

ĊENN

Annual Report 2024 / Contributing to SDGs



Shaping the Future by Changing Today

N. JANASHIA



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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA	Austrian Development Agency	GFPA	Georgian Forest Product Association	NEA	National Environmental Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation	GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation	NFA	National Forest Agency
B2B	Business-to-business	GNTA	Georgian National Tourism Administration	NGO	Non-governmental Organization
CAG	Climate Action Group	HEKS-EPER	Swiss Church Aid	ONFI	Office National des Forêts International
CBO	Community-based Organization	HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach	PMCG	Policy and Management Consulting Group
CENN	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network	ICC	Information Consultation Centre	PV	Photovoltaics
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development	I-CISK	Innovating Climate Services through Integrating Scientific and Local Knowledge	PwDs	People with Disabilities
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease	IHE Delft	Delft Institute of Water Education	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CPC	Centre of Participation and Involvement	IPPA	Integrated Participatory Planning Approach	SDGWE	SDG Watch Europe
CRA	Climate Resilient Agriculture	IRI	International Republican Institute	SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
CSI	Civil Society Institute	ISFED	International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy	SMHI	Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute
CSO	Civil Society Organization	LA	Local Authority	SUP	Single-use Plastic
CSRDG	Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia	LAG	Local Action Group	SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
CTC	Center for Training and Consultancy	LDS	Local Development Strategy	UN	United Nations
EEB	European Environmental Bureau	LEADER	Links between the Rural Economy and Development Actions	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development	LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer	VET	Vocational Education and Training
EU	European Union	MAP	Multi-actor Platform	VNR	Voluntary National Review
EU AA	European Union Association Agreement	MEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform	WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
FFS	Farmer Field Schools	MSWG	Multi-Stakeholder Working Group		
FMP	Forest Management Plan	NbS	Nature-based Solution		
GA	Georgian Amelioration	NCP	National Climate Platform		
GEF	Global Environment Facility	NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions		
GEL	Georgian Lari				



A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear team, friends, and partners,

According to the latest Global Risks Report, five of the top ten projected global risks over the next decade are environmental. The growing impact of climate change, environmental pollution, and ecosystem collapse is being felt across societies and economies worldwide, demanding immediate, coordinated action.

Adding to these environmental concerns is the increasing fragmentation of the global landscape. We are witnessing an intensification of conflicts, severe climate-driven disasters, increasing social and political polarisation, and the rapid spreading of misinformation. This has resulted in shifting global priorities, and as a consequence, the world is off-track to meet the Agenda 2030 goals, as only 17 % of the SDG targets show sufficient progress to be met by 2030. In this increasingly uncertain world, optimism is waning.

However, if the past years have taught us anything, it is that there is no sustainable path forward without multi-level collaboration. The complexity and interdependence of today's challenges require shared solutions. Now more than ever, leaders across sectors must come together with honesty, trust, and urgency. Only by working constructively can we mitigate the risks we face and build more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

At CENN, we stay committed to Agenda 2030 as the universally recognized development goals for a meaningful social, economic, and environmental impact. As part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability, our team continues to align our initiatives with specific SDG targets. This year's report showcases the ways in which our work supports the following SDGs: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17.

We continue to stress the vital role of civil society and other stakeholders in addressing social inequality and environmental degradation. Let us move forward together, united in purpose and resolve, to create a more peaceful, democratic, green and inclusive future.

With gratitude and commitment,

Laurent G. E. Nicole

Executive Director

CENN

Climate Change, Environment and Energy

CENN's work in the Caucasus region to tackle challenges related to climate change, environmental protection, and green efficiency extends over two decades. We partner with all key stakeholders to create sustainable solutions for complex environmental problems.

CENN promotes inclusive environmental practices, the application of modern approaches and technologies, and builds sound environmental management systems at every level to support better natural resources management and biodiversity protection, increase climate resilience and energy efficiency, and create lasting opportunities that sustain livelihoods.

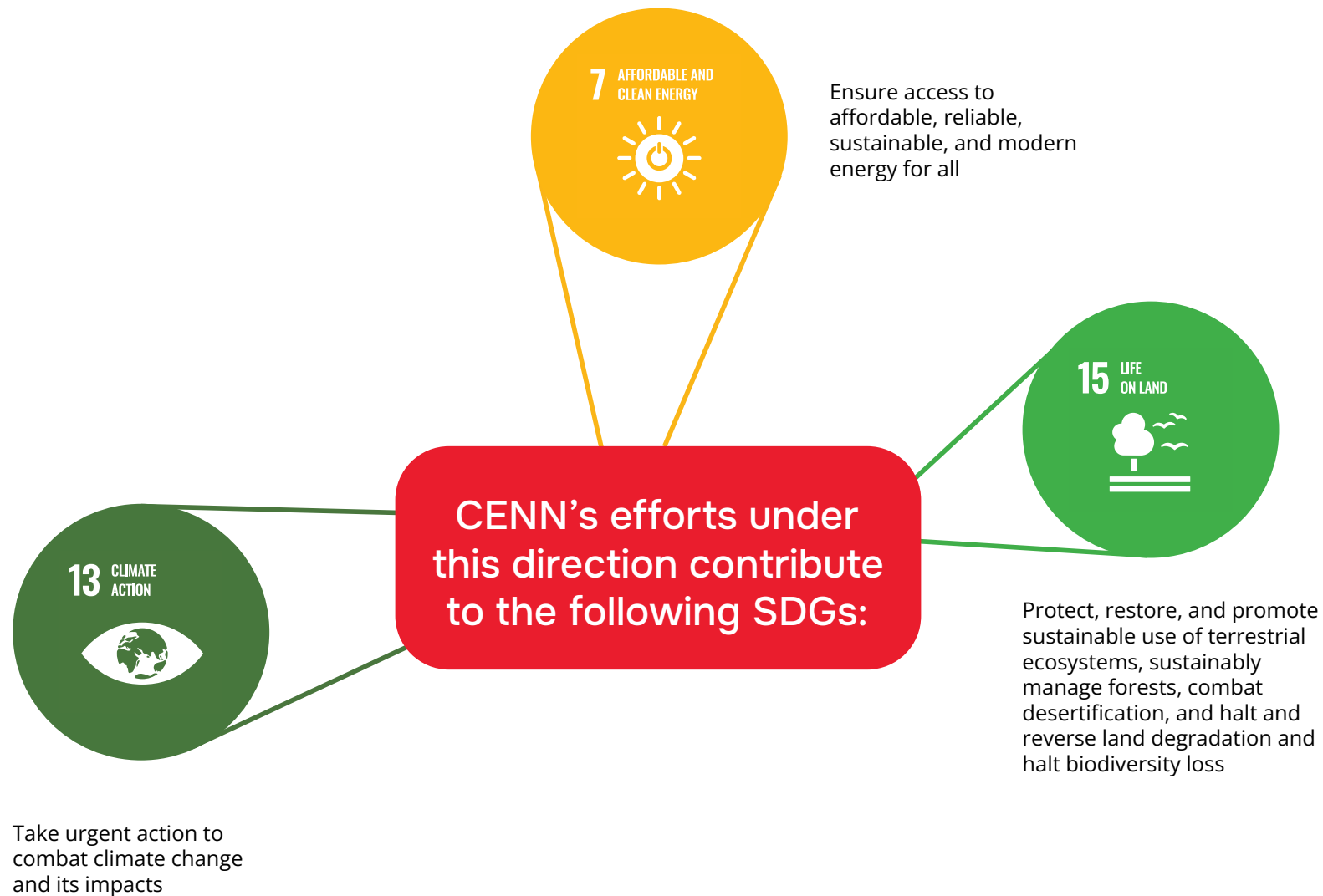
In 2024, under **environmental protection and natural resources management**, CENN addressed challenges in forest management and promoted sustainable development via an awareness-raising campaign about Forest Management Plans in Kvareli, Telavi, and Tianeti municipalities (Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions). CENN continued working on the expansion of sustainable forest product markets through the creation of incentives for the commercial utilization of forest resources and the enhanced capacity of both the private sector and farmers. CENN also prepared a report that explores existing challenges and opportunities in implementing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and SFM certification in Georgia.

In 2024, under **climate change (CC) mitigation, adaptation, and climate resilience**, CENN continued developing a streamflow prediction system and climate change scenarios in target watersheds. CENN continued

to support multi-stakeholder platforms created at the national (National Climate Platform (NCP)) and regional levels (Climate Action Groups (CAGs)) to facilitate the engagement of civil society in developing and implementing climate-related strategies as well as promotion of collective actions to mitigate CC's adverse effects on the environment, water security and the population's health. Furthermore, CENN continued supporting local CSOs in playing a key role in solving local climate change-related issues and engagement of civil society in developing and implementing climate-related strategies to be promoted through national and regional multi-stakeholder platforms.

Lastly, in 2024, regarding **renewable energy and energy efficiency**, CENN implemented an information and awareness-raising campaign on energy efficiency in Tbilisi.





Environmental protection and natural resources management

Environmental degradation and exploitation of natural resources represent one of the key challenges in the Caucasus region. The region is prone to a range of hazards, which can result in casualties, damage to infrastructure, and economic loss. These are often caused by unsustainable use of natural resources, economic activities, and improper waste management. CENN, in close cooperation with partner organizations, are working with communities, public and private sector to steer development towards sustainable solutions through capacity building of stakeholders and supporting the introduction of green and innovative practices. Moreover, CENN programs contributed to the delivery of commitments taken by the government of Georgia under the SDGs, NDC, and EU AA concerning the sustainable use of natural resources.

SDG Target 15.2:

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally



Contribution 1: Supporting Public Participation in Forest Management

In 2024, CENN continued working in Kvareli, Telavi, Tianeti, Chokhatauri, and Ozurgeti municipalities to address challenges in forest management and promote sustainable development. Following up on the stakeholder analysis conducted in 2023 and utilizing eco-cultural checklists to identify forest-dependent stakeholders, participatory planning was started aligned with the Integrated Participatory Planning Approach (IPPA). From January to December 2024, an Improved Public Participation Approach (IPPA) working group was formed to improve the IPPA methodology. The Improved Public Participation Approach (IPPA) addresses gaps in forest management by focusing on the needs of forest-dependent communities, reducing conflicts, and strengthening stakeholder engagement in Forest Management Plan (FMP) development within the National Forest Agency (NFA) protocols. It encourages collaborative management through Local Advisory Councils (LACs), ecosystem mapping, and public consultations, aiming to improve decision-making, prevent conflicts, and ensure local participation in forest governance.

In March 2024, working meetings on ecosystem service mapping were held in Telavi, Kvareli, and Tianeti municipalities, attended by representatives of local self-government, non-governmental organizations operating in the municipalities, local communities, the National Forest Agency (NFA) from Tbilisi, regional departments, and other interested parties. Participatory mapping of ecosystem services involved engaging stakeholders in mapping ecosystem services. Participants, including community members of the given municipality and experts, collaborated to identify and document the ecosystem services provided by the forests in the target municipalities. This process collected valuable input on the local environment and forests, highlighting their value and roles to stakeholders. During the mapping, stakeholders identified challenges and opportunities related to the forest ecosystem. Additionally, it helped to identify potential conflicts among stakeholders and provided a platform for discussing and finding resolutions to these conflicts in a collaborative manner. Following up on the participatory mapping exercise and additional LAC meetings, the collected data and maps were processed and developed for inclusion in respective Forest Management Plans (FMPs).

In addition, CENN developed comprehensive training concepts and materials on the participation of local stakeholders in forest management planning and implementation based on IPPA and conflict resolution, mediation, and dispute resolution in the forestry sector. The training covered various essential topics, emphasizing the importance of public participation and the active involvement of the community, especially local residents, in discussing and shaping the forest management plan, models and tools for managing and resolving culturally specific conflicts, causes of conflict, styles of conflict resolution. The training materials highlighted such aspects as the importance of public participation, incorporation of local knowledge in sustainable forest management strategies, society's role in environmental preservation, and the influence of participation on policy and decisions. The materials were used during trainings for various representatives from civil society, local municipalities, and the central government.



Funding	German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)
Project	Support of Public Participation in Forest Management Within the project “Enabling Implementation of Forest Sector Reform in Georgia (ECO Georgia)”

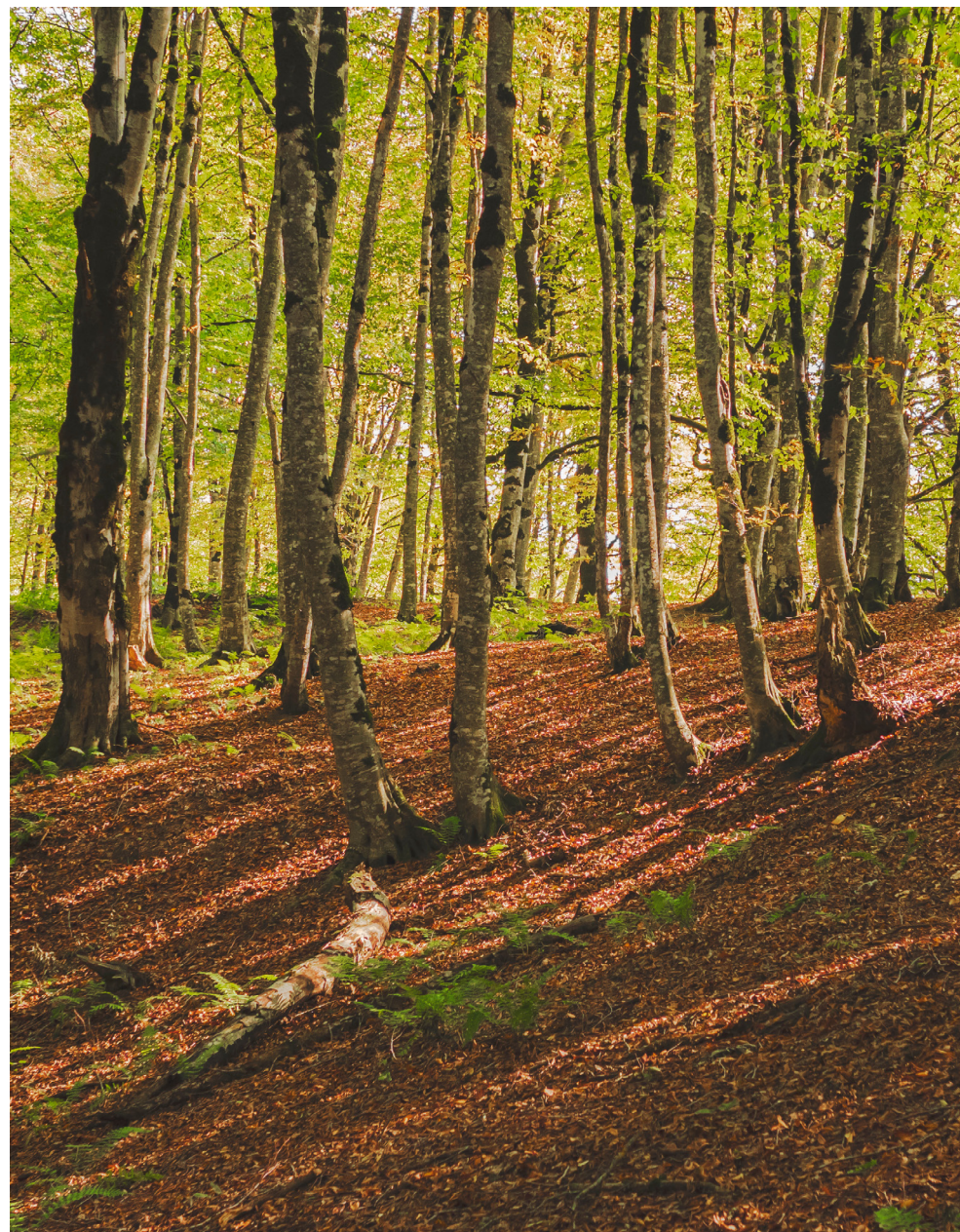
Contribution 2: Developing Forest Product Market in Georgia

In 2024, CENN continued working on the expansion of sustainable forest product markets through the creation of incentives for the commercial utilization of forest resources and the enhanced capacity of both the private sector and farmers.

CENN prepared a study based on data collected from local farmers and entrepreneurs in Mtskheta, Dusheti, and Gori municipalities to assess their awareness about Rural Development Agency (RDA) programs, with a focus on forestry-linked initiatives. During the meetings, the team has disseminated information on 10 RDA programs, including energy-efficient stoves co-financing, bio production promotion, and the “Plant the Future” initiative. The report has revealed existing bottlenecks such as long processing times, slow disbursement of funds, and regulatory delays that affected the implementation of programs.

CENN prepared the review of opportunities for integrating sustainable commercial use of forest resources into rural development programs (as part of RDA), identifying at least three priority programs and providing justification for their expansion. The review document suggested a number of recommendations, including legislative changes in the agro-credit program, development of timber and non-timber forest products, review of RDA programmes and changes/amendments to the "Plant the Future" programme.

Funding	Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)
Project	GREEN Caucasus - Enhancing Green Rural Economy and Energy in Georgia



Contribution 3: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Certification in Georgia

In 2024, ONFI and CENN prepared a report “Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification in Georgia and case studies in comparable countries”. The report explores existing challenges and opportunities in implementing SFM and SFM certification in Georgia, which has approximately 44.5% of its land area covered by forests. There has been renewed interest in pursuing SFM certification from both, state actors as well as businesses.

The report also includes comparative analyses and case studies from North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Romania, offering valuable insights and lessons applicable to Georgia. These case studies illustrate successful strategies for introducing and operating SFM certification, highlighting the importance of government support, public-private partnerships, and stakeholder collaboration. The preliminary findings of the study were presented during a roundtable discussion in November 2024, where key stakeholders had the opportunity to explore the feasibility of introducing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification in Georgia.

Funding	ONF International (European Union, The World Bank)
Project	Supporting Legal and Deforestation-free Trade and Preventing illegal trade of wood products in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova (part of the project: European Union for Environment (EU4Environment – Green Economy); CENN's role: implementing partner in Georgia for ONF International)



Climate change mitigation, adaptation and climate resilience

Climate change is already evident in the Caucasus region. There is a noticeable increase in average annual temperature and changes in annual precipitation patterns. The region is prone to natural disasters and climate change intensifies these processes.

To overcome the adverse impacts and facilitate adaptation to climate change in different sectors, CENN is supporting the decision-makers to introduce climate-smart and resilient practices, conducting research on climate change in close cooperation with the research institutions and providing results along with recommendations to the relevant stakeholders, piloting climate-smart practices and developing the issue-based constructive dialogue and cooperation mechanisms among various stakeholders.

SDG Target 13.1:

Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Contribution 4: Continued Development of Streamflow Prediction System in the Alazani-Iori River basin

CENN continues the development of a drought and seasonal streamflow prediction system in the Alazani-Iori River basins. Streamflow prediction is one of the essential components for the proper planning and management of water resources. The developed system would be used for agricultural planning, flood control, and hydropower operations. For this purpose, CENN together with NEA

and members of the Alazani Multi Actor platform (MAP)¹ works with international experts from 13 member organisations of project consortium led by the [Delft Institute of Water Education \(IHE Delft\)](#) to create the above-mentioned service for the Alazani-Iori River Basin.

The need for a streamflow prediction system and its potential benefits for agricultural practices were also demonstrated by the research in the Alazani and Iori basins finalized in August 2024. The research has assessed the condition of melioration systems, specifically focusing on agricultural water distribution trends and the challenges impacting resource effi-

¹ The Alazani multi-actor platform (MAP) was created by CENN within the project, consisting of private and public sector representatives and aimed to identify needs in terms of climate services in the Alazani River Basin.

ciency. Extensive fieldwork uncovered numerous water management issues, including pollution from wastewater, illegal water intakes, blocked channels, and especially the poor condition of the distribution network. The research has shown that by providing reliable forecasts of water availability, a streamflow prediction system can support more efficient planning and distribution of management for irrigation.

Furthermore, in April 2024 representatives of the IHE Delft visited Georgia in

order to assess the progress and plan the next steps to develop a drought and seasonal streamflow prediction system in the Alazani-Iori River basins. During the visit, an action plan has been prepared to continue working on the system. Apart from the stakeholder meetings, IHE Delft representatives conducted a seminar “Managing Drought in a Changing Climate” at Ilia State University, attended by students from different universities in Georgia.



Funding	European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme
Project	Innovating Climate Services through Integrating Scientific and Local Knowledge (I-CISK) (CENN's role - national partner)

Contribution 5: Supporting Local Initiatives for Climate Resilience

In 2024, CENN continued supporting local CSOs in playing a key role in solving local climate change-related issues through an open grants competition. A total of 10 projects were selected and implemented from the initial 21 proposals during the second phase of the sub-granting program.

These projects covered Imereti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi, and Kakheti regions. Two projects were implemented in the Guria region: (1) Agro Association contributed to reduction of the negative impact of climate change in Lanchkhuti municipality, supporting the development of agroecosystem and climate-smart agriculture through greening urban areas and creating a source of income for beekeepers and vulnerable groups and (2) Student-youth Council raised awareness about waste management in Ozurgeti and Ambrolauri Municipalities through promoting civil activism and usage of digital technologies.

Three projects were implemented in the Imere-ti region: (1) Tkibuli District Development Fund (TDDF) empowered local stakeholders to initiate adaptation and mitigation measures of climate change in the Tkibuli Municipality through practical demonstration of solar energy utilization; (2) Mkhhardamkhar implemented a project aimed at reducing the effects of climate change through nature-based solutions via restoring

1 hectare of soil in Chiatura Municipality; and (3) Regional Initiatives Centre Bright Future informed the youth, public servants, and local community about climate change and energy efficiency.

Three projects were implemented in the Kakheti region: (1) Civil Development Association of Georgia created educational centre of Sustainable Development and Energy Efficiency at Velistsikhe Public School and Gurjaani Public School to raise environmental awareness and promote sustainable development among youth; (2) Matani 21 worked on promoting the use of renewable energy resources and popularise them in schools, as well as increasing awareness about climate change in Akhmeta Municipality and (3) Tusheti Development Fund focused on improving food safety standards in the production of Tushetian Guda cheese via introducing renewable energy sources to the farming industry.

Finally, two projects were implemented in the Racha-Lechkhumi Region: (1) Active Citizen-Accountable Government worked on increasing awareness of climate-smart agriculture for farmers living in Ambrolauri municipality; and (2) Racha Youth Assembly developed a concept for green development of Ambrolauri and Oni municipalities based on the best practices of the EU green cities.

Funding	European Union
Project	Georgia Climate Action Project (GEO-CAP): Promoting Civil Society Engagement in Climate Change Policy Design and Implementation



Renewable energy and energy efficiency

Energy supply security and energy efficiency are among the top regional priorities that stem from environmental and geopolitical issues. Potent energy policies and technologies are a stepping stone for regional stability and economic development. In this regard, the availability of domestic energy sources and their transportation routes as well as efficient use of local and regional resources and the development of renewable energy technologies are the promising possibilities to guarantee a positive balance between the environment and sustainability and improvement in energy security. What is more, the utilization of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies reduces carbon emissions and provides energy at an affordable price, thus facilitating economic well-being.

CENN provides solutions to the energy deficiency in the region by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies such as biofuels, wind energy, photovoltaics (PV), and solar thermal energy to the public and private sector, and community members. We believe that mainstreaming alternative energy solutions will reduce pressure on natural resources, provide cheaper energy, and alleviate poverty.



SDG Target 7.2: By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

Contribution 7: Awareness-Raising Campaign on Energy Efficiency in Tbilisi

In 2024, CENN implemented an information and awareness-raising campaign on energy efficiency Tbilisi. As part of the initiative, 11 thematic articles were developed and shared online on such topics as energy efficiency of a multi-storey building; how to increase energy efficiency in housing without renovation; energy-efficient heating-cooling systems; building an

energy-efficient house; reducing energy consumption, renewable energy sources, etc.

Furthermore, the initiative included a campaign for visual artists on the topic of energy efficiency and climate action. 10 artists came together to present their artistic visions on the theme of energy and energy carriers, exploring the essence, mythology, and potential of organic materials in their quest for understanding, perfection, and advancement. The exhibition [“The Landscape Tells the Story”](#) was held in June 2024.

Funding	European Union and KfW development bank
Project	Technical Assistance Project in Support of the Georgian Energy Sector Reform Programme (GESRP), implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in partnership with the German independent energy consulting company GOPA intec (role of CENN: implementing partner)

Agriculture and Rural Development

Agriculture is one of the key sectors in the rural areas of the Caucasus region. Over the years, CENN has been pushing the frontiers of innovation to develop and advance best practices in sustainable agriculture and rural development. We build capacity and educate local farmers and promote new technologies and strategies to boost productivity and improve the lives of rural people. The Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach applied by CENN in rural areas gives local people a voice and the tools to make a real difference in their community.

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In rural development, CENN focuses on promoting sustainable agriculture practices, supporting increased food security, and engaging local communities in Rural and Community-Led Local De-

velopment (CLLD). In **sustainable agriculture**, in 2024, CENN continued increasing the capacities of local farmers on climate resilient agriculture, showcasing sustainable agriculture and farming practices through demonstration plots as well as providing local farmers with financial support for agricultural production and processing. CENN also prepared Drought Gender Analysis in which showed how drought disproportionately affects the women. Under **Rural and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)**, CENN addressed the lack of participatory local development by developing Local Development Strategies (LDSs) with direct engagement of local communities and newly established Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the Guria region.





Sustainable Agriculture

Agricultural systems in the Caucasus region need to increase their outputs in a sustainable manner and, at the same time, adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and the loss of fertile lands to meet the demands of the population.

CENN promotes sustainable agriculture and farming practices by capacity building of the farmers, which, among many others, includes the establishment of demonstration plots and organization of field days and farmer field schools (FFS) to emphasize the long- and short-term benefits of sustainable climate resilient agricultural practices while reducing the environmental impact of the sector. CENN supports strategic planning of the sector through partnership and cooperation between key stakeholders.



SDG Target 2.4:

By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, which help maintain ecosystems, which strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding, and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

Contribution 8: Climate Resilient Vegetable and Fruit Production in Gardabani and Bolnisi

In 2024 CENN started a new project aimed at increasing the capacity of farmers in terms of climate-resilient agriculture in the Gardabani and Bolnisi Municipalities. As part of the project, in September 2024 certificate training course on “Climate Resilient Vegetable Production” was conducted for vegetable and fruit producer farmers from Bolnisi and Gardabani municipalities and staff of information consultation

centres of RDA. The 3-day training courses covered such topics as negative implications of climate change on agriculture, the importance of climate-resilient agriculture (CRA), climate-resilient agricultural practices, and technologies; the main aspects of vegetable crop fertilization; the principles of integrated pest management; the types and importance of irrigation systems in vegetable crops and practical masterclass in the greenhouse. To facilitate hands-on learning and reinforce the practical application of the acquired knowledge, project organized 3 field days on the basis of demonstration plots in village Maradisi, Marneuli municipality.

Funding	Embassy of France in Georgia
Project	Enhancing Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Farmer and Information Consultation Centre Staff Capacity Building in Gardabani and Bolnisi Municipalities, Georgia

Contribution 10: Capacity Development of Farmers in Marneuli

In 2024, CENN continued to deliver a series of trainings to increase awareness on climate change among farmers and the capacity of farmers on climate-resilient agriculture in the Marneuli municipality. CENN continued its partnership with Cartlis Academy and implemented another holistic certificate course on climate-resilient vegetable production for 21 farmers. Capacity development of the local farmers included field days and visits to demonstration plots, which increased their practical knowledge of climate-resilient agricultural practices.

The farmers also continued to generate additional income from the implemented sub-grant initiatives, with the majority of grantees reporting an increase in their household income. People in the community also benefited from the services/products created through the sub-grant initiatives, such as soil cultivation service and irrigation water infrastructure. The project's tailored support to grantees reinforced their understanding that Climate-Resilient Agricultural (CRA) practices are not just a temporary solution but a crucial adaptation to the ongoing challenges posed by climate change. Their practical experience in implementing these practices has given them a deeper appreciation of the importance of sustaining these efforts beyond the project's lifespan.



Funding

HEKS-EPER

Project

PRAISE Marneuli: Promoting Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihoods in Multi-ethnic Marneuli Municipality

Contribution 11: Women’s Agriculture Cooperative Established in Marneuli

CENN continues to support the women’s agricultural cooperative “Green Maradisi”, which was established in 2022, consisting of women eco-migrant farmers in the village of Maradisi. In 2024 CENN remained committed to supporting further capacity building of the women-led agricultural cooperative “Green Maradisi” as an integral part of this outcome. CENN’s effort was mostly directed at communications, branding, and marketing to increase the visibility of the cooperative among relevant stakeholders and target groups and promote its effective positioning on the market. CENN created a brand identity for the cooperative, such as logo, colour palettes, and designs of promotional materials. All these efforts support fostering sustainable income generation for the cooperative members.

Women-led agricultural cooperative “Green Maradisi” shows financial stability and growth by producing high-value vegetable seedlings. Additionally, the cooperative is well-positioned to provide extension services to the local community members in the future, further expanding its role within the local agricultural community, and making it an integral part of the local agricultural extension system. The cooperative’s success could serve as a model for other groups, including those in the Azerbaijani community. This potential for broader impact makes the cooperative a vital component of the project’s long-term legacy in the Marneuli municipality.

In addition, the cooperative also maintains the demonstration plots, which showcase climate-resilient and environmentally friendly practices, including effective water management, soil nutrient management, integrated pest management, crop rotation, raised beds, and using drought-resilient varieties and high-quality seeds. The demonstration plots have been used by partner organizations too - Information and Consultation Center (ICC) and Cartlis Agrosystems, which contributes to the sustainability of these plots.

Funding	HEKS-EPER
Project	PRAISE Marneuli: Promoting Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihoods in Multi-ethnic Marneuli Municipality



Rural and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)

Community-Led Local Development is a new model for Georgia, when local people form local partnerships that design and implement integrated development strategies. This approach helps to increase the skills of rural people and helps them get involved in addressing the local challenges that eventually lead to sustainable rural development.

CENN successfully piloted the CLLD model in the regions of Georgia and created Local Action Groups (LAGs) from active community members to support local actors in overcoming existing development constraints. We support community institutions and members to promote inclusive governance, create a common vision and participatory initiatives for rural development, apply effective agricultural practices, innovative approaches, and new technologies, and create business linkages with market players.

CENN, through the promotion of CLLD, supports approaches and activities, which lead to reaching economic, environmental, and social goals of rural development.



SDG Target10.2:

By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

Contribution 12: Local Development Strategies (LDSs) in Guria

CENN has developed Gender and youth-responsive and child- and environmentally sensitive Local Development Strategies (LDSs) with the involvement of newly established LAGs in Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, and Chokhatauri. As a result of a participatory process, an agreement was reached, and the main directions were identified as priority issues for rural development in each LAG.

The LDS is based on a detailed territory analysis including a baseline survey, business and socioeconomic assessment, tourism development assessment, human capital assessment, and spotlight report on affordable, accessible, and safe water and energy. Multiple consultations were held to obtain feedback for the analysis, as well as to validate and approve final LDSs.

As part of implementation of the approved LDSs, CENN organized a grant competition in all three municipalities. In order to promote the diversity and quality of applications during the grant competition period, a series of project management and implementation training sessions were organized. These sessions targeted a wide range of stakeholders, including community representatives, local businesses, and other interested parties across all municipalities. The training aimed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare high-quality grant applications and was conducted on such topics as project writing, financial management and procurement. Information about the grant competition was spread through 45 information meetings and Europe Bus campaign. As a result, 333 applications were received and 50 projects were selected for funding, covering tourism, agriculture, education, culture, sports, and youth topics. Total budget of the approved projects is more than 4 million GEL, including contribution from the applicants.

Funding	European Union (EU), ENPARD 4
Project	Green Guria: Supporting Local Democracy and Rural Development for Inclusive and Resilient Green Growth

Economic Growth

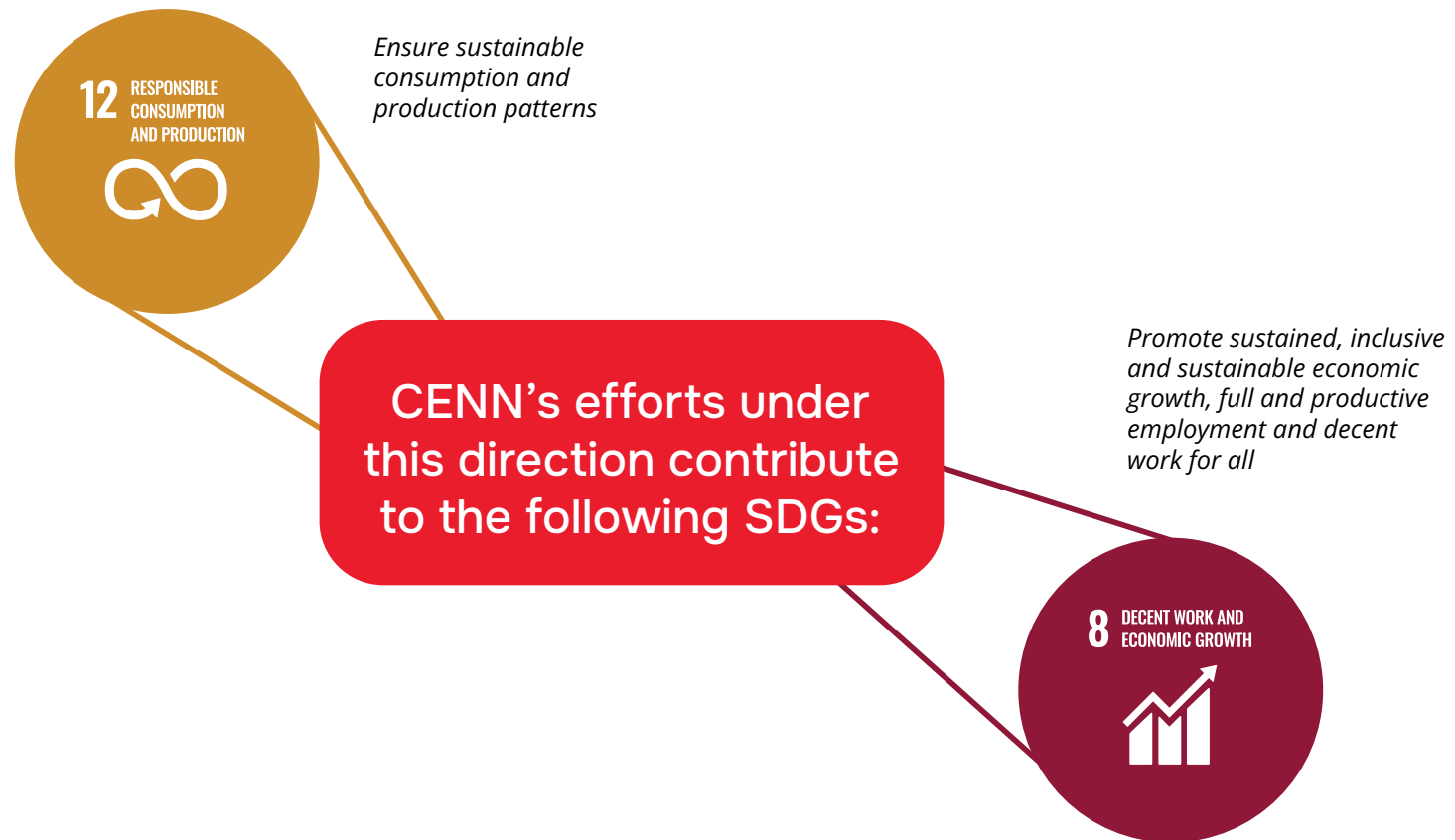
Economic growth is critical for the Caucasus region countries to solve their development challenges, drive progress, and improve living standards. CENN strives to create a fair and prosperous society in the region by supporting inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economic development while preserving the natural environment. We partner with various key stakeholders to foster modern, resource-efficient, and competitive economic development.

CENN's approach towards economic growth focuses on promoting a circular economy, resource efficiency, creating an enabling business environment for an inclusive economy, and developing innovation, technologies, and research. We build the capacity of the private sector to develop the workforce, apply innovations and new technologies, and improve productivity and sales.

In 2024, under **Circular economy and resource efficiency** CENN started a new project “Circular Cities and Regions in Georgia: Building Local Capacities to Advance Waste Prevention and Circular Economy in the Regions of Georgia”. The project aims to build a more inclusive and environmentally resilient future for Georgia by promoting sustainable consumption and production, while reducing waste in the Kakheti region and Adjara Autonomous Republic (AR). Moreover, CENN has closely worked with key businesses along the value chain who are interested in integrating reusable packaging systems into their business models, and has been active in implementing capacity-building activities for key stakeholders, covering more than 80 participants from various representatives of value chain including packaging users, retailers, producers, plastic waste generators, hospitality sector etc. Furthermore, in 2024 CENN has been actively promoting cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder business-to-business collaboration around plastic management.

Under **Enabling a business environment for an inclusive economy** in 2024 CENN continued contributing to development of forest-based tourism in Georgia and has started a new visionary initiative South Caucasus Geoparks' Network Programme, aimed at establishing the first UNESCO-recognized transnational network of geoparks across Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.





Circular economy and resource efficiency

Current production and consumption patterns in the Caucasus region are mostly based on a linear economy. The development of a sustainable, low-carbon, resource-efficient, and competitive economy requires a transition to a circular economy, where the value of products, materials, and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste is minimized.

CENN is developing solutions for the transition to a circular economy in the region. We promote resource-efficient models through the testing of modern approaches. We build the capacity of the private sector to apply resource-efficient practices, support waste aggregating and recycling companies to improve their business operations, and create opportunities for citizens to separate waste. CENN also assists educational institutions in integrating the circular economy concept into their programs and raises awareness among various stakeholders about the circular economy and proper waste management practices.



SDG Target 12.5:

By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse

Contribution 13: Advancing Waste Prevention and Circular Economy in the Regions of Georgia

In 2024, CENN started a new 4-year project titled “Circular Cities and Regions in Georgia: Building Local Capacities to Advance Waste Prevention and Circular Economy in the Regions of Georgia”. The project aims to build a more inclusive and environmentally resilient future for Georgia by promoting sustainable consumption and production, while reducing waste in the Kakheti region and Adjara Autonomous Republic (AR).

In order to tackle circular economy (CE) challenges in the country — legal, institutional, financial, and operational — the project focuses on three key objectives: fostering collaboration among stakeholders, piloting scalable and innovative solutions, and raising public awareness on the environmental and social impact and benefit of waste management and circular economy approaches. These efforts aim to drive long-term behavioural changes and implement effective waste prevention (WP) and circular economy practices in the target regions.

The baseline analysis conducted during the inception phase has revealed a fragmented and uncoordinated stakeholder ecosystem. There is limited capacity at the regional level to translate national circular economy frameworks into meaningful action. Local stakeholders remain focused on basic waste management, rather than on tailor-made upstream WP&CE approaches. They demonstrate limited knowledge and capacity to implement broader circular principles.

Private sector engagement with WP&CE is almost absent across both regions, with construction, packaging, and biodegradable material sectors showing no evidence of upstream WP&CE practices, only some waste sorting, collection and recycling activities were identified. Proxy estimates indicate approximately 95% virgin material dependency in those sectors, reflecting Georgia's low national circularity rate (1.3%).

Despite surface-level familiarity with WP&CE concepts among the surveyed local population comprehensive knowledge remains marginal. Only 10.7% in Adjara AR and 1.3% in Kakheti can recognize both environmental and social benefits of circular practices. Most residents conceptualize WP&CE through basic waste collection and recycling rather than prevention or upstream strategies, focusing on individual actions like collecting plastic bottles or reducing plastic bag use rather than systematic community initiatives. Participation remains conditional on infrastructure availability and convenience factors.

In addition, as the needs assessment has revealed, infrastructure, financial, technical, and organizational capacity constraints create sector-specific barriers that share a common outcome: they all perpetuate reliance on linear, waste-generating practices instead of enabling the transition to circular systems.

Funding	EU Commission
Project	Circular Cities and Regions in Georgia: Building Local Capacities to Advance Waste Prevention and Circular Economy in the Regions of Georgia



Contribution 15: Private Sector Assisted to Adopt Circular Models of Plastics Management

With the overall goal to promote the circular economy in Georgia, CENN has been active in implementing capacity-building activities for key stakeholders, covering more than 80 participants from various representatives of the value chain including packaging users, retailers, producers, plastic waste generators, the hospitality sector etc. The tailored trainings were aimed to develop skills needed for applying circular models in plastics management.

In 2024, trainings organized by CENN covered such topics as (1) waste management for hospitality sector, focusing on the harmful impacts of plastic waste, waste audit methodologies, alternatives to single-use plastics (SUPs), and the development of prevention and reduction strategies; (2) establishing reuse models for businesses that utilize packaging focusing on how companies can implement systems where packaging is returned, cleaned, and reused for the same purpose; (3) training tailored for retail sector focusing on practical tools for identifying and measuring the most problematic plastic packaging within their operations, along with real-life examples of how to “de-plastify” products in the retail context; (4) core principles of EPR systems, existing and upcoming Georgian regulations, as well as circular business models and practices, with a particular focus on the role of producers in the transition to a circular economy.



Funding	UNDP Georgia
Project	End Plastic Pollution in Georgia

Contribution 16: Cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration (B2B) on plastic management in Georgia

In 2024, CENN has been actively promoting cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder business to business collaboration around plastic management. The goal was to connect relevant actors involved in plastic management and consumption (manufacturing, retail, hospitality sectors) to exchange knowledge, foster cooperation between different actors along the plastic value chain and promote plastic waste reduction through circular approaches. With this goal, two cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration meetings were organized and various actors involved in the plastics value chain both from production and consumption side were invited including Producers, HORECA businesses, Retailers, CSOs, donor organisations, and recycling companies. The meetings aimed to promote knowledge exchange, assess sectoral progress, and identify opportunities for inter-sectoral collaboration in advancing the circular economy transition in Georgia. A strong emphasis was placed on exploring synergies between sectors to develop more integrated and sustainable supply chains.

As a result of the multi-stakeholder meetings and follow-up facilitation process, the CENN team has identified and facilitated a number of partnerships with the purpose of reducing plastic waste and promoting circular solutions.

Funding	UNDP Georgia
Project	End Plastic Pollution in Georgia



Contribution 17: Business Pledging Campaign to Reduce Plastic Waste

CENN has organized a business challenge aimed at promoting circular practices. The goal of the challenge is to encourage companies and organisations to avoid or reduce procurement and consumption of single-use plastic (SUP) items, replace them with more sustainable and durable products, establish circular practices and promote companies and organisations who are championing sustainable solutions.

The challenge included trainings on circular waste management tailored to the needs of the businesses and intensive mentoring to develop and implement pledge ideas. The trainings were conducted in partnership with Georgian Farmers' Association (GFA), Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel, Sheraton Grand Metechi Tbilisi Palace, UN Global Compact Georgia (UNGCG), TBC bank (ESG coordinator), and CSR Agency. The trainings covered such topics as waste audit, green procurement and alternatives to single-use plastics, opportunities with UNGCG for corporate sustainability, ESG methodologies, sustainability reporting for businesses, challenges and possibilities of advancing further in transitioning to circular economy etc. The business campaign participants received certificates and were also awarded courses in sustainability at the Sustainable Science Academy.

As a result of the campaign, the participating businesses developed and implemented action plans aimed at reducing consumption and procurement of single-use plastics. The implemented activities include:

[Green work](#) – conducted waste audit and procurement analysis, educated organization members on the harmful consequences of plastic waste, collected a significant quantity of plastic both within the enterprise and allowed all employee families to bring recyclables for further recycling.

[Hilton Garden Riverview](#) - replaced the water bottles with a NAMI 8 machine across the hotel premises, removed plastic bottles in their mini-bars and placed glass bottles, and placed Tene's plastic separation box for collecting PET bottles.

[Martkopi Youth Centre](#) - launched a grassroots program to educate young people on the importance of recycling. As part of the initiative, they implemented a points-



based system, where participants collect and bring in waste materials like plastic and paper each week.

Lineate - revised their purchasing practices to be more sustainable. Now, they buy fewer individually packaged items, avoid purchasing plastic cups and straws, and request that delivery companies exclude plastic cutlery from their orders.

Sevsamora - signed an agreement with “Nami 8” LLC to replace the existing water dispensers with eco-friendly, innovative models. Additionally, they have implemented waste separation for plastic and glass, supplying materials to respective companies, “Tene” and “Kere”. In their conference rooms, they now use pencils instead of plastic pens, and serve water in glass bottles instead of plastic ones.

Tom's Hut - replaced disposable cups, plates, spoons, knives, and forks with reusable utensils..

Social Enterprise: Connection for people who require additional support - initiated a monthly analysis to evaluate the plastic purchases, decided not to buy single-use plastic utensils for seminars and events. Instead, they purchased blue glassware to replace disposables and printed branded mugs for their beneficiaries — individuals with disabilities—featuring their names or favourite photos.

Ezo Festival – replaced all plastic bottles sold across the festival with glass bottles eliminating a significant amount of plastics. In addition, Ezo Festival installed 40 glass recycling points across the festival grounds and used part of the glass for its own construction and sent the rest to a recycling company Kere Ltd.

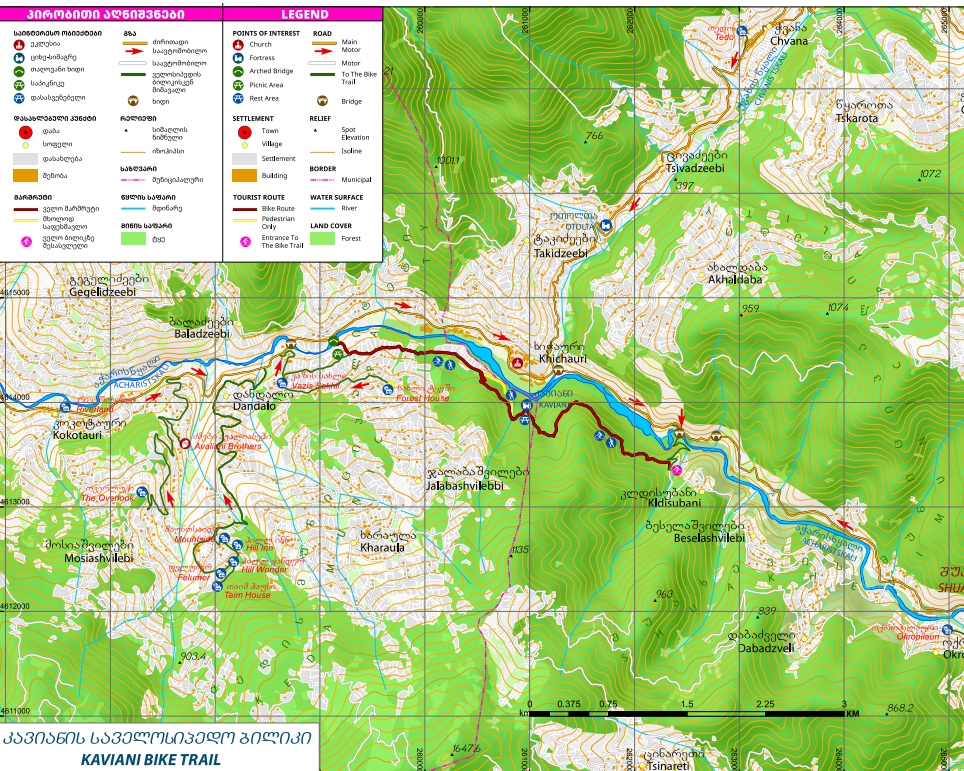
Funding	UNDP Georgia
Project	End Plastic Pollution in Georgia



Enabling a business environment for an inclusive economy

Businesses are engines for economic growth, playing a key role in fostering economic activities through their value chains. Creating and maintaining a business climate that stimulates inclusive and sustainable economic development is at the core of efforts to spur growth in the region.

CENN provides professional technical assistance to foster an enabling business environment by improving



SDG Target 8.9:

By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

Contribution 18: Developing Forest-Based Tourism

In 2024, CENN continued contributing to development of forest-based tourism in Georgia. Throughout the year the efforts included development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report for the general development plan of Shkernali and Beshumi Resort-Goderdzi Pass, research on ecotourism development in the Shalauri-Kisiskhevi river basin and development of bilingual map for Kaviani Trail, hiking and biking trail connecting Keda and Shuakhevi.

In March 2024, the updated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report for the general development plan of Shkernali and Beshumi Resort-Goderdzi Pass was presented at Khulo Municipality's city hall. Following feedback from CENN and Goderdzi's Friends platform, significant improvements were made in areas such as forest management, transport planning, ski and bike tracks, and addressing natural and anthropogenic threats. As a follow up, CENN provided technical assistance to Adjara Forest Agency (AFA) and en-

sured its participation in the development and approval process of the general plan and strategic environmental assessment for the Goderdzi-Beshumi-Shkhernali resort cluster. Specifically, in collaboration with the Friends of Goderdzi Club, the project facilitated AFA's active involvement in public discussions, the preparation of recommendations, and documentation, which prioritize forest management principles in the urban development process. The recommendations developed with AFA were reflected in the strategic environmental assessment document and aim to align urban and spatial plans with forest management plans, designate recreational forest areas for resorts, and assign them appropriate status. This is expected to play a crucial role in the future protection of forest ecosystems from unregulated or systemic urbanization and promote the sustainable use of forest lands and resources for tourism purposes.

As part of CENN's project, in July 2024, a study was completed by Eco-Tourism Association in the Shalauri-Kisiskhevi river basin. The research identified, analysed, and evaluated various products related to the utilization and development of eco-tourism in these villages.

Based on the findings, market demand for various products and services was determined. Furthermore, priority eco-tourism products were developed. Finally, recommendations were formulated for private and public initiatives designed to increase incomes and employment for local entrepreneurs and residents. As a follow up to the studies, between October-December 2024, GREEN Caucasus project launched a competition to develop sustainable tourism services in the Kisiskhevi River basin area. The competition involved students from the faculty of Telavi State University, aiming to create innovative eco-tourism products for roughly 40 local sites, enhancing clustered development and service diversification while upholding environmental and sustainable development principles.

To support the hiking and biking trail, known as the “Kaviani Trail,” which connects Keda and Shuakhevi Municipalities (established under CENN project), a detailed bilingual map (Georgian and English) was created, featuring selected objects marked with points. Using the collected GPS coordinates, each object was connected to the main cycling route with a marked path, and details such as location, services, and contact information were included for each object.

Funding	Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)
Project	GREEN Caucasus - Enhancing Green Rural Economy and Energy in Georgia



Contribution 19: South Caucasus Geoparks' Network Programme

In December 2024, CENN started a new visionary initiative South Caucasus Geoparks' Network Programme, aimed at establishing the first UNESCO-recognized transnational network of geoparks across Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. During the 18-month inception phase, CENN will foster partnerships and support regional cooperation and community development among the three South Caucasus countries. Focusing on the region's most significant geological and natural sites, the initiative will position these areas as centres for education, sustainable tourism and green economy, ecological sustainability, and regional collaboration. With geoparks as symbols of conservation and cultural pride, the South Caucasus will emerge as a leading model for cross-border heritage preservation.

The project will establish a network of South Caucasus Geoparks comprising of one transnational geopark between Armenia and Georgia, one between Azerbaijan and Georgia, and three national geoparks, one in each country. The geoparks will provide:

- ▶ **Environmental Conservation:** Preserving key geological sites will protect the unique biodiversity and landscapes of the South Caucasus, promoting climate resilience and sustainable land use. Each designated geopark will highlight ecosystems and geological heritage as part of a larger commitment to conservation.
- ▶ **Economic Development through Sustainable Tourism:** By fostering eco-tourism and academic research in geopark areas, the project creates sustainable income sources, strengthens regional economies, and supports local businesses. This growth helps mitigate regional depopulation by offering meaningful livelihoods to local communities and facilitates community development.
- ▶ **Cultural Heritage and Identity:** Geoparks will showcase the rich cultural and historical legacies of the South Caucasus, incorporating archaeological sites, historical landmarks, and indigenous knowledge. Each geopark will be a living narrative of the region's identity.

- **Education and Awareness:** Geoparks will serve as dynamic learning environments, offering educational programs that enhance public understanding of geological processes, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. In addition, it will provide Academic institutions an opportunity to study the environment, cultural heritage and the effects of climate change.
- **Regional Collaboration and Community Development:** As a cross-border initiative, the project promotes cooperation among Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, uniting the South Caucasus as a cohesive and welcoming destination for visitors. At the community level, geopark development fosters local empowerment by involving communities in planning, conservation, and tourism activities, strengthening social ties and economic resilience.



Funding	The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Project	Caucasus Geoparks' Network in the South Caucasus (CGNP)

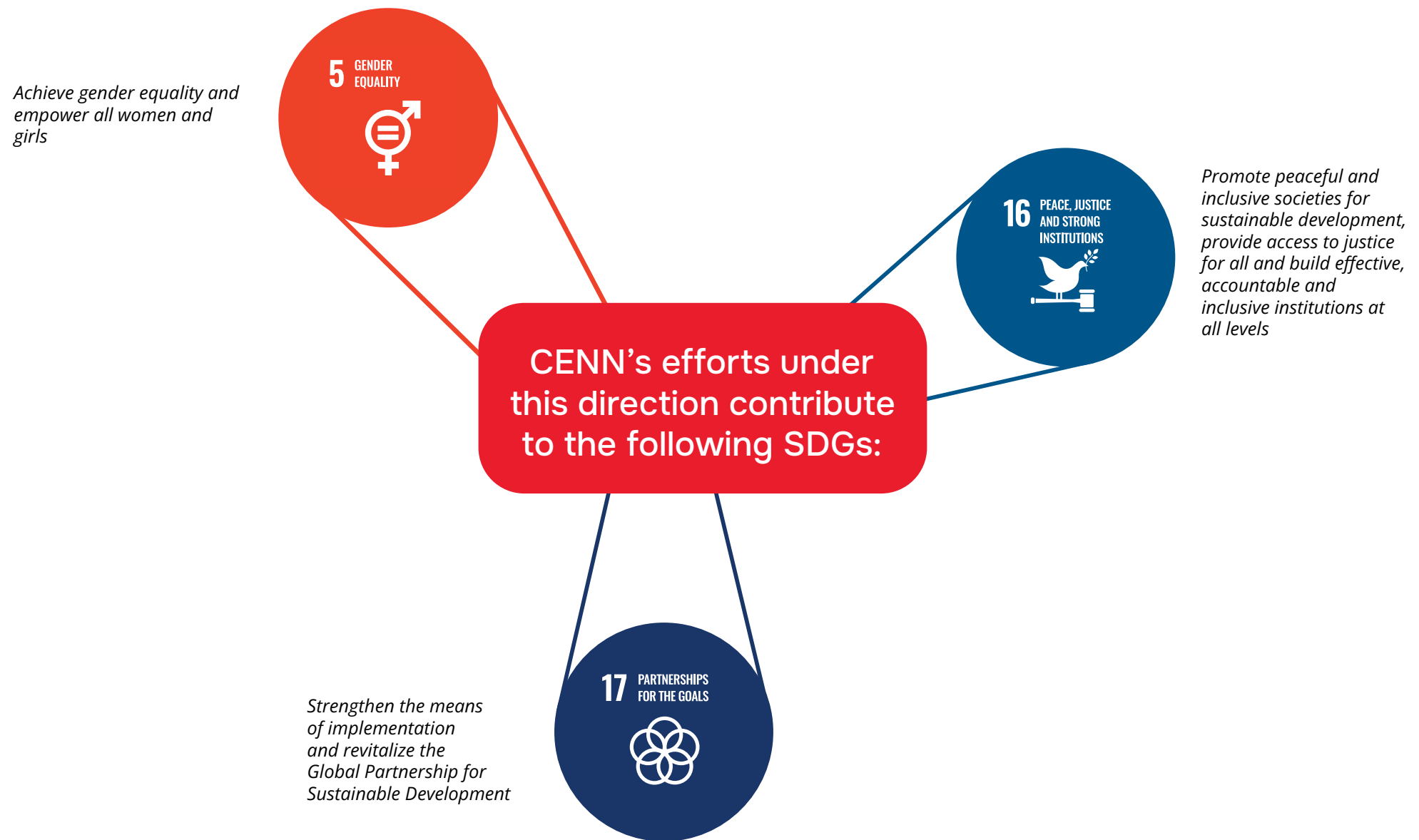
Citizen Engagement and Good Governance

Citizen engagement and good governance are vital for the South Caucasus region's further development towards the European path. CENN believes that Citizen engagement and good governance extend beyond the government, involving collaboration with various stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, media, civic activists, etc. We acknowledge the importance of effective, transparent, and accountable public institutions and strive to strengthen democratic governance systems.

In 2024, CENN has been working on **participatory and inclusive governance** by establishing multi-stakeholder Local Forestry Platforms (LFPs) in five municipalities (Chkhorotsku, Dusheti, Chokhatauri, Sagarejo and Zugdidi), CENN also continued to foster partnerships between local authorities and civil society organizations in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions to promote the participatory development and implementation of social services, and continued supporting and strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms such as new Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Guria

region and the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group in Marneuli. For **human rights protection and civil society development**, CENN continues its efforts to strengthen civil society SDG Networks in Georgia and internationally and increase the capacities of local CSOs from Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti Regions. Lastly, CENN has been supporting **gender equality and women's empowerment** by deliberately focusing on girls and women, e.g. through the Girls' Empowerment Club in Marneuli.





Participatory and inclusive governance

Addressing existing challenges of sustainable development is impossible with the limited effort of any given sector alone. It requires a partnership between all sectors, both public and private. The participatory decision-making process remains a challenge in Georgia, both locally and centrally. The guarantees to engage in the policy-making process are scarce, inconsistent, and often limited to merely informing or consulting, rather than meaningful and inclusive dialogue.

Over the years, CENN has secured a reputation as a reliable, effective, resourceful, and results-oriented partner in a relationship with the state and private institutions. CENN is facilitating a participatory decision-making process and engagement of non-state stakeholders. We are active members and/or co-chairs of relevant thematic working groups on the central level, and initiators of various multi-stakeholder platforms at the local, regional, and national levels. In addition to advocating for more inclusive processes, we engage directly with local actors including CSOs, communities, and youth, to increase their capacities as change-makers.



SDG Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels

Contribution 20: Community Engagement in Forest Management through Local Forestry Platforms (LFPs)

CENN has contributed to multi-stakeholder dialogue on forestry topics by establishing Local Forestry Platforms (LFPs) in five municipalities (Chkhorotsku, Dusheti, Chokhatauri, Sagarejo and Zugdidi). The primary goal of LFPs is to enhance community engagement in forest management at the local level. After establishment of LFPs in 2024, CENN transferred the process to MEPA and the NFA, to further manage the process, integrating it into the Improved Public Participation Approach (IPPA). This mechanism formalizes local government involvement in forest management and introduces Participatory Mapping to classify forests based on ecosystem services. For the first time since 2020, the Forest Code will be enforced to categorize forests into four types, ensuring local needs are reflected in management plans.

To ensure community mobilization, issue-based coalitions have been established in the same target municipalities, separate from municipal and public processes, consisting from CBOs, Women

Rooms, Rural Women Councils (RWCs), Youth Councils, local media, private sector and educational organisations. These civic initiatives are used to monitor the on-the-ground implementation of systemic sectoral changes and to develop and implement new participatory mechanisms (e.g., new models for functional forest management and strategic planning, community forest projects, forest restoration projects, new rural development programs, initiatives to modify local development plans, etc.).

CENN also continues to contribute to a sound legislative and regulatory framework for responsible forest management through implementing Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM). In March-April 2024, a study was conducted on harmful mining practices in forests, focusing on the Ksani River. The research resulted in recommendations to MEPA to mitigate risks associated with the new practice of excluding forest land for construction and tourism purposes.

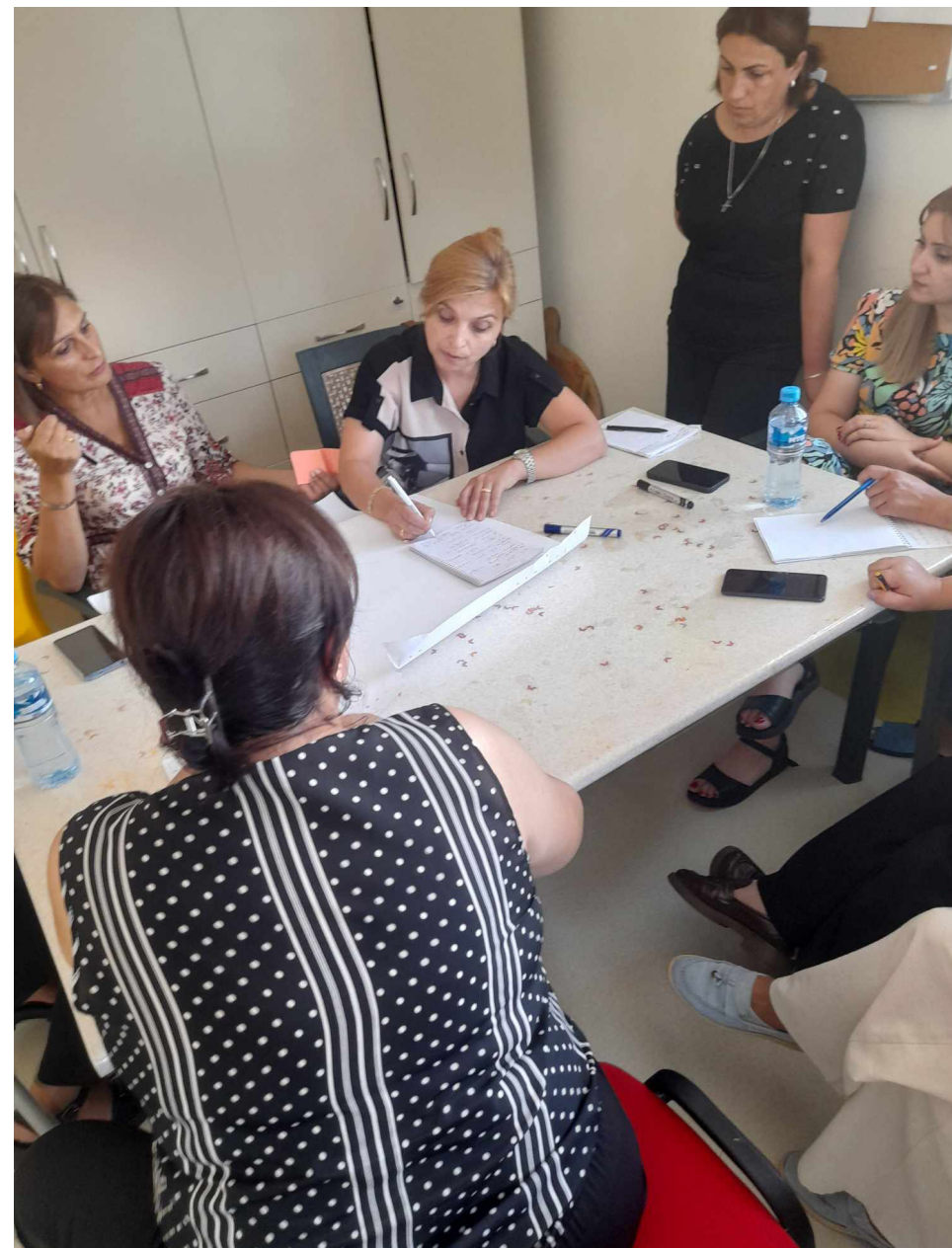
Funding	Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)
Project	GREEN Caucasus - Enhancing Green Rural Economy and Energy in Georgia

Contribution 21: Participatory Development of Social Services in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti

In 2024, CENN continued to foster partnerships between local authorities and civil society organizations in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions to promote the participatory development and implementation of social services. As a result, two joint social initiatives addressing post-COVID needs were piloted in the target regions, demonstrating effective CSO-LA partnership practices. One of the pilot projects aims to establish an intergenerational mutual support social service that enhances the socialization, knowledge, and skills of elderly individuals and socially vulnerable adolescents living in Dmanisi municipality. The other pilot project aims to promote the socio-economic and psychological empowerment of parents and caregivers of children living alone and/or with disabilities in the Tsalka municipality through piloting relevant service.

CENN also continued supporting CSO-LA multi-stakeholder partnerships and provided consultation to target municipalities which developed and adopted new social services through multi-stakeholder partnership groups. Furthermore, in April 2024 the representatives of target municipalities were provided with a training on development of strategic documents and stages and cycle of public policy formation at the municipal level.

The goals of the partnerships are to (1) stimulate evidence-based multi-stakeholder dialogue enabling CSOs and LAs to understand and respond to the current needs for improved quality, availability, and sustainability of local social and community-based service delivery and (2) enable the inclusive social policy-making process.



Funding

European Union

Project

Empowering CSOs to Promote Inclusive and Green Post-COVID Recovery in Multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli Region

SDG Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels

Contribution 22: Three New Local Action Groups (LAGs) are Established in Guria

In 2024, CENN continued supporting and strengthening participatory bottoms-up mechanisms for sustainable rural and territorial development via three established new Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Guria, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, and Chokhatauri. LAGs are comprised of private, public, and civic sectors, the number of members ranges from approximately 130 up to more than 200.

Throughout 2024, CENN continued capacity building and institutional strengthening of the newly created LAGs. With this goal in mind, various trainings were conducted for LAG members on such topics as EU's rural development and LEADER approach; legal, institutional, and financial governance and management; project cycle and grant management and fundraising, advocacy and lobbying; public outreach and Public-Private Partnership, facilitation, and negotiations. Thematic trainings on climate smart agriculture, green tech-

nologies, disaster risk reduction and management, water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH), sustainable tourism development; wine making etc.

As part of the capacity development program, a study tour to Keda LAG as well as two international study tours to Austria were organized. The main purpose of the study visits was for the established LAGs to familiarize themselves with the European LEADER approach, learn from Austrian practices, understand the structure of local action groups in Austria, explore the projects they have implemented, and learn how they support local businesses. This visits also aimed at establishing connections and fostering the exchange of information.

In addition, LAGs were provided with support in terms of organizational policies and documents, including how to develop LAGs charter, LAGs structure, roles, and action plans etc. During 2024 the LAGs have continued their institutional setup by legally registering with a clearly defined structure and preparing for the LAG Board elections, establishing and equipping LAG offices, and launching websites and social media pages.

Funding	European Union (EU), ENPARD 4
Project	Green Guria: Supporting Local Democracy and Rural Development for Inclusive and Resilient Green Growth



Contribution 23: Multi-Stakeholder Working Group in Marneuli

The Multi-Stakeholder Working Group (MSWG) continued operating to strengthen more inclusive, integrated, and participatory development of Marneuli municipality. The group was established in 2021 to promote economic opportunities and social inclusion of local stakeholders. MSWG has 16 members, mostly from the civil society sector, up to half from ethnic minorities, and with the majority of women.

In 2024, with coordination from MSWG, citizens of Maradisi, Tsitelsopeli, and Takalo villages submitted a budget initiative requesting the Marneuli City Hall and Municipal Assembly to allocate sufficient funds for irrigation water systems' operations in the 2025 municipal budget. In 2024 MSWG also tackled the problem of unstable electricity supply in various villages through an advocacy campaign. Due to the unstable supply of electricity, farmers could not use agricultural equipment (e.g. a seed sowing machine), and/or cold storage facilities, resulting in economic loss. By facilitating communication with the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission and Energo-pro Georgia (one of the country's largest energy supplier companies), a stable electricity supply has been restored to the target villages of the advocacy campaign. In 2024, one more MSWG-led advocacy campaign succeeded and the Khrami irrigation channel was rehabilitated.



Funding	HEKS-EPER
Project	PRAISE Marneuli: Promoting Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihoods in Multi-ethnic Marneuli Municipality

Human rights protection and civil society development

Experiences highlight the importance of fostering a strong local civil society that can contribute to ensuring rights-based social services and promoting inclusive access to decision-making processes, particularly for people living in vulnerable and marginalized communities. Participatory approaches and strengthened collaboration between civil society organizations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) play an important role in addressing the needs of ethnic minorities and supporting their meaningful inclusion in local development processes. CENN supports civil society development by strengthening the institutional capacity of organizations and enhancing their ability to effectively engage in diverse thematic areas.

SDG Target 17.9:

Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

Contribution 24: Strengthening Civil Society for SDG Promotion in Georgia

In 2024, CENN partnered with a regional project SDG Lens which covered Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. During the year the focus was on UN Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which Georgia presented to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable

Development in 2024. CENN together with its partners focused on actualization and sensitization of the VNR-related process among the civil society sector and the broader audience in general. In addition, CENN participated in several regional and international platforms for networking around SDGs, including [UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2024](#) and [The 2024 UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi](#) among others.

Funding	German Federal Foreign Office
Project	SDG LENS. Monitoring Sustainable Development in Eastern Europe & South Caucasus (role of CENN: implementing partner)



SDG Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

Contribution 25: Capacity Development Program for Local CSOs in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti Regions

In 2024, CENN continued working with targeted ten CSOs participating in the Capacity Development Program, equipping them with the necessary skills to advocate for human rights effectively. The tailored capacity development program focusing on the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), aims to strengthen local CSOs in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. The goal is to enhance the capacities of local CSOs, youth, and women groups to advocate effectively for access to gender and child-sensitive social services (with a specific focus on human rights to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health) and promote meaningful and inclusive participation for green and resilient post-COVID recovery in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. 10 CSOs (7 in Kvemo Kartli and 3 in Samtskhe-Javakheti) participate in the program, which were selected through an open call and competitive process, based on such criteria as their capacity, motivation to work on participatory practices and social service development in Georgia.

In 2024, within Capacity Development Program CENN provided trainings to CSOs on such topics

as design thinking, monitoring and evaluation, and stress management. In addition, as part of the overall goal to increase the capacities of local CSOs, CENN organized a second study tour to the Czech Republic. During the study tour, the participants visited those organizations in the Czech Republic that are working on the provision of social services for different vulnerable groups either on advocating for the social services needed for these groups. The host organizations included SONS ČR, Diadeti, Union of Employer's Association, Community centre for war veterans and professional soldiers, People in Need and Silent World. In total, 15 representatives of Georgian CSOs participated in the study visit. The first such study tour was organized in 2023. To enhance the effectiveness of the study tours, in 2024 a series of webinars were organized as a follow up activity. During these sessions, participants had opportunity to twin with organizations working in social service sector in the Czech Republic and receive additional experience related to the subject.

The twinning initiatives included such topics as principles of working in a mother-and-child shelter in the Czech Republic and adapting these approaches for implementation in Georgia, transferring the practices from the Czech Republic for working with people with vision impairments to the context of Georgia and practical training on application of the Active Citizen Guidebook.



Furthermore, as part of the capacity development, the target CSOs were provided with financial support for implementation of projects based on local needs. In 2024 eight projects were implemented on such issues as improving the quality of life for ethnic Azerbaijani children with special needs living in Kvemo Kartli; promoting the provision of essential services to children with autism spectrum disorders in Akhaltsikhe Municipality; promoting the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti; promoting and encourag-

ing an increase in the number of professionals in critical fields to enhance the quality of social service provision in Gardabani Municipality; promoting the harmonious mental and physical development of children living in Tetrtskaro Municipality; promoting dignified and active aging, as well as socialization of older people in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region and increasing access to basic social services for ethnic minority and socially vulnerable children and youth with disabilities in Dmanisi municipality.



Funding	European Union
Project	Empowering CSOs to Promote Inclusive and Green Post-COVID Recovery in Multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli Region

Contribution 26: Civic Participation Program for young adults in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti

In 2024, CENN continued implementation of Civic Participation Program for young adults (18-30) in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. The programme aims to support the youth in promoting solutions of socio-economic issues in their communities and increasing their civic participation. The Civic Participation Programme consists of four components: Civic Education Camp, Training, Mentoring, and Implementation of campaigns.

A total of 26 participants took part in a five-day Civic Education Camp in 2024, which included sessions with guest speakers, discussions on civic engagement, and meetings with local initiative authors. Topics covered included governance, ethnic minority rights, and community problem-solving, and planning campaigns on social and environmental issues. In the second half of the camp, participants developed initiatives to be implemented at local levels. The camp was followed by mentoring sessions and

trainings on communications, media relations, and financial management to support participants in finalizing their projects.

As a result, 5 initiatives were developed and implemented until the beginning of 2025: (1) overcoming of gender stereotypes by raising awareness of gender equality among school-children in the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities; (2) Encouraging civic activism among youth in the Bolnisi and Marneuli municipalities and strengthen their involvement in socio-economic life; (3) Raising environmental awareness among youth in Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki municipalities and increasing their involvement in environmental protection issues; (4) Raising awareness on literacy and educational opportunities among youth aged 14 to 20 living in the villages of Balanta and Chikharula, Borjomi Municipality and (5) Raising awareness among youth aged 14–30 in 5 villages of Akhalkalaki Municipality, providing them with information on formal and non-formal education opportunities and strengthen their involvement in these areas.

Funding	European Union
Project	Empowering CSOs to Promote Inclusive and Green Post-COVID Recovery in Multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli Region



Gender equality and women empowerment

CENN strongly believes that sustainable development is best achieved through empowering girls and women, enhancing the voice of marginalized and vulnerable groups, and promoting gender-sensitive participatory processes at all levels.

Gendered drivers and impacts of environmental degradation and climate change amplify existing gender inequalities. In many contexts, women's dependence on and unequal access to the environment – land, water, and other natural resources – and public services and infrastructure, including energy, transport, water, and sanitation, mean that they are disproportionately affected by climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters.

Women and girls should be an integral part of developing solutions to reduce the impacts of climate change. Therefore, enabling women's voices and promoting women's leadership are prerequisites for resilience building, sustainable development, and the fulfilment of gender equality and human rights. CENN strives to ensure women's substantive and meaningful participation in sustainable development-related actions, and projects and to empower them to drive changes. CENN, through various programs and initiatives supports increasing women's employment opportunities, particularly for rural and vulnerable women.



SDG Target 5.5:

Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life

Contribution 27: Marneuli Girls' Club Unites Active Girls

CENN continued supporting the Girls' Empowerment Club in Marneuli, which unites up to twenty local girls, around half from ethnic minorities living in various villages of Marneuli. In 2024 the focus was on the peer learning approach, which has enhanced communication and facilitation skills among the club members. The school campaign covered 18 public schools and reached over 100 school students. The club members conducted several seminars with peers on various issues: negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of plastic pollution, the 4R principle of waste management, climate-resilient agriculture, and youth engagement in rural development. The Girls' Club has created valuable networks between ethnic Georgian and Azerbaijani participants. The relationships and experiences gained through the Girls' Club have created a foundation for continued social cohesion, even as the participants move on to new opportunities.

Funding	HEKS-EPER
Project	PRAISE Marneuli: Promoting Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihoods in Multi-ethnic Marneuli Municipality

Education and Youth

Education is central to the development and improvement of the lives of young people in the Caucasus region and globally. Education is critical in eradicating poverty and inequalities and promoting sustainable and inclusive growth of societies.

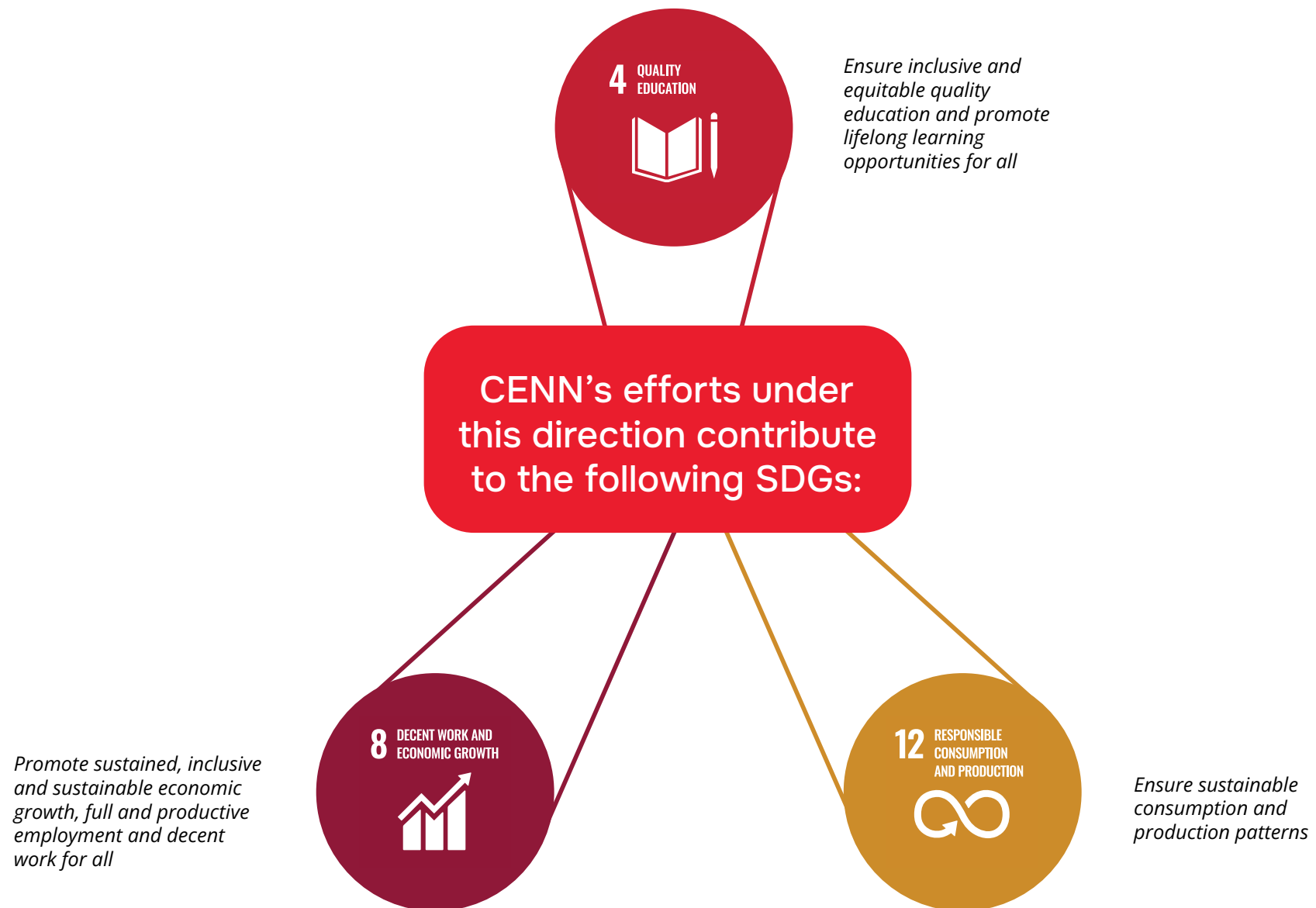
CENN has mainstreamed youth-inclusive formal and non-formal education in its various programs and projects in the region, as we recognize the importance of the role of educated youth in shaping an environmentally conscious and responsible society. CENN offers numerous opportunities for adolescents and youth for self-expression and growth as well as leadership toward sustainable development. We partner with educational institutions, including schools, universities, and VET centres, and decision-makers to educate youth and accelerate the green and digital transition of societies.

With the support of CENN's past and ongoing engagements, 500+ school eco-clubs were established in the region, diverse university curricula were introduced in the Caucasus countries, as well as hundreds of young people were empowered via non-formal education – Green Camps, environmental and youth campaigns, and activism. With formal and non-formal education endeavours we also contribute to youth's further transition to the job market.

Under education and youth, CENN focuses on the strengthening of education systems, human capital development as well as youth development, entrepreneurship, and leadership. In 2024 CENN continued **strengthening education systems** by organizing the Annual SDG-themed Niko Ketskhoveli Award for Schools, promoting youth-driven actions, and providing participants with valuable skills such as observation, data collection, analysis and research, as well as empowering school teachers and students in the disadvantaged rural areas. In terms of **human capital development**, **CENN remains active in organizing diversity of** awareness-raising initiatives including media cam-

paigns, tree planting activities, open-air exhibitions, competitions, clean-ups, study tours, movie screenings, trainings, and workshops, etc. Finally, under **youth development, entrepreneurship, and leadership**, CENN's focus lies in increasing employability skills among youth and providing various opportunities for non-formal education on such diverse topics as sustainable development, rural development, environmental protection, climate action, entrepreneurship and innovations, human rights, science and technology, waste management, circular economy, WASH, active citizenship, etc.





Strengthening education systems

A strong education system is a cornerstone for continuous and inclusive education for the young generation in the Caucasus region. Systemic reforms, harmonization of existing educational practices (introducing both – formal and non-formal education platforms/projects) and governance to modern standards and job market requirements are streamlined in CENN's past and ongoing work.

Our teams work alongside ministries, schools, eco-clubs, universities, VET centres, and various educational institutions to conduct research, develop teacher, pupil, and student standards and benchmarks; create platforms for learning-by-doing and knowledge and skills development via social participation and volunteering, and creating teacher training curricula; develop and distribute new teaching and learning materials; provide certification courses for teachers and students. We also assist graduate and undergraduate programs to introduce innovative methodologies and skills development programs for students.



SDG Target 4.7:

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Contribution 28: Annual SDG-themed Niko Ketskhoveli Award for Schoolss

Since 2014, CENN has held annually the Niko Ketskhoveli Award for school students all around Georgia. What started as an environmental initiative has turned into a completely SDG-themed competition. Participants compete by planning and implementing various community initiatives directly connected to achieving SDG goals, such as campaigns, studies, clean-ups, tree planting and grafting, trainings, presentations, growing their own food, social enterprising, volunteer work, charity, etc. The year-long competition promotes youth activism and provides participants with valuable skills such as observation, data collection, analysis, and research, as well as teamwork and collaboration with other schools and governmental agencies. During the competition, participants receive feedback from a Jury comprised of various institutions.

In 2024, out of more than 621 registered and 389 active schools, 173 semi-finalists and 42 finalists were identified. Eventually 3 winners of the Niko Ketskhoveli Youth Award were: Ts-kaltubo Theological Gymnasium named after Bishop Gabriel (1st place), Rustavi Public School #14 (2nd place) and Gori Public School #1 named after Nikoloz (Niko) Ketskhoveli (3rd place). The three winning schools were awarded financial support to purchase relevant equipment for their eco-clubs, further supporting their sustainability initiatives and ongoing environmental projects. Within the scope of the ongoing year, special efforts were made to reach the schools of ethnic minorities. Due to the language and cultural barriers, such schools can be at risk of being excluded from the various educational opportunities. Traditionally, NKA guidebooks were translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and published on forestry.ge portal.

In addition, during this year 34 active teachers from the Niko Ketskhoveli School Award were invited to participate in the Green Camp, which provided a dynamic learning environment

focused on sustainability, education, and innovative teaching methods. The camp featured educational sessions on a variety of topics, including sustainable forest management, the SDGs, working with vulnerable groups, effective presentation techniques, outdoor learning, energy-efficient technologies, and informal education practices.

Teachers also had the opportunity to meet with the organizers of the Niko Ketskheli School Award, where they discussed the current and upcoming competition years and reflected on the previous year's activities. Additionally, participants engaged in various cognitive activities both inside and outside the camp, including an educational visit to the Bazaleti Energy Efficiency Centre. Here, they explored renewable energy-powered buildings and learned about the implementation of energy-efficient technologies in schools and homes.



Funding	Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)
Project	GREEN Caucasus - Enhancing Green Rural Economy and Energy in Georgia

Contribution 29: Campaign SOS Plastic Helps Schools Reduce their Plastic Footprint

In 2024, CENN implemented the school campaign SOS Plastic aimed at helping schools understand their plastic footprint, find realistic paths and sustainable options to reduce consumption of single-use plastics. The goal was also to raise awareness and change behaviour among pupils and teachers about sustainable consumption.

20 schools were selected to participate, each was provided with trainings on waste management, waste audit and a toolkit on reducing plastic pollution. The selected schools were each assigned a mentor with whom the school shared their action plan and received feedback and advice on how to audit school's plastic footprint and afterwards implement actions to raise awareness about plastic pollution and reduce consumption of SUPs.

The campaign united 300 students from all around Georgia with the desire to implement the right waste management practices. Each school conducted waste audits to assess their plastic footprint and based on their audit results, some installed recycling bins and water dispensers, significantly reducing the daily consumption of disposable plastic bottles, others replaced polyethylene bags with reusable bags created by students, and to raise awareness, participants organized thematic exhibitions and conducted digital campaigns. Each school had over a month to implement activities.

An evaluation committee assessed all implemented initiatives and selected three winners: (1) #169 Public School, Tbilisi (2) Vazha-Pshavela #9 Public School, Gori and (3) School “Genius”, Tbilisi. The #169 Tbilisi public school team developed a [prototype of an application](#) that allows users to calculate their plastic footprint. Based on studies and audits conducted by the Gori #9 Public school, it was determined that plastic consumption had been reduced by 75% compared to the initial amount by the end of the competition. Students at “Genius School” produced informative videos that increased awareness of plastic pollution throughout the school community, and numerous volunteers actively participated in the initiative.

As a partner of the campaign, ProCredit Bank Georgia hosted the three winning schools of the campaign – Gori 9 School, School Genius and Tbilisi #169 Public School, along with one additional school selected as the bank's favourite – Tbilisi #179 Public School. During the visit, students were introduced to ProCredit Bank's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices, learning about the bank's environmental management systems, initiatives to minimize plastic use, support for green financing, and ways in which employees are actively engaged in sustainability efforts. While the winning schools were invited to learn more about sustainable business practices, it was the bank's favourite school that received a special prize in recognition of its outstanding efforts to reduce plastic pollution. This activity provided students with a practical perspective on corporate sustainability and reinforced the importance of cross-sector partnerships in advancing environmental stewardship and fostering a culture of responsibility among the next generation.



Funding	UNDP Georgia
Project	End Plastic Pollution in Georgia

Contribution 30: Schools Receive Training on Waste Management

As part of a commitment to raising awareness about waste management among young people, CENN implemented a nationwide school training initiative. This action aimed to educate students on proper waste management practices, promote sustainable behaviours, and empower the younger generation to become advocates for environmental responsibility.

The initiative was designed to equip school-children with essential knowledge and practical tools to address waste-related challenges. A structured training program was delivered across 20 selected schools in Georgia, following an initial training session for trainers conducted by CENN.

These schools were chosen to participate out of a total of 60 applications. Each of the selected schools received both online and offline training sessions on waste management best practices and the principles of sustainability. A total of 300+ students actively engaged in these training sessions, gaining valuable insights into waste re-

duction, recycling, and circular economy principles. More than 50% of participating students were girls, highlighting strong female engagement in this process. Over 20% of the participants came from vulnerable groups, ensuring an inclusive approach to environmental education. 20 trainings were conducted covering schools in Kvemo Kartli, Adjara AR, Tbilisi, Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions.

To motivate students and encourage practical learning, a video competition was organized to challenge them create informative videos on waste management, applying the knowledge gained after attending the training. Three winning schools were selected based on the creativity, accuracy, and impact of their videos. The winners were awarded prizes, enabling them to further support digital learning in their schools. In addition, the project partner Procredit Bank awarded their chosen school a projector. To further encourage participation and foster a sense of community, students involved received branded t-shirts, reinforcing their commitment to the initiative.



Funding	UNDP Georgia
Project	End Plastic Pollution in Georgia

Contribution 31: Transboundary Cooperation of Conflict-Affected Teachers and Students through Environmental Education

CENN continues working on environmental education as an opportunity for transboundary cooperation of conflict-affected societies. For this purpose, in 2024, CENN implemented Teacher Environmental Education Program (TEEP) in target schools, which provided the teachers with the necessary knowledge and resources to become environmental educators in their schools and communities. The program included training for trainers (ToT) as well as one-to-one mentorship support and peer-to-peer coaching sessions to help them develop their training plan, adapt the lesson plans to their students and plan and implement the environmental education lessons in their schools. The knowledge materials and educational resources cover sustainable development and natural resources management; climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR); sustainable management of water resources; biodiversity and sustainable waste management.

Trained teachers conducted 25 model lessons across five environmental topics at five different schools on environmental topics, such as climate change; sustainable development; water resources management; biodiversity and waste management etc. The lessons included presentations, group exercises, videos, and various resources to enhance learning. Students gained knowledge and skills related to these topics and were actively involved in eco-clubs, where they applied what they learned and shared it with their peers. This involvement extended to contributing to environmental im-

provements in their communities. The teachers became environmental educators both within their schools and in the broader community.

Following up on the received knowledge, ten environmental pilot initiatives were successfully implemented by the teachers and students, including such activities as cleanups, planting new evergreen plants in the school yard, placing waste separation bins in the school yard etc. During these events, teachers and students engaged in discussions about the role of green plants in climate change mitigation, sustainable waste management principles, and the importance of composting.

By providing learning opportunities, such as the ToT, the capacity building workshops, joint environmental campaigns and activities as part of the local initiatives, the awareness among local youth about environment, climate change and sustainable development has been increased. The joint environmental campaigns have been implemented by following the principles of trust-based cooperation. The joint actions proved the positive impact and effectiveness of addressing environmental challenges and climate change impacts.

The initiative contributed to the reconciliation and confidence building between conflict-affected societies via establishing a stable framework for effective collaboration. CENN developed new approaches to peace and confidence building via building the capacity of teachers and implementing and supporting teacher-driven environmental, gender-sensitive confidence-building initiatives.



Contribution 32: Zero Waste at Schools in conflict-affected communities

CENN continues to implement initiatives aimed at building confidence among those impacted by the conflict through the promotion of collective efforts in waste management and creating an enabling environment for fostering sustainable linkages between schools, teachers, and students. The Zero Waste at Schools program was implemented in conflict-affected areas and included the following components: (1) training for teachers in waste management practices; and (2) campaigns led by teachers and students, providing enhanced access to sustainable waste management for the target schools, students, and communities. As part of a capacity development program, the teachers were provided with essential modern knowledge about the sustainable waste management system in schools, emphasizing reduction and reuse. After the capacity development program, model lessons were conducted in participating schools where students received environmental, climate change, waste management and sustainable development knowledge. The participants received continued mentoring and peer-to-peer coaching sessions to ensure effective implementation of their Sustainable Waste Management action plans, and implemented teacher- and student-led campaigns for their local communities on such topics as Waste Management and Environmental Risks, Solutions for Waste Reduction in Schools and Ways to Reduce Plastic Consumption. As a result of the campaigns reusable water bottles were distributed and new waste collection bins were installed. Overall, by providing learning opportunities, such as ToTs, the capacity building workshops, joint environmental campaigns and activities as part of the local initiatives, the awareness among local youth from the target group about the environment, climate change, waste management, and sustainable development has been increased.



Contribution 33: Professional Orientation and Career Development in Conflict-Affected Communities

CENN provided professional orientation and career development opportunities to youth and teachers in the conflict-affected communities, enabling them to make more informed decisions and prevent mass migration of youth. After thorough needs assessment, Students Professional Development Program (SPDP) was implemented, which contained four components: face-to-face thematic trainings; online thematic workshops cycle; four-day workshop/camp and visits to relevant institutions; and Individual mentoring sessions. The topics covered included resume building and self-branding, the university's programs and existing opportunities, global perspectives and study abroad opportunities, career development through internships and volunteering, career development paths, soft skills, circular economy and waste management, climate change – challenges and mitigation etc. The program included mentorship in partnership with the US Government Exchange Program Alumni Association of Georgia (EPAG), and study visits in various organizations and universities.

In addition, the program increased capacities of local teachers by providing them with tailored trainings after needs assessment. The training covered such topics as concept of sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources; climate change and disaster risk reduction; protection and sustainable management of water resources; biodiversity and waste management. As a follow up, the teachers who completed the training conducted model lessons in their schools, using the methodologies, tools, and resources provided through the ToT program, ensuring a standardized and effective approach. As part of the model lessons 6 eco-clubs were established, one in each target school.



Human capital development

We believe that human capital is a cornerstone for green growth, innovation, and sustainable development. Equipped with modern knowledge, skills, and jobs, human resources stand to be the most important driver of economic growth and a sustainable pathway to social progress in the Caucasus region.

CENN prioritizes human capital development across all interventions, focusing on building thematic modern knowledge for various target groups such as farmers, foresters, teachers and schoolchildren, women entrepreneurs, social and green start-uppers, private sector representatives, and many more. To achieve this goal, CENN offers various tools – from tailored trainings, coaching, and experience sharing – to the creation of educational programs, curricula, and knowledge materials, as well as knowledge transfer and sharing mechanisms.

Moreover, CENN prioritizes continued education for its staff members, offering thematic training and courses for professional and personal development to maintain knowledgeable and skilful team members.



SDG Target 12.8:

By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

CENN promotes the celebration of thematic environmental days and significant global events to increase awareness of the general population, especially the youth. In 2024, the awareness-raising initiatives included media campaigns, clean-up activities, competitions, study tours, movie screenings, trainings, and workshops, etc.

The environmental days that were marked by CENN activities included Earth Day, World Environment Day, World Clean-up Day etc.

These are some of the highlights from the year:

- ▶ On April 1, 2024, the [visual arts contest](#) was conducted with the support of GOPA Intec. The objective was to enhance public awareness through visual art regarding the crucial role of energy efficiency and renewable energies in mitigating and preventing the adverse impacts of climate change. To take part in the competition, participants were requested to develop concepts for their proposed artworks (painting, sculpture, video, and infographics) centred on the following themes: Importance of saving energy; Importance of energy-efficient technologies; Energy efficiency in buildings; Renewable and clean energy; Energy efficient transport. The winners were awarded prizes and their artworks were exhibited in the Art Area Exhibition Hall.
- ▶ On September 19, 2024, youth conference was organized for local youth about the waste management in the municipalities of Imereti dedicated to the World Clean-up Day. The youth presented local challenges related to the waste management and discussed the potential solutions. The conference was also attended by the Imereti CAG members.
- ▶ On September 20, 2024, a workshop on waste management and climate change was organized in Ozurgeti for local youth dedicated to the World Clean-up Day. The first part of the workshop covered the topics of SDG 11 ([Sustainable cities and communities](#)) and 13 (Climate Action), waste management importance, climate change and its cases. The second part of the workshop was dedicated

to handcrafted clothing. 31 youth attended the workshop. In addition, within the World Clean Up Day 2024, local youth in Guria provided recommendations to 6 school administrations (Shekarini, Gurianta, Kviriketi, Meria, Naruja, Nagomari), which included implementing waste collection practices and allocating bins to collect used elements in schools, as well as raising environmental awareness in the community through peer-to-peer sessions.

- On September 21, 2024, a workshop on waste management and climate change was organized at the Racha Climate Hub for local youth dedicated to the World Clean-up Day. The first part of the workshop covered the topics such as SDG 11 and 13, waste management importance, climate change and its cases.



Youth development, entrepreneurship and leadership

Youth play a significant role in building a better future that is greener, more inclusive, and digital. CENN is striving to give young people more opportunities for the future. Youth in the Caucasus region are still facing challenges in terms of education, training, learning, employment, entrepreneurship, and participation.

In the past years, we have witnessed the determination and strength of the younger generation to create more employment opportunities in green industries. CENN, therefore, provides various development programs for rural youth to accelerate their social, environmental, and innovative business models and become key drivers of societal changes through entrepreneurship which empowers them to generate income and employ those in need. To achieve this, we work with public, private, and academic sector representatives.



SDG Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Contribution 34: Empowering Young Professionals in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti Regions

In 2024, CENN completed the Young Professionals Program in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. As part of the program, 10 motivated young people (including ethnic minorities and women) underwent a one-month fellowship in 9 organizations (HEKS-Eper, CSI, PMCG, CENN, Caritas, CSRDG, CTC, ISFED, and IRI) in Tbilisi. During 2024, the participants of the program developed project ideas for the sub-grants, and were paired with local CSOs for consultation and refinement of their ideas. The capacity building provided by CENN also included training in budget, financial management and procurement procedures. As a result, the participants of the Young Professionals Program implemented various awareness raising initiatives on such topics as domestic violence, women's rights, environmental pollution, ecotourism, civic engagement, advocacy, waste management, natural disasters etc. Participants acquired valuable experience in teamwork, familiarization with organizational workflows, active involvement in project implementation, and event coordination. Complementing this practical exposure, a team-building workshop and project writing training were conducted, equipping program participants with essential knowledge and skills to participate in the grant competition announced for YPP program participants. The vast majority of participants believe that the internship significantly helped them to develop new skills, including leadership and professional skills.

Funding	European Union
Project	Empowering CSOs to Promote Inclusive and Green Post-COVID Recovery in Multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli Region

SDG Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university

Contribution 35: Global Platform Youth Hubs promote youth activism in Tbilisi and Ozurgeti

CENN is committed to promoting youth education and activism in Georgia. With this goal in mind, in 2024 CENN has created two Global Platform (GP) youth hubs in Tbilisi and Ozurgeti (Guria region), as spaces for local youth to organize and connect. The hubs implement a variety of initiatives providing opportunities for youth to engage, learn, and collaborate on meaningful projects, enhancing their capacity to address local challenges. The hubs are designed to be space for workshops, discussions, and community gatherings, empowering young people—especially women and marginalized groups—to advocate for their rights and build connections.

Mutual study visits for youth and key staff between Georgia and Denmark and a “green youth camp” for volunteers from both countries helped build the foundation for youth activist volunteer communities in both Tbilisi and Guria – many of these participants are

now some of the most active volunteers at the GPs in Georgia. The volunteers from Georgia also had an opportunity to meet other GP partners and volunteers from across the European GP partner network (Denmark, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Italy, Poland, Romania, Azerbaijan) in Denmark for a leadership and organizing workshop focused on building volunteer communities, further strengthening both the collaboration between GPs in Europe and the foundation for GPs in Georgia.

Global Platform youth hubs are part of global network for youth-led activism which unites similar hubs in African, Latin America, Asia, Middle East and Europe. The local hubs enable Georgian partners and youth to be connected to a global youth hub network and support Georgian youth activists to be heard on the global stage. In Tbilisi the Global Platform youth hub is hosted by GrlzWave, and in Ozurgeti – by Young Pedagogues’ Union (YPU).



Funding	New Democracy Fund
Project	Seeds of change: Intersectional Green Feminism and Youth Activism in Georgia

Contribution 36: Non-Formal Education of Sustainability through Green Camps

CENN annually implements Green Camps for rural youth, providing participants with a variety of learning opportunities including trainings, lectures as well as practical workshops, field trips and research activities. The Green Camps cover a diversity of topics including sustainable development, rural development, environmental protection, climate action, entrepreneurship and innovations, human rights, science and technology, waste management, circular economy, WASH, climate-resilient agriculture, food systems, food loss, food waste etc. The Green Camps provide youth with invaluable skills such as team building, presentation, participation, public speaking, critical thinking, and constructive feedback. The participants are also taught about the rules of behaviour in wild nature and are given a chance to apply this knowledge in practice while going on a field trip. In 2024, CENN conducted up to 10 camps in Georgia, benefitting more than 200 participants.



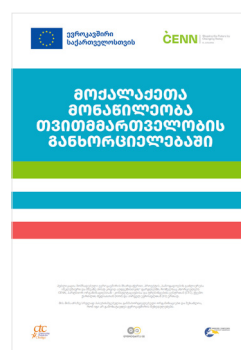
Funding	European Union; HEKS-EPER; UNDP Georgia; ActionAid Denmark; Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC); New Democracy Fund (NDF); EU Commission
Project	Green Guria: Supporting Local Democracy and Rural Development for Inclusive and Resilient Green Growth; End Plastic Pollution in Georgia; A network for democracy: Building a future with the European leaders of tomorrow (BAF); PRAISE Marneuli: Promoting Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihoods in Multi-ethnic Marneuli Municipality; GREEN Caucasus - Enhancing Green Rural Economy and Energy in Georgia; Seeds of change: Intersectional Green Feminism and Youth Activism in Georgia; Empowering CSOs to Promote Inclusive and Green Post-COVID Recovery in Multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli Region

Knowledge Materials

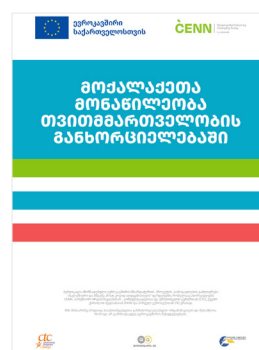
This year's collection of knowledge materials offers practical guidance for strengthening local governance, community resilience, and sustainable development. It supports municipalities and civil society in improving policy planning, environmental management, citizen engagement, and adaptive responses to climate challenges. By fostering participatory approaches and building institutional and individual capacities, these resources contribute to more inclusive, informed, and sustainable local decision-making.



[Sustainable Pastureland Management](#)



[Participation of citizens in the local self-governance](#)



[Preparation of municipal policy documents](#)



[Stress Management – Practical Guidebook](#)



[Project Monitoring and Evaluation](#)



[Guria's Marketing and Communication Strategy and Action Plan](#)



[Local Development Strategies for Three Municipalities of Guria](#)



[Drought Dynamics in Georgia](#)



[Overview of the Drought Policy in Georgia](#)



[Resource Lab for Human Centred Climate Services](#)

Annex: Projects implemented in 2024

Donor	Project Title
Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)	GREEN Caucasus - Enhancing Green Rural Economy and Energy in Georgia
Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)	Restoring Ecosystems to Reduce Drought Risk and Increase Resilience
EU Commission	Circular Cities and Regions in Georgia: Building Local Capacities to Advance Waste Prevention and Circular Economy in the Regions of Georgia
EU Commission	Empowering CSOs to Promote Inclusive and Green Post-COVID Recovery in Multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli Region
EU Commission	Innovating Climate services through Integrating Scientific and local Knowledge – I-CISK
European Union (EU)	Georgia Climate Action Project (GEO-CAP): Promoting Civil Society Engagement in Climate Change Policy Design and Implementation
European Union (EU), ENPARD 4	Green Guria: Supporting Local Democracy and Rural Development for Inclusive and Resilient Green Growth
European Union through GOPA Intec	Information and Awareness-Raising Campaign on Energy Efficiency in Tbilisi
French Embassy in Georgia	Enhancing Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Farmer and Information Consultation Centre Staff Capacity Building in Gardabani and Bolnisi Municipalities
German Federal Foreign Office	SDG LENS. Monitoring Sustainable Development in Eastern Europe & South Caucasus (role of CENN: implementing partner)kve
German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)	Support of Public Participation in Forest Management Within the project “Enabling Implementation of Forest Sector Reform in Georgia (ECO Georgia)”

German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)/German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	Tbilisi Circular Lab: Implementing circular packaging models for waste reduction
HEKS-EPER (Swiss Church Aid)	PRAISE Marneuli: Promoting Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihoods in Multi-ethnic Marneuli Municipality
Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke/ActionAid Denmark	A network for democracy: Building a future with the European leaders of tomorrow (BAF)
New Democracy Fund (NDF)	Seeds of change: Intersectional Green Feminism and Youth Activism in Georgia
The World Bank with the funding from the European Union; via service contract agreement with ONF International	European Union for Environment (EU4Environment – Green Economy); Activity: Supporting Legal and Deforestation-free Trade and Preventing illegal trade of wood products in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova (role of CENN: implementing partner in Georgia, lead – ONF International)
The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Caucasus Geoparks' Network in the South Caucasus (CGNP)
UNDP Georgia	End Plastic Pollution in Georgia

