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GREEN Guria

მეცნიერების გურია

Supporting Local Democracy and Rural Development for Inclusive and Resilient Green Growth

The project, Green Guria - Supporting Local Democracy and Rural Development for Inclusive and Resilient Green Growth, aims to reduce poverty and improve the economic and social environment and living conditions of vulnerable rural communities in disadvantaged regions of Georgia by enhancing civic participation, inclusive rural development and green growth. The task of the project is to strengthen the development potential of Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri municipalities and optimal use of local opportunities and resources.

The project is implemented by CENN in partnership with:

- ▶ **Young Pedagogues' Union**
- ▶ **Institute of Democracy**
- ▶ **Local Action Group of KEDA (LAG)**

The project is implemented with the support of the European Union within the ENPARD IV, the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development. The duration of the project is three years (December 8, 2022 – December 8, 2025).

Project activities

Within the framework of the project, the following activities are planned:

- ▶ Establishing and building the Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri LAGs based on the EU "Leader" principles.
- ▶ Participatory development of gender, child and VG-sensitive Local development strategies of Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri municipalities based on RBA.
- ▶ Greening and diversifying the rural economy via the implementation of innovative and replicable projects.
- ▶ Promoting civic participation and empowering women, youth and local CSOs to defend the rights of their constituencies and advocate for the provision of quality public services for VGs and fair and sustainable post-COVID recovery.

What is the EU LEADER approach?

LEADER is a local rural development method, which has been actively used in European countries since the 1990's. LEADER is a French acronym (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) meaning "Links between actions for the development of the rural economy". The main principle of LEADER is to facilitate rural development by establishing partnerships between the public, private, and civil society sectors and empowering their efforts. The method involves strengthening rural areas by delivering local strategies and resource allocation. The main instruments of the LEADER approach are Local Action Groups (LAG), which enable local people to make decisions concerning local socio-economic, cultural, and environmental issues. LEADER involves establishing links to share knowledge and experience and uniting local communities around a common goal.

Seven key characteristics of the LEADER approach

1. Developing a local development strategy based on a specific area in a participatory way;
2. Implementation of the mentioned strategy from the bottom up;
3. Strengthening local partnerships and local development groups;
4. Promotion of innovations: along with technical innovations, encouraging those social innovations that are of great importance to the villages;
5. Integrated and multi-sectoral actions;
6. Establishing connections and sharing experience with other groups involved in rural development;
7. Cooperation with local development groups of different regions to implement joint projects/initiatives.

What is a Local Action Group (LAG)?

A Local Action Group (LAG) comprises public and private organizations from rural villages, which identify and implement rural development strategies. In addition, LAGs can include farmers, entrepreneurs, community organizations, local residents, service providers, media organizations, women's unions, young people, people with disabilities, etc.

What is the Local Development Strategy (LDS)?

The Local Development Strategy is a vision developed by locals for the development of their region. Local participation is one of the cornerstones of the whole strategy development approach and the community's involvement in the preparation of the strategy is therefore essential. The strategy needs to be designed through a bottom-up process that must actively involve a representative cross-section of the local community to consider local needs and potential.

Other approaches of the project

- ▶ Ensuring equal participation opportunities for all stakeholders, including women and youth;
- ▶ Raising the awareness and strengthening the capacities of the local population;
- ▶ Establishing links with other local development groups in Georgia and Austria;
- ▶ Promotion of citizens' involvement in local budget management;
- ▶ Promotion of entrepreneurship;
- ▶ Attracting investments for the development of the region;
- ▶ Promoting the development of climate-smart agriculture and increasing the population's resilience to climate change;
- ▶ Financing of innovative projects corresponding to the development strategies of municipalities in order to promote entrepreneurship and increase local capacity;

- ▶ Participatory development and lobbying of development strategies of municipalities;
- ▶ Promotion and marketing of the Guria region;
- ▶ Synergies with other initiatives.

Target and beneficiary groups of the project

Target and beneficiary groups of the project are community institutions of Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri municipalities, local communities, local authorities, regional authorities, farmers, enterprises, tourist service providers, educational institutions and youth, tourists and visitors, and media organizations at local and regional levels.

Expected results of the project

- ➔ **Improved participatory bottom-up mechanisms for sustainable rural and territorial development.** Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri LAGs (3) are established with private, public and civic sector representation and equal gender and youth participation, representing VGs. LAGs are engaged in the rural and territorial development process following the EU's LEADER/CLLD approaches.
- ➔ **Improved policy dialogue and participatory implementation of rural development approaches.** Gender and youth-responsive and child- and environmentally-sensitive LDSs are developed based on RBA in a participatory way for 3 target municipalities. LDSs incorporate the needs of the local actors, especially those of VGs, as well as relevant SDGs in accordance with the SDG localisation action plan. LDSs' priorities, promoting mechanisms for resilient and sustainable rural livelihoods, are reflected in the Rural Development Agency's (RDA) programs, the LAGs' strategy documents and budgets.
- ➔ **Greener and diversified rural economy, increased areas with climate-smart forest and land management.** Rural economic diversification and inclusive green growth opportunities are demonstrated and offered via the implementation of sustainable projects (with the potential of replication on a greater scale) that attract people with technical skills and prevent the depopulation of

villages. Supported projects generate new development and rural opportunities, build the capacity of local stakeholders and improve: (a) the competitiveness of the agricultural practices and forest use; (b) the diversification of local economic activities; and (c) the quality of life in rural areas by increasing access to public services and infrastructure and/or improving the management of natural resources.

- ➔ **Empowered rural population and improved access for rural citizens to public services and infrastructure.** Civic participation is enhanced and accessibility and quality of state public services for particularly disadvantaged, remote and depopulated rural areas are improved via empowering women, youth and civil society, introducing digital and social innovation in rural services, facilitating multi-stakeholder issue-based dialogue and demonstrating effective CSOs-LAs partnerships. Local youth and women-led initiatives and advocacy campaigns are supported that promote EU values, participatory local democracy, gender equality, climate action and green post-COVID recovery.

Who we are

CENN

Since 1998, we have worked with local communities and national governments through region-wide initiatives to engender green growth at every level. At CENN, we believe that sustainable development is best achieved through networking, cooperation, and engaging with all sections of society. We implement joint initiatives with equal participation across Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to find viable solutions to local and regional environmental challenges.

With representation throughout the South Caucasus, more than 60 full-time members of staff, and a network of volunteers across the region, CENN has the capability and commitment to providing a service that is consistent, professional and of the highest quality. We create and deliver modern solutions for the public and business sectors and communities, assisting them in managing their environmental and related risks and helping them to achieve a competitive advantage through improved environmental, economic and social performance.

Partners

Young Pedagogues' Union

Since 1996, the Union of Young Teachers has been working to improve the mechanisms for protecting the social rights and interests of the vulnerable population of Georgia. The organization has three main directions: raising the civic awareness of adults/young people, strengthening democratic processes in educational institutions, and promoting civic involvement in improving the state's social protection policies/programs. The Union of Young Educators has been collaborating with local governments for many years, including facilitating youth involvement in community problem identification, advocacy campaigns, and policy document development processes at the local level.

Institute of Democracy

The Institute of Democracy has been operating since 2004 in order to support the rapid and modern development processes in Georgia through close cooperation with various institutions and the international sector. The organization's mission is to promote the development of democratic institutions and protect human rights. The Institute of Democracy operates mainly in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara and also implements programs in other regions of Western Georgia in the following main directions: protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, advocacy, support for the development of good governance, cooperation between sectors, support for the private-public dialogue process, professional education, and promotion of career growth.

One of the priority directions of the Institute of Democracy is the economic development of various groups in rural areas, increasing the availability of professional education, promoting the development of professional skills and employment among young adults and women.

Local Action Group of KEDA (LAG)

The Local Action Group of KEDA (LAG) was established in 2018 as part of the CENN project - Keda Leader, which is funded by the European Union. The LAG brings together active citizens of Keda municipality and has been working towards promoting inclusive development and improving rural welfare by integrating innovative approaches that have created diverse employment opportunities at the local level.

How to get involved in the project?

Anyone interested in the development of the Guria region can get involved in the project.

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More information about the ENPARD programme can be found at:
www.eu4georgia.eu

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Young Pedagogues' Union



Proud to be diverse