



AGENDA

9th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia followed by thematic workshop on Nature Based Solutions

<p>Date: 6-7 December 2022</p>	<p>Venue: Republic Event Hall 6 Rose Revolution Square, Tbilisi, GEORGIA</p>	<p>Time: 6 December: 10:00-18:30 7 December: 09:00-13:30 7 December (pm): Optional site visit (registration required)</p>
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DAY 1

9th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM

Online link: <https://theuniversalconsulting-ge.zoom.us/j/86011315130> (meeting ID: 860 1131 5130)

Local Time	Item	Speaker
09:30-10:00	Registration and welcome coffee	
10:00-10:30	Opening and welcoming statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour de table - Introduction from members of Steering Committee • Adoption of Agenda 	- N. Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) of Georgia - A. Darras, Attaché, Team Leader Connectivity, Energy, Environment & Climate change, EU Delegation to Georgia - A. Zinke, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme
10:30-12:00	Thematic session 1: Dialogue on water resources management in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project Session to include planning and progress on River Basin Management Planning, Water Quantitative Management Plan, Water Monitoring including COVID monitoring, Economic Instruments, Mobilising Finance, Water and Health, Legislative developments and Transboundary cooperation in Khrami-Debed and Alazani River basins	Moderator: OECD UBA, IOW, UNECE, OECD
	Q&A and discussion	
12:00-12:30	Coffee Break	

Implementing partners



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12:30-13:30	<p>Thematic session 2: Dialogue on environmental statistics and open data in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project</p> <p>Session to include progress on Environmental Data and open data issues, including water accounts, environmental data, air quality, waste, land cover mapping and international co-operation.</p> <p>Q&A and discussion</p>	<p>Moderator: MEPA</p> <p>UBA, IOW, UNECE</p>
13:30-15:00	Lunch	
15:00-16:30	<p>Thematic session 3: Donor exchange on challenges and opportunities for water sector.</p> <p>To include presentations and dialogue with relevant projects and donors active on water in Georgia. To discuss ongoing activities and principles, achievements, challenges and future opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Economic Governance: Support for Implementation of the Draft Water Law of Georgia • EU4EMBLAS Project • UNDP-GCF: Scaling-up Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and the Use of Climate Information in Georgia • ADB/AFD: Policy Based Loan on Water Resources Management Project in Georgia <p>Q&A and discussion</p>	<p>Moderator: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Economic Governance Programme (tbc) • Marine Arabidze, Head of NEA Pollution Monitoring Department • Ketevan Skhireli, UNDP-GCF Project Coordinator • Raphaël Jozan, Head of AFD Regional Office in Tbilisi
16:30-17:00	Coffee Break	
17:00-18:00	Closing remarks and meeting summary	<p>- Chair to provide closing statement, key messages, decisions, next steps</p> <p>- Provide an introductory overview of Day 2</p>
18:00	Networking cocktail	

DAY 2**Thematic workshop on potential of Nature-based Solutions
towards sustainable river basin management in Georgia**Online link: <https://theuniversalconsulting-ge.zoom.us/j/87162822662> (meeting ID: 871 6282 2662)

Time	Item	Speaker
08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00-09:15	Opening remarks	- M. Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Environment and Climate Change Department, MEPA Georgia - K. Zaunberger, EC DG Environment (TBC) - A. Belokurov, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme
09:15-09:30	Scene-setting presentation	IUCN (TBC)
09:30-10:25	Experience from Georgia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring Gallery Forest and Grasslands in the Iori Valley • Natural Pasture Management at Georgia's Protected Area Network • Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Urban Development in Georgia • Restoring Ecosystems to Reduce Drought Risk and Increase Resilience • Restoration Measures for the Krtsanisi Park to Protect the Forest Cover 	Moderator: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aleksandre Mikeladze, Society for Nature Conservation - SABUKO • Kakha Artsivadze, Center for Biodiversity Conservation & Research – NACRES • Nino Rostomashvili, Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus - RECC • Nino Bregadze, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network - CENN • Maka Julakidze, UNDP-GEF Kura II Project
10:25-10:50	Coffee Break	
10:50-11:40	Experience from outside Georgia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managed aquifer recharge (new EU guidance) - Joint management of floods between upstream and downstream areas - Creation of buffer zones between water and agriculture - Payment for forest management to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation in reservoirs. - A mechanism by development co-operation partners to support NbS 	Moderator: OECD UBA IOW IUCN
11:40-12:15	Moderated discussion Guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are existing and potential Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for river basin management in Georgia? - How have existing NbS in the country been identified, developed and implemented? - What are challenges to promoting and scaling up to NbS in Georgia? 	Moderator: UNECE All participants

	- What can the EU4Environment programme, together with development cooperation partners, do to support Georgia?	
12:15-12:30	Closing remarks and next steps - Possibly to highlight/agree on key priorities (e.g. types of NbS, regions, landscape) that can be included in the “roadmap” to be developed under the EU4Environment Project.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia Representative of EU4Environment Water and Data Programme
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-17:00	Field trip to the Krtsanisi Forest Park - NbS site [Registration will be required]	

Background

This is the 9th meeting of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in Georgia. NPD facilitates policy discussions where stakeholders meet to advance water policy reforms. NPDs are driven by the demand from the host countries and are usually chaired by heads of respective government agencies. A variety of stakeholders participate in the meetings, such as ministries and government agencies and institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations, the business community, parliamentary bodies, academia. Participants typically include international organisations and EU Member States active in water policy reforms in each country. Under the EU-funded EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme, NPDs are supported in the five Eastern Partner countries.

Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

- to provide and update on recent developments in the area of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and policy development;
- to provide an update on the implementation of the road map of EU water directives in Georgia under the Association Agreement with the European Union;
- to discuss progress and next steps in implementing the EU4Environment – Water and Data programme in Georgia and to receive feedback from the national stakeholders;
- to provide a platform for discussion of donor activities in the water sector in Georgia and to enhance the international cooperation with partner organisations;
- to open dialogue on Nature Based Solutions (NbS) and potential application and benefits in Georgia;
- to discuss remaining challenges in the area of IWRM and next steps.

Participants

The meeting will gather over 40 participants from ministries, agencies, donors and international projects with an interest in water management in Georgia.

About EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data

This programme aims at improving people’s wellbeing in EU’s Eastern Partner Countries and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme’s activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens. It ensures continuity of the Shared Environmental Information System Phase II and the EU Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership programmes.

The programme is implemented by five Partner organisations: Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The action is principally funded by the European Union, and co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and the French Artois-Picardie Water Agency based on a budget of EUR 12,75 million (EUR 12 million EU contribution). The implementation period is 2021-2024.

Background notes on the NbS thematic workshop

Background

There is an increasing interest in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across the world, as an approach to contribute to multiple sustainability objectives, including water resource management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, food security and land use management. While recognising that there is a variety of definitions, the term NbS can be used here as “solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. (European Commission, 2021)”. In so doing, NbS will contribute to protecting, sustainably managing or restoring nature, with the goal of maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services to address a variety of social, environmental and economic challenges (OECD 2020).

NbS align with the overall objectives of the The EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data programme, the different mandates and expertise of the implementing partners. NbS have a great potential to have a positive impact on water quality and quantity in Georgia, slowing down runoff and increasing infiltration, favouring natural retention and clean up and creating or improving habitats, supporting biodiversity. However, there remains several gaps in Georgia to fully recognising the potential and applicability of NbS, implementing and financing them and evaluating their effectiveness.

Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

This session aims to:

- Provide explanation (including criteria and standards), overview and benefits of what are different types of NbS compared to other water management solutions in river basins
- Exchange experience and views among Georgian stakeholders and development partners on:

- What existing and potential Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for river basin management exist in Georgia.
- How existing NbS in the country have been developed and implemented.
- Enhance understanding of definition, benefits and challenges of NbS for Georgia's climate and biodiversity related targets and sustainable river basin management in terms of:
- How NbS can be further scaled up in Georgia.
- What challenges to scaling up are.
- Identify key priorities (e.g. types of NbS, regions, landscape) that can potentially be included in the "roadmap" to be developed under the EU4Environment Project.

Field visit to the Krtsanisi Forest Park

The Park became part of the Wildlife Agency in March 2019. The Wildlife Agency, formerly a wildlife nursery, is a legal entity of public law (LEPL), operating under the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

Functions of the Wildlife Agency in general include: registration of wild animal species and habitats, data processing, storage and dissemination; organization of biotechnical measures necessary for the restoration of populations and habitats of wild animal species; acquisition, breeding and reintroduction of breeding material of local species of wild animals; identification and participation in the establishment of hunting and fishing grounds; nursing planting material of forest species, including species of the "Red List of Georgia", as well as decorative and cultural species of trees and plants; participation in the implementation of cleaning, fencing, planting and maintenance works of the designated areas in accordance with the afforestation projects and recommendations, etc.

The purpose of the visit to the Krtsanisi Park is to see the restoration works conducted by the UNDP-GEF Kura II Project in 2020, as part of Nature-based Solution (NbS) activity, where 100 kW solar panel plant was installed to provide the park area and the pumping stations with the environmentally friendly source of electricity, in order to pump a water from the Kura to oxbow lakes located next to the Kura, as well as to irrigate about 50 ha of the forest trees in the park to maintain its ecological state.