

Protection of socio-economic and environmental rights of local communities and individuals in Georgian Black Sea coastal zone

The Black Sea Eco Academy has been involved in a project focusing on the education and capacity building of local communities with respect to public participation in decision making, stakeholder involvement and the improvement of governance.

The main goal of the project was protection of the socio-economic and environmental rights of citizens of coastal regions of Georgia through application of article 35 of the Constitution of Georgia and the UNECE Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.



The project team provided free legal support for communities and citizens affected directly from huge economic projects and programs. The project helped to educate the public in issues related to democratic practices such as responsibility for public participation in the decision-making process, increased local stakeholders' and individual citizen's activism for solution of local social and environmental issues and influencing the local authorities toward better governance.

This project is included in the long-term strategy of the organization. It has been educating the citizens how to conduct public participation processes, how to involve all stakeholders in a dialogue in order to prevent possible conflicts; it has provided recommendations for different projects already under way in the region (Baku-Supsa Oil terminal, Kulevi Oil terminal, Kolkhety National park etc.), as well as advice how to mitigate existing and potential environmental and socio-economic damages for local communities, integrating society needs, traditional knowledge and relevant know how.

The long-term goal of the project was to building of public education and responsibility in order to protect citizens socio-economic and environmental rights, democratic public participation in decision making processes, facilitation of the establishment of good governance models in the region. The recommendations were made available to the project target groups (NGOs, local communities, local governments, project sponsors, officials of the ministries of environment and finance), so that they should be in a position to make and promote the most efficient choices of investments. The project goal has been achieved through, both direct advocacy towards the decision makers responsible for application of legislation requirements, as well as through greater public control over these processes.