



Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

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Minister David Songulashvili Meets with International Sommelier Guild President Joseph Miller



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr David Songulashvili, met with the President of the International Sommelier Guild, Mr Joseph Miller.

During the meeting, Mr Miller presented the Global Education and International Development Initiative for Georgian Wine. The initiative outlines a five-year strategic framework aiming to strengthen the long-term international positioning of Georgian wine through education, professional development, market engagement, and structured international cooperation.

“Enhancing the international recognition of Georgian wine remains one of the key state priorities. Initiatives that deepen knowledge of Georgian wine within international professional communities, promote awareness of its unique history and cultural heritage, and create new partnerships and opportunities are particularly important. Educational, professional development, and international cooperation-centred projects are key pillars for further strengthening the international profile and market position of Georgian wine. Today’s meeting was dedicated to advancing precisely these objectives,” Minister Songulashvili stated.

The initiative is built around five core components: the establishment of educational programmes and a professional development framework focused on Georgian wine; the expansion of international partnerships and commercial opportunities; the implementation of experiential study programmes in Georgia for international wine professionals; the development of multilingual educational and communication resources to promote Georgian wine more effectively on the global stage; and the enhancement of evaluation, and reporting mechanisms to measure the initiative’s impact.

The International Sommelier Guild is recognised as one of the world’s leading educational institutions in the fields of wine and sommelier education.

Operating in numerous countries, the Guild delivers internationally recognised training programmes based on global standards, supporting the education, certification, and professional advancement of wine industry specialists.

The leadership of the National Wine Agency of Georgia attended the meeting.

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Approximately 160 Tonnes of PCB-Contaminated Hazardous Waste Exported from Georgia to Europe for Final Environmentally Sound Disposal



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Solomon Pavliashvili, along with the Acting United Nations Resident Coordinator in Georgia, Mr Douglas Webb, and the Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus, Mrs Sopio Akhobadze, attended the final preparations for the safe export of hazardous waste containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from Georgia to Europe for environmentally sound final disposal.

As part of the project “PCB-Free Power Supply in Georgia,” approximately 160 tonnes of hazardous PCB-containing waste were safely packaged, documented, and prepared for transportation in full compliance with international requirements. The waste will be transported to Europe, where it will undergo final disposal using environmentally sound treatment technologies.

“This project clearly demonstrates how the Government of Georgia is fulfilling its international commitments. Implemented under the Stockholm Convention, the initiative is a clear example of how political will, scientific expertise, and international partnership can be combined to achieve meaningful environmental outcomes. Georgia continues to strengthen its hazardous waste management system. To this end, we are implementing a new National Hazardous Waste Management Strategy, which envisages the construction of a new hazardous waste disposal facility. We are working closely with the World Bank on this initiative, and the location of the facility will be determined in the near future,” stated the Deputy Minister, Mr Solomon Pavliashvili.

Systematic efforts to identify, inventory, and safely manage PCB-containing equipment and waste have been underway in Georgia since 2016. Under the project,

more than 7,000 electrical devices at 14 companies across Georgia were inspected, PCB-contaminated equipment was identified, and a comprehensive system for safe management was established.

“Since 2022, we have been actively collecting PCB-contaminated oils, and today we have reached a milestone whereby approximately 70 per cent of the country’s existing PCB contamination can be safely exported to Europe for final disposal. It is essential to mention that 14 private companies participated in the process, enabling the project to be successfully implemented under the coordination of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. This kind of international cooperation significantly reduces the financial burden on the private sector, as the collection, inventory, export, and environmentally sound disposal of the hazardous waste have been fully financed through donor support,” said Mrs Sopio Akhobadze.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are classified as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), characterised by their high toxicity and long-term persistence in the environment. Their safe management and environmentally sound disposal constitute one of the key priorities of international environmental policy.

The project “PCB-Free Power Supply in Georgia” is financed by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus serves as the executing partner, while the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia is the project initiator.

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David Songulashvili Meets with Representatives of Foundation Plant Services



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr David Songulashvili, met with the Director of Foundation Plant Services, Mr Maher Al-Rwahnih, and the founder and President of the Georgian Agrarian Union, Mr Valeri Gorgisheli.

The parties focused on avenues for cooperation to advance pistachio cultivation in Georgia, facilitate the transfer of modern agricultural technologies and international experience, and develop a certified nursery production system meeting globally recognised standards.

During the meeting, Minister Songulashvili highlighted the state agricultural development programmes, including the importance of ensuring farmers’ access to high-quality planting material, introducing modern agricultural technologies, and strengthening international cooperation to promote the sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

The discussions also covered future cooperation in knowledge and expertise exchange, enhancement of modern laboratory capabilities, strengthening plant health control systems, and the development of certification mechanisms for planting material.

According to the Minister, collaboration with international partners will contribute to the adoption of modern standards, improve access to innovative technologies, and foster knowledge-based development across the agricultural sector in the country.

Mr Maher Al-Rwahnih noted that Georgia has significant potential for developing

various agricultural industries, particularly perennial crops and modern nursery production. He emphasised that sharing international knowledge and expertise, and implementing advanced standards and technologies, will support the production of high-quality planting material and strengthen the country’s agricultural sector.

Foundation Plant Services (FPS), based at the University of California, Davis, is internationally recognised as one of the world’s leading institutions in the production, certification, diagnostics, and research of healthy, disease-free planting material.

The organisation collaborates with public and private sector partners in numerous countries, supporting the development of nursery production, phytosanitary and laboratory systems, while promoting the transfer of modern knowledge and technologies.

The Georgian Agrarian Union is an organisation dedicated to advancing Georgia’s agricultural sector, actively promoting the adoption of modern agricultural technologies, facilitating knowledge transfer and practical training for farmers, and supporting the cultivation of non-traditional, high-value crops, including pistachios, blueberries, and other berry crops. The organisation works closely with both local and international partners to encourage the development of modern nursery production and innovative agricultural practices in Georgia.

The Deputy Minister, Mr Lasha Dolidze, and representatives of the Georgian Agrarian Union attended the meeting.

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Carl Amirgulashvili: “The Restoration of Georgia’s Forests, Particularly Degraded Ones, Is a Key National Priority”



Representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia got familiar with ongoing and completed forest restoration and afforestation projects in the Guria region and review the progress of implemented activities.

Forest restoration efforts are currently underway across 702 hectares in the Guria region. In recent years, the region has seen the successful implementation of several restoration

projects, under which nearly 15,000 seedlings of various tree species have been planted, including species protected under Georgia’s Red List.

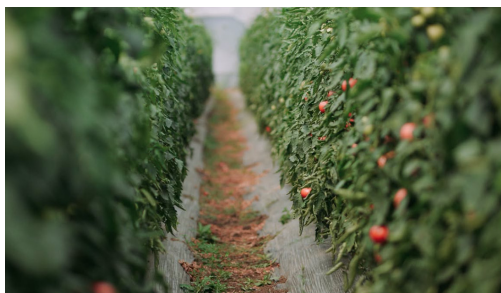
According to Mr Amirgulashvili, Head of the Forest Policy Department at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, the restoration of Georgia’s forests, particularly degraded forest ecosystems, remains one of the Government’s highest priorities.

“Over the past decade, forest restoration activities have been carried out across several thousand hectares through both assisted natural regeneration and tree planting initiatives. Under Georgia’s national target for 2036, approximately 52,000 hectares of forests are to be restored nationwide. This ambitious goal further underscores the strategic importance of forest restoration and afforestation. Ultimately, advancing these efforts will remain one of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture’s strategic priorities in the coming years. Thus, we will continue actively assessing ongoing and planned forest restoration projects across Georgia’s regions in the upcoming weeks and months,” stated Mr. Carl Amirgulashvili.

Notably, over the past decade, forest restoration and afforestation measures have been implemented on more than 7,000 hectares throughout Georgia.

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David Songulashvili: “The development of local production enhances regional economies and promotes Georgian products”



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr David Songulashvili, paid a working visit to the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, where he learned about the operations of state-supported agricultural enterprises and ongoing activities in protected areas.

As part of his visit to the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, Minister Songulashvili visited a poultry farm, a greenhouse producing annual crops, an organic strawberry farm, and snail- and dairy-processing enterprises. He also reviewed the tourism and recreational infrastructure in Tbilisi National Park and met with local farmers and entrepreneurs.

“Visits to the regions are particularly important, as they allow us to meet local producers, learn more about their activities, understand the challenges they face, and identify oppor-

tunities for further development. Strengthening local production provides a solid foundation for the economic development of municipalities and regions, while also improving the quality of Georgian products and enhancing their promotion. In addition to visiting enterprises, we also had the opportunity to review infrastructure projects implemented in protected areas. One of our key priorities in this regard is to develop appropriate infrastructure in protected areas to ensure high-quality services for visitors. This, in turn, will contribute to raising awareness of Georgia’s unique natural environment and making the country’s natural heritage more accessible to both local and international visitors,” said Mr David Songulashvili.

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David Songulashvili Pays a Working Visit to the Samtskhe-Javakheti Region



As part of his working visit to the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr David Songulashvili, visited Ninotsminda Municipality, where he learned about local production and activities in the sheep-farming sector. Mr Songulashvili visited the St. Nino Convent in Foka, where he got familiar with the dairy production activities carried out by the nuns. The Minister also attended a public celebration organized by sheep farmers in the Ninotsminda Municipality and met with local farmers. During the meetings, the parties discussed opportunities to develop and market local agricultural production, while focusing on sheep farming, animal health and veterinary services, the efficient management of pasture resources, and available government support mechanisms.



“We were able to learn firsthand about the opportunities and challenges facing both local production and the sheep-farming sector in the Samtskhe Javakheti region. The products made at the Foka Convent are a good example of developing local production, while sheep farming is a traditional sector in our country with significant potential for both domestic production and export. We aim to support the development of high-quality local products, strengthen farmers, and provide them with greater opportunities to develop and expand their farms. This is precisely the purpose of the state agricultural programmes, including the updated State Programme for Agricultural Co-Financing,” stated Minister Songulashvili.

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David Songulashvili: “We aim to strengthen the entire agricultural value chain”



As part of his working visit to the Kvemo Kartli region, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr David Songulashvili, got acquainted with agricultural education, production, research, and farming activities in the municipalities of Dmanisi and Marneuli.

Minister Songulashvili visited the Swiss Agricultural School “Caucasus” in the village of Sarkineti, Dmanisi Municipality; the Marneuli Food Factory in Marneuli Municipality; and the agricultural farm Lomtagora. The Minister reviewed opportunities for vocational education and practical training, the processes involved in fruit and vegetable processing and the production of canned food products, as well as ongoing work in wheat production and breeding.

“Today, we had the opportunity to see first-hand agricultural education infrastructure, local food-processing operations, and ongoing activities

in wheat breeding. These three areas provide an important foundation for agrarian development and for making better use of the country’s agricultural potential.

The development of agriculture requires a skilled workforce. It is therefore important to ensure that young people have access to modern vocational education and hands-on experience, enabling them to contribute as qualified professionals to the agricultural sector’s future development.

Our goal is to strengthen the entire agricultural value chain. This will enable us to increase local production, reduce dependence on imports, and expand export opportunities for Georgian agricultural products,” said Mr David Songulashvili.

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David Songulashvili Meets with the Owners of German Food Producer “Develey” and “Marneuli Food Factory”



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr David Songulashvili, hosted Mr Michael Durach, Owner of the German food producer “Develey”, and Mr Mikheil Svimonishvili, Owner of Marneuli Food Factory.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the progress of a new production facility being developed at “Marneuli Food Factory” as part of the cooperation between “Develey” and “Marneuli Food Factory”, while highlighting the companies’ plans for the future. The facility, covering approximately 10,000 square meters, will feature six modern technological production lines. The facility is scheduled to become fully operational in March, while production of the first products is expected to launch in October.

Once the new production facility is operational, “Marneuli Food Factory’s” product range will expand by 30–40 new products, including mayonnaise and various types of sauces, intended for the domestic market as well as for export. The project also envisages the development of local raw-material production and the adoption of modern technologies.

“You have extensive experience. I believe this is precisely what Georgia needs today: knowledge, technological expertise, and international connections. One of our key priorities is to strengthen food production in the country and make the most effective use of local resources. In this regard, it is essential to develop both the industry and the supply chain and provide the necessary

support. Georgia offers a favorable business environment and opportunities for access to international markets. Our goal is not only to strengthen local capabilities but also to create conditions that will enable companies to export products made in Georgia to international markets,” said Mr David Songulashvili.

According to Mr Michael Durach, owner of “Develey”, Georgia has significant agricultural potential and a stable, predictable business environment, which are among the key factors underpinning the company’s decision to invest in the country.

“Georgia is a country with significant agricultural potential. Our idea was to combine investment with access to the entire supply chain - from the field, including product quality control, all the way through to production. This is only the beginning. We wish to make Georgia the starting point and a regional hub for our operations, enabling us to export products from here to other countries as well. By combining Georgia’s local raw-material base with our technological expertise, we can further develop and strengthen the country’s existing capabilities. A stable and predictable environment is also very important to us, and we see that in Georgia. We are pleased to feel the support we are receiving in the country and are confident that our operations will continue to grow,” said Mr Durach.

“Marneuli Food Factory ” was established in 2007 and is currently one of the major food-processing companies in Georgia. The factory produces more than 50 types of products, including tomato paste, tkemali, adjika, marinades, sauces, jams, and preserves. Using locally sourced raw materials is a key priority for the company, which currently procures raw materials from more than 150 Georgian farmers. Its products are sold on the Georgian market and exported to international markets, including countries in Europe and the United States.

“Develey” is a German family-owned company founded in 1845 and is now an international producer of sauces, mustard, and other food products. The company exports its products to more than 65 countries worldwide. One of “Develey’s” key partners is McDonald’s, which the company has supplied with various sauces, ketchup, and mustard since 1971.

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David Songulashvili Pays a Working Visit to Kvemo Kartli Region



As part of his working visit to the Kvemo Kartli region, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr David Songulashvili, along with Kvemo Kartli State Representative, Mr Ilia Jalaghaniya, got familiar with the activities of enterprises operating in the wine production and livestock sectors.

The Minister visited G.B. Consulting, a company manufacturing modern technologies and equipment for wine production, in Gardabani Municipality, as well as Gardabani Livestock, a beneficiary company of the Rural Development Agency, in Sartichala village.

“It is essential to develop local production, adopt modern technologies, and enhance the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. Manufacturing wine-production equipment in Georgia makes modern technologies more accessible to the winemaking sector. At the same time, particular attention is being given to livestock farming under the new Agricultural Co-Financing Programme, which provides specific mechanisms to support the development of agricultural farms,” stated Mr David Songulashvili.

Since 2009, G.B. Consulting LLC has been manufacturing stainless steel tanks and modern machinery and equipment required for the production of wine and other beverages. The company currently employs 37 people.

Gardabani Livestock LLC operates two farms specializing in beef cattle production and breeding.

The company benefited from the Preferential Agrocredit Project on several occasions in 2024 and 2026 to establish and develop farms and expand its operations.

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