



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

## A Historic Moment for Georgia: Cheering on Our National Team in the European Championship

„The Georgian national team has our unwavering support. This long-awaited participation in the European Championship marks a significant milestone in our nation's history. Each team member inspires immense pride with their exceptional skills and unwavering determination. Witnessing the Georgian national team compete evokes profound emotions. We extend our deepest appreciation to these esteemed athletes. Their hard work and dedication truly inspire us all“, - The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr Otar Shamugia



## The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr Otar Shamugia, presented a report on the activities performed by the Ministry in 2023 at the parliamentary session



Mr. Otar Shamugia provided the Deputies with a report on the efforts of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture taken in 2023 while also focusing on the achieved results. The Minister addressed the current challenges in the agricultural and environmental areas, emphasizing the visions for potential solutions.

Mr. Shamugia discussed the main directions of plans, stating that the Ministry will continue to implement all measures aimed at promoting agricultural development and on the other hand, preparing and launching new programs in response to the needs of farmers and entrepreneurs.

Regarding environmental protection, the Ministry continues to take reforms to improve the environment.

It is planned to establish additional protected areas and expand existing ones. Reforestation efforts will be prioritized, with a focus on protecting and restoring floodplain forests and unique ecosystems.

Furthermore, plans will be approved to improve air quality and determine and implement the necessary measures. The effectiveness of environmental assessment procedures will increase, and industrial emissions will be regulated in line with EU legislation.

The implementation of a separate system for the collection of specific waste will continue throughout the country. The list of specific wastes- that will be subject to the separate collection will be expanded.

The development of early warning systems and the improvement of multiple hazard prediction systems will be greatly accelerated, for which the National Environment Agency has allocated an additional GEL 16 million this year.

At the end of his speech, Mr. Otar Shamugia thanked the government team, the Parliament of Georgia, and especially the Committees for Agrarian Issues and Environmental Protection and Natural Resources for their active cooperation.

*“I would like to express my gratitude to our partner countries, the European Union, and international organizations for their support, thanks to industry associations, farmers, business representatives, and, ultimately, from the tribune of the Parliament, I thank each employee of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, who contributed significantly to achieving the results I spoke during the presentation of the 2023 report”, said Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia*

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## A new office of the Department of Environmental Supervision was opened in Kutaisi



Mr. Otar Shamugia, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, visited Kutaisi, where he inspected the Department of Environmental Supervision's new office and got familiar with the work process. Notably, the building has all the essential tools, including high-quality equipment. The new office will embrace 129 employees of the Regional Division of Environmental Inspection and Rapid Response from West Georgia, specifically, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, and Kvemo Svaneti regions.

According to the Minister, increasing the capacity of the Department of Environmental Supervision is part of the state's environmental policy.

*"The Department of Environmental Supervision is one of the most significant links in the Ministry system, with the primary goal of protecting our unique nature, preventing and controlling environmental damage. Accordingly, our priority is to strengthen this service to the greatest extent possible by providing employees with the necessary tools, equipment, and vehicles, thus enabling them to exercise the crucial authority assigned to them. Moreover, setting up infrastructure is essential, and we are actively working on it. Opening a new, state-of-the-art office in Kutaisi is a good example, and we continue working in this direction. We should have similar offices in all locations, and we will complete constructing them shortly", said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

The Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Kakha Kakabadze, the Head of the Environmental Supervision Department, Mr. Levan Jgharkawa, the state representative of Imereti region, Mr. Zviad Shalamberidze, and the Mayor of Kutaisi, Mr. I. Khakhaleishvili accompanied the Minister.

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## Nino Tandilashvili participates in the joint session of the European Integration and Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committees of the Parliament of Georgia



Mrs. Tandilashvili participated in the joint session of the European Integration and Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committees of the Parliament of Georgia.

Notably, the Kolkheti National Park hosted the field session dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the Association Agreement. During the event, the Committees heard reports on fulfilling the commitments outlined in the Agreement and the results achieved in this regard.

At the Kolkheti National Park, the parties reviewed the outcomes of the environmental commitments fulfilled in 2014 -2024 under the Association Agreement.

*"10 years have passed since the signing of the Association Agreement. During this period, Georgia has taken significant steps in fulfilling the commitments under the Association Agenda towards environmental protection and agricultural areas.*

*Out of 27 current regulations, the legislation of Georgia has fully aligned with the 21 in the environmental protection area, addressing both the improvement of air quality and the expansion of protected areas, which has already increased to 13%.*

*The state has made numerous efforts to reduce industrial pollution. We have new legislation in water resources management, which will be gradually enforced and ensure sustainable use and proper management of water resources throughout the country. As you know, our climate change policy is in line with that of the EU. Similarly to the EU, Georgia has declared its intention to become carbon neutral by 2050", said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.*

Notably, the field sessions are underway, including scheduled activities such as getting familiar with the fieldwork conducted on Georgia's Black Sea coast, observing the water quality monitoring event, visiting a new atmospheric air quality monitoring station in Batumi, and learning about the principles of how analyzers operate and determine the behavior of the solid particle in ambient air.

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## During his visit to the Imereti region of Georgia, Minister Otar Shamugia toured enterprises supported by government financial aid and met with local farmers



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, embarked on a comprehensive visit to the Imereti region of Georgia, accompanied by key officials from the ministry and local government representatives. In Khoni municipality, the minister was joined by the State Representative of Imereti region, Mr. Zviad Shalamberidze, and the Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr. Davit Tsitlidze. Together, they visited “Agroveli” company’s blueberry orchard in Gocha Jikhaishi village. Shamugia emphasized the ambitious goals for blueberry production and export, stating, “This year, we expect to double blueberry production and export, implying about GEL 100-120 million income for our farmers and entrepreneurs.” The visit underscored the importance of state programs like “Plant the Future” in supporting agricultural development across the region.

In Vani municipality, Shamugia and his team toured “Georgian Laurel,” where they were briefed on the company’s significant role in laurel cultivation and export. “The increased demand for exports has raised the demand for laurel cultivation. This year has had record-breaking exports of USD 20 million in just five months.” - said Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia. The visit highlighted the successful partnership between the private sector and government initiatives, including the co-financing program for processing and storage enterprises. Continuing their journey in Tkibuli municipality, the delegation inspected “Tkibuli Mtis Chai” tea processing plant. Accompanied by local officials, Shamugia discussed the company’s expansion



plans: “By the end of 2024, the company plans to sell its premium quality products both domestically and abroad and create a tea crop culture center on the territory of the enterprise.” The visit showcased the impact of rehabilitation programs on tea plantations and the integration of international food safety standards into local production processes.

In Sachkhere municipality, Minister Shamugia met with farmers benefiting from the “Co-financing program for agricultural machinery in mountainous settlements.” He was accompanied by Mr. Zviad Shalamberidze, the State Representative of the Imereti region, Mr. Davit Tsitlidze, Director of the Rural Development Agency, and local government representatives. The minister emphasized the significance of agricultural machinery in enhancing productivity: “Access to agricultural machinery is crucial for farmers to perform appropriate agro-activities.” He highlighted the success of the program in supporting rural communities, with over 1147 applications received across the region.

Throughout the visit, Minister Shamugia and his team reaffirmed the government’s commitment to fostering agricultural innovation and sustainable rural development in Georgia. Their interactions with local stakeholders underscored the collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing the agricultural sector’s resilience and competitiveness on both national and international fronts.



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## A working meeting addresses the elimination of the threats of plastic pollution in the Black Sea ecosystem



During the meeting, the representatives of the local and central government and non-governmental organizations discussed the technologies for collecting plastic waste in rivers and the Black Sea, identifying plastic leakage ‘hotspots’, and improving the policy of plastic waste management.

Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, focused on developing a unified policy for the preservation of biodiversity for the countries of the Black Sea basin area.

*“Plastic pollution of oceans, seas, and rivers is a global problem. Studying the pollution level in the Black Sea area and finding potential solutions are crucial for us. Notably, the cleaning of the sea requires a complex approach. Along with other Black Sea countries, Georgia should take care of preserving the biodiversity of the Black Sea,” said Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili.*

In 2021, the Government of Georgia developed a National Plastic Waste Prevention Program for Georgia (NPWPP) to combat plastic pollution, and in the same year, the nation joined the High-Ambition Coalition, whose objective is to eradicate plastic pollution by 2040.

According to Mr. Klaus Sattler, Environmental Engineer at the World Bank, the Government of Georgia is making significant strides at the international level towards developing policies to eliminate the threat posed by plastic pollution.

The meeting was held under the World Bank’s PROBLUE initiative, which aims to support the development of integrated, sustainable, and healthy marine and coastal resources.

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## Otar Shamugia: “We are striving to promote the development of the private laboratory network”



A new international analytical laboratory was opened in Tbilisi, near Lisi Lake. The Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Mr. Levan Davitashvili along with the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, attended the opening ceremony. High-tech research will be conducted in a state-of-the-art laboratory that complies with EU standards. The laboratory allows the business sector and private individuals to conduct up to 500 studies.

*“We strive to promote the development of a private laboratory network. Opening a laboratory of such standards in Tbilisi is a significant fact. We should mention that the demand and need for laboratory services are constantly increasing. Therefore, we annually increase and enhance our agricultural laboratory capacities. The Ministry designed and approved the concept for developing the laboratory network in col-*

*laboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).*

*As part of our commitment to EU integration, we strive to promote the development of the laboratory network, which is essential under the DCFTA”, said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

The International Analytical Laboratory offers comprehensive laboratory services related to food safety, veterinary care, and agriculture, including HACCP, analysis and detailed research of bread and baking cookies, cereals, and nuts, a thorough study of chemical-microbiological soil, residues, and contaminants in veterinary drugs and antibiotic residues in animal feed.



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## The draft law of Georgia on “ Management of Pastures” was discussed at the meeting



During the working meeting, the state officials and representatives of the non-governmental organizations addressed pasture identification, zoning, ownership rights, category changes, the common use of pastures, and pasture management-related issues.

Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, and Mrs. Mzia Giorgobiani, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, attended the meeting.

Mr. Nasaridze emphasized current challenges in pasture management, noting that the draft law will be completed shortly.

“Our farmers and local and national governments have struggled with pasture management for years. During the working meetings, we agreed on the top issues, which will be reflected in the draft law.

*We think to present the draft law to the public in the format of public discussions within the next few months. The law was drafted by considering the interests of the residents and farmers,” said Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze.*

The draft law on pasture management aims to prevent the degradation of pastures, preserve biodiversity, improve productivity, ensure access, and promote sustainable development of the livestock sector by creating legal bases for sustainable pasture management.

The draft law will regulate the management of pastures in state, municipal, and private hands, and also protected areas, including those managed by the Agency for Protected Areas, protected landscapes, multi-use zones, forests, and pastures located beyond their boundaries. According to the Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Mrs Mzia Giorgobiani, it is essential to have a dialogue of a similar format to correctly define the role of agencies and prepare everyone to face the reform.

The Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus organized the meeting with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) within the project “Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality Targets of Georgia through Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Pasturelands”.

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## Otar Shamugia meets with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Moldova to Georgia, Alexander Esaulenko



During the meeting, the parties addressed issues of deepening bilateral trade relations and emphasized investment opportunities.

*“I’m pleased to meet you. As you know, our nations are undergoing a challenging and responsible path in the EU integration process. I believe that with coordinated efforts and efficient cooperation, we will be able to achieve the intended goal and become members of the European family on time”, said Otar Shamugia.*

Within the meeting, the Minister highlighted the state support programs implemented in the agricultural and environmental protection areas and focused on agricultural products with export potential.

*“Georgia has made significant progress in the agricultural and environmental protection fields. We will be happy if we have the opportunity to share experience and deepen trade relations”, said Mr Alexander Esaulenko.*

The conversation touched upon the issues of organizing the Georgia-Moldova bilateral business forum, which will create a favourable environment for developing business relations.

The Heads of relevant Departments of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture attended the meeting.



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## Tengiz Nasaridze attends the event dedicated to the “World Day to Combat Desertification”

The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, along with the Mayor of Dmanisi Municipality, Mr. Koba Muradashvili, visited Dmanisi Municipality, where he attended the event held as part of the celebration of the “World Day to Combat Desertification”.

“World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought” was established under the initiative of the United Nations in 1994 and is annually celebrated on June 17. “

The main message for this year is “United for Land: Our Legacy. Our Future.”

It is worth mentioning that a grazing demonstration plot for controlled grazing was set up in the village of Ganakhleba, Dmanisi municipality, as part of the project “Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality Targets of Georgia through Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Pasturelands”.

The “modern standard” pasture established on up to 40 hectares serves the residents and, at the same time, contributes to improving soil health and increasing livestock productivity.

*“Such initiatives are crucial as they seek to utilize pastures through using modern methods and adopting the sustainable pasture management principle. This approach will protect the nation’s pastures as a resource while also serving as a vital step toward developing cattle*



*breeding here and in other areas, where livestock is traditionally an important direction for the residents,” - noted Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze.*

The Mayor of Dmanisi, Koba Muradashvili, thanked the initiators and implementers of the project for their efforts, emphasizing the significance of the pasture for the residents.

The Pasture User Associations (PUAs) received equipment for milk storage and animal care as part of the event.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus), and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) are funding the project, which is implemented on the initiative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

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## Georgia hosts the 10th Regional Dialogue on the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of Europe and the Asia-Pacific region EAPAC



Georgia hosts the 10th Regional Dialogue on the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of Europe and the Asia-Pacific region EAPAC.

During the 10th regional meeting on the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, the representatives of the governments of 17 countries and approximately 70 biodiversity experts brought forward national biodiversity strategies and ways for mobilizing financial resources for conservation/ protection of biodiversity.

Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mrs. Anna Chernyshova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Georgia, Mr. Onno Van den Heuvel, Head of the Biodiversity Finance Portfolio at UNDP, and Mr. Giorgi Kvesitadze, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia, delivered opening remarks at the event.

The Deputy Minister emphasized the steps of the Government of Georgia towards biodiversity conservation and the importance of sharing other nations’ experiences in the mentioned area.

“Active participation in conventions and strong collaboration with partners have resulted in holding such a large-scale event in Georgia. Global biodiversity loss is a major challenge. This dialogue aims to explore ways of financing and preserving biodiversity jointly. Let’s share our experiences and best practices in restoring and conserving forests, fulfilling our commitments under the Vienna Convention, and using the state budget in this direction”, said Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has been implementing the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) since 2012, intending to close the financing gap for biodiversity and mobilize resources more efficiently. Forty-one countries supported the initiative.

Forty-one countries supported the initiative.

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tive, including Georgia, which joined the BIOFIN global partnership in 2016. According to Mrs. Anna Chernyshova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Georgia, the Government of Georgia has taken significant steps in recent years towards biodiversity protection.

*“Globally, biodiversity is facing a major crisis, with various flora and fauna disappearing due to urbanization. We have gathered today to discuss ways to preserve biodiversity. It is important to mention that Georgia is one of the richest countries worldwide regarding biodiversity. 21% of the flora is endemic, and there are more than 100 protected areas, which is the result of the tremendous efforts of the Government of Georgia”, Mrs. Anna Chernyshova said.*

Notably, Georgia adopted the National Biodiversity Finance Plan in 2019. Since then, the state budget for the Department of Forest and Biodiversity has quadrupled. Seventeen innovative projects have already been launched in the country, aiming to promote sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity.

Every year, UNDP-BIOFIN organizes regional dialogues worldwide to share best practices and refine strategies, mechanisms, and methodologies. In 2024, 91 more countries will join the initiative.

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## The members of the intergovernmental group discuss chemical safety-related issues

The intergovernmental group created within the project “Institutional Capacity Building for Chemical Safety and Security in Georgia” held a working meeting where parties discussed the issues of developing and implementing a national legislative framework necessary to fulfill all the requirements under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture, addressed the parties, emphasizing the significance of the mentioned project.

“This project is of the utmost importance for the country since strengthening Georgia’s institutional capacities and legislative base in the chemical safety area is a priority part of the sustainable development agenda of Georgia,” said Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili.

Since 2022, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia has been implementing the project “Institutional Capacity Building for Chemical Safety and Security in Georgia” with the support of the Office of Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism (WMDT) of the US State Department, and the Regional Environmental Center for the



Caucasus (REC Caucasus).

The 3-year project, with a budget of 1,500,000 USD, aims to strengthen the legal framework and institutional capacity in the chemical safety area, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, improve chemical substance management systems, and fulfill international and national obligations in the

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## The Winners of the “Green Award” contest revealed within the framework of the World Environment Day



World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated annually on 5 June. The winners of the Environmental Information and Education Center’s “Green Award” competition were revealed as part of the World Environment Day celebration.

Teachers and educators participated in the competition throughout Georgia. Approximately 170 guests, including the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, participated in the awarding ceremony.

Nino Barbakadze-Kakhniashvili, a teacher of N126 Kindergarten in Tbilisi, won the “Green Award - Pre-School Environmental Education 2024”, and Nino Kachkachashvili, a teacher of Natural Sciences and Biology in the public schools of villages, Arali and Varkhani, Adigeni

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21723>



Municipality, won the “Green Award - Environmental and Agricultural Education in Schools 2024”.

Minister Otar Shamugia awarded the winners.

*“I show great respect to teachers and educators. Educating our children, the future generation, and transferring knowledge to them, both in environmental protection and agricultural education, is a great responsibility that should be appreciated.*

*On June 5, the whole world celebrates the day of environmental protection, and it is symbolic that the award ceremony of the winners is held on this day.*

*I congratulate everyone and wish you to live in a healthy environment. Preserving and safeguarding the environment and its unique nature is the top priority for our Government and the Ministry. In this direction, we strive to complete the assignments outlined in the Associ-*

*ation Agreement, including other international agreements.*

*We should mention that we have already implemented several reforms to protect our unique nature and healthy environment and will carry out even more large-scale reforms in the future”, said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

Since 2018, the Environmental Information and Education Center has held the “Green Award” competition.

The mentioned contest aims to reveal and encourage those teachers and educators who provide children with environmental and agricultural education and actively use the manuals “Pre-school Environmental Education” and “Environmental and Agrarian Education at School” in the educational process.

Within the framework of the event, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, presented certificates to the employees of the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Abkhazia for their contribution to environmental protection. The competition commission awarded the selected participants and winners with special prizes.

The Deputies of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr.Kakha Kakabadze and Mr.Solomon Pavliashvili, State representative in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, Mr. Davit Nozadze, representatives of municipalities, members of non-governmental organizations attended the event.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, Nursery Management Agency in Tbilisi, National Center for Teacher Professional Development, Tbilisi Zoo, Ecokhedva, and Ecokhedva supported the event.



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## A targeted roadmap has been created to promote the transition to single-use plastic alternatives



The “Roadmap to Transitioning from Single-Use Plastics to Sustainable Alternatives” is a framework document encompassing different activities to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics.

The roadmap envisages the adoption of the EU directives in the mentioned direction, promoting businesses to transition to alternatives, adopting Extended Producer Responsibility, and raising public awareness.

Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, attended the event.

During the meeting, the parties presented the roadmap created within the project, summarized project outcomes, and highlighted further activities.

The project “ Roadmap for Transition from Single-Use Plastics to Environmentally and Financially Viable Alternatives in Georgia”

was launched with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) through the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus).

*“Reducing and removing single-use plastics is one of the components of the green economy. Green transformation is a very complex and broad concept that encompasses the use of new energies, water resources management, combating desertification, waste management, energy efficiency, and other related issues. Georgia has made progress in all of the mentioned areas, and we are still working to align our legal framework with EU legislation. Obviously, we face some challenges as part of the implementation, although the Ministry, as a policymaker, is making significant efforts in this direction,” said Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili.*

As mentioned, the country’s strategic goal is to improve the existing legislation and bring our laws into compliance with EU standards regarding the green economy.

According to Gigi Bregadze, Democratic Governance Team Leader at UNDP, the implementation of the activities outlined in the roadmap will be a step forward on the path to European integration.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) organized the meeting with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the Embassy of Norway.

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## The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture hosts the newly appointed project manager to discuss ENPARD IV-related issues

The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputies of the Minister, Mr.Tengiz Nasaridze and Mr. Kakha Kakabadze, met with the newly appointed manager of the European Neighborhood Program for Rural and Agricultural Development ENPARD IV new component in FAO, Mr. Guido Agostinucci.

The Deputy Ministers congratulated Mr. Guido Agostinucci on his appointment to the new position and expressed a desire for joint, successful cooperation.

During the meeting, the parties discussed current and future cooperation issues.

The conversation touched upon the cooperation in the food safety, sanitary, and phytosanitary sectors, including enhancing aquaculture and laboratory capacities within the program.

According to Mr.Agostinucci, the readiness of the Ministry for the effective implementation of the project is visible, which will affect the results.

As mentioned, Georgia has achieved significant progress towards agricultural development, which is a solid basis for the effective implementation of ENPARD IV.

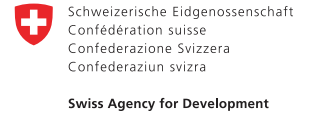
The Heads of the National Food Agency and the Agricultural Laboratory, including the representatives of the relevant Departments of the Ministry, attended the meeting.



As mentioned, ENPARD-IV aims to support rural development through the following initiatives: developing infrastructure and improving services in rural areas; strengthening women’s roles in rural development; improving governance systems; sustainable management of forest resources and environmental protection.

The program also envisages capacity building in food safety, veterinary medicine, and plant protection areas.

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## ENABLING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GEORGIA'S FOREST SECTOR REFORM - ECO.Georgia



ISSUE#10 / JUNE 2024

**“What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.” - Mahatma Gandhi**

### PROJECT BRIEF

The project “Enabling the implementation of Georgia’s forest sector reform - ECO.Georgia” is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture together with the National Forestry Agency, Rural Development Agency, Environmental Information and Education Centre, Department of Environmental Supervision; by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The project aims to mitigate GHG emissions through the nature-based management of the country’s forests and the improvement of energy efficiency to reduce the demand for fuelwood. It also envisages the strengthening of local self-governance and diversifying livelihood opportunities in the forest adjoining rural communities to benefit from diversified income opportunities through improved forestry value chains and better access to forestry knowledge and skills. The project focuses on three target regions (Guria, Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti) and eight municipalities: Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri, Lanchkhuti, Telavi, Kvareli, Akhmeta, Dedoplistskaro and Tianeti. The Project is funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Government of Georgia (GoG) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

**Component 1: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)**

- Activity 1.1:** Development and implementation of SFM plans
- Activity 1.2:** Strengthening of forest supervision
- Activity 1.3:** Provision of sustainably produced fuelwood by NFA
- Activity 1.4:** Enhancement of enabling environment for the nation-wide implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM)
- Activity 1.5:** Improvement of monitoring and measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) systems for the forest sector

**Component 2: Market Development for Energy Efficiency (EE) and Alternative Fuels (AF)**

- Activity 2.1:** EE-AF supply chain development
- Activity 2.2:** Implementing consumer financing instruments for EE-AF solutions
- Activity 2.3:** Creating consumer awareness and provision of technical advisory services for fuelwood users
- Activity 2.4:** Enabling policies and regulations

**Component 3: Livelihood opportunities and local self-governance in forest management**

- Activity 3.1:** Development and introduction of municipal-level tools, practices, plans and necessary capacities for participatory SFM and conservation
- Activity 3.2:** Development, testing and promotion of mechanisms at the local level to better protect interests of adversely affected stakeholders
- Activity 3.3:** Development of professional skills and knowledge relevant to SFM and conservation through vocational education and international partnerships with centers of knowledge
- Activity 3.4:** Strengthening of selected value chains (e.g., timber, NTFP, parts of eco-tourism)

■ Activity in 3 target regions only    ■ Nation-wide activity    □ Nation-wide activity with focus on 3 target regions



## Information meetings with the municipalities have been continued in Kakheti region

In June, information meetings with the municipalities continued in the Kakheti region. The goal of the events was to introduce the new principles of forest management and discuss ongoing or planned processes in the forest sector.

Participants from the responsible agencies and departments of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture presented the changes and opportunities provided by the Forest Code of Georgia. They answered community questions on various topics, such as new system fuelwood provisioning, state control of the forest, principles of sustainable forest management, forest use permissions, etc.



©EIEC: Information meeting in Telavi municipality

The local population also had a chance to see the exhibited equipment and machinery procured for the improvement of forest supervision. They learned about the advantages of energy-efficient stoves directly from the producers. Additionally, the audience heard details about the co-financing scheme for EE stoves, which is administered through the Rural Development Agency.



©EIEC: EE stove exhibition



©EIEC: DEC machinery and equipment exhibited for the meeting participants

The information meetings were organized in all eight target municipalities of the ECO.Georgia project over the last three months.

## Training programme for the stove producers was launched

In June, a special training program developed for stove producers in the country was launched. The goal of the program is to raise awareness among stove producers about energy efficiency (EE), standards of energy-efficient stoves, and stove testing procedures.

During the training sessions, the producers also learned about the co-financing program for energy-efficient stoves administered by the Rural Development Agency, including the requirements and advantages of participating in the program.



© GIZ: Training of stove producers



© GIZ: Training of stove producers

Additionally, during the training experienced and new stove producers exchanged their knowledge and experience. They discussed potential challenges and needs for EE stove production, including increased prices and technical features established by the standards. The training participants evaluated the sessions as very useful and pro-

ductive. They stated that the information obtained during the training sessions increased their motivation to develop their production of energy-efficient stoves, as they saw the potential of an enlarged market, which serves as a basic stimulus for them. After the first modules of the

training program, the producers expressed their interest in being part of the co-financing scheme administered by the Rural Development Agency and supported by the ECO.Georgia project.

## Knowledge Management and Training Platform

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For e-learning programs related to the forestry sector, the Knowledge Management and Training Platform (KMTP) is launched.

The first programmes have been uploaded to the Knowledge Management and Training Platform (KMTP). The first e-learning courses - “Basic Aspects of Forestry Legislation”, “Introduction to the Forestry Sector for New Employees”, “Media Communication” and “Public Relations” are intended for employees of the National Forestry Agency and the Department of Environmental Supervision.

The format of the modules allows the participants of the course to go through the full programme without a trainer and receive or update their knowledge according to their job competencies. The adaptation of the training modules to put them in an appropriate format for

e-learning and the training of the authors of the modules was carried out with the involvement of a didactic expert.

Authors of already existing study groups/modules were given special training, where they received theoretical and practical knowledge, in the direction of creating a suitable format for e-learning of study modules.

The KMTP platform was developed by the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture within the ECO.Georgia project and will be coordinated by the Environmental Information and Education Centre. The platform will collect training courses related to the forestry sector and materials needed for these courses, on the basis of the electronic library of the Ministry.