



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

MARCH 2022

## Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador of the United States of America to Georgia, Kelly Degnan



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Ambassador of the United States of America to Georgia, Mrs. Kelly Degnan, and the USAID/Georgia Mission Director Mr. Peter Wiebler.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the US Government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their long-term, significant support in the environmental protection and agricultural fields.

During the meeting, Minister Shamugia stated, that the Ministry has an Agricultural Development Strategy and an Action Plan with concrete goals, the

implementation of the aforementioned policies is crucial, as it will enable to use of the existing opportunities in the sector.

The parties emphasized the issue of promoting Georgian high-quality products in the international markets and stressed the support of partners amid the current situation in the region.

The parties also discussed the challenges facing the wine sector. The maximum diversification of international markets to promote the sale of Georgian wine was underlined at the meeting.

*“ We managed to reduce the share of wine exports in the Russian market from 80% to 57% in a short time. We are actively campaigning for market diversification, however, some challenges still remain. We actively work with the importers to find alternative markets, thus promoting the sale of Georgian products in the international markets. In this process, the support of the US government is important to make Georgian wine more popular in the US market,” – Mr. Otar Shamugia stated.*

At the meeting, Mrs. Kelly Degnan stressed, that the United States will support Georgia in addressing the existing challenges; In coordination with the Government of Georgia, it will try to find all possible ways to promote Georgian products in the international markets. Moreover, Georgian farmers will be provided with professional training, which will help them to improve the productivity and quality of wheat to get an abundant wheat crop – was noted by Mrs. Degnan.

USAID/Georgia Mission Director Mr. Peter Wiebler stressed, that climate change is a priority area for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), he also added, that USAID is actively working and supporting the search for alternative sources of renewable energy in Georgia.

Mr. George Khanishvili, the First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture attended the meeting at the Ministry.

## Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Carl Hartzel

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Mr. Carl Hartzel.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the EU, and sincere appreciation to the Ambassador and his team for their great support towards environmental protection and agricultural development fields.

*“Through the support of the European Union, a number of important projects and programs are being implemented in the environmental protection, as well as agricultural fields over the years. It’s worth mentioning, that real tangible results and success are already visible in the respective areas. Georgia has already applied for EU membership, which takes us one step closer to European integration.*



*We set a goal to move fast on this path. On the one hand, this is a challenge and we have to work hard to overcome this challenge, on the other hand, it is a great opportunity for Georgian production. We will do our best to fully fulfill the obligations under the Georgia-EU Association Agreement,” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.*

According to the EU Ambassador to Georgia Mr. Hartzel, as a result of projects implemented through EU financial and technical support, there is gradual progress in the rural and agricultural development areas, as well as the environmental protection field.

We appreciate and welcome Georgia’s ambition to make the most of the opportunities offered by the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).

The conversation touched upon topical issues related to the rural and agricultural development, food safety, pasture, and land management, forestry, air, water, and waste management reforms, the New Forest Code, technical assistance projects, and trade relations.

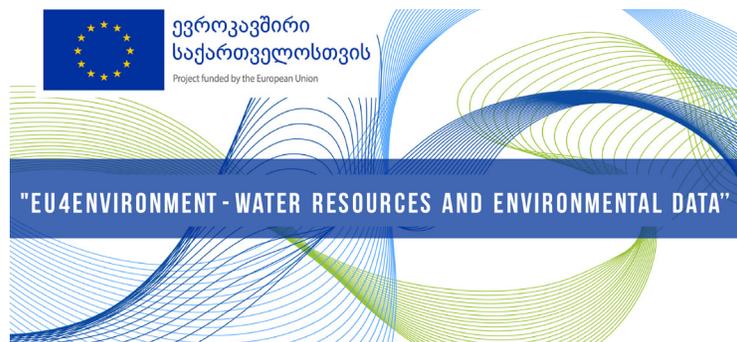
Mr. George Khanishvili, the First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protec-



tion and Agriculture, and Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture attended the meeting with the EU Ambassador.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20708/>

## New EU program “EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data” to launch in Georgia



The new EU program “EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data” is launched in Georgia.

The protection and sustainable use of water resources, support for existing water management policy, new reforms and their implementation at the local level, as well as improved access to reliable environmental data, information on water resources, air quality, land use, and waste are envisaged by the new EU program “EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data”.

*“Under the frame of the Association Agreement signed between the European Union and Georgia, Georgia has undertaken an obligation to harmonize its national policy and legislation with the EU legislation. Some progress has already been made - a draft law on water resources management has been developed and the water monitoring network has been significantly expanded. It should be mentioned, that the new EU program will help to improve the environmental protection in Georgia, “- said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili at the event.*

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

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

The Project EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data is based on the results of the projects, which have been already implemented with the EU support – “EU Water Initiative Plus (EUWI +)” and the “ENIS SEIS II East”.

The project “EUWI +” assisted Georgia in fulfilling its commitments taken under the Association Agreement with the European Union and supported in gradually implementing EU water resources management practices in Georgia.

Alazani-Iori and Khrami-Debeda River Basin Management Plans and Chorokhi-Adjaristskali Basin Management Plan have been developed, which also include issues related to the Black Sea coast. All three pool management plans total 24,000 km2 and include 961,000 inhabitants.

The ENI SEIS II East project supports the implementation of the principles and practices of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and strengthens the regular reporting process including the production of environmental indicators and assessment reports in the fields of biodiversity, water, land, waste, and air. The project develops institutional capacity in the environmental assessment and accounting fields.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/Ge/News/Details/20729/>

## Otar Shamugia met with the Head of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Regional Representation for the South Caucasus, Maciej Czura

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia hosted the Head of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Regional Representation for the South Caucasus Mr. Maciej Czura.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the current projects undertaken in the environmental protection and agricultural fields in the country. According

to the Minister, a number of important projects are being implemented with the support of donor organizations.

Mr. Shamugia expressed his gratitude to Mr. Czura for the significant assistance provided by the European Investment Bank in the rehabilitation of the Zemo Samgori irrigation system and stressed, that development of irrigation



infrastructure is a priority for the country, as improving the water supply to farmers is a crucial factor for the development of agriculture.

The Minister stressed the importance of increasing local production in the country and declared, that technical support, as well as sharing knowledge and

introduction of new technologies from partner organizations to their Georgian counterparts are really crucial. The importance of promoting Georgian quality and competitive products in the international markets was also discussed at the meeting.

The Minister also spoke about the implementation of the obligations taken by Georgia under the Association Agreement with the European Union.

*“The Ministry has a specific action plan, which is in line with the obligations taken under the Association Agreement with the European Union. Therefore, fulfillment of obligations is a priority for us. Moreover, Georgia has already applied for EU membership and our task is to get closer to our goal as soon as possible,” Mr. Otar Shamugia said.*

The conversation touched upon environmental reforms undertaken in the country, including the New Forest Code and the Law on Environmental Liability, it was mentioned, that the support of the European Investment Bank will be important in the fulfillment of the obligations undertaken under the Association Agreement.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Czura noted, that the European Investment Bank is one of the main supporting organizations of the ongoing global projects in the field of climate change and protection of natural resources, and expressed readiness to cooperate with the Georgian side and provide technical, as well as financial support in the implementation of the respective projects.

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## Otar Shamugia met with the Eugene Zhukov, Director General of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Central and West Asia Regional Department

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia hosted Eugene Zhukov, Director General of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Central and West Asia Regional Department.

The Minister expressed gratitude to the representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for their long-term support in the implementation of important projects. Special attention was paid to the projects being successfully implemented in Georgia, namely, projects for rehabilitation and modernization of the irrigation network in Kvemo Samgori, restoration of windbreaks, and projects supporting agricultural activities in the country.

Mr. Otar Shamugia underlined the role of international and donor organizations in the effective development of the agricultural sector and emphasized the importance of introducing new technologies in the agricultural sector. The conversation also touched upon the challenges of climate change facing the country and discussed solutions for combating climate change.

Mr. Zhukov briefed the Minister about the goals of the Asian Development Bank, which aim to provide support for the agricultural sector, he also expressed interest in water management-related issues.

Mr. Shamugia noted, that the development of the strategic water management plan and the fulfillment of the obligations taken by Georgia under the Association Agreement with the EU is a priority for the country.

*“Establishing a basin management system is a new challenge; we should develop water resources management plans for river basins, therefore, the support from our international partners in this area will be important” - said Mr. Shamugia.*

Mr. Evgeni Zhukov expressed readiness to cooperate with the Georgian side and share best practices for the implementation of the basin management system in Georgia.

The Minister spoke at length about the priorities of the country, regarding environmental protection.

*“We have developed a Nationally Determined Contributions, which presents the vision of our country on how to reduce greenhouse gases and fulfill the international commitments, that we have made to achieve sustainable development goals.*

*“We consider climate change-related issues as a top priority of our agenda;*



*when we speak about climate change adaptation, we should bear in mind, that it is necessary to build a climate-resilient infrastructure that will enable farmers to carry out their agricultural activities and produce agricultural products in the light of climate change,” said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

At the meeting, the representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) named transport, communications, industry, energy, agriculture, and financial sector as top investment priorities.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Shane Rosenthal, Country Director for Georgia at Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Avtandil Tskhvitava, ADB Senior Project Officer, Mr. George Khanishvili, First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister and representatives of relevant agencies of the Ministry.

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## Otar Shamugia hosted the UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, Nick Beresford



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, Mr. Nick Beresford.

During the meeting, the sides discussed the projects implemented by UNDP in the environmental protection and agricultural fields of Georgia and highlighted issues of future cooperation.

The conversation touched upon environmental reforms undertaken in the country, including the New Forest Code and the Law on Environmental Liability, it was mentioned, that the support of the United Nations Development

Program (UNDP) in terms of funding and knowledge sharing will be crucial in the implementation of reforms.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the representatives of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for their support in the agricultural and environmental protection fields.

In the course of the meeting, Mr. Shamugia noted, that, cooperation with the international partners will be important in the implementation of various projects, in parallel with the agricultural support programs, to improve the economic situation of the rural residents.

The importance of the ongoing "Sustainable Rural Development Program", as part of the larger European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD 3) was also underlined at the meeting.

Mr. Nick Beresford emphasized, that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture is an outstanding partner for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP);

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), through joint efforts by the Government of Georgia, with the financial support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Government of Switzerland and Sweden, have been successfully implementing a large-scale seven-year program in Georgia to reduce risks of natural disasters caused by the climate change.

The UNDP Resident Representative noted, that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in close cooperation with the National Forestry Agency of Georgia will implement a new project in the country "Support to Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Forest management Practices in Georgia" which will be funded by the Government of Japan.

## Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Georgia Hubert Knirsch



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr. Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Georgia, Mr. Hubert Knirsch.

Minister Shamugia expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador for supporting

Georgia in the environmental protection and agricultural development fields over the years, noting that assistance from the German side significantly contributes to the fulfillment of the commitments taken by Georgia under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

"Now that Georgia has applied for the EU membership, we will have to work more actively in many areas, where the support of Germany and other international partners is of the utmost importance. Our goal is to move forward quickly, get closer to Europe and increase the export of Georgian products to the European Union, the US, and other strategic markets. Germany is an important trade partner for us and we welcome the fact, that the export of Georgian products to Germany is annually increasing - said Mr. Shamugia.

Mr. Hubert Knirsch congratulated Minister Shamugia on his appointment as Minister, wished him success, and noted, that the German side has a long-term and good cooperation with the Ministry, which will be further continued and will be even more fruitful.

The conversation touched upon the current and implemented projects of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the German Development and Reconstruction Credit Bank (KfW) in Georgia, aiming to ensure the protection of the environment and biodiversity, forestry, and protected areas, as well as trade relations between the two countries.

## Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Otar Shamugia hosted the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to Georgia, Diego Colas

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to Georgia, Diego Colas

Mr. Shamugia expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador for the support provided within the framework of the bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The Minister spoke about the ongoing and planned projects in the environmental protection and agricultural fields.

The focus was set on the irrigation and sustainable land management related issues. Minister Shamugia stressed the importance of the agricultural land registration project, which will contribute to the development of the land market and make the programs implemented by the Ministry even more flexible.

The sides also discussed cooperation issues in the field of vocational education, and training of farmers.

The importance of sharing experience of foreign experts was also stressed by participants, so as to ensure our manufactured products to maximally meet the requirements of the international markets.

Mr. Diego Colas noted, that Georgia has great potential for agricultural development. According to the Ambassador, Georgian wine is special and there is a real potential for growth of exports to the international markets.

At the end of the meeting, Ambassador Diego Colas stressed, that Georgia is an important partner of the French Republic and expressed readiness to pro-



mote fruitful cooperation between the two countries. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.

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## Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia, Maaïke van Koldam



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia held a meeting with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia Mrs. Maaïke Van Koldam.

During the meeting, the sides discussed projects implemented in Georgia with

the support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and drew their attention to the issues of future cooperation.

The Minister noted, that supporting agricultural production in the country, as well as promoting Georgian products to the international markets is a priority for the Ministry.

*“A number of projects are being implemented for the development of processing enterprises and storage facilities through co-financing of the Ministry; We also have programs to support cooperatives, which help them in increasing production of quality agricultural products,“ - said Mr. Otar Shamugia.*

Mrs. Maaïke Van Koldam noted, that 20 Georgian trainers have been trained in the horticulture and dairy farming fields, who will further provide qualified assistance to Georgian farmers and share international practice.

According to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Government of the Netherlands will continue to actively support the Government of Georgia in funding priority areas for the country.

It was pointed out, that Georgia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, which is an important date.

Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Nino Tandilashvili attended the meeting at the Ministry

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## Minister of Environmental protection and Agriculture of Georgia met with the Ambassador of Israel

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Israel to Georgia Ran Gidor.

At the meeting, the parties underlined the importance of long-term relations between the two countries and discussed the prospects for future cooperation.

The Minister expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Ambassador of Israel for supporting the development of the agricultural sector in Georgia. The conversation touched upon the educational programs implemented by Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, "Mashav" for Georgian entrepreneurs.

Under the frame of the "Mashav" programs, agricultural workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs have an opportunity to acquire knowledge tailored to modern needs, including the adoption of new technologies.

It was mentioned, that sharing Israel's experience to Georgian partners towards the development of the agricultural sector is of the utmost importance.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Shamugia spoke about the trade potential and possibilities to exploit existing export/import potential between Israel and Georgia and expressed the desire to deepen trade and economic relations between the two countries.



Deputy Minister Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili attended the meeting at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20691/>

## Nino Tandilashvili participated in the special session of the UN Environment Assembly



The Special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP@50) took place online, where the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili addressed the participants on behalf of the Government of Georgia.

*"UNEP and Georgia mark the thirtieth anniversary of the cooperation in 2022. Active and close cooperation with UNEP is important for Georgia, as our task is to implement the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The protection of the environment, fulfillment of obligations taken under the international environmental agreements and environmental processes is a priority for Georgia. Howev-*

*er, considering the principles of environmental democracy, Georgia is fully aware, that good environmental governance is an essential prerequisite not only for effective protection of the environment, but also for the sustainable development of the country " - said Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.*

A number of resolutions were adopted at the session, including a draft resolution initiated by Peru and Rwanda on the elimination of plastic pollution - End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument, which is supported and co-sponsored by Georgia.

The purpose of this resolution is to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). The Committee will be able to conduct negotiations on plastic pollution, aiming to complete a draft legally binding global agreement by the end of 2024.

The aim of the agreement is to reduce plastic pollution into the environment, which addresses the full lifecycle of plastics and adopts a circular economy approach to plastic waste.

According to Ms. Igner Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Plastic Pollution Treaty is the most significant international multilateral environmental deal since the Paris Climate Agreement.

## Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Otar Shamugia met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Qatar to Georgia Hassan Ahmed Ali Mohamed Al-Mutawa

Mr. Otar Shamugia hosted the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Qatar to Georgia, Hassan Ahmed Ali Mohamed Al-Mutawa.

The Minister stressed the importance of the participation of Georgian com-

panies in the exhibition and emphasized, that involvement in similar activities will help Georgia to further deepen trade relations.

Mr. Shamugia noted, that Qatar is an important partner for Georgia and there



is great potential for deepening trade and economic relations between the two countries.

In the course of the meeting, the conversation touched upon state support programs for farmers, which play an important role in promoting local production. Moreover, the sides addressed a number of important areas, entailing current export trends, namely, increasing exports of honey, wine, mutton, and natural juices from Georgia, the sides also underlined the country's potential in promoting horticulture, developing and producing various export products. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20688/>

## Nino Tandilashvili attended the opening of the International Agricultural Exhibition “Agriteq 2022” in Doha



The opening ceremony was also attended by HE Nikoloz Revazishvili, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Qatar. According to him, the Georgian Embassy in the State of Qatar continues to work actively to increase the export of Georgian products.

“During the last two years, about 50 Georgian products of dozens of Georgian companies have been allocated on the shelves of stores in Qatar, through cooperation with the local distribution companies and shopping malls.

*“The participation of our companies in the “Agriteq” is crucial, as far as, the exhibition is attended by representatives of about 500 different distribution companies and trade networks from different countries of the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Humans, which is a good opportunity for our companies to establish business relations with them.” Mr. Revazishvili said.*

“Agriteq” is considered one of the largest international exhibitions in the Gulf region, which embraces many thousands of visitors. This year, 50 countries and about 300 local and international companies operating in the agricultural sector are participating in the exhibition.

“Agriteq” will come to an end on March 14, 2022.

The Georgian exhibition stand was opened at the International Agricultural Exhibition “Agriteq 2022” in the capital city of Qatar, Doha, through the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the Embassy of Georgia in the State of Qatar.

About 15 Georgian companies are participating in the international exhibition: Agrokiziki LTD, Agrolein LLC, LTD Anigoza LTD, NUTS.GE LLC, Kerk LLC, Geo Natural LLC, Gorji Co, Geo Organic LLC, August LLC, Campa LLC, Sno LLC, Kobi LLC, Alali LLC, Olive LLC. The aforementioned companies showcase Georgian apples, nuts, blueberries, dried fruits, olives, chilled lamb, honey, organic juices, etc.. at the exhibition.

According to Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, promoting the export of high-quality, competitive agricultural products and diversification of markets is crucial for the Government of Georgia.

*“Different agricultural products showcased at the international agricultural exhibition in Doha. It should be noted, that this is an opportunity for Georgian agricultural producers to export their competitive Georgian products to the international markets. Obviously, the Government will continue to support the respective area in the future as well,” Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili said.*

Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili noted, that, exports of Georgian agricultural products have been increased in Gulf countries in recent years, particularly, in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Therefore it is important to support our farmers and carry out similar measures in the future as well.

It should be mentioned, that within the framework of the exhibition, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili held meetings with the Heads of International Business Companies.



## Nino Tandilashvili: “During the meeting with His Excellency, Sheikh Faleh Bin Nasser Bin Ahmad Al Thani, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the State of Qatar, we discussed the possibility of linking greenhouse gas trading markets between the two countries”



Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili briefed the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the State of Qatar on the strategic vision of the Government of Georgia and highlighted measures taken by Georgia to address climate change.

The parties also discussed issues related to waste management and recycling. According to the Minister of Environment of Qatar, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on environmental issues with the Government of Georgia will be a crucial issue for the future.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the State of Qatar, Mr. Nikoloz Revazishvili.

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## Nino Tandilashvili met with the Minister of Municipality of the State of Qatar

The Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili held a meeting with his Excellency Mr. Abdulla bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, Minister of Municipality and Environment of the State of Qatar in Doha.

During the meeting, the sides discussed issues of bilateral cooperation in the agricultural field.

The Deputy Minister briefed the Minister of Qatar on the Investment Project | Imereti Agro Zone.

According to Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, it is important for Georgia to establish its competitive, agricultural products, namely, Georgian honey, nuts, dried fruits, blueberries, mutton.. etc on the market of Gulf countries.

It was mentioned, that important steps have been taken in Georgia to promote the production of quality agri-food products, which in itself increases the interest in the international markets.

Minister Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Subaie stressed, that the State of Qatar is interested in deepening trade relations with Georgia, noting, that the awareness of Georgian quality agri-food products has been increased in the last two years.



At the official meeting with the Minister of Municipality of the State of Qatar, the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia was accompanied by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the State of Qatar, Mr. Nikoloz Revazishvili.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20703/>

## A new refrigeration plant opened in Sartichala through state financial assistance

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Mr. Otar Shamu-gia accompanied by the State Representative of Kvemo Kartli region, Giorgi Dokhturishvili attended the opening ceremony of the new refrigeration plant “Sartichala Vineyard Management” in the village of Sartichala, Gardabani Municipality.

*“ We have been implementing state projects for many years to support all parts of the value chain, entailing, planting of orchards, cultivating annual crops, creating refrigeration and storage infrastructure, increasing access to agricultural machinery, introducing international standards, improving access to modern technologies.*

*Today, a new refrigeration plant has opened in the village of Sartichala. It is noteworthy, that the company plans to export its products to the EU countries,*



which underlines the fact, that the state's efforts to diversify export markets enable more companies and, eventually more Georgian products to have access to the European market " Mr. Otar Shamugia said.

The company "Sartichala Vineyard Management" is a beneficiary of the Rural Development Agency. Overall, GEL 3.8 million was invested in the enterprise, including a grant of up to GEL 500,000, and a preferential agro-credit amounting to GEL 3 million.

Modern technologies are introduced in the "Sartichala Vineyard Management" refrigeration plant; The refrigeration infrastructure can store 1,000 tonnes of products at a time.

"Sartichala Vineyard Management" LLC is united in Agro Holding. It should be mentioned, that, through the support of the state program "Plant the Future", four types of modern, Italian table grape varieties are cultivated on the 30 hectares in the vineyards owned by the companies of Agro Holding, where, up to 400 tonnes are expected to be harvested by 2022.

With the support of the USDA, Agro Holding receives recommendations



from Italian specialists on the cultivation of table grapes, as well as storage conditions. Agro holding companies employ 60 people.

It should be mentioned, that 86 refrigeration plants have been set up across the country with the state co-financing exceeding GEL 41 million.

<https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/20705/>

## Nino Tandilashvili: "The Ministry will conduct thorough monitoring on the fulfillment of environmental obligations imposed on "Rustavi Azot" LLC within the specified timeframe"



Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, together with Mrs. Maia Bitadze, Chairperson of the Committee of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources at the Parliament of Georgia, Mrs. Nino Latsabidze, Mayor of Rustavi Municipality and Mr. Levan Vepkhvadze, President of the Business Association paid a visit to the company "Rustavi Azot" LLC, where they got acquainted with the activities of the enterprise.

The officials held a visit within the framework of the monitoring campaign of enterprises operating in the town of Rustavi.

"We continue conducting monitoring of large enterprises in the town of Rustavi. We saw the ongoing processes in "Rustavi Azot" LLC and got acquainted with the progress, that the enterprise has made in fulfilling its environmental obligations.

"Rustavi Azot" LLC has been inspected several times by the Department of Environmental Supervision. All the environmental problems were identified and reasonable timeframes were set for the enterprise for fulfilling imposed environmental obligations.

The representatives of the company briefed us, that by the end of April, the enterprise will have a self-monitoring system. The current industrial workshops

have filter systems, besides, active work is underway to fulfill other responsibilities, regarding, waste management, protection from water pollution, or, proper arrangement of the enterprise area.

*The Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture will conduct thorough monitoring of the fulfillment of obligations imposed on the "Rustavi Azot". We will continue active monitoring of the company, which will enable us to achieve the goals set for the improvement of the state of the environment, and fulfill environmental obligations within the specified timeframe" said Mrs.Nino Tandilashvili.*

According to Mrs. Maia Bitadze, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, the company has taken important steps in the field of environmental protection in recent years, but there is still much work to be done.

The Mayor of Rustavi Municipality, Mrs. Nino Latsabidze noted, that the improvement of the ecological situation is particularly important for local residents of the town of Rustavi; One of the main challenges facing the town is still the environmental area.

Mr. Levan Burdiladze, First Deputy Director of "Rustavi Azot" LLC, focused on successful cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

*"We are cooperating closely and successfully with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. We have agreed on a time-bound action plan, which we strictly follow. Last year, some of the measures have already been taken" Mr. Burdiladze said.*

The aim of the monitoring campaign of large enterprises is to enable the enterprises to effectively fulfill their obligations specified under the legislation on air protection at the earliest possible time.



<https://mepa.gov.ge/Ge/News/Details/20738/>

## The state will repay the interest on a loan issued for growing annual crops



<https://mepa.gov.ge/Ge/News/Details/20722/>

In accordance with the decision of the Government of Georgia, the sub-component will be added to the Preferential Agro Credit project, under which, the Rural Development Agency will co-finance the interest on loans issued for the purpose of growing annual crops.

The Rural Development Agency will co-finance the loan over 12-month at an interest rate of 9% per annum. The maximum annual interest rate of the loan has been set at 18%. The loan amount per beneficiary has been estimated at GEL 5,000 to GEL 100,000.

The loan will cover the costs for sowing/planting seed materials for annual crops, pesticides, organic and mineral fertilizers, current costs for biological plant protection products, hiring an agricultural labor force for planting/growing annual crops, fuel costs, and equipment rental.

The co-financing may be received by citizens of Georgia, individual entrepreneurs, and legal entities registered in accordance with the legislation of Georgia, (except for state / municipal enterprises).

Issuance of agro-credit will start after the enactment of the ordinance; Financial institutions will be able to issue loans until October 31, 2022.

## Agricultural cooperatives will be able to store their crops in compliance with the modern standards



<https://mepa.gov.ge/Ge/News/Details/20738/>

In accordance with the decision made at the session of the Government of Georgia, an additional, separate program will be implemented to support agricultural cooperatives.

Under the terms of the state program “Co-financing Storage Enterprises for Agricultural Cooperatives”, the Rural Development Agency provides co-financing for storage and refrigeration infrastructure, which will be used only for storing vegetables and potatoes.

The co-financing for an enterprise with a storage capacity of 500 tonnes is not more than 80% of its total cost, not exceeding GEL 450,000.

According to the program, the number of potential beneficiaries, or shareholders of the agricultural cooperative should not be less than 20 shareholders, the land owned by each shareholder should not be less than 0.1 ha, and the total area of the land (plots) owned by the potential beneficiary and/or beneficiary shareholders should include at least 20 hectares.

## In accordance with the amendments to the Law of Georgia on the “Establishment and Management of Kolkheti Protected Areas”, the confluence of the River Rioni and Black Sea will be a part of the Kolkheti National Park



As a result of the amendments to the Law, the area of Kolkheti National Park will increase by 671.5 ha and the total area will make up 44,980 ha (the land area will increase - by 196.5 ha and will include 29 229 ha, while the sea aquatory will increase by 475 ha and ultimately it will make up - 15 751 ha)

Kolkheti National Park has become particularly important since 2021, when it was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The confluence of the River Rioni and Black Sea to gain the status of a protected area is crucial for conservation of unique sturgeon species in Georgia, which are on the verge of extinction not only in Georgia but around the world

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