

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia Report 2020

Minister Davitashvili: “We have ensured an undisrupted supply for products. Amidst , none of Georgia’s regions have suffered from shortage”



The Government-initiated “Report to the citizens” format has hosted Mr Levan Davitashvili, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia to inform the public on the Ministry’s work throughout 2020.

“Firstly, I shall touch upon on response actions to the hardships of turmoil. Under auspices of the Interagency Coordination Council under the Prime Minister, we have been delegated to undertake oversight over management of product storage, logistics and transportation amidst the crisis of .

Minister Davitashvili: “The pandemic turmoil has generated negative vibes, which could have disrupted agricultural production in Georgia. Our comprehensive efforts have supported farmers through an accurate anti-crisis plan of agriculture with an accumulated 300 million GEL”

Aspired by social responsibility, we have been providing meaningful support to the citizens, thus developing several packages of assistance.

- Firstly – the new state program entailing subsidizing agricultural goods and cultivation fees. More than 172, 000 farmers have benefited from the program. Funding assigned to subsidizing efforts exceeds 30 million GEL and more than 24, 3 million GEL has already been activated at retail stores. Accrual of agro-points is underway;
- Secondly – assistance program of agro-diesel. Within the program, more than 123, 700 beneficiaries have received up to 32, 000 tonnes of agro-diesel discount cards. Farmers, who have already activated their discount cards – have saved a total amount exceeding 5, 2 million GEL;
- Thirdly, users have been fully exempted from their obligations to the Georgian Amelioration up to the year of 2020. The farmers will also be exempted from amelioration fees in case they receive irrigation and drainage at up to 10 hectares of land. A total number of 32, 122 beneficiaries have accepted the State subsidies. Savings of the beneficiaries has amounted to 3, 599 982 GEL.

We have successfully ensured an undisrupted supply of products and despite turmoil – none of Georgia’s regions have suffered from shortage of products.

The subsidizing programs had also been enacted upon need and promptly.

Public diners, small and large markets have been under consistent provision of requirements to be adhered while operating amid . 8703 subjects have been instructed and monitored. The National Food Agency has developed safety instructions for permitting agrarian markets to operate. 80 units of machinery from the Ministry have complemented disinfection efforts, which also span to the border checkpoints. The National Food Agency has recommended and supervised large-scale rehabilitation and cleaning efforts spanning across nearly 90 agrarian markets. Our colleagues from the Department of Environmental Supervision have joined forces with law enforcement agencies to ensure protection of safety norms. Oversight over the new regulations of safety norms have been undertaken at more than 500 establishments.

Undisrupted provision of spring activities in the regions has been complemented. Consistent conduct of seasonal activities has been highly important, due to agro-timelines and peculiarities of the field, aiming at eradicating any risks in the lead up to harvest.





Programs implemented by the Rural Development Agency



The most important activity of the Rural Development Agency is to promote the development of the private sector, to achieve which the incentive programs and projects are implemented in all components of the agricultural value chain.

Complex measures were taken during 2020 to reduce the economic damage caused by in the agricultural sector.

Under the State program of stimulation of agricultural landowners, more than 172,000 farmers have already been credited with agro-scores. The amount of the accrued subsidy exceeds 30 million GEL, of which more than 24.3 million GEL has already been cashed in specialized trade facilities. Accrual of agro-scores continues.

Under the Agro-diesel promotion program, more than 123,700 beneficiaries received agro-diesel discount cards for up to 32,000 tons of diesel. Farmers who have already cashed in discount cards in total have saved more than GEL 5.2 million.

The State program for subsidizing wheat imports has been announced. As a result, as of May 20, 2020, six companies imported 40,000 tons of whole wheat and first-grade wheat.

The State program for maintaining prices for 9 primary consumption food products was developed, in order to insure the risk of price increase on basic food products. Up to 1.2 million GEL was spent on 3,181 tons of products under the program.

In November 2020, **State flour subsidy program was launched** to maintain the retail price of mass produced bread.

Within the framework of the State program on modernization of the dairy sector and market access, 369 applications were approved from Imereti, Kakheti, Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneti, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions, with state co-financing amounting to GEL 22 million.

387 beneficiaries are involved in the **Agro-production promotion program**, including 252 beneficiaries, who were funded by 50% of the cost of agricultural machinery, and the applications of 135 beneficiaries were approved for the purchase and installation of fixed assets for the arrangement and modernization of the greenhouse, as well as for the purchase and installation of an irrigation system for annual crops.

With the help of Preferential Agrocredit program, it was possible to mobilize more than 300 million GEL in various fields of agriculture; 6,144 loans worth 372,086,077 GEL were issued during the current year, the co-financing of the Agency was 64,241,572 GEL. Among them, under the anti-crisis plan, the state will fully cover the 6-month interest rate to finance the current costs of growing annual crops. 2,893 agro-loans were issued, the total amount of the loan exceeds 57 million GEL, including the co-financing of interest by the Agency, which exceeds 4.7 million GEL.

In 2020, the area covered by the Agro-insurance program is increased by 31% compared to 2019, which exceeds 18,000 ha. 17,532 policies were issued under the program. The amount of the subsidy of the Agency exceeds 8 million GEL.

6 processing and 10 storage enterprises were financed within the framework of The Co-financing project of processing and storage enterprises, the total investment cost exceeds 19 million GEL.

In 2020, new perennial gardens were planted on more than 2,000 hectares within the scopes of the program Plant the Future; total amount of state co-financing exceeds 20 million GEL.

Within the framework of The Program Georgian Tea, 168 ha of wild tea plantation was rehabilitated, the total investment is 419,192 GEL, including state co-financing is 293,434 GEL.

73 applications were co-financed under The Agricultural Machinery Co-financing Program, with a total investment of GEL 9,255,363, including GEL 3,983,737 in state co-financing.

115 projects were funded under The Market Access and Modernization (AMMAR) program with a total investment of GEL 6,225,823, including state co-financing of GEL 2,489,465.

39 projects were funded under The Young Entrepreneur Program, with a total investment of GEL 4,525,643, including state co-financing of GEL 1,710,833.

10 projects have been funded under The Rural Development Program (UNDP); the total investment is 1,661,550 GEL, including funding amounting to 1,198,608 GEL.

The state program of technical assistance for the beneficiaries of the Rural Development Agency (RDA) has been launched. 30 contracts were signed. Program beneficiaries will receive co-financing for the introduction and branding of international food safety management systems / standards.

More than 49 thousand tons of non-standard apples have been processed by 14 companies involved in The State program to promote the sale of non-standard apples. As a result, farmers earned more than 11 million GEL.

In 2020, new legislation was enacted to further regulate organizational and legal issues related to The Activities of Agricultural Cooperatives. Programs to support agricultural cooperatives continue. As of today, 1,025 cooperatives with agricultural status are registered, comprising 10,734 shareholders.

27,800 consultations on sectoral issues and state support programs were provided by the Municipal representatives of the Regional Information-Consulting Services of the Rural Development Agency, the meetings were held in more than 700 villages.



National Wine Agency



Global recognition of Georgian wine

Wine, produced with Georgian technology, was added into the special wines' list of International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV). This appeared to be one of the most remarkable events in Georgian wine sector, throughout 2020.

Decision of adding wine, produced with extended maceration on dregs, was made by The General Assembly of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), on 26 November of 2020.

So far, there were 7 types of wine in OIV special list: sparkling wines, carbonated wines, fortified wines, liqueur wines, sweet wines with residual sugar derived from grapes, 'icewine', flor or film wines. Georgian amber wines have become the 8th category of wine to be added to the International Organisation for Vine and Wine (OIV) list.

Popularisation of Georgian wine

In order to increase potential of Georgian wine export to international strategic markets, PR and marketing campaign was held in digital format by using various online platforms, social network and online wine-tastings. Successful TV and radio channels, online wine-shops and mobile applications were used to launch the advertising campaign of Georgian wine. Web and social pages were created to maintain constant awareness of consumers.

Within "the program of supporting small wineries" who suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic, about 1500 bottle of wine samples from hundreds of winemakers were sent to different countries for tastings, throughout the world.

As a result of the campaign, National Wine Agency maintains export growth on strategic markets (USA, Poland, UK, Japan, etc.).

Vintage (Rtveli) 2020

During COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, one of the main challenges was harvest of 2020. Despite existing environment, Georgian government made decision to subsidise Rtveli 2020. Alongside with that, government endured purchasing of grape on which there was no more demand from the private sector.

atan 280 tones of grape, which appears to be record number throughout last 30 years. About 25 thousand winegrowers took part in the process and received about 310 million GEL, in total.

Georgian wine quality

In order to produce high qualified wine, competitive on international market, 2020 embraced certain basic amendments in a following order: determining the lists of procedures, materials and substances that may be permitted in winemaking practice" and "determining the lists of procedures, materials and substances that may be permitted in production of alcoholic beverages of grape origin".

Amendments imply balance of various parameters, which are important for showing falsification.

2020 Enriches protected designations of origin with four more Georgian wines

The 2020 has been a successful year in viticulture and winemaking toward shaping protected designations of origin (PDO) of Georgian wine. Four more wines were added to the PDOs registered in Georgia: "Salkhino Ojaleshi", "Akhmeta", "Tsarapi" and "Akhoebi". Given statement is one of the main indicators of the diversity and uniqueness of Georgian viticulture and at the same time, has significant effect on popularization and export growth of Georgian wine.

The National Intellectual Property Center of Georgia "Sakpatenti" entails 24 PDOs: "Kindzmarauli", "Manavi", "Kakheti", "Napareuli", "Teliani", "Mukuzani", "Tsinandali", "Akhasheni", "Gurjaani", "Khvanchkara", "Ateni", "Sviri", "Vazisubani", "Kardenakhi", "Tibaani", "Tvishi", "Kvareli", "Kotekhi", "Khashmi Saperavi", "Bolnisi", "Salkhino Ojaleshi", "Akhmeta", "Starapi" and "Akhoebi".



National Food Agency



In spite of the situation brought about by Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), the National Food Agency administers, without any delays, measures aimed at ensuring provision of safe food, animal health and plant protection.

To make sure that food safety requirements are met and consumer interests are protected, following has been accomplished this year:

- 19 912 official control measures (inspections, documentary checks, surveillance, sample testing on various parameters) carried out; 2 246 administrative violations identified;
- Within the scope of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) Agreement, 23 normative acts approximated with EU legislation in 2020;
- EU Commission has positively evaluated official control system in Georgia and has added the state to the list of third countries authorized to export petfood (dog food, cat food) to EU;
- Implementation of modern safety standards in the internal market and increase of export potential of agricultural products shall once more represent a priority for 2021.

With the aim of ensuring animal health and sustain reliable conditions in Georgia, following has been performed:

- 4 110 505 veterinary manipulations (vaccinations, re-vaccinations, seromonitoring), including at zones quarantined due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19);
- 571 356 large and small ruminants identified (The Animal Identification-Registration Program is undertaken with the financial and technical support of UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO));
- 799 017 animals treated against external parasites at veterinary surveillance points;
- Animal disease monitoring and vaccination for diseases designated within the scope of the official programme shall continue vigorously in 2021.

To protect agricultural crops from pests and maintain harvest, following measures have been enacted:

- Up to 325 700 ha of area treated (through thermal and cold fogging) and 6000 monitoring systems and 107 000 pheromones ("attract-and-kill" stations) installed in 37 municipalities of Western Georgia against the BMSB (These measures against BMSB have been enacted with the support and under recommendations of United States Agency for International Development (USAID));
- Areas treated against beet webworm, fall webworm moth, Italian locust and mosquitoes in Eastern and Western Georgia, 102 790 ha in total;
- Within the scope of pesticide and agrochemical quality control, 148 violations of sale rules identified.
- Measures against and monitoring of BMSB and other pest organisms shall continue in 2021.

Concurrent with core its activities, the Agency has also been engaged in preventive measures against the spread of Novel Coronavirus:

- Given the situation arising from the onset of Novel Coronavirus, mass scale rehabilitation and cleaning activities were organized at up to 90 agricultural markets, under Agency recommendations and supervision;
- The National Food Agency was involved in the administration of preventive and disinfection measures against COVID-19 at quarantine zones, border inspection points and cities in general, utilizing up to 80 specialized vehicles.
- Agency specialists were actively engaged with healthcare experts in drafting recommendations for public catering venues in order to prevent the spread of Novel Coronavirus.
- Agency specialists, with Labour Inspection, undertake monitoring and issue recommendations to business operators, concerning both virus prevention and food safety.
- During the state of emergency, information was provided to 5520 venues (public catering venues, markets, etc.), which were also re-inspected.
- Agency inspectors continuously monitor prices for essential food products at sale venues.



The LEPL Georgian Amelioration



The regulation of amelioration systems is significantly developing the agricultural sector

34,600 subscribers were exempted from the 2020 tax of amelioration services. The savings amounted to 3,847,330 GEL

“Georgian Amelioration Ltd, under the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, is carrying out large-scale rehabilitation works of amelioration infrastructure in order to increase the fund of water-supplied and drained agricultural lands”, - Said the Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Levan Davitashvili, while presenting the annual report of the Ministry.

The anti-crisis agricultural plan “Care for Rural and Farmers”, developed to mitigate the economic damage caused by the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) in Georgia, provides significant benefits in terms of amelioration,” - said the Minister of Environment protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Levan Davitashvili, at the annual report submission event of the ministry. According to the report of the Minister, farmers receiving irrigation and drainage services will be exempted from the 2020 amelioration services tax on up to 10 hectares of land area. As of today, 34,600 subscribers have benefited from the established state benefit. Beneficiaries’ savings amounted to 3,847,330 GEL.

“Since 2012, significant funds have been spent from the budget for the restoration- rehabilitation of amelioration infrastructure, and as a result, 201 thousand hectares of area have been ameliorated. This means that, in fact, a new life has returned to the land. Amelioration works are carried out intensively during the winter to get ready for the season.

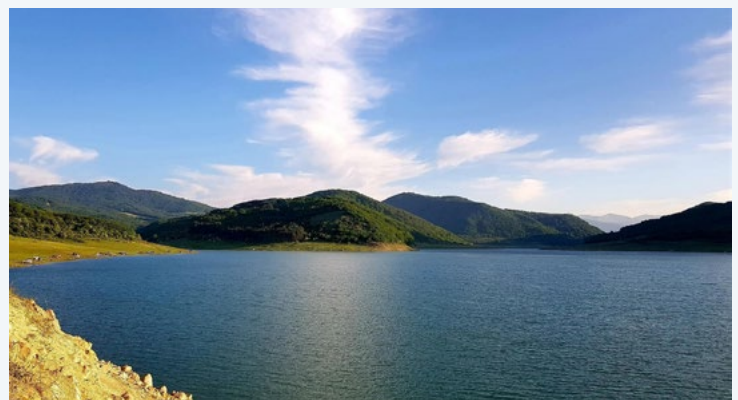
“Also, within the framework of the anti-crisis plan of agriculture, the debt of nearly 8 million GEL to the amelioration of Georgia, which had been accumulated until 2020, was fully written off to 42 thousand farmers,” - said Levan Davitashvili.

By 2012, the irrigated area in Georgia was about 45 thousand hectares, and the drained area was 14 thousand hectares. As a result of measures taken in recent years, we have tripled the number of irrigated areas in eastern Georgia. As for western Georgia, the number of drained areas has almost tripled,” - said Levan Davitashvili.

According to the 2020 report of the Ministry, amelioration of Georgia has implemented 36 rehabilitation projects of amelioration infrastructure through the rehabilitation program. In the framework of rehabilitation, 97 km of irrigation and 76 km of drainage canals were cleaned / repaired, 2 headworks were built, while through the operation program 1,995 km of canals were cleaned and repaired and 3,495 units of different types of hydraulic structures were repaired.

In 2020, irrigation water was supplied to the villages, where agricultural lands plots had not been irrigated for 2-3 decades.

“If we do not create amelioration infrastructure, we will not be able to maintain soil fertility and increase production. “Our plans to cultivate perennial crops will be in vain, because without water, in the modern reality, we will not be able to produce competitive agricultural products,” - said Levan Davitashvili.





The LEPL – State Laboratory of Agriculture (SLA)



The LEPL – State Laboratory of Agriculture (SLA) is an international level laboratory under the administration of Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, responsible for performance of significant functions.

Laboratory work is conducted in three main directions:

- Diagnostics of animal diseases;
- Food testing;
- Diagnostics of plant pests.

Throughout Georgia laboratory network encompasses 13 laboratories holding international ISO 17025 accreditation and 9001:2015 QMS system

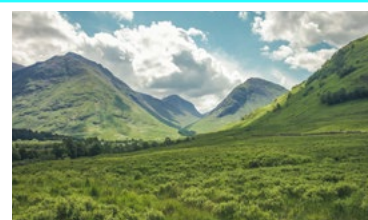
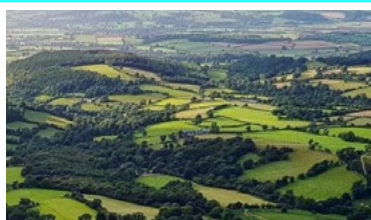
According to 2020 data:

- LEPL State Laboratory of Agriculture was successfully accredited, satisfying Georgian state SST standard and ISO 17025:2017/2018 standard
- 62 new accredited test methods were implemented at the laboratory;
- Laboratory employees successfully passed international qualification tests;
- 306 477 samples received and 352 870 tests performed at the laboratory

For detailed information on services and fees at the laboratory please visit laboratory webpage: <http://sla.gov.ge/Ge/Tariffs>



LEPL National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring



National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring – Challenges and Solutions

Land is an exhaustible resource of special importance, having the greatest economic, social and cultural values. Consequently, rational use and smart management of the land fund is under the priorities of the state. In order to solve these tasks, the new National Agency For Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring was created in 2020 under the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, therefore, ensuring the basis for initiating the implementation of state policy for sustainable land management. The institution development process took place throughout the year, it is being almost finalized and the agency will start fulfilling its' rights and obligations from 2021.

The powers of the agency are to: conduct inventory of agricultural land

resources and create a complete database, prepare thematic maps related to land use, participate in the establishment of administrative-territorial borders, as well as development and implementation of state policy for sustainable management of agricultural lands; participation in the planning and implementation of activities to fight against desertification and land degradation, and to restore soil fertility, including carrying out activities related to the management of windbreaks (shelter belts). The agency is also authorized to receive and review applications concerning investment plans related to privately owned plots of agricultural land and supervise the implementation processes that should support the rational development of agricultural production and smart planning for farmers and agricultural companies. In addition, the agency will be compiling the land balance to reflect any quantitative and qualitative changes of the reporting year related to designated purposes of land plots, agricultural land categories, agricultural lands, tenure and use, including the entire state land fund.

The new agency is expected to significantly contribute to the development of the land market, agricultural sectors and rural development in general.



Agricultural Scientific - Research Center



Scientific potential of Georgia pursued and empowered

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Levan Davitashvili, discussed the importance of using the scientific potential in agriculture and the measures taken in this direction during the presentation of the annual report of 2020.

Up to 80 new varieties have been added to the collection this year with the purpose to find, restore, conserve and research the gene pool of the rare grapevine and fruit varieties. At present, up to 450 Georgian, more than 350 introduced and more than 400 perennial varieties of cultures are retrieved and protected.

The results of the research obtained from the collections cultivated in different agro-climatic zones will significantly help the farmers in the selection of crops and specific varieties and in proper implementation of agro-technical measures.

The maintenance of animal genetic resources and the management of a breeding system and evaluation system's establishment works have been implemented, which will form the basis for the expansion of livestock incentive projects in the private sector.

Levan Davitashvili spoke about the importance of introducing a certification system for seeds and planting material in accordance with international standards in Georgia and the strengthening of nurseries and support of farmers in this regard. The widely implementation of the system will ensure the market with healthy, quality and with varietal purity of the seed and planting material of agricultural crops, the increase of competitiveness, the substitution of import and the creation of export opportunities.

The Minister, in the framework of the Agricultural Land Inventory Program, focused on the joint work of the Soil Fertility Research Division of the Scientific-Research Center with NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration, USA), which aims to study land degradation based on the analysis of images obtained from artificial satellites.

The Minister also spoke about ongoing infrastructure projects. Among them is the arrangement of a scientific-research space for viticulture and grape products, which is being carried out on the basis of Jigaura base of the Scientific-Research Center, where together with the laboratory, conference, office and tasting spaces, a vineyard and wine museum corner, a cellar and an enoteca will be arranged.

The arrangement of level II biological laboratory in Anaseuli has been completed.

In 2020, about 1,500 farmers were trained to raise the level of knowledge of farmers. A total of 45, including 18 online trainings, were conducted, more than 800 telephone consultation and recommendation were provided. In order to raise the farmers' awareness a various thematic brochures, books and monographs have been published.





LEPL National Environmental Agency



The National Environmental Agency carries out ambient air, water, and soil surveys, monitoring of hydrometeorological and geological events, weather and climate observations, as well as Black Sea biodiversity surveys.

GFCM, for the first time in the Georgian maritime space, large-scale Black Sea Rapana surveys were launched.

During 2020, large - scale ambient air surveys have been actively accomplished by the Agency

In 2020, the studies of fir cone (*Abies nordmanniana*) stocks were carried out using modern technologies and methods, based on which it is planned to issue new, long-term (10 years) licenses from 2022 on the most acceptable terms for the state. Based on these studies, accurate data on fir cone stocks in Racha-Lechkhumi and Samtskhe-Javakheti will be determined not only amid the forest quarters and districts, but also forest litters.

The project “Improving Air Quality Management Capabilities” was completed, within the framework of which an Air Quality Monitoring Network Development Plan (Roadmap) was developed, including the identification of the number and locations of stations and the assessment of resources needed for network development, operation, and maintenance.

During 2020, fieldworks have been actively conducted with the support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP Georgia), which, among other activities, provides assessment of natural geological and hydrometeorological hazards, hazards and risk zone mapping and improvement of the early warning systems on the territory of Georgia.

Meteorological Radar was put into operation in Kutaisi this year,

which, within a radius of about 250 km from Kutaisi, in the operational mode, transmits data on the types of clouds, their intensity, movement, direction, speed, and other physical parameters. This radar enables to determine the amount and intensity of expected precipitation in almost the entire territory of western Georgia, which ensures the timely delivery of information on floods and avalanches caused by them to the relevant authorities.

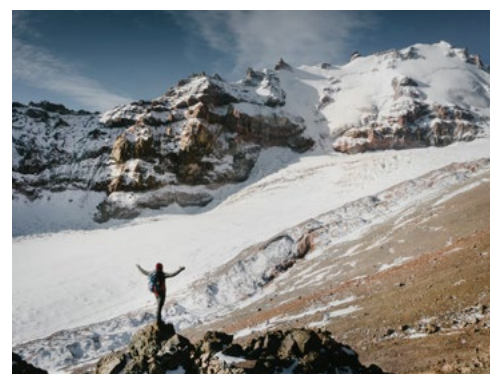
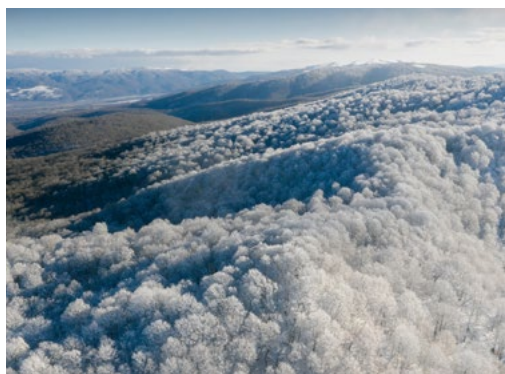
In 2020, the experts of the Agency prepared and published information newsletters on environmental pollution, geological processes, quantitative and qualitative characteristics of groundwater.

2020 was an important year for Black Sea research. With the support of FAO/GFCM and the active involvement of foreign experts, the issue of quotas for the allowable catch of commercial fish resources in the Georgian maritime space for 2020-2021 has been successfully addressed. Besides, with the support of FAO/





LEPL Agency Of Protected Areas



In 2020, the protected areas reported record increase with 122,374 hectares

One of the priorities of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia is the creation / establishment, expansion and development of protected areas in accordance with international best practices.

In 2020, the area of protected areas increased by 122 374 hectares and today it reports 793 351 hectares, which is 11.38% of the country territory. In 2020, 3 new protected areas were created and one was expanded.

Year of 2020 was quite important in terms of conservation and reintroduction projects. With the support of World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Gazelle Population Restoration Project in Vashlovani Protected Areas is successfully underway – the number of gazelles is growing steadily and currently amounts to 150 individuals. Telemetric monitoring of East Caucasian Tur has been successfully introduced in Lagodekhi protected areas. The project is implemented by the non-governmental organization NACRES with the financial support of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) and Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS).

In Ajameti Managed Reserve, on an area of about 56 hectares the project of Imeretian Oak Restoration, has been underway since 2016. Imeretian Oak is included in the “Red List” of Georgia.

The development or updates of management plans is still in process in 2020. Management Plan for Algeti National Park has been elaborated, while the renewal of 7 protected area management plans has been undertaken. At present, 13 from 20 territorial administrations are managed in accordance with the management plans.

With the purpose of improving protection and monitoring of protected areas, modern SMART technologies of patrolling and biomonitoring are being introduced.

The pest control measures should be also noted, in scope of which the

special sprays against boxwood allura were utilized in Babaneuri Strict Nature Reserve, in Kintrishi Protected Areas and in Kolkheti National Park. Pheromone traps were used in the coniferous forests of Nedzvi Managed Reserve, Borjomi-Kharagauli, Kazbegi and Pshav-Khevsureti National Parks. Chestnut blade research has been started in Machakhe-la National Park with the financial support of GEF/UNDP project.

The cost of the grant projects’ portfolio of the Agency of Protected Areas reaches an unprecedented GEL 54 million

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the Agency of Protected Areas have been actively working for years to strengthen international support for protected areas, both in terms of working with existing partners and attracting new ones. For the development of Georgia’s protected areas, it is important to have financial support, as well as to share the best international experience and introduce it in Georgia.

The cost of the Grant Projects’ portfolio is unprecedentedly high, reaching GEL 54 million in the current period, out of which approximately GEL 14 million was earmarked for 2020. It’s noteworthy that most of these projects are developed through the support of the following international organizations: KFW, Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Government of Sweden, European Union (EU), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Municipal Development Fund (MDF), World Bank, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Czech Development Agency (CzDA).

From the projects implemented in 2020, a grant of GEL 4 200 000 received to overcome the challenges posed by the new coronavirus Covid-19 is particularly important. The construction of Pshav-Khevsureti Visitor Center in Shatili, which started this year and involves an



LEPL Agency Of Protected Areas



investment of up to GEL 4 000 000, is also worth noting. Rehabilitation of a public square in Manglisi (investment about GEL 760 000) was completed; arrangement of trails in Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, Nedzvi Managed Reserve are also finalized; trails in Abastumani as well as in Algeti National Park are at the final stage of completion (investment GEL 1 million); on the other hand, another ecotourism attraction - „Adventurous Rope Park” was built in Kolkheti National Park (budget GEL 285 000).

According to the plans, several important projects are intended to be launched in 2021, with a total cost of up to GEL 60 million. The grants are aimed at strengthening conservation measures, the creation of new protected areas and the development of ecotourism. Among these projects is also Okrojanashvili Cave Development Project, for which GEL 1 995 000 has been allocated. A grant of approximately GEL 3 990 000 will be mobilized in the budget of the Agency to finance the operational costs.

Up to GEL 7 million investment is being implemented at protected areas of Georgia in 2020 for the development of ecotourism

The Agency for Protected Areas, in accordance with the policy developed by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, continues to actively develop ecotourism despite caused by

Covid-19.

There are about 30 ecotourism ongoing projects in 2020 at protected areas of Georgia with the total investment of up to GEL 7 000 000. The support of international partner organizations in the implementation of these projects is particularly appreciated.

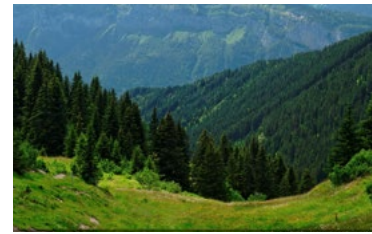
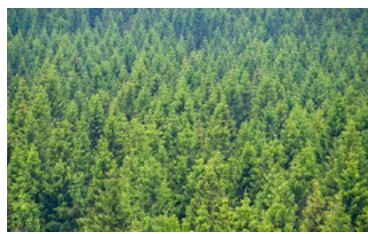
The network of up to 200 km of hiking trails were built, rehabilitated and/or at the final stage of completion in Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park (Nedzvi Managed Reserve and Abastumani), Sataplia, Ajameti Managed Reserve, Algeti National Park. Ecotourism attraction “Adventurous Rope Park” was arranged in Kolkheti National Park. The visitor center of international standards worth up to GEL 4 million is under construction in Pshav-Khevsureti National Park in Shatili.

Against the backdrop of the challenges derived from , record amount of investment projects worth more than GEL 89 million are being implemented at Georgia’s protected areas. Among them is investment at Tsal-ka (former Dashbashi) Canyon, which is the first private international investment at protected areas of Georgia.

The successful implementation of these projects will significantly contribute to the attraction of tourist flows at protected areas after the end of , and will provide additional economic benefit to the local population.



LEPL National Forestry Agency



The National Forestry Agency is the main forest management body in the country. The Agency manages about 2 million hectares of the country's forest fund. The Agency operates in 9 regions of the country (except Adjara) through regional forestry services. Priorities of the National Forestry Agency are to improve the sanitary condition of forests, forest inventory, and preparation of management plans, as well as multi-purpose forest use and increased access to legal timber. Priority directions for 2020 were - development of forest infrastructure; strengthening the management system of the National Forestry Agency; inventory of forest management level and restoration-rehabilitation program of chestnut groves.

Development of forest infrastructure

In order to facilitate the effective enforcement of the new Forest Code, to facilitate access to timber resources for the population and the private sector, and to develop forestry, at the initiative of the Ministry, in almost all regions of the country (Imereti, Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Kakheti, Shida Kartli) 26 "business yards" was arranged, which facilitates the provision of all forest-related information and services. As it is known, the National Forestry Agency is changing the practice of timber production. Social logging will be phased out, the Agency will organize timber production, sorting, and warehousing in "business yards". This change will make it easier for the population and the private sector to purchase and transport timber at the desired time.

Strengthening of the management system of the National Forestry Agency

A strong forest management body and a well-functioning institutional system are essential for the development of a sustainable forest management system and the effective enforcement of the Forest Code. Accordingly, the National Forestry Agency Development Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2026 were prepared in 2020; in order to fully implement financial monitoring, the first agreement between the Agency and the Ministry on the provision of services under the budget program (SLA) was signed; the Memorandum of

Understanding was signed between the National Forestry Agency and the CIDA / Global Georgia Network on the introduction of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles. By preparing a domestic policy document, the Forestry Agency will be the first public agency in Georgia to introduce such governance tools

Inventory of forest management level

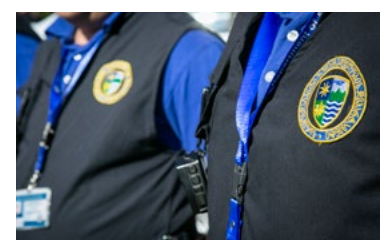
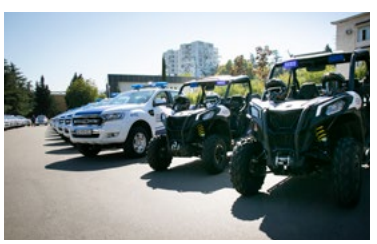
Forest inventory is a prerequisite for sustainable forest management, through which the quantitative and qualitative indicators of forests are assessed and all types of forestry agricultural activities are planned. It has a ten-year audit period. In 2020, forest inventory and a 10-year management plan were carried out on an area of more than 150,000 hectares, which is almost double the annual figures of previous years. It should be noted that the inventory of the forest areas of Akhmeta and Dedoplistskaro-Sighnaghi was carried out by young foresters, who, after passing the training program of the National Forestry Agency in 2019-2020, were employed in fieldworks. Within the framework of the training program, 21 forester-taxators were trained in 2020, which is higher than those interested in previous years.

Chestnut groves restoration - rehabilitation program

For the first time since the last century in Georgia, after the detection of chestnut disease, complete and consistent scientific and forestry measures have been carried out in connection with the use of biological methods in the fight against the disease. After the detection of the disease, the National Forestry Agency in 2020 for the first time carried out the introduction of hypovirulent stams in a specially selected area (43 hectares) of the Boslevi forestry, the Zestafoni forest area, where, after sanitary felling, an experimental site was specially allocated. The strain has been introduced into about 200 chestnut trees. Over the next years, descriptive work, detailed observation, and monitoring will be carried out. The biological method of control will contribute to the improvement of diseased chestnut groves, which for many years remained a problem both in Georgia and worldwide.



The State Sub - Agency Department Of Environmental Supervision



Supervision has been introduced modern electronic monitoring systems

In 2020, there were revealed 6,405 cases of violation in the field of environmental legislation.

In 2020, the staff (Environmental Patrolling and Rapid Response Division) of the Department of Environmental Supervision identified 6,405 cases of violations of environmental legislation, from here including 367 cases containing signs of a criminal offense. The total amount of fines imposed for violations was GEL 1,602,800; in addition the amount of damage to the environment was GEL 3,758,345.

In 2020, there were carried out 1547 inspections of regulated enterprises. Including here 46 - inspections of fishing vessels from Georgian ports in order to determine compliance with environmental requirements. The department has been submitted administrative correspondence to the regulated entities, including the large air pollutants and enterprises in Rustavi and Poti cities.

The process of inspecting plastic bag manufacturers has taken on a larger scale to ensure that plastic bags do not fall into the retail chain in order to reduce environmental pollution. In 2020, 2,142,450 units of plastic bags have been sealed and confiscated as a result of inspections and laboratory research from plastic bags manufacturing companies.

In 2020, there were carried out 20 inspections were in accordance with the Law of Georgia on "Living Genetically Modified Organisms". It should be noted that as a result of the inspections, the fact of introduction of genetically modified living organism into the environment was not revealed.

Fuel quality research is ongoing process, and as a result of these measures, the consumption of non-conditioned fuel will be minimized, which in itself reduces the emission of harmful substances into the ambient air. By 2020, there were taken 344 samples of fuel from the reservoirs of 280 petrol stations across the country. In total, only 33 samples of diesel and gasoline failed to meet the norms required by the law.

The operation of the 24-hour hotline is important for the efficient operation of the department. In 2020, 2,592 reports were received on the hotline (153) about alleged environmental violations. The Department responds to each notification and takes the measures in accordance by law.

Since July 1, 2020, the Department of Environmental Supervision (DES)

has purchased 2 months service from a French company (CLS) (access to satellite electronic vessel monitoring system (VMS) and training on its use). Since 1986, CLS has an experience in collecting and controlling of fishing data through a satellite electronic monitoring system. At the same time, mentioned above service is compatible with the EU standards. CLS cooperates not only with the countries (EU member states and other countries), as well as with international organizations. The department's inspectors, who carry out international fishing monitoring, have been trained as part of the donor organization's EU TAIEX technical assistance program.

The Draft Law on Environmental Liability will be an important basis for the prevention of environmental violations

In 2020, the Parliament of Georgia pre-adopted the draft law "On Environmental Responsibility", which was prepared in accordance with the Georgia-EU Association Agreement with the active participation of the Department of Environmental Supervision and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

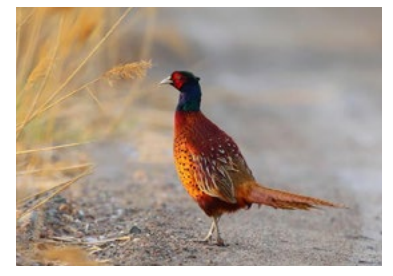
The purpose of the bill is to introduce an effective, best practice-based methodology for restoring the environment instead of monetary compensation for significant damage to the environment, and to implement measures to prevent and mitigate the damage on the environment.

The regulations provided for in the Draft Law on Environmental Liability are based on the - "polluter pays principle" - in case of damage to the environment; person is obliged to compensate the damage to the environment. The person causing the damage will be obliged to take the corrective measures himself/herself. The main goal of the new approach is to prevent and eliminate damage to the environment. The bill provides a solid legal basis not only for large-scale companies, also for all enterprises to take appropriate mediation measures in the event of significant environmental damage and to provide solid financial guarantees that, if the damage occurs, they will have adequate short-term period to prevent it.

After the approval of the package of changes in the legislature in the third reading, adequate sanctions will be established which are essential for the prevention of environmental violations.



LEPL Agency Of Wildlife



National Agency for Wildlife is actively working to restore flora and fauna, breed endemic and rare species of the Caucasus and restore the population

The National Agency for Wildlife of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture works on the restoration of the flora and fauna, endemic and rare species of Georgia, as well as registration and monitoring of local species and their habitats.

The National Agency for Wildlife is implementing the project to breed river trout-the species of the “Georgian Red List”. Stream or river trout were included in the “Red List” in 2006, being assigned a vulnerable category. Such trend is observed in many European countries, due to which the population is artificially multiplied and rivers are fished. Without such measure, the species in the Georgian rivers will be lost over time. That is why the Wildlife Agency is working to breed different populations of stream trout and then fish the rivers. 160 m2 building was constructed in the river trout farms where trout incubator and whitebait ponds are located. The incubator will allow the agency to have more than 500,000 whitebaits.

In 2020, the Wildlife Agency has produced 80,000 pieces of stream trout whitebaits. In order to restore it in nature, it fished with more than 100,000 whitebaits in 5 locations of Georgia, including the rivers of protected areas. The released fish are monitored with photo and video traps.

The Wildlife Agency is actively working to breed local wild birds- rock partridge, common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), Western Swamphen and grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) and to restore their populations in the wild.

In 2020, common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) farm was organized in the village of Nojikhevi, Khobi Municipality. The farm includes nature-integrated aviaries, incubator-hatchery buildings and an administrative building. Corn grain was sown on 8 hectares of area this year for ensuring food base for the farm. One of the main goals of the farm is to breed common pheasants and release them into the wild. The Wildlife Agency has released 200 common pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) and 100 rock partridges in the wild. In 2021, 500 rock partridges and 500 common pheasants are planned to be released in the wild.

Furthermore, the National Agency for Wildlife is ensuring to breed the Georgian Red List, forest-forming and urban species plants, including Selkova (stone pillar), *Ostrya*, *Pistacia atlantica*, *Quercus macranthera* (highland oaks), *Buxus colchica*, forest chestnut and others.

Wildlife Agency is carrying out large - scale works for the restoration of Krtsanisi Forest Park

The Wildlife Agency of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture is working on the renovation and restoration of the Krtsanisi Forest Park. The existing unique flora and fauna are being preserved and the plants of the Red List species are being cultivated. The agency is carrying out measures to restore the infrastructure of the Kura floodplain and green cover in the forest park.

In order to protect the park from illegal logging and poaching, 150 hectares of Krtsanisi forest park area have been fenced.

Construction of a 100-kilowatt solar power plant in the forest park, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF, Kura 2, UNDP) has been completed. The generated electricity is intended for filling of the irrigation water pumping station, floodplain forest irrigation schemes, the existing 11 fishery ponds and lighting of roads and paths in the forest-park itself.

The irrigation water pumping station designed by the Wildlife Agency will be located in the forest park on the Kura River in the near future. Furthermore, the construction of the head office of the Wildlife Agency is underway in Krtsanisi Forest Park, which will be completed by the spring of 2021. The Wildlife Agency has arranged parking lot at the entrance of Krtsanisi Forest Park and placed security guard office.

As a result of the large-scale works performed by the Wildlife Agency, the park will regain its most important function. The forest park is a natural ecosystem of the Kura floodplain and a recreational space between Tbilisi and Rustavi, where one can move only by foot, bicycle or mini electric car. It is planned to construct conference hall of the “Green Council” and develop Dendro-park of Red List species in the forest park.



LEPL Environmental Information and Education Centre



The New Environmental and Agriculture Education Programs for Schools

Inspired by the aspirations to enhance environmental and agricultural education policies, the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) has elaborated a new program - “Environmental and Agriculture Education for Schools”, which aspires to cultivate fostering environmental and agricultural education at schools and primary level of an education arena. The program has been tailored to cover issues from both areas and has been adapted to be instructed to primary school pupils.

Moreover, the program has been empowered with a specially elaborated textbook “Environmental and Agriculture Education for Schools” for teachers of primary school stage.

The teachers’ textbook emphasizes on highlighting importance of environmental and agricultural components for the pupils and raising their awareness; nevertheless, it has been tailored to comply with the contemporary standards of education. Apart from theoretical content, the textbook has been enriched with practical elements and comprehensive tasks for empowering a pupil to be enlightened on environmental and agricultural matters, but also shape transferable skills, such as discussion, argumentation, critical thinking, expressing his/her opinion, maintaining a stance and etc.

The EIEC-developed textbook comes in full compliance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and has been harmonized with incumbent educational reforms and standards.

The textbook entails eight environmental and agricultural topics:

1. Sustainable development concept;
2. Protection of biological diversity;

3. Protection and sustainable management of water resources;
4. Protection of air from pollution;
5. Climate change and reducing natural threats;
6. Waste management;
7. Land management and striving against desertification;
8. Agriculture, product safety and quality.

The textbook has resulted from a comprehensive working process and has been complemented by several thematic experts, as well as meaningful liaison with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia; each and every feedback and recommendation of the Ministry’s structural units has been harmonized within the textbook. Teachers will be empowered with the respective publication to ensure instruction of priority areas entailed within unified teaching program, environmental protection and agricultural topics among these.

Upcoming steps have been inspired by aspiration to launch nationwide training of teachers and schools’ representatives to educate them on accurate integration of the textbook into educational processes. The textbook will be accessible for every school countrywide, thus resulting into equally accessible program on environmental and agricultural education topics at large schools, as well as every village of Georgia.

The Government of Georgia has set agricultural development, enhancement of environment, and fostering high-quality education as State priorities, thus, launching and fostering environmental and educational education program will translate into succeeding with supporting three priority areas in Georgia.



LEPL Environmental Information and Education Centre



Empowering Farmers

Empowering farmers serves as a fundamental precondition for an effective and sustainable agricultural development. The Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) actively complements capacity building of farmers through supporting agricultural education programming.

The EIEC has joined forces with the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency for conducting a nationwide project on empowering farmers through equipping them with training programs on wide-range of thematic, resulting into their capacity building.

Peculiar characteristics of each and every region have been scrutinized for elaborating strategic directions, which had been utilized as fundaments for shaping training programs for local farmers.

123 farmers in Kakheti have been educated on “modern technologies for harvesting topnotch, quality and sustainable grain”, which aspired to enable professionals to educate attendees on the importance of utilizing and applying modern technologies to cereals.

As part of an initiative, trainings were conducted in Samegrelo, Guria and Imereti municipalities, attended by nearly 286 farmers; sessions spanning across topics, such as hazelnut cultivating and caretaking technologies; professionals empowered attendees with knowledge and experience of agricultural technologies applied in hazelnut produc-

tion, enhancing caretaking efforts, harvesting and accommodating, as well as tackling pests.

Eight municipalities (Zestaponi, Tskaltubo, Chiatura, Sachkhere, Terjola, Tkibuli, Baghdati and Kharagauli) of the Imereti municipality enjoyed trainings on honey production and caring for bee families, which were also attended by nearly 160 local beekeepers. Attendees were familiarized with possibilities for curing bee illnesses, honey production and technological roadmap of caring for bee families and importance of planning farming.

Each of the trainings turned out to be vastly proactive and empowered farmers to pose questions and get feedback from a professional angle; sharing knowledge and experience will support successful and effective future endeavors in their work.

The EIEC aspires to ensure various events for capacity building of farmers and empowering the agricultural field from an individual, as well as systematic perspectives.