

Item 9 – Strengthening Synergies with other organizations and processes

EIEC established a partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) which is funded and supported by the British Government. EIEC was actively involved in raising environmental awareness among local self-governments in Georgia within the Environmental Democracy Program implemented by the WFD. Under this programme, EIEC developed an e-learning course, which includes theoretical material, as well as various practical examples (European and Georgian) and a variety of exercises and assignments to help people who take the course gain extensive and interesting information on environmental democracy and human rights and raise environmental awareness. The course is accessible for everyone.

At the first stage, online meetings were held with the representatives of the self-governments of the three pilot municipalities of Georgia, selected under the Program, where the representatives of EIEC provided information about the principles of environmental democracy, the Aarhus Convention, ESD, etc., and the commitments and responsibilities of local self-governments regarding these topics. In the second phase three knowledge and experience sharing sessions were held face-to-face with the representatives of the self-governments of the same municipalities. During these sessions the EIEC trainers discussed the importance of environmental protection and public involvement, challenges related to environmental protection and climate change at the local level, the rights and responsibilities of municipalities in the development of environmental democracy and their role in the implementation of environmental legislation with a strong emphasize of the principles and importance of education for sustainable development.

For the effective implementation of one of the functions of EIEC, namely, support the country in the application of the Aarhus Convention at the national level, EIEC plans to continue the training campaign on “Environmental Democracy - Human Rights and Responsibilities”, that was started in 2019 and covered the whole country (except of the occupied territories), namely - 11 regions of Georgia.

Through demonstrating close interlinkages between the principles of the Aarhus Convention and ESD for the more effective development of environmental democracy, one of the main topics of the training was the ESD component as a basis of a full understanding and realizations of environmental responsibilities. Therefore, along with the representatives of municipalities’ city halls and city councils, representatives of local media, NGOs and CBOs, public school directors were the central parts of the targeted audience of the training. In addition to the training campaign, to raise the levels of environmental awareness and ESD, number of information meetings were held with school children, students and public school teachers on similar topics.