



TRANSFORMING RISKS INTO COOPERATION

The Environment and Security Initiative
2003–2013





ENVSEC IN NUMBERS: THE INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

10 Years of ENVSEC

6 ENVSEC partner organisations working in **4** regions through a network of around **40** national focal points and **30** partner countries, and in collaboration with more than **20** international partners and **100** local partners.

4 regional assessments and **3** in-depth assessments of environment and security risks have been followed up by more than **150** projects addressing the identified risks, with a total budget of over **USD 60** million.

The key results include strengthened regional collaboration on the management of **13** transboundary water basins and increased awareness of environment and security issues through **50** Aarhus Centres established and supported by ENVSEC. During the past decade, approximately **170** million people have benefited from the work of ENVSEC.



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FOREWORD


Understanding the mutual dependencies between global risks and the good governance of natural resources and the environment is a prerequisite for sustainable development. There is an ever greater need for forward-looking solutions at regional and global level as competition for natural resources increases due to population growth, economic development and technological change. Global threats such as climate change are not confined within political boundaries or sectoral divides, making it impossible for any country or organisation to address them unilaterally. Instead, multi-lateral action is required to manage common resources and mitigate risks. International environmental cooperation in vulnerable situations can strengthen countries' resilience, mutual confidence and regional stability.

The experience gained over the past decade by the partners in the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) shows that shared environmental risks can be transformed into opportunities for regional and cross-regional cooperation, laying the foundations for sustainable development. Joint monitoring and early warning systems, transboundary environmental protection areas and international river basin agreements are all encouraging examples of progress achieved through cooperation among the countries where ENVSEC operates.

In 2013, the ENVSEC Initiative celebrates its 10th anniversary, and the present publication describes the history, methodology and key results achieved so far through the skills, experience and networks of the ENVSEC partners. It provides examples of success stories from several countries in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus. We believe that this information, along with the summary of lessons learned and best practices, will be beneficial across the globe.

In the future, the ENVSEC partner organisations will continue to strengthen regional dialogue and cooperation on assessing and addressing emerging environment and security risks, including the adverse effects of climate variability and global warming. Combined with natural resource scarcity, climate change may imperil water, food and energy security, thereby compromising countries' ability to achieve development goals. Now, more than ever before, it is important for ENVSEC to continue to build synergies, enhance its close collaboration with partners, and grow as an initiative that is able to offer an innovative approach to common concerns.




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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resolving today's complex environment and security challenges requires a multi-faceted approach. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an associated member, have joined forces in the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) to provide holistic solutions through their complementary expertise and networks.

The mission of ENVSEC is to strengthen national capacities, regional coordination mechanisms and international cooperation for environment and security risk reduction in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and South Eastern Europe. Over the last 10 years, the Initiative has grown from a "joint venture" of three international organisations to an inter-agency partnership of six, currently active in more than 20 countries. ENVSEC regional and sub-regional assessments have resulted in an improved understanding of environmental factors in national and regional stability, and a portfolio of more than 150 projects addressing the identified environment and security risks.

Key environmental security risks in the post-conflict and transition countries of the ENVSEC regions include the pollution and overuse of transboundary waters; radioactive waste and hazardous substances from abandoned mining sites and other sources; water and energy conflicts; as well as deforestation and land degradation caused by illegal logging. Climate change and population pressure can aggravate these problems. Low levels of cooperation and weak governance structures often block common solutions to the challenges, while unresolved political conflicts hinder the development of cooperation on natural resources and the environment.

By promoting the joint management of shared natural resources, ENVSEC projects are an effective means of tackling problems such as water pollution, declining biodiversity, floods and conflicting water needs.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO



FOREST WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT – GROUNDWORK FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

The wildfire management programme emerged from two assessment missions in the South Caucasus: the 2006 OSCE-led environmental assessment mission to fire-affected territories in and around Nagorno-Karabakh; and the 2008 joint OSCE/UNEP environmental assessment mission to Georgia. In politically sensitive areas, wildfires, and the subsequent landslides, mudflows and floods, can become a source of tension between countries. In the South Caucasus, the magnitude of the damage caused by wildfires can largely be attributed to the absence of effective forest fire management policies and institutions.

In order to enhance national capacities, develop wildfire management policies and strategies, and improve regional and international cooperation, ENVSEC organised a number of trainings for practitioners, administrations and local governments. A regional fire management training workshop was held in Antalya, Turkey, in 2010, aimed at the South Caucasus, South Eastern Europe and Russia.

An independent evaluation of the programme, carried out on behalf of the Finnish Government in 2010, commended the project for promoting dialogue and cooperation by bringing together experts and practitioners at national, regional and international conferences and network meetings.

In Georgia, a draft policy paper on fire management was prepared with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders and submitted to the Ministry for Environmental Protection. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, vulnerability studies were carried out with the aim of developing comprehensive national fire management policies.

The first national roundtables on fire management were held in both countries, representing the initial steps towards creating inter-agency dialogue and ensuring the participation of civil society in developing national fire management policies.

The programme will continue to strengthen national capacities in the region, mainly through the finalisation and implementation of national fire management policies. It will also provide opportunities for the countries to participate in major international events on fire management.

OSCE's experience and presence in the region have been important for the successful implementation of the project. Partnering with the Global Fire Monitoring Center, which is connected with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, ENVSEC has benefited from its drive and vast expertise and secured the sustainability of the programme.

"Everything which is not a pure national policy is a lengthy process and may take many years to consolidate [...] we had a good experience with ENVSEC [...] they have recognized that this is not a short-term project but rather the facilitation of a process that will take several years."

Professor Johann G. Goldammer,
The Global Fire Monitoring Center
(GFMC)



Geographical scope: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Donors: Finland, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Budget: USD 330,880

Implementing agency: OSCE

Other partners: Global Fire Monitoring Center

Duration: 2008–2013

Local partners: Ministry of Nature Protection, Armenia; Ministry of Emergency Situations, Armenia; Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan; Ministry of Emergency Situations, Azerbaijan; Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia; Department of Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Georgia

ENVSEC work in the region has helped to strengthen national fire management policies.

PHOTO: JOHANN G. GOLDAMMER

Sharing information and involving members of the public in workshops and public hearings enables the ENVSEC partners to build trust and ensure transparency, and encourages the local ownership of solutions (opposite).

PHOTO: KANYBEK ISABAEV

Promoting the joint management of the transboundary Timok River basin has been one of ENVSEC's key achievements (below).

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO

PLATFORM FOR COORDINATION

ENVSEC has proved able to serve as a platform for boosting coordination among other international actors. This helps to reduce the overlapping and fragmentation of international aid by promoting targeted and demand-driven support. It works, for example, with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Eurasian Economic Community on the uranium tailings project in Central Asia, and with the Global Fire Monitoring Center on fire management in the South Caucasus.

A REGIONAL APPROACH TO CROSS-BORDER CHALLENGES

The ENVSEC approach takes fully into account the transboundary nature of environment and security challenges. Annual regional meetings ensure that interventions are demand driven and build confidence for cooperation. With its field presence, ENVSEC is familiar with specific political and socioeconomic contexts and can adapt its operations to local challenges and opportunities.

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Regional and national consultations are held with a wide range of stakeholders on identification, assessment, project proposals and project design. This targeted work creates credibility, ensures ownership of the processes and solutions offered, and contributes to the sustainability of ENVSEC interventions.





A MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH

Consultations, workshops and capacity-building activities at regional and national level are complemented by the work of the Aarhus Centres, for example, at local level. In addition, the Initiative raises awareness and catalyses action at international level through its network and high-level conferences.

CHAMPION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY

ENVSEC has gained recognition as a trustworthy and credible neutral assessor by consistently applying the principles of transparency, openness towards the needs of the countries, and confidentiality. It has been able to bring countries together to the negotiating table and is thus a tool for conflict prevention and confidence building. With its different entry points, from ministries of environment to ministries of foreign affairs or defence, it is able to adapt to the different contexts and changing political realities in the regions and countries and has been instrumental in the achievement of a number of regional agreements.

MULTI-DONOR TRUST FUND

The ENVSEC Trust Fund is a single channel for receiving and disbursing funds. The fund reduces delays in project implementation and makes ENVSEC operations more transparent and accountable as monitoring, evaluation and reporting are harmonised.

ENVSEC IN THE COMING DECADE

ENVSEC's vision is to be a globally acknowledged effective partnership for dialogue, cooperation and action in addressing environment and security challenges within and across borders.

SHARING THE ENVSEC APPROACH

A decade after its launch, and with a track record of more than 150 projects, ENVSEC has a wealth of experience, expertise and insights to share at a global level. Having a unique methodology and tools for assessing security and environment risks, the Initiative can become a model for replication around the world. It plans to organise workshops and produce a toolkit on assessing and addressing the environmental factors in security issues in order to integrate its best practices into the work of policy makers and development agencies inside and outside the ENVSEC regions. In order to insti-

“ENVSEC can be commended for its operational capabilities in the regions: the Initiative not only carries out concrete activities but also supports dialogue and negotiations to develop trans-boundary agreements (on the basis of international conventions). [...] This approach made it possible to reach a number of regional agreements and has generated much-needed neighbourly cooperation.”

Dr. Martin Ledolter,
Managing Director,
Austrian Development Agency



Protecting transnational ecosystems means bringing countries together for dialogue and cooperation.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO

tionalise information sharing and cooperation between donors, partners, academia and practitioners, the ENVSEC Initiative will continue to organise meetings on a regular basis, which could also be scaled up to a global level.

BROADENING THE PARTNER AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

ENVSEC will continue to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration with initiatives that specialise in peace building, conflict prevention and environmental security from different thematic or geographical perspectives in order to advance understanding of the link between environment and security issues. The ENVSEC Initiative has established the Environment and Security Network, a voluntary alliance of potential and future partners, inter- and non-governmental organisations, development banks, the media, academia, foundations and donors, who will work together towards the common goal of addressing transboundary and interlinked environment and security risks. The network aims to encourage new ideas and fresh analysis, share approaches and experience, explore challenges and evaluate solutions.

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Since ENVSEC's regional assessments were carried out, various economic and political events and developments have taken place in the ENVSEC regions. The re-mapping and updating of the assessments to reflect current realities will therefore be

considered. Incorporating new issues in the maps and discussing them at a high political level will revive the general debate on environment and security issues in the regions and attract attention to newly surfaced hotspots.

ADDRESSING EMERGING ISSUES

Although the links between climate change and security are internationally recognised, there is as yet no common response. Existing climate data must be reinterpreted to support risk management strategies and decision making. A focus of the European Union for the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly was the “promotion of peace and security”, and among its priorities are supporting water and climate diplomacy for conflict prevention and facilitating the enhanced resilience of societies and economies. Through the Instrument for Stability, ENVSEC teamed up with the EU to work on common strategies. ENVSEC will conduct participatory assessments, assist the countries in dialogue and cooperation on regional adaptation strategies, and find suitable governance tools to respond to these emerging issues.

Advancing a strategic work programme in the field of climate, energy and food security, giving emphasis, in particular, to the risk nexus between them, will be a future priority for ENVSEC. The Initiative will develop new project concepts with relevant partners to address the interlinked challenges.

BUILDING COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES

The ENVSEC geographic focus area should be defined depending on the issue at stake. Addressing transnational ecosystems and global risks such as climate change requires a broader geographic focus. In some cases, it will be important to look beyond the boundaries of the ENVSEC regions in order to draw together all the countries that have an impact on a shared water basin.

IDENTIFYING TOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

ENVSEC will make use of modern digital tools, such as advanced satellite imagery. Remote sensing can contribute to the understanding of environmental and security challenges and can facilitate monitoring by providing accurate and comparable data on environmental problems such as chemicals, hazardous waste, land degradation and water quality. Climate change adaptation and effective water management require reliable hydrological and meteorological data, and at present gaps still remain. Mobile technologies, such as social media, can also be used to track environmental change and can assist in the development of indicators or methodologies for analysing impacts on livelihoods, economics and migration.

Overall, ENVSEC will maintain its relevance and continue to offer an innovative approach to addressing environment and security challenges in the coming decade and beyond. The Initiative will continue to build synergies and further strengthen its close collaboration and coordination with current and future partners.

“On the way towards preventing environmental and security risks, which is our common responsibility, the ENVSEC Initiative is always ready to offer its reliable helping hand to the countries bearing in mind their features and considering their needs.”

Khatuna Gogaladze, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia



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This publication has been prepared with support and input from former and current members of the ENVSEC Management Board, and the six ENVSEC partner organisations.

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