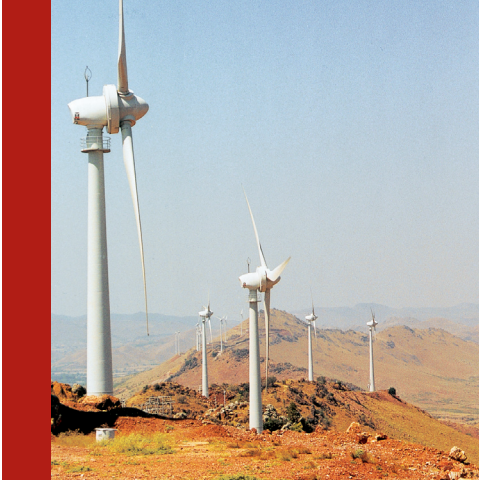


IFC and the Eurasia Foundation

Reducing Poverty Together



PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The Eurasia Foundation has a particular interest and focus on countries of the former Soviet Union. Through a decentralized model, it provides grants to a variety of organizations, including those that promote private enterprise development. Eurasia's commitment and proactive involvement within the region have afforded opportunities to partner with IFC in the areas of microfinance and the environment in particular.

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In 2002, Eurasia participated with IFC and other partners in the Small Enterprise Assistance Fund in Central Asia. The Fund was developed to alleviate pressures from scarce equity capital as well as insufficient technical, training, and business expertise for small and medium enterprises. The fund is available to these enterprises in a variety of sectors, with a special focus on agricultural processing and agribusiness. In 2005, Eurasia and IFC teamed up with other partners to educate rural Azeris about energy conservation and renewable energy generation.

RECENT HIGHLIGHT

“Energy Bus” Brings Bright Ideas to Rural Azerbaijan

In 2005, the “Energy Bus” hit the road in an effort to help impoverished rural communities in Azerbaijan gain access to electricity. Supporters of the partnership include IFC, the Eurasia Foundation, the government of Azerbaijan, oil company BP, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The Energy Bus is a mobile source of information on energy conservation and renewable energy generation that travels frequently throughout remote parts of Azerbaijan. It informs local people about proven alternative energy sources and helps them identify long-term, cost-effective solutions. These include simple solar panel water heaters, wind power generators, mini hydro plants, sawdust heaters, biogas units to generate cooking gas, and advice on home insulation and energy efficiency. All technologies are designed to produce energy from inexpensive resources available locally.

IFC’s participation in the project comes through the SME Linkage Program associated with its investments in the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field development and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline projects. The linkage program is designed to help local communities see more benefits from the large-scale foreign investment project that carries Caspian Sea oil through Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.

The project is in its second year of operation and offers an option for extension. A local non-governmental organization, Umid, manages the project and has proven itself to be one of the leading groups working to improve social conditions in Azerbaijan. The project not only improves the population’s access to energy in Azerbaijan, but uses locally-available, low-cost materials whilst encouraging local companies to create new manufacturing businesses to provide energy saving equipment.