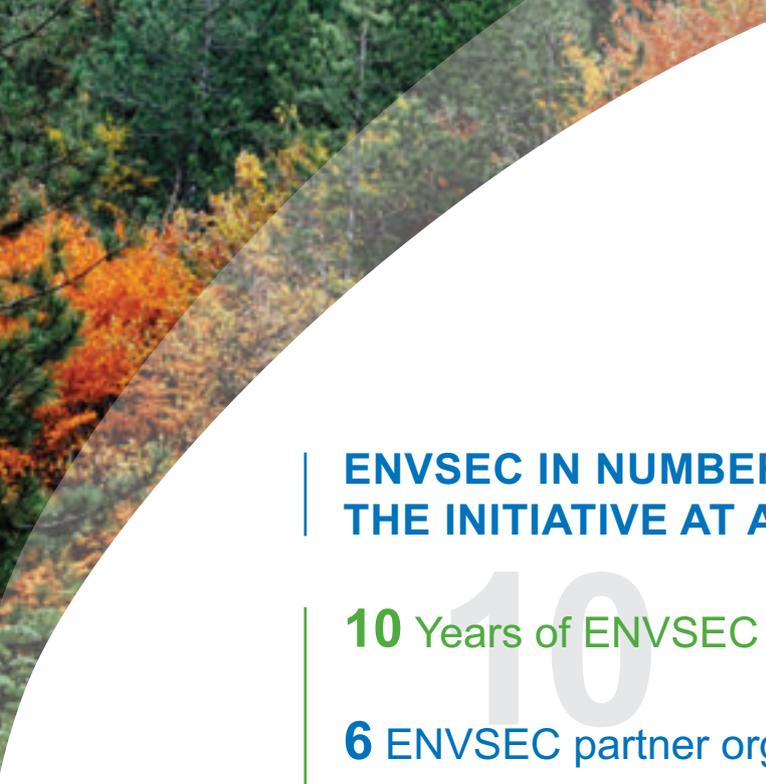




TRANSFORMING RISKS INTO COOPERATION

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.



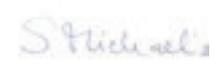

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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





Industrial activities put pressure on the environment in all four ENVSEC regions.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO

"It is important to mention a peculiar platform, the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), which brings together six global and regional partners [...] to fight against environmental threats to reduce the risk of conflict. Interagency coordination is well known to be an arduous exercise, but this one has been more successful than others."

J.M. Church, "International Cooperation of Turkmenistan in the Water Sector", 2012

The Initiative has responded to these challenges via both technical and political actions, from in-depth vulnerability assessments to capacity building and institution strengthening. ENVSEC encourages coordination and negotiations between countries and supports pilot interventions at country and regional level. It enhances civil society engagement and promotes information sharing and local participation through Aarhus Centres.

Success stories over the past 10 years include a joint declaration and regional action plan on radioactive waste management; transboundary agreements and modern water treaties; improved policies and legislation on challenges such as illegal logging and dam failure; improved flood and fire monitoring and early warning systems; as well as pilot remediation projects that provide solutions and catalyse follow-up projects. In South Eastern Europe, for example, a remediation agenda was set for mining sites. Since 2003, ENVSEC has been instrumental in establishing 50 Aarhus Centres in 13 countries, thereby improving public participation and providing local communities with better access to legal assistance. Where there are risks to security from protracted conflicts, ENVSEC has contributed "soft" environmental cooperation initiatives to stimulate confidence building and trust.

As a multi-agency partnership with pooled expertise and resources, ENVSEC is well placed to stimulate new ideas and offer an integrated response to complex challenges. It is also a coordination platform for donors and other international actors working in the ENVSEC regions, leading to more efficient, harmonised and targeted action.

ENVSEC takes a three-dimensional approach:

- a **regional approach** to address transboundary problems
- a **participatory approach**, engaging a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process from assessment to addressing respective risks
- a **multi-level approach**, in the local, national, regional and international spheres



“The ENVSEC Initiative is an excellent example of a well-functioning multi-agency cooperation, a joint effort that can provide an effective integrated response to environment and security challenges.”

Antti Rytövuori, Minister, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Finland in Geneva, December 2011, Rio+20 regional preparatory meeting

With its long-term perspective and environmental diplomacy skills, ENVSEC is able to achieve concrete and sustainable results. A multi-donor trust fund ensures transparency, efficiency and accountability.

This report identifies best practices adaptable for replication in specific regional contexts:

- **Regional assessments and mapping:** ENVSEC assessments are an innovative tool for raising awareness and for the participatory identification of environment and security risks and regional priorities. Determining “hotspots” via mapping enables stakeholders to visualise the need for cross-border solutions.
- **Joint programming and implementation:** The ENVSEC partners bring complementary strengths, expertise and field presence, ensuring cost-effective operations.
- **International conventions as a tool for cooperation:** ENVSEC uses conventions as a legal framework for dialogue, while active support for their implementation leads to the development of transboundary agreements and treaties.
- **Offering solutions and catalysing actions:** ENVSEC provides policy advice, backed up by concrete pilot projects. Reported examples of best practice from these projects lead to further projects and programmes.
- **Aarhus Centres:** These centres are ENVSEC’s means of outreach to citizens and they have become successful models for engaging local actors in decision making.

ENVSEC is the first initiative to address operationally a previously neglected strategic link between the environment and security in the pan-European region. The Initiative has helped to mainstream this interdependence within the partner organisations and at regional and international level. ENVSEC is keen to support countries and organisations on other continents who want to apply its approach and methodology. In the ENVSEC regions, the Initiative will adapt to the changing geopolitical landscape and respond to emerging issues such as climate, energy and food security.



FROM CONCEPT TO COLLABORATION

TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY RISKS INTO COOPERATION

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) was established in 2003 as a unique partnership, bringing together 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. ENVSEC's mission is to strengthen national capacities, regional coordination





mechanisms and international cooperation for environment and security risk reduction. The Initiative tackles the environmental factors of stability and security, ranging from conflict prevention to disaster risk reduction, in a flexible and comprehensive way. As environment and security risks are not confined within borders, a basin-wide or ecosystem approach is needed. ENVSEC operations are focused on four regions: South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, with a total population of over 170 million people.

The ENVSEC approach is to first assess and then address environment and security risks by applying the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, including local and national ownership, donor harmonisation, results-based management, and mutual accountabilities. The ENVSEC Initiative has been a pioneering force in putting these principles into operation. Since its launch, ENVSEC has implemented more than 150 projects with a budget of approximately USD 60 million.

BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP

The idea of the ENVSEC partnership emerged from discussions at the 2002 OSCE Economic Forum. At the request of countries in South Eastern Europe (SEE), OSCE, UNDP and UNEP met with regional stakeholders in Belgrade, Serbia, in late 2002 to discuss environmental problems that posed security threats in the region. In January 2003, the consultation process was repeated in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, for Central Asia. The results were presented in May 2003 at both the Fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, held in Kiev, Ukraine, and the OSCE Economic Forum in Prague, where the ENVSEC Initiative was launched. The three founding organisations were OSCE, with its security mandate; UNDP, with its development expertise and operational capacity; and UNEP, the catalytic force to drive global action on environmental issues. The Initiative soon attracted attention and more organisations expressed an interest in joining.

NATO became an associated member in 2004 and coordinates ENVSEC activities to enhance security in vulnerable regions. Through its Science for Peace and Security Programme, NATO contributes capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. In 2006, UNECE, as host to a number of important regional environmental conventions, and the REC, with its expertise in the regions and its link to the European Union, joined the Initiative.

NEW CHALLENGES – NEW SOLUTIONS

Discussions about the links between environment, natural resources, conflict and peace building have become more prominent in the last 20 years. According to a 2008 finding by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), over the last 60 years at least 40 percent of all conflicts within states have been linked to environmental causes. Environmental factors are seldom the sole source of violent conflicts, yet the com-

“As global population rises and the demand for resources grows, the potential for conflicts over resources could intensify. The impacts of climate change may exacerbate these threats. In response, we will need to develop new thinking on sources of insecurity and ensure that our preventive diplomacy takes into account the transboundary nature of ecosystems and environmental degradation.”

Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General, November 6, 2010



“It is a beauty in terms of conception.”

Frits Schlingemann, former Regional Director for Europe,
United Nations Environment Programme

bined pressure on natural resources from growing populations and the impacts of climate change make the need for action in the area of environmental security more important than ever. The way that people access and use natural resources can trigger or drive conflicts within states and across regions. On the other hand, natural

resources can provide a bridge for conflict prevention and peace building. Environmental issues are sometimes the only entry point for cooperation across borders.

The environment and security nexus has been evident in all post-conflict and transition countries in all four ENVSEC regions. Tackling the security risks that stem from environmental factors can be complex and requires a multi-dimensional approach that is difficult for a single organisation to achieve. As an inter-agency partnership, ENVSEC is in a unique position to provide a tailored response to environment and security risks because of the specialised but complementary mandates of its part-





ner agencies. The Initiative has developed a formal, flexible structure that allows it to respond to a changing environment and risk landscape while continuing to provide cost-effective and viable solutions. Today, ENVSEC is geared towards providing long-term solutions to addressing environment and security challenges identified in the assessments carried out in the four regions.

SUPPORTERS AND DONORS

Recognising the huge potential of this innovative, multi-agency initiative that tackles complex environment and security risks using an integrated, regional approach, Austria, Canada, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland were the visionary donors who provided long-term support to ENVSEC in its early days. From 2003 to 2009, ENVSEC activities were mainly funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The Finnish Government then became the principal supporter, funding ENVSEC projects in all four regions as well as the regional and inter-agency coordination work of the ENVSEC Secretariat. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) has

ENVSEC activities help raise awareness of environment and security risks.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO



“ENVSEC’s unique institutional set-up enables the member organizations to jointly work together, creating synergies and tackling complex environment and security risks in a way no other organisation on its own could do.”

Kristina Salomonsson, Programme Manager, Reform Cooperation in Eastern Europe, Department for Reform and Selective Cooperation, Sida



AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND STRENGTHENING STABILITY

Competition is increasing for natural resources due to population growth, economic development and technological change. This, in turn, can threaten stability and security across many societies. When looking at the links between environment and security, it is important to consider not only resource scarcity and degradation leading to security risks, but also resource abundance. In some parts of the world, the abundance of valuable natural resources, such as diamonds, gold and timber, can lead to conflict between and within states. If a country relies mainly on exporting this kind of resource and lacks other opportunities to generate income, it can potentially lead to conflict when groups intend to take over resource-rich areas.

In the ENVSEC regions, environmental factors that can undermine stability and security are primarily related to limited access to, and the degradation of, natural resources. These are interlinked, as environmental degradation can lead to scarcity, and scarcity can lead to overexploitation. Disputes over natural resources are rarely the only cause of conflicts, but environmental factors play a role, particularly when they interact with historic grievances, pre-existing conflicts, marginalisation or polarisation.

As ecosystems and environmental problems have no political boundaries, multilateral action is required to manage resources and mitigate risks. Good governance of natural resources and the environment can contribute to peace building by promoting confidence and cooperation, economic development, employment and sustainable livelihoods.

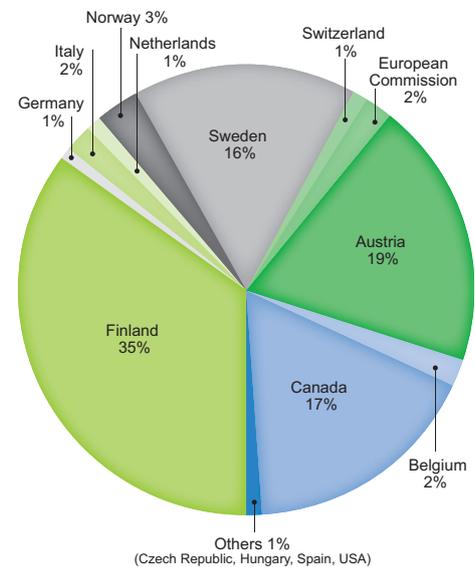
been a committed donor to ENVSEC since the beginning, with a focus on South Eastern Europe. Building upon many years of collaboration in Eastern Europe, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) continues to work with the ENVSEC Initiative with the prospect of expanding the partnership into other sub-regions. In 2012, the European Union joined with the Initiative to tackle climate and security risks. It is one of ENVSEC's strengths that it brings together a multitude of different partners, while a multi-donor trust fund allows ENVSEC to operate in a highly transparent, efficient and accountable manner.

PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

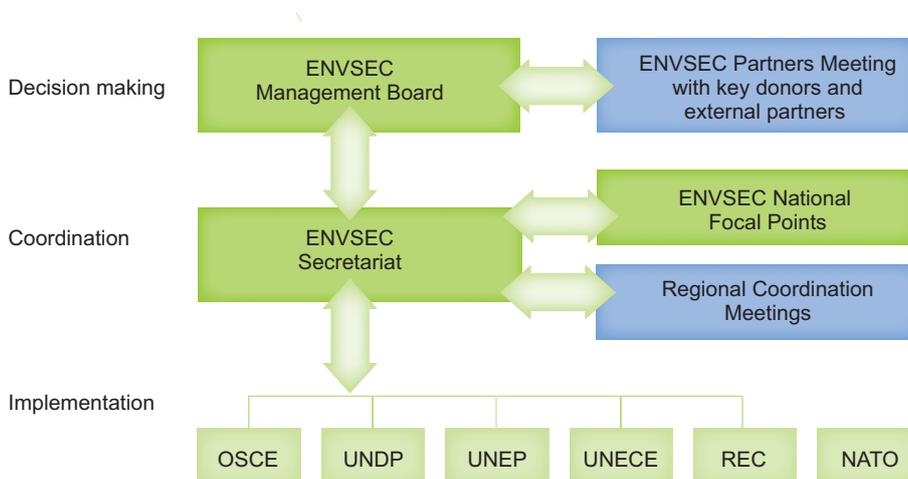
The Management Board is the key decision-making body of the partnership. It comprises representatives of each of the partner organisations, who take turns to act as chair. The Board provides guidance on strategic, policy and regional issues based on the annual ENVSEC partners meeting, which brings together representatives of active and potential donors as well as other partner agencies.

Day-to-day activities are coordinated by the ENVSEC Secretariat, made up of the Coordination Unit and regional desk officers. The Secretariat informs the Board about emerging needs and issues in the regions, the future development of regional programmes, and ENVSEC operations as a whole.

Operations are firmly anchored in the needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries. The ENVSEC national focal points from the ministries of environment and foreign affairs participate actively, together with focal points from the country offices and field missions of OSCE, UNDP and the REC, in project planning and monitoring, with the support of national agencies, NGOs, universities and research institutes.



Total contributions to ENVSEC projects, 2003–2013



ENVSEC has been instrumental in addressing industrial legacies (opposite).

PHOTO: ISTOCK



ENVSEC IN ACTION: APPROACH AND TOOLS

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Key to the success of the Initiative are its working methods and processes that build on participation, ownership and cooperation.



ENVSEC takes a four-stage approach: assessing the situation on the ground and mapping the environment and security risks through participatory tools; ensuring stakeholder ownership and political endorsement through national and regional consultations; developing work programmes to address the identified risks; and implementing targeted projects that encourage transboundary cooperation.

Since 2003, ENVSEC has published a number of assessments covering key vulnerable areas in the ENVSEC regions where environment and security linkages are both evident and challenging. These range from regional assessments in South Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2003), the South Caucasus (2004) and Eastern Europe (2007), to in-depth assessments of conflict-prone regions such as the Ferghana/Osh/Khujand area (2005), the Eastern Caspian region (2008) and the Amu

ENVSEC PRODUCTS

The four-stage process results in:

- vulnerability assessments, early warning and the monitoring of environment and security risks
- improved capacities of national institutions for more effective environment and security policies and stronger institutional dialogue
- the mobilisation of technical expertise and financial resources for clean-up and remediation
- increased knowledge and awareness of the linkages between environment and security risks and enhanced participation of stakeholders in activities aimed at preventing and reducing these risks



Darya basin (2011). ENVSEC priorities are regularly updated at annual regional meetings, and the Initiative continues to conduct assessments on a smaller scale with a thematic approach, such as assessments of the security impacts of climate change.

FROM ASSESSMENTS TO REGIONAL WORK PROGRAMMES

The multi-stakeholder assessments carried out under UNEP's leadership are an innovative means of identifying environment and security risks in a participatory, concise and focused way, using mapping exercises for visualisation. Throughout the assessment process, the ENVSEC Initiative benefits from the complementary competencies and the regional and country presences of OSCE, UNDP, UNECE and the REC.

National-level identification of environment and security risks is based on data collected via desk studies, field missions and consultations with key stakeholders. Field assessment techniques, such as sampling and analysis, are used to validate the findings of the desk reviews. Through ministry staff acting as national focal points, the beneficiary countries actively participate in planning and monitoring ENVSEC programmes and projects.

Using the networks of its partner agencies, the ENVSEC Initiative is able to involve ministries of environment, health, agriculture, foreign affairs and defence, lending the process greater political weight and catalysing transboundary cooperation between countries.

National consultations are followed by regional consultations, at which ENVSEC facilitates the identification of shared regional priorities. The results of the consultations form the basis of an assessment report that is launched at a regional high-level event.

Once policy makers, national experts from the ministries, NGOs, research institutes and civil society actors have agreed on regional priorities, a regional work programme is developed by the ENVSEC partners in consultation with the national focal points. This work programme comprises a number of concrete projects on policy development, capacity building, awareness raising and public participation, or the launching of pilot interventions at specific hotspots.

The Initiative uses results-based management to better plan, measure and report the results and impacts of its projects and feed lessons learned into new project cycles.

"The maps developed as part of the process are universally considered, by far, as primary communication tools that raise the profile of the Initiative with policy makers in the targeted countries and on the international scene, as well as with donors. These maps have been referred to, and publicized, in numerous global publications."

CIDA evaluation, 2006

ENVSEC CARTOGRAPHIC PORTRAYAL – A PARTICIPATORY TOOL

Cartographic portrayal is a trademark of the Initiative. Developed by UNEP in collaboration with the UNEP-affiliated research centre GRID-Arendal, the mapping methodology has proved an inexpensive and efficient approach, reflecting different interests, points of view and perceptions of "hot topics". The first mapping exercise in regional consultations is a "cartographic brainstorming", which is then supported and complemented with data from desk reviews and field studies. This innovative approach is an excellent way to communicate the end results of assessments in an accessible form, not only to a small number of experts in the national and international community, but also to politicians, donors, civil society groups and citizens living in and around the assessed region. Examples of ENVSEC maps can be found on pages 21 and 24.



THEMATIC PRIORITIES

ENVSEC works in four main thematic areas: natural resources, hazardous substances, climate change, and information and participation. These priority areas are adapted to the specific needs of each of the ENVSEC regions.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT

Access to natural resources and resource scarcity are key causes of conflict, especially when combined with pressure from a growing population and environmental degradation. The political and economic context of a region affects whether access to resources leads to conflict, or whether it can be turned into an opportunity to identify viable responses and solutions.

Activities under this thematic area focus on enhancing the transboundary management of shared resources, including forests, land, water, rivers and energy, with the goal of providing equitable long-term solutions. ENVSEC supports countries to improve their policies and regulations on environment and security challenges such as dam failures, illegal logging and wildfires. The box opposite shows how the challenge of transboundary water management has been addressed within the ENVSEC framework.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND SECURITY RISK REDUCTION

While industrial activities have led to social and economic development in all the ENVSEC regions, there is clear pressure on the environment and ecosystems as a result of chemical use and waste generation. When environmentally harmful activities or landfills are located close to borders or transboundary rivers, they become a concern for neighbouring states.

Several countries in the ENVSEC regions have accumulated stocks of obsolete toxic pesticides and industrial or other waste in sensitive or border areas. The disastrous effects of the Chernobyl accident and nuclear activities at the Semipalatinsk test site have raised awareness of the security risks inherent in hazardous substances. Organic pollutants buried in storage facilities, illegal imports of toxic waste, and mining industry activities can also lead to environment and security risks.

“Climate change is among the most pressing global challenges. Projected impacts of climate change are felt particularly in developing countries. Seeking solutions jointly bears utmost importance, today no country nor any organization can combat climate change alone. In order to achieve concrete and long-term results, the science-based understanding of changing climate needs to be translated into peaceful action and cooperation. This is where ENVSEC is aiming at.”

Johanna Ketola,
Programme Officer, Finnish
Ministry for Foreign Affairs



TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS – OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION

Transboundary rivers and lakes create hydrological, social and economic interdependence between countries, making water resources management an important area of regional cooperation. Government acknowledgement of the need for joint responses to common problems is the first, essential step, and ENVSEC has supported countries to take this step using a participatory approach at the early assessment stage and by organising high-level regional meetings that bring together key decision makers.

The 1992 UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes places significant emphasis on institutional cooperation between countries. It requires countries to enter into agreements and to establish joint bodies such as river basin commissions and other institutions for transboundary water cooperation. ENVSEC uses the convention as a framework to provide the legal basis for adopting and implementing work programmes in this sector.

ENVSEC is active in 13 transboundary water basins, including the Chu-Talas River basin, the Amu Darya basin, the Dniester River basin and the Danube Delta region.



The ENVSEC Initiative supports assessments, capacity building, and the development of preparedness and emergency response capacities in order to prevent or minimise the risk from past, present and future activities involving hazardous substances.

ENVSEC works in many transboundary water basins, including the Danube Delta region.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO



MÉLANGE – A COLD WAR LEGACY

In the Cold War era, a rocket fuel component known as “mélange” was widely used to propel short- and medium-range rockets. Mélange is a toxic, corrosive and highly reactive material that represents an extreme health risk to workers at storage sites and to those living nearby. Long-term environmental damage is primarily associated with groundwater contamination from leaking or ruptured tanks.

In order to identify environmentally sound solutions, ENVSEC brought together experts and representatives from affected countries. In 2005, the Initiative co-funded an OSCE/NATO workshop aimed at shar-

ing national experiences. This workshop, together with seed funding from ENVSEC for mélange destruction in Armenia, catalysed remediation projects in the ENVSEC regions. Projects to neutralise mélange have now been completed in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro and Uzbekistan, and are ongoing in Ukraine. A total budget of over USD 34 million was used to safely dispose of more than 20,000 tons of mélange. NATO neutralised mélange in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan by utilising a mobile plant that made possible on-site destruction at various locations. The by-product was a low-grade fertiliser.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND SECURITY RISK REDUCTION

Climate change is now recognised as a threat multiplier that carries potentially serious implications for international peace and security. It has moved from being just an environmental problem and an energy challenge to being a matter of economic, social and political concern. Climate change affects geopolitical landscapes by creating direct and indirect risks related to water, energy and food security, as well as to human health and economic livelihoods. Failure to adapt to challenges like floods, drought, coastal erosion, glacial melting and heat waves can result in disasters and societal instability. At regional level, climate change will put stress on existing mechanisms for sharing resources such as transboundary rivers and arable land. The likelihood of conflict may also increase as a result of climate change-induced migration.

The strengthening of policies, institutions and capacities will be among the main activities of the ENVSEC Initiative, since weak governance often hinders adaptation efforts and long-term planning. An in-depth assessment of governance structures and of the political, institutional and economic context will be needed in order to evaluate the security impacts of climate change in the ENVSEC regions. The Initiative will also need to raise awareness of the links between climate change and security at local, national, regional and international level.

Ukraine has over 16,000 tons of obsolete mélange, currently being destroyed by OSCE (above).

PHOTO: OSCE

As the impacts of climate change affect the geopolitical landscape, ENVSEC partners are working to address the implications for the environment, security, health and the economy (opposite).

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO



CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY – ENVSEC ACTIVITIES IN THE REGIONS

All the ENVSEC regions will potentially be affected by the impacts of climate change, although the security implications differ. Central Asia is already prone to instability, and climate change impacts could further strain relationships, particularly in relation to water. In the South Caucasus, climate change could negatively affect the resolution of existing protracted conflicts. In Eastern Europe, water resources will be directly affected by climate change through changes in the hydrological cycle that may lead to an economic downturn and social consequences. In South Eastern Europe, climate change is a potential threat to the still weak transboundary collaboration and to the sustainable development of the region. Data on climate change impacts in the regions are already available, although as yet there is no analysis of the resulting security issues.

To date, ENVSEC activities include an in-depth vulnerability assessment in South Eastern Europe; an assessment of the vulnerability of selected economic sectors in the South Caucasus; measures for understanding the impacts of glacial melting in Central Asia; and the promotion of cooperation for climate change adaptation in transboundary river basins such as the Dniester River basin in Eastern Europe.

In 2012, under the leadership of OSCE, the ENVSEC partners joined forces with the EU to implement a project on climate change and security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus. This joint venture is funded under the EU Instrument for Stability, with the Austrian Development Agency as co-sponsor, and can be seen as a model for a jointly designed programme to assess and address climate change and security risks across the regions.



AARHUS CENTRES – A MEANS TO SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The ENVSEC Initiative aims to empower civil society to participate in addressing environment and security challenges. It supports the implementation of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention). Under the leadership of OSCE, and in close cooperation with UNECE, the Initiative creates and supports the operation of Aarhus Centres in all four regions. As of August 2013, there are 50 Aarhus Centres operating in 13 countries in the ENVSEC regions. These centres have benefited from ENVSEC funding as well as from parallel financial contributions from several OSCE participating states and field operations.

Each Aarhus Centre takes into account specific local needs and capacities. They disseminate environmental information, raise public awareness, organise public hearings, monitor environmental hotspots, provide legal advice, support local environmental planning, and engage young people and women in environmental initiatives. The centres increasingly serve as an outreach facility for ENVSEC to local communities and foster ENVSEC's ownership at local level. They also provide a platform for discussions between government officials and NGOs.

The Aarhus Centre in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, has been actively involved in the mitigation of localised conflicts related to mining activities and their impact on the environment by mobilising the local community and facilitating a constructive dialogue between the local community, local officials and the mining company. As a result, the mining company has pledged to rehabilitate the land and roads affected by mining activities and to introduce a social benefits package for the local population.

In Khujand, in northern Tajikistan, the Aarhus Centre is raising public awareness of the abandoned uranium mining site. The site poses serious health threats to the 14,000 residents living in the small town of Taboshar. The Aarhus Centre provides them with information about the serious health hazards of uranium waste and what they can do to protect themselves.

INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY AND PARTICIPATION IN RISK MANAGEMENT

For successful cooperation and risk reduction it is essential not only to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of policy and decision makers, but also to share information and promote participation among NGOs, civil society groups and local communities. The mass media and NGOs have a crucial role to play in spreading reliable environmental information, improving dialogue on environment and security issues, and identifying appropriate solutions.

ENVSEC helps public authorities and civil society to undertake participatory planning that includes security issues in environmental policy making. By fostering dialogue and partnerships between government and civil society organisations, the Initiative has improved understanding of environmental impact assessments and of socially and economically responsible environmental practices. The focus has been on mining, the disposal of hazardous materials, adaptation to climate change, urban development and the management of transboundary natural resources.

The ENVSEC Initiative provides a robust platform for discussions among stakeholders (opposite).

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO

Armenia's network of 15 Aarhus Centres encourages the participation of NGOs and the community in addressing environment and security issues by providing them with information and offering legal assistance and support (below).

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO





SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE REGIONS

ENVSEC offers a formula for sustainable results: its participatory approach ensures a lasting difference. Success stories in the last decade include improved regional cooperation, policies and regulations, public participation, and monitoring and information exchange. Many interventions are catalytic, generating further support from other sources.

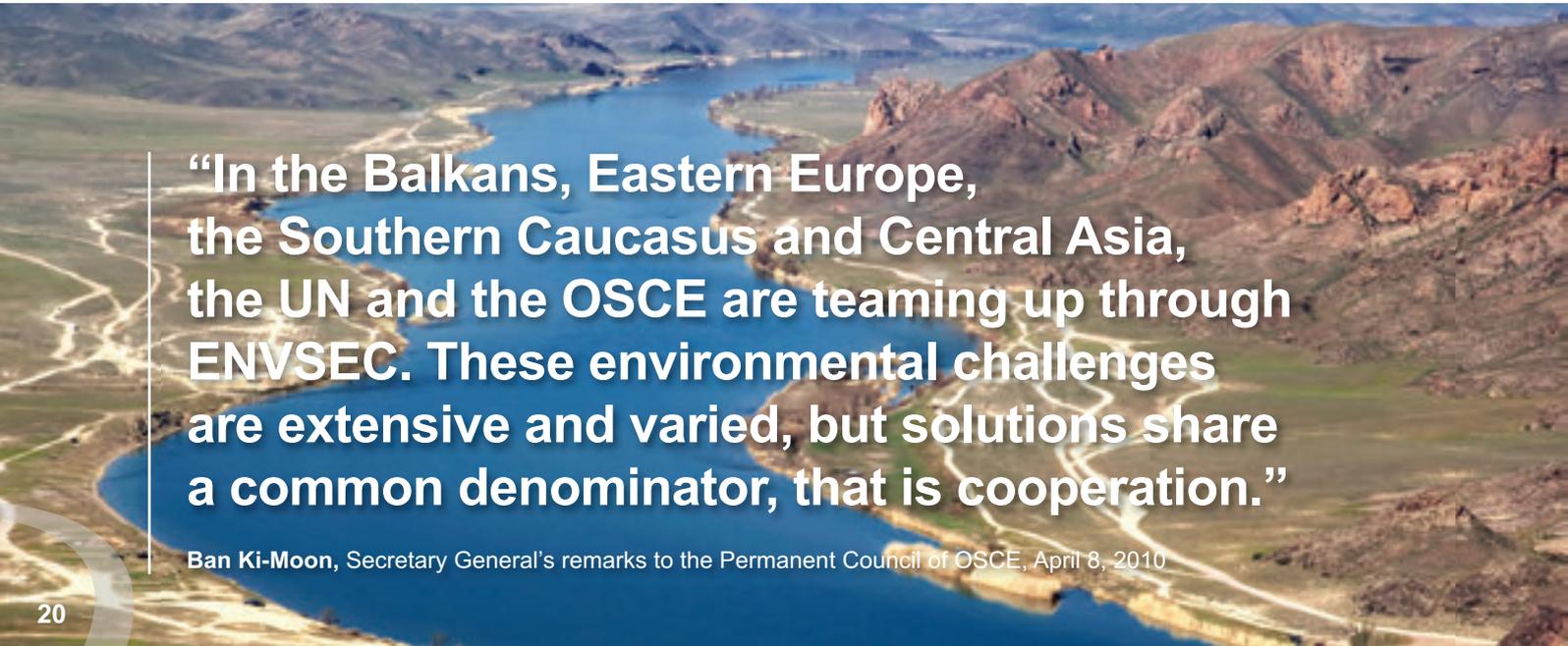
But ENVSEC's operations also face challenges: some countries resist taking a more regional approach, while in others the national focal point changes frequently and the nomination process is lengthy. If funding is not secured, or small budgets cannot achieve big results, interest and commitment may be lost. For more sustainable results, long-term partnerships and financing are needed.

CENTRAL ASIA

In terms of the ENVSEC Initiative, Central Asia comprises Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The region stretches from the Caspian Sea to China and has a total population of about 65 million. Water is a valuable and scarce resource in the region and can be seen as one of its most significant security risks.

The management of transboundary waters is one aspect of the environment and security nexus in Central Asia.

PHOTO: ISTOCK



“In the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, the UN and the OSCE are teaming up through ENVSEC. These environmental challenges are extensive and varied, but solutions share a common denominator, that is cooperation.”

Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General's remarks to the Permanent Council of OSCE, April 8, 2010



The shrinking of the Aral Sea can be regarded as one of the biggest human-made environmental disasters, to which no solution has been found in the last 20 years.

Transboundary water management is just one aspect of the environment–security nexus in Central Asia. Abandoned uranium mines and pesticide dumps pose a serious public health risk, often across borders. Climate change will have severe impacts in most parts of the region, especially on water access and agriculture, and will increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters. These environment and security threats are exacerbated by political instabilities, inefficient and outdated infrastructure, and a lack of capacities and resources.

ENVSEC began work in Central Asia in 2002 with a participatory regional assessment on environment and security hotspots. The partners then undertook in-depth assessments in the Ferghana Valley, the Eastern Caspian region and the Amu Darya basin, raising awareness among decision makers. Work programmes are reviewed and future regional priorities are agreed on at annual meetings. With a total budget of USD 11 million, ENVSEC has carried out 27 core projects and NATO 11 associated projects. Besides in-depth assessments and vulnerability studies, activities include capacity building, institution strengthening, policy development, and pilot remediation projects.

A joint programme by UNDP, UNEP and OSCE to enhance knowledge and observation capacities in relation to the glacial retreat in Central Asia drew attention to the associated risks to water, energy and food security. A study on glacial melting in Central Asia identified data gaps and recommended steps to address the challenges. Trainings, workshops and a glaciological expedition improved regional dialogue among hydrometeorological institutes and raised awareness of the implications of glacial melting at regional and international level.

Another valuable achievement is the establishment of 18 Aarhus Centres in the region, which have helped to raise awareness of the environment and health implications of radioactive waste and of the need for transparency in the mining and other extractive industries. By bringing together all stakeholders, including industries, the centres have mobilised community action and promoted environmental journalism.

Other ENVSEC programmes and projects in Central Asia include:

- support to bilateral cooperation in transboundary water basins (Isfara and Chu-Talas)
- capacity building for cooperation on dam safety
- assessments of transboundary risks from industrial and hazardous waste
- capacity building for the management of radioactive waste
- support to disaster risk management

NATO's associated ENVSEC projects include assessments of locations in the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, the promotion of sustainable land and water use in the Aral Sea basin, and the first seismic hazard assessment of the Toktogul dam and reservoir area.



“ENVSEC does not impose its resources and interest. It pays attention to the opinions of the countries and experts, which is important.”

Shukhrat Talipov, Uzbekistan, former member of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR DAM SAFETY IN CENTRAL ASIA – TOWARDS REGIONAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

In Central Asia, dams and reservoirs are hugely important to the economy and for future development. They are an important source for irrigation, energy, and industrial and household water use. Water storage is likely to become increasingly important, as a 15 to 20 percent decline in water resources and more variable precipitation are predicted for the region by 2050.

Over 100 major dams and reservoirs in the region are over 40 years old and many are not adequately maintained. Dam failures can have disastrous consequences, as seen in March 2010 when the village of Kysyl-Agash in Kazakhstan was destroyed. A dam burst resulted in a 2-metre tidal wave, causing 43 deaths and injuring 300. Concerns have been raised over the safety of the Kirov dam in Kyrgyzstan, which is situated on

the country's border near to the Kazakh city of Taraz, home to half a million people. If this dam were to fail, the impact of the resulting 55-metre wave would be devastating.

Geographical scope:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Donor: Finland

Budget: USD 1,323,318

Implementing agency: UNECE

Duration: 2007–2014

Local partners: Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; Committee for Water Resources, Ministry of Environment Protection, Kazakhstan; Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration, Kyrgyzstan; Ministry of Emergencies, Kyrgyzstan; Ministry of Energy Resources, Kyrgyzstan; Water Department, State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry, Kyrgyzstan; Ministry of Water Resources and Melioration, Tajikistan; State Committee for Environmental Protection, Tajikistan; Ministry of Water Economy, Turkmenistan; Ministry of Health, Uzbekistan; Nature Protection Committee, Uzbekistan; Water Control Facilities Committee, Uzbekistan

The Kirov dam, on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, is the focus of serious safety concerns.

PHOTO: OSCE/VALERIY KARTUN



The ENVSEC Initiative has launched a process to improve and harmonise national legislation, including support to a joint safety assessment and a pilot early warning mechanism for the Kirov dam. The actions undertaken in relation to the new legislation demonstrate clear national ownership. The model regulation on hydro-technical structures has been approved by the Central Asian governments and serves as a good basis for further harmonising regulations for monitoring and evaluating dam safety. The process is strengthening national and local capacities through a “learning by doing” approach.

Joint planning and close cooperation with the project's national focal points ensures the commitment of the national partners and smooth programme implementation. An independent evaluation carried out by Gaia Consulting Oy. stated that “the ENVSEC Initiative has established an important forum for regional cooperation on dam safety, allowing the representatives from the five countries to share information and debate controversial issues and learn from each other.” Despite the political tensions in Central Asia, the programme has been a great success. Dam safety has proved to be a “soft” topic with which ENVSEC could start dialogue and regional cooperation.

Dam safety is also integrated in the recently approved Aral Sea Programme 3, bringing the issue to the highest political level, and all five Central Asian governments have expressed a need to continue working on dam safety in the region.

ENVSEC activities in this field have been catalytic, with increasing numbers of international organisations and donors becoming involved in dam safety issues, among them Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, the Eurasian Economic Community and the World Bank.

URANIUM TAILINGS – BUILDING TRUST AND STRENGTHENING COORDINATION FOR SUSTAINABLE RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

Large-scale uranium mining and processing has resulted in a huge amount of highly dangerous and toxic waste in Central Asia. Uranium tailings are a radioactive waste by-product of uranium mining, and more than 800 million tons are deposited in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Many deposits are located close to densely populated areas, state borders and transboundary rivers, including the Syr Darya and Mayлуу-Suu. The situation is made more precarious by the fact that many of the deposits are situated in areas vulnerable to seismic activity, landslides, mudflows and floods. Failure to find an effective solution could have consequences for millions of years to come.

In 2005, ENVSEC undertook an in-depth field assessment of environment and security hotspots in the Ferghana-Osh-Khudjand triangle and adjacent areas. This UNEP/OSCE-led effort created awareness of the urgent challenges posed by the uranium legacy.

ENVSEC projects led by NATO and UNDP followed. NATO provided equipment as well as training courses to ensure the effective management of radioactive waste, and international and local expertise was strengthened. A UNDP-headed ENVSEC awareness-raising campaign included multiple consultations and a high-level regional meeting in Bishkek in April 2009. The Aarhus Centres were instrumental in raising awareness among affected populations.

“Over the last few years the countries of the region and the international community managed to develop a common understanding of uranium tailings problems and approaches to their solution. At the Geneva Forum (June 2009) its participants identified and agreed the priorities in a road map.”

Bazarbay Mambetov, representative of Kyrgyzstan for the CIS and Eurasian Economic Community

Developed in accordance with this declaration, the Uranium Tailings Project helped stimulate regional dialogue and the search for concrete solutions. A regional action plan on radioactive waste management was adopted in 2010, and a website, maintained by the Ministry of Emergencies of Kyrgyzstan, provided an exchange mechanism and ensured lasting stakeholder engagement.

Following an ENVSEC regional meeting in June 2012, the Central Asian states decided to establish the Coordination Group for Uranium Legacy Sites in order to integrate radioactive waste management efforts. ENVSEC worked with the International Atomic Energy Agency, member states and other donors to create this mechanism, which includes the Central Asian countries and all international organisations in this area. This is an example of multi-agency action that avoids the fragmentation, duplication and overlapping of donor activities while improving the transparency and accountability of aid in sensitive areas.



Geographical scope:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Donor: Finland

Budget: USD 545,000

Implementing agency: UNDP

Partner organisations: UNEP, OSCE

Duration: 2009–2012

Local partners: Ministry of Environment Protection, Kazakhstan; Ministry of Emergencies, Kyrgyzstan; State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry, Kyrgyzstan; State Committee for Environmental Protection, Tajikistan; Ministry of Health, Uzbekistan; Nature Protection Committee, Uzbekistan

There are more than 23 uranium waste sites near the Mayлуу-Suu River, Kyrgyzstan, containing over 4 million tons of radioactive waste.

PHOTO: URANIUM-CA.NET

EASTERN EUROPE

The densely populated Eastern European region, comprising Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, is home to almost 60 million people. Although there is a low risk of major conflicts, there are still factors that can potentially increase fragility and revive tensions between and within states. The impacts of the Chernobyl accident, the most prominent

environmental disaster in the region, are still apparent in Ukraine and Belarus. Other environmental challenges include toxic and radioactive industrial and military waste sites, the pollution of transboundary rivers, deforestation and land degradation, as well as a potential increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters as a result of climate change. Energy insecurity, caused in part by energy-intensive industries and dependency on fossil fuels, has become a major challenge in the region. In 1992, Moldova also experienced internal military clashes with the breakaway region of Transnistria, a conflict that remains unresolved despite the ceasefire agreed in the same year and the commitment to negotiate a settlement. Addressing these old and new challenges requires strong environmental institutions and the political will to identify common solutions to transboundary environmental threats.

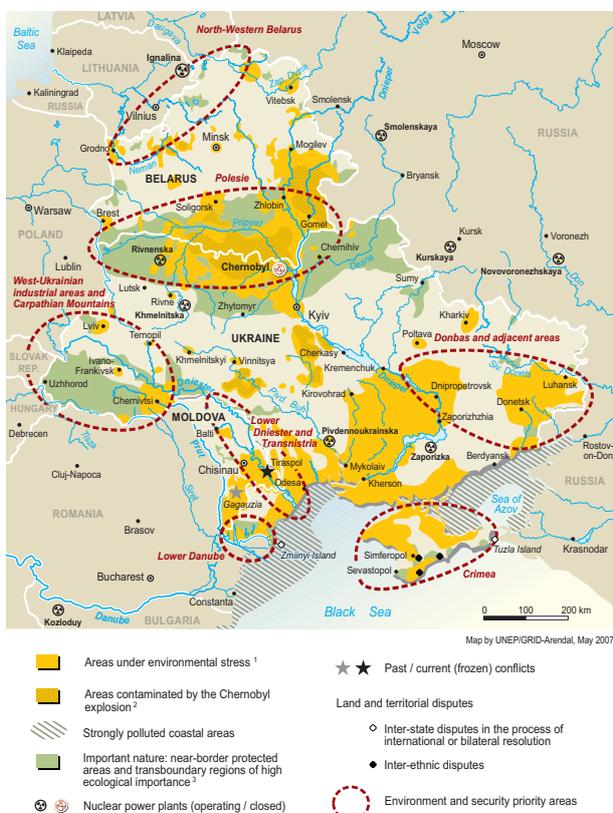
Following an assessment of the environment and security risks in Eastern Europe, the ENVSEC work programme has focused on the identified gaps in national and local capacities. The portfolio of 26 core projects and three associated projects with a total budget of USD 6 million has made possible significant progress in the region.

Through an OSCE-led long-term programme, ENVSEC supports efforts to prevent the transboundary trafficking of hazardous waste.

“Waste watch cards” were translated and adapted for use by national environmental, customs and border authorities, while capacity building also included the development of a methodological manual for trainers and a series of train-the-trainers workshops coordinated with the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.

An Aarhus Centre in the Moldovan capital Chisinau and a Public Environmental Information Centre in Bender, Transnistria/Moldova, were opened in 2013 under OSCE leadership. These centres provide a platform for confidence building on both sides of the Dniester River.

Another priority for ENVSEC was to destroy identified stockpiles of obsolete pesticides and chemicals in Transnistria/Moldova as an interim step towards the final destruction of the entire stock. The Chisinau-Tiraspol Working Group on Ecology and Agriculture





“Eastern Europe is a small territory, where any ecological problem in one country can cause a serious problem in another. ENVSEC has brought attention to transboundary problems and contributes to the mitigation of transboundary threats.”

Alexander Rachevsky, former ENVSEC National Focal Point at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus

has been an important institutional framework for discussing environmental issues. It is one of eight working groups established by Chisinau and Tiraspol to deal with technical issues and confidence-building measures, to which ENVSEC has provided input for discussion on several occasions.

The ENVSEC Initiative has improved the exchange of information and cross-border cooperation in the Danube Delta region by facilitating a joint Danube Delta survey with the participation of scientists from Ukraine, Moldova and Romania. The survey was the first practical step towards the harmonisation of the monitoring systems of the three countries.

Other ENVSEC programmes and projects in Eastern Europe include climate change awareness and adaptation projects; a sustainability assessment of energy security strategies; support to the implementation of the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessments in a Transboundary Context; mélange disposal in Ukraine; and water basin management programmes for Lake Drisviaty/Druksiai and for the Dniester, Pripyat and Neman river basins.

NATO's work in the region, under the ENVSEC umbrella, includes flood risk monitoring and forecasting in Ukraine and Belarus, an assessment of radioactive pollution in the Chernobyl exclusion zone, and the clean-up of pesticides in Moldova.

Sweden cooperates with ENVSEC on a multi-project portfolio in Belarus that focuses on institutional and capacity development towards EU harmonisation in the field of environmental legislation and the implementation of international conventions. Cross-cutting priorities are civil society support, inter-sectoral dialogue and cooperation, and environmental awareness.

The ENVSEC Danube Delta survey was a practical step towards the harmonisation of river monitoring systems in the three delta countries.

PHOTO: ICPDR

“The ICPDR expresses appreciation for the cooperative activities of the three Danube Delta countries and the support of the Environment and Security Initiative for this work.”

Resolution in support of the development of the Danube Delta Analysis and Danube Delta Management Plan adopted by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

THE DNIESTER RIVER BASIN – TRANSBOUNDARY MANAGEMENT AND A PIONEERING WATER TREATY

The Dniester is a transboundary river that rises in Ukraine and flows through Moldova before re-entering Ukraine, where it drains into the Black Sea. The river provides drinking water and is also used for agricultural irrigation, hydropower generation and fishery. The Dniester River basin is home to nearly 8 million people and faces the challenges of water pollution, declining biodiversity, floods and conflicting water needs. Environmental problems are aggravated by the frozen conflict in Transnistria/Moldova, as it is difficult to involve all stakeholders.

“The Dniester-III project contributed to a dialogue of the riparian states which is vital for effective cooperation at the basin level. A characteristic feature of the project was that not only environmental but also other authorities, non-governmental and scientific institutions were invited to the dialogue, which was a true exercise of the integrated approach to basin management. [...] Signing the bilateral Dniester River Basin Treaty in Rome in November 2012 was a graceful step at the project completion.”

Oleg Shevchenko, Former Deputy Head of the International Relations Department, Ministry of Environment, Ukraine

From 2004, at the specific request of Moldova and Ukraine, OSCE and UNECE began to promote the adoption of a Dniester River basin treaty to facilitate transboundary cooperation and raise public awareness of the environmental challenges in the basin. ENVSEC has facilitated joint samplings of Dniester water quality and meetings to discuss the results with experts from both countries, including Transnistria/Moldova. An independent evaluation carried out by Gaia Consulting Oy. concluded that “joint monitoring has been extremely successful in building confidence and has reduced and removed the perception of environmental threats to the downstream area of the river by documenting actual pollution levels.”

After eight years of negotiations and dialogue, with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders and including public consultations in Berezhan, Odessa, Bender and Chisinau, the landmark treaty was signed in November 2012 at the Sixth Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention. The treaty emerged from a diagnostic study of the Dniester River basin and a joint action programme to improve transboundary cooperation. It can be seen as a model for a new generation of transboundary water treaties, covering the whole basin and providing a framework for cooperation on water pollution prevention and control, water flow regulation, and biodiversity conservation. Data exchange, public participation, and cooperation in emergency situations are also addressed.



The Dniester programme aims to reduce vulnerability to floods and climate change. The Dniester basin is prone to heavy floods of increasing magnitude, often with trans-boundary impacts. Ukraine experienced disastrous floods in 2008, partly as a result of the impacts of climate change: 150,000 people were affected and 30 people lost their lives. ENVSEC aims to help reduce the damage and associated security risks caused by flooding and to assess and address the impacts of the changing climate. This aim is shared by the UNECE programme of pilot projects on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins. The project has resulted in two new automated flow-monitoring stations in the Ukrainian part of the Dniester, and a first basin-wide study on vulnerability to climate change, which was presented in Marseilles in 2012 at the sixth World Water Forum.

The Dniester River projects can be seen as successful examples of joint implementation. Collaboration between states and authorities, and among international organisations, contributed to the creation of the Dniester Treaty, and continuous support from Finland and Sweden ensured its success. Once the treaty is ratified, a bilateral Dniester commission will be established. ENVSEC will then strive to provide guidance for the implementation of the treaty and to further strengthen cooperation in the river basin.

The Dniester experience is an example for other trans-boundary rivers, in terms of both the treaty itself and the principles that guided the negotiation process, which included transparency, openness to ideas and local needs, coordination with other international projects and donors, the careful use of data, and the keen observation of confidentiality issues in both countries.



Geographical scope: Moldova, Ukraine

Donor: Finland and Sweden

Budget: USD 1,293,700

Implementing agencies: UNECE, OSCE, UNEP

Duration: 2006–2011

Local partners: Ministries of the environment, water agencies, hydrometeorological services and emergency management agencies of Moldova and Ukraine; the Eco-TIRAS Association of River Keepers; Ecospectrum-Bender; the Biotica environmental society in Moldova; and MAMA-86, Ukraine



Joint monitoring of the Dniester has helped build dialogue between authorities and scientists (above).

PHOTO: RUSLAN MELIAN

The creation of the Dniester Treaty was a model of transparency and openness to local ideas (opposite).

PHOTO: RAMIN MAZUR

“We highly appreciate the components that refer to adaptation to climate change which brought significant value to the project and contributed substantially to flood fighting and the implementation of flood prevention measures.”

Gheorghe Salaru, Minister of Environment, Moldova, in an evaluation of the Dniester-III project, March 2, 2012



“The automated stations, installed on both the Ukrainian and Belarusian sides, are working now and projected the flood situation that we were facing this spring. The data was exchanged between the two sides. The stations were intensively used for the forecasts and they provided information in real time. This is a great success.”

Alexander Rachevsky, former ENVSEC National Focal Point, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus

THE PRIPYAT BASIN – COOPERATION FOR SHARED WATER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD RISK MONITORING

The Pripjat is one of the largest rivers in Europe. Originating in Ukraine, it flows into Belarus and then back to Ukraine, passing through the Chernobyl exclusion zone before draining into the Dnieper River. The Pripjat regularly experiences severe floods that can have disastrous impacts on the socioeconomic situation of people living in both Ukraine and Belarus. Nuclear power stations located in the Pripjat basin represent an additional risk to the population and the environment. Climate change will further aggravate the situation, potentially leading to more frequent floods in the region. Prior to the project, there were no common operational rules for water allocation in the upper part of the Pripjat River basin.

Following a feasibility study, the ENVSEC partners and the beneficiary countries worked out practical solutions for cross-border management and improved monitoring and flood forecasts. The UNEP/UNDP component of the ENVSEC project achieved a historic agreement on the sustainable allocation of water from the Pripjat River. In November 2010, Belarus and Ukraine formally adopted operational rules for the Belozerskaya water-feed system of the Dnieper-Bug canal. The project involved extensive fieldwork, analytical and modelling studies, and consultations involving water, environment and transport authorities and experts from both countries.



Geographical scope: Belarus, Ukraine

Donor: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Budget: USD 925,000

Implementing agencies: UNEP/NATO

Partner organisations: UNDP, OSCE, UNECE

Duration: 2008–2012

Local partners: Ministry of Environment, Belarus; Ministry of Transport (including the Dnieper-Bug canal), Belarus; Belarus Institute of Water Resources; Ministry of Environment, Ukraine; State Committee for Water Management, Ukraine; hydrometeorological services of Belarus (Brest Department) and Ukraine (Volyn Department)

NATO implementation partners: Belarus Central Research Institute for the Complex Use of Water Resources; Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute; Ukrainian Center of Environmental and Water Projects; Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute



As part of the NATO project, by the end of 2012, seven automated river monitoring stations had been put into operation in the Pripjat River basin: four in Ukraine and three in Belarus. Local experts were trained on data collection and the interpretation of flood forecast models, sharing data on a public website. The hydrometeorological services now have a flood forecast model that takes into account real-life data on precipitation, temperature and other factors. Data and models are shared with nuclear power plants in the area. In parallel, the UNEP component developed a pioneering flood risk assessment, with easy to follow maps for part of the basin, and held public hearings with local communities and authorities.

The Pripjat project was developed at the request of the countries, formulated through ENVSEC's regional assessment for Eastern Europe. Effective solutions identified in the programme eliminated sources of potential disagreement over the use of water resources in the basin and helped build a culture of cross-border dialogue. The experience gained can contribute to other projects, such as the UNDP/GEF upper Tisza basin water management project in Ukraine.

Local experts carry out data collection and analysis (above).

PHOTO: ARI MÄKELÄ

Severe floods have a dire impact in the Pripjat basin (opposite).

PHOTO: ALEXEI IAROCHEVITCH



SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

South Eastern Europe, in the scope of the ENVSEC Initiative, covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo*. The region has a total population of 23 million. Bulgaria and Romania are not direct beneficiaries, although both countries have ENVSEC national focal points.

Conflict and transition left South Eastern Europe with a legacy of slow economic growth and severe environmental problems. Industries, the mining sector, intensive agriculture, the lack of wastewater treatment plants and outdated technology in the waste management sector have had considerable effects on health and the environment in the region. New environmental concerns have surfaced in recent years, including

Shared waters, forests and mountains present opportunities for regional cooperation.

PHOTO: ISTOCK



“The ENVSEC programme in South Eastern Europe can be seen as an excellent and highly successful programme. [...It] is highly participatory in terms of contribution by partner countries.”

Final evaluation of the ENVSEC programme in SEE, 2009–2012

illegal logging, energy insecurity and the potential impacts of climate change. While the security situation has become more stable, the region is still fragile. The use and management of shared natural resources, such as transboundary waters, forests and mountain areas, present both challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation.

South Eastern Europe was a pioneering ENVSEC region. The 2003 assessment identified a number of environment and security hotspots, including landmines and water pollution in transboundary areas resulting from industries, mining and waste dumps. Meanwhile, ENVSEC interventions have grown into a portfolio of 27 core and five associated projects with a total budget of USD 10 million.

Stimulating dialogue and developing a roadmap for the joint management of the Timok River basin between Serbia and Bulgaria has been one of ENVSEC's key achievements. Through Aarhus Centres, the ENVSEC Initiative has increased public awareness of environment and security issues by means of public hearings and information campaigns. In Albania and Serbia, a capacity-building programme was developed in order to promote public participation in decision making related to environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, and urban planning.

Other ENVSEC activities cover the management of shared resources, the protection of mountain regions, transboundary risks from mining and industrial sites, illegal logging, and the implementation of the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

Through regional dialogue and consultations, ENVSEC has assessed the potential impacts of climate change in order to identify hotspots and regional priorities. Regional adaptation strategies for mountainous areas, including the Carpathian and Dinaric Arc transboundary mountain ranges, have been finalised in dialogue with the Alpine, Caucasus, Central Asian and Carpathian regions.

NATO's associated ENVSEC projects include a fully automated early warning system related to drinking water quality and the implementation of hazard prevention strategies in Novi Sad, Serbia, as well as a regional project for water management in the Bosna River that serves as a model for other river basins throughout the region.

Regional cooperation is the key to long-lasting political stability in South Eastern Europe, and ENVSEC fosters dialogue between countries by helping them to tackle environmental challenges together.



“ENVSEC regional and local assessments represent a great tool for developing awareness and the joint identification of “hotspots” or priorities for action. The participative nature of the process contributes to develop transparency and good governance within and between countries.”

CIDA evaluation, 2009

* All references to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

“The ENVSEC Initiative offers solid opportunities for the implementation of important activities in the area of environment and security, especially concerning the removal and remediation of historical pollution in industry and mining. The experiences and lessons learned gained through these projects represent a rich base for future activities. The networks established are a guarantee for new steps towards sustainable development and the strengthening of environmental security in our country and the whole region.”

Kosta Trajkovski, Head of Project Preparation Division, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

REDUCTION OF TRANSBOUNDARY RISKS FROM MINING AND OTHER HAZARDOUS ACTIVITIES

Mining and mineral processing have played a vital role in the history and economy of South Eastern Europe. However, these activities have also left a legacy of thousands of abandoned mining sites that have not been properly closed and, in many cases, have already caused serious damage to public health and the environment. The accident at a small gold mine in Baia Mare, Romania, in 2000 was, at the time, the worst environmental disaster in Europe since Chernobyl. The spill led to serious cyanide pollution of the Tisza and Danube rivers, spurring ENVSEC's involvement in the region. Mining hotspots with potential transboundary risks were mapped out in ENVSEC assessments. The UNEP “Mining for Closure” methodology was developed and endorsed at a high-level sub-regional conference in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2005. The Mining for Closure report outlines policies, practices and guidelines for sustainable mining to reduce environment and security risks in the region.

ENVSEC has implemented a number of demonstration projects for mining sites, focusing on cost-efficient remediation plans, and has compiled examples of best practice for replication.

By means of assessments, workshops, trainings, site visits, consultations and meetings over the last 10 years, UNEP and UNDP, within the ENVSEC framework, have raised awareness, shared knowledge and stimulated coordination and synergies between policy makers, technical experts, academia and the private sector, ensuring a platform for multilateral approaches. The REC and UNECE have facilitated the process towards the ratification and implementation of EU legislation and multilateral environmental agreements on mining through assessments, capacity-building events and workshops.



Before



After



The mining programme was a success story for many reasons: while UNDP focused on concrete work, UNEP provided technical and environmental capacity for the remediation of mining sites in politically sensitive areas. The ENVSEC partners were able to mobilise co-funding from governments that reflected their commitment. All partner organisations were involved and were able to make use of each other's expertise and networks, from project design to implementation.

Abandoned mining sites still represent a major challenge and much work is needed to erase the current hotspots from the map of South Eastern Europe. ENVSEC has identified some problems and provided solutions for action. However, in order to avoid new problem sites appearing on the map it is time to look at active mines and to lay the foundations for responsible and sustainable mining.



Geographical scope: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo*

Donors: Austria, Canada, Finland

Budget: USD 2,150,000

Implementing agencies: UNEP, UNDP, REC, UNECE

Duration: 2004–2012

Local partners: Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration, Albania; Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, Croatia; Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro; Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection, Serbia (formerly Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning); Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo*

Hundreds of years of copper mining in the vicinity of Bor, Serbia, have left a legacy of ore waste and tailings that threaten to cause severe environmental damage to soil and waterways, with the risk of transboundary pollution via the Timok and Pek rivers (above).

PHOTO: CHRISTINA STUHLBERGER

The decommissioned tailings facility in Rreshen, Albania, was one of ENVSEC's pilot remediation sites. Surface water and damaged water diversion channels were endangering the stability of the tailings dam, creating a significant risk of pollution and environmental contamination (opposite).

PHOTOS: BARDHYL SHUSHKU

CASE STUDY



FORESTS – GOVERNANCE AND ENFORCEMENT TO COMBAT ILLEGAL LOGGING

Illegal logging is a threat to the once abundant forests of South Eastern Europe. Albania is among the worst affected by deforestation. In 1990, over half the country was covered by forest, while 20 years later forest cover was down to a quarter. The proportion of trees felled illegally is high and existing laws are often not enforced. Illegal logging can have both environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Environmental damage includes loss of habitats and biodiversity, erosion and land degradation, desertification and climate change, while in socioeconomic terms countries are at risk from corruption and loss of government revenue. Already weak institutions are further undermined by such activities, and along with trade in illegal timber, this can lead to cross-border disputes.

In this ENVSEC programme, national authorities, independent experts and interest groups took part in a fact-finding mission on the scope and effects of illegal logging. A diagnostic audit of the policy, institutional and legislative set-up then led to a report containing recommendations and a regional roadmap.

Following an international conference on environmental crime and illegal logging, organised by ENVSEC in Budapest in 2010, a joint statement was issued by the countries of South Eastern Europe on fostering regional cooperation to combat illegal logging, and on launching a cooperation platform (Themis) to improve governance and the enforcement of forest legislation. The Themis Network ensures ownership by its beneficiaries.

Trainings and workshops, organised with the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, the US Environment Protection Agency and the International Law Enforcement Academy, have helped strengthen the capacities of the national authorities responsible for environmental protection and forest management. The endorsement of the Regional Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement and Trade, with its focus on the cross-border aspects of illegal logging, demonstrates the willingness of countries to identify responses to regional concerns. A parallel programme was implemented in Ukraine, which was able to benefit from the experience gained in South Eastern Europe on combating illegal logging.

The ENVSEC Initiative was able to catalyse further actions. A multi-annual work programme, funded by the Austrian Development Agency and implemented by the REC, was launched in 2012, building on the ENVSEC results. The programme continues to work closely with ENVSEC, sharing best practices and providing further guidance through the Themis Network to support the enforcement of forestry legislation while building strong institutions and forest governance.

Geographical scope: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo*

Donor: Belgium and Finland

Budget: USD 387,958

Implementing agency: REC

Partner organisations: UNDP, OSCE, UNECE

Duration: 2009–2012

Failure to tackle the illegal timber trade can lead to cross-border conflicts.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO

“The illegal logging projects implemented by the REC in our region served as a very important tool to raise awareness of the problem in the beneficiary countries and to encourage a cross-border response from our side. We were glad to be involved from the very beginning and also to see a process started with these projects, resulting in a more coordinated approach via the Themis Network.”

Dragan Asanovic, Assistant Director, Environment Protection Agency, Montenegro



THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, the South Caucasus region includes the three post-Soviet states Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, which have a combined population of about 17 million. With as many as 50 ethnic groups, the South Caucasus has been an area of turbulence since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Protracted conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh remain obstacles to the potential economic benefits of cross-border cooperation. While various environmental challenges, including the management of transboundary resources, pollution from former industrial and military sites and demographic pressures in urban areas, are potential sources of conflict, they can also be opportunities for cooperation. Climate change-induced natural disasters and water shortages are likely to become more severe in the future.

Since 2004, the ENVSEC Initiative has been building on an initial series of national consultations at which a wide range of stakeholders mapped out environment and security hotspots. These consultations formed the basis of the South Caucasus Regional Assessment Report, which was endorsed by the ministers of the environment of the three countries. Since then, ENVSEC has provided a platform for transboundary dialogue and cooperation through a portfolio of 30 core projects along with eight associated projects implemented by NATO with a total budget of USD 7 million.

“The environmental assessment mission to the fire-affected areas in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region is significant in that it brought people together to cooperate on a non-political problem of mutual interest.”

**Ambassador Barbara Gibson,
former Head of the Canadian
Delegation to OSCE**

The management of transboundary natural resources was identified as one of the priority environment and security challenges in the South Caucasus.

PHOTO: ZAHRA AHMADOVA



“ENVSEC’s work on the ground is known for the local ownership of its projects and programmes and its transparency.”

Dr. Martin Ledolter, Managing Director, Austrian Development Agency

In the 2006 OSCE-led fact-finding mission to investigate the impacts of wildfires in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, OSCE and UNEP were able to quickly organise a team to make recommendations on how to rehabilitate affected areas and prevent future fires, with national experts working alongside the international team. The mission was key to building confidence and communication channels.



At the request of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, NATO, in cooperation with OSCE, supported the improvement of the river monitoring system for the shared Kura-Aras basin. Each of the three countries received identical laboratory equipment and joint training on sampling, analysis and data sharing. A watershed quality monitoring system was developed, and a data sharing platform was created. The project was implemented in close collaboration with ministries, state committees and national departments.

Through the Aarhus Centres, the ENVSEC Initiative has been able to integrate the perspective of non-governmental organisations, communities and citizens in tackling environment and security risks.

Armenia now has a network of 15 Aarhus Centres that support the participation of NGOs and civil society in addressing environment and security issues. The Aarhus Centre in Tbilisi, Georgia, is one of the most active in the region, with a focus on active public participation in decision making in environmental impact assessment processes. The Aarhus Centres are linked to the programme Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE), implemented in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Through OSCE, ENVSEC has supported this small grants programme to build up civil society capacity, benefiting 41 NGO projects in the region since its launch in 2009.

ENVSEC partners with NGOs to address environmental challenges at community level through the CASE NGO Small Grants Programme.

PHOTO: ZAHRA AHMADOVA

As part of its work to address transboundary natural resources, ENVSEC has also addressed challenges associated with the management of mountains and protected areas and has implemented projects related to the implementation of the Espoo Convention, urban environmental assessment, climate change studies, and mining and waste management.

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

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE WATER CONVENTION

The Kura-Aras basin belongs to the territory of all three countries and covers almost two-thirds of the entire region. The countries are heavily dependent on the two rivers for irrigation, industrial and municipal water resources, as well as drinking water and sanitation. Water quality and ecosystems in the basin have suffered greatly from human impacts over the last 50 years. Cooperation between the three countries of the South Caucasus on water quality, quantity and availability is therefore vitally important.

When Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia became independent, water resources management regulations were still in force from Soviet Union times. Since then, each country has adopted new water legislation. Through the NATO/OSCE river monitoring project that ran from 2002 to 2008, ENVSEC assisted the countries to strengthen their technical capacities for assessing water quality. ENVSEC has since then mainly focused on supporting bilateral and multilateral cooperation, using the UNECE Water Convention as a formal platform for collaboration to advance good water management principles.

As of 2013, only Azerbaijan is a party to the convention. In 2009, at the request of Georgia, ENVSEC assessed the legal, institutional and financial requirements for the country to ratify and implement the convention. This assessment contributed to the negotiations towards a bilateral agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia.



Geographical scope: Azerbaijan, Georgia

Donor: Finland, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Budget: USD 132,333

Implementing partners: UNECE, OSCE

Duration: 2009–2014

Local partners: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Azerbaijan; Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgia

Since 2011, UNECE and OSCE have facilitated bilateral consultations on developing a draft agreement on the Kura River. Five bilateral meetings have taken place in the last three years, building trust and leaving only a few issues unresolved. The agreement would provide a framework for cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia on water pollution prevention and control, biodiversity conservation, emergency situations, data and information sharing, and public participation. It foresees the establishment of a joint commission for the protection and rational use of the water resources of the Kura River basin.

In parallel, the ENVSEC Initiative aims to improve cooperation between Armenia and Georgia through a project complementary to the UNDP/GEF project on the Kura-Aras basin. Bilateral consultations have taken place to discuss transboundary water management and a draft legal framework on cooperation between the two countries has been developed, focusing primarily on joint water quality monitoring and early warning systems.



ENVSEC provided laboratory equipment as well as joint training for the countries on sampling, analysis and data sharing (above).

PHOTO: VANO SHLAMOV

ENVSEC has been facilitating bilateral negotiations on a water cooperation agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia (opposite).

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO



LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

BEST PRACTICES

The following best practices offer an insight into solutions that can potentially be replicated in different contexts. In the framework of addressing complex environment and security challenges, best practices should be seen as an adaptive learning process rather than a fixed set of rules and guidelines.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS

ENVSEC assessments help to raise understanding and awareness of environment and security risks at local, national, regional and international level. Involving the right balance of people lends legitimacy to the results, while tapping into the complementary skills of the partner organisations ensures that the identified hotspots are analysed from different angles. The assessment methodology remains sufficiently flexible to respond to the specific needs of each region. The assessments are launched at high-level meetings, reaching a large audience internationally and stimulating policy debate on the environment-security nexus.

CARTOGRAPHIC PORTRAYAL

The cartographic portrayal, or mapping, of a given environment or security risk is a key tool in all assessments and represents an effective and efficient means of collecting views, ideas and perceptions about environment and security hotspots from stakeholders in the region. It highlights the fact that, in many cases, identified hotspots are not confined within national boundaries, making common solutions necessary. The maps are clear and easy to understand, making them accessible to a wide audience rather than a small circle of experts.

JOINT PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTATION

By jointly designing and implementing projects and programmes, partner cooperation exists not only on the programming level but also at project level, involving national and local stakeholders. While this may require greater coordination efforts, the benefits clearly outweigh the costs. As a result, project implementation is smooth, cost effective and owned by the organisations, as well as the countries.

“The partnership is key to supporting countries to manage environmental risks through dialogue and neighbourly cooperation.”

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General, UNEP Executive Director



MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AS A TOOL TOWARDS COOPERATION

International conventions provide a legal basis for promoting regional cooperation, and countries are encouraged and assisted to become members of international environmental conventions. Active support to the implementation of legally binding conventions significantly improves environmental policy in the regions and leads to the development of transboundary agreements and treaties. In parallel, capacity-building activities help to strengthen environmental institutions and convention secretariats.

AARHUS CENTRES

Aarhus Centres provide a valuable platform for the active engagement of local actors in decision making. The centres disseminate knowledge of environment and security hotspots and encourage affected communities to contribute to addressing the issues. Through coordination between Aarhus Centres and the organisation of annual meetings, knowledge sharing is also promoted at regional level.

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCES

Taking advantage of its range of networks and contacts, the ENVSEC partners are able to make use of different entry points for negotiation, according to the specific context. High-level meetings lead to joint declarations or agreements, which can be followed up to achieve policy developments.

“During its ten-year period of existence ENVSEC has proved itself as an Initiative that directs its efforts not only towards the solving of transboundary environmental problems but also towards the prevention of possible tension between countries. We can rely on ENVSEC’s diplomacy.”

Ms. Nino Gokhelashvili, National Focal Point for the ENVSEC Initiative,
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia



“ENVSEC is a rare upshot of the implementation of the February 2005 Paris Declaration with regard to donor harmonization and local ownership.”

CIDA mid-term evaluation, 2006

The Initiative's strength lies in its ability to create synergies and engage multiple actors, building trust in regions like South Eastern Europe that have emerged from recent periods of conflict.

PHOTO: VICTOR MELLO

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS, CATALYSING ACTION

The ENVSEC Initiative provides policy advice that is backed up by concrete demonstration projects. By disseminating the results of pilot projects through reports, conferences and workshops, the Initiative is able to catalyse further projects by other organisations and donors.

PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

The ENVSEC Initiative itself can be seen as an example of best practice. The partner organisations are committed to the Initiative and provide complementary funding and resources, for example in the form of dedicated staff. As a result, even with small budgets the ENVSEC Initiative can achieve cost-effective solutions and tangible results. Multi-agency cooperation can only work with the commitment, political will, flexibility and creativity of the key individuals who are part of ENVSEC. From the synergies created by cooperation, innovative solutions can emerge and lasting impacts can be achieved.



THE ADDED VALUE OF ENVSEC

A LONG-TERM APPROACH

The ENVSEC Initiative adds the dimension of national and regional stability to environmental challenges, raising awareness of the link through its risk assessments. Addressing the challenges from a long-term programmatic perspective, rather than via isolated short-term projects, results in sustainable outcomes.

SYNERGIES FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

No single actor can respond fully to complex environment and security challenges, especially in post-conflict and transition countries. As a multi-agency partnership, ENVSEC exploits synergies and offers an integrated response. Cooperation rather than competition has advantages for everyone involved. The partner organisations can share their knowledge and experience, while the beneficiary countries and donors are able to use ENVSEC as a one-stop shop to obtain a package of services rather than competing projects.

“The Dniester-III is a unique project considering its extraordinarily high efficiency reached with relatively small funds. The project lifted transboundary cooperation in the basin to a new level...”

Svetlana Slesarenok,
Head of “MAMA-86”, Odessa



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.

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

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.





“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

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-



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.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of ENVSEC, the Initiative would like to express its appreciation and gratitude to all members of the extended ENVSEC family, acknowledging the national focal points in each of the partner countries, the many experts and organisations who have contributed their views and perspectives to numerous ENVSEC activities, and all collaborating partners who have contributed in one way or another to the joint efforts of the ENVSEC Initiative.

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