



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

APRIL/2022

## Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia addressed the MPs within the framework of the “Minister’s Hour”, at the Parliament of Georgia



Mr. Shamugia summed up the results of the activities implemented by the Ministry, he spoke about the existing challenges, possible solutions and the visions of the Ministry.

*“It will be crucial to discuss issues, which revealed a new agenda for us and for the whole world. We are all aware of these unfortunate events and reasons - the COVID -19 Pandemic and currently, the Russia-Ukraine war, which is the biggest challenge faced by the whole world.*

*We have experienced a number of deadliest wars and violence, our territories are occupied and we have hundreds of thousands of refugees. Therefore, we feel the pain of the Ukrainian people and make our best efforts to support them.*

*From the Tribune of the Parliament of Georgia, I honor the memory of all the fallen. The common goal that brings us together is that our future generation and our children should live in a peaceful, civil, developed and free world,” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.*

The Minister noted, that the application for the EU Membership is yet another milestone on the path of European integration of Georgia, therefore, the successful implementation of the ongoing reforms is an inevitable process.

“Today is a historic moment for our country with regard to full integration into the European family. Georgia has applied for the EU membership and we have seen a concrete political decision from the EU in the shortest possible time.

A questionnaire has already been delivered to Georgia, according to which, the EU will make an assessment of the current reforms being implemented in the country on its path to the EU. I am proud to state, that, since 2014, our Agency has worked hard to fulfill its obligations taken under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement “ Mr. Otar Shamugia said.

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### Otar Shamugia: “We think, that it will be possible to increase the wheat self-sufficiency from 15 % to 50% in a few years”

The Minister set focus on the food security and supply-related issues and noted that, currently, there is no problem related to the supplies of food products in the country.

“Actually, we have daily communication with the importers and conduct monitoring of the whole process; Thereupon, I can tell that, currently, we have no delays in the supply of food products in the country. If necessary, we are ready to help businesses to have access to alternative markets as well.

However, the current situation has shown us, that more needs to be done to increase the self-sufficiency of primary consumption products; Therefore, we are actively working to develop necessary measures to promote and ensure the growth of the grain production, moreover, through the engagement of the representatives of the sector and science, we will present a program in the nearest future, which will help to stimulate significant growth in grain production in the country.

*“We think, it will be possible to increase the wheat self-sufficiency from 15 % to 50% in the country, in a few years, we will make our best endeavors to accomplish it “*

*According to the Minister, currently, promoting local production is of the utmost importance.*

*“Within the framework of the preferential agro-credit project, we will finance the working capital loan for farmers with an interest rate.*

*However, we understand, that loans are not always available to smallholder farmers and they need the support, particularly, in the face of rising prices for fuel, fertilizers, and pesticides. We are actively working on the respective issues and, we will present the assistance package in the nearest future, which will help farmers in financing the costs for growing/producing the products, “- said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

The Minister underlined the importance of positive dynamics, which resulted from the policy pursued by the Government in the fields of agriculture, production, and exports.

“ The positive growth trend in the exports of agri-food products was maintained in 2021 over the past few years and the export amounted to USD 1,142,000,000, which is an unprecedented rate in the history of independent Georgia.

This is more than USD 200 million (up 21%) compared to the previous year. The growing trend in the export of agri-food products is maintained in 2022, according to the data of the first quarter, we have a 5% growth. The negative foreign trade balance of agri-food products has decreased by 72% in the last 10 years. During the same period, we have about an 80% increase in agri-food exports to the EU ( USD 180 million in 2021).

The diversification of export markets is one of our main objectives for us. The number of countries, where agricultural products produced in Georgia are exported is annually increasing. In 2021, Georgian products were exported to 99 countries around the world.

According to the data for 2021, the output of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries amounted to GEL 6.0 billion, and the total output of processed agricultural products – GEL 7.3 billion, “- said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

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## Otar Shamugia: “The state is launching two important projects”



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia announced the decision made by the Government of Georgia after the Government session, noting, that the state is launching two important projects;

The first project provides financing for the growing of annual crops, this year, the state will finance the planting and growing of annual crops, and the second project is for agricultural cooperatives;

Under the project, 80% of the expenses incurred by the cooperatives will be financed in case of creating the storage infrastructure, which will help cooperatives to store and sell their products in compliance with modern standards.

*“Over the years, we have been implementing very important programs aimed at promoting the development of various links in the agricultural production value chain, such as the planting of perennial gardens, providing technical support, establishing storage and processing farms, introducing new technologies, etc.*

This is reflected in the fact, that about GEL 4.5 billion has been invested in the sector as a result of these projects. A large number of finances come from private investment, which is important for the further development of the sector “- said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

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## Otar Shamugia: “We are launching a program aimed at assisting smallholder farmers in purchasing goods needed for farming activities”

*“Today, very important decision has been made by the Government of Georgia to support our farmers - the Agricultural Farmers Support Program has been approved to help smallholder farmers in purchasing goods urgent for agricultural activities”- said the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture at the meeting with the media representatives after the government session.*

According to the Minister, a few weeks ago, an additional, separate program was launched to support farmers. Under the preferential agro-credit project, the interest rate on a working capital loan will be financed for large farmers.

“Under the frame of the program, in a very short time, from March 22 till today, we help farmers to subsidize their interest on working capital loan - in the amount of 9%.

Too many beneficiaries got benefits under the program, more than GEL 20 million loans have been issued, which means that our farmers are actively benefiting from the program offered by the state and are involved in the process of growing annual crops; This means more cultivated land plots, which is crucial.

However, it should be mentioned, that the smallholder farmers have relatively less access to preferential financial resources, therefore, considering the raising prices for fertilizers, pesticides and other commodities, farmers need our assistance and support.

Therefore, the Government of Georgia decided to approve the new program. Under the program, according to the decision of the Prime Minister, farmers will receive GEL 300 assistance per 1 hectare.

*“You will definitely agree, that this will be an important support for them and will enable them to produce agricultural products and earn more income,” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.*

It should be mentioned, that according to the decision made at the government session today, the state is launching a program to support the owners of the agricultural land plots.

The budget of the new program is Gel 35 million. Under the program, the amount of subsidy for agricultural land was set at 300 GEL per hectare. Under the program, subsidies will be received by landowners / co-owners , if they have an agricultural land plot from 0.25 ha - up to 1.25 ha.

The beneficiary will be able to use the points accrued on the card to purchase the goods needed for agricultural activities.

Subsidies will be given to the beneficiaries involved in the program by accruing the corresponding points on a special agro card.

Beneficiaries will be provided with agro-cards by Liberty Bank. The beneficiary is required to register with the farmers register to participate in the program.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20796/>

## Otar Shamugia: “This is a great opportunity for our country, which we should use to join the European family”

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Otar Shamugia, spoke on the TV channel Maestro, “Maestro Regions” about important issues, regarding filling out the EU membership questionnaire to get the status of the EU candidate country. Minister noted that a large part of the respective questionnaire is related to environmental protection and agricultural areas.

*“This is a great opportunity for our country which we should use to join the European family. The entire Ministry is involved in the process of filling out the questionnaire and preparing the relevant answers. We will have answers to all questions in the near-est future.*

Since the signing of the Association Agreement, we have implemented very important reforms, regarding our country’s legal approximation with the EU acquis. The prepared responses will reflect all reforms and measures we have taken. We have made great efforts in the respective area, although, there is still a lot more work to do and we are ready for it, “- said Mr. Shamugia.

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## Vehicles equipped with modern laboratory equipment were handed over to the Rural Development Agency



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Georgia, Mr. Imamura Akira.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan and the International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for transferring vehicles equipped with state-of-the-art laboratory equipment to the Rural Development Agency to ensure the extension services to farmers.

*“Ensuring agricultural extension services for rural residents and farmers employed in the agricultural sector, timely response to their needs, sharing knowledge, and providing information on new technologies is a priority for the Ministry. The new vehicles are equipped with laboratory equipment, which will enable the employees of the regional services of the Rural Development Agency to provide extension services to farmers on their agricultural land plots,” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.*

The Minister spoke about the projects implemented for the development of cooperatives in the country and noted, that with the financial support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), exchange programs and advanced training are successfully conducted in the country.

Sharing of Japanese and international experience by the specialists of the Agency contributes

to the development of the agricultural field in Georgia and, therefore, it is important to deepen cooperation in this area.

The Ambassador of Japan noted, that Georgian agro-food products have great potential in the international markets.

“Japan is ready to support and increase the quality of Georgian agricultural products, which will be important for the accession of Georgia to the EU and for Georgian farmers to increase the exports of their products to the international markets,” said Mr. Imamura Akira.

The Japanese Ambassador noted, that today, tackling climate change is a priority all over the world and expressed a desire to cooperate in linking greenhouse gas trading markets between the two countries”

At the end of the meeting, a handover ceremony of vehicles for the Rural Development Agency was held by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

“Vehicles equipped with laboratory equipment will help to increase production quality and, consequently, diversify export markets,” said Hiroyuki Mori, Permanent Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Georgia Office.



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## Grant Agreements were signed between the Agency for Protected Areas and Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF)



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Yuri Nozadze, Executive Director of the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) Mr. Tobias Muenchmeyer, and Chairman of the Agency for Protected Areas Mr. Davit Iosebashvili signed the grant agreement.

The Agency for Protected Areas has been cooperating closely with the Caucasus Nature Fund for many years. We are pleased to have signed this important grant this year, which aims to increase the motivation of our employees and improve working conditions. I believe this support will further contribute to their well-being,” said Mr. Yuri Nozadze, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

Under the framework of grant agreements, all employees of the territorial administration within the system of the protected areas will receive a salary supplement for the next year. The cooperation also includes the life and health insurance for all employees of all administrative units of the Agency and the improvement of their working conditions.

*“We are providing the grant to the Agency for Protected Areas, which serves to motivate and support rangers in their unique day-to-day nature conservation activities.*

*We are glad, that we have made contributions to increase their motivation. Moreover, we are working to create the rewards and bonuses system for rangers, based on their work performance, we believe, the respective rewards system will appreciate their work even more,” said Mr. Tobias Muenchmeyer, Executive Director of the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF).*

The Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) has been cooperating with the Agency for Protected Areas for many years and contributes greatly to the development of protected area infrastructure, as well as raising employee motivation.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20807/>

## Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) got acquainted with the results of the projects implemented in Kakheti to prevent crops flooding and other disasters caused by climate change



Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) together with the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili got familiar with the current report of the project “Reducing the risk of climate-driven disasters in Georgia”

Under the framework of the project “Learn in a Safe Environment”, the meeting was also held with the students, who won the school competition. The students from the public school of the village Tsinandali presented their environmental initiatives, aiming to raise awareness of climate change and promote environmental education.

Mrs. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger and Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili inspected the shore-braces and ongoing cleaning works undertaken on the rivers Khodashnikshevi and Telaviskhevi.

*“It is very important, that the UNDP Assistant Administrator has arrived and got familiar with the ongoing activities undertaken on the rivers Khodashnikshevi and Telaviskhevi. Preventive measures are taken to prevent flooding, which can cause great damage to the region.*

*We saw the interest (how high could it be) in the environmental education field among young students from the village Tsinandali school. We also got familiar with the already implemented activities,” said Mr. Solomon Pavliashvili.*

*“We are very proud, that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has been cooperating with Georgia for 30 years. We will continue to support the Government on its path to European integration and in achieving sustainable development goals. Strengthening of the institutions, protecting the environment, and setting focus on the climate change impact-related issues are important for a democratic transformation of the country,” said Mrs. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger.*

The program “Reducing the risk of climate-driven disasters in Georgia” is a joint effort of the Government of Georgia and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and aims to adapt to climate change and reduce disaster risk.

The program is financially supported by the Green Climate Fund and the Governments of Georgia, Sweden, and Switzerland. Under the program, modern mechanisms for adapting to climate change, including hydrometeorological observation and early warning systems should be introduced in the country.

Major works will be carried out in 11 large river basins of Georgia, where the risk of disasters is particularly high. Moreover, public awareness of climate change will be increased in the country.

The event was attended by Mrs. Danielle Meuwly, Regional Director for South Caucasus chez Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Mrs. Mzia Giorgobiani, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Mr. Irakli Shioshvili, State Representative in the Kakheti Region, and Mrs. Tamar Aladashvili, Head of the Environmental Information and Educational Center.



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## Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture opened the first Preparatory National Consultation Meeting for Stockholm +50



Through the national consultation meetings, Georgia joined the process ongoing in 58 countries, prior to the conference “Stockholm +50”, which is scheduled to be held on June 2-3 in Sweden.

Consultation meetings allow a wider public to get engaged in the vitally important discussions on the protection of the environment, tackling climate change, and addressing climate-smart solutions for further recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The results of the National Consultation Meetings, recommendations, and action plans will be discussed during the Stockholm + 50 Conference.

“One of the top priorities of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture is to make transparent decisions and involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process, taking into account their views to effectively enforce the right to participate in the environmental decision-making process.

The views expressed during the consultation are not only essential in the process of preparing the report on behalf of Georgia but will also assist the Ministry and other government agencies in better identification and planning of measures and future policy.

Despite the pandemic, Georgia has taken significant steps in recent years to improve the country’s environmental governance and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, ambient air quality improvement, protection and proper management of water resources, biodiversity conservation, and management of waste and chemicals, and combating climate change.

Considering current circumstances, when Georgia applied for EU membership, both our efforts, as well as the participation of all of you should be further strengthened to achieve tangible and successful results,” Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili said.

The Stockholm + 50 conference is dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the first UN Environment Conference. On this day, environmental protection was first forced onto the agenda of the UN General Assembly. Stockholm + 50 participants will summarize the results of five decades of global environmental efforts and discuss the critical steps that need to be taken to achieve a healthy planet and universal well-being.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Government of Sweden supported the National Consultation Meeting in Georgia.

The meeting was attended by the Head of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Sweden in Georgia, Mr. Erik Illes, Deputy Head of the UNDP in Georgia Mrs. Anna Chernishova, Deputy Chairman of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, Mrs. Khatia Tsilosani, representatives of the Government of Georgia, civil society and the private sector.

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## The Government of Japan, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia are launching a joint project



The project amounting to \$ 920,000 assists Georgia in fulfilling international commitments in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The presentation of the new project was attended by the Assistant Administrator, Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mrs. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Ambassador of Japan to Georgia Mr. Imamura Akira and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources.

“The introduction of a sustainable lifestyle, as well as generating the sustainable sources of income are pillars to sustainable development. Thereupon, it is sustainable development that gives people the opportunity to earn an income that does not pose a threat to the environment and, conversely, serves to save our planet and humanity. Georgia is one of 23 countries where Japan and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are making joint efforts to address climate change and take concrete steps,” said Assistant Administrator, Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mrs. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger.

*“Introducing the mechanisms which can provide employment opportunities and bring benefits in parallel with the protection of the environment is a global priority. We thank the international partners for their support in introducing the principles of sustainable management in the country.”*

*We appreciate, that Georgia is one of the countries where Japan and the United Nations*

*Development Program (UNDP) jointly support the protection of the ecosystems, as well as sustainable forest management in the face of climate change. The gradual implementation of the Forest Code will increase access to firewood for rural residents and create new employment opportunities.*

*Moreover, as we are all aware, the Government of Georgia has taken ambitious commitments under the Paris Agreement. The implementation of the new program will help to fulfill the international commitments taken by the country in the field of climate change “- said the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.*

The implementation of the new joint project will contribute to the introduction of sustainable and climate-friendly management practices in Georgia. The respective project will help in protecting the forests, reducing forest degradation and deforestation, and preventing forest fires. Thereupon, the forest will perform the function of absorbing carbon dioxide and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“Japan has an ambitious plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. In addition to implementing the national plan, Japan also supports building low-emission economies in other parts of the world. Through our support, 43,000 people will be able to use green and sustainable solutions in Georgia, which will help to protect the delicate ecosystem of forest,” said the Japanese Ambassador to Georgia Mr. Imamura Akira.

Through the support of Japan and UNDP, a pilot project will be implemented in Mtskheta Municipality to support the establishment of log sort yards, and the adoption of sustainable timber production practices. Three ‘ log sort yards will be opened and equipped in Mtskheta Municipality, which will serve about 43,000 locals.

Arrangement of log sort yards is part of the current forest reform in Georgia. From 2023, log sort yards should become fully operational throughout Georgia.

It should be mentioned, that in 2021, Georgia adopted an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) document, which stipulates the country’s commitment to unconditionally reduce the total greenhouse gas emissions to 35 percent below its 1990 baseline level by 2030. At the same time, the Government of Georgia has approved the National Climate Change Strategy 2030 and the Action Plan for 2021-2023, which outline concrete steps to fulfill the respective commitments. Increasing carbon sequestration in forests by 10 percent is part of this ambitious plan.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20763/>

## Otar Shamugia meets the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Switzerland to Georgia Heidi Grau.



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia hosted the Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Georgia Mrs. Heidi Grau. The issues of future cooperation in the agricultural and environmental protection fields between the two countries have been discussed at the meeting.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the Government of the Swiss Confederation and the Ambassador for providing active support to Georgia.

“We have a long-term partnership and fruitful cooperation with the Swiss side, but I believe, that there might be even more potential for deepening relations, both in the environmental protection and agricultural fields. The difficult situation in the region has posed new challenges to our country.

We have started to work even more actively to diversify the export markets for Georgian

products, to improve access to the European market. Georgia has already applied for EU membership, which requires making more efforts to fulfill its commitments taken under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).

At the same time, Georgia is in a phase of implementing significant reforms in the field of environmental protection - forest code, waste management, ambient air quality, adaptation to climate change, etc., all the aforementioned require complex measures and large financial resources. Therefore, the support from partner European countries, including Switzerland, as well as sharing their experience with the Georgian side is crucial to achieving our goals,” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.

According to the Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Georgia, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Georgia and Switzerland. During these years, fruitful cooperation has been established between the two countries and the Swiss side is ready to continue supporting Georgia, particularly in the implementation of ongoing environmental reforms.

*“Georgia is taking important steps towards the development of rural and agricultural areas, as well as environmental protection field. Over the years, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has been successfully implementing a number of projects in Georgia, promoting food safety, animal identification/registration, and vocational education in the country.*

*In 2021, the Agreement was signed between Georgia and Switzerland to facilitate the achievement of global emission reduction targets, moreover, under the frame of the respective agreement, we can implement new projects, considering the needs of Georgia. We are ready to deepen our cooperation on climate change mitigation and waste management. Ensuring environmental protection is a foundation, that will help Georgia in the development of many areas,” said Mr. Heidi Graum.*

The meeting was attended by Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, and Mrs. Danielle Meuwly, Regional Director for the Swiss Cooperation Office in the South Caucasus.

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## Otar Shamugia meets the Ambassador of Austria to Georgia Thomas Mühlmann



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Georgia Mr. Thomas Mühlmann.

The Minister expressed his appreciation to the Ambassador for the significant support being implemented by Austria in the agricultural development and environmental protection fields in the country.

“Austria is an important supporter and partner of our country. Through support provided by Austria and our other friendly countries over the 30 years, the integration into a large European family has become a reality for Georgia. We make our best efforts to speed up this process. It is important for us to boost access to Georgian products in the European market.

Georgia is a small country, therefore, it will not be able to compete with large countries with the volume of export products produced in our country, however, we have the potential to establish our niche in the international market, as a country producing high-quality organic products, for which we are actively working with donor organizations,” - said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

According to the Minister, currently, against the background of the difficult political and economic situation in the region, the support of partner countries is even more necessary and crucial for Georgia to increase food self-sufficiency, diversify export markets, and promote environmental reforms.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Georgia, Mr. Mühlmann marked 30 years of the establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Georgia and Austria, and noted, that Georgia’s European aspirations are obvious. Austria will continue to support our country in implementing reforms that will help Georgia to achieve its goal.

*“We have had fruitful cooperation with Georgia over the years. The Austrian Development Agency, together with the Ministry has implemented a number of important projects in food safety, animal identification /registration, rural development areas, forest sector reform, and many others. Considering Georgia’s ambition toward Europe, we will support the development of rural and agricultural areas, mountain tourism, as well as environmental and ecotourism fields. In addition, the Austrian agency is ready to share the experience with the Georgian side in ensuring sustainable forest management. It should be noted, that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture will be our important partner in the future as well, “- said Mr. Thomas Mühlmann.*

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili and the Head of the Office in Tbilisi, Austrian Development Agency Mr. Alexander Karner.

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## Nino Tandilashvili attended the presentation of the project “Low Carbon Solutions through Nature Based Urban Development for Kutaisi City”



Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture attended the presentation of the project “Low Carbon Solutions through Nature Based Urban Development for Kutaisi City”, which also included the project work plan, project activities and goals..

The participants discussed the expected results of the project and possible ways of cooperation.

The project “Low Carbon Solutions through Nature Based Urban Development for Kutaisi City” aims to create an institutional framework for urban development of Kutaisi city, demonstrate and scale-up investments in low-carbon electric solutions in transport and sustainable land management practices.

*“Quite interesting activities will be implemented within the framework of the project. The green city development plan and strategy will be elaborated for Kutaisi city, bicycle lanes will be arranged. It is planned to purchase modern buses, which will contribute to the development of the internal transport network.*

*Moreover, 700 ha of forest will be restored near Kutaisi, which is important for the preservation of ecosystems. The initiation of similar projects with the involvement of the central government at the municipal level will be continued in the future as well, which will facilitate the implementation and encouragement of green initiatives,” - said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.*

“Low Carbon Solutions through Nature Based Urban Development for Kutaisi City” is a three-year project (2022-2025) funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) through the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus). Kutaisi City Hall is the direct beneficiary of the project.

The Mayor of Kutaisi Municipality Ioseb Khakhaleishvili, representatives of relevant agencies within the system of the Ministry and the private sector attended the presentation of the project.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20801/>

## Working meeting held within the framework of the program “EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data”



During the meeting, the current situation and challenges faced by Georgia in water accounting -as one of the program's main components were discussed in depth by parties, who also identified the needs and revealed priorities to plan future activities for the implementation of the project.

As mentioned at the meeting, Georgia has started implementing large-scale reforms in the water resources management field through EU-supported projects in the past few years.

Within the framework of the European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+ 4 EaP), a draft law on water resources management has been drafted and has already been submitted to the Parliament, whereupon, the discussions are underway at the Committee.

The Regional Program – “EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data” being implemented in six countries (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine) aims to improve health, the well-being of citizens and to pursue the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the EU's Eastern Partnership countries, it also provides an opportunity for the green transformation of aforementioned countries, following the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The program embraces two main areas - support for sustainable use of water resources and the

use of reliable environmental data by partner countries, entailing, expansion-improvement of environmental data and information.

The EU program “EU4 Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data” is a part of the EU Eastern Partnership framework with a total budget amounting to € 12.75 million.

The program will be implemented in the period 2022-2024; The consortium of implementing organizations consists of representatives of the Umweltbundesamt (Environment Agency Austria), the ADA (Austrian Development Agency), the Office International de l'Eau (France), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

‘EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data’ builds upon the success of previous programs like the European Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) and the Shared Environmental Information System Phase II (ENI SEIS II East).

Through respective programs, modernization of environmental monitoring and data analysis systems have been successfully held, which supported partner countries in bringing their national policies and strategies into line with the EU Water Framework Directive.

The workshop was attended by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture representatives, the stakeholders of the program, and experts.

