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The State Of The Environment On The Armenia Coast

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The project consortium consists of 4 partners:

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P1- *Sinop University, Sinop, Turkey*

P2-*Chamber of Agriculture of Trabzon, Turkey*

P3-*International Center for Social Research and Policy Analysis in Tbilisi, Georgia.*

According to the Project Implementation Plan, within the activity *T2.1 Development of “Pollution and solutions in BSB - Manual for everyone”* we made a manual. This manual contains several topics. Through these newsletters we present these topics. Today we choose to present you:

The State Of The Environment On The Armenia Coast

Armenia continues to face problems with respect to air, water, soil pollution, and threatened ecosystems that may bear significant political and economic consequences. According to a recent survey, 88 percent of the Armenians polled believe that Armenia's environment is deteriorating (Danielian and Dallakyan, 2007).

Republic of Armenia is the landlocked country on the crossroad between Europe and Asia (southeastern Europe/western Asia, east of Turkey, north of Iran and south of the mountainous Caucasus region (Transcaucasia), which also does not remain indifferent from the global environmental challenges. Global environmental challenges are effected and linked to the local issues, such as loss of biodiversity, over-use of natural resources and environmental and health issues, poverty and the sustainability of ecosystems.

Armenia is located in the Middle East, between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Due to Armenia's geography and its history of being part of the Soviet Union in the 20th century, many environmental issues have emerged due to pollution (Environmental issues in Armenia).

Among them is Energy usage, due to its geography it relies on other countries for energy, but also uses nuclear energy. Also, one very important issue is that of Lake Sevan which has shown to be important in the running of the country. Lastly, deforestation has proven to be a very important issue to Armenia due to the loss on trees and the lack of wood. Yet, it is prominent to point out that in all of these issues information technology could prove to be both helpful and harmful, but most prominently in the Energy sector where nuclear energy is present.

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Energy is an important resource that every country needs, Armenia is no exception. However, due its geographic location, it can hardly create energy due to its lack of natural resources. Armenia relies on oil that comes from Georgia and Azerbaijan (Kazarian). However, it does create energy using the Soviet-era nuclear plant, Metzamor Nuclear Power Plant, to create nuclear energy. It is precisely this that is causing many environmental problems due to radioactivity.

One other most important environmental hazard is Lake Sevan because of the great exploitation it has undergone. Lake Sevan has been suffering from water pollution as well as a decrease in its size over the years (Lake Sevan Case). This is due to the fact that during the Soviet era, this lake had been exploited for hydro power energy resulting in the reduction of the volume of the lake. This greatly impacted the agriculture because "Lake Sevan's water was drained in order to provide the Ararat Valley with irrigation water for farms," (Lake Sevan). And it was also because of this that the Lake's volume decreased. Due to the decrease in the available water and the man-made pollution cause by dumping waste on the lake, the bio-diversity of the lake also started to drop (Lake Sevan Case). More and more the sea population began to decrease. Though this issue is very important many advances, like the regulation of trout and the amount of water used from the lake, have made it possible for the lake to go back on track to its original state, though the lake itself can be pretty dangerous because it's polluted.

Deforestation has proven to be one of the leading environmental problems in Armenia as well because it is causing the reduction of trees in Armenia which can be necessary as fire wood in the winter. The reason why deforestation is growing at an alarming rate is because of the lack of governmental policy to protect the forests and because of the economic profit it gives corporations that benefit from timber financially (Deforestation and Illegal Logging). Deforestation is very important because it means lack of resources in Armenia and if trees are lost the whole country will not only lose money but a healthy environment where trees are the source of energy.

Armenia has been dealing with many environmental problems that have resulted in the loss of natural resources, life, and energy. Energy alone has proven to be more harmful because it is using nuclear power which could be dangerous for the Armenian population. Lake Sevan has been polluted and as a result has been responsible for biodiversity to decrease overtime. Through illegal cutting of trees the country has been losing much of its forests and as a result a valuable resource needed in order to protect them during the winter.

Environmental Issues:

- 1.) Deforestation
- 2.) Water pollution: lake Sevan is polluted with human chemicals and an over use of its water for energy.
- 3.) Nuclear plants: nuclear plants can contaminate the air and the surrounding areas if they are not properly contained and overseen.

Armenia's environment became severely polluted during the Soviet period. The Soviet government pushed heavy industry development to a massive scale, throughout the Soviet Union. The government ignored the environmental harm caused by these industries for too long, but in the 1980s liberalizing political reforms in the USSR resulted in the formation of environmental groups, which began to express concerns about the state of the environment.

Due to the pressure of these groups, several factories in Armenia that were sources of severe pollution were closed, starting from 1989. One of these, a rubber and chemical plant in Nairit, reopened in 1992. as Armenia needed the income generated by exporting the plant's products. Although national environmental laws have been put into effect in Armenia since it became independent, no comprehensive environmental protection program has emerged, and environmental initiatives are typically addressed to an ad hoc basis.

In an attempt to offset a six-year-old energy crisis caused by blockades by Azerbaijan

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and Turkey, the Armenian government in mid-1995 reactivated a nuclear power plant at Metsamor, close since 1988. after the catastrophic earthquake in northern Armenia.

Environmental groups opposed reopening of the plant, since it poses an environmental threat. Although it is in an earthquake-prone area, it was not built to withstand earthquakes. Portions of Armenia also were rapidly deforested during the winters of 1992, 1993, and 1994, as trees were often the only available source of fuel.

Armenian government claims they are ready to shut the plant down, as soon as they get able to replace its energy production with alternative energy sources. Soil intoxication is yet another problem and a result of reckless use of pesticides, in order to increase the yield. Usage of DDT has poisoned both soil and the rivers.

The country is almost entirely dependant on importing energy. The only domestic energy resource in use is hydropower, providing about 30% of energy demands, and the single nuclear power plant. All the natural gas for now comes from Russia, and existing inaccurate estimate of coal reserves is basis for opening a state owned coalmine.

Renewable energy sources are scarce except for the water and the wind, which might represent significant resources for the future. From 2001, 7.6% of the land in Armenia has obtained the status of protected areas. In further attempts to protect biodiversity, 10 fauna species have received a status of endangered species, from 2001 onwards.

Climate change:

Caucasus region already suffers serious consequences of climate changes on biodiversity and deposition of ice and snow, but climate would also have a significant effect on climate-dependent economy. One of most obvious effect on nature will be landscape zones shift towards higher altitudes, such as desert and semi-desert area which will expand for 33%, while sub-alpine and alpine zone will be reduced up to 22%. It is expected reduction of river flow, precipitation in continental regions and of agriculture yield, and increase of draught rate, precipitation in Sevana lake area, as well as expander of habitats of natural carriers of malaria and plague.

Armenia, bordering Georgia and Azerbaijan, is sharing some of the same ecosystems and biodiversity of the Caucasus region, which is one of the riches areas in diversity, in Europe. However, species extinction within the region is reaching alarming rate. Therefore, the country will face same consequences of Caucasus range ice sheet melting, water reserves and biodiversity loss as two other neighboring countries.

For more informations please visit our website <https://www.spiritbsb.online/>.

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