



ევროკავშირი  
საქართველოსთვის



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE

## 9th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia and Thematic Workshop on Nature Based Solutions

6-7 December 2022  
Tbilisi, Georgia



Funded by  
the European Union

**EU4Environment**  
Water and Data in Eastern Partner Countries

## 1. Proceedings

The 9th Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in Georgia was chaired by Ms Maia Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Department of Environment and Climate Change, and Ms Mariam Makarova, Head of Water Division, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. Across 1.5 days (including a half-day workshop on Nature-based Solutions), participants discussed and progressed water policy reform priorities for Georgia and used the opportunity to sharing information on the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme and other ongoing donor-funded projects.

The agenda for the meeting can be found [here](#) and the list of participants [here](#).

The opening session saw welcoming remarks from Ms Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) of Georgia, Mr Alexander Darras, Attaché, Team Leader Connectivity, Energy, Environment & Climate change, EU Delegation to Georgia, and Mr Alexander Zinke, Environment Agency Austria and Head of the Consortium for the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data programme. The speakers welcomed the Steering Committee members and other participants, recognising that the NPD meeting aims to identify priorities for water management and the environment, assess progress with recent policy reforms in the water and environment sectors and to brief participants on the latest developments with ongoing national and international environment projects in Georgia. The speakers stressed that the country is undertaking a major reform of its water sector to comply with the European Union Acquis, notably the Water Framework Directive (WFD) requirements, as set forth in its Association Agreement with the European Union. In this regard, the Draft Law on Water Resources developed by Georgia with EU support is a key element to pursue reforms in the water sector and ensure sustainable and qualitative water resources for all. The Draft Law is at an advanced stage of readings at the Parliament of Georgia with adoption expected in spring 2023. The country has also started enhancing capacities of the National Environmental Agency for conducting research for the quantitative and qualitative indicators of water resources in the entire territory of Georgia in compliance with the internationally recognized standards adopted by EU countries. Moreover, Georgia has developed a national program with the support of the European Union, which helps to ensure the monitoring of quantitative and qualitative indicators of water resources across the country.

Speakers welcomed the new EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data programme, which builds on the previous success of EUWI+ and SEIS II projects and aims to extend support for Georgia in strengthening the sustainable management of water resources and improving quality and access to environmental data.

The first and second sessions of the NPD agenda provided updates on the two components of EU4Environment Water and Data programme and presented an opportunity for Steering Committee members to consider policy questions proposed by the implementing partners. Thematic Session 1 discussed the challenges of water resources management with key discussion points, including the role of river basin management planning, improving water monitoring (including of COVID in wastewater) and the availability of data, linkages to water and health, legislative developments and enhanced transboundary cooperation in the Khrami-Debed and Alazani basins as well as support to the review and implementation of economic instruments and a mobilisation of finances for effective measures. Thematic

session 2 captured a rich discussion on the challenges around environmental statistics, waste, air and land data and a specific discussion on some of the legal and institutional challenges in improving reporting and inter-institutional data availability.

Thematic session 3 provided a platform for donor exchange on challenges and opportunities for water sector with updates from a range of projects, important for the topics of the EU4Environment Water and Data programme. Speakers represented the following projects: USAID Economic Governance: support for Implementation of the Draft Water Law of Georgia, EU4EMBLAS project, UNDP-GCF: scaling-up multi-hazard early warning system and the use of climate information in Georgia, ADB/AFD: policy-based loan on water resources management project in Georgia.

On day 2, a half-day workshop on Nature based Solutions (NbS) discussed the potential of NbS to contribute towards improving the environmental performance in Georgia. Various Steering Committee members, joined by additional representatives of environmental NGOs, participated in the workshop to exchange experiences and consider how NbS might support their work to tackle relevant environmental objectives. The EU4Environment Water and Data implementing partners described the intent for work on this area under the new programme and that this introductory workshop aimed to raise awareness of the different type of NbS approaches and possibilities in this direction, ahead of more detailed and regional discussion as the programme progresses. Speakers from the European Commission's DG Environment, IUCN and the EU4Environment implementing partners presented background on latest trends in NbS and international case studies while speakers from the Society for Nature Conservation – SABUKO, Center for Biodiversity Conservation & Research – NACRES, Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus – RECC, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network – CENN, UNDP-GEF Kura II Project provided direct experience from within Georgia. The workshop concluded with a site visit to the Krtsanisi Forest Park – NbS site, a wetland under restoration next to Mtkvari/Kura river.

All Steering Committee members and partners were thanked for their participation and commitment to this platform. It was agreed that the Steering Committee will meet again in approximately 1 year to review progress and share results of implementation of the projects presented at this meeting including monitoring realisation of environmental, social and economic benefits. Participants agreed that the Steering Committee should ask to establish a working group on Georgia's accession to the UNECE Protocol on Water and Health. Some participants commented that EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data programme will be very instrumental for future projects in the region.

## 2. Participation and visibility

Across the 1.5 days over 60 participants joined the NPD and NbS workshop either in person or in online mode. Participants were 48% female and 52% male.

A news articles were published on the MEPA web site, EU4Environment Water and Data programme site, social media posts were posted through partner’s channels. Key links are reproduced below:

- MEPA web site article: <https://mepa.gov.ge/En/News/Details/21124>
- EU Delegation to Georgia twitter: <https://twitter.com/EUinGeorgia/status/1602617345289093126?s=20&t=g0eB-zB-2kDf1nMNnavu2A>
- EU4Environment Water and Data programme website: <https://eu4waterdata.eu/en/blog-news/32-georgia/168-eu-supports-georgia-s-water-sector-reforms-through-policy-dialogue.html>
- EU4Environment Water and Data programme Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/EU4Envwaterdata/posts/pfbid0J6QJpmyzdV4C5zqakDR5GtrY8bFsfByMKoMLd9HEaWsrcVEwczG1XtGVVHKZTxLwI>

### About National Policy Dialogues

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

### About EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data

This programme aims at improving people’s wellbeing in EU’s Eastern Partner Countries and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme’s activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens. The programme is implemented by five Partner organisations: Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OIeau) (France), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The programme is principally funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and the French Artois-Picardie Water Agency based on a budget of EUR 12,75 million (EUR 12 million EU contribution). The implementation period is 2021-2024.

### 3. Annexes

#### 3.1. List of participants

N	Name	Gender (M/F)	Organization, position	Contact Information (e-mail, phone) (optional)
1.	Ms. Nino Tandilashvili	F	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA), Deputy Minister	<a href="mailto:nino.tandilashvili@mepa.gov.ge">nino.tandilashvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
2.	Ms. Zinaida Chkhaidze	F	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), Deputy Head of the Department of Infrastructure Policy and Relations with Development Partners	<a href="mailto:z.chkhaidze@mrdi.gov.ge">z.chkhaidze@mrdi.gov.ge</a>
3.	Ms. Maia Javakhishvili	F	MEPA Department of Environment and Climate Change, Deputy Head of Department	<a href="mailto:maia.javakhishvili@mepa.gov.ge">maia.javakhishvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
4.	Ms. Mariam Makarova	F	MEPA Department of Environment and Climate Change, Head of Water Division	<a href="mailto:mariam.makarova@mepa.gov.ge">mariam.makarova@mepa.gov.ge</a>
5.	Mr. Solomon Maisuladze	M	MEPA Department of Waste and Chemicals Management,	<a href="mailto:solomon.maisuradze@mepa.gov.ge">solomon.maisuradze@mepa.gov.ge</a>
6.	Mr. Tinatin Karanashvili	M	MEPA Department of Hydro-melioration and Land Management, Head of Department	<a href="mailto:tinatin.karanashvili@mepa.gov.ge">tinatin.karanashvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
7.	Ms. Irine Lomashvili	F	MEPA Department of Biodiversity and Forestry, Chief Specialist	<a href="mailto:irine.lomashvili@mepa.gov.ge">irine.lomashvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
8.	Ms Ema Barkalaia	F	The State Sub-Agency Department of Environmental Supervision (under MEPA), Industrial Emissions and Waste Control, Chief Specialist	<a href="mailto:emmabarkalaia@gmail.com">emmabarkalaia@gmail.com</a>

9.	Ms. Ketis Shangiradze	F	LEPL Environmental Information and Education Center – EIEC	
10.	Ms. Tamar Pitskhelauri	F	LEPL National Environmental Agency – NEA, Head of Agency	<a href="mailto:Tamar.Pitskhelauri@nea.gov.ge">Tamar.Pitskhelauri@nea.gov.ge</a>
11.	Ms. Marine Arabidze	F	NEA Department of Pollution Monitoring, Head of Department	<a href="mailto:Marine.Arabidze@nea.gov.ge">Marine.Arabidze@nea.gov.ge</a>
12.	Ms Tamar Gamgebeli	F	MEPA, Environmental Assessment Department, Senior Specialist	<a href="mailto:Tamar.gamgebeli@mepa.gov.ge">Tamar.gamgebeli@mepa.gov.ge</a>
13.	Mr. Nika Gogatishvili	M	MEPA - Environment and Climate Change Department, Water Division, Senior Specialist	<a href="mailto:Nika.gogatishvili@mepa.gov.ge">Nika.gogatishvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
14.	Mr. Alexander Mindorashvili	M	MEPA - Environment and Climate Change Department, Head of Water Division	<a href="mailto:Aleksandre.mindorashvili@mepa.gov.ge">Aleksandre.mindorashvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
15.	Ms. Lika Aptsiauri	F	NEA Laboratory of Atmospheric Air, Water and Soil Analysis, Head of Laboratory	<a href="mailto:Lia.Aptsiauri@nea.gov.ge">Lia.Aptsiauri@nea.gov.ge</a>
16.	Mr. Ramaz Chitanava	M	NEA Department of Hydrometeorology,	<a href="mailto:ramaz.chitanava@nea.gov.ge">ramaz.chitanava@nea.gov.ge</a>
17.	Mr. Besik Kavtaria	M	NEA Department of Hydrometeorology, Head of the Inland Hydrology Division	<a href="mailto:besik.kavtaria@nea.gov.ge">besik.kavtaria@nea.gov.ge</a>
18.	Mr. Merab Gaprindashvili	M	NEA Department of Geology, Head of Department	<a href="mailto:merab.gaprindashvili@nea.gov.ge">merab.gaprindashvili@nea.gov.ge</a>
19.	Mr. Baadur Ukleba	M	Georgian Amelioration, LLC, Head of Water Use and Environmental Protection Division	<a href="mailto:baadurukleba@mail.ru">baadurukleba@mail.ru</a>

20.	Ms Lela Nonikashvili	F	MEPA, Department of Policy Coordination and Analysis; Senior specialist of the Rural Development and Environmental Protection Policy Coordination Division	<a href="mailto:Lela.nikolaishvili@mepa.gov.ge">Lela.nikolaishvili@mepa.gov.ge</a>
21.	Ms. Irakli Apkhaidze	M	National Statistics Office of Georgia, Deputy Executive Director	<a href="mailto:iapkhaidze@geostat.ge">iapkhaidze@geostat.ge</a>
22.	Ms. Giorgi Sanadze	M	National Statistics Office of Georgia, Head of Department of Agriculture and Environment Statistics	<a href="mailto:gsanadze@geostat.ge">gsanadze@geostat.ge</a>
23.	Mr. Vakhtang Kikabidze	M	National Food Agency; Senior specialist of non-animal food and beverage department	<a href="mailto:Vakhtang.kikabidze@nfa.gov.ge">Vakhtang.kikabidze@nfa.gov.ge</a>
24.	Ms. Salome Kurtsikidze	F	National Food Agency	<a href="mailto:s.kurtsikidze@nfa.gov.ge">s.kurtsikidze@nfa.gov.ge</a>
25.	Mr. Alexander Darras	M	European Union Delegation to Georgia (EUD), Attaché, Team Leader Connectivity, Energy, Environment & Climate change	<a href="mailto:Alexandre.DARRAS@eeas.europa.eu">Alexandre.DARRAS@eeas.europa.eu</a>
26.	Mr. Raphaël Jozan	M	French Development Agency (AFD), Head of the Regional Representative Office in Tbilisi for South Caucasus	<a href="mailto:jozanr@afd.fr">jozanr@afd.fr</a>
27.	Mr. Jan Joost Nijhoff	M	The World Bank, Europe and Central Asia Region (WB) Senior Agriculture Economist, WB South Caucasus	<a href="mailto:jinijhoff@worldbank.org">jinijhoff@worldbank.org</a>
28.	Darejan Kapanadze	F	World Bank, Senior Env.Specialist	
29.	Ms. Sophiko Chikhradze	F	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Principal Banker, Sustainable Infrastructure Group	<a href="mailto:CHIKHRAS@ebrd.com">CHIKHRAS@ebrd.com</a>

30.	Mr. Antoine Pogorzelski	F	Expertise France, Groupe AFD Resident Twinning Advisor, Support to implementation of Health Impact Assessment practice in Georgia	<a href="mailto:antoine.pogorzelski@expertisefrance.fr">antoine.pogorzelski@expertisefrance.fr</a>
31.	Ms. Tamar Buadze	F	USAID Economic Governance Programme Programme Officer	<a href="mailto:tbuadze@egp.ge">tbuadze@egp.ge</a>
32.	Mariam Bakhtadze	F	USAID Economic Governance Programme Natural Resource Management Advisor	<a href="mailto:mbakhtadze@egp.ge">mbakhtadze@egp.ge</a>
33.	Ms. Ketevan Skhireli	F	UNDP project - Scaling-up Multi-Hazard Early Warning System in Georgia, Project Coordinator	<a href="mailto:ketevan.skhireli@undp.org">ketevan.skhireli@undp.org</a>
34.	Ms. Nino Rostomashvili	F	Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus – RECC, Project Manager	<a href="mailto:maia.talakhadze@rec-caucasus.org">maia.talakhadze@rec-caucasus.org</a>
35.	Ms. Nino Bregadze	F	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network – CENN, Project Manager	<a href="mailto:nino.rostomashvili@rec-caucasus.org">nino.rostomashvili@rec-caucasus.org</a>
36.	Mr. Aleksandre Mikeladze	M	Society for Nature Conservation – SABUKO, Project Manager	<a href="mailto:alex.mikeladze@sabuko.org">alex.mikeladze@sabuko.org</a>
37.	Mr. Tornike Bubashvili	M	Society for Nature Conservation, SABUKO Policy Officer	<a href="mailto:Office@sabuko.org">Office@sabuko.org</a>
38.	Mr Aleko Panchulidze	M	Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Earth, Chair	
39.	Ms Maia Julakidze	F	UNDP_GEF Kura II	<a href="mailto:julakidzemaka@yahoo.com">julakidzemaka@yahoo.com</a>
40.	Mr. Giorgi Dzamukashvili	M	National Water Partnership of Georgia (member of GWP), Director	<a href="mailto:george.dzamuka@gmail.com">george.dzamuka@gmail.com</a>



41.	Mr Irakli Jeiranashvili	M	NEA	<a href="mailto:i.jeiranasjvili@nea.gov.ge">i.jeiranasjvili@nea.gov.ge</a>
42.	Mr Beka Chikhladze	M	GWP	<a href="mailto:Bchikhladze@gwp.ge">Bchikhladze@gwp.ge</a>
43.	Ms Nino Sul Khanishvili	F	GWP	
44.	Ms Gvantsa Darispanashvili	F	Georgian Amelioration	
45.	Mr Teimuraz Lochoshvili	M	Georgian Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission	<a href="mailto:t.lochoshvili@gnerc.org">t.lochoshvili@gnerc.org</a>
46.	Ms. Maka Goderdzishvili	F	United Water Supply Company of Georgia Head of the Department of Environmental Protection and Social Affairs	
47.	Mr. Zurab Chilingarashvili	M	United Water Supply Company of Georgia Senior Specialist of the Department of Environmental Protection and Social Affairs	
48.	Mr. Nikoloz Kakhidze	M	United Water Supply Company of Georgia Head of Geoinformation Systems and Asset Management Department	
49.	Mr. Alexander Zinke	M	Austrian Environment Agency (UBA), EU4Environment - Water and Data, Programme Action Leader	<a href="mailto:Alexander.Zinke@umweltbundesamt.at">Alexander.Zinke@umweltbundesamt.at</a>
50.	Mr. Johannes Mayer,	M	Austrian Environment Agency (UBA), EU4Environment - Water and Data, Component-2 Leader	<a href="mailto:johannes.mayer@umweltbundesamt.at">johannes.mayer@umweltbundesamt.at</a>
51.	Mr. Andreas Scheidleder	M	Austrian Environment Agency (UBA) EU4Environment - Water and Data, Monitoring Action Leader	<a href="mailto:andreas.scheidleder@umweltbundesamt.at">andreas.scheidleder@umweltbundesamt.at</a>

52.	Ms. Maria Krasteva	F	Austrian Environment Agency (UBA) EU4Environment - Water and Data, Waste Data Action Leader	<a href="mailto:Maria.Krasteva@extern.umweltbundesamt.at">Maria.Krasteva@extern.umweltbundesamt.at</a>
53.	Mr. Yannick Pochon,	M	International Office of Water (OiEau), EU4Environment - Water and Data, RBMP Activity Leader	<a href="mailto:y.pochon@oieau.fr">y.pochon@oieau.fr</a>
54.	Mr. Matthew Griffiths	M	Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD), Senior Programme Manager, Green Growth and Global Relations Division	<a href="mailto:Matthew.GRIFFITHS@oecd.org">Matthew.GRIFFITHS@oecd.org</a>
55.	Mr. Alexander Belokurov	M	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Environmental Affairs Officer	<a href="mailto:alexander.belokurov@un.org">alexander.belokurov@un.org</a>
56.	Mr. Zurab Jincharadze	M	EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data, Georgia Programme Representative	<a href="mailto:z.jincharadze@eu4waterdata.eu">z.jincharadze@eu4waterdata.eu</a>
57.	Ms. Keti Metreveli	F	EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data, Programme Administrative and Finance Assistant	<a href="mailto:k.metreveli@eu4waterdata.eu">k.metreveli@eu4waterdata.eu</a>
58.	Ms. Tamar Loladze	F	EU4Environment - Water Resources and Environmental Data, UBA Consultant for Waste Data, Comp. 2	<a href="mailto:t.loladze@eu4waterdata.eu">t.loladze@eu4waterdata.eu</a>

### 3.2. Agenda

#### DAY 1

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM

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

Local Time	Item	Speaker
09:30-10:00	Registration and welcome coffee	
10:00-10:30	Opening and welcoming statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tour de table - Introduction from members of Steering Committee</li> <li>• Adoption of Agenda</li> </ul>	- N. Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) of Georgia - A. Darras, Attaché, Team Leader Connectivity, Energy, Environment & Climate change, EU Delegation to Georgia - A. Zinke, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme
10:30-12:00	Thematic session 1: Dialogue on water resources management in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project  Session to include planning and progress on River Basin Management Planning, Water Quantitative Management Plan, Water Monitoring including COVID monitoring, Economic Instruments, Mobilising Finance, Water and Health, Legislative developments and Transboundary cooperation in Khrami-Debed and Alazani River basins  Q&A and discussion	Moderator: OECD  UBA, IOW, UNECE, OECD
12:00-12:30	Coffee Break	
12:30-13:30	Thematic session 2: Dialogue on environmental statistics and open data in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project  Session to include progress on Environmental Data and open data issues, including water accounts, environmental data, air quality, waste, land cover mapping and international co-operation.  Q&A and discussion	Moderator: MEPA  UBA, IOW, UNECE
13:30-15:00	Lunch	
15:00-16:30	Thematic session 3: Donor exchange on challenges and opportunities for water sector.  To include presentations and dialogue with relevant projects and donors active on water in Georgia. To discuss ongoing activities and principles, achievements, challenges and future opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID Economic Governance: Support for Implementation of the Draft Water Law of Georgia</li> </ul>	Moderator: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID Economic Governance Programme (tbc)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU4EMBLAS Project</li> <li>• UNDP-GCF: Scaling-up Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and the Use of Climate Information in Georgia</li> <li>• ADB/AFD: Policy Based Loan on Water Resources Management Project in Georgia</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine Arabidze, Head of NEA Pollution Monitoring Department</li> <li>• Ketevan Skhireli, UNDP-GCF Project Coordinator</li> <li>• Raphaël Jozan, Head of AFD Regional Office in Tbilisi</li> </ul>
16:30-17:00	Coffee Break	
17:00-18:00	Closing remarks and meeting summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair to provide closing statement, key messages, decisions, next steps</li> <li>- Provide an introductory overview of Day 2</li> </ul>
18:00	Networking cocktail	

**DAY 2**

**Thematic workshop on potential of Nature-based Solutions  
towards sustainable river basin management in Georgia**

Online link: <https://theuniversalconsulting-ge.zoom.us/j/87162822662> (meeting ID: 871 6282 2662)

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

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

### 3.3. Pictures

#### NPD meeting on 6 December 2022





**Krtsanisi Forest Park field visit on 7 December 2022**



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