



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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**UNECE**

## Strengthening environmental assessment system in Georgia in line with the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment: SEA screening and scoping for the municipal spatial plans

16-17 May 2019

Tbilisi, Georgia

### TRAINING WORKSHOP REPORT

**EU4Environment**

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine

## Background

A two-day training on “Strengthening environmental assessment system in Georgia in line with the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment: SEA screening and scoping for the municipal spatial plans” was held on 16-17 May 2019 in Tbilisi, Georgia (see Annex 1. Training Agenda).



The training workshop was organized within substantive and technical assistance of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and with the funding mainly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and co-funding from the EU4Environment Action.

The training was focused on the efficient application of SEA in urban planning with a special emphasis on the SEA screening and scoping stages. According to the national legislation, Georgian municipalities are obliged to develop spatial plans, which require, prior to their adoption, carrying out a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) procedure. Because the Environmental Assessment Code of Georgia has come into force recently (in June 2018), the competent authorities and municipalities lack relevant experience on effective SEA application and enforcement of the Code on both - the national and local - levels.

For the practical application of SEA screening and scoping processes to spatial plans, a case of the Labarde Resort Regulation Development Plan (RDP), still a draft plan, was selected and used for the training.

The participants of the training represented the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA), mainly the Department of Environmental Assessment, the National Environmental Agency and other sectoral units of MEPA, including the Forestry and Biodiversity Department, Land Resources Division, Waste and Chemicals Management Department, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development and

Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI) the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoH), Tbilisi City Hall, mainly the Municipal Department of Environmental Protection, Municipal Transport Department, and Municipal Department of Urban Development. The representatives of other selected municipalities also attended the training including Poti, Mtskheta, Oni, Kutaisi, Martvili, Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri, as well as the representative of the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Adjara Autonomous Republic, and the Municipal Development Fund (MDF) of Georgia (see Annex 2. The List of Participants).



### **Opening session**

The training was opened by Mr. Giorgi Khanishvil, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, and Ms. Maia Bitadze, Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi. Mr. Jiří Preclik, Chargé d' Affaires, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Georgia and Mr. Alexandre Darras, Attaché, Sector Coordinator Connectivity, Energy, Environment and Climate Change, EU Delegation to Georgia also welcomed the participants.

After the opening session the participants were asked to introduce themselves and provide information about their expectations on the training. They were invited to indicate what urban development plans/spatial plans (if any) were being prepared, both at the national and municipal level, that can be future candidates for SEA.

Most of the participants' expectation was related to improving skills and knowledge on the practical application of SEA in their daily work. It was also reported that Mtskheta municipality had started the process of preparation of the Mtskheta spatial-territorial management plan, and other municipalities were planning to develop their spatial plans in the future.

### **Theoretical sessions of the training**

In general, the training was designed in the following way:

- to present SEA principles and procedures as defined by the UNECE Protocol on SEA and
- to share international experience and best practice examples of SEA application in different countries, including in several EU and UNECE Member States.

This part of the training was followed by the presentations on national requirements according to the Environmental Assessment Code of Georgia, with an emphasis given to the screening and scoping stages. At large, the presentations were delivered on the following aspects:

- SEA process, its purpose, main principles and steps as well as the role of planning, environmental and health authorities according to the UNECE Protocol on SEA;
- screening and scoping procedures, their purposes and expected outcomes, approaches and methods and the best practice examples of screening and scoping from selected countries;
- SEA in Georgia with focus on screening and scoping procedures and main responsibilities according to the Environmental Assessment Code of Georgia.

Presentations were delivered by Mr. Martin Smutny, UNECE international consultant on SEA, and Ms. Irma Melikishvili, UNECE national consultant.



Next, participants asked questions mainly concerning:

- practical aspects of the SEA application in screening and scoping procedures;
- the international practice of the SEA application.

Furthermore, there were raised questions related to the cases of uncertainties or the cases when provided information is not enough for decision-making. A number of the participants were interested in how the decisions are made in such cases in other countries, which have a long history of the SEA application. For example, what decision on screening should be made when not enough information is provided from the planning authority, and which screening criteria should be used?

## Practical sessions of the training



The training was organized in a way to enable its participants to work on practical examples of the screening and scoping procedures. In particular, the discussion was based on the real case of the Lebarde Resort and a hypothetical case of Amendments to a Municipal Spatial Plan of Tarukai Municipality. The participants were asked to work in pairs and explain their decision i.e. why the provided case is subject to SEA or not, and explain the decision to others.



Another practical case was related to scoping, which was also based on the real case of the Lebarde Resort. First, the national consultant presented background information related to a new urban development of the Lebarde Resort, including environmental conditions, and environmental and health risks. Later, the participants worked in four groups comprised of both national-level and local-level officials, and prepared a list of environmental and health issues to be considered in SEA (i.e. a scoping matrix). Each group introduced their results to others. Finally, UNECE consultants shared their views on the possible scope of SEA. Conclusions from the exercise were presented in the scoping matrix (see Annex 3. Resort Lebarde Scoping Matrix).



Mr. Martin Smutny continued the training session with a brief overview of the next steps of the SEA process and their practical aspects. Also, he moderated the concluding session of the training to identify:

- existing challenges for the SEA implementation in Georgia (in particular, at the municipal level);
- needs for the technical assistance on the applications of SEA in Georgia in line with the Protocol on SEA in 2019-2020 and beyond, including under the EU4Environment Action;
- key aspects to be addressed at the 2nd training workshop – quality control, monitoring.



The main challenges and needs identified by the participants to be addressed through the EU4 Environment Action with the technical assistance from the UNECE include but are not limited to:

- Update the existing guideline on SEA “Recommendations/Guidelines on Practical Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Georgia”;
- Support a SEA pilot – several options were mentioned including the Zugdidi Municipal Spatial Plan, and Mtskheta Municipal Spatial Plan (preparation is supported by UNESCO; however, the schedule with the deadline by the end of 2019 seems to be challenging for SEA application);
- Preparation of sectoral guidelines, for example, a guideline on SEA application for urban spatial plans, and/or in the energy and mining sectors;

- Preparation of quality control guidelines/procedures related to the environmental part as well as to the health part of SEA application;
- Development of multicriteria assessment guidelines for addressing health issues in SEA;
- Conduct an additional training workshop for municipalities on SEA application (representatives of 7 municipalities - out of a total of 75 municipalities in Georgia - attended this training workshop);
- Train consulting companies/practitioners on SEA application;
- Assist in the preparation of by-laws for the health part of SEA under the Environmental Assessment Code.



### **Summary and next steps:**

As a summary of the training, the following aspects need to be finalized from the side of the consultants:

- provide the participants with a link to the UNECE web page where the materials of the workshop are published;
- develop a scoring matrix for the Lebarde Resort case and send it to the participants.

MEPA shall coordinate with the participants and provide a unified list of possible other challenges and further needs they see relevant to be addressed by the EU4 Environment Action in 2019-2022. It should also provide a list of spatial plans subject to SEA and based on which a pilot example of the SEA application might be selected under the EU4 Environment Action. MEPA will further consider a request for the second workshop on SEA for municipal spatial plans with a focus on quality control and monitoring that could be conducted, inter alia, with the financial support from the Czech Republic.

### **Meeting evaluation by the participants**

The training was attended by 52 participants. Twenty-four evaluation forms were submitted. However, not all participants chose to respond to all questions.

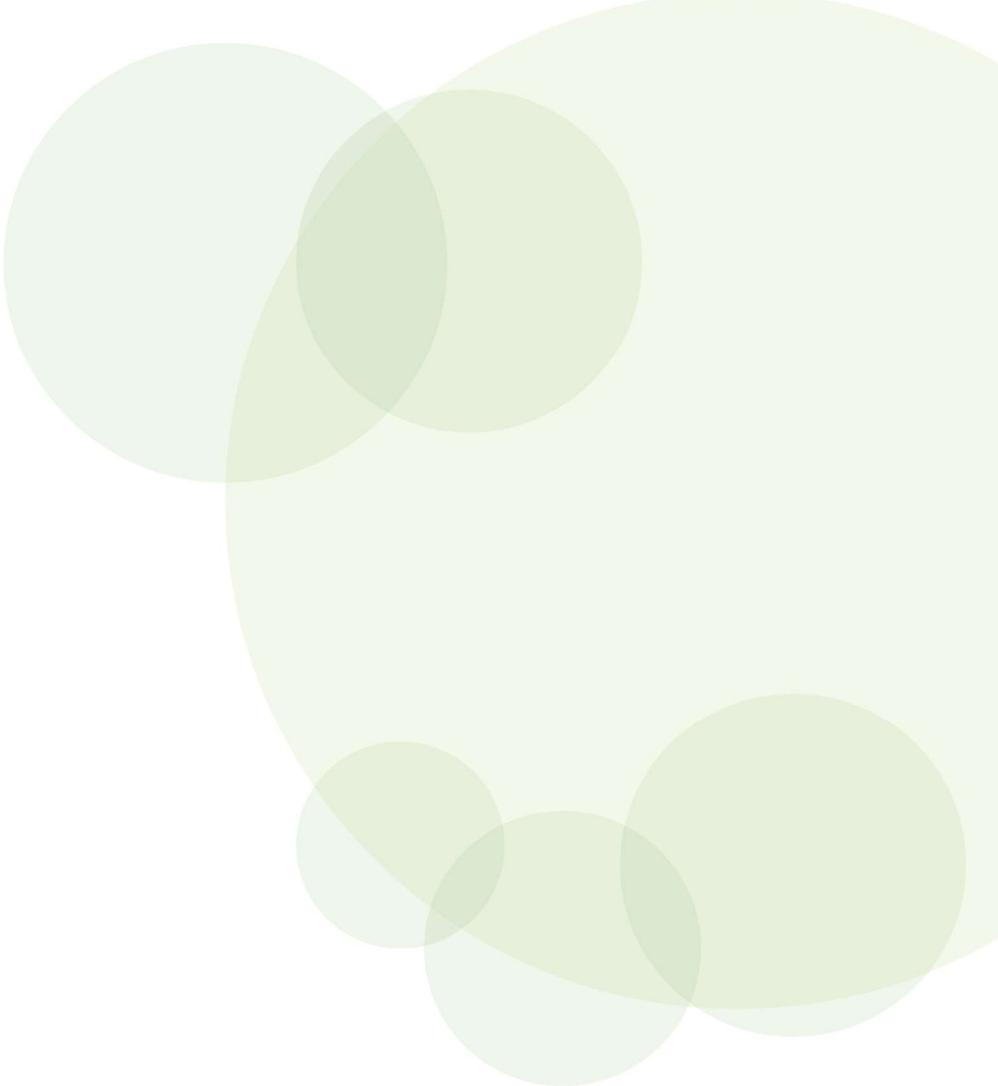
The summary of evaluation marks is presented in the table below:

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Format of the meeting</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Preparation of documents</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Quality of discussions</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Timing of the session</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>General organization and logistics</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Quality of presentations</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>71 (43%)</b>	<b>77 (46%)</b>	<b>17 (10%)</b>	<b>0</b>

The analysis of the responses given on the evaluation forms confirms an initial impression left during the event. The participants were highly motivated to learn more about the practical application of SEA, and actively took part in the group discussions.

To sum up, a total of 89% of the participants rated the meeting ‘excellent’ and ‘good’.





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## Strengthening environmental assessment system in Georgia in line with the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment: SEA screening and scoping for the municipal spatial plans

16-17 May 2019

Tbilisi, Georgia

Holiday Inn Tbilisi Hotel

Address: 1, 26 May Square, Tbilisi, Georgia (LIVING ROOM)

Since mid-2018, a number of municipalities in Georgia have been preparing their spatial plans with many others to follow in the course of 2019. Further to the Environmental Assessment Code of Georgia these spatial plans and other plans and programmes to be developed at a municipal level require – prior to their adoption – carrying out a strategic environmental assessment. As the Code was only recently adopted its enforcement still requires improvements, in particular at the local level.

This workshop will launch a series of training events to enhance capacities of municipal and environmental authorities of Georgia in application of SEA in accordance the Georgian Environmental Assessment Code that fully transposes requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA.

The participants of the workshop – from Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, National Environmental Agency, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Tbilisi City Hall and other selected municipalities – will get familiar with the main principles of efficient application of SEA in urban planning with a special focus to the screening and scoping stages. The training programme will continue in the course of 2019/2020 focusing on other SEA steps, including under the EU4Environment action.

# Strengthening environmental assessment system in Georgia in line with the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment: SEA screening and scoping for the municipal spatial plans

## AGENDA

**Trainers:** Mr. Martin SMUTNY, international consultant on SEA, UNECE

Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI, national consultant, UNECE

### 16 May 2019, Thursday

- 09:00 – 09:30**      **Registration of participants, welcome coffee**  
Video on the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
- 09:30 – 09:45**      **Opening remarks**  
Mr. Giorgi KHANISHVILI, the First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture  
Ms. Maia BITADZE, Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi  
Mr. Jiří PRECLÍK, chargé d' Affaires a.i., Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tbilisi  
Mr. Alexandre DARRAS, Attaché, Sector Coordinator Connectivity, Energy, Environment & Climate Change, EU Delegation to Georgia
- 09:45 – 10:15**      **Introduction to the workshop and expectations of participants**  
Facilitated by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- 10:15 – 11:00**      **UNECE Protocol on SEA: Purpose, main principle and steps of SEA; role of planning, environmental and health authorities**  
Presentation by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- Questions and answers**
- 11:00 – 11:30**      **Coffee break**
- 11:30 – 13:00**      **SEA process in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Code of Georgia: Main steps, responsibilities of the planning and environmental authorities**  
Presentation by Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- Questions and answers**
- Group discussion on the key issues related to application of SEA in Georgia**

- 13:00 – 14:00**      **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 15:30**      **Introduction to screening: Purpose and expected outcomes, approaches and methods, examples of screening from selected countries, requirements of the Protocol and the Code**  
Presentation by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- Recent experience with screening in Georgia: screening application and screening decision**  
Presentation of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
- 15:30 – 16:00**      **Coffee break**
- 16:00 – 17:30**      **Practical application of screening: Case example of ‘Resort Lebrade Development Regulation Plan’**
- Introduction to the case example
  - Group work on screening application and screening decision
  - Presentation of results
  - Discussion
- Facilitated by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- 17:30 – 18:00**      **Closing of the Day 1: summary and further steps**

### **17 May 2019, Friday**

- 9:00 – 9:15**      **Opening of the day**
- 9:15 – 10:30**      **Introduction to scoping: Purpose and expected outcomes, approaches and methods, examples of scoping from selected countries, requirements of the Protocol and the Code**  
Presentation by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- Questions and answers**
- 10:30 – 11:00**      **Coffee break**
- 11:00 – 13:00**      **Practical application of scoping: Case example of ‘Resort Lebrade Development Regulation Plan’ (part I.)**
- Introduction to the case example
  - Group work on scoping application and on how to determine the key environmental and health issues
- Facilitated by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI

- 13:00 – 14:00**      **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 15:00**      **Practical application of scoping: Case example of ‘Resort Lebrade Development Regulation Plan’ (part II.)**
- Finalising the group work and presentation of results
- Facilitated by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- 15:00 – 16:00**      **Practical application of scoping: Case example of ‘Resort Lebrade Development Regulation Plan’ (part III.)**
- Group work on scoping opinion
  - Presentation of the results by groups
- Facilitated by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- 16:00 – 16:30**      **Coffee break**
- 16:30 – 17:00**      **Brief overview of the next steps of the SEA process and their practical aspects**
- Presentation by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- Questions and answers**
- 17:00 – 17:45**      **Closing discussion:**
- Existing challenges for SEA implementation in Georgia (in particular at the municipal level)
  - Needs for the technical assistance on applications of SEA in Georgia in line with the Protocol in 2019/2020 and beyond, including under the EU4Environment action
  - Key aspects to be addressed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> training workshop
- Facilitated by Mr. Martin SMUTNY and Ms. Irma MELIKISHVILI
- 17:40 – 18:00**      **Closing of the workshop: Summary of discussion outcomes and next steps**



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## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### Strengthening environmental assessment system in Georgia in line with the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

#### SEA screening and scoping for the municipal spatial plans

16-17 May 2019

Tbilisi, Georgia

**Total number of participants: 52**

**Number of female participants: 26**

	<b>Name, title</b>	<b>Contact information</b>
1.	Giorgi KHANASHVILI Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia First Deputy Minister	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 595555555 E-mail: george.khanashvili@mepa.gov.ge
2.	Maia BITADZE, Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia E-mail: m.bitadze@tbilisi.gov.ge
3.	Jiri Preclik Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the Czech Republic to Georgia	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 577750307 E-mail: Jiri_preclik@mzv.cz
4.	Jan ČERNÍK Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of the Czech Republic to Georgia	Address: Chavchavadze Ave., 37-block VI, 0179 Tbilisi Phone: +995 599 176 654 E-mail: jan_cernik@mzv.cz
5.	Aleksandre DARRAS Attache – Thematic sector coordinator connectivity, energy, environment and climate change	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 598244898 E-mail: alexander.darras@europa.eu

	Delegation of the European Union to Georgia	
6.	Martin SMUTNÝ, international consultant on SEA	Address: The Czech Republic Phone: +420 724 11 07 79E-mail: martin.smutny@integracons.com
7.	Irma MELIKISHVILI, national consultant	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: +995 591 81 96 18 E-mail: irmamelikishvili@gmail.com
8.	Maia BERADZE Head of Environmental Assessment Department	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: +995 (599) 44 44 45 Email: M.Beradze@mepa.gov.ge
9.	Ketevan PAPIASHVILI Environmental safeguards specialist, Municipal development fund of Georgia	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599149696 E-mail: kpapashvili@mdf.org.ge
10.	Malkhazi BAGHUASHVILI Head of the Department of Infrastructure and Architecture of City Hall	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 593131863 E-mail: maxobagashvili@gmail.com
11.	Ketevan KANDELAKISHVILI Lawyer of the Municipal Department of Environmental Protection of the City Hall	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 591926236 E-mail: ketevan.kandelakishvili@yahoo.com
12.	Kristina KOROSHINADZE Senior Specialist of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> category Bio Diversity Division	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599313125 E-mail: kristina.koroshinadze@mepa.gov.ge
13.	Beno GELUTASHVILI Chief Specialist of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> category Land Resources Division	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 595350816 E-mail: besogelutashvili@gmail.com
14.	Gurami YAPLANISHVILI Deputy Head of Environmental Assessment Department	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599101989 E-mail: kaplanishvilig@gmail.com
15.	Shorena METREVELI Deputy Head of Environmental Assessment Department	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599511514 E-mail: vickymetre@gmail.com
16.	Sopio GOGICHAISHVILI Senior Specialist of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Category Strategic Planning Division	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 595776903 E-mail: sopio.gogichaishvili@gmail.com
17.	Tamta DAGARGULIA Head of Urban Planning and Spatial Arrangement Poti Municipality City Hall	Address: Poti, Georgia Phone: 591417511 E-mail: tamtadag@yahoo.com
18.	Ketevan CHOKURI Junior Specialist in the First category Strategic Planning Division	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599159514 E-mail: ketichokuri@mepa.gov.ge
19.	Nino GOGUADZE Specialist Strategic Planning Division	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 591939054 E-mail: ninogogvadze2@gmail.com

20.	Nikoloz KERELIDZE Chief Specialist at Infrastructure Development and Improvement Division	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599858904 E-mail: nikakarelidze@gmail.com
21.	Manana PKHAKADZE Leading Specialist Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 591404179 E-mail: tsmanan@mrdi.gov.ge
22.	Kakha POTSKHISHVILI Deputy Head of the Spatial Planning Department Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599140437 E-mail: kpotskhishvili@mrdi.gov.ge
23.	Giorgi KARGARETELI National Environmental Agency	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599704177 E-mail: Giorgi.kargareтели@gmail.com
24.	Levan OZBETELASHVILI Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 591817505 E-mail: levani.ozbetelashvili@mepa.gov.ge
25.	Davit JAIANI Department of City Transport Tbilisi City Hall	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 558795260 E-mail: d.jaiani@tbilisi.gov.ge
26.	Davit ASANIDZE Head of Urban Planning and Renewal Urban Development Service Tbilisi City Hall	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 558587758 E-mail: d.asanidze@tbilisi.gov.ge
27.	Maia KAPANADZE Environmental Protection Service	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 598400969 E-mail: Kapanadzemaia7@gmail.com
28.	Dali SVANI Senior Specialist at Waste Management Policy Division Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 595119730 E-mail: Dali.svani@gmail.com
29.	Maia JOLOKHAVA Tbilisi City Hall	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 568018822 E-mail: maiajolokhava@gmail.com
30.	Zura MARSAGISHVILI Head of Spatial Building Unit of Mtskheta Municipality City Hall	Address: Mtskheta, Georgia Phone: 599307100 E-mail: z.marsaga@gmail.com
31.	Tamaz GEKEULI Leading Specialist National Environmental Agency	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 599108272 E-mail: gekeulitamaz@gmail.com
32.	Tamar KASHIBADZE National Center for Disease Control and Public Health	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 551170051 E-mail: tkashibadze@gmail.com
33.	Budu REKHVIASHVILI Chief Specialist Oni Municipality Infrastructure Service	Address: Oni, Georgia Phone: 591010378 E-mail: Rexviashvili.56@mail.ru

34.	Salome DVALI Strategic Planning Division of Environmental Assessment Department	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 595101775 E-mail: salome.dvali@mepa.gov.ge
35.	Maia GOGIBERIDZE Chief Specialist Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 591992954 E-mail: makogogiberidze@gmail.com
36.	Nino DEDABRISHVILI National Center for Disease Control (NCDC)	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 597055599 E-mail: n.dedabrishvili@ncdc.ge
37.	Mamuka KUBLASHVILI Deputy Head of Kutaisi Architecture and Monument Protection Agency	Address: Kutaisi, Georgia Phone: 551255522 E-mail: Mamukakublashvili@gmail.com
38.	Nana BERAIA National Center for Disease Control (NCDC)	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 593332829 E-mail: nana_beraia@yahoo.com
39.	Vitali MACHAVARIANI National Agency of City Hall Leading specialist of the Department of Hydrometeorology	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 591688388 E-mail: vitalimachavariani@gmail.com
40.	Jambul GEGECHKORI Chief Specialist of Infrastructure of Martvili Municipality	Address: Martvili, Georgia Phone: 591935176 E-mail: jambuligegechkori@gmail.com
41.	Alexandre PAPUNASHVILI Head of Strategic Planning Division of Environmental Assessment Department	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 595920303 E-mail: aleksandre.papunashvili@mepa.gov.ge
42.	Nana ZAZANASHVILI Urban Development Municipal Service of Tbilisi City Hall	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 593942849 E-mail: nano_zazanashvili@yahoo.com
43.	Giorgi TEVZADZE Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture Environmental and Evaluation Department The first category junior specialist	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 557000067 E-mail: giorgi.tevzadze@mepa.gov.ge
44.	Eka ELGENDARASHVILI Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture Environmental and Evaluation Department Division Head	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 593949490 E-mail: e.elgendashvili@gmail.com
45.	Ketevan APTSIAURI Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia Strategic Communication Department	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 555377800 E-mail: ketevan.aptsiauri@mepa.gov.ge
46.	Lia SALIA Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia Main specialist	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 577101418 E-mail: Lia.salia@apa.gov.ge
47.	Tamar SHARASHIDZE	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia

	Deputy Head of Environmental Protection Service of Tbilisi City Hall	Phone: 591913139 E-mail: tammarasharashidze@gmail.com
48.	Tamar TSKHOMELIDZE Specialist of architecture department Ozurgeti Municipality City Hall	Address: Ozurgeti, Georgia Phone: 595305035 E-mail: tskhomelidze@list.ru
49.	Per-Olof HALLBERG International relations manager	Phone: +4626172923 E-mail: info@gastrikeatervinnare.se
50.	Gogi BOLKVADZE Head of Architecture and Spatial Arrangement Service Chokhatauri Municipality City Hall	Address: Chokhatauri, Georgia Phone: 577749922 E-mail: Architecture84@mail.ru
51.	Paata JIOSHVILI Deputy Head of Law Department Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia	Address: Tbilisi, Georgia Phone: 577557599 E-mail: p.jioshvili@mrdi.gov.ge
52.	Nugzar DZNELADZE Head of Spatial Arrangement and Technical Supervision Department Ministry of Finance and Economy of Adjara	Address: Adjara, Georgia Phone: 577203727 E-mail: n.dzneladze@mofea.ge

**Strengthening environmental assessment system in Georgia in line with  
the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment:  
SEA screening and scoping for the municipal spatial plans**

16-17 May 2019

Tbilisi, Georgia

Holiday Inn Tbilisi Hotel

Address: 1, 26 May Square, Tbilisi, Georgia (LIVING ROOM)

**Practical application of scoping**

**Case example of ‘Resort Lebrade Development Regulation Plan’:**

**SCOPING MATRIX**

<b>Key issue</b>	<b>Specific concerns</b>	<b>Aspect to be considered in plan and/or SEA</b>	<b>Relevant stakeholders to be consulted</b>
<i>Environmental and health issues related to the plan or programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Risks and opportunities related to the plan or programme</i></li> <li>• <i>Territorial dimension of likely impacts</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Specific aspects to be further analysed in SEA</i></li> <li>• <i>Guiding principles or recommendations for further development and/or implementing the plan or programme</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Whom and why to consult in next SEA steps</i></li> </ul>
Land and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uptake of land and soil by the resort and connecting transport infrastructure</li> <li>- Soil pollution from improper waste/waste water management</li> <li>- Soil disturbance by tourism activities (SUV, off road motorbikes), may result in increased erosion/landslides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyses: soil quality on the site and in the transport corridors</li> <li>- Planning of tourist trails and routes should take this into account (i.e. avoid erosion-prone areas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MEPA (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture)</li> <li>- NEA (National Environmental agency)</li> </ul>

<b>Key issue</b>	<b>Specific concerns</b>	<b>Aspect to be considered in plan and/or SEA</b>	<b>Relevant stakeholders to be consulted</b>
Water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct impacts on water resources on the site, with possible impacts downstream: water pollution during construction and operation</li> <li>- Likely water pollution during construction and operation (accidents) of the connecting transport infrastructure</li> <li>- Likely water pollution of streams, wetlands from increased tourism activities (e.g. pollution from vehicles – SUV cars, motorbikes)</li> <li>- Opportunity: improved waste water infrastructure in villages in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyses: current water quality in the resources to be used for the resort</li> <li>- Wastewater infrastructure with sufficient capacity must be in place before opening the resort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MEPA – Water Resources Protection Unite + NEA</li> <li>- MRDI (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure)</li> </ul>
Water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased demand for water resulting in possible overexploitation of water resources, both underground and surface waters – both effects on the site and likely effects on water resources used by the population downstream</li> <li>- Demand for water during construction of connecting transport infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyses: capacity of water resources to be used by the resort + for potential further development, current water consumption + estimated consumption of the resort, existing wastewater infrastructure</li> <li>- Wastewater infrastructure with sufficient capacity must be in place before opening the resort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MEPA – Water Resources Protection Unite + National Environmental Agency</li> <li>- MRDI (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure)</li> </ul>

Key issue	Specific concerns	Aspect to be considered in plan and/or SEA	Relevant stakeholders to be consulted
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likely impacts from increased transport intensity in the villages along connecting transport infrastructure</li> <li>- Impacts on the air quality from heating + energy supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyses: transport model considering a full capacity of the resort, calculation of air emissions from the transport for the main pollutants affecting human health (PM10 and PM2.5, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, benzo(a)pyren) – this requires also a routing of connecting roads to be designed as a part of the Resort planning</li> <li>- Resort should use mainly low/no-emission energy/heating production (i.e. to avoid fossil fuels and biomass)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MEPA - National Environmental Agency</li> <li>- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development</li> </ul>
Biodiversity and nature protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct impacts on the biodiversity resulting from new resort</li> <li>- Impacts on biodiversity from connecting transport infrastructure (including aquatic diversity, migration of fish and mammals)</li> <li>- Impacts on biodiversity resulting from increased tourism activity in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyses: mapping of protected (and endemic) species and mapping for protected/sensitive habitats (including Emerald sites)</li> <li>- The plan should also address potential tourist routes and trails</li> <li>- SEA should define limits/conditions for tourism activities</li> <li>- SEA should analyse likely impacts of the new roads (related to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MEPA</li> <li>- Agency of Protected Areas (maybe)</li> </ul>

Key issue	Specific concerns	Aspect to be considered in plan and/or SEA	Relevant stakeholders to be consulted
	(disturbance, habitat degradation) - Impacts on biodiversity from energy production (wind power (if any)) - Likely impacts on sensitive habitats (Emerald sites)	the resort) and energy production (in particular wind power – if included in the resort’s design)	
Climate change risks	- To be considered both for the resort as well as for the connecting transport infrastructure - Changes in flood regime - Droughts - Avalanches - Both for the site, as well as for connecting roads	- SEA or plan should include analysis of climate change risks (following EC guidelines on considering climate change in EIA, and JASPERS guidelines on climate change risk assessment for transport infrastructure)	- MEPA - National Environmental Agency
Seismic activities	- Likely effects on the resort and connecting transport infrastructure	- To be analysed within SEA to identify risks and relevant mitigation measures	- National Environmental Agency
Health	- Noise and air pollution from increased transport along connecting roads - Proper determination of sanitary zones - Capacity of health care	- Noise modelling for connecting transport infrastructure as a basis for formulating noise mitigation measures (walls, windows) - Likely health effects should be analysed in SEA - Study further conflict of sanitary zones with the planned development - Set minimum standards and protection norms for	- MoH (Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs)

Key issue	Specific concerns	Aspect to be considered in plan and/or SEA	Relevant stakeholders to be consulted
		<p>mineral water sources during the construction and exploitation phases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analysis of current health care capacity in the region + estimate of future demand (considering the number of guests of the resort as well as the number of employees)</li> </ul>	
Socio-economic aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likely effects on the livelihood of the local population (who and how will benefit from a new development, any potential adverse effects)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEA should carry out analysis of likely effects on the livelihood of the local population formulating necessary mitigation and/or compensatory measures (e.g. part of the profit from the resort should be invested in the region to improve infrastructure)</li> <li>- Is area used for hunting? If so, can it be affected by new resort?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development/</li> <li>- Local municipality(ies)</li> <li>- Local people</li> </ul>
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solid waste production by the resort (including possibly hazardous waste)</li> <li>- Waste water production by the resort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wastewater infrastructure with sufficient capacity must be in place before opening the resort</li> <li>- Waste management plan should be prepared addressing among other also proper disposal of waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MEPA</li> <li>- Municipality</li> <li>- Solid Waste Company</li> </ul>

<b>Key issue</b>	<b>Specific concerns</b>	<b>Aspect to be considered in plan and/or SEA</b>	<b>Relevant stakeholders to be consulted</b>
Energy demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring energy supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low energy consumption building (or passive houses) should be preferred for the resort</li> <li>- Renewable energy resources should be preferred</li> <li>- Analyses: capacity of the renewable energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development</li> <li>- Energy related NGOs</li> </ul>