



**ALCP** | Alliances  
Caucasus 2  
REGIONAL MARKET ALLIANCES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

## ALLIANCES CAUCASUS 2

### GOVERNANCE ANALYSIS, NOVEMBER 2022

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Governance in the ALCP2 relates to the governance principles which are cross cutting across all interventions in all outcomes of the programme especially as manifested in the rules section of each market system donut. In the ALCP2 these are the dairy, honey, beekeeping products, Lori (bacon), wild botanicals and silk market systems. In the dairy sector for example this relates to an advocacy initiative relating to fair terms of trade for rural SME dairy processors with supermarkets. In wild botanicals it relates to maintaining rights of access to sustainable natural resources for pickers and accountability of processors for the sustainable sourcing of wild resources.

Governance in the ALCP2 also relates to the work conducted under Outcome 3 of the programme in which the programme partners are local, regional, or national government or government entities and civil society engaging on interventions which naturally involve the impact of laws and regulations, outreach of government services and government and civil society engagement for the public good. It naturally focusses on accountability, efficiency, participation, non-discrimination, and transparency,

In the ALCP2 Outcome 3 is focusing on facilitating local institutions to provide improved access to more equitable local decision making and agency over natural resource use for rural producers (RP's). Climate change adaptation, environmental sustainability and equitable natural resource use are cross cutting themes in the ALCP2, fundamental issues for rural producers in the target market systems in terms of ensuring future sustainable rural production. *Please see Table 1 for the Governance Summary Market Analysis* which summarized the relevance, pro poor potential and intervention potential of the governance sector and planned interventions.

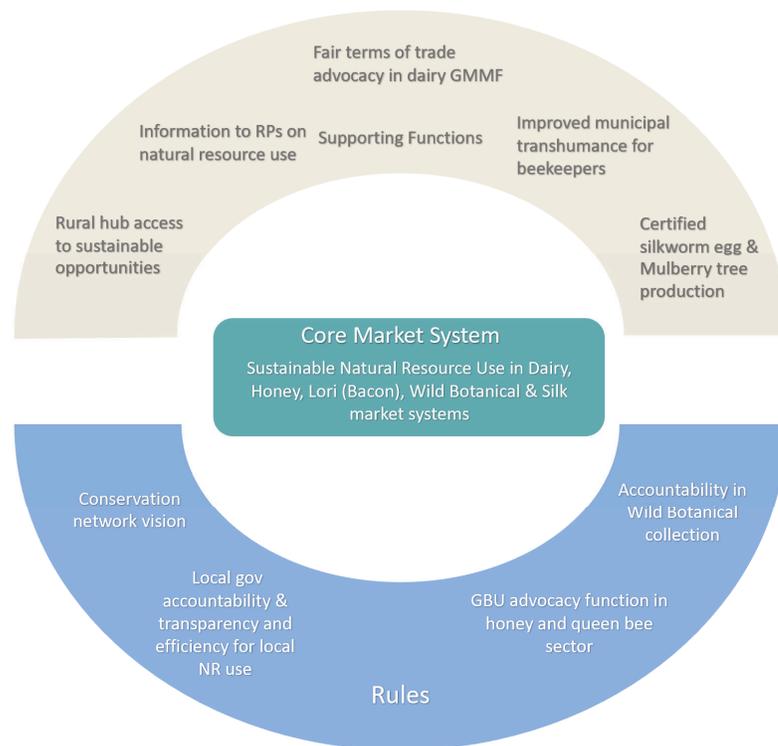


Figure 1ALCP2 Governance Market System Donut

Table 1 Summary Market Analysis

Relevance to Target Group	Pro Poor Potential	Intervention Potential
<p>High: Local natural resources are central to human wellbeing, especially for rural inhabitants whose income is highly dependent on use of local natural resources. Therefore, improved access to more equitable local decision making and agency over natural resource use for rural producers is vital.</p> <p>All rural producers in Dairy, Honey, Lori, Wild Botanicals and Silk value chains are highly dependent on natural resource use. Maintaining rights of access to sustainable use of natural resources for rural producers and accountability of rural producers and processors for the sustainable sourcing of resources are vital.</p> <p>Women and men are both involved in local natural resource usage, youth and elderly people are also engaged in activities related to natural resources such as taking care of arable lands, livestock husbandry/grazing. The only significant difference is related to forests. Men tend to be responsible for timber and women for non-timber forestry. Otherwise, they reported equal access and agency over natural resource usage, such as using water, land, pastures, and natural protected areas such e.g., Alpine Garden in Ajara.</p>	<p>High: Continued access to and sustainable use of local natural resources in line with improved participation of rural producers in inclusive decision making will have positive impact on rural producers' income especially from agriculture and rural tourism highly dependent on use of natural resources.</p> <p>Access to 'communal' natural resources such as pasture and forest area a major bulwark for rural producers who could otherwise not sustain levels of production on land strictly under their own ownership. Wild botanicals provide a substantial additional HH income involving all family members, youth and the elderly.</p>	<p>High: Interventions focused on facilitating transparent, accountable and efficient local government, public access to opportunities through rural hubs and uniting conservation civil society for united rural vision will result in local institutions provision of improved access to more equitable local decision making and agency over natural resource use for rural producers including women and men, youth and elderly, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups (Outcome 3)</p> <p>Includes knowledge sharing based on Tusheti model with Ajara municipalities and increased agency of Goderdzi Alpine Garden.</p> <p>Facilitation of linkages and providing Information on natural resource use via media and rural hubs to provide improved access to more equitable local decision making and agency over natural resource use for rural producers. (Outcome 1 &amp; 3)</p> <p>Facilitation of opportunity for sustainable natural resource livelihoods through rural hubs e.g. information, trainings, grants, education opportunities. (Outcome 3)</p> <p>Facilitation fair terms of trade advocacy in dairy Georgian Milk Mark Federation (GMMF)</p> <p>Facilitation of Georgian Beekeepers Union (GBU) advocacy function in honey and queen bee sectors including improved municipal transhumance access and use and other sector related advocacy initiatives.</p> <p>Facilitation of improved accountability of wild botanical processors and collectors for sustainable sourcing and picking to become and develop a sustainable vision for rural inhabitants going forward.</p> <p>Facilitation of Government in term of certification of silkworm egg &amp; Mulberry Tree production.</p>

## METHODOLOGY

This Governance report contains information collated through desk research, market research, an inventory of relevant laws and stakeholders, interviews with local government decision makers and civil society and a farmers focus group survey. Eighteen gender disaggregated (nine female and nine male) focus groups were held in five programme targeted regions (Ajara, Racha, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Guria) to analyze farmers perspectives regarding local natural resources. The results can be found in the *Governance Focus Group Survey on Natural Resource Use*.

## CROSS CUTTING THEMES IN GOVERNANCE

GEDSI, climate change and equitable use of natural resources cut across the ALCP2.

## GEDSI IN OUTCOME 3

Gender equality, diversity, and social inclusion (GEDSI) is a cross-cutting theme of vital importance in the ALCP2. Alliances has worked in the most diverse areas of Georgia since its establishment, effectively incorporating ethnicity and gender equality within the programming. Outcome 3 will facilitate rural inhabitants' inclusive access and agency in local natural resource use regarding local development. The focus groups confirmed that when it comes to gender, women and men are both involved in local natural resource usage, youth and elderly people are also engaged in activities related to the usage of the natural resources, such as taking care of arable lands, livestock husbandry/grazing.

The only significant difference is related to forests. Men tend to be responsible for timber and women for non-timber forestry. Otherwise, they reported equal access and agency over natural resource usage, such as using water, land, pastures, and natural protected areas such e.g., Alpine Garden in Ajara. Table 2 below shows the roles and responsibilities of women and men in access to natural resources and agency over them.

*Table 2 Gender Division of Access and Agency (Decision-Making Ability) in Natural Resource Use*

Roles & Responsibilities	Access		Agency	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Water resources (river, lake, spring)	X	X	X	X
Forest (as feed resource for bees, pigs)	X	X	X	X
Forest, Timber		X	X	X
Forest, Non-Timber	X		X	
Agricultural Land: pastures	X	X	X	X
Agricultural land: arable land	X	X	X	X
Non-agricultural land	X	X	X	X
Alpine Garden	X	X	X	X
Field to collect wild botanicals	X	X	X	X

When it comes to local development, women and men are equally interested in information related to ongoing development projects. They try to have up-to-date information about laws, regulations and permits. In some cases, females are more involved in public discussions, while male are mostly responsible for applying and obtaining permits for construction and usage of natural resources. In most villages, women attend public hearings and discussions, they might refrain from acting independently, but usually take decisions jointly with other household members.

Furthermore, if a village decides to complain about construction without a permit or to protest unfair use of natural resources, women also participate on the community level, and they together with other community members try to defend their rights e.g., female focus group participants from Shemokmedi village, Guria were actively protesting construction of a hydro power plant in their village last year. Mainly due to a language barrier Azerbaijani and Armenian community members tend to be less involved in these type of processes. Table 3 below shows the roles and responsibilities of women and men in access and agency over local development.

*Table 3 Gender Division of Access and Agency in Local Development*

Roles & Responsibilities	Access		Agency	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Information about Planned/Ongoing projects/constructions	X	X	X	X
Information about laws, regulations, permits	X	X	X	X
Attending Public hearing	X	X	X	X
Taking Construction permit	X	X		X
Leasing Land from the Forestry or other government entity	X	X		X
License/Permit on natural resource use	X	X	X	X
Complaints on construction without permit, new project idea/design, insensible use of natural resources	X	X	X	X

## CLIMATE CHANGE

According to the *Governance Focus Group Survey on Natural Resource Use*, climate change is tangible now for farmers and it negatively impacts on all natural resources on which the farmers are dependent e.g., water, land, pastures, crops, and all types of harvest. All focus group participants reported that climate has significantly changed over the last ten years with unstable weather, harder winters, heavy snow and increased rainfall in spring, drought in the summer, changes of the durations of seasons, landslides, and more frequent floods damaging crops and blocking roads. Due to all these changes the amount and quality of harvest has decreased, farmers can no longer stock enough hay for winter, which is additional expense for households as they need to buy additional feed for their livestock. The majority of farmers stated that lack of drinking and irrigation water is another result of climate change. Local people and local government are not prepared for these changes, municipalities do not have the equipment for coping with natural hazards, they also do not have money for arranging irrigation systems for villages. The farmers do not have information on how to cope with climate

change for example they all have heard about solar panels but cannot afford them. The interviewed local government representatives could not say what is or should be the role of local government regarding climate change and how they could help rural inhabitants to protect their livelihoods which are linked to the natural resources.

#### EQUITABLE NATURAL RESOURCE USE

Natural resources are resources/materials that are drawn from nature including sunlight, air, water, all types of land, forests, all minerals, vegetation, and wildlife and are central to human wellbeing. Use and agency over natural resources for rural producers through equitable access to information about local natural resource use and local government decision making related to natural resources, including local development initiatives, is crucial for people who live in rural areas.

Natural resources are particularly vital for those most vulnerable to social, economic, and environmental changes and shocks. The focus group survey showed that the female and male farmers consider that they all have access and agency to local natural resources, they are not paying for them or only paying modest fees for them e.g., firewood permits, irrigation water. All focus group participants said that drinking and irrigation water is the most important resource for rural people and access to water is still a problem in the most places because of unfair distribution, lack of finances in local municipal budgets for building water systems, construction of hydro power plants on the rivers, climate change, and drought. According to our survey agricultural land is the main income-generating natural resource for all farmers. Non-agricultural land is less important for rural inhabitants, only seventeen percent said that this type of land is important for income generating activities e.g., construction of hotels or guesthouses. Rural producers who have land parcels far from their village tend not to use them because of transportation costs. Ongoing problems registering land are restricting investment. Farmers use land parcels which were always used by their families for agriculture but cannot get construction permits due to lack of legal documents proving ownership an increased registration fee is a disincentive.

After land and water, forests are the most important resource for farmers. Timber resources are used by 72% of focus group participants as firewood in winter (with permits), otherwise cutting the trees in forests is prohibited. The process is controlled by the National Forestry Agency which issues special permits and allows them to cut a certain limited amount of timber for each HH once a year. The local government is involved in the distribution of the permits. The price is almost symbolic, five to seven GEL per cube of wood. Each rural HH can get from seven (in lowland) to fifteen (in highland) cubes of wood for social needs. Only 11% of respondents said that timber is an income generating resource for them. The focus group participants from Tsalka, Kvemo Kartli mentioned that permissions for cutting trees are not always available on time, sometimes people get permissions when it is already heavy snow, and they cannot get wood. Farmers from Khulo stated that landslides and mudslides damage the roads, so they often cannot go to fetch wood in the forest. According to a new Forest Code 2020 the farmers will not be able to cut firewood by themselves from 2023, they must buy ready cut wood from the Forestry Agency and the price per cube will greatly increase which is an issue of serious import to the target group. Our focus group participants have heard about the upcoming changes regarding forest use but do not know the details.

The forests are also used for agricultural purposes by 44% of the focus groups participants e.g., as foraging for pigs in Racha region. The focus group participants from Oni in Racha said that there are no restrictions for using the forest as a feed resource for pigs. They were mostly concerned that the village pasture fields have become forested, and the locals cannot even walk into the forest because it is full of dried wood and branches.

Cutting wood or collecting dry wood is illegal and people are afraid to clean it. 56% of the survey participants use non-timber forest resources including wild botanicals such as berries, chestnuts, medicinal plants, mushrooms, seeds, and for 22% it is an income generating activity. In Akhmeta, Kakheti the collected wild botanicals are either sold locally in the village or in guesthouses/hotels in Tusheti, besides, local people use wild plants to dye (color) the wool that is used for knitting. The traditionally knitted handicrafts (usually made by women) are also sold to tourists in Tusheti hotels/guesthouses.

Local governments share responsibility for natural resource management with national level entities on protection and distribution of land, water, and forest resources to local people, these entities are the National Forest Agency, National Environment Agency, National Agency of Protected Areas, and the National Agency of State Property. During the interviews with local decision makers, they stated that all decisions regarding local natural resource use are made at a central level, but must be agreed with local government who usually concur. According to them local governments do not have agency over the management of local natural resources and usually rely on and agree with central level governmental bodies.

Local inhabitants should be included in decision-making process over natural resource use as the agreement of the people is required by the law. In actuality some general information is provided generally by village representatives and online social networks but there is no consultative process.

**MAINSTREAMED GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES IN THE ALCP2 BY OUTCOME**

Governance is mainstreamed through the application of five principles throughout interventions where applicable; accountability, efficiency, transparency, participation, non-discrimination, and in all market systems the programme works. *See Table 4 below.*

*Table 4 Mainstreamed Governance Principles Applied to the ALCP2 Outcomes*

Governance Principles	Relevant Outcomes	Key Stakeholders	Activities
Efficiency Participation	Outcome 1  Outcome 2	Sectoral Associations, Local Self-Governments, Rural Producers, SMEs in programme relevant sectors	Providing information to rural producers through media and other information networks on natural resources and right related to their use.  Strengthening service provision and sustainability of sectoral associations (GBU, GMF, JBA) Strengthening Women’s Rooms’ Union
Accountability Transparency	Outcome 3		Facilitation of local self-governments for improved accountability, transparency and efficiency concerning NRM and use including distribution of key information related to local development initiatives
Non-discrimination	Outcome 1 Outcome 2 Outcome 3	Micro enterprises, women, ethnic minorities, youth & persons with disabilities, Rural SME’, sectoral associations, local self-governments, supermarkets/traders	All interventions

Rural producers in all the market systems in ALCP2 dairy, honey, Lori (bacon), wild botanicals and silk are dependent on natural resources hence the Outcome 3 focus on local authorities providing access to more equitable decision making for local natural resource use. An issue which cross cuts all the market systems of the programme. Throughout the rest of the programme the entry points to address key constraints in the market system related to governance and government are detailed in the rules section of the donuts for each market system, described in detail within each market system report and summarized in Table 5 below.

*Table 5 Rules Based Themes in the ALCP2*

Outcome	Market System Focus
<b>Outcome 1</b>	
Information to rural producers on natural resources	Information provision to rural producers on their rights and interests regarding natural resources and the landscapes in which they reside
<b>Outcome 2 Local, regional and national government, government entities and civil society</b>	
Dairy Market System	Fair terms of trade and unfair competition advocacy
Honey Market System	Improved municipal transhumance access and regulation Expanded applicability to government BIO certification support programmes
Queen Bee Market System	Entering EU 3 <sup>rd</sup> country list Legitimizing the international image of Georgian Queen Bee market Protection of Caucasian Bee breed Formalizing illegal export markets
Lori Market System	Ensuring the continued access and use of forest resources for pig rearing in Racha Regional product promotion Regional NFA outreach for disease monitoring and control
Wild Botanical Market System	Accountability of processors and collectors for sustainable sourcing and picking
Silk Market System	Certification of silkworm egg production, Municipal support to mulberry tree cultivation, pest & disease notification

### OUTCOME 3 IMPROVED ACCESS TO EQUITABLE LOCAL<sup>1</sup> NATURAL RESOURCE USE

Local natural resources<sup>2</sup> are central to human wellbeing, especially for rural inhabitants whose income is highly dependent on use of local natural resources. However, uncontrolled local development, lack of information about ongoing or planned developments, lack of transparency and accountability of local self-governments as well as regional and central governments in line with low awareness of local inhabitants of their rights in local natural resource use hampers the sustainable use of natural resources and results in chaotic development spoiling the precious biodiversity, landscape, traditions and culture of unique mountain regions in Georgia. Accountability and transparency in local natural resource use, access to opportunities through rural hubs and developing a united vision for rural development amongst conservation stakeholders will be the main focus of the ALCP2 interventions under Outcome 3. The programme will build on its existing work in conservation and local development, key to which has been the Goderdzi Alpine Garden (GAG) creation as rural hub and advocacy related to Goderdzi Pass development. See Annex 1 for a full *History of the development of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden rural hub*.

### LAWS ON NATURAL RESOURCE USE

According to the focus group survey, rural inhabitants believe that they know all necessary regulations and laws regarding natural resources that they use, but they cannot name anything concrete except the usage of forest timber resources because most of them have got a permit for cutting firewood. A few of them mentioned permits for construction, mineral resources and a special license to use them, but none of the participants have had experience of requesting such permits.

The main entity responsible for natural resource management in Georgia is the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, through its sub-bodies, The National Forestry Agency, the National Environment Agency and the National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring. At the municipal level the local government is responsible for aiding the national entities roll out relevant policy and regulations. Regarding local development, local government is in charge of the process in terms of planning and issuing permits. Rural producers are not aware of the role of national bodies, and think that local government is responsible to ensure rural inhabitants access to land, water, and forests. See *Annex 3 Laws and Regulations* for more information

### UNCONTROLLED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Uncontrolled local development taking place in mountainous regions of Georgia, poses a significant threat to the potential for sustainable development and use of local natural resources. The focus group survey showed that there is a lack of transparency from local governments regarding their plans for the development of local areas. Farmers lack knowledge and agency about local development. People do not protest ongoing development projects, especially connected to tourism as they are told and believe that they will be wholly beneficial for their economic development. However they lack information about the environmental risks and costs these developments might incur.

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<sup>11</sup> Local as in the resources contained within the municipality in which rural producers lives and which ostensibly local governments have remit over.

<sup>2</sup> Resources/materials that are drawn from nature including sunlight, atmosphere, water, all types of land, forests, all minerals, vegetation, and wildlife.

For example, decreased access to pasture, overuse of natural resources such as water, limited job opportunities for untrained locals, local landscapes underpinning potential for high value rural tourism destroyed for short term gain. Farmers are not involved in the decision-making process when it comes to local investments and they think that local government needs to increase their accountability towards them regarding the local environmental vision and economic development plans. They also they lack information about their rights about the sustainable use of local natural resources. The ALCP2 governance focus group survey confirmed that equal access to public goods is crucial for the local economy. Villages with better participation in local decision making can defend their rights and access to the natural resources around them. Involvement of women, youth, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities and rural MSMEs in local decision-making fora will increase inclusivity and the development of a more equitable vision of local development.

#### THE CASE OF GODERDZI AND CHIRUKHI, AJARA

Goderdzi now represents a perfect storm of unbridled, uncontrolled, shortsighted and unsustainable development. Replicating similar development in other mountainous areas such as Bakuriani which once the damage is done, is incredibly expensive to rectify. The pace of the development on the Goderdzi has accelerated with the development of the Goderdzi Ski Resort<sup>3</sup> and the renovation of the Khulo-Zarzma road<sup>4</sup> as well as the tourist attractions of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden and Green Lake. Locals including larger investors see opportunities for opening up accommodation and have started to build hotels, guesthouses and cottages.

Most of them do not have relevant permits. They construct buildings which ignore the traditional architectural vernacular and the traditions and materials of the building of wooden houses in Ajara mountains, using plastic and concrete, destroying the architectural identity of the area with no care for the environment. Local government representatives said that none of them have construction permits and penalties are issued but the government is unable to enforce them. The penalties themselves are fairly negligible and people are prepared to pay them knowing the government will not pursue threats to take down illegal construction. . See *Annex 1* and *4* for more details.

The pandemic has further impacted the transparency of these processes. According to the focus group survey, local inhabitants are not aware of planned projects on Goderdzi, especially the ones that come from private investments. There have been no recent public hearings of any projects related to Goderdzi and none of the focus group respondents had heard about, knew about or had attended a public hearing. Based on the market research, the lack of agency of stakeholders, including the Goderdzi Alpine Garden itself is evident and facilitation of these stakeholders in developing a long-term vision of the Goderdzi Pass development is of utmost importance. The GAG has the highest potential to become the main advocate for environmental value of the Goderdzi Pass and initiate zonal planning to avoid unplanned constructions and the spoiling of environment around it. But is hampered by being a state institution and being unsure of its remit. Working with Khulo municipality self-government is also vital for improved, accountable and efficient local government.

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<sup>3</sup> by the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara and private investors

<sup>4</sup> Section of the Batumi-Akhaltzikhe Highway, strategically important for Georgia. The renovation of the road is funded by Kuwait Fund. A total of 47 kilometres of roads, and seven bridges, will be rehabilitated, with two-lane asphalt and concrete surface to be paved. Renovated Khulo-Zarzma road worth approximately GEL 110 million will offer the shortest route between the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Adjara regions. The upgraded road will cut travel time from Batumi to Akhaltzikhe by 90 minutes.

Chirukhi mountain is another destination in Ajara, which is in danger after the announcement of the construction of the Europe's longest zipline there. According to the focus group survey, locals have positive attitudes towards the opening up new economic opportunities for them, however most of them are worried about their beautiful landscape being spoiled and cultural heritage destroyed. Most of the interviewed local inhabitants do not like chaotic development and want to protect the authenticity of their traditional wooden architecture. The municipality are of the same mind, the mayor is positive about protecting Chirukhi and making it a Protected Landscape and protecting its unique landscape, local traditions and architecture. Although undoubtedly not perfect, the Tusheti experience detailed below is of value in learning how to manage the process. The ALCP2 will facilitate experience sharing and learning.

According to the market research, rural development in Tusheti and related advocacy initiatives can serve as a good example for local sustainable development in other regions of Georgia, especially for Ajara.

Out of twenty-one surveyed protected areas<sup>5</sup> and five botanical gardens in Georgia, Tusheti Protected Areas was found to be one of the most developed<sup>6</sup> and actively involved in local sustainable development. Tusheti Protected Areas include Tusheti National Park, Tusheti Protected Landscape and Tusheti Strict Nature Reserve with a total protected area about 113,660.2 ha. Tusheti Protected Landscape<sup>7</sup> was created in 2003 with the goal to protect natural landscape, biodiversity, local culture and traditions.

It is managed by Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration founded and financed by Akhmeta Municipality. The Administration together with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia developed the renovation/construction standard, which is the basis for all kind of works implemented in Tusheti Protected Landscape ensuring authenticity protection and the sustainable development.

In 2009, the Friends' Association of Tusheti Protected Areas is a nonprofit, non-governmental, membership based organization uniting individuals and groups of people striving to support Tusheti Protected Areas. Later in 2015, Tusheti Development Fund was established by locals with the mission to facilitate the social-economic development and environmental protection of Tusheti by improving the livelihood of Tushi communities and preserving the unique nature of Tusheti. The Fund implements donor-financed projects<sup>8</sup> as well as raises funds via donations, primarily from Tushi community members living abroad (emigrants), but also from Tushi living in Georgia. The Fund facilitated the revival of a centuries old traditional governance model - the Tusheti Community Council, comprised of local people equally represented from four communities of Tusheti, with the goal to protect unique natural-cultural heritage of Tusheti and support its sustainable development with the involvement of local people. The Council works with locals to increase awareness of the standards that needs to be followed and the benefits of following it. The Council together with other stakeholders mentioned above work in coordination to protect Tusheti and its beautiful landscape, traditions and culture.

*Figure 2 Short Overview of Tusheti Development Initiatives*

<sup>5</sup> In Georgia there are ninety-four protected areas of five different categories according to IUCN criteria and five botanical gardens.

<sup>6</sup> With strong donor and local government support

<sup>7</sup> See [link](#)

<sup>8</sup> Such as provision of wireless broadband internet to Tusheti and the operation of heavy machinery to clean up Tusheti roads

‘All development is good’ is an assertion which seems to have been accepted mostly unchallenged and is being followed blindly in a process that has seen ‘development’ spoil so many rural landscapes across the world. And there is at present no model being widely championed proving to mainstream stakeholders the superiority of sustainable alternatives targeting higher value rural tourism which at once benefit the local municipality, the local people, local flora and fauna and the environment in which they live. The Tusheti model above provides a good example of how local stakeholders and local government can work together for sensitive and sustainable local development which empowers local government, benefits locals whilst also preserving the unique nature of a location. The ALCP2 already has strong links with Akhmeta municipality and a direct facilitation with Ajarian municipalities is immediately feasible.

Increased accountability of local government concerning more sustainable, transparent and efficient local development that truly benefits rural producers is the first focal point under Outcome 3. Informing local rural inhabitants of the full picture through facilitating the delivery of relevant knowledge to rural producer inhabitants will be key on issues relevant to their livelihoods, water, forest, pasture, wild botanicals, laws related to local development.

Some newly developed constructions and large-scale investment projects in Goderdzi Resort have altered or even spoiled the unique identity the tourists were coming to see. Ajara government has plans to develop the Goderdzi Pass even further<sup>9</sup> without any urgent need to focus on sustainable use of local natural resources and landscape protection. Key stakeholders responsible for the development and management of the Goderdzi Pass, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara and Khulo Municipality lack the vision and capacity to develop the Goderdzi Pass sustainably. Both of these institutions understand that many ongoing constructions on the Goderdzi Pass are illegal and are being done without construction permit<sup>10</sup>, however neither of them take a step forward to stop it. Lack of accountability of local self-government and lack of transparency are key constraints within the development process preventing equitable local development properly inclusive of local rural people. The same applies to other mountainous regions in Georgia including Chirukhi, Ghoma<sup>11</sup>, Bakhmaro, Gomi<sup>12</sup> where local people have inappropriately renovated houses posing risks of destroying the architectural identity of the area. However, local self-governments there have stopped the process and seem to be stricter in issuing fines or even orders for dismantling them.

The focus group survey revealed that most rural inhabitants are positive about the local developments taking place in their communities and municipalities in general. They are aware of development projects in their own villages but know fewer details of anything outside. Eighty three percent of participants think that any

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<sup>9</sup> Ajara government wants to put three locations, Goderdzi Resort, Green Lake, Beshumi Resort, under one management called “Tourist Cluster”. In 2020, The Ministry has outsourced Development Concept Paper which includes recommendations for management of all these three locations. The Ministry wants to link other three locations with the GAG and consider it as one of the main locations in Goderdzi Tourist Cluster. The Ministry plans to build a cable car connecting Goderdzi Resort and GAG (outside the garden), especially for winter season.

<sup>10</sup> Any type of construction is subject to permit, which is issued by Khulo Municipality City Hall.

<sup>11</sup> Ajara

<sup>12</sup> Guria

development will bring positive benefits, the rest could not say whether local developments taking place in their municipalities are good or bad. The majority of farmers receive information about ongoing development projects/constructions (hotels, guesthouses, restaurant, café, cottages, shops) from their neighbors or see them in person. 50% got some general information from local government but 28% of participants had none. However, almost half of the participants (44%) think that local landscape, natural resources, and traditions are not considered in implementing local development projects and 83% said that local self-government is responsible for ensuring all these are taken into account (protection and sensible use of natural resources) when planning the development. Only 28% see this as local inhabitants' responsibility as well. Overall, the survey showed that there is a lack of transparency at the local self-government level a lack of knowledge amongst rural inhabitants concerning the benefits of sustainable development. Local government plans regarding the development of local areas are not properly transmitted, people do not feel as if they have a say in this development but do not protest ongoing development projects, especially connected to tourism and lack information about the environmental risks and costs.

#### ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH RURAL HUBS

The experience of the Alliances programme in developing the Goderdzi Alpine Garden and working with the Women's Room network has provided the experience and groundwork for rural hub<sup>13</sup> development. The ALCP2 will facilitate strengthening of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden as a rural hub for local communities and development of new local rural hubs on the Goderdzi Alpine Garden model. Knowledge transfer to Zugdidi Botanical Garden for creation of an alpine garden in Samegrelo will be ensured<sup>14</sup>. The market research also revealed the urgency of the Bakuriani Alpine Botanical Garden to support the revival of its reputation as one of the oldest alpine gardens<sup>15</sup> and which could serve as local rural hub in Samtskhe-Javakheti region. However, at present the garden collection of plant species and infrastructure are in poor condition due to lack of financial resources and support<sup>16</sup>. The ALCP2 will transfer knowledge and experience of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden in leveraging public and private funding for garden development, of providing eco education and training for sustainable local livelihood options e.g. Jara honey in Ajara, wild botanicals in Bakuriani and bee breeding in Zugdidi and women's rooms will be linked in to ensure inclusivity and leveraging of grants and financing opportunities for sustainable micro enterprises based on the model established in the ALCP. The programme will facilitate improved linkages and exchange sharing between botanical gardens for establishing a common vision of their role in the protection of and use of local natural resources.

The programme will use existing rural hubs such as Women's Room network<sup>17</sup> to provide rural producers and MSMEs access to public goods and opportunities related to local natural resources such as information about their rights concerning natural resources including handbooks from the local self-government for empowering them to have better access and agency over decision making related to natural resources. Linkages between local rural hubs and environment networks, resources and capacities will be facilitated by the ALCP2.

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<sup>13</sup> A multi-functional local point with public access to resources and public goods.

<sup>14</sup> The process has already started with the study tour in the GAG for better understanding of the concept of alpine gardens and more informed decisions. Zugdidi Botanical Garden becoming the member of the BGCI, opens up new opportunities for international support and visibility, which will help the garden to attract international consultancy on the example of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden.

<sup>15</sup> Established in 1912 and currently managed by Ilia State University Institute of Botany

<sup>16</sup> The newly established Bakuriani Development Agency, Borjomi Municipality, is interested in its rehabilitation and has started to promote the garden among donor organizations to attract finances.

<sup>17</sup> There are thirty two women's rooms, public resource centres specifically targeted for women and vulnerable groups in Georgia.

According to the ALCP2 Focus Group survey, local inhabitants believe that protected natural landscapes and botanical gardens increase local rural tourism potential. 90% of farmers from Ajara think that the Goderdzi Alpine Garden is one of the most important natural resources for their communities because it draws tourist interest. Local inhabitants in Tusheti believe that the tourism sector has developed in Tusheti because the natural and unique landscapes and local architecture have been preserved there and now hospitality is one of the main sources of income for locals together with cattle and sheep farming which used to be the only source of income for Tushi people. This is true for Guria as well, rural people who live near Bakhmaro derive their main income from tourism. Therefore, the sustainable development and use of local natural resources and their protection is critical. The Tusheti example above shows the importance of imposing instruments like protected areas and uniting stakeholders with a common vision for creating equitable local systems for natural resource use and environmental sustainability.

The ALCP 2 will build on its existing experience of working with conservation stakeholders for developing a united rural vision. The programme will focus on strengthening civil society groups such as Goderdzi Friends (See Annex 1) for improved advocacy and convening in other conservation stakeholders and government entities and civil society and other private sector entities such as the Georgian Beekeepers Union and the members they represent to develop a united vision for sustainable rural development in mountainous regions. This will bring forward a better understanding of the use of protected areas and designations and transmitting to local inhabitants the importance and value of preserving their local cultural and environmental heritage for sustainable benefits going forward.

## SYNERGY WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES

The ALCP2 sees the potential for cooperation with CENN who run the *Caucasus Environmental Knowledge Portal* which includes many resources connected to waste management and sustainable community forestry and possibly with GiZ Eco.Georgia project in dissemination of information, knowledge and resources particularly through to the Women's Rooms network in target municipalities.

## HOW IT STARTED

Environmental governance work was first piloted with the Batumi Botanical Garden, Khulo Local Self Government and private hydro power company Adjaristsqali Georgia LLC in the development of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden. Other public stakeholders: Ajara Government, the Government of Georgia, Department of Tourism and Resorts of Ajara and the Batumi City Hall subsequently contributed over 2 million USD to date, for road building, operational costs and marketing. In 2015, with the facilitation of the ALCP, the Batumi Botanical Garden (BBG)<sup>18</sup> began the foundation of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden (GAG) in one of the most stunning mountain regions of Georgia – the Goderdzi Pass, Khulo. Since then, the GAG has begun the conservation of the Caucasian flora<sup>19</sup> in subalpine and alpine zones. Fifteen different zones of the garden including a rock garden, lake, beech and spruce fir forests, beekeeping, eco-education and recreational zones, picnic and camping areas provide a special experience for the garden visitors. The GAG is a pioneer in showcasing traditional Jara beekeeping still practiced in Ajara region, with its bio-certified apiary of Jara hives aiming at publicizing Jara beekeeping and teaching people interested in taking it up. With a strong interest and support to develop GAG from a number of stakeholders including government at regional and local level, private sector and civil society, it has high potential to become a powerful representative of sustainable eco-friendly development in the mountainous regions, especially where rural tourism development is either ongoing or has a high potential.

## IMPACT TO DATE

With 69,000 visitors<sup>20</sup> since its opening in 2019, the GAG has become an integral part of the must-visit tourist attractions in Khulo promoted through various media channels, by local government and government tourism agencies<sup>21</sup>. According to the *Goderdzi Alpine Garden, Impact Assessment, February 2022*<sup>22</sup>, local farmers and guesthouse owners emphasize that it had created additional value for the Goderdzi Pass as a rural tourism destination attracting more visitors and bringing new market opportunities for their livestock products<sup>23</sup>. The GAG has established itself as an educational and scientific destination by hosting and creating relevant space

<sup>18</sup> Founded in 1880, the Batumi Botanical Garden (BBG) is one of the most popular tourist destinations (311,666 visitors in 2019) in Georgia. The BBG is also important education center for agriculture and biology. One of the main goals of the BBG is to introduce and distribute new income-generating crops to the farmers of the region as well as supply seedlings for the restoration of degraded forests and support the conservation of ecosystem and biodiversity in highlands of Ajara region.

<sup>19</sup> Eighty three new species have been recorded in the garden. The 161 plant species first recorded on opening the garden in 2019 have increased to 244, which represents 35% of the plant species spread in Ajara highlands (702 in total). The eighty-three new plants have been catalogued and introduced in the garden nursery. These are plant species requiring special alpine habitat far from the coastline. The gardens showcase Ajara highland plant species in the Alpinarium a key attraction in the garden.

<sup>20</sup> In 2019 - 10,000 visitors, 2020 - 20,000 visitors, 2021 – 17,000 visitors and 2022 – 22,000 visitors.

<sup>21</sup> Since its official opening in July 2020, local media outlets (TV, print and social media) in their articles/videos (forty) about the GAG have enthusiastically discussed and promoted it. In 2019-2020, thirty-five new tours were organized by travel agencies. The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Ajara (DTRA) is promoting the GAG under their social campaign for internal tourism encouragement #DiscoverGeorgia. It allocated 10,000 USD in its 2021 budget for the placement of information signs and boards in the GAG. It created a new Chirukhi-Khikhani-Goderdzi tourist route to include the GAG and distributed GAG promotion flyers to tourism agencies.

<sup>22</sup> [https://alcp.ge/assets/pdf/2022-09/1663248981\\_end\\_of\\_phase.pdf](https://alcp.ge/assets/pdf/2022-09/1663248981_end_of_phase.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Especially local traditional dairy products Kaimaghi, Chechili cheese, Kuruti, and artisanal butter.

for different audiences including students<sup>24</sup>, school children<sup>25</sup>, botanists, botanical gardens<sup>26</sup> and local business representatives<sup>27</sup>. From the point of view of major conservation stakeholders in the region<sup>28</sup>, they regard the GAG as a successful and highly important project creating an excellent example, focal point and research base for sustainable development and stakeholder organizations. *The International Association of Alpine Botanical Gardens* has selected the GAG as a location for the International Congress of Alpine and Arctic Botanical Gardens planned in August, 2023.

#### CHAOTIC DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE GARDEN

Development of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden, together with the investments in the development of the Goderdzi Resort by the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara and the private investors, and the renovation of the Khulo-Zarzma road<sup>29</sup> stimulated local businesses. Locals see the opportunities opening up with the increasing number of tourists visiting Goderdzi Pass, therefore started to build hotels, guesthouses and cottages. Most of them construct concrete buildings ignoring traditions of building wooden houses in Ajara mountains, use of local wood and stone destroying the architectural identity of the area without much care about the biodiversity.

One of them<sup>30</sup> has already started building cottages on 11,787 m<sup>2</sup> land leased from the Ajara Forest Agency next to the Goderdzi Alpine Garden. The company plans to build thirty-two guesthouses, two private houses, two restaurants, administration building, parking are, two picnic areas, football stadium and children playground. According to the project plan posted on the construction site, the restaurant will be two stories for 40 people and the cottages will be wooden construction, however the real picture is different See Annex 4. The company uses concrete, plastic and roofing iron disregarding the project and the beauty of the area including the Goderdzi Alpine Garden, which poses threats for the garden to lose its status and reputation in front of international botanic society and tourists who value local identity, traditions, culture and biodiversity. The construction is ongoing without construction permit and the GAG was neither consulted not informed about the project before lease agreement was signed between the company and the Ajara Forest Agency.

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<sup>24</sup> In 2017-2022, the GAG hosted 334 bachelor students from the faculty of Natural Sciences and Agriculture of Tbilisi Free University and Tbilisi Agricultural University for mandatory field practice and increasing awareness of protected areas and eco-systems. The students were involved in cleaning, plant inventory and other works in the garden.

<sup>25</sup> In 2020, the Department of Youth and Tourism of the Khulo Municipality City Hall organized field visits to the GAG for thirty local schoolchildren and twenty Batumi State University and Tbel Abuseridze Teaching University students to raise awareness of tourism potential and biodiversity.

<sup>26</sup> In 2019-2022, botanists from twelve countries, scientists from Munich Botanic Garden, Germany, the Nantes Botanical Garden, France, Harvard Arboretum, USA and the National Botanical Garden, Georgia visited the GAG.

<sup>27</sup> In September 2020, the GAG hosted fifteen guesthouse owners (twelve women) from Keda, Shuakhevi and Khulo at a seminar on how biodiversity, conversation and Jara beekeeping can be used for business promotion and attracting more tourists.

<sup>28</sup> Based on the interviews with the stakeholders: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Caucasus, Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF), Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Centre for Biodiversity Conservation & Research (NACRES), Caritas Czech Republic in Georgia and Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN).

<sup>29</sup> Section of the Batumi-Akhaltzikhe Highway, strategically important for Georgia. The renovation of the road is funded by Kuwait Fund. A total of 47 km of roads, and seven bridges, will be rehabilitated, with two-lane asphalt and concrete surface to be paved. Renovated Khulo-Zarzma road worth approximately GEL 110 million will offer the shortest route between the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Adjara regions. The upgraded road will cut travel time from Batumi to Akhaltsikhe by 90 minutes.

<sup>30</sup> Shkemali 2020 LLC

The pandemic has impacted the transparency of the processes, some of the locals taking advantage of it. Based on the market research, the lack of agency of stakeholders, especially Goderdzi Alpine Garden is evident and facilitation of these stakeholders in developing long-term vision of the Goderdzi Pass development is of utmost importance. The GAG has the highest potential to become the main advocate for environmental value of the Goderdzi Pass and initiate zonal planning to avoid unplanned constructions and spoiling of environment around it.

## ADVOCACY

In 2020, a conservation sector stakeholders<sup>31</sup> survey<sup>32</sup> which included government and private sector representatives related to Goderdzi Pass Development revealed Ajara government plans to further develop the Goderdzi resort which potentially threatens biodiversity, precious cultural heritage and potentially some rural livelihoods. The plan includes the development of additional 200ha of land as the second phase development of the resort by the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara. The Ministry developed a '*Scoping report of the Strategic Environment Assessment of the Development of the Goderdzi Resort Nearby Territory*' as part of the mandatory procedures for receiving approval from Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA), which was published on MEPA website on August 5th, 2021 for gathering public review. A stakeholders' group was created, who closely studied the document and sent initial collective feedback in the form of a signed letter to promote transparent, inclusive and constructive dialogue concerning the future development of the Goderdzi Resort on August 26th, 2021. Eleven stakeholders<sup>33</sup> signed the letter. A response letter from MEPA was received on September 24th, 2021, stating that their concerns would be considered in future planning. The advocacy process continues by the leading of the Black Sea Eco Academy<sup>34</sup>, who united fifteen stakeholders<sup>35</sup> under a civic initiative group called Goderdzi Friends by signing the Memorandum of Understanding by all these stakeholders in February, 2022.

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<sup>31</sup> Twenty-seven in total.

<sup>32</sup> Conducted by the ALCP

<sup>33</sup> Ekaterine Khvedelidze - Executive Director, Black Sea Eco Academy (BSEA); Gulo Surmanidze - Executive Director, Mtirala and Machakhela Protected Areas Friends Association, (BSEA); Irakli Archaia - Director, Batumi Botanical Garden; Temur Vasadze - Manager, Goderdzi Alpine Garden of the Batumi Botanical Garden; Jimsher Mamut Chadze - Chairmen of the Board, Environmental Association Psovi; Kartlos Manvelidze - Director, Geographic Travel Ltd; Giorgi Rajebashvili - Director, Eco Tours Georgia Ltd; Nika Tsiklauri - Director, Eco Films Ltd; Nana Janashia - Executive Director, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); Nino Gafrindashvili - Project Coordinator, Keda Lideri; Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); Gia Nakhutsrishvili - President, Botanic Society of Georgia; Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Caucasus.

<sup>34</sup> A local NGO.

<sup>35</sup> Ekaterine Khvedelidze - Executive Director, Black Sea Eco Academy (BSEA); Gulo Surmanidze - Executive Director, Mtirala and Machakhela Protected Areas Friends Association, (BSEA); Jimsher Mamut Chadze - Chairmen of the Board, Environmental Association Psovi; Kartlos Manvelidze - Director, Geographic Travel Ltd; Giorgi Rajebashvili - Director, Eco Tours Georgia Ltd; Nika Tsiklauri - Director, Eco Films Ltd; Kakha Bakhtadze – Programmes Manager, Environment and development NGO; Sophio Akhobadze – Executive Director, the Regional Environmental Centre for The Caucasus; Irakli Mikeladze – Adjara Coordinator, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); Gia Nakhutsrishvili - President, Botanic Society of Georgia; Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Caucasus; Archil Guchmanidze – Chairmen, Association Flora and Fauna; Mariam Jorjadze – Director, Biofarming Association Elkana; Zurab Manvelidze – Association Mta-Bari; Diana Egiziarova – Chairwomen, Green Step NGO and Ilia Guchmanidze – Chairmen, Association Green Sector.

Table 6 Key Informant Table

#	Key Informant	Date	Organization/ Specialization	Location and Link to Project
<b>Local Self-Governments (LSG)</b>				
KI 1	Roman Takidze	October 2022	Shuakhevi Municipality City Hall, Mayor	Shuakhevi, Ajara: Mayor conducts meetings with locals in each village twice a year, which is mandatory according to the law of self-governments. According to the mayor, all the important topics are discussed during these meetings. Construction permits are issued by the municipality city hall. Other permits (cutting wood, obtaining wood for selling) are issued by other entities: Forestry Agency of Ajara, Environment Protection and Natural resources Administration of Ajara, Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara, which ask the municipality city hall for expressing its opinion. The municipality has the right to issue construction permit on the municipal land and pasture lands like Chirukhi are State Property and municipality does not have right to issue construction permit until they have Development Regulation Plan for specific area like Chirukhi to follow. In 2022, they have issued several warnings, three penalties, one order for dismantling and one case is ongoing in the court. The penalty amounts to 1,000 - 2,000 GEL for using state property land and 1,000 GEL for construction without permission. The mayor is ready to work on Chirukhi Development Regulation Plan with the support of the donor funded programmes like ALCP2. Currently, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara is working on it. The mayor is positive about protecting Chirukhi and making it as Protected Landscape and is open to study Tusheti experience.
KI 2	Vakhtang Beridze	October 2022	Khulo Municipality City Hall, Mayor	Khulo, Ajara: Construction permits are issued by the municipality city hall. Other permits (cutting wood, obtaining wood for selling) are issued by other government entities listed above. The municipality holds meetings with locals several times a year. They also provide information about the planned projects through mayor representatives in communities. The municipality mayor and the head of departments do not like constructions without permission. Local inhabitants construct houses very fast. The municipality issues penalties and order to dismantling. Fines have been issued for many constructions and sometimes the process goes to court, which often continues for months. Local development projects supported in recent years: Infrastructure development at Goderdzi Resort, Green Lake, Beshumi resort. Arrangement of Ghorjomi horse riding club is planned in 2023.
KI 3	Sergi Khidesheli	October 2022	Oni Municipality City Hall, Mayor	Oni, Racha: Construction permits are issued by the municipality city hall. Other permits (cutting wood, obtaining wood for selling) are issued by the Forestry Agency, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia. Illegal constructions have been fined in Oni. Accountability of construction companies is of high importance as they do not place construction

				waste in designated areas, which leads to the creation of unauthorized landfill and damages the environment. The mayor and head of departments are open to cooperate with organizations, that will bring benefits to the municipality. According to the mayor, local inhabitants are involved in decision making related to natural resource use. All projects planned in the municipality are discussed with the local inhabitants through mayor representatives in communities.
<b>KI 4</b>	Fridon Gvariliani	October 2022	Tsalka Municipality City Hall, Head of Infrastructure Development Department	Tsalka, Kvemo Kartli: The municipality is rich with natural resources including fossil like basalt, perlite, pumice. The request from the National Agency of Mineral Resources is sent to the Local Self Government to issue permission on access to these fossils. The municipality has established Fossil Surveillance Inspection to avoid overusing of natural resources. The representatives of self-government think that it will be good to copy Marneuli municipality practice. Local development projects supported in recent years: Dashbash Canyon, Tsalka town gasification, arranging sport stadiums for village population. The municipality lacks equipment for cleaning roads and houses roofs from snow. The municipality lacks finances to arrange water irrigation systems for using river resources fully. In 2022, the municipality city hall issued fourteen penalties for illegal constructions. Locals are informed about the penalties.
<b>KI 5</b>	Aleksii Pitskhelauri	October 2022	Akhmeta Municipality City Hall, Mayor	Akhmeta, Kakheti: The municipality has Tusheti spatial development plan which is a document strictly followed by the city hall when issuing permits for construction or renovation. The city hall representatives conduct frequent field visits to monitor the protection of the Plan and there were several cases of penalties issued. The status of Protected Landscape has helped the development of the Plan. Locals are aware that there will be less interest from tourists if they damage the landscape, which then affects their incomes. However, still in 2022, 31 penalties were issued for the violation of permit conditions. Violation of permit conditions in Akhmeta city - 800 Gel, in villages - 200 Gel. Illegal construction in Akhmeta city 4,000 Gel, in villages – 1,000 Gel. Local development projects supported in recent years: development of the Tusheti spatial arrangement plan, construction of a dam and rehabilitation of access roads to Tusheti. The city Hall through its representatives in villages shares information about the use of the natural resources and discusses planned projects and decisions are made after hearing the opinions of local inhabitants; there is also a Facebook group 'Akhmeta and Akhmetelebi' where information about planned/ongoing projects are posted and people can express their opinions openly.
<b>KI 6</b>	Davit Sharashidze	October 2022	Chokhatauri Municipality City Hall, Mayor	Chokhatauri, Guria: The municipality has Bakhmaro Resort spatial development plan, according to which the construction permits are issued by the municipality. If the construction is large scale, then the permit is issued by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. According to the mayor, this has stopped the chaotic development in Bakhmaro Resort. The penalty for construction without permission amounts to 25,000 - 30,000 GEL based on the regulation approved by the

				Municipality Council. Before pandemic, the government of Georgia gave land to the Orbi group in Bakhmaro for a symbolic price 1 GEL. The development of the project was delayed due to pandemic. According to the mayor, the municipality is involved in the relevant meeting where the project design is being discussed and the height of the buildings will be maximum 3-4 floors and authenticity will be considered. Local development projects supported in recent years: Bakhmaro development plan, road and bridge construction, improvement of water supply systems. Infrastructural projects are financed by the Ministry of Regional development and Infrastructure. The municipality holds meetings with the local inhabitants several times a year. They also provide information to them through their representatives in communities.
KI 7	Avto Talakvadze	October 2022	Ozurgeti Municipality City Hall, Mayor	Ozurgeti, Guria: At present, the municipality is working on Gomi Resort spatial development plan according to which permits will be issued to locals. Meanwhile, the municipality tightened supervision and stopped illegal constructions. The penalty for construction without permission amounts to 25,000 - 30,000 GEL based on the regulation approved by the Municipality Council. Local development projects supported in recent years: Road and bridge construction and improvement of water supply systems. The municipality holds meetings with the local inhabitants several times a year. They also provide information to them through their representatives in communities.
<b>Protected Areas</b>				
KI 8	Nana Noghaideli	August 2022	Kintrishi Protected Areas	Kouleti, Ajara: Kintrishi State Nature Reserve was established in 1959 and its purpose is to protect the relict forest and endemic species, flora and fauna of Shuamta. Total area of the protected areas is 13,893 ha. in Reserve are tourist trails, picnic and camping places and fire spots. One of the goals of the reserve is to conduct eco-educational programmes and green calendar events. With the protected area cooperates CNF, WWF, KFW, UNDP.
KI 9	Nana Baujadze	August 2022	Machakhela National Park	Machakhela National Park is located in Khelvachauri Municipality and is 30 km away from Batumi. The main goal of creating the park is to maintain the unique biodiversity and ecosystems of the Colchis forests. The administration and Visitor Center are located in Khelvachauri Municipality, the village of Acharisaghamarti. Unique species of relict forests are represented on the area: Colchic bot box, chestnut, nut, hazelnut, bot, etc. The administration conducts eco-educational programmes and green calendar events, They have Eco-Camp for school children. The protected area cooperates UNDP, CNF.
KI 10	Beka Tsetskladze	August 2022	Mtirala National Park	Mtirala National Park was established in 2006 on the initiative of Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia. It is situated between the Black Sea and the Adjara Mountains. It also adjoins the Kintrishi Protected Areas. Owing to its outstanding relict forests, diversity of wetland ecosystems, and biodiversity, the national park was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands in 2021. Its total area is 15,698.8 ha. There are exhibition and presentation halls in visitors center where

				visitors have the opportunity to become familiar with the specifics of the National Park. There are zones for family trip, the zone for adults, 220 meters zip-line.
<b>KI 11</b>	Tamar Gogitidze	August 2022	Kobuleti Protected Areas	Kobuleti, Ajara: Kobuleti Protected Areas were established in 1998 to preserve unique wetland ecosystems recognized by the Ramsar Convention. The mentioned wetlands are located in Ajara autonomous republic and include the north-eastern part of Kobuleti coastal plain and are distinguished by the diversity of birds and plants. Visitors center is combined into an administrative building. Kobuleti Managed Reserve arranged trails so that visitors can carry out educational tours. It is possible to rent skis and walk along the sphagnum bog.
<b>KI 12</b>	Khatuna Katsarava	August 2022	Kolkheti National Park	Poti, Samegrelo: National Park was established during 1998-1999 and covers an area of 28,940 hectares, with protected wetlands spanning 33,710 hectares. Districts of the national park are located on five administrative regions – Zugdidi, Khobi, Senaki, Abasha and Lanchkuti and are part of two historic parts of Georgia – Samegrelo and Guria. Kolkheti National Park - the first natural site in Georgia, is nominated on the UNESCO World Heritage List, for its Colchic forests and wetland. Park is in the emerald network as well, which is ecological cooperation, created in order to make up special conservation interest. The administration conducts eco-educational programmes and green calendar events, working with school, Eco-Camp.
<b>KI 13</b>	Gocha Ghibradze	August 2022	Ajemeti Managed Reserve	Baghdati, Imereti: Ajemeti was formed as a strict nature reserve in 1946 to preserve rare and relict Imeretian Oak and Zelkova trees. The famous oaks of Ajemeti are ancient natural treasures, with some of the trees being over 250 years old. Infrastructure has yet to be developed in the area. The Reserve cooperates with schools and conducts eco-educational meetings.
<b>KI 14</b>	Nino Avetisian	August 2022	Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park	Borjomi, Samtskhe-Javakheti: Borjom-Kharagauli National Park is the first national park created in independent Georgia in 1995. It is one of the biggest parks in Georgia, with a total area is 104,099 hectares, which is more than 1.5% of country's territory. It is in the central part of Georgia and creates the eastern part of the lesser Caucasus Mountains. The park administration manages four various types of protected areas – Borjomi Nature Reserve, Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, Nedzvi Managed Reserve and Goderdzi fossil forest Natural Monument. Programmes offered: environmental education programme and green calendar events. Donor/NGO support: CNF, WWF, KFW, Bank of Georgia.
<b>KI 15</b>	Beto Mikadze	August 2022	Imereti Caves Protected Areas	Village Banoja, Imereti: Imereti Caves Protected Areas Established in 1935 and is located in west side of Georgia, Imereti region and includes four municipalities – Tskaltubo, Khoni, Terjola and Tkibuli and 17 Natural Monuments. The total area of Imereti Caves Protected Areas amounts to 504.6 ha and includes Sataplia Nature Reserve (330 ha), Sataplia Managed Reserve (34 ha), Promethe Cave Natural Monuments (46.6 ha) and 17 Natural Monuments. Remarkably, Imereti Caved Protected Areas Administration has one of the most well-arranged infrastructures on Sataplia Managed Reserve and Promethe Natural Monument. Sataplia Managed

				Reserve Infrastructure includes visitors centre, conservation building of dinosaur footprint, exhibition hall, glass panoramic viewpoint, cafes, souvenir shops, well-arranged cave and marked trails. Programmes offered: environmental education program and green calendar events..
<b>KI 16</b>	Tamar Kirtadze	August 2022	Okatse and Martvili Canyon Natural Monument	Khoni, Imereti: Located in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, the canyon was granted the national status of a natural monument in 2013, with the project of its tourist development initiated in 2015. Visitor Centre of Martvili Canyon is located in the village Inchkhuri. 700 meters circular hiking trail starts from the visitors' centre and passes through Dadiani's historic walkway. Programmes offered: environmental education programme and green calendar events. Donor/NGO support: CNF..
<b>KI 17</b>	Tamaz Karapetian	August 2022	Javakheti Protected Areas	Javakheti Protected Areas was established in 2011. It includes Javakheti National Park, Kartsakhi Managed Reserve, Sulda Managed Reserve, Khanchali Managed Reserve, Bugdasheni Managed Reserve and Madatapa Managed Reserve. Javakheti is woodless region. It does not have administrative and visitors center. The most important natural alpine forest composed with white birch, Caucasian mountain-ash, cotoneaster, raspberry bushes are found near Lake Kartsakhi parts on border of Georgia-Turkey.
<b>KI 18</b>	Giorgi Simonishvili	September 2022	Batsara-Babaneuri Protected Areas	The Batsara-Babaneuri Strict Nature Reserve and Ilto Managed Reserve were established in 2003 by Georgian law under the “Establishing and Management of Tusheti, Batsara-Babaneuri, Lagodekhi and Vashlovani Protected Areas”. The nature reserve is located at an altitude of 700-2,000 meters above sea level. Managed Reserve gives possibility to arrange botanical, educational, and adventurous eco-tours. Cooperates with schools and conducts eco-educational meetings.
<b>KI 19</b>	Nino Seturidze	September 2022	Vashlovani Protected Areas	Dedoplistskaro, Kakheti: Vashlovani Protected Areas was established in 1935. It includes Vashlovani Nature Reserve, National Park and three Natural Monuments – Eagle Gorge, Takhti-Tepa Mud Volcanoes and Kakliskure Alazani floodplain forest. Its area includes Pantishara-Vashlovani massive, whose height is up to 300-600 meters above sea level. Its total area amounts to 35,292 ha.
<b>KI 20</b>	Nodar Teteloshvili	September 2022	Chachuna Managed Reserve	Dedoplistskaro, Kakheti: Chachuni Managed Reserve was established in 1996 mostly on the territory of former Chachuni State Forestry which was in existence since 1965. The Administration of Chachuna Managed Reserve is located in Dedoplistskaro in shared facility with Vashlovani Protected Areas Administration. The Managed Reserve is mainly represented with arid and semi-arid types of flora and fauna. The unity of landscapes and vegetation characteristic to floodplain and arid-semiarid systems contribute to diversity of fauna. The administration works with schools, offers Eco-Camp. Donor/NGO support: SABUKO, CNF.
<b>KI 21</b>	Giorgi Bakuridze	September 2022	Tusheti Nature Reserve and National Park	Akhmeta, Kakheti: Tusheti Nature Reserve and National Park is managed by Tusheti Protected Areas Administration, which is in Akhmeta municipality, village lower Alvani, and summer administration in Tusheti, village Omalo. National Park is in the administrative building of protected areas, with integrates hotel rooms for visitors, cafeteria and visitor center with exhibition

				and conference hall, interpretation and information boards. Visitors can plan various types of tour for Tusheti sights and gain information on existing services. Programmes offered: ECO - education programme and green calendar events, working with schools, Eco-Camp. Donor/NGO support: Czech government USAID Zrda, GIZ, CNF, WWF, KFW, Kartu Foundation.
<b>KI 21</b>	Lado Kakhoidze	September 2022	Tusheti Protected Landscape	Akhmeta, Kakheti: Tusheti Protected Landscape is part of the Tusheti Protected Areas include Tusheti National Park, Tusheti Protected Landscape and Tusheti Strict Nature Reserve with a total protected area about 113,660.2 ha. It was created in 2003 with the goal to protect natural landscape, biodiversity, local culture and traditions. It is managed by Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration founded and financed by Akhmeta Municipality. The Administration together with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia developed the renovation/construction standard, which is the basis for all kind of works implemented in Tusheti Protected Landscape ensuring authenticity protection and the sustainable development.
<b>KI 23</b>	Tea Shalvashvili	September 2022	Lagodekhi Protected Areas	Lagodekhi, Kakheti: Lagodekhi preserves a variety of rare local flora and fauna and was originally protected in 1912, the first nature preserve in Georgia. Lagodekhi Protected Areas - one of the world's best-preserved, primitive area with a diversity of natural landscapes is located in Lagodekhi, in the extreme north-eastern part of the southern slopes of the Caucasus and extends at an altitude of 590-3500 m. Programmes offered: ECO - education programme and green calendar events, working with schools, Eco-Camp. Donor/NGO support: GIZ, CNF, WWF, KFW, Kartu Foundation
<b>KI 24</b>	Zviadi Tiginashvili	September 2022	Mariamjvari Nature Reserve	Sagarejo, Kakheti: Sagarejo, Kakheti: Mariamjvari Nature Reserve was founded in 1935 with the purpose of preserving untouched landscapes of relic Sosnowskyi pine ( <i>Pinus sosnowskyi</i> ). The main reasons of creation of Korugi and Iori Managed Reserve are unique floodplain forests (Korugi), Tugai type forests (Iori), protection and maintenance of flora and fauna. Programmes offered: ECO - education programme and green calendar events, working with schools, Eco-Camp.
<b>KI 25</b>	Salome Kobaidze	September 2022	Algeti National Park	Tetritskaro, Kvemo Kartli: The park was founded in 1965 as a state reserve to protect the easternmost limits of the Caucasian Spruce and Nordmann Fir. In 2007, it was reorganized into a national park. The park has an environmental education programme and green calendar events. Donor/NGO support: Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF), German Development Bank (KfW).
<b>KI 26</b>	Gvantsa Gigauri	September 2022	Kazbegi National Park	Kazbegi: Kazbegi National Park is in a historic valley on the north slopes of Caucasus Mountains. Kazbegi NP total area is 78 543,4 ha. Only 35% of the park is covered by forest and the rest is alpine pastures, snow-covered peaks and impregnable rocks. These rocks and mountains are native areas for lots of rare and unique species of animals and birds. Kazbegi National Park is characterized by high mountains and its lowest point is at an altitude of 1,400 meters. Programmes offered: environmental education seminar in schools. Donor/NGO support: Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF), German Development Bank (KfW).

KI 27	Tina Tsiklauri	September 2022	Protected areas of Pshav-Khevsureti	Shatili, Pshav-Khevsureti: Pshav-Khevsureti National Park is in Dusheti Municipality, Eastern part of Georgia, on the North-Southern slopes of Kavkasioni Range. It unites: Asa, Arghuni, Andakistskali, Pshavi and Aragvi Valleys. Pshav-Khevsureti National Park is distinguished with its interesting landscapes, unique plexogenics (Roshka Rocks, Tanie Lake) and middle ages cultural heritage: Shatili, Mutso, Ardoti, Khakhabo, etc. It has an environmental education programme and green calendar events. Donor/NGO support: German Development Bank (KfW).
KI 28	Lasha Meladze	September 2022	Tbilisi National Park	Saguramo, Mtskheta: Tbilisi National Park is the first national park in Georgia, created in 1973. It is located on southern slopes of Greater Caucasus Range Saguramo-lalno ranges and their branches, which stretch latitudinal from river Mtkvari to river Iori, at an altitude of 600-1,700 above sea level. The area amounts to 21,036.14 ha. Visitor infrastructure is less developed, but it is noteworthy that in 2013 in cooperation with the UNWTO the first cycling routes were marked. Three cycling routes have been planned and arranged.
<b>Botanical Gardens</b>				
KI 29	Tinatini Barblishvili	September 2022	National Botanical Garden of Georgia (NBGG), Deputy Director	Tbilisi: The National Botanical Garden of Georgia occupies an area of 161 hectares and possesses a collection of over 4,500 taxonomic groups. Its history spans more than three centuries. It was first described in 1671 by the French traveller Jean Chardin. The goal of the National Botanical Garden of Georgia is for the population of Georgia to appreciate and protect the unique plant diversity of the country and to use it in the urban environment, agricultural fields and nature to improve the quality of life. The mission of the garden is the study and conservation of plants and support of their smart use for the benefit of the population of Georgia. The garden implements conservation programme, medicinal plant programme, Ex Situ Conservation programme, reintroduction programme, and eco educational courses for school children. The garden is financed from Tbilisi city budget.
KI 30	Irakli Archaia	September 2022	Batumi Botanical Garden, Director	Batumi, Ajara: Batumi Botanical Garden, located at the distance of 9 km from the center of Batumi, occupies the area of 108, 7 ha. The garden collection is comprised of up to 1,800 taxonomic units, with 90 of Caucasian origin. The garden serves as a significant center for spreading agricultural and biological knowledge. It has established relationship with the Botanical Gardens of more than 140 countries, universities, and other scientific-research institutions in the form of signing the Memoranda of Cooperation. In 2015, with the facilitation of the ALCP, the Batumi Botanical Garden (BBG) began the foundation of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden (GAG) in one of the most stunning mountain regions of Georgia – the Goderdzi Pass, Khulo. The ALCP facilitated Batumi Botanical Garden to attract 100,000 USD from private hydropower company Adjaristsqali Georgia LLC for the development of the Goderdzi Alpine Garden, resulting in one of the successful Public Private Partnerships in Georgia. The Garden is highly supported by regional and central governments investing 1,738,500 USD outside the garden (GAG parking area and Goderdzi-Beshumi road

				construction). The Alpinarium construction and development in the garden is being supported by the Munich Botanic Garden (Germany) and the Lautaret Garden (France).
<b>KI 31</b>	Temur Vasadze	September 2022	Goderdzi Alpine Garden of Batumi Botanical Garden, Manager	Khulo, Ajara: Established in 2015 and officially open since 2019. Fifteen different zones of the garden including a rock garden, lake, beech and spruce fir forests, beekeeping, eco-education and recreational zones, picnic and camping areas provide a special experience for the garden visitors. The GAG is a pioneer in showcasing traditional Jara beekeeping still practiced in Ajara region, with its bio-certified apiary of Jara hives aiming at publicizing Jara beekeeping and teaching people interested in taking it up. With a strong interest and support to develop GAG from a number of stakeholders including government at regional and local level, private sector and civil society, it has high potential to become a powerful representative of sustainable eco-friendly development in the mountainous regions, especially where rural tourism development is either ongoing or has a high potential. With 69, 000 visitors since its opening in 2019, the GAG has become an integral part of the must-visit tourist attractions in Khulo promoted through various media channels, by local government and government tourism agencies.
<b>KI 32</b>	Zaza Raminashvili	September 2022	Kutaisi Botanical Garden, Director	Kutaisi, Imereti: Kutaisi Botanical Garden was founded in 1969. It is one of the first points of introduction of subtropical trees and shrubs in Imereti. The main scientific direction of the garden is the preservation and protection of plant biodiversity. Collection of the Botanical Garden has about 700 species of plants, trees, and shrubs, from different regions of the world. One of the goals of the garden is to conduct scientific research and implement eco educational programmes. The garden has poor infrastructure and lack of finances to implement projects.
<b>KI 33</b>	Shalva Agumava	September 2022	Zugdidi Botanical Garden, Director	Zugdidi, Samegrelo: Zugdidi Botanical Garden was built by Ekaterine Chavchavadze in the 19th century as a decorative garden of the prince's residence, near the Dadiani Palace. Up to eighty species of trees, shrubs and plants grow in the garden, including six species of magnolia, various species of oak, Atlas and Himalayan cedar, Canary poplar, relict and endemic plants imported from Asia, including India, Japan, the Mediterranean, the Americas and elsewhere. Zugdidi Garden became decorative after the last prince of Samegrelo, Davit Dadiani, started its development. Zugdidi Botanical Garden is one of the best bases for the introduction, research and acclimatization of valuable subtropical plants, with its location, as well as climate. The garden started working on the idea to establish an alpine garden towards Egrisi Ridge, Chkhorotsku on the road connecting Samegrelo and Svaneti regions on the model of Goderdzi Alpine Garden.

<b>KI 34</b>	Shalva Sikharulidze	September 2022	Bakuriani Alpine Botanical Garden	Bakuriani, Samtskhe-Javakheti: Bakuriani Alpine Botanical Garden (BABG) was established in 1912. The garden collections mostly feature Caucasian plants (up to 400 species). The arboretum comprises 125 species of trees and shrubs (including 75 Caucasian woody plants). Approximately 250 species from different regions of the world have been propagated from seeds. The garden collections serve as a basis for taxonomic studies and ensure conservation of vulnerable plant species. The Garden infrastructure is outdated and need financial support for renovation. It has experience in implementing eco educational programmes with the support of WWF and has potential to become rural hub in Samtskhe-Javakheti.
<b>Conservation Organizations/NGOs</b>				
<b>KI 35</b>	Ekaterine Khvedelidze	September 2022	Black Sea Eco Academy (BSEA), Executive Director	Batumi, Ajara: The Black Sea Eco Academy is a local non-governmental organization founded in Batumi. During 21 years of active work in the region the organization has implemented more than 30 projects related to environmental protection and natural resources management, socio-economic and rural development, biodiversity conservation and protected areas management. In 2015, the organization was contracted by the ALCP to conduct the survey Human-Wildlife Interface, based on which teaching modules and guidelines for farmers and local self-governments were developed and disseminated through meetings and trainings. It is one of the key stakeholders engaged in Goderdzi advocacy regarding the Goderdzi Resort development. The advocacy process continues by the leading of the Black Sea Eco Academy, who united fifteen stakeholders under a civic initiative group called Goderdzi Friends by signing the Memorandum of Understanding by all these stakeholders in February 2022.
<b>KI 36</b>	Irakli Mikeladze	September 2022	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), Coordinator in Ajara	Tbilisi: CENN is a regional development organization working to protect our environment through fostering sustainable development and green growth throughout the South Caucasus. CENN specialize in a number of areas including combating climate change, sustainable management of resources, promoting inclusive economic development, fostering democracy and good governance, building and developing healthy and prosperous climate-resilient communities, and empowering women and girls, and youth to participate in creating inclusive solutions. The organization implements several projects related to climate change, sustainable forest management, climate resilient agriculture throughout Georgia. CENN coordinator in Ajara is the member of the civic initiative group called Goderdzi Friends.
<b>KI 37</b>	Rati Kochlamazashvili	October 2022	Tusheti Development Fund, Founder	Tbilisi/Alvani, Akhmeta: Tusheti Development Fund was established by locals with the mission to facilitate the social-economic development and environmental protection of Tusheti by improving the livelihood of Tushi communities and preserving the unique nature of Tusheti. The Fund implements donor-financed projects as well as raises funds via donations, primarily from Tushi community members living abroad (emigrants), but also from Tushi living in Georgia. The Fund facilitated revival of centuries old traditional governance model - the Tusheti

				Community Council, comprised of local people equally represented from four communities of Tusheti, with the goal to protect unique natural-cultural heritage of Tusheti and support its sustainable development with the involvement of local people. The Council works with locals to increase awareness of the standard that needs to be followed and the benefits of following it. The Council together with other stakeholders mentioned above work in coordination to protect Tusheti and its beautiful landscape, traditions and culture.
KI 38	Vakhtang Tsuladze	October 2022	Independent Consultant	Batumi, Ajara: Former head of the Department of Environment Protection of the Ajara government, the former head of the Agrarian and Environment Protection Committee of the Supreme Council of Ajara and former deputy Minister of Agriculture. He supports the idea of establishing a protected landscape in Ajara mountains, which would include Goderdzi – Zankebi – Chirukhi. While working at the Supreme Council, he initiated the study of the area to find out the potential. As a result of the study, the territory has great potential but needs appropriate planning, socio-economic assessment and meetings with the local inhabitants to find out their opinions and involve them in the process. He is in process of establishing a local NGO Green Kolxheti to work on environment conservation projects in cooperation with donors and development programmes like the ALCP2.
KI 39	Irakli Macharashvili	September 2022	Association Alternative, Biodiversity Programme Coordinator	Green Tbilisi: the mission of Green Alternative is to protect the environment, biological and cultural heritage of Georgia through promoting economically sound and socially acceptable alternatives, establishing the principles of environmental and social justice, and upholding public access to information and decision-making processes. The organization works on projects related on environmental governance, climate change, sustainable energy and conservation of biodiversity with the funding from Global Forest Watch (GFW); Global Environment Facility (GEF); World Resources Institute (WRI). In 2019, the organization developed the <a href="#">guidelines</a> for citizens about their involvement in decision making process regarding projects having impact on environment. The organization representative is interested to be involved in the biodiversity management related advocacy.
KI 40	Irina Ebralidze	September 2022	NACRES, Researcher	Tbilisi: centre for Biodiversity Conservation & Research mission is to safeguard the biodiversity of Georgia and the South Caucasus, through conservation activities at national and local levels, based on sound science, sustainability principles and local participation. The organization programmes: studies of species, populations and ecosystems and evaluation of their status and threats; Strengthening and increasing the capacity of local and central government structures, NGOs and academic institutions for nature conservation; Mobilizing local community groups and local initiative groups and their involvement in conservation activities; Supporting the country's protected areas and ecological networks to increase their effectiveness and to facilitate their further development; Raising conservation awareness amongst local resource users and the general public. The organization mainly works with the protected areas and supports strengthening of community groups and

				volunteers around protected areas. Funded by UNDP Georgia; Global Environment Facility; Embassy of U.S; WWF.
<b>KI 41</b>	Tamaz Dundua	September 2022	ELKANA, Manager	Tbilisi: The Biological Farming Association Elkana is a Georgian nongovernmental organization established in October 1994. Elkana aims at improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the Georgian population and environmental protection through the fostering the development of sustainable organic farming and increasing self-reliance of the rural population. Elkana implements programmes related to organic farming, rural development and agricultural biodiversity conservation throughout Georgia. The Association provides sustainable and organic farming extension service, training and consultancy to rural producers. The ALCP has the experience of working with the organization in support of the bio certification of Jara Beekeepers Association and its members. Elkana is the member of the civic initiative group called Goderdzi Friends.
<b>KI 42</b>	Giorgi Sanadiradze	September 2022	WWF CAUCASUS, project manager	Tbilisi: WWF Caucasus has been operating in the Caucasus since 1990. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is the world's leading conservation organization and unites people across the globe to develop and deliver innovative solutions that protect communities, wildlife, and the places in which they live. In times of global challenges, the WWF is finding ways to help transform the future for the world's wildlife, forests and waters, calling for a reduction in carbon emissions to counter the grave consequences of climate change as well as campaigning for a healthy environment for people in order to enjoy long and sustainable life on our planet. To achieve this, WWF's global network focuses on six major areas: Forests, Freshwater, Wildlife, Oceans, Food and Climate. The Eco-Corridor Fund for the Caucasus (ECF) is a financial instrument developed to support biodiversity conservation throughout the South Caucasus. The project promotes the connectivity of landscapes and the active involvement of local populations and communities in the protection of biodiversity ecological integrity in large conservation landscapes. WWF Caucasus provides financial support to the project about creation of Guria National Park. The project is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and Agency of Protected Areas and financed by the government of Sweden. The goal of the project is to stop degradation and fragmentation of unique mountain ecosystems of Guria through biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Table 7 List of Laws &amp; Regulations on Natural Resources in Georgia

Name of the Regulation	Short Description	Note
Forest Code of Georgia ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	The code determines the main principles of forest management for ensuring its sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, rational use and participation of citizens in the management, as well as availability of forest resources to the public.	See an abstract of the code: <a href="#">Link</a>
Regulation on using Forest Resources ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	The rule determines legislative mechanisms on sustainable management and use of forests, access of local population, public and business sectors to the forest resources. The rule also defines terms on harvesting non-wood forest products including mushrooms, crude drugs, technical raw materials, other herbs	
Law of Georgia on Soil Protection ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	The law defines measures for rational use of soil, fertility improvement and conservation. It describes rights and duties of state institutions, local self-government and landholders in soil protection, specifies prohibitions for preventing negative impact on soil, human health, flora and fauna. The regulation also defines measures to ensure the conservation of endemic plants to high mountainous regions and conservation of the fertile layer of soil by protecting sub-alpine and alpine meadows.	See an abstract: <a href="#">Link</a>
Law of Georgia on Determination of the Designated Purpose of Land and on Sustainable Management of Agricultural Land ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	Through the principles of sustainable management of agricultural land, the law regulates issues related to the designated purpose of land, determines the categories of agricultural land (including pastures and hayfields) and procedure for changing the categories. The regulation also describes the role and responsibilities of the LEPL National Agency for Sustainable Land Management and Land Use Monitoring (Land Management Agency). The purpose of this Law is to ensure the rational use and protection of land and to facilitate the development of the land market and state monitoring system of agricultural land resources.	See an abstract: <a href="#">Link</a>
Law of Georgia on Water ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	The law defines rules for rational use of water resources considering the principles of sustainable development; Together with prioritizing population's demand for clean drinking water, the regulation intends to ensure rational and sustainable use of water by the residents of Georgia, and prevention its pollution, littering, and depletion. The law also defines particular responsibilities of local self-government in water recourse management.	A new draft law on Water Resources Management was prepared by the parliament of Georgia in 2022 to be adopted soon.
Law on Air Protection ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	The law is a legal framework to regulate emissions of harmful substances into the ambient air and ensure the attainment, maintenance and improvement of air condition/quality for safety of human health and natural environment. It also intends to support implementation of the principle of public access to information on the condition of the ambient air and gradual entry into force of legal norms established under EU legislation on air protection from pollution.	
Local Self-government Code ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	The code is a legal framework for defining local self-governance, its rules, finances, property and powers of local authorities. Among others, the code assigns local forests, pastures and water resource to the municipality property and consequently, management of these recourse in accordance with the law is a responsibility of the self-governments	See abstract <a href="#">Link</a>



*Photo 1 An Example of ongoing local construction on Goderdzi Pass, September 2022*

*Photo 2 Ongoing construction of plastic covered camping houses next to the Goderdzi Alpine Garden, September 2022*