



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

MARCH 2025

## Minister David Songulashvili Meets with the Director of the Asian Development Bank



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, hosted Mrs. Lesley Bearman Lahm, the Country Director of the Georgia Resident Mission at the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

During the discussion, the parties reviewed ongoing projects and explored opportunities for future cooperation.

Minister Songulashvili thanked the Asian Development Bank for its longstanding and effective partnership with Georgia.

The parties focused on rehabilitating the Left Main Canal of Kvemo Samgori as part of the ongoing “Climate-Smart Irrigation Sector Development Program.”

The Minister emphasized the importance of this initiative, particularly in terms of land reclamation, which plays a crucial role in enhancing the agricultural development and boosting productivity, reaffirming land reclamation as a top priority for the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

Minister Songulashvili emphasized the significance of ensuring the high quality of work in ongoing projects and adhering to project timelines.

Director Lahm stated that the successful and effective collaboration between the ADB and Georgia in the agriculture and environmental protection fields builds a firm background, cultivating the Bank’s interest in launching additional projects shortly.

The First Deputy Minister, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister, Mr. Lasha Dolidze, and senior officials from the Ministry’s relevant departments attended the meeting.

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## David Songulashvili: “The Inter-Agency Action Plan serves as a cornerstone for Strengthening Active Cooperation Between Georgia and Uzbekistan”



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. David Songulashvili, along with the Georgian Government Delegation led by Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, paid an official visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

As part of the visit, Minister Songulashvili participated in the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation between Georgia and Uzbekistan, where key issues on the bilateral agenda were discussed alongside Government representatives from both countries.

“Georgia’s agri-food sector holds immense potential, and expanding exports to Uzbekistan presents an outstanding opportunity. However, this potential remains largely untapped,” stated Minister Songulashvili.

According to the Minister, the newly established inter-agency action plan is the foundation for fostering active collaboration between the two nations.

“The Memorandum envisages enhanced cooperation in scientific research and trade promotion, which will have a direct impact on the agricultural sector. This, in turn, will contribute to the economic development of Georgia,” emphasized Minister Songulashvili.

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## David Songulashvili: “The Agreement signed with the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan will enable us to increase the export of agro-food products”



During the official visit to Turkmenistan, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. David Songulashvili, met with the Minister of Agriculture of Turkmenistan, Mr. Charyyar Chetiev. The two Ministers signed an agreement: “On Cooperation between the Government of Georgia and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Plant Protection”. The strategic partnership aims to enhance bilateral cooperation and facilitate the growth of agro-food exports between the two nations.

“Turkmenistan holds vast potential, and leveraging it within the framework of the Middle Corridor is crucial. Today, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan signed an Agreement to foster bilateral collaboration and experience-sharing between the two Ministries. Expanding agro-food exports will further stimulate economic development,” the Minister stated.

The mentioned Agreement establishes a framework for cooperation in trade and the movement of products subject to phytosanitary control. It also mandates both countries to keep each other informed about updates in phytosanitary legislation and reinforces their shared commitment to preventing the spread of quarantine pests.

Notably, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr David Songulashvili, paid an official visit to Ashgabat, the capital city of Turkmenistan, along with a Georgian Government Delegation led by Prime Minister of Georgia, Mr Irakli Kobakhidze.

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## David Songulashvili Meets with the UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia, Didier Trebucq



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. David Songulashvili, hosted the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Georgia, Mr. Didier Trebucq.

During the meeting, Minister Songulashvili expressed his gratitude to the United Nations for its longstanding and effective cooperation, emphasizing the significance of the organization’s support for rural and agricultural development and environmental initiatives in Georgia.

The Minister provided an overview of key projects currently being implemented under the European Neighborhood Programme for Rural Development and Agriculture (ENPARD IV), including animal identification, food safety, early warning systems, air quality monitoring, biodiversity conservation, and advancements in the forestry sector.

Mr. Trebucq commended the productive collaboration between the Ministry and the United Nations in the fields of agriculture and environmental protection, reaffirming the organization’s commitment to continued support and coordinated efforts.

Mr Douglas Webb, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Georgia; Mr Mamuka Meskhi, Assistant Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Georgia; and senior officials from the Ministry attended the meeting.



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## David Songulashvili inspected the rehabilitation works of the Headwaters of the Kvemo Samgori Irrigation System and the Right Main Canal



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. David Songulashvili, alongside Kakheti State Representative Mr. Giorgi Aladashvili and World Bank representatives, visited Sagarejo Municipality to inspect the rehabilitation of the Kvemo Samgori Irrigation System and the Right Main Canal.

The Minister met with local farmers during the visit to understand their concerns. With international support, the Georgian government has invested in land reclamation infrastructure, including a 131-kilometer irrigation network in Sagarejo Municipality, featuring 122 km of closed pipelines and 9 km of open canals. Funded by GEL 43.65 million from the World Bank, the project benefits over 6,050 hectares of farmland across more than 20 villages.

Mr. David Songulashvili emphasized that up to 165,000 hectares of farmland now have access to irrigation. “A productive agricultural sector requires modern irrigation. Ongoing projects, including a €150 million initiative with the World Bank, will further enhance agricultural output and development,” he stated.

From 2024 to 2029, the World Bank and the Georgian government are implementing the €75 million Georgia Resilience Agriculture, Irrigation, and Land Project (GRAIL). The government remains committed to advancing land reclamation, with international donors playing a crucial role in supporting the agricultural sector and strengthening the economy.

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<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/22904>

## Lasha Dolidze has been appointed as the new Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, officially introduced Mr. Dolidze to the Ministry’s employees. Mr. Dolidze will be in charge of agricultural policy.

“Lasha Dolidze has had a longstanding and distinguished career in the agricultural sector, shaping his professional path and contributing significantly to the development of agricultural strategies both in Georgia and internationally. His vast experience makes him one of the most experienced experts in the field. We are pleased to have him join our team, and I am confident that his expertise will help us navigate the challenges ahead. Through teamwork and consistent policy, we will work toward achieving the best possible outcomes,” stated Mr. Songulashvili.

Dolidze holds a Bachelor’s Degree in International Economic Relations at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. He continued his education in the United States at the Center for Development Economics at Williams College, where he earned a Master of Arts in Development Economics.

Moreover, Dolidze served as an Advisor to the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia from 2017 to 2018. He has also worked on a variety of significant projects with international organizations, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the European Union, and Mercy Corps, in positions ranging from national manager to international expert.

“The development of the agricultural sector requires support, considering existing challenges; Therefore, adopting modern approaches, knowledge, and technologies will be a priority for us. We will make the best efforts to find effective ways to boost agricultural production and productivity,” Mr. Dolidze noted.

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## Giorgi Darchia appointed as Director of the Rural Development Agency



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, formally introduced the newly appointed Director of the Rural Development Agency, Mr. Giorgi Darchia, to the agency's staff.

Mr. Darchia possesses extensive professional experience in financial institutions, both within Georgia and internationally. Prior to his appointment as Director of the Rural Development Agency, he served as the Deputy Head of the Financial Innovation Program at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

He has also held the position of Executive Manager in Kabul, Afghanistan, at the American agricultural cooperative "Land O'Lakes," which has been actively engaged in the implementation of agricultural development projects.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Darchia has held key managerial positions at the National Bank of Georgia and the LEPL Enterprise Georgia

He pursued his higher education in the United States, earning a degree in Business Administration from Lincoln University.

## Gigla Tamazashvili appointed as the General Director of LLC Georgian Amelioration



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, introduced Gigla Tamazashvili as the new General Director of "Georgian Amelioration" LLC to the organization's employees.

Mr. Tamazashvili possesses extensive experience in both the public and private sectors. In addition to his professional career, he is actively engaged in scientific research and academic activities.

He holds a doctorate in geographical sciences and is the author of 12 scientific publications. Furthermore, he has participated in 17 state-funded scientific research and technical projects.

Prior to his appointment as General Director of LLC "Georgian Melioration," Mr. Tamazashvili served as the Head of the Technical Division at Tbilisi Energy.

## David Songulashvili Hosts World Bank Delegation



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. David Songulashvili, met with a World Bank delegation led by Mr. Rolande Pryce, World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the Georgia Resilient Agriculture, Irrigation, and Land Project (GRAIL).

Minister Songulashvili expressed his gratitude to the World Bank for its longstanding and effective cooperation, emphasizing the crucial role of land reclamation infrastructure projects in advancing Georgia's agricultural sector.

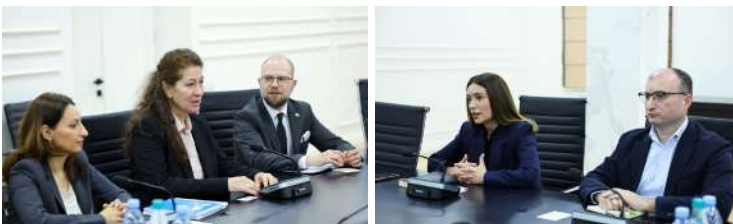
The conversation focused on key components of GRAIL, including land reclamation infrastructure development, agricultural support initiatives, grant programs, strengthening the Rural Development Agency, and land consolidation efforts.

Mr Pryce highlighted Georgia's favorable conditions for the timely and efficient implementation of the project, reaffirming the World Bank's commitment to continued collaboration with the Georgian Government.

Representatives from relevant Ministry Departments also attended the meeting.

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## Nino Tandilashvili hosts the Director of the UNOPS Multi-Country Office in Austria, Simonetta Siligato



The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, hosted Mrs. Simonetta Siligato, Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Austria.

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

Mrs. Tandilashvili expressed gratitude for the UN's longstanding support in various sectors.

According to the First Deputy, agriculture and environmental protection remain the state's top priorities. She emphasized the active collaborations with partner organizations to combat climate change, enhance air and water quality, and preserve biodiversity. As mentioned, a new four-year regional project is planned, with one of its objectives to reduce plastic pollution in the Black Sea.

Mrs. Simonetta Siligato reaffirmed the UN's commitment to supporting Georgia in implementing the project, emphasizing that the mentioned project will significantly help the country to improve the Black Sea water quality.

The Head of the Programme at UNOPS Austria, Mr Gurel Gurkan, along with the senior officials from the Ministry's relevant Departments, attended the meeting.

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## Solomon Pavliashvili: “The state has the political will to encourage the business sector towards the transition to a circular economy”



Mr. Pavliashvili participated in the Symposium “Waste Management and Circular Economy: Global Challenges and Solutions”, hosted by Georgian Technical University. Mrs Tamar Lominadze, Vice-Rector of the university; Mrs Nino Chkhobadze, Chair of “Greens of Georgia – Friends of the Earth”; and Mr Sadhan Kumar Ghosh, Visiting Professor from Jadavpur University, India, delivered the opening remarks.

In his address, the Deputy Minister outlined the state’s efforts in adopting circular economy principles and the challenges ahead, noting that Georgia’s current circularity rate is only 1.3%. However, there is significant potential for growth across various sectors.

“In 2015, we adopted the Waste Management Code, and today, we have a Waste Management Strategy (2016–2030), a Waste Management Plan (2022–2026), and a National Environmental Program. These frameworks position the circular economy as a new platform for sustainable waste management. Many economic sectors have untapped resources to reuse waste and produce new products, fostering job creation. Recognizing the challenges businesses face in adapting to these changes, the state has the political will and is committed to supporting them in this transition. Together, we will achieve tangible results,” Pavliashvili stated.

The scientific conference covered a range of critical topics, including solid household waste management, urban water management, the impact of climate change on tourism development, and micro-aerosol concentration assessments in Georgian cities.

Professor Sadhan Kumar Ghosh shared insights from India’s experience with circular economy practices, emphasizing Georgia’s promising potential:

“Georgia is taking its first steps in circular economy implementation, but I am confident that within a few years, it will make significant progress in waste management and sustainability.”

The symposium embraced representatives from the Waste Management Business Association, Georgian Greens – Friends of the Earth, Georgian Society of Natural Explorers “Orchis”, the Institute of Hydrometeorology, and various academic institutions.

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## The National Wine Agency will make the marketing campaign of Georgian wine in the USA even more large-scale



In one of the most important strategic markets for Georgian wine – the USA, in order to increase its recognition and popularity, the National Wine Agency has signed a contract with the American marketing company “Colangelo and Partners.”

This year, organized by the company “Colangelo and Partners” and with the financial support of the National Wine Agency, a marketing campaign for Georgian wine is planned, which includes strategic directions to ensure the growth of demand and sales of Georgian wine in the US market. In parallel with the existing activities, con-

sumer-oriented events will be intensified, which will contribute to the promotion of Georgian wine and the increase of engagement from American consumers.

As part of the marketing campaign of “Colangelo & Partners,” wine tasting seminars will be held in various cities across the USA for wine professionals and representatives of the wine trade sector. Additionally, Georgian wine will be showcased at international exhibitions, and targeted advertising and media campaigns will be carried out. Furthermore, wine tours will be organized in Georgia for media representatives, sommeliers, and sales professionals, which will contribute to better familiarizing and promoting Georgian wine in the American market.

Since 2022, the marketing company “Colangelo & Partners” has been promoting Georgian wine in the US market under the contract with the National Wine Agency. During this period, a growing trend in Georgian wine exports has been recorded. In 2024, exports reached 1.2 million liters, which is a 32% increase compared to the 2023 figures.

The USA is one of the most high-priced markets for Georgian wine. The average price of one liter of wine here ranges around 6 USD, indicating the high quality and growing demand for Georgian wine.

<https://wine.gov.ge/En/News/38201>

## A Large-Scale Presentation of Georgian Wine Took Place in Düsseldorf, Germany



With the support of the National Wine Agency and the Embassy of Georgia in the Federal Republic of Germany, 24 Georgian wine producers participated in ProWein Düsseldorf, one of the world's largest international exhibitions for wine and alcoholic beverages.

During the three-day exhibition in Düsseldorf, wine professionals, representatives of the commercial sector, and thousands of visitors had the opportunity to taste and evaluate Georgian wine, which is of particular importance for diversifying export markets and increasing sales.

Notably, this year marks the 25th anniversary of Georgia's participation in ProWein Düsseldorf. Within this framework, the Chairman of the National Wine Agency, Levan Mekhuzla, and the Acting Ambassador of Georgia to the Federal Republic of Germany, Ana Abuladze, along with other representatives of the agency and the embassy, met with the Director of ProWein, Peter Schmitz. During the meeting, the parties positively assessed 25 years of bilateral cooperation and discussed future plans.

As part of the exhibition, the National Wine Agency organized a branded Georgian wine stand at a conference hosted by the prestigious German media holding "Meininger." The stand featured approximately 300 bottles of wine from 24 Georgian wine producers, and a professional tasting was conducted by Georgian wine expert Inge Mainzer.

Additionally, at ProWein Düsseldorf, three more Georgian wine tastings were led by renowned German influencer and sommelier Toni Askitis.

During the exhibition, Levan Mekhuzla held meetings with wine professionals, representatives of various marketing companies, partner organizations, and representatives of media holdings.

<https://wine.gov.ge/En/News/38198>