



(Clockwise from top left)
Contaminated pond and piles of sludge at Sumgayit Organic Synthesis Plant.



Contaminated ponds are located right next to the Caspian Sea.

Local communities use the area as a beach.

Project Details

Location	Sumgayit, Azerbaijan
Contaminants	Lead, Arsenic, Mercury, Cadmium, and Elemental Mercury
Project Duration	May 2014 – February 2015
Project Cost	\$30,000, provided by the European Commission
Implementing Partners	Blacksmith Institute for a Pure Earth, State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR), the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, and Blacksmith Institute
Affected Population	10,000

Background and Scope

During the Soviet era, Sumgayit was a major industrial center with over 40 factories that produced metals and chemicals. Today, Sumgayit is plagued with environmental challenges that the industrialization process left in its wake. Over the last decade, the municipal and national government have taken important steps to reduce the impacts of the city's industrial legacy, including closing polluting factories, upgrading facilities, treating contaminated wastewater and transferring contaminated materials to a secure facility. Despite this progress, area soil test results show that large areas are still highly contaminated with heavy metals and other pollutants known to impact human health. SOCAR and MENR identified the Sumgayit Organic Synthesis Plant as a site that urgently needed cleanup, and where technical assistance was required. The plant is one small piece of the larger Sumgayit industrial area, but it is located on the Caspian Sea and the public has begun using this highly contaminated area as a beach.

Solution Implemented

In 2014, Blacksmith Institute visited the site with representatives from Azerchemical State Company, a subsidiary of SOCAR that controls the site. Environmental professionals and surveyors from Blacksmith and SOCAR conducted a detailed assessment of the site. The site contains a variety of pollutants, including benzene, benzo-a-pyrene and PCBs. A multistakeholder group was convened, and partnership established with the relevant ministries. Project partners determined that additional soil sampling at the site was required before a remediation strategy could be developed. That sampling was conducted in July-August 2014.

Remediation is scheduled for February 2015. 0.4 m of contaminated surface soil layer from the nearly 2 hectare site will be removed and transported into a hazardous waste facility owned by MENR. Clean soil will be brought to the area, and the area rehabilitated through planting of trees.

It is important to note that Azerchemical will cover all remediation expenses in excess of the GAHP financing of \$30,000. The company will also provide labor and heavy machinery. Some bioremediation activities will also be conducted.

Project Results

The project will be completed in February 2015.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- Will be extracted at project end.