



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

JUNE/2021

## The Government of Georgia adopts the State inventory program on a wind break belt



The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia has drafted the “State inventory program on a wind break belt”, which entails inventory – identification efforts on an existing wind break belts in Georgia, as well as their registration into the Public Registry.

Within the program, existing wind break belts will be identified and documented, in order to determine timber plants’ types on the respective territories. These efforts will ensure registration, rehabilitation, recovery/cultivation of the wind break belts. The program entails inventory of green plantation belts, as well as those locations which have been fully or partially destroyed; it will also cover those locations, which can be asserted through state registries/documents to have been partially or fully operational wind break belts.

The core function of wind break belts is to resist to wind erosion of soil, as well as sustain fertility of the land. Long-term degradation of the land will negatively affect rural-agricultural function of a soil and requires additional efforts to make the latter fertile again.

The efforts within the program will be delivered by the National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring, in coordination with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. As a coordinated and consistent effort, inventory of the wind break belts will be launched in 2021 and will commence by 2025. In 2021, inventory efforts will be deployed to the selected municipalities of the Kakheti region.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20384>

## Minister Davitashvili meets with Dr. Bekir Pakdemirli, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA), Mr Levan Davitashvili hosted the Delegation of Turkey, led by the Dr. Bekir Pakdemirli, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey. In the course of the meeting, attendees scrutinized possibilities for future cooperation and signed an MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ANIMAL HEALTH , which will boost export of products with animal origin from Georgia.

*“MoU on animal health is a step made forward, which will be an important milestone for cultivating cooperation between the two countries. In frames of the MoU, Georgian producers will be empowered to boost export of animal and products of animal origin” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

*Dr. Pakdemirli demonstrated willingness to share experience on various electronic systems cultivated in Turkey with the Georgian counterparts. “We have electronic registration system that are highly successful, as well as electronic rural-agrarian market, which serves as a tool for improving accessibility of farmers to markets, thus boosting their income” – Dr. Pakdemirli stated.*

Minister Davitashvili stated that Georgia has joined forces with Turkey for developing an MoU on fishery and forestry, which is a vital aspect for both countries. In the course of the meeting, attendees touched upon bilateral cooperation matters on scientific, cereal crops, forestry and product waste management matters. It has been stressed out that trilateral agreement on hazelnut



between Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan will be translated into expansion of export markets, as well as income from hazelnut sales.

The meeting was attended by the H.E. Fatma Ceren Yazgan, Ambassador of Turkey to Georgia, as well as representatives of the MEPA’s relevant agencies and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20378>

## Minister Davitashvili: “Environmental programming is a priority for both, within the state as well as the Association Agreement’s agenda”



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA), Mr Levan Davitashvili attended an exhibition “A friend to the nature” at the Krtsanisi Forest-Park together with the H.E. Thomas Muehlmann, Ambassador of Austria to Georgia. An exhibition was organized as an effort to commemorate the World Environment Day and featured works of Mr Friedrich Hundertwasser, prominent Austrian artist and environmentalist.

*“Since 1974, Georgia, along the rest of the World, celebrated the World Environment Day, therefore, discussing environmental policies on this occasion – is vital. Environmental programming is a priority for both, the state as well as the Association Agreement’s agenda. The respective sphere requires progress for Georgia and deployment of successful environmental policy, which will complement the country transforming into a more credible applicant for becoming a member of the European Union. We have a well-formulated agenda, determined by the Eu-Georgia Association Agreement, encompassing programming at various matters. Last year, expansion of protected territories reached an unprecedented scale and is up to 200, 000 hectares and spans across 12 % of an entire country; the new forest reform; through assistance of the donors, we will ensure a better management of forest industries and ecology, as well as accurate deployment of economic potential. Caring for the air quality is crucial. We are at the Krtsanisi Forest-Park, which is located between Tbilisi and Rustavi. The biggest chal-*

*lenges of all are faced by Rustavi. We have adopted and enacted new legislation, thus, by the end of the year – large enterprises will cultivate modern technologies and consistent monitoring will ensure enhancement of the city’s environmental conditions. Moreover, Tbilisi Mayor Office-deployed urban greenery efforts are crucial; in fact, we have achieved significant progress in terms of greenery of Tbilisi. In 2017, the Government adopted complexed approach for managing Tbilisi’s air quality. We have witnessed positive changes to transport, greenery policies, city’s ecological improvement. Last year, the Government adopted the similar plan for Rustavi, thus, I am confident that we will harvest significant progress in the respective city. We have reached an agreement with the Government of Sweden. We will obtain financial means for a complete assessment and planning of the Rustavi Mtkvari Chala ecosystem, which will result into Rustavi’s consistent greenery” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

Minister Davitashvili thanked Ambassador of Austria, Austrian Development Agency, LEPL Agency of Wildlife and the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN). Moreover, visit to the Krtsanisi Forest-Park is on purpose, as the Austrian Development Agency has made significant assistance to sustaining a green space, which spans across 200 hectares and is nearby Tbilisi.

The respective occasion was organized as a commemoration of the World Environment Day hosted representatives of the diplomatic community, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Georgia, H.E. Hubert Knirsch, State Trustee of Kvemo Kartli, Mr Shota Rekhviashvili, Deputy Chairperson of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee, MP Khatia Tsilosani and various agencies of the MEPA attended the event.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20380/>

## Minister Davitashvili attends the Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili attended the 3rd Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change, which was held upon an initiation of Portugal, as a country that presides the Council of the European Union. In frames of the event, Ministers briefed attendees on numerous reforms, results achieved with regard to softening climate change, as well as scrutinized possibilities for recovering economies in the post-pandemic world and that are in full compliance with the green economy principles.

In his speech, Minister Davitashvili stressed out on the importance of all the reforms and legislative initiatives, which Georgia has cultivated and fosters transformation of the country into a more harmonization with the European standards, which shall complement environmental liability, ecological advancement as well as fulfillment of the Association Agreement with the European Union.

*“Georgia has adopted its NDC document, as well as the 2030 Climate change strategy and Action Plan (CAP) 2021-2023. Georgia is fully committed to an unconditional limiting target of 35 % below 1990 level of its domestic total greenhouse gas emissions by 2030; unconditional targets would be increased by 50-57% in case of international support. We actively succeed with the development of a circular economy in the country. In this regard, we are committed to support waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and energy recovery according to the environmentally sound management standards and safe disposal of waste. Georgia is also progressing toward its planned water reform. We work on mainstreaming the biodiversity in key economic sectors, which is especially important for achieving the biodiversity targets. Numerous and vital reforms and initiatives have been carried out for complementing sustainable forest*

*management efforts. We shall stress out contribution of the European Union and its member states with regard to environmental protection and climate change. We are following the European Green Deal process, which and serves as a crucial precondition for Georgia becoming a member of the European Union”*  
 – Minister Davitashvili stated.

The Ministerial was held online and enjoyed presence The meeting was co-hosted by the Portuguese Minister for Environment and Climate Action, João Pedro Matos Fernandes, and by the European Commission, represented by Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans, and the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevius the Eastern Partnership.

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## Deputy Minister Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic to Georgia, H.E. Hubert Knirsch



Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic to Georgia, H.E. Hubert Knirsch. In his speech, Mr Shamugia expressed gratitude to the Ambassador for meaningful contribution toward forestry sector, biodiversity and protected territories. Deputy Minister also stressed-out boosting product export to the European countries, including Germany. Ambassador Knirsch briefed that Germany intends to organize an exhibition of agro-products in the fall, thus, expressed his hopes for seeing high volume of high-quality production of Georgia positioned there to boost visibility of the country.

Deputy Minister Shamugia also briefed Ambassador on Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring Agency, as well as the future plans of the latter body. Deputy Minister stressed out importance of sharing German experience with regard to sustainable management of land, as well as recruitment and capacity building of the staff, which will be a profound assistance to the Agency.

In the course of the meeting, matters related to cooperation on irrigation, pasture management, winery and nut crops have been touched upon.

Ambassador Knirsch highlighted Georgia being a crucial partner for Germany and expressed readiness to support Georgia through sharing experience on sustainable land management, as well as professional and capacity building of staffers.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20398/>

## Photo - exhibitions organized on national parks in Korea and in Georgia



During the period of June 7 – 21, the Algeti National Park hosted a photo-exhibition of the Korean national parks. At the same time, the city of Wonju in Korea will host an exhibition of photos, depicting Georgia’s national parks. Opening ceremony was launched at the same time, in both countries.

The event was attended by Deputy Ministers of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Ms Nino Tandilashvili and Mr Iuri Nozadze, Head of the Office of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Georgia, Mr Chung Dae-soo, Chargé d’affaires, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local municipalities and the National Tourism Administration. At an event, attendees had a possibility to enjoy opening of a photo-exhibition in the city of Wonju of Georgia’s national park; an opening ceremony was transmitted live via specially installed screens.

*“Today, we have cultivated cooperation between national parks of Georgia and Korea. The Algeti National Park hosts a photo-exhibition of Korean national parks. Meanwhile, the Korean parks have gifted Georgian rangers with 200 walkie talkies, which will assist rangers in the process of patrolling and law-enforcement actions. This is a launch of a solid and promising cooperation between the national parks of Korea and Georgia. We are working on deepening our cooperation through signing a memorandum”*

– Deputy Minister Tandilashvili stated.

Aiming at enhancing Georgia's protected territories and fostering Georgia's tourist potential – the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia are in constant search for capacities to establish or deepen existing linkages with the international partners.

The Algeti National Park's visitors' center will entail a presentation of beautiful national parks of Korea, with an entailing description and for the next two weeks.

Nowadays, there are 22 national parks with diverse categories in Korea: 17 mountain, 4 shore and marine, and 1 historical-cultural. An entire space of the Korean national parks is 6 726 sq. km., which comprises 6, 7 % of an entire territory (100, 295 sq. km.).



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20398/>

## Safe food for a healthy future! June 7 commemorates the World Food Safety Day



On June 7, the World Food Safety Day was commemorated, established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019 and aims at fostering food safety risks prevention and management. In an incumbent year, the WHO has set the following theme – “Safe food for a healthy future”. As an effort to commemorate the World Food Safety Day, the National Food Agency under the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia has organized an annual report presentation for the representatives of international and non-governmental organizations.

*The event was attended by the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili, who stressed out on achievements and drawbacks. “Without an exaggeration, we can state that the*

*Ministry has been undisputedly contributing to food safety; our consistent efforts have harvested significant achievements. Of course, challenges remain. Nevertheless, we shall stress out that food safety is not only the Government's responsibility, but it shall be complemented by each and every entrepreneur, as well as relevant associations. Better results can only be harvested through unified efforts” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

In the course of the event, it has been stressed out that the National Food Agency actively cooperates with international organizations, cultivates and scrutinizes their standards. During the period of 2015 – 2020, a total number of 146 legislative acts have been harmonized with food safety, veterinary and plants protection to the European Union's legislation, in frames of the DCFTA. During an incumbent year, 10, 650 state oversight has been carried out with various business operators (inspection, verification of documents, oversight), which has identified 888 administrative violations. Within the monitoring effort – 656 samples have been collected (study on animal and non-animal food products is carried out at different parameters; including – variety, limited substances, hard metals, pesticides, waste, trans fat, genetically modified bodies, salmonella and listeria).

For animal health protection and epi-zoonotic trust, the Agency has conducted 1, 964, 587 veterinary manipulations, which has identified 184, 774 large and small livestock; 327, 453 large and small livestock have been processed against external parasites during seasonal rotation.

For the sake of ensuring farmers' rights protection, veterinary and plant protection means' control has been enacted. Moreover, actions for plant protection, including fighting the armored stink bug are underway.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20381/>

## UNDP and the Swedish Government complement multiple - use of forestry



The National Forestry Agency has been supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swedish Government to implement the project “multiple-use practice of forestry usage”, which aims at capacity building of the Agency; throughout the efforts, special emphasis will be made on tourism and recreational potential of forest space, as well as enhancement of ecotourism.

Attendees to the coordination meeting, scrutinized project development matters with an active engagement of the National Forestry Agency, Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA), Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia (APA), environmental protection organizations and other interested parties.

In the course of the discussion, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Iuri Nozadze stated that the National Forestry Agency is actively working on developing ecotourism on the corresponding protected territories. Tourist routes and sidewalk networks' development will highly complement ecotourism; therefore, sidewalk routes enhancement will foster national operational guidelines. It shall be highlighted that throughout the project and for ecotourism and eco-systemic services enhancement – the process will entail Lentekhi, Tsageri, Oni, Ambrolauri and Chokhatauri forest-

ry ecotourism development action plan. Multiple-usage of forestry is one of the core denominations of an ongoing forestry reform and code efforts, which shall ensure an effective usage of forest's eco-systems and rural development.

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## Minister Davitashvili: “Blueberry export volume has exceeded three million GEL



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA), Mr Levan Davitashvili joined Mr Giorgi Sakhokia, State Trustee of the Guria region in a visit to the agricultural cooperative “Nagomri Agro House”, which harvests blueberry plantations. “Berry crops and specifically blueberry have become increasingly popular throughout the recent years and have been exported at an intensive pace. Last year, fruit export has significantly complemented export amount from Georgia. Blueberry export has amounted to more than three million GEL and it will be annually growing, resulting from flowering more and more plantations” – Minister Davitashvili stated.

The State-deployed assistance programs unites five entities of the rural-agricultural cooperative “Nagomri Agro House”, which has cultivated a 2,5 hectares blueberry garden. Investments for the new plantation has amounted to

more than 150, 000 GEL, including more than 100, 000 GEL of preferential agro-credit. Moreover, 35, 000 GEL of co-funding have been allocated from the “Plant the Future” project.

The blueberry garden employs 30 locals at seasonal jobs. The production is available at local, as well as export markets. The State-deployed efforts have emphasized on actions to enhance agriculture, thus, enabling farmers to produce a competitive production.

In frames of the “Plant the Future” project in the Guria region, gardens on more than 450 hectares have been cultivated. Out of these, more than 276 are blueberry plantations. Co-funding of the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency exceeds 6 million GEL.

At a visit to the “Nagomri Agro House”, Minister Davitashvili enjoyed a company of Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri Majoritarian MP Vasil Chigogidze, MP Khatia Tsilosani, first Deputy Chairperson of the Parliamentary Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee and Mr Ilia Tamarashvili, head of the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20376/>

## The 3rd steering committee meeting of the project “Financial, Extension & Cooperative Development for Georgian Farmers”

The European Union Delegation to Georgia and the French Development Agency (AFD) host the 3rd steering committee meeting of the project “Financial, Extension & Cooperative Development for Georgian Farmers”, which was attended by the Deputy Ministers of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Giorgi Khanishvili and Ms Nino Tandilashvili. The project “FinExCoop” aspires to increase accessibility of farmers to finances, as well as

enhancing extension services and cooperatives. The respective meeting scrutinized progress achieved, as well as anticipated outcomes. “Upon deploying an incumbent project, Georgian farmers will be more empowered in getting access to resources and knowledge, which they can deploy toward various financial structures, attract financial recourses and develop farming” – Deputy Minister Khanishvili stated.

Christopher Cordonnier, Executive Director of the “FinExCoop” provided a presentation on future plans of the project, which is funded by the European Union’s Neighborhood Investment Platform and the French Development Agency (AFD). The project is implemented by the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, the Mercy Corps, the Association Rural Development for Future Georgia and Chambre Agriculture de Loiret.

The meeting enjoyed presence of the proxies from the European Union Delegation to Georgia, the French Development Agency (AFD), Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the respective bodies, “FinExCoop Georgia” team, United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Embassy of France to Georgia and field experts.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20395/>



## Deputy Minister Pavliashvili attend the conference on the “Green Economy and Inclusive Growth in the South Caucasus region”



An exhibition center “Expo-Georgia” hosted a conference on the “Green Economy and Inclusive Growth in the South Caucasus”, which was organized by the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN). The conference enjoyed participation of the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Solomon Pavliashvili. In the course of the event, vital projects and initiatives of the South Caucasus have been showcased, which facilitate enhancement of green economy, youth entrepreneurship, as well as sustainable use of green tourism, natural and energy resources; attendees scrutinized the latter thematic and brainstormed on capacities for tackling these – through deploying best practices of the European Union, Georgia and Armenia.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20390/>

*“Boosting the green economy will decrease effect on energy resources, as well as foster waste-less technologies and cultivation of new jobs. The Ministry is elaborating the circular economy strategy, which shall encourage development of new and alternative economic models. Increase of green economy, as well as green concept are priority areas for the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia” – Deputy Minister Pavliashvili stated.*

The conference was organized in frames of the following projects: “EU4Youth – “The ‘Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development (SEED) program” in Georgia and Armenia; USAID’s bureau of Europe and Eurasia; a grant assigned by the Economic Development, Governance, and Enterprise (EDGE) project in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan “Digital Caucasus” and “sustainable management of forests for agriculture development” project, funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

The conference enjoyed company of the Deputy Minister of Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Ms Ekaterine Mikabadze; Mr Alexander Daras, Thematic Sector Coordinator, Connectivity, Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Delegation of the European Union to Georgia; Honorary Consul of the Republic of Austria, Mr Alexander Kerner; Executive Director of the CENN, Ms Nana Janashia; as well as representatives of private sector, development projects’ partners and civil society organizations.

