

Item 2 (a) – Progress in implementing the ESD Strategy

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) are responsible government institutions for the implementation of ESD in Georgia.

From the part of MEPA, its agency Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) is carrying out the following activities in this direction:

Under the program „Preschool Environmental Education“, a textbook on current environmental issues was created and more than 2000 educators and methodologists were retrained. It is planned to renew the program based on the results of the respective study. The course includes the following topics: Biodiversity Around Us, Saving Water and Energy, and Waste Management.

Programme “Environmental and Agricultural Education in School” is being implemented nationwide in Georgia. It intends to enhance environmental and agricultural awareness, green skills and knowledge in schools through the integration into the different subjects at the elementary level (1- 6 classes). Initiated by EIEC, an auxiliary textbook for primary school teachers was developed, which is easily adaptable to primary school students. In order to integrate the program into school, the training process for primary school teachers and curriculum experts (coaches – as future trainers) is underway, as well. At this stage, up to 2800 teachers have already been trained. Furthermore, EIEC designed the asynchronous module of this training course, including various videos, tasks, and topics and intended for the elementary school teachers to take the course at any time, which provides its sustainability. Furthermore, the program “Environmental and Agricultural Education in School” is the winner of VET Excellence Award at the European Vocational Skills week 2022 (18 May 2022).

In order to promote the deficient professions in the country and support the environmental and agricultural directions in vocational and higher education institutions, EIEC implements the accreditation process of vocational training/retraining programs, as well as initiates deficit and priority subjects in vocational and higher education institutions, based on the Memorandums of Understanding between EIEC and the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement of MES.

EIEC developed "Green Scholarship" program for students that will be started this year. In order to popularize the deficient environmental professions, including, ecology, hydrology, geology and GIS as well, students with high academic achievements from different universities will be awarded with the Green Scholarship.

By promoting non-formal education, EIEC provides life-long learning opportunities for adults of a different target groups, such as, public agencies, local self-government, private sector, community organizations, educational institutions, regional media outlets, and NGOs.

Along with the active dissemination of environmental information and promotion of environmental education to various target groups through number of programs, EIEC monitors the results of certain activities carried out through evaluations of trainings/workshops, pre- and post-tests of trainings, social media feedback, etc. However, there is no integrated, comprehensive statistics or analytical data on the level of environmental education and awareness at national level which is a key instrument in elaborating a long-term evidence-based environmental education policy. Therefore, there is a need to conduct the relevant assessment across the country. Furthermore, assessing the environmental education and awareness level is an impact indicator identified in the National Environmental Action Programme (NEAP 4) for SDG 16 “Support Environmental Education and Increase Awareness Level”, implementation of which is crucial to achieving this goal. In addition, there are no baseline indicators defined in the NEAP 4 for education and awareness activities. Respective assessment will enable the determining of baseline indicators and provide an opportunity to define target indicators as well. In order to define the level of environmental education and awareness of the community and set the next steps, EIEC plans to conduct relevant research this year (Study on Assessing Environmental Education and Awareness at National Level). At the first stage, qualitative and quantitative analysis among various target groups is will be carried out. Based on it, assessment methodology and plan will be developed and elaborated. The assessment will cover various target groups from various municipalities, including people of different ages, diverse areas of employment, gender, and persons with disabilities.

Whereas, such a large-scale research in this field will be conducted for the first time, sharing experience and best practices, methodology and recommendations from other countries and organizations is of utmost importance for us.