



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

JANUARY/2023

## Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Otar Shamugia participated in the Ministerial Conference in Berlin



The 15<sup>th</sup> Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA 2023) dedicated to the international community's efforts to ensure food security was attended by Mr. Otar Shamugia.

The Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture of Germany, Mr. Cem Özdemir opened the 15th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference. It is worth mentioning that, within its scope and importance, the respective conference is one of the best platforms for discussing food safety-related issues. Moreover, factors such as the severe impacts of climate change and the crisis created by war have made food security an urgent global concern.

To address the mentioned challenge, Mr. Otar Shamugia stated that global agricultural production faces the need to ensure high-quality nursery and seed materials, appropriate agricultural equipment, and modern technologies. According to the Minister, farmers and entrepreneurs should have constant access to modern knowledge and scientific achievements.

"Joint efforts are crucial. We think it is important to overview international cooperation in the medium and long-term perspective, which I am confident will provide concrete and tangible results", Mr. Otar Shamugia stated.

The Ministers of Agriculture from 90 countries and high-level representatives of international organizations attended the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA 2023) in Berlin, the capital city of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Ministerial Conference was organized by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Germany.



"Food Systems Transformation: A Worldwide Reply to Multiple Crises" was the main topic of the 15th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA). During the high-level Ministerial conference, the Ministers adopted a joint communiqué.

Mr. Otar Shamugia, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture took part in sessions held as part of the Ministerial conference -on how to create crisis-resilient, climate-friendly food systems and how to improve cooperation in terms of global sustainable food systems and biodiversity preservation.

**It is worth mentioning that Mr. Otar Shamugia attended the opening ceremony of the world's largest trade fair for food, agriculture, and horticulture "Green Week 2023" (Grüne Woche 2023) during his working visit to Berlin.**

With the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, 16 companies showcased their products at the Georgian exhibition stand. The majority of Georgian companies participating in the exhibition are beneficiaries of the state programs.

The international exhibition "Green Week" aims to promote the development of modern agriculture, the processing industry, and the horticulture sectors.

Georgian entrepreneurs introduce Georgian wine and alcoholic beverages, natural juices, honey, and other Georgian products to visitors worldwide. It should be mentioned that Georgian products fully meet EU standards.

"I would like to emphasize that establishing Georgian products on global markets is a priority of our policy. Accordingly, we are gradually increasing the budget for the advertising campaign, collaborating with international top-tier marketing companies, and assisting our entrepreneurs in being represented with their goods at all major exhibitions in Europe and America, Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia. Our objective is to increase awareness of Georgian agricultural products to the greatest extent possible on the global market, hence increasing demand and enabling export indicators to rise steadily" Mr. Otar Shamugia stated.

Mr. Shamugia hosted the Ministers of Agriculture from different countries at the Georgian exhibition stand. Meetings were held with German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture Mr. Cem Özdemir, Mayor of Berlin Mrs. Franziska Giffey, European Commissioner for Agriculture Mr. Janusz Wojciechowski, as well as Lithuanian, Latvian, Turkish, Polish, Hungarian and Uzbek colleagues.

The National Tourism Administration of Georgia participates in the international exhibition "Green Week 2023", which introduces visitors to Georgia's tourism potential, products, and destinations.

The Berlin International Exhibition "Grüne Woche" has been held annually since 1926. This year, more than 1,400 companies from 72 countries are participating in the exhibition, and the number of visitors exceeds 400,000.



During his visit to Berlin, Otar Shamugia met with the Minister of Agriculture of Lithuania Kestutis Navickas

During the meeting, the parties emphasized the importance of international partners' support in Georgia's integration process into the European Union.

Mr. Shamugia expressed gratitude to the Minister of Agriculture of Lithuania for his active cooperation, noting that the Georgian Authorities are making their best efforts to implement EU recommendations, ensuring that Georgia can obtain the status of a candidate country as soon as possible.

The Minister of Agriculture of Lithuania openly expressed his support for Georgia on the path of European integration.

During the meeting, the counterpart Ministers discussed strengthening bilateral trade relations-related issues. As Mr. Shamugia pointed out, Lithuania is a strategically important country for Georgian wine exports. Considering all the mentioned issues, the National Wine Agency cooperates with the marketing company "TRIBE INTERNATIONAL", as the latter ensures the raising of awareness of Georgian wine in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and the implementation of various marketing campaigns to contribute to the growth of Georgian wine exports to the Baltic countries.



During the meeting with his Turkish Counterpart Minister, Mr. Otar Shamugia discussed the prospects for agricultural development across the country.

Mr. Kirisci emphasized that Turkey and Georgia have not only neighborly but also friendly relations, which contributes to the deepening of cooperation in a wide range of areas, including trade relations.

As mentioned by Mr. Shamugia, Turkey is one of its most important partners for Georgia, and the free trade agreement with Turkey fostered this partnership even more, noting that trade turnover between the countries is increasing.

As stated by the sides, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, in collaboration with the Turkish side, completed work on the project Memorandums of Understanding to expand bilateral cooperation in the fishing and forestry fields, which would be beneficial for both countries.



During the international exhibition "Green Week", Mr. Otar Shamugia met with the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan, Mr. Aziz Voitov

The parties discussed the possibilities and great potential for deepening trade relations between Georgia and Uzbekistan.

According to the preliminary data for 2022, Georgia exported agri-food products worth USD 23.6 mln to Uzbekistan. The respective figure is 119% higher than the indicator of 2021. In 2022, the share of Uzbekistan in total agro-food exports made up 1.9%.

During the meeting, Mr. Aziz Voitov stated that the Uzbekistan side is ready to learn more about viticulture and the winemaking field from Georgian specialists. Mr. Shamugia emphasized the importance of the 8,000-year continuous history of winemaking in Georgia.

"More than 600 varieties of vines are represented at the Jighaura experimental base of our scientific-research center; Wine quality control mechanisms, state programs, and marketing measures enable Georgian wine to occupy a quality position in the global market. We are always ready to share our experience with friendly countries", said Mr. Shamugia.

The parties also highlighted food safety-related issues and expressed their readiness for deepening cooperation between the two countries.



During his working visit to Berlin, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia met with the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Henryk Kowalczyk.

The parties emphasized the international partners' assistance on the path of Georgia's European integration. The Vice Prime Minister of Poland openly expressed his readiness to support Georgia, noting that successful steps taken towards the implementation of reforms, the Association Agreement, and other areas establish a solid basis for further progress in the European integration process.

The conversation touched upon the possibilities for deepening trade relations between the two countries. According to Mr. Shamugia, Poland ranks second place among Georgian wine-exporting countries. In 2022, Georgia exported 6.6 mln liters of wine to Poland, amounting to USD 14.5 mln and representing a 32% increase in quantity and a 5% increase in value.



During the international exhibition "Green Week 2023", Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia Mr. Didzis Šmits.

As was mentioned, Latvia is a constant supporter of Georgia on the path to the EU. Sharing the experience of the Republic of Latvia regarding the convergence with the EU regulations and standards was one of the main topics discussed during the meeting.

"Active collaboration in the field of agricultural modernization significantly supports Georgia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic space and the fulfillment of commitments taken by Georgia through multilateral agreements with the EU," Mr. Shamugia stated.

The conversation touched upon the issues of strengthening trade relations between Georgia and the Republic of Latvia. According to preliminary data for 2022, USD 9.8 mln worth of Georgian agri-food products were exported to Latvia, as mentioned by Mr. Shamugia, who also added that this indicator is 15% higher than the index in the previous year. In 2022, natural wines, spirits, mineral and fresh waters, and hazelnuts were mainly exported to Latvia.

In 2022, the value of wine exports in the Republic of Latvia amounted to USD 4.4 mln, which is 4% higher than the previous year.



## Rural Development Agency Summary Report 2022

**The Rural Development Agency implements targeted programs and projects to support all components of the agricultural value chain in accordance with the modern requirements of the agricultural sector.**

In the direction of improvement of production processes of primary production, processing, and storage-sale of agricultural products, in 2022 concessional agro-credits in the amount of more than 916 million GEL were issued, co-financing of interest on loans by the state exceeded 152 million GEL. Among them, 11,962 credits in the amount of 187.6 million GEL were issued to promote the cultivation of annual crops.

Within the framework of the program “Plant the Future” in 2022, the planting of new perennial orchards, installation of anti-hail systems, drip irrigation systems, and wells worth 33.7 million GEL was co-financed on an area of more than 4,824 hectares.

In 2022, the establishment of 58 enterprises for the storage and processing of products with an investment value of 71.7 million GEL was co-financed to the amount of 26.2 million GEL. This creates an opportunity to store or process products under modern standards and market requirements.

This year a program to promote bio-production was launched in pilot mode. Within the framework of the program, 3 bio-producers were co-financed in 2022.

The creation of 9 agricultural cooperative enterprises for vegetable and potato storage, which unite more than 100 small farmers, was financed. State co-financing exceeds 4 million GEL.

Within the framework of the program for co-financing harvesting agricultural equipment 116 units of agricultural equipment were purchased, and the state co-financing exceeded 4.5 million GEL.

In 2022, 15 fruit-processing enterprises participating in the state program to promote

the realization of the harvest of non-standard apples, received more than 73 thousand tons of non-standard apples. As a result, farmers received an income of more than 17.7 million GEL.

A new program was launched to develop primary hazelnut production and support nut farmers. As of December 2022, 20,000 hectares of hazelnut orchards were registered in the hazelnut cadaster.

To create new enterprises, as well as to expand and/or re-profile existing enterprises in Imereti, Kakheti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi, and Kvemo Svaneti a comprehensive pilot region development program is being implemented. Within the framework of the program, 44 beneficiaries are co-financed and co-financing exceeds 18 million GEL.

Under the state program to encourage owners of agricultural land, farmers purchased agricultural products worth more than 35.7 million GEL.

The Development Agency supports agribusinesses in implementing international food safety management systems and standards, product branding and packaging, as well as consulting services for the management of agricultural cooperatives, co-financing the equipment needed to give products a final commercial appearance, and co-financing the cost of registering a trademark by agricultural cooperatives. In this direction, 94 agreements were signed in 2022.

Rural Development Agency in collaboration with the UN Women’s Organization is implementing a “pilot program for women” in the municipalities of Lagodekhi and Marneuli. Under the program, 30 women were financed 90% of greenhouses, in the amount of 664,000 GEL.

Access to agricultural knowledge and information is one of the important aspects of the development of modern agriculture. 32,570 individuals and legal entities received consultations in the regional services and information and consulting centers of the Rural Development Agency.

Rural Development Agency supports the presentation of Georgian agricultural products at international exhibitions and provides an opportunity for agricultural producers to export competitive Georgian products to international markets. In 2022, the Georgian booth was presented at 6 international exhibitions in Saudi Arabia, Latvia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Germany, and Qatar.



## National Wine Agency Summary Report 2022

**Despite the challenges in the region, 2022 was a successful year for the wine industry. Up to 104 million liters of wine worth USD 252.5 million are exported to 66 countries worldwide. Export revenues have increased to 6%, which is the highest rate in the history of independent Georgia.**

The USA, Great Britain, Poland, Germany, Baltic countries, China, Japan, and South Korea have been selected as strategic export markets for Georgian wine. Georgian

wine and alcoholic beverages were showcased at 41 exhibitions and 55 tastings, both in the mentioned countries and in other countries of the world;

Activities aimed at improving quality control of Georgian wine were actively carried out, which resulted in tens of millions of bottles of Georgian wine meeting international standards.

The handling, storing, and processing of up to 255 thousand tonnes of grapes were conducted in an organized manner. About 22,300 winegrowers received GEL 260 million as income. The state fulfilled its promise and the winegrowers will not face disruptions in selling their crops.

In 2022, the vineyard cadastre program was launched in the Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, which will gradually cover all viticulture regions in Georgia by 2023. The program 2021 was completed in the Kakheti and Racha-Lechkhumi regions. The vineyard cadastre is one of the crucial programs aiming at developing the viticulture field and promoting high-quality wine production.



## National Food Agency Summary Report 2022

**162 normative acts have been adopted and approximated from the planned 272 directives in the food safety/security, veterinary, and plant protection fields in 2015- 2022. This year, 22 legal acts are planned to be harmonized with EU legislation.**

In 2022, the National Food Agency carried out 30,000 state controls in the food safety field, specifically, the inspection was conducted in preschool and school food blocks, public catering facilities, and meat and food facilities in agricultural markets.

Different types of food products are tested in the laboratory on 21 food safety indicators, including the content of heavy metals and banned substances. 3920 samples were examined in the laboratory in 2022.

The National Food Agency undertakes veterinary activities annually, including free vaccination of animals (against seven types of animal diseases), animal identification and registration, and treatment of animals at veterinary supervision points to protect the health of animals, prevent the spread of various diseases and help farmers to avoid economic losses.

Up to 6 million veterinary interventions were carried out in 2022. The Agency undertakes quality control measures of facilities and drugs subject to veterinary control along with activities taken to ensure animal welfare/ health protection. Moreover,

special attention is paid to taking control of primary production and some banned substances, and their residues in the mentioned facilities/enterprises.

Respective veterinary measures ensure animal welfare and support the country in building a trustworthy reputation, diversifying markets, and boosting export potential.

The plant protection measures implemented by the National Food Agency help farmers to protect their crops from invasive pests and preserve their crops.

In 2022, plant protection treatments were carried out against Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in 36 municipalities of western Georgia. More than 251 thousand hectares

of the area had undergone treatment with the specialized equipment of the Agency. Plant protection measures were taken in eastern Georgia as well, where more than 100 thousand hectares of the land area were treated against invasive pests, namely Italian and Moroccan locusts and American white butterflies (*Hyphantria cunea*).

Techniques approved by the world's leading countries are applied under the framework of state programs to reduce the impact of pesticides on the environment.

Damage to crops and predicted economic losses have been reduced to a bare minimum as a result of massive interventions.



## Scientific-Research Center of Agriculture Summary Report 2022

- Biodiversity preservation, establishing a gene bank of local varieties  
The breeding animals and birds of the restored local breeds formed by the Center were transferred to the interested private farms for their further selection, breeding, improvement, and promotion of the introduction of breeding activities. Standardized food rations were developed as part of the introduction of breed surveillance for controlled farms.
- Livestock traceability system and breeding activities  
The breed standards, bonding requirements, monitoring implementation guidance documents, individual cards, as well as herd and breeding book forms, and their production rules were developed. Individuals in farms were subjected to research within the framework of the mentioned activity;
- Within the scope of improving the gene bank and collections of local varieties in plant production, integrating them with international systems  
The preservation and expansion of the field Ex-situ collections of grape varieties and

fruit crops continued, and morphological and genetic descriptions were completed on another 40 varieties of local vines for inclusion in the State Catalog.

- Within the framework of the harmonization with international standards operation of nurseries and seed farms and certification systems of planting material and seeds  
A unified register of qualified seed and nursery farms was created (with database software).

The planting material of eight fruit nurseries was certified in compliance with the requirements of European directives.

The schemes for the production of virus-free vine and fruit crops' mother plants will be established for nurseries.

The adoption of basic propagating material of commercially interesting, promising, and local varieties of annual and perennial crops and the promotion of dissemination continued.

Based on the study of agro-climatic features and the existing background of pathogens, pen calendar schemes and recommendations will be developed for common crops and varieties.

Recommendations will be prepared for the selection of suitable crops for windbreaks in different agro-climatic zones.

- In the framework of the study, assessment, and creation of the relevant geodatabase of the general condition of the soils of Georgia, an area of 20,000 ha was subjected to research. 5 types of maps were created.



## Nuclear and Radiation Safety Agency Summary Report 2022

### To strengthen radiation protection, nuclear safety, and security:

With the involvement of the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency and responsible National Agencies, the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan of Georgia for 2022-2026 was developed and approved by the Decree No. 1874 of the

Government of Georgia dated October 19, 2022;

The draft of the Law of Georgia "On Radiation Protection, Nuclear Safety and Security" was developed, which fully complies with Georgia's international obligations and the requirements and recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency; Also, a draft of the amendment of the technical regulations - "Radiation safety norms and basic requirements for handling sources of ionizing radiation" was developed by the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency;

A radiological assessment of the temporary storage of contaminated soil at the former Anaseuli Tea and Subtropical Plant Research Institute was carried out.

A radiological assessment of the former Anaseuli Tea and Subtropical Plant Research Institute's temporary storage of contaminated soil was performed.



## Georgian Amelioration Summary Report 2022

Considering the climatic conditions of Georgia, land improvement, amelioration /reclamation, construction, operation, and management of irrigation and drainage systems are crucial for agricultural development across the country. All mentioned factors are necessary to create conditions that contribute to improving agricultural productivity in the country.

"Georgian Amelioration" LTD carries out large-scale rehabilitation works of irrigation infrastructure (which has been out of service for decades) for increasing land reclamation fund.

414 rehabilitation projects have been completed in the last ten years, including the rehab-

ilitation of 3340 irrigation canals, and the repairing of 53 headworks and 47 pumping stations. Over 19,025 kilometers of irrigation canals were cleaned and reorganized, and 23,550 units of various hydro-technical structures were repaired. Furthermore, the ameliorated land area increased by 3.5 times as a result of the measures taken across the country. Since 2012, the irrigated area has increased from 45,000 hectares to 163,000 hectares, while the drained land area increased from 14,000 hectares to 43,500 hectares. The cultivated land areas increase significantly year by year as well. The rehabilitated pumping stations were put into operation and the irrigation system /network was set up to supply irrigation water to villages that have not been irrigated for 20-30 years.

In 2022, 59 rehabilitation projects worth GEL 49.4 million were launched across the country, out of which 30 projects worth GEL 12.6 million were completed.

Large-scale works were carried out within the irrigation infrastructure program. Activities worth GEL 8 million were carried out in the country.

International support from a variety of donor organizations is critical in the implementation of irrigation infrastructure projects. The "Georgian Amelioration" company cooperates closely with the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB), and the French Development Agency (AFD).



## The National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring Summary Report 2022

The land is an exhaustible resource of special importance that needs protection, rational use, and reasonable management. To accomplish these tasks, the National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring (Land Agency) was established and became operational in 2020 as a legal entity of public law within the system of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. The Agency is responsible for developing a unified land resources database, maintaining a land balance registry, ensuring sustainable land management, and taking state control and monitoring of land use.

With the support of the World Bank, the Land Agency prepared a "concept paper to create and develop a unified land resources database". Based on the concept paper a project was prepared which based on international standards involves the creation of a unified database of land cover according to 42 categories in line with the CORINE classifier. The first stage of the project includes the implementation of a pilot project in Lagodekhi and Kvareli municipalities followed by the second stage which includes project implementation across the country. The first land balance prepared by the Land Agency will be published on July 1, 2024. Collected data on the available land fund resources will be a useful tool to manage the

agricultural and economic sectors of the country in consideration with modern challenges. The Land Agency also implements the "State Program on Accessibility of State-Owned Pastures" which is aimed at protecting pastures from degradation and promoting the development of animal husbandry. Since March 28, 2022, the Land Agency has selected and published data on 37,356 ha of pasture land plots to be leased by auctions in six stages. During the I-V stages of auctions, interest was expressed on 212 codes (land plots) and the National Property Agency was provided with relevant information. 119 land plots with a total area of 12,650 ha were subject to direct transfer. 93 land plots with a total area of 14,495 ha will be transferred by auction. The National Property Agency ran auctions on 83 land plots with a total area of 12,939.42 ha. The process of signing lease agreements is underway and as of January 2023 lease agreements have been signed for 49 land plots the total area of which is 6,924 ha, and the total annual lease amount stipulated by the agreements is 1,534,880 GEL. The Land Agency also implements the state program on the inventory of windbreak strips (field protection), aiming to protect the land resources from negative processes caused by climate change and maintain land fertility.

The agency carries out inventory according to the inventory plan approved under the decree of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

In total, an inventory of windbreak strips was registered on 1256.34 ha. At present, the Land Agency completed the status register of the 319.3 ha of state-owned windbreak strips. This year, the inventory of windbreak strips will be carried out in Dedoplistskaro, Kaspi, Dusheti, and Kareli municipalities. According to preliminary data, the estimated area is 2,448 ha. The work related to the inventory of windbreak strips is expected to end by 2024. The next stage is to restore/rehabilitate and build new windbreak strips which will be implemented under the requirements of the law on windbreak (field protection) strips.



## Agency of Protected Areas Summary Report 2022

One of the priority directions of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture is the creation/establishment, expansion, and development of protected areas in compliance with international best practices. Since 2012, the Agency of Protected Areas has been developing at an unprecedented speed, which is crucial for the protection and preservation of the unique nature and biodiversity of Georgia, on the one hand, and on the other hand, for the development of ecotourism in the country.

The Agency of Protected Areas continues promoting ecotourism. It should be mentioned that in 2022, 897,988 visitors visited the protected areas of Georgia, which is a 75% increase compared to the record number of visitors in 2019 (1,200,000 visitors).

In 2022, 18 infrastructural projects were implemented across the country, specifically, a new, modern visitor center in compliance with the international standards opened in Pshav-Khevsureti National Park, the unique ecotourism complex of Tsalka (Dashbashi) canyon, which gained great popularity and international attention since opening; A network of up to 1200 kilometers of trails was organized

In 2022, the first mobile application - Parks. Ge. - was developed to ensure the safety and comfortable travel of visitors to the national parks of Georgia.

The total portfolio value of grant projects in 2022 increased by approximately GEL 50 million and reached an unprecedented high number of GEL 106 million.



## National Wildlife Agency Summary Report 2022

With financial support from the Swedish government, the National Wildlife Agency launched the project "Save the Nature - Georgia" in 2022. The respective project will enhance the institutional capacities of the Wildlife Agency and promote the adoption of the principles for developing sustainable wildlife management in Georgia.

Within the framework of the mentioned project, the restoration/rehabilitation works were actively underway in Krtsanisi forest park in 2022, which included the arrangement of the forest park as a public space for raising environmental awareness, and the establishment of the South Caucasus Ecosystems Research and Restoration Center.

The restoration activities were taken on a 7,5 km long road section of a Krtsanisi forest park, and also the planting of trees, fence line gardening, fence perimeter landscaping, installation of outdoor lighting, and fencing of 50 ha of park area were

completed in the Krtsanisi forest park area.

The forest rehabilitation activities also included the creation of decorative squares, arranging/organizing irrigation systems, and planting about 5,000 green plants of different species, including a grass lawn.

In addition, within the project "Save the Nature Georgia" activities were taken to elaborate the draft law on the "Management of Hunting and Game Species".

The respective draft law aims to take into consideration the economic, social, and ecological "values" of hunting, as well as the sustainable management of game species and their living environment (habitat), the control of the populations of different species, creation of new workspace in rural areas, and the certification of hunters, with the overall objective of preventing poaching.

In 2022, the National Wildlife Agency released endangered species of stream trout, up to 700,000 fish fry, and larvae of fish (included in the red list) in 30 rivers and lakes, and more than 100,000 fish fry was released to restore natural diversity in 5 sites, including the rivers of protected areas across the country.

The photo and video traps are used for monitoring the released fish. Moreover, the National Wildlife Agency has bred more than 5,000 local wild species of Colchis pheasant, Rock Partridge, and Western Swamphen to release them into the wild and supply game farms with endangered species.



## State Laboratory of Agriculture (SLA) Summary Report 2022

- The LEPL State Laboratory of Agriculture (SLA) is a diagnostic laboratory with three main directions: Diagnostics of Animal Diseases; Diagnostics of Plant Pests and Testing of Food and Drinking Water.
- The laboratory network in Georgia includes 13 (thirteen) Laboratories.
- The LEPL State Laboratory of Agriculture is accredited in accordance with the requirements of SST ISO/IEC 17025:2017/2018.
- In 2022, the number of study samples received in the laboratory increased by

10% compared to 2021 data, and the rate of tests increased by 15%.

- The Department of Plant Pest Diagnostics has established 25 methods and developed and approved 13 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- The Department of Animal Disease Diagnostics has established 15 methods and developed and approved 9 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- The Food Safety Department has established 25 methods and developed and approved 11 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- Laboratory specialists participated in the trainings and seminars.
- The trainings were conducted for students and specialists from regional laboratories.
- Laboratory specialists participated in international Proficiency Tests (PT).
- Specialists from Laboratory Network participated in Inter-Laboratory Comparisons (ILC).



## National Environmental Agency Summary Report 2022

LEPL National Environment Agency conducts research on atmospheric air, water, and soil and provides monitoring of hydro-meteorological and geological conditions, observes weather and climatic conditions, and studies biodiversity in the Black Sea.

This year, the agency received new directives to ensure that strategic environmental and environmental impact assessments are conducted in the country, the public is involved in decision-making processes, expertise is conducted, and remediation of environmental damage is planned.

In 2022, the Agency conducted large-scale research on the quality of ambient air, surface water, and soil, taking into consideration the Framework Directive on Ambient Air Quality (2008/50/EC). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is implementing the project "Improving air quality policy development capability by introducing complex air pollution monitoring tools", to contribute to atmospheric air

quality modeling and strengthen the capacities of the employees of the agency.

Moreover, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2000/60/EC requires monitoring surface water quality throughout the year, which includes an annual survey of surface water bodies.

In addition, new automatic stations were installed to improve the groundwater monitoring network. Furthermore, new automatic stations are equipped with cutting-edge hydrogeological equipment, which enables continuous monitoring and automatic data transmission to the National Environment Agency.

The National Environment Agency is actively working to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FAO/GFCM standards, and requirements. Every year it improves the methodology and practice of assessing the natural resources of the Black Sea. Accordingly, in 2022, the Agency conducted an assessment and commercial forecast of fish and other bio-resources in the maritime space of the Black Sea and inland waters of Georgia.

Also, in 2022, with the support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the United Nations Development Program in Georgia (UNDP-Georgia), fieldwork was actively carried out, which, among other things, ensures the identification and risk assessment for natural geological and hydro-meteorological threats on the territory of Georgia, mapping of hazard and risk zoning and scaling up multi hazard early warning systems.



## National Forest Agency Brief Summary Report 2022

The improvement of the sanitary condition of forests, implementation of forest inventory, preparation of management plans, multi-purpose use of the forests, and increased access to legal timber resources were key priority directions of the LLC National Forestry Agency in 2022. 32 log sort yards, the so-called "business yards" were created in almost all regions across the country to improve access to wood resources for the population and the business sector, and develop the forestry sector.

The volume of annual wood resources available for sale amounted to 187 026 KBM. To provide the population with firewood for heating, within the framework of social wood cutting, the volume sold with timber production tickets amounted to 277,580 KBM;

As of 2022, forest inventory works have been carried out on 35% of the territory of the state forest, which is under the management of the National Forestry Agency, and where the forest management plans have already been developed.

The measures were taken on 1811.1 ha of the forest area to restore the forest. The concept of the "Friend of the Forest" platform was developed, which ensures the public and private sectors' involvement in forest maintenance and restoration, and the management of recreational areas.



## The State Sub-Agency Department of Environmental Supervision Summary Report 2022

Environmental protection is a priority direction of state policy, and in this context, the implementation of effective environmental control is of great importance. To that end, a number of innovations have been introduced in the Department of Environmental Supervision and Oversight in 2022, and the process continues today. Legislation initiatives have been developed. The department already performs state oversight through modern electronic mechanisms. As a result, the number of environmental offenses detected by the Department in 2022 is substantially higher than the previous year's indicators. For instance, in 2021, 7,936 violations were reported, and in 2022, 12,343 violations were reported.

Major measures have been taken to prevent and reduce air pollution, which is a priority for the department. Data from devices installed on the source (pipe) of harmful substance emission is continuously received in the central storage of the electronic system of continuous instrumental self-monitoring of harmful substance emission from stationary sources of pollution. 18 companies are already registered. Inspections of regulatory objects are conducted on a regular basis to enable companies to eliminate detected violations and to ensure that their activities comply with established standards to the greatest extent possible.

- 4,350 regulatory object inspections have been conducted;
- Scheduled/unscheduled inspections – 407;
- Administrative letters were submitted to 212 objects of regulation in order to eliminate the detected violations within a reasonable period of time or refrain from any actions;
- Administrative letters were sent to 81 regulatory objects with the request to limit the activity (in whole or in part);
- On the basis of the inspection, proposals were made to cancel three special licenses for timber production.



## Promotion of Environmental and Agricultural Education and Awareness Raising Summary Report 2022

**Environmental and Agricultural Education at Schools** – The training for primary school teachers is underway to support environmental and agricultural education. School children are learning about sustainable development, biodiversity protection, water resource protection, air pollution, climate change, natural hazard reduction, waste management, land management, fighting desertification, agriculture, and food safety/quality-related issues. Currently, approximately 3,800 teachers have been trained across the country.

Environmental and agricultural educational programs – educational programs, specifically "School of Eco-leaders," "Agro School," "Forestry School," and "Green Camp - Climate Ambassadors" was developed for youth, providing meaningful options for

students, and involving young volunteers to popularize and promote environmental and agricultural professions. Around 200 school students (Grades IX-XII) participated in programs raising awareness on environmental and agricultural issues. In addition, three professional training and/or retraining programs for adults - "Forest Inventory and Taxation," "Environmental Manager," and "Climate-Smart Agriculture" - were designed and approved to be launched in the country. Respective programs will support the creation of jobs and develop green businesses.

The Green scholarship program was developed to promote in-demand environmental jobs (ecology, geology, hydrology, environmental protection, and sustainable development), the Green Scholarship program was launched and scholarships ( GEL 1500 ) were awarded to 32 outstanding postgraduate students.

Environmental and agricultural training for farmers and other stakeholders - 6766 people were trained in environmental and agricultural fields across the country, among them, 4125 participants were trained in the environmental field. Furthermore, training and seminars were held (based on identified needs) for raising the qualifications of farmers on the issues regarding increasing the production and quality of local agricultural products. In total, 1,300 farmers were trained in the agricultural field in 2022.



GREEN CLIMATE FUND



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



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"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." - Albert Einstein

### 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





### ECO.Georgia project representatives planned the activities for 2023 with project target municipalities

ECO.Georgia project representatives held the project operational planning workshops in the target municipalities.

They met the local municipality representatives, including the Mayors and Deputy Mayors and considering the scope of the project and the needs, they planned activities for the upcoming 2023.

The project aims at strengthening the municipalities and local communities to increase their participation in sustainable forest management and diversify their livelihood opportunities and income sources through the development of professional skills and knowledge and forest-related value chains.

Municipality representatives expressed their commitment and enthusiasm to be actively involved in the implementation process of the planned activities.

### New machinery procurement for the Department of Environmental Supervision

The State Sub-Agency Department of Environmental Supervision (DES) will procure six off-road buggy cars and six trailers and modify the three patrolling vehicles through the state tendering procedures.

The procurement is financed via the Green Climate Fund (GCF) within the frames of the Project – Enabling the Implementation of Georgia's Forest Sector Reform - ECO.Georgia.

As the goal of "ECO.Georgia" is to decrease the pressure on forests, strengthening the capacity of the Department of Environmental Supervision is one of the main directions of the Project. Since the task of the Department is to ensure the protection of the environment by policing and investigating environmental crimes (including forest-related violations like illegal logging and hunting), reaching the hard-to-access forest areas is crucial. Thus, considering the complex terrain of Georgia's forests, the Department must be equipped with off-road cars to operate and fulfil their responsibilities efficiently.

DES has procured 20 off-road cars – Mitsubishi L200 via a state consolidated tender in September, out of which ten, including the three modified ones, will be deployed in the project target regions of Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Guria.