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# Progressing on Biodiversity Protection: EU4Environmenta contribution towards better action in the EaP countries

## Azerbaijan: progress and way forward

Chisinau, Moldova  
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## Country context and integration of EU4Environment into the country's policies

- The National Strategy on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity was developed for 2017-2020 and then further extended
- New National Forestry Program and Action Plan was developed in 2019, covering the period 2020-2030
- The Eco-corridors Programme was implemented in the Southern Caucasus in 2015-2020

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## Country context and integration of EU4Environment into the country's policies

- The Government has prioritized sustainable forest development and committed to restore 170,000 ha of degraded lands, and additional 100,000ha subject to funding under the Bohn Challenge
- In 2022, the MENR of Azerbaijan and the MEPA of Georgia signed Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on research, conservation and management of national parks and protected areas.
- The MENR has developed a collaboration process with civil society through the establishment a Public Council under the MENR.
- In consultation with key stakeholders, country and regional workplans were developed around four areas.

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## Progress/achievements and planned activities in each pillar under Result 4

As of now, the main progress has been under pillar 1 **“Support to protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems (Emerald Network):**

- the Emerald Network Development Guidelines and recommendations for the Emerald Network Roadmap were prepared to facilitate the effective development of the Emerald Network in Azerbaijan by the Government
- Three sites – Hirkan, a recognized UNESCO site, Shirvan representing steppe biogeography, and Zagatala/Ilisu representing highland alpine biogeography - have been prioritized for piloting the preparation and implementation of the Emerald Network Management Plans (ENMP).
- The legal framework has been assessed and recommendations made to assist the Government in harmonizing existing legislation for the effective development of the Emerald Network in Azerbaijan

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- An intersectoral Capacity Building Program has been developed. This program includes various training modules and plans for key biodiversity conservation specialists, academia, local authorities, and community engagement. Subject to agreement with the Government, the commencement of the program is foreseen in May
- At a regional level, consultancy services are sought to enhance the countries' knowledge of the different aspects of the Emerald site management, learn from the best EU practices and promote regional knowledge exchange and collaboration.



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Under **pillar 2 “Promoting sustainable natural resources management, economic development and participation at local community level”**, consultancy services contracted to provide analytical and advisory support on ways to involve local communities in NRM with a view to enhance rural job creation and diversification of economic opportunities

Under **pillar 4 “Enhancing strategic financing to the forest and natural resources management sectors”**, the following activities are planned:

- Baseline assessment of forest and ecosystem services values and recommendations for sustainable financing and investment plans for forests and relevant NRM sectors
- Analytical studies on the role of forests and other ecosystems in meeting climate targets, assessing investment needs, and identifying funding sources for maximizing the potential
- Country-specific analytical reports on ecosystem services related to legal framework for establishing the payments for the ecosystem services
- Workshops to share experiences on forest financing schemes and policies from EU member states

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