

Establishment of a Community Conservation Area in the Gomk and Artavan Villages of Armenia

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

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Executive Summary

The "Young Biologists Association" NGO, together with WWF-Armenia and the communities of Gomk and Artavan develop community-based wildlife protection on the territory of the villages, by establishing a community conservation area.

The villages Gomk and Artavan are situated in Vayots Dzor province of Armenia. The territory of the villages is part of the Priority Conservation Corridor defined by multiple stakeholders (convened by WWF) in the Ecoregion Conservation Plan for the Caucasus. It is a habitat for species registered as a threatened in the IUCN Red List and the Red Book of Armenia. There can be found Bezoar Goat, Eurasian Lynx, Brown Bear and there could also be habitat for Armenian Mouflon and Persian Leopard.

This transfer project aimed to create a basic concept for further conservation planning and management of the proposed community conservation area. In the frame of the transfer project we carried out a literature review and research, as well as an evaluation of legal and institutional frameworks on protected areas.

The Jermuk Development Center NGO and administration of the villages provided supported the implementation of the project. The participatory planning of the concept was ensured.

As a result of the project, a basic concept for the development of community conservation in the proposed area and an analytical report regarding policy, legal and institutional frameworks for development of community conservation areas in Armenia were prepared. A long-term perspective and main outcome of the transfer project is to facilitate introduction and delivery of community-based conservation approaches to the communities of Gomk and Artavan.

Participation in the KTF and preparation of this TP provided me with an opportunity to reconsider my understanding of community-based conservation.