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Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus

www.ecfcaucasus.org

Innovative Community-based Conservation Programme in the Caucasus Commences Implementation Phase

The final meeting of the Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus marks the end of the initiation phase and the start of the implementation phase.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tbilisi, Georgia – Eco-Corridors Fund for the Caucasus held a successful and exciting **final meeting in Tbilisi on November 26, 2019** marking the final formal gathering of the programme's initiation phase and the commencement of the implementation phase.

Eco-Corridors Fund (ECF) arranged a comprehensive agenda which included a summary of the project's accomplishments in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, an overview of the unique and innovative methodology and details on how the ECF programme is contributing to the Caucasus Ecoregional Conservation Plan.

The meeting celebrated the success of ECF's actions so far, which have led to 19 conservation agreements being signed in 3 countries, securing community-based conservation on 75.000 hectares of landscapes in the Southern Caucasus.

Throughout the duration of the meeting translations in the four active languages (Georgian, Armenian, Azeri and English) were available via headsets, enabling participants to listen and contribute in their native language. This feature fostered active participation from ECF's community leaders and enabled effortless discussion and communication.

The highlight of the meeting, was the **facilitated panel discussion** where representatives of participating local communities and independent experts discussed the lessons learned through the programme, the barriers to continued conservation activities and sustainable socio-economic development opportunities in rural communities of Caucasus. A final message on the future outlook was provided, encouraging the continued efforts towards the conservation objectives and sustainable use of resources outlined in the signed ECF's conservation agreements.

ECF was please to bring together representatives from participating local communities to converse with representatives from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and



Development (BMZ), German Development Bank (KfW) and WWF Caucasus as well as governmental delegates from Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia.

ECF is dedicated to creating community-managed landscapes which 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 ECF team is excited to support the communities as they carry out the 10-year Conservation Agreements and to share this innovative strategy of biodiversity conservation.

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

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