

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

March 2009

Developing eco-tourism in the Western Caucasus



Eco-tourism – an important source of income for the local population (picture: V. Kovalev)

Background

In the Caucasus, zones of Arctic tundra in the high mountains and elements of Central Asian deserts meet Euro-Siberian steppes and deciduous forests with many arctotertiary relicts and endemic species. The Caucasus is extremely rich in species – the region is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

Numerous social conflicts in the Caucasus region have, however, led in part to vast degradation of the natural environment. Use conflicts can also be expected to arise in developing areas for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

In 1999, the Western Caucasus region was included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites due to its exceptional natural features. This makes preserving these natural landscapes not only a regional, but also an international task.

Project

The aim of the project is to strengthen the Bolshoy Thach Nature Park by promoting sustainable tourism development. The park is adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage Site and is therefore part of the buffer zone, which will also be strengthened by development of the Nature Park. By fostering democratic decision-making processes, the project is to lead to greater acceptance of this protected area.

The project is divided into three sets of activity:

1. Setting up a development advisory panel with the participation of relevant administrations, mayors and representatives of local environmental organisations; planned activities include technical discussions to promote acceptance, press conferences, and a round table for democratic decision-making;
2. A study visit to nature parks in Germany (training of multipliers) and development of a mission statement for the Bolshoy Thach Nature Park including development objectives;
3. Drawing up a management and development plan for the nature park and implementation of local pilot projects for sustainable tourism.

- Funding: Advisory Assistance Programme of the German Federal Environment Ministry
- Project identification: 380 01 202
- Region: Russian Federation
- Duration: 03/ 2009 – 08/ 2010
- Project management: Umweltbundesamt
- Projekt partner: Grüne Liga e.V.
www.grueneliga.de
- Local project partner: Nature Protection Centre NABU-Kavkaz, Maikop, Russia