study on land use practices and development of zoning proposals of the planned biosphere reserve in Akhmeta and Telavi municipalities of Kakheti region
- Presentation and discussion of the zoning proposals as well as proposed outer borders of the planned BR to the project working group consisting of members from municipality, local community council “Sabcheo”, protected areas administrations, GIZ and other partners and stakeholders
- Conceptualization of the participatory BR governance structure including draft charter/statute for the future management body of the BR
- Agreement with the working group on the Biosphere Reserve name and development of the draft logo
- Development of the BR management plan concept
- Conduction of several workshops and meetings with relevant stakeholders, as well as local communities for raising awareness and discussing the planned BR concept, zoning and borders
- Development and distribution of an informational triplet on UNESCO MaB concept within the local communities as well as publishing of project news through Michael Succow Foundation, Biosphere Center and RECC web pages
- Awarding MoU with the University of Telavi and planning of a symposium on “Participation of the Local

Population and Stakeholders in the Planning and Management of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Natural Resources in the South Caucasus Region” to be organized in 2021

- Purchasing and transfer of cheese packaging equipment to the local Cheese Producers’ Association as part of the small-scale demonstration measures
- Compilation of the draft UNESCO BR nomination document in collaboration with international and national experts

Next Steps

- Conducting trainings on the sustainable management of the planned BR for local administrations and protected areas (PA) administration representatives, as well as other local stakeholders
- Development of the BR web page
- Conducting trainings for local tourism service providers (as part of the small scale demonstration measures)
- Finalization of the UNESCO BR nomination document and necessary maps and presentation to the partners and stakeholders
- Collecting endorsement letters from all relevant stakeholders to be attached to the nomination document
- Development of the BR electronic data base
- Organizing a Symposium/Summer School in Telavi in cooperation with University of Telavi and other partners

Partner Organizations Involved/Implementing Partners

Implementing Partner:

- Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC)

Other partner institutions:

- Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
- Agency of Protected Areas
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO commission
- Administration of the State Attorney
- Governor of Kakheti region
- Municipalities of Akhmeta and Telavi in Kakheti region
- University of Telavi
- Management of natural resources and safeguarding of ecosystem services for sustainable rural development in the South Caucasus (ECOserve) Commissioned by (BMZ), implemented by GIZ

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Project period:
June 2017 to March 2022