

Voluntary commitment 1 to the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (Nicosia call)

- 1. Country or organization:** Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA)
- 2. Title of the action (referencing in parenthesis the number of the related focus area(s) that the initiative will contribute to):** **Implement staff training programmes on sustainable infrastructure** ((9) promote public participation and education for sustainable development)
- 3. Description of the action:** The innovative program “Environmental and Agricultural Education in School”, which is being implemented nationwide in Georgia in schools through the integration into the different subjects, in particular at the elementary level (1-6 classes) is developed by LEPL Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) of MEPA. In 2020, within the framework of the program, an auxiliary textbook "Environmental and Agricultural Education in School" was developed. It presents 8 topics that combine theoretical material, activities and complex assignments. It also indicates what knowledge the student will acquire and what skills will be supported to develop through the activities and assignments presented within the topic.

In order to integrate the program into school, the training process started in 2021 and is underway. More than 3100 teachers have already been trained at this stage. Professional trainers of EIEC are intensively working to enhance the skills of 50,000 teachers in the fields of environment and agriculture. As a result, 500,000 school students will have opportunity to gain basic knowledge on important issues such as the Concept of Sustainable Development, Biodiversity Conservation, Water Conservation and Sustainable Management, Protecting the Air from Pollution, Climate Change and Natural Hazard Reduction, Land Management and Fight Against Desertification, Sustainable Agriculture, Food Safety and Quality.

The training course is recognized by the National Centre for Teachers Professional Development of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia as a mandatory course for teachers of 1-6 classes. Trained teachers are awarded with certificates and textbooks.

In order to improve the coordination of environmental education events and implementation of initiatives to raise the level of environmental awareness across the country, the Environmental Education Coordination Council was established at the EIEC.

One of the examples for building sustainable infrastructure are business service yards (BSY). BSY serves as an alternative to illegal logging and offers people easy access to firewood used for heating and other daily needs. EIEC is planning to disseminate the information through the “forest school” program on BSY and its role in the forestry sector during which school students will acquire theory-based and practical knowledge.

- 4. Timeframe/milestones for the action, as appropriate:** The training process started in 2021 for 4 years and will cover the whole country.
- 5. Type of action:** (c) information, education-based, capacity-building and voluntary instruments.
- 6. Economic sectors:** (c) sectors, including: agriculture, forestry and fishing; energy; mining; manufacturing; transport; water; waste; tourism; and housing, buildings and construction.
- 7. Reference instruments and sources, as appropriate:** Auxiliary textbook “Environmental and Agricultural Education in School” (first 8 topics on the link) - <https://eiec.gov.ge/En/EducationalResources>
- 8. Expected co-benefits and impact of the outcome:** The program “Environmental and Agricultural Education in School” aims to enhance environmental and agricultural awareness, green skills and knowledge in schools. BSY is one of the components of Georgia’s forest sector reform which aims at gradual shift towards sustainable practices.
- 9. SDGs target(s) that the action may contribute to implement:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (goal 2). Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (goal 4). Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (goal 6). Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (goal 7). Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (goal 12). Take urgent action to combat climate change

and its impacts (goal 13). Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (goal 14). Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (goal 15)

10. Implementation of Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Recommendations, as appropriate:

EPR Recommendation 3.5: The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources and other stakeholders, including NGOs and the mass media, should finalize, without delay, the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and develop an action plan for the implementation of the ECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development. It should also establish a Coordinating Council on Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development, involving all stakeholders, to make it an effective instrument for the promotion of the Strategy implementation.

Comment with regard to the first part of the Recommendation 3.5 on finalisation of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and develop an action plan for the implementation of the ECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development: All the related items are fully incorporated in the Fourth National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia (NEAP 4) (2022-2026)

EPR Recommendation 11.5: The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, should strengthen education, training and awareness-raising on sustainable forest management at both the central and local levels, including for local communities.

11. Objectively verifiable indicators, as appropriate: Verifiable indicators for the program are described in the following documents: NEAP 4, The Government Programme 2021-2024 “Toward Building a European State”, State Youth Strategy (2021-2025) and Action Plan (2022-2023), Ten-Year National Development Strategy of Georgia. As a verifiable indicator for four years training, it is determined to train at least 500 teachers yearly.

12. Partners: Ministry of Education And Science of Georgia

13. Contact point: Sustainable Development Division, Environment and Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (Lali Titilokashvili; E.mail: Lali.titilokashvili@mepa.gov.ge; Mob.: +995574605454).

Is the action related to the Nicosia environmental theme I: “Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure”? (YES / NO)

If yes, please indicate below to which “International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure” does the action contribute: (4) Avoiding environmental impacts and investing in nature

Is the action related to the Nicosia environmental theme II: “Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism”? (YES / NO)