

Armenia Becomes First Eastern European Country to Achieve Direct Access Under the Adaptation Fund

Armenia's Environmental Project Implementation Unit Accredited as Fund's 25th National Implementing Entity

Washington, DC (November 8, 2016) -- The Adaptation Fund has broken ground by enhancing access to climate finance for vulnerable communities in Armenia as the country became the first in Eastern Europe to have a National Implementing Entity (NIE) accredited under the Fund's [Direct Access](#) modality.

The [Environmental Project Implementation Unit \(EPIU\)](#) in Armenia's Ministry of Nature Protection was accredited by the Adaptation Fund Board on November 4 as the Fund's 25th NIE across the globe.

The Adaptation Fund pioneered Direct Access, which gives developing countries the opportunity to access climate finance and develop and implement projects directly through accredited NIEs while building from their own capacity to adapt to climate change. EPIU will now be able to design projects eligible for Adaptation Fund resources that will help the most vulnerable communities in Armenia adapt and build resilience to climate change.

"Being the first Eastern European country and the first country in the Southern Caucasus to be accredited as an NIE in the Adaptation Fund is very encouraging for us," said **Gevorg Nersisyan**, EPIU's Director. *"It is a very important achievement by which the implementation of projects addressing natural landscape adaptation under climate change will be possible."*

EPIU also became the Fund's third NIE to be accredited under an alternative, streamlined accreditation process developed by the Fund last year for smaller entities.

"This is good news for the vulnerable communities in Armenia enduring hardships related to climate change, and perhaps will open doors for other areas in Eastern Europe enduring similar challenges," said Adaptation Fund Board Chair **Naresh Sharma**. *"Accrediting the first Eastern European country under Direct Access creates opportunities for Armenia to develop concrete adaptation and resilience projects for its most climate-vulnerable communities as well as potentially provide models that other countries in the region may be able to replicate."*

"This accreditation breaks ground for the region. It is also a reflection of the Fund's active [climate finance readiness program](#) to help guide NIEs through the accreditation process, and its growing community of practice where NIEs share

knowledge, best practices and experiences,” added Adaptation Fund Board secretariat Accreditation Officer **Silvia Mancini**.

Since Armenia is landlocked, its natural landscapes are more vulnerable to global warming and climate change and at risk to landslides, mudflows, groundwater fluctuations, loss of biodiversity, desertification and abandonment or overuse of lands. Ararat and Armavir Provinces located in the central part of the country and around the capital are particularly vulnerable. *“All these factors have a direct impact on the socio-economic development of the country, particularly on agriculture, as lands of agricultural importance are less represented in the country,”* Nersisyan advised.

The upper and lower layers of Armenia’s mountainous forest regions additionally serve as important ecosystems, but are also vulnerable to climate change and have urgent natural landscape adaptation needs. Specially protected natural areas play important roles in the country as essential climate adaptation activities for stabilizing the biosphere.

“Stabilization of the conditions for the existence of biodiversity of these layers and at the same time extension of coastal layers of rivers, lakes, as well as soil protection layers of agricultural lands will raise landscape resistance and will reduce the impact of adverse factors affecting the loss of biodiversity,” Nersisyan said. *“The improvement of management procedures of these areas will have significant importance both in those areas and in adjacent areas to provide stability of biodiversity habitats. This will create an opportunity to develop ecotourism and recreational environments, which will also lead to Armenia’s socio-economic development.”*

ABOUT the ADAPTATION FUND

Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed US \$357.5 million to support 55 concrete, localized climate adaptation and resilience projects in 48 countries, with more than 3.6 million direct beneficiaries.

Communications: Matthew Pueschel, mpueschel@adaptation-fund.org or +1 202 473 6743