

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Armenia



*Workshop Report
December 2025*

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Executive Summary

The workshop “**Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Armenia**” was convened as part of the European Union’s Green Weeks initiative, a series of events highlighting the intersections between climate action, environmental health, and sustainable development. The workshop took place on 21 November and demonstrated the central role of biodiversity in Armenia’s development trajectory—particularly as the country prepares to host the **17th Conference of the Parties (COP17)** to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2026.

Armenia stands at a pivotal moment. As a recognised biodiversity hotspot within the Caucasus, the country is home to rich endemic species and ecologically critical landscapes such as Lake Sevan. Hosting COP17 presents both an opportunity and a national responsibility: to show leadership in advancing the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, reaffirm commitments under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and catalyse broad-based reforms across sectors including agriculture, water, health, education, and tourism. Against this backdrop, the workshop gathered ministries, UN agencies, development partners, academia, civil society, and private sector actors to explore how biodiversity can be woven more deeply into Armenia’s policies, institutions, and everyday decision-making.

The workshop reaffirmed that **biodiversity is not a standalone environmental concern**, but a foundation for human wellbeing, economic resilience, and sustainable livelihoods. Opening remarks from the European Union, the United Nations, and the Ministry of Environment underscored the urgency of mainstreaming biodiversity within national planning, especially as Armenia accelerates preparations for COP17. Speakers highlighted increasing momentum on environmental reforms, the need for stronger science–policy connections, and the importance of governance frameworks that cut across ministries and sectors.

Four thematic panels explored the links between biodiversity and priority national sectors:

Food Systems and Water discussions emphasised that Armenia’s agriculture and rural livelihoods depend on healthy ecosystems, reliable water supplies, and robust data systems. Participants reiterated the persistent challenges of limited and inconsistent data on resource use, land degradation, and water scarcity. Development partners stressed the need for institutionalised monitoring systems, sustainable farming incentives, rehabilitated irrigation, and coordinated forest management, recognising that food security and biodiversity protection are deeply intertwined.

The **Health and One Health** panel illuminated the relationship between ecosystem integrity and human wellbeing. Participants raised concerns about excessive use of antibiotics and pesticides, rising antimicrobial resistance, and the appearance of new vector species, all of which underscore the health consequences of ecosystem degradation. A unified, cross-ministerial One Health approach was identified as essential to reducing pollution, safeguarding public health, and advancing sustainable agricultural practices that protect both people and nature.

Youth and Education discussions highlighted both enthusiasm and gaps in engaging young people in environmental policy and action. Youth representatives called for greater inclusion, more platforms for participation, and stronger integration of biodiversity and climate literacy into education systems. Participants stressed that meaningful youth involvement, especially outside Yerevan, is critical for building the next generation of biodiversity leaders, and that tools such as citizen science, digital technologies, AI, and remote sensing can empower youth to contribute directly to monitoring and conservation.

The session on **Tourism and Nature-Based Economies** reaffirmed that sustainable tourism could support conservation and rural development, but only if biodiversity protections are at the core of planning.

Case studies from Armenia and neighbouring Georgia illustrated both successes and tensions, including the risks posed by poorly regulated activities, fragile habitats, and unequal benefit-sharing. Participants emphasised zoning, ecological corridors, community involvement, and capacity building for tourism operators as essential conditions for ensuring that economic gains do not come at the expense of nature. With COP17 expected to bring a sharp rise in visitors, careful preparation will be required to manage ecological pressures.

Across the workshop, several cross-cutting insights emerged. Participants highlighted the need for improved data systems for land, forest, agriculture, and water management; stronger inter-ministerial coordination; strategies to reduce harmful chemical use; and structured mechanisms for youth engagement. The discussion also underscored the importance of protecting the rights and livelihoods of communities reliant on natural resources, ensuring they are not marginalised in the push for environmental reform.

Finally, the workshop identified priorities for **capacity building and institutional strengthening** in advance of COP17. These include training government officials and local experts on biodiversity negotiations and monitoring; establishing dedicated units within ministries for COP implementation; improving communication channels between national and local authorities; and ensuring transparent and harmonised systems for data collection, stakeholder engagement, and reporting.

Overall, the workshop served as a timely platform to align stakeholders, consolidate lessons, and build momentum toward COP17. By weaving biodiversity into the core of Armenia's development agenda, across agriculture, health, education, tourism, and governance, the country can demonstrate regional leadership and build a lasting legacy for both nature and society.

1.0 Introduction

1. The European Delegation to Armenia drafted a preliminary concept note for the *Green Week*. This followed the guidance provided by broader EU green programming related to issues such as climate mitigation and adaptation, water security, green growth, or climate and environmental security. It has now become *Green Weeks* and took place during the period, 17 November to 8 December. The workshop on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Armenia was one of the events organised during the weeks.

1.1 Workshop Purpose and Objectives

2. The event, “*Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Armenia*”, demonstrated how biodiversity underpins Armenia’s sustainable development, linking nature, health, food systems, and economic well-being. It also emphasised the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches necessary to ensure that biodiversity action is integrated into national policy and practice; a core message for COP17.

The Objectives were to:

- Raise national awareness of the importance of biodiversity and its integration into policies on health, agriculture, tourism, and climate resilience, amongst others;
- Highlight EU-Armenia and UNEP-Armenia cooperation in advancing biodiversity mainstreaming and COP17 readiness;
- Activate participation of key ministries (Environment, Economy, Health, Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Education), academia, youth, and businesses in the COP17 preparatory process;
- Showcase Armenia’s scientific and policy achievements, including the new National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), ecosystem restoration efforts, and innovative conservation models (OECMs, *ex situ* and *in situ* initiatives); and
- Inspire lasting partnerships between national institutions, civil society, and international organisations for biodiversity action beyond COP17.

1.2 Background: Biodiversity in Armenia

3. In October 2026, Armenia will host the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This event positions Armenia on the global stage as a biodiversity hotspot in the Caucasus, home to unique endemic species such as Caucasian leopard and vital ecosystems, such as Lake Sevan. Hosting COP17 is both an opportunity and a responsibility. It will require the Government to demonstrate leadership in advancing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, strengthening national strategies such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and showcasing Armenia’s ecological heritage and conservation efforts.
4. COP17 will also help to catalyse international cooperation, mobilise climate and biodiversity finance, and create momentum for systemic reforms in protected area management, ecosystem restoration, and cross-border collaboration. For the government, COP17 is a strategic priority, reinforcing Armenia’s global role and unlocking long-term commitments from partners.
5. The Government of Armenia will require substantial support in areas such as logistical coordination, financing for venue and infrastructure, technical expertise for biodiversity negotiations, and stakeholder engagement to ensure COP17 is both effectively managed and leaves a lasting legacy for national biodiversity policy and practice.

1.3 Participating Institutions and Stakeholders

6. These included participation of ministries, UN agencies, academia, and civil society.
7. The Partners of the event were:
 - **Lead organisers:** EU Delegation to Armenia and UNEP Regional Office for Europe; and
 - **Supporting partners:** UN organisations, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Ministry of Education, American University of Armenia Acopian Center for the Environment, WWF Armenia, FPWC, Institute of Botany, GIZ, ADA, AFD.

1.4 Workshop Overview

8. The format was a half-day programme featuring four thematic sessions (panels), aligned with UNEP's and national stakeholder priorities.
9. The Agenda is provided in Annex 5.1.

2.0 Opening Remarks – Key Messages

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Armenia



Opening remarks and keynote speeches

- Vassilis Maragos, Ambassador European Union Delegation to Armenia
- Françoise Jacob, UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia
- Aram Meymaryam, Deputy Minister of Environment

2.1 European Union Delegation to Armenia

10. Emphasised importance of topic generally and briefly summarised the Panel topics to be discussed, related to a general peace process. Also emphasised were the well-being of citizens and the relationship to the State. Biodiversity Strategy was related to the daily life of citizens. Noted that the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) underlines the need for collective action and public administration need to be strengthened and people to be empowered, trained. Welcomed the participants to the event and encouraged engagement and debate, sharing experiences. Looking forward to the actions arising from the day.

2.2 UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia

11. Read out some remarks, recounting some of the milestones surpassed during the last two years, noting the increasing momentum and the knowledge already present. Noted the commitment of the Government. Discussed biodiversity mainstreaming, its meaning and context within other sectors generally and specifically, tourism, and infrastructure. Noted the challenges posed by the mining sector which has one of the largest negative footprints on the natural environment. Also noted the relevance of governance and the commitment of academia and of the UN. Need this to continue especially expanding the science base and mainstreaming environment within engineering courses. Discussed actions plans, processes and aligning with required outcomes, especially via pilot projects with the private sector.
12. Finally, noted the support of the EU Delegation.

2.3 Ministry of Environment

13. Thanked the two previous speakers and re-iterated the importance of the topic, especially the need for mainstreaming. Described the Government's work on this and its preparation for the forthcoming COP17 to the Convention on Biological Diversity, taking place in Armenia in 2026.

3.0 Panel Summaries – Key Messages

14. Each panellist introduced themselves. The moderator then posed various questions to each of the panellists and then invited questions from the audience.

3.1 Food Systems and Water – Integrating biodiversity into food and agriculture

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Panel 1

Food Systems and Water Integrating biodiversity into food and agriculture

Moderator: Lawrence Jones Walters

- AudreyGourdien, Programme Manager, AFD
- Nora Alanakyan, Deputy Head Office, ADA
- Levon Movsisyan, Component Manager, GIZ
- BotagozNartayeva, Country Programme Coordinator, FAO Armenia

Discussion Points:

- Linkages made between biodiversity, agriculture, and food security;
- Noted role of agrobiodiversity, soil health, and water management in resilience;
- Showcasing EU- and AF-funded projects on biodiversity-based adaptation, and community-level initiatives;
- Opportunity to involve environment/biodiversity into food systems. The Challenges to doing this are data availability, and water scarcity, but also the need for institutionalised monitoring systems, stronger economic incentives, and coordinated governance;
- One of the persistent problems has been the partial absence and insufficient quality of data on usage of natural resources and on agriculture. It undermines the evidence needed for delivering quality policies and strategies and the required decision-making. FAO has been working with Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Centre (State Non-Commercial Organisation subordinated to the Ministry of Environment) for collecting data, and, still, the problem exists;
- FAO additionally emphasised the need to institutionalise long-term monitoring processes under the new NBSAP and to synchronise data collection across agriculture, forestry, and water sectors to support evidence-based decision-making;
- ADA has been working in areas of agriculture and managing natural resources (for specifically, also, soil and water health). Among the many, few challenges are standing out: the intensive agriculture and related land degradation and overuse and contamination of surface water and aquifers (for agricultural purposes). ADA seeks solutions for halting the further pollution of water and upscaling the irrigation system. Overall, there is a need to facilitate actions, as not much time remains until the point of irreversible damage. ADA also noted that transitioning to quality-driven,

biodiversity-positive production systems requires stronger economic models that keep farmers profitable, supported by reliable data and efficient water governance;

- The knowledge and capacity gaps for sustainable management of resources are widespread at all levels. There are also institutional and regulatory bottlenecks. Participants highlighted the need to invest in the knowledge and capacity of rural communities, particularly for sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, given their strong dependence on these resources;
- GIZ is involved in biodiversity protection, specifically pasture systems. The climate change risks are now materialising and impact on the agriculture sector is increasingly visible: negative effects on agrobiodiversity, food security soil health water availability are observed. Armenia's Agricultural Adaptation Action Plan, also known as the [National Action Program of Adaptation to Climate Change](#), is a government strategy to increase the resilience of its agricultural sector to climate change¹. GIZ currently supports the delivery of the adaptation action plan in agriculture. The focus is on climate-resilient crops, pastures, and linking the incentives and sustainability: agricultural, land and water usage data is also important. GIZ stressed that farmers and local communities need to be actively brought on board, supported by state-driven incentive schemes that link sustainability to income generation, otherwise climate-smart practices will not scale. Consumers can also play a role by driving demand for sustainably produced food;
- AFD helps with the draft Water Strategy, underlining the need for a participatory strategy-making, focusing on water scarcity, drinking and irrigation water and water losses that make pressure on the resources. AFD additionally emphasised that central ministries must not only be consulted but must lead biodiversity mainstreaming efforts across the food and water sectors to ensure coherence and long-term ownership;
- The participants underlined the importance of integrated and efficient community forest management. It was mentioned that the windbreaks are not efficient (many projects failed in the past) and those could be integrated with food-forests. Specifically, FAO and GIZ put some efforts towards enhancing community forest management, to make it more efficient and reduce the dependence of the communities from the forests. NTFPs are not yet regulated, and AFD noted the institutional issues; and
- Overall, there is a need for coordinated strategy and coordinated efforts for developing integrated forest management projects. It was also noted that forests are essential for food security and rural livelihoods, creating a social as well as environmental challenge that requires stronger regulation of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and targeted capacity building for communities to adopt sustainable harvesting practices.

¹ Probably meant the 2023-2026 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Agricultural Sector Strategy: [web-link here](#)

3.2 Health and One Health – Linking biodiversity and human wellbeing

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Panel 2

Health and One Health–Linking biodiversity and human wellbeing

Moderator: Lawrence Jones Walters

- Dr. Siddhartha Sankar Datta, Representative and Head of WHO Country Office
- Raimund Jehle, Head of FAO
- Dr NuneBakunts, Deputy Director General of National Centre for Disease Control

Discussion Points:

- Noted role of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity in human health;
- Presentation of Armenia's collaboration with UNEP on Anti-Microbial Resistance;
- Cross-sector discussion involving Ministry of Health, MoEnv, and MoE on integrated One Health strategies;
- The uncontrolled or badly controlled circulation of pesticides and antibiotics is an overarching problem with consequences of circular contamination of water, soil, food and feed;
- Ministry of Health (MoH) undertakes some activities and campaigns to reduce the usage of antibiotics among the population, but also to reduce the climate change health risks. However, there is not a general strategy on limiting the usage of pesticides, antibiotics and contaminating substances in economy and agriculture;

A few years ago, the MoH reported the presence of malaria-vector mosquitoes (*Anopheles maculipennis* complex). Historically, Armenia used *Gambusia affinis* for vector control, although records are uncertain because this species was often confused with *Gambusia holbrooki* before their taxonomic separation in 1990. The related species mentioned in recent surveys, now believed to have disappeared from Armenia due to its strict dietary requirements, has not been recorded for more than a decade. This raises the possibility that *G. affinis* may also no longer be present in the region;

- WHO emphasised that farmers cannot meaningfully contribute to society, food systems, or environmental protection if their own health is compromised. Biodiversity protection and human health must therefore be understood as mutually reinforcing, with health serving as a key vehicle for safeguarding ecosystems;
- WHO and the ministries highlighted the rapid rise in antibiotic use in livestock for economic efficiency, which is accelerating antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Although reliable data are limited, AMR is becoming a major threat, with daily impacts such as reduced effectiveness of common antibiotics and increased difficulty treating routine infections;

- Participants stressed that excessive antibiotic and pesticide use directly affects farmers' health and food safety, reinforcing the need to introduce alternative agricultural practices and translate global One Health knowledge into locally adapted, community-driven solutions;
- Adaptation and mitigation measures must be made concrete for farmers, with clear explanations of how reduced antibiotic use improves both health and long-term productivity. Nature-based solutions should be paired with viable economic models so that rural populations understand the benefits and costs of adopting safer practices;
- Consumers were noted as important drivers of change, capable of influencing market demand for food produced without excessive antibiotics and chemical inputs;
- At the government level, WHO underlined that the NBSAP and other strategic documents must not be implemented in silos. Ecosystem integrity, biodiversity, public health, agriculture, and water management are interconnected, requiring stronger cross-disciplinary coordination across ministries and UN agencies; and
- Participants also highlighted the economic rationale for integrated action: preventing AMR, reducing pollution, and strengthening ecosystem health produce measurable long-term economic benefits, reduce health system burdens, and increase resilience of rural communities.

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Panel 3

Youth and Education – Empowering future biodiversity leaders

Moderator: Garabet Kazanjian

- Lia Kalforian, EU Young Ambassadors programme, American University of Armenia
- Sona Kalantaryan, Project Director, FPWC
- Thierry Lucas, Youth training on Environmental leadership, UNEP

Discussion Points:

- Acopian Center for the Environment (AUA) and EU Young Ambassadors presented how youth is involved into climate change dialogue and campaigns, and what are the achievements and challenges;
- Youth representatives are interested to know whether and how Artificial Intelligence (AI), biodiversity identity and remote sensing are used in engagement and in decision-making;
- Remote sensing in citizen science was elaborated;
- The participants discussed various ways to include youth in the climate change discourse and policy discussion and planning, such as:
 - (i) Interactive sessions on biodiversity literacy, citizen science (BioBlitz), and creative youth outreach
 - (ii) Presentation of UNEP's youth training on environmental leadership and participatory governance
 - (iii) Climate Change Youth Advisory Board has been established with the support of UNICEF and the Ministry of Environment to contribute to climate policy and action
 - (iv) UNEP organised a visit of a group of youngsters to Denmark to discuss climate change-related issues with renown scientists
 - (v) there is a Biodiversity Collage Toolkit developed for knowledge building and training on biodiversity issues and specific to Armenia, which can be used for, and by, youth
- Youth representatives highlighted that: (i) there is a need for more space for involvement of youth, more opportunities-events-platforms, not only for CBD COP17; and (ii) specifically for COP17, the youth representatives would undertake a media action to raise the interest of youth in general; they would popularise topics that are not popular now;

- In general, environment, biodiversity and climate change literacy and space for action needs to be expanded among the youth, at all levels, since the childhood. The role of the youth in ideation, leading reforms also given the expected increase in the number and scope of environmental challenges is important;
- While the participants presented ideas and some practices of involvement of youngsters into climate action, environmental protection, research and advocacy, no coordinated and integrated approach was presented by them, or the authorities present at the workshop;
- COP17 was highlighted as an opportunity for active and meaningful youth engagement, not symbolic participation. Youth should be positioned as knowledge holders and co-organisers of events, particularly through youth centres and regional networks;
- Participants stressed the need to translate complex biodiversity and climate concepts into youth-friendly, accessible formats and local languages. Early education was highlighted as essential, with tools such as “Climate Frescos” and the “Biodiversity Collage” recognised as effective ways to build literacy from an early age;
- The urban–rural divide was noted as a major barrier to equitable youth participation. Socio-economic disparities limit opportunities for regional youth, despite the fact that 25% of Armenia’s population is young. Participants recommended organising COP17-related and biodiversity events outside Yerevan and strengthening the involvement of regional youth centres;
- UNEP also noted forthcoming collaboration with World Food Programme to integrate environmental and biodiversity-awareness components into school feeding programmes, helping ensure systematic engagement at the community level;
- A stronger long-term vision for youth engagement is needed beyond COP17, including pathways for sustained participation in environmental governance, research, monitoring, and entrepreneurship;
- Participants emphasised the need to highlight career opportunities in environment, climate, biodiversity, and sustainability. Armenia faces a significant shortage of skilled professionals, and motivating young people to enter these fields is crucial to addressing the environmental crisis;
- Key challenges limiting youth involvement include: tokenism; lack of financial resources; limited awareness of opportunities and events; eco-anxiety and feelings of powerlessness; and the scarcity of structured mechanisms for influencing policy; and
- Innovative technologies, including AI, remote sensing, and citizen-science platforms, were identified as major opportunities to empower youth, enabling them to contribute to biodiversity monitoring, data management, and ecosystem identification at scale.

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Panel 4

Tourism and Nature-based Economies- Conservation and livelihoods

Moderator: Lawrence Jones Walters

- Armen Shahbazyan, National Coordinator, Program for promotion of EcoCorridors in the Southern Caucasus, WWF Armenia
- Anahit Voskanyan, Tourism Development Manager, Ministry of Economy, Tourism Committee
- Svetlana Harutyunyan, UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme Manager

Discussion Points:

- Sustainable and eco-tourism as tools for conservation and rural development; UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme support a number of initiatives for sustainable eco-tourism, such as the Boo Mountain Bike park in Vanadzor²;
- The Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural assets (FPWC) is a proactive local partner implementing a number of projects, in cooperation with development partners, in conservation, ecotourism, sustainable communities, environmental education. Some case studies were presented by FPWC on ecotourism in Vayots Dzor, establishment of Jermuk and Tatev National Parks, and community-led wildlife corridors;
- The Georgian perspective was provided by two representatives from Georgia;
- Promoting biodiversity-positive business models. The participants underlined that the projects for ecotourism need to be paced into eco-corridors and sustainable landscape and resources' management by the communities. An example is the local ecotourism in the area of Yeghegis, bordering with Nakhijevan region of Azerbaijan. The development of local community-based tourism in the Yeghegis canyon is regularly affected by the activities in the nearby hunting area, which is in a protected area and is licensed by the Ministry of Environment;
- WWF implements a regional project on Eco-Corridors' Fund in South Caucasus (funded by German government), by funding ecologically sustainable land use in selected eco-corridors in the Caucasus, with a focus on the sustainable landscape management by the communities;
- It is understood that a closer coordination between the Ministry of Economy (overseeing tourism sector) and Ministry of Environment is needed;
- Participants highlighted the core challenge of tourism development: while it can provide significant economic opportunities for local communities, it also carries risks

² <https://armenia.travel/experiences/boo-mountain-bike-park/>

of environmental degradation if unmanaged. Balancing economic benefits with ecological integrity must be at the centre of tourism planning;

- A key solution discussed was the need for proper mapping and zoning of natural habitats, including strict limits on activities in core ecological zones and key habitats. Such spatial planning is critical to ensure that tourism infrastructure and visitor flows do not undermine biodiversity;
- Building the capacity of tour operators and tourism service providers was identified as essential. Tourism actors must understand the local environment, its sensitivities, and appropriate behaviour in ecologically fragile landscapes. This requires structured training on conservation principles and responsible tourism;
- Participants stressed the importance of establishing monitoring systems for tourism projects to track environmental impacts and ensure early detection of pressures on ecosystems. Community-based monitoring and stewardship models can strengthen local ownership and long-term sustainability;
- It was emphasised that revenues from tourism should remain within local communities to the greatest extent possible. Tourism can be a viable alternative livelihood, but only if business models ensure fair benefit-sharing and do not disadvantage smaller local operators compared to larger external investors;
- Ethical investment considerations were raised, including the need to examine the sponsors of tourism projects and avoid partnerships that may be linked to gambling, tobacco, or other socially harmful activities. Municipalities should be fully engaged in permitting processes, with transparency about project impacts from the outset;
- Participants also noted the risk of over-exploitation: natural resources are finite, and excessive tourism or poorly planned interventions can degrade the very assets on which tourism depends. Sustainable visitor thresholds and impact assessments are therefore essential;
- With COP17 expected to bring approximately 17,000 participants to Armenia, the discussion underscored the urgent need to prepare for increased tourism pressure, ensuring that event-related travel and visitation do not harm sensitive ecosystems; and
- The session concluded with a reminder that safeguarding nature is both a responsibility and an opportunity for future generations. Engaging youth in responsible tourism, conservation initiatives, and community stewardship will be vital in maintaining Armenia's natural heritage.

4.0 Group Discussions and Outcomes

4.1 Key Insights

- Enhanced national awareness and understanding of biodiversity plays a key role in resilience, health, and sustainable development;
- Active inter-ministerial cooperation and commitment necessary to mainstream biodiversity across sectors; specifically, ecotourism projects need to be based on eco-corridors' – communities – sustainable landscape, forest and water resources management nexus, for which an inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination among the development partners is needed;
- Strengthened science–policy interface; at the initial level for agricultural, land, forest and water data management systems and databases; based on which participatory and research-based policy making systems and regulatory frameworks need to be developed;
- Dedicated policies on youth inclusion into environment protection and environmental education are lacking;
- A general strategy on limiting the usage of pesticides, antibiotics and contaminating substances in economy and agriculture;
- Clear action points and stakeholder commitments feeding into Armenia's COP17 National Preparatory Road Map;
- Reinforced EU–Armenia–UNEP partnership as a driver of biodiversity and environmental governance;
- Necessary not to dis-enfranchise indigenous communities using resources for livelihood; and
- Problem of environmental impact by the COP.

4.2 Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening

15. For the upcoming biodiversity COP in Armenia, capacity building efforts should focus on enhancing the skills and knowledge of government officials, local experts, and civil society organisations working in the field of biodiversity. This includes targeted training programmes on international negotiation techniques, biodiversity monitoring, and reporting standards, as well as workshops on the effective implementation of national biodiversity strategies. Equally important is fostering cross-sectoral collaboration to ensure that scientific findings can be translated into policy action.
16. Institutional strengthening will require establishing or reinforcing dedicated units within relevant ministries to coordinate COP preparations and follow-up activities. Streamlining communication channels between national and local authorities, and ensuring adequate resources for stakeholder engagement, will be vital. Additionally, developing robust mechanisms for data collection and sharing, alongside transparent systems for monitoring progress against COP commitments, will help Armenia meet its international obligations more effectively.

5.0 Annexes

5.1 Agenda

Time	Content
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and welcome coffee Londra Hall & Berlino Hall
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Opening remarks and keynote speeches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vassilis Maragos, Ambassador European Union Delegation to Armenia • Françoise Jacob, UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia • Aram Meymaryan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment
09:30 – 10:30	<p>Panel 1 Food Systems and Water – Integrating biodiversity into food and agriculture</p> <p>Moderator: Lawrence Jones Walters Director of the Knowledge Base Programme for Biodiversity in a Nature Inclusive Society at Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audrey Gourdien, Programme Manager, AFD • Nora Alanakyan, Deputy Head Office, ADA • Levon Movsisyan, Component Manager, GIZ • Botagoz Nartayeva, Country Programme Coordinator, FAO Armenia
10:30 – 11:00	<p>Panel 2 Health and One Health – Linking biodiversity and human wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Siddhartha Sankar Datta, Representative and Head of WHO Country Office • Dr Nune Bakunts, Deputy Director General of National Centre for Disease Control
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee Break Londra Hall & Berlino Hall
11:30 – 12:15	<p>Panel 3 Youth and Education – Empowering future biodiversity leaders</p> <p>Moderator: Garabet Kazanjian Assistant Professor at the American University of Armenia and a lead aquatic researcher at the AUA Acopian Center for the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lia Kalforian, EU Young Ambassadors programme, American University of Armenia • Sona Kalantaryan, Project Director, FPWC • Thierry Lucas, Youth training on Environmental leadership, UNEP
12:15 – 13:00	<p>Panel 4 Tourism and Nature-based Economies – Conservation and livelihoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armen Shahbazyan, National Co-ordinator, Program for promotion of Eco-Corridors in the Southern Caucasus, WWF Armenia • Anahit Voskanyan, Tourism Development Manager, Ministry of Economy, Tourism Committee • Svetlana Harutyunyan, UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme Manager
13:00 – 13:30	Key messages and Closing Reflections
13:30	Lunch

5.2 List of Participants

Participants attended from:

Armenian Statistical Service
Ministry of Environment
Ministry of Economy
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Austrian Development Agency
European Union Mission in Armenia
EU4GreenRecovery
French Development Agency
French Embassy
Food and Agriculture Organisation
Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
United Nations Children's Fund
UN Environment Programme
World Bank Group + BirdLife
World Health Organisation

American University of Armenia
Armenian State University of Economy
Lycée Français Anatole France
Yerevan State University

Armenian Automobile Federation
Caucasus Environmental NGO Network
Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Foundation for Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets
Raoul Wallenberg Institute
Shen NGO
World Wide Fund for Nature

5.3 Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AFD	French Development Agency/Agence Française de Développement
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ArmStat	Armenian Statistical Service
ASUE	Armenian State University of Economy
AUA	American University of Armenia
EU	European Union
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CENN	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network
COP	Conference of the Parties
COP17	17 th Conference of the Parties on the Convention on Biological Diversity
EUMA	European Union Mission in Armenia
FAA	Armenian Automobile Federation
FAO	United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPWC	Foundation for Preservation of Wildlife Cultural Assets
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
MoE	Ministry of Economy
MoEnv	Ministry of Environment
MoH	Ministry of Health
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
OECM	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP GEF	UNDP Global Environmental Facility
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
YSU	Yerevan State University