



EU4Environment in Eastern Partner Countries: Water Resources and Environmental Data (ENI/2021/425-550)

## **WORKSHOP REPORT**

## **"COUNTRY SPACE" FOR GEORGIA (SOER2025) & SDG INDICATOR 6.3.2**

Date:

18 January 2024

Workshop Lead: Florian Wolf-Ott, Gabriele Vincze

#### **Output n°:**

2.5 International sharing of data and networking is maintained

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Implementing partners



Austrian Development Agency







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- **SUBJECT:** Workshop on a "Country Space" for Georgia in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2023 and introduction to SDG indicator 6.3.2 "Proportion of water bodies with good ambient water quality"
- VENUE: Wyndham Grand Tbilisi Hotel, 3 Lado Gudiashvili Street, Tbilisi, Georgia
- AGENDA: Annex 1
- PARTICIPANTS: Annex 2
- DOCUMENTS: Internal Project Sharepoint SOER-2025 Workshop 18 Jan 2024

### 1. Scope of the workshop

## **1.1. Introductory workshop on developing a "country space" for Georgia in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2025**

The objective for this workshop was to introduce the SOER 2025 approach that is more integrated, systemic and with a transformative perspective: transitions monitoring at the country level. Transitions monitoring at the country level is an approach to monitor environmental performance and socio-economic change at the country level with the ambition to understand if and how societies are transforming established societal systems around energy, mobility and food towards more sustainable modes of production and consumption.

The workshop aimed to start identifying relevant and available data and its competent data holders, it seeks to discuss potential alternative indicators in case of data gaps and tried to address Georgian competent authorities on possible updates of relevant information.

A potential engagement of Georgia now gives the opportunity to express already capabilities of the Georgian competent authorities to participate in a European Environmental reporting process in due time and to populate a country space as a window to show good Georgian practice. In the light of European accession, this would be a straightforward contribution from competent Georgian authorities.

# **1.2.** Indicators SDG 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

The aim of the intervention was to encourage Georgia to submit data for the 2023 data drive of SDG 6.3.2. The project team also offered support with data preparation and calculation of the indicator.

As part of the SOER 2025 workshop the SDG indicator 6.3.2 "Proportion of water bodies with good ambient water quality" was presented. As this indicator is already known in Georgia, Georgia reported on groundwater in 2020, new developments were presented. The so called level 2 reporting has been added since the last reporting cycle.





Data on this indicator is collected every 3 years and the deadline for the newest data collection was 1 October 2023. It is still possible to submit data, however, this data will not be included into the 2024 Progress report any more. All SDG information is sent to UN Statistical Division by the custodian agencies on an annual basis although the SDG 6.3.2 indicator works to a three-year reporting cycle. In those years that new data are not available, the most recent data are resend. Additional countries, also data of Georgia, can be added at that point.



Figure 1: Plenum at the Introductory workshop SOER2025 - MEPA chair, Umweltbundesamt experts and one EU4ENV Water & Data expert, January 18, 2024.

### 2. Main results / outputs

#### 2.1. General explanations regarding SOER Country Space 2025

Mr. Wolf-Ott introduced the possibility to associate Georgia to the "country space" development process of the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2025. The role of the European Environment Agency (EEA) that is mandated by its governing regulation to publish a report on the state of, trends in and prospects for the environment in Europe every five years, was explained. This report can be considered one of the flagship products of the EEA.

The ambition with SOER 2025, building further upon past SOERs, that is to provide decision makers and the general public with the knowledge that informs and inspires them to achieve sustainability was shown. This requires a credible, legitimate, relevant and accessible assessment, based on objective, reliable and comparable information on the environment and climate and how it is intertwined with economic and social considerations in a broader sustainability context. The digitalization of SOER 2025 emerged as one of the high priorities for the development process of SOER 2025 and is a





key activity to realize the EEA-Eionet ambition to make full use of the potential of data, technology and digitalization.

Mr Wolf-Ott highlighted also that there is also opportunity on international reporting and if relevant information is available on country level Georgia should show their progress and be visible to Europe. That will help as a candidate country towards accession to European Union.

### 2.2. Indicators of the SOER Country Space 2025 - discussion

#### Indicator 1 Area under organic farming

**Irakli Tsikhelashvili** – **Head of Environmental Statistics Division** – **National Statistics office of Georgia** – Based on official statistics, there is no valuable information regarding organic farming in Georgia and some data is available from existing research surveys (12 000 farm annually) that distinguish between conventional farming and approaches resembling organic farming. Addressing this challenge requires the development of a comprehensive methodology or framework that defines organic farming (according to the EEA - indicator definition)practices in a consistent and standardized manner.

#### Ilia Kuntchulia - Georgian Farmers Association -

Natureland Project: supported by the German government, aims to promote organic farming in Georgia, specifically in winemaking and tea production. The project is planned to continue for two years. Greta Project: The Greta Project, funded by Austria, was focused on organic farming and ended the 2023 year. While the specific details of this project are not provided, he mentioned that there have been prior initiatives to support organic agriculture in Georgia. Certification Process: There is one accredited organization in Georgia responsible for granting organic certifying organic farms and determining the area of land dedicated to organic farming. Challenges in Determining Organic Land: While it is relatively straightforward to determine the area of land certified as organic through the accredited organization, accurately assessing the total amount of land suitable for agriculture and the proportion dedicated to organic farming poses challenges. This may require more comprehensive surveys or assessments to obtain accurate data.

**Salome Nozadze** – **Biodiversity Department, MEPA** - This indicator is in the list of indicators of the Ministry, certified and non-certified organizations; in 2018, according to Elkana data, there were up to 1500 hectares of organic farms.

Suggestion for at least working as a pragmatic proxy indicators was suggested by Mr. Wlf-Ott: e.g. by simply summarize ton a project base well documented activites (e.g. such as by the Austrian development Agency supported projects on organic farming in Georgia and/or German company Naturlands activities, since it is a certified company under EU-law as an organic certifier)

#### Indicator 2 Designated terrestrial protected areas

**Salome Nozadze** – **Biodiversity Department, MEPA** – The Ministry currently is working on the development of national biodiversity monitoring system also with UNEP developed indicators.





Questions that arose in the discussins were: Do EU countries report in EEA reporting format or UNEP fact sheet format? What could be the recommendation for Georgia?

Another process is the National Biodiversity Action Plan and a strategy development process, which will have to do the biodiversity indicator framework. Georgia is part of the Bern Convention and EEA is supporting reporting to this convention. Georiga has an indicator according to the EEA methodology developed and it could be easily updated on request.

Reporting in SEIS project website also exists and can be updated (status today: up to 2017).

Summarizing this would be one of the first indicators to work on since EEA methods are well established

#### Indicator 3 GHG Emissions / Indicator 4 LULUCF emissions

**Irakli Tsikhelashvili – Head of Environmental Statistics Division – National Statistics office of Georgia** -Mentioned that based on national greenhouse gas inventory report there is information regarding GHG emissions. He also highlighted the fact that Regional Environment Center for the Caucasus (Rec Caucasus) currently works on information collection and identification of the GHG emission sources , based on economic sectors.

**Maia Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Environment and Climate Change** - the Ministry (MEPA) plays a central role in coordinating processes related to climate change mitigation and reporting in Georgia. The data used for climate change reporting and calculations are derived from national reporting documents related to international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These documents provide a basis for assessing Georgia's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change impacts. The latest available information for climate change reporting is from 2017. Georgia has approved a Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDs) document, indicating a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. This strategy likely outlines specific goals, targets, and actions to be implemented to achieve emissions reduction objectives. The new NDC document will be approved in 2025.

**REC Caucasus -** 32 municipalities in Georgia are signatories to the Mayors' Agreement, where each has an obligation to reduce greenhouse gases by 35%.

#### Indicator 5 Climate-related economic loss

Xx According to the discussion this indicator seems not to be existing, nor a proxy indicator could be suggested by now in exchange. (Preliminary – not further discussed idea by Mr. Wolf-Ott: It might be illustrated at least e.g by statistics of weather extremes)

#### Indicator 6 Share of renewable energy consumption and indicator 7 Energy consumption

**Ministry of Economy - Tamar Sabelashvili -** informed that Georgia is a member country of the Energy Union and has an obligation from this union to develop target indicators for renewable





energies. In 2022 an agreement was reached between the Energy Union of Georgia and the European Commission and the national target indicator was set to 27.4% - to be reached by 2030.

Today, based on the national energy and climate action plan of Georgia the share of renewable energy is 19%, - the data is from 2022.

In terms of energy consumption, there are also target figures and those targets are also agreed with the European Commission and the Energy Union. 5.44 million tons of energy is determined for primary energy consumption. 5 million megatons for secondary end use.

This is part of the national policy and the energy and climate action plan has been submitted to the parliament and will be approved this year.

Irakli Tsikhelashvili – Head of Environmental Statistics Division – National Statistics office of Georgia -

Statistic office annually publish data on energy balance, according to the format of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) environmental indicators. (G-1 - final energy consumption, G-2 - Total primary energy supply, G-3- Energy intensity, G-4 - Renewable energy supply).

The energy balance allows us to produce accounts of physical flows in the direction of energy with the latest statistics strategy.

#### Ministry of Economy - Tamar Sabelashvili -

In the national energy plan, the scenarios are counted according to the Times model. Using a combination of renewable energy and energy consumption as a proxy indicator for energy efficiency is indeed a practical approach, particularly when specific efficiency indicators are lacking.

#### **Indicator 8 Total waste generation**

Maia Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Environment and Climate Change – Unfortunately, no data is available for Georgia in the UNECE.

**Irakli Tsikhelashvili** – **Head of Environmental Statistics Division** – **National Statistics office of Georgia** – the statistic office has total waste generation data only from landfills and this information is only available for municipal waste. It was expected to have a waste data collection system at MEPA. It is fulfilled but does not work properly and no data can be taken from it. It is still expected that in two years this system can be functional and they will have disaggregated data.

#### Indicator 9 Circular material use rate

Currently, no information is published about circular materials use rate or waste recycling systems. It was mentioned that because no data and also, no prospect of obtaining reliable data in the nearest future is possible, one option could be to remove the circular material use rate indicator from SOE2025 country space or alternatively, considering the importance of the mentioned indicator only a textual description could be added to the report. This description





could explain the lack of available information and perhaps, mention any efforts or initiatives in place to improve data collection or waste management practices in the country.

**Maia Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Environment and Climate Change** – is afraid that still no data is available. There is an ongoing processes, the ministry is working on a circular economy roadmap and CE strategy but no particular information is at the moment available.

#### Indicator 10 Health impacts of exposure to fine particulate matter

**Nia Giuashvili – NCDC – comprehensive and difficult indicator.** Identical with the corresponding SDG Indicator 11.6.2 Concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM2.5). Information is calculated by WHO for Georgia as an index. Mortality rate for indoor exposure. There will be soon a calculation for Tbilisi (covering a big share of the Georgian population) ready – this could for the beginning work as a proxy. Discussion: Florian Wolf-Ott would suggest this to be reported at least, when it is available.

Mortality rate of five groups of respiratory diseases are included. Conclusion from Nia Giaushvili: We should think about this indicator to be reported.

Lasha Akhalaia, Air protection Division, MEPA - NEA and Ministry is contributors to this indicator (air emissions) and are in the process of calculation of this one. For two cities it is done. They update the similar SDG indicator annually. Also, every two years the UNECE indicator is updated and updated tables are also available; this information is published on statistics websites and can maybe be used for analyzes. Expressed suggestion by Florian Wolf-Ott: to at least report air emission trendsas a proxy if no calculated SDG is available

Nino Chikovani – Head of the Land Divison, MEPA suggested Adding a soil and land indicator to country space for Georgia, particularly given the establishment of a dedicated land agency under the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA), that is a significant step towards comprehensive land management and sustainability. Agency works on compilation of land balance, on monitoring of land use and information, planning of measures to combat desertification and land degradation and restoring soil fertility, preparing thematic maps, soil balance (analyze the nutrients present in the soil in relation to each other) etc. . Ministry's land department is responsible for desertification convention requirements and reporting.

<u>Concluding Impression</u>: Due to the possibility to update already some of the existing EEA indicators and the availability of additional relevant information for Georgia, it seems feasible to create a country space for Georgia in due time in a meaningful way.







Figure 2: Plenum at the Introductory workshop SOER2025 – Representatives of the competent Georgian authorities, January 18, 2024.

# **2.3.** Indicators SDG 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

Gabriele Vincze gave presentation on the SDG indicator 6.3.2 "Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality". Information on the indicator can be found here: <u>https://www.unwater.org/our-work/integrated-monitoring-initiative-sdg-6/indicator-632-</u>

proportion-bodies-water-good-ambient. She mentioned that the program intends to introduce and support reporting on the SDG indicator 6.3.2. UNEP is the custodian of this indicator. European countries are also partly reporting on this indicator and UNEP tries to harmonise this indicator with European Water Framework Directive (WFD) reporting and the reporting of water data to the EEA for the SOER. The reporting unit are water bodies and the data measured at water bodies are aggregated to river basin district and the national level. There will be one score at the national level. The definition of the water body is up to each country. A water body can be defied according to the WFD guidelines or a complete river or river system can also be defined as water body.

**Ilia Kuntchulia - Georgian Farmers Association** – thanked the project for the meeting and asked if the number of groundwater monitoring sites that exist in Georgia can be compared to European groundwater monitoring networks and if the Georgian network is sufficient for the assessment. Are there requirements available? Gabriele's response was that there can be always improvements on the density of monitoring stations and there are statistical methods to asses how many sites are representative for groundwater bodies.

Irakli Tsikhelashvili – Head of Environmental Statistics Division – National Statistics office of Georgia – mentioned that there is a specific monitoring methodology in place for gathering data involving regular and mobile sites. These sites collect data twice a year. He considers the data is taken from first level of coverage and published for Georgia. Based on this data he assumed this data can be a valuable source.

Maia Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Environment and Climate Change — her department and specifically water division is responsible for SDG indicator 6.3.2, also water policy development,





reporting, strategic directions etc. Furthermore, she said that Georgian National Environmental Agency (NEA) is in charge of different environmental qualitative components and of water indicators. There are possibilities in future to plan mutual meeting or training for specific methodology sharing for Georgian colleagues; a workshop on SDG 6.3.2 would be most welcome.

**Elina Bakradze – Head of NEA – (responsible for pollution monitoring at NEA)** mentioned the importance that the Ministry should coordinate all processed indicators. There is no classification system available respective target values to compare measured values to targets; they work with max permissible concentrations. NEA collects, assess and sends data to MEPA. Would be great to get assistance and shared information how the indicator can be calculated for groundwater. They will share the information on already available data which can be sent already to UNEP so that UNEP can calculate the indicator (UNEP offers to calculate the indicator for countries; countries need to sent raw data).

Mariam Makarova – Head of the Water Division of MEPA – stated that NEA methodology is not as easy and it requires time and energy.

<u>Findings</u>: NEA is interested in the calculation of the DGS 6.3.2. They are ready to send data to UNEP so that UNEP can calculate the indicator. There are competence issues regarding surface water and groundwater – Elina Bakradze is responsible for Pollution Monitoring and surface water, she is the primary focal point for SDG 6.3.2; Nana Kitiashvili is supporting and is responsible for groundwater. Nana sent in 2020 data on groundwater to UNEP so that there are now groundwater data for Georgia available for SGD 6.3.2 (for 2020).

STEP/TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE	FOLLOW UP
High Level Letter supporting the development of a "country space" for Georgia in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2025	J. Mayer	March 2024	
Identifying counterparts in Georgia's competent authorities to coordinate a "country space" for Georgia in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2025	J. Mayer	March 2024	
Identifying first potential topics to start populating a "country space" for Georgia in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2025 – Data/Indicators/Porxy-Indcators	F. Wolf-Ott	April 2024	
Organizing first pilot draft assessments populating a "country space" for Georgia in the European State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2025 – indicator assessment, socio- economic system, food-energy system assessments	F. Wolf-Ott	June 2024	
Providing the presentations to the participants	F. Wolf-Ott, G. Vincze	asap	
Send relevant papers to Elina Bakradze and Nana Kitiashvili regarding SDG 6.3.2;	G. Vincze	March 2024	

## 3. Next steps / action list





coordinate meeting with UNEP or if wished		
organise a online workshop (together with		
colleagues from AM)		





- 4. Follow-up dates
- 5. Annexes

5.1. Agenda











Time:

12:00-15:45

#### AGENDA

### INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING A "COUNTRY SPACE" FOR GEORGIA IN THE EUROPEAN STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT (SOER) 2025

Date: Thursday 18 January 2024 Venue: Wyndham Grand Tbilisi hotel 3 Lado Gudiashvili Street, Tbilisi, Georgia

nd Tbilisi hotel reet, Tbilisi, Georgia

Local Time Item Speaker From 12:00 Registration with sandwich lunch - informal get-together 13:00-13:15 Welcome and introduction of participants Maia Javakishvili (MEPA) Florian Wolf-Ott (Austrian National Focal Point to the EIONET, Evironment Agency Austria) 13:15-13:30 Data collection for UN SDG 6.3.2 indicator - "Proportion of Gabriele Vincze (Water bodies of water with good ambient water quality" expert, Environment agency Austria) 13:30-14:00 Development Process of the European State-of-the Florian Wolf-Ott Environment Report (SOER) Published by European Environment Agency in dialogue with Member States Indicator-based "Country Spaces" on transition to sustainable development all · How can Georgia participate in the SOER 2025 process Questions and discussion 14:00-15:30 Indicators and Themes of the "Country Space" Florian Wolf-Ott • Area under Organic Farming 

(with coffee break)	Protected Terrestrial Areas     Greenhouse Gas and LULUCF emissions	Tamar Loladze
	<ul> <li>Climate-related economic losses</li> <li>Share of renewable energy and energy consumption</li> <li>Total waste generation</li> <li>Circular material use rate</li> <li>Health impacts of exposure to fine particulate matter</li> <li>Socio-economic change (5 indicators economic, 5 social dimensions - including energy poverty)</li> </ul>	Gabriele Vincze Georgian expert country feedback on data availability and options
15:30-15:45	<ul> <li>Closing session: Next steps</li> <li>What can we achieve (and what not)?</li> <li>Who does what until June 2024 to assure data research and a draft of indicator/data supported "country transition story" for SOER 2025</li> </ul>	Maia Javakishvili Florian Wolf-Ott all





#### 5.2. List of Participants



Funded by the European Union

EU4Environment Water and Data in Eastern Partner Countries

"EU4ENVIRONMENT – WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA" PROGRAMME INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING A 'COUNTRY SPACE' FOR GEORGIA IN THE EUROPEAN STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT (SOER) 2025

#### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS\*

DATE: 18 JANUARY 2023

#### VENUE: WYNDHAM GRAND TBILISI HOTEL; 3 LADO GUDIASHVILI STREET, TBILISI, GEORGIA

N	Name	Gender (M/F)	Organization, position	Contact Information (e-mail, phone) (optional)	Signature			
		Total me	Total women = Total men = Total participants =					
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2.	Mr. Florian Wolf-Ott	м	Austrian Environment Agency (UBA), EU4Environmnet - Water and Data, Component-2	Florian.Wolf-Ott@umweltbundesamt.at	(sall-0			

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5.	Mr. Kakha Lomashvili	м	MEPA Department of Environment and Climate Change, Climate Change Division	Kakha.Lomashvili@mepa.gov.ge	
6.	Mr. Lasha Akhalaia	м	MEPA Department of Environment and Climate Change, Senior Specialist of Ambient Air Division	lasha.akhalaia@mepa.gov.ge	c. 162000
7.	Mr. Noe Megrelishvili	м	MEPA Department of Environment and Climate Change, Head of Ambient Air Division	noe.megrelishvili@mepa.gov.ge	
8.	Mr. Omar Tsereteli	м	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MESD), Deputy Head of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Policy and Sustainable Development Department	otsereteli@moesd.gov.ge	

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