

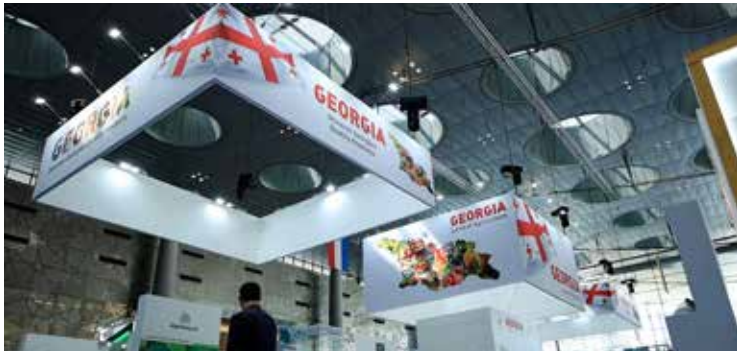


Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

MARCH/2023

With the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the Embassy of Georgia in the State of Qatar, 14 Georgian companies were represented at the Georgian exhibition stand, providing their agricultural products to the visitors of the International Agricultural Exhibition „Agriteq 2023“.



Otar Shamugia hosts Ministers of Qatar and Ambassadors of various countries at the Georgian exhibition stand during the International Agricultural Exhibition in Doha

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia, attended the opening ceremony of the International Agricultural Exhibition “Agriteq 2023” in Doha, the capital of Qatar. Qatar’s Minister of Transport, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Municipalities, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Chairman of Qatar Tourism Board and Qatar Airways, and Ambassadors of different countries paid a visit to the Georgian exhibition stand.

Georgia’s exhibition stand featured Georgian walnuts, blueberries, water, dry and freeze-dried fruits, chilled lamb meat, honey, and organic juices. The mentioned products meet the requirements of international standards. The vast majority of the Georgian companies participating in the exhibition are beneficiaries of the state programs of the Rural Development Agency.

“Georgia and the Gulf countries have significant potential for developing trade relations, which should be expanded, and the trade turnover between the two countries should be increased. Our policy prioritizes the positioning of Georgian products on the global mar-

ket. Moreover, we strive to increase the awareness of Georgian agricultural products in the global market to the greatest extent possible and make them in demand, which, in turn, will allow export numbers to rise gradually. It is noteworthy that, in recent years, interest in Georgian agricultural products has been increasing in the Gulf countries, therefore, it is crucial to hold similar events to support our farmers” said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

“Agriteq” is considered one of the largest international exhibitions in the Gulf region, which embraces many thousands of visitors. This year, 52 countries and over 650 local and international agricultural companies are participating in the exhibition. Participation in the exhibition, which attracts up to 20,000 visitors, is a significant opportunity to promote Georgian products and increase export in Qatar and the Gulf region in general.

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Shamugia, together with the members of the Georgian delegation, visited the exhibition stands of different countries, including the state of Qatar, and held meetings with the officials.

The Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Georgia to the State of Qatar, Mr. Nikoloz Revazishvili, and the Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr. Davit Tsitlidze accompanied the Minister.



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The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Otar Shamugia meets his Excellency Mr. Abdulla bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, Minister of Municipality of Qatar in Doha, the capital of the State of Qatar.



Mr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Subaie welcomed Mr. Otar Shamugia and thanked him for visiting Qatar. Mr. Abdullah emphasized the support of the Ministry in presenting the Georgian stand at the international agricultural exhibition, noting that the State of Qatar is interested in deepening trade relations with Georgia.

The Minister of Municipality of Qatar also mentioned that the awareness of quality Georgian agro-food products has increased significantly in recent years, and the two countries have the potential to deepen trade relations.

Otar Shamugia and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the State of Qatar sign a Memorandum of Cooperation in Doha.



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the State of Qatar, Sheikh, Mr. Faleh Bin Ahmed Bin Ali Al Thani.

At the meeting, the parties emphasized the importance of taking environmental measures to prevent the hazards posed by climate change.

Mr. Shamugia spoke extensively about the strategic vision of the Government of Georgia in the mentioned direction and emphasized the measures undertaken in the environmental area. According to the Minister, the Government of Georgia has taken crucial steps to improve air quality, preserve biodiversity, manage water resources, expand protected areas, manage waste, etc.

At the end of the meeting, the parties signed a Memorandum of Cooperation that calls for increased collaboration in improving water resources management, air quality monitoring and control, biodiversity protection, and implementation of joint environmental projects and programs aiming at mitigating the effects of climate change. The Minister of Environmental Protection of Qatar expressed gratitude to Mr. Shamugia for his visit to the State of Qatar and stated that the Memorandum signed between the Agencies in the field of environmental protection moves the existing collaboration to a new level. The Minister expressed his hope that the mentioned Agreement will support the implementation of joint projects.

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Otar Shamugia meets Mr. Al Noubay Al Marri, CEO of “Widam Food” Company in Doha.



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia met with Mr. Al Noubay Al Marri, CEO of “Widam Food” Company, which provides livestock and chilled/frozen local and imported meat. During the meeting, Mr. Shamugia discussed the possibilities of trade relations between the two countries.

According to Mr. Shamugia, Qatar is an important trade partner for Georgia, and there is great potential for deepening trade and economic ties between the countries.

“Government of Georgia implements important state programs in the agricultural area, which are initiated by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia to support farmers and ensure their access to preferential financial resources, introduce various international standards, and increase competitiveness, including livestock sector development projects and the adoption of global standards. Moreover, the recent activation of trade ties with Qatar is encouraging; Georgia exports quality products to Qatar, including chilled sheep meat, accordingly, potential and interest in these products is growing,” said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

According to the Executive Director of “Widam food,” it is critical to start working meetings shortly and resolve bilateral cooperation issues as soon as possible.

Minister Shamugia expressed his willingness to participate in relevant procedures within his competence so that Georgian farmers may obtain maximum support in entering and establishing their products in various foreign markets.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the State of Qatar Mr. Nikoloz Revazishvili, the Head of the Rural Development Agency Mr. Davit Tsitlidze, and the chairman of the Association of Georgian Shepherds, Beka Gonashvili accompanied the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia at the meetings in Doha.

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During his visit to Qatar, Otar Shamugia meets the Chairman of the Leading Landscaping & Agriculture Company “Al Sulaiteen Group”.

During his visit to Qatar, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Chairman of the largest Company, “Al Sulaiteen Group”, Mr. Abdullah Salem Al Sulaiteen and inspected the greenhouse of the mentioned Company.

At the meeting, Mr. Shamugia briefed the representatives of the Company on the development trends in the agricultural sector of Georgia and provided information on agricultural support projects.

The conversation touched upon the investment project “Imereti Agro Zone”.

The parties emphasized the great potential for deepening trade and economic relations between the Gulf countries and Georgia.

Since 2001, the Company “Al Sulaiteen Group” has been implementing large projects, aiming to supply fresh fruits, vegetables, and flowers to the local market. Moreover, the Company collaborates with the biggest markets and foundations, including the Lulu supermarket chain and the Qatar Foundation.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21207/>

Otar Shamugia hosts Mr. Frank Morschel, Manager of the Environmental Portfolio of the German Development and Reconstruction Bank (KfW) in Georgia.



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia hosted Mr. Frank Morschel, Manager of the Environmental Portfolio of the German Development and Reconstruction Bank (KfW) in Georgia.

During the meeting, the parties discussed issues outlined in the grant agreement “Biodiversity and Sustainable Local Development in Georgia” signed between the Agency of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the German Development Bank (KfW).

“I would like to express my gratitude to the German Bank for Reconstruction and Development (KfW) for supporting the Agency of Protected Areas over the years. The grant agreement “Biodiversity and Sustainable Local Development in Georgia” envisages the creation of new protected areas and the expansion of existing ones

within six years, also the improvement of the efficiency in the management system of protected areas.

Considerable attention will be paid to the improvement of the monitoring of biodiversity, and also, the conservation of natural resources. Moreover, with the support of our German partners, research is planned to be conducted in the Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneti regions, which will be the basis for creating protected areas in the mentioned regions.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture will submit a draft law to the Parliament on the establishment of protected areas in the Guria region shortly”, said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

According to the Minister, the territory of protected areas has significantly expanded in recent years, making up 13% of the overall territory of the country. The government will actively implement state policy in this direction in the future.

According to Mr. Frank Morschel, the German Bank for Reconstruction and Development (KfW) has a long-standing, successful cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the Agency for Protected Areas. Mr. Morschel expressed his readiness to actively support the Georgian side regarding the expansion/creation of new protected areas.

The grant agreement “Biodiversity and Sustainable Local Development” was signed in 2022. The project amounts to EUROS 16,245,625. The newly established protected areas in Racha, Shida Kartli, and Kvereti have been selected as target areas. Moreover, visitor centers will be built in all three of them, including tourist trails and ranger pathways.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21209>

With the support of the Japanese government, the log sort yard –the so-called “Business Service Yard” was organized in the village of Jighaura.

With the financial support of the Japanese government, within the framework of the project “Support to Sustainable and Climate Friendly Forest Management Practices in Georgia”, a new “Business Service Yard” was organized in the village of Jighaura, Mtskheta municipality.

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, accompanied by the H.E. Imamura Akira, Ambassador of Japan to Georgia, and Mr. Nick Beresford, UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, opened the “Business Service Yard”.

“Ensuring sustainable forest management is one of our top priorities. Firstly, it is critical to develop appropriate forest management plans, carry out inventory, strengthen the maintenance and restore forests, and, secondly, protect forests by enhancing appropriate control mechanisms.

Moreover, “Business Service Yards” are essential for the success of the ongoing forestry reform in Georgia. We strive to gradually replace social logging with forest-friendly services and create easy access to sustainably harvested wood resources for citizens and businesses”, -said Mr. Otar Shamugia, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

The project “Support to Sustainable and Climate Friendly Forest Management Practices in Georgia” is implemented with the funding of the Japanese government and the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), for which USD 920,000 has been allocated. 39 “business service yards” have already been set up in the country. In addition, 17 “business service yards” will be organized by the end of 2023.

According to Mr. Imamura Akira, the forest in Georgia is a precious treasure, which plays a crucial role in the sustainable and climate-smart development of the country and is vital for the well-being of people; Japan is happy to share its many years of experience with Georgia in forest management and thereby contribute to the protection and sustainable use of natural resources in the country.

It is worth mentioning that within the framework of the project “Support to Sustainable and Climate Friendly Forest Management Practices in Georgia”, the “business service yards” in the villages of Dzegvi and Kvemo Lisi were equipped with the appropriate equipment: 4 units of trucks, 3 pickup trucks, 1 tractor, and 3 electricity generators.

Personal safety kits, 100 fire-fighting tools, 30 special fire-resistant protective helmets, 50 radio transmitters (walkie-talkies), and three all-terrain vehicles were given to foresters, thus, enabling them to manage and control the hazards of forest fires.

In addition, the most vulnerable families in the mentioned villages were provided with energy-efficient stoves. About 43,000 residents have received sustainable biomass fuel for their daily needs.

As UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, Mr. Nick Beresford stated, the UN Development Program supports forest sector reform in Georgia as a step forward in the sustainable management of natural resources and mitigation –reducing climate change.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21185>

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Otar Shamugia meets Sheraz Gasri, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of France to Georgia.



During the meeting, the parties discussed current projects, prospects for future cooperation, and investment opportunities.

Mr. Shamugia expressed his gratitude to the French government for long-standing friendly and partnership relations, emphasizing the importance of French assistance and experience sharing for Georgia in its European integration process.

At the meeting, the Minister discussed state programs supporting environmental protection and agricultural development and emphasized the favorable environment for investing in the country, which enjoys a liberal tax system with fewer taxes and low tax rates.

“As we are aware, Georgia was granted a European perspective. Our goal is to become a candidate country for the European Union. To that end, we hope to receive support from our friendly countries, including France. We enjoy and sincerely appreciate effective cooperation with France. I hope that our plans will be even more active and fruitful”, stated Minister Shamugia.

“As you know, the European Union is a unity, an embodiment of values and principles. Therefore, I would like to congratulate you on your European perspective. Our goal is to assist Georgia in becoming a candidate country for the European Union membership. We also believe that Georgia should depend less on imports and establish itself in the EU market with its locally produced goods. We welcome the ongoing joint projects between our countries and admit that bilateral cooperation will be further expanded” Mrs. Sheraz Gars stated.

The parties focused on issues regarding infrastructure development and cattle breeding, also expanding collaboration in the wine certification and water resources management fields.

Deputy Minister Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, representatives of the relevant departments of the Ministry, also Mr. Raphaël Jozan, Director of the AFD office for the South Caucasus, and Head of the Economic Service of the French Embassy, Mr. François-Henri Cloarec attended the meeting.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21186>

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Otar Shamugia hosts the Agricultural Attache at USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Christine Mumma.



During the meeting, Minister Shamugia and USDA Attaché Mrs. Christine Mumma discussed the close collaboration between the two countries and drew their attention to the current and completed programs, implemented with the support of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

“For many years, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia has had a strategic partnership and cooperation with the United States of America. US support is crucial for the development of the agricultural sector. In this regard, we would like to highlight the efforts of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for which we are grateful” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.

At the meeting, the Attaché emphasized the importance of the participation of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture in the climate summit planned in Washington D . C and invited Mr. Shamugia to the USA to attend the Summit.

“Currently, climate change is a challenge for the world, therefore, it is critically important that you - a representative of a close partner country of the United States of America participate in the summit scheduled for May,” said Mrs. Christine Muma.

At the meeting, the Attaché spoke about the current programs supported by the USDA and noted that the United States of America implements several programs for the development of the agricultural sector of Georgia and is ready for further engagement and extension of existing support.

The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. George Khanishvili, and Deputy Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Head of the Economic Department of the US Embassy, Mrs. Jean Foster, and representatives of the USDA local office attended the meeting.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21187>

Nino Tandilashvili was elected as the Chair of the Accreditation Committee of the Green Climate Fund and a member of the Ethics and Audit Committee.



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili participated in the meeting of the Governing Board of the Green Climate Fund in the city of Songdo, South Korea.

During the meeting, Mrs. Tandilashvili was elected as the Chair of the Accreditation Committee and a member of the Ethics and Audit Committee.

From 2022, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili represents the Eastern European countries in the Green Climate Fund for two years.

At the Governing Board meeting, Mrs. Tandilashvili emphasized the importance of the financial support provided by the Green Climate Fund for the countries of the Eastern European region to ensure the adoption of climate-smart technologies, reduce vulnerability to climate change and also mitigate the emissions emitted by the mentioned countries.

During the meeting, the participants discussed a wide range of issues related to climate change. The Board decided to fund initiatives for developing countries in energy, agriculture, sustainable forest management, and other areas worth USD 587 million.

The Green Climate Fund is the financial mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which finances climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in developing countries.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21206>

George Khanishvili meets John A. Pennel, USAID Mission Director, and USAID/Georgia Economic Growth Director Marika Olson.



The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. George Khanishvili held a meeting with Mr. John A. Pennel, USAID Mission Director, and USAID/Georgia Economic Growth Director, Mrs. Marika Olson.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the possibilities of continuing the “Plant Safety System

Initiative” to strengthen the phytosanitary capacity of the National Food Agency and highlighted prospects for future cooperation.

Mr. Khanishvili thanked the American government and the US Agency for International Development for long-standing cooperation and emphasized the importance of the support provided to the National Food Agency.

“We are making our best efforts to fulfill EU requirements. The project, which ensures plant protection, will be completed shortly. I would like to note that, thanks to the mentioned project, we were able to effectively combat the invasion of an Asian stink bug, although we still face challenges.

The EU assessment document provides guidelines for us on how to implement the specified normative acts.

However, if the program “Plant Safety System Initiative” is extended we will have an opportunity to create an electronic plant protection program that ensures full traceability. As a result, we will be able to manufacture safe and high-quality products and export them to European Union markets. Your assistance is crucial to achieving these objectives,” stated Mr. George Khanishvili.

“Any other form of assistance will be rendered ineffective if the government fails to analyze phytosanitary concerns, does not conduct proper monitoring, or provides risk management measures. If the “Plant Safety System Initiative program” continues, we will be capable of achieving these goals,” said Mr. Zura Chekurashvili, the head of the National Food Agency.

Mr. Pennell spoke at length about the importance of partnership and friendly relations between the two countries, emphasizing the need for continuing cooperation.

According to Mrs. Marika Olson, the International Development Agency of the United States of America intends Georgian products to be competitive on international markets to the greatest extent possible. Mrs. Olson expressed willingness to collaborate with the Georgian side in the respective area.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21189>

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Otar Shamugia hosts the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Georgia, Ahmed Ibrahim Ahmed Taher Al Nuaimi.



During the meeting, the parties addressed the possibility of expanding bilateral trade and economic cooperation, including investment opportunities.

The Minister briefed the Ambassador on the state initiatives promoting agricultural development, emphasizing the “Imereti Agro Zone” project as one of the best ex-

amples ensuring greenhouse cluster development in the region. Mr. Shamugia also outlined the favorable investment climate in the country.

“The visit of the Prime Minister of Georgia to the United Arab Emirates confirms the importance of close partnership and friendly relations between the two countries. I believe we have a huge potential for deepening trade relations, which will be mutually beneficial and effective”, said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

“Georgia has attracted the attention of Arab investors primarily to its prospects for environmental and agricultural development. We welcome to further deepening our partnership “ Mr. Ahmed Al Nuaimi noted.

The conversation touched upon the expanding trade and economic cooperation to support the development of agro-food products, namely fruits, blueberries, almonds, hazelnuts, etc., and also to promote the use of renewable energy sources in the country.

It should be mentioned that the United Arab Emirates is hosting the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) at the UNFCCC in November 2023. The Ambassador has personally invited Mr. Shamugia to participate in the Conference.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21194>

Nino Tandilashvili participates in the 8th meeting of the EU-Georgia Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Sub-Committee.



The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture hosted the 8th meeting of the EU-Georgia Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Sub-Committee. During the meeting, the parties evaluated the fulfillment of obligations set forth in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

“We are delighted to host you in Georgia, at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. We strive to inform the representatives of the EU delegation about the progress made by the country within the Association Agreement and address challenges that we hope to overcome

with your assistance. Moreover, the positive assessment of the EU membership questionnaire is crucial for us. I believe that joined efforts and close collaboration will enable us to obtain the candidate status and give our citizens the opportunity, among other benefits, to increase their access to the European Union market”, said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.

The Deputy Minister expressed her gratitude to the representatives of the EU delegation for their assistance and stressed the importance of Georgia’s European perspective as recognized by the European Council.

“Georgia has a clear view, an ambition, and a road map to obtain the EU candidate Status. Georgia and the European Commission have built a successful partnership. We look forward to continuing our close collaboration”, stated Mr. Koen Van Dyck, Head of Unit Bilateral International Relations, DG Health & Food Safety), European Commission.

During the meeting, the parties emphasized the importance of improving the legal framework in the food safety, laboratory, phytosanitary and sanitary fields.

Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili and Mr. Koen Van Dyck, Head of Unit Bilateral International Relations signed the amended Annex XI-B of the Association Agreement.

It is worth mentioning that the updated annex is a list of legal acts of the European Union, which Georgia should bring closer to its legislation.

The members of the European Union delegation, the Heads of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, the Revenue Service, the National Food Agency, the laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture, and representatives of the relevant services of the Ministry attended the meeting.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21199>

The Chairmanship of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) was handed over to Georgia from the United States of America during a conference in Brussels. Georgia assumes the status of a Chair of the WWTG on May 1st, 2023.



“This is another recognition of Georgia as a wine producer country, which will contribute to the promotion of Georgian wine and the growth of exports among the member countries of the “WWTG”. Furthermore, Georgia will lead, oversee, and coordinate the work of the mentioned Organisation for a year.

In November 2023, Georgia will host the representatives of WWTG countries to discuss important issues faced by the wine industry” stated Mr. Levan Mekhuzla, Chairman of the National Wine Agency, who participated in the annual meeting of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) in Brussels, Belgium.

The World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) is a group of wine-producer countries, including Georgia, the USA, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, and Uruguay.

The primary objective of the mentioned organization is to ease and facilitate international wine trade by sharing information and taking joint initiatives /actions to remove trade barriers.

“On behalf of the wine industry of the United States of America, we are pleased that Georgia is becoming the Chair country of the World Wine Trade Group. Together with other partner countries, we are working to change wine labeling practices, waste management, sustainable development, and take other important initiatives for the wine industry. Since I have already been to Georgia, I am well aware of Georgian hospitality. I congratulate the Georgian team on the Chairmanship of WWTG”, said Mrs. Katherina Bedard, a representative of the US wine industry (Katherina Bedard, University of California Wine).

It is noteworthy that the World Wine Trade Group has a rotating Chair with a term of one year. Georgia chaired WWTG in 2014.

Throughout the mentioned period, important issues were agreed upon, and documentation was created, which simplified wine trading procedures between the member countries of the WWTG. The World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) evaluated positively the one-year chairmanship of Georgia.

The document adopted at the WWTG plenary session in Tbilisi in August 2014 is still titled “Tbilisi Statement” on Analytical Methodology and Regulatory Limits on Constituents and Potential Contaminants in Wine.

<https://wine.gov.ge/Ge/News/35981/>

25 Georgian wine companies participated in the “ProWein-2023” exhibition in Dusseldorf, Germany, with the financial support of the National Wine Agency and coordinated efforts of the “Georgian Wine” Association.



Over three days, the Georgian stand attracted lots of visitors to one of the most important international wine and alcoholic beverage exhibitions. Wine specialists, media representatives, and exhibition attendees were allowed to taste Georgian wine and run business negotiations with Georgian producers.

Within the framework of the exhibition, the representatives of the National Wine Agency held business meetings with the representatives of the commercial sector, also the media and marketing companies of the National Wine Agency.

“The National Wine Agency aims to diversify wine export markets and boost the popularization of Georgian wine in strategic markets. Participation in one of the most important international exhibitions in the world wine industry, “ProWein-2023” is a huge opportunity for Georgian wine-producing companies to attract trade partners and expand export markets, which will result in increasing wine sales. Thus, the state supports wine-producing companies to participate in international exhibitions to the greatest extent possible” said Mrs. Tamar Metreveli, Head of the Marketing and Public Relations Department of the National Wine Agency.

As part of the “ProWein-2023” exhibition, the Georgian wine-tasting seminar was organized at the exhibition stand of the prominent German media holding “Meininger,” headed by sommelier and wine expert Inge Mainzer.

The exhibition stand of Californian wines embraced a joint tasting of Georgian and Californian wines. The Consul General of Georgia in the Federal Republic of Germany Mr. Giorgi Tabatadze attended the exhibition.

<https://wine.gov.ge/Ge/News/35982>

The Georgian Hazelnut Sector Improvement Project (G-HIP) has been completed



The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, and USAID Mission Director, Mr. John Pennell attended the closing ceremony of the Georgian Hazelnut Sector Improvement Project (G-HIP).

From 2015-2023, the non-governmental organization “CNFA - Georgia” has been implementing the project with the financial support of the USAID and FERRERO companies.

“The United States of America is an important and strategic partner of Georgia. Several important agricultural and rural development initiatives and projects have been implemented in Georgia over the years with the help of the US Agency for International Cooperation (USAID). Moreover, it is critical, that the state pursues a consistent policy to help the hazelnut industry to develop and increase production, export, and revenue. The initiative carried out with the assistance of the United States was crucial for our hazelnut sector. The mentioned project was successful and significantly contributed to the growth of the quality and quantity of hazelnuts and the overall development of the hazelnut sector”, stated Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.

The USAID Mission Director, Mr. John Pennell expressed appreciation for the fruitful cooperation between donors, the state, and the private sector, noting that the project has yielded significant results.

“Under the framework of the project, we assisted farmers in Georgia in improving their hazelnut production. As a result, the mentioned project benefited up to 35,000 (almost 70%) hazelnut producers in Georgia.

The production and sales grew to USD145 million. Farmers received different types of funding from donors and the Georgian government,” Mr. Pennell stated.

During the meeting, the parties summed up the results of the Georgian Hazelnut Improvement Project (G-HIP), noting that the objectives of the project were achieved and the hazelnut industry has developed significantly with the assistance of sectoral associations (Georgian Hazelnut Growers Association (GHGA) and the Hazelnut Processors and Exporters Association of Georgia (HEPA).

Under the scope of the project, in close collaboration and financial assistance of the Rural Development Agency (RDA), eight new enterprises were built and equipped with modern equipment, which can dry 7.5 thousand tonnes of hazelnuts per season and store up to four thousand tonnes of products (total investment amounting to USD 2.4 million);

The National Food Agency (NFA) was ensured with pheromones worth \$800,000 for the effective implementation of pest-control measures, including conducting monitoring of the pest and setting up “attract and kill” stations. International professional assistance was provided, and an information campaign was funded to increase public awareness/participation in pest control measures. The first steps have been taken to develop the most significant component of hazelnut safety standards - the traceability system. The support was provided to industry associations. More than 180 students from 10 higher educational institutions in Georgia were trained on the FERRERO base to increase their knowledge regarding the full cycle of hazelnut production, care, and processing “From Farm to Table”.

The event also included a panel discussion “Achievements and Challenges of the Georgian Hazelnut Sector”.

The representatives of the state, donor and non-governmental organizations, industry associations and educational institutions, industry specialists, and farmers attended the event.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21197>



GREEN CLIMATE FUND



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development

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



ISSUE#6 / March / 2023

“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

Supporting the Department of Environmental Supervision continues



Example of photo captured by the photo-trap

Within the frames of the ECO.Georgia project, more equipment is procured to strengthen the Department of Environmental Supervision of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

The regional offices of DES in Guria, Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti have already received the photo traps and installation works are underway. Part of the traps is installed and functioning in the State Forest areas.

The photo traps will help the Department identify environmental violations and strengthen control of the forests.

Rapid Environmental Assessment for the areas of Business Service Yards in Guria



Area allocated for BSY in Supsa (Guria)
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According to the NFA, before allocating the areas for the BSY, the local people were informed about the plans, to hear their opinions and to suggest alternative solutions if needed - for instance, the usage of BSY land as grazing area for cattle.

ECO.Georgia representatives, including the National Forestry Agency and GIZ, visited the three allocated areas for the Business Service Yards (BSY) in Guria - Supsa, Lanchkhuti and Kvenobani (Chokhatauri). The purpose of the visit was to conduct a Rapid Environmental Assessment following the GCF requirements of assessing soil, flora and fauna, red list species with IUCN criteria, risk/impact assessment and rapid social assessment. Two of the sites were found to comply with environmental criteria, while one site was found to be ecologically sensitive.



Area allocated for BSY in Kvenobani (Chokhatauri, Guria)
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