



Supporting afforestation and erosion control in Turkey

Turkey is one of the most erosion-prone countries in the world. Steep slopes, dry climate and frequent over-exploitation of forests, rangeland and farmland contribute to the vulnerability of its soils. In addition, large-scale forest fires exacerbate erosion and contribute to CO₂ emissions. Yet, forests have a considerable mitigating effect on CO₂ emissions and provide a vital socio-economic contribution to the almost 8 million people living in Turkey's forest and range land areas.

The EIB is actively supporting the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Works in its ambition to make Turkey's forest- and rangeland more resilient and healthy. With a EUR 150m loan, the Bank has contributed to the rehabilitation of some 70 000 hectares of degraded forest as well as 30 000 hectares of rangeland, the afforestation of 100 000 hectares, and to erosion control of

190 000 hectares throughout the country. Investments also cover follow-up and maintenance activities on 1.4 million hectares, as well as investments in forest infrastructure and fire-fighting equipment.

A review of project achievements has revealed impressive results. More than 90% of targets were achieved or even exceeded during the most recent year of operations, and multiple environmental benefits are already becoming visible.

The impact on reducing CO₂ emissions is note-worthy. Rehabilitation and afforestation measures carried out so far are estimated to have a capacity of capturing 230 000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. This is equivalent to the emissions that would result from 150 000 people taking return flights from Ankara to New York.

The Turkish authorities' ambitious goal to reach forest coverage of 30% by 2017 – before the centenary of the Turkish Republic in 2023 – has also come closer to reach.

In addition, the project has proved to bring tangible benefits to the local economy. The employment created by labour intensive rehabilitation and afforestation activities is particularly important for rural areas where incomes are significantly below the national average. With some 6500 people employed over two years, the project represents an important contribution to the rural economy.

Recovering forests also helps to meet energy needs in areas where fuel wood from state forests provides the major energy source. With bioenergy forming an integral part of the country's climate strategy, wood pellets and briquettes are currently being promot-



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Newly planted trees in Central Anatolia

ed as replacements for coal, both to reduce CO₂ emissions and as a way of diversifying rural incomes.

Able to respond to outbreaks of fire within just 18 minutes, the reactivity of Turkish fire fighters is well above international best practice. The impressive performance in this area is the result of investments in fire fighting equipment, training, training centres and new access roads.

The success of this project has encouraged the EIB and the Turkish Ministry of Forestry and Water Works to explore further cooperation opportunities to continue to support the on-going programme of afforestation and erosion control works, building on the progress up until to date. Future work will put even greater emphasis on improving the quality of forest management and on the safeguarding of biodiversity in Turkey's forests.

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Climate action is a key priority for the EU. Between 2008 and 2012, the EIB invested almost EUR 80bn in climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. We support low-carbon and climate resilient growth in Europe as well as in emerging and developing countries outside Europe. Moreover, our funding acts as a catalyst to mobilise finance for climate action, encouraging others to match our long-term investment. We complement our innovative financing instruments with a range of technical assistance tools to provide rounded solutions for commercially promising climate initiatives.

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