

CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMME IN GEORGIA
‘TO MAP CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN GEORGIA’
National Meeting for Mapping Circularity of Georgia

The transition to a circular economy requires a radical change in the way we produce and consume. In a circular economy, products are designed for durability, upgradeability, reparability and reusability, with a view to reusing the materials from which they are made after they reach the end of their life. In the use phase, products are managed with a view to maximising their utilisation capacity and extending their useful life, thus maintaining their value for as long as possible. This is made possible by companies that develop new business models generating revenue streams from services rather than products while making a more efficient use of resources and/or giving new value to end-of-life products and materials. Consumers use products efficiently and discard them in such a way that they can be reused or, if this is technically or economically unfeasible, recycling operators turn them into secondary materials that can enter a new production-consumption cycle. This needs to be supported by the whole system, from enabling technologies and infrastructures to a form of market organisation that facilitates collaboration along and across value chains and a form of governance and regulation that encourages companies to adopt circular approaches to social norms that make the circular production-consumption patterns socially preferable.

With the general objective of replacing the ‘end-of-life’ concept with an economic system that closes material loops, Georgia embarked in 2018 on an accelerated path to transition to the circular economy with enacting the concept of the Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) in the national Waste Management Code. With the concerted efforts of the Government of Georgia (GoG), civil society organisations, academia and international partners, Georgia has also initiated the development of the Circular Economy Strategy and Road Map based on a comprehensive multidimensional approach that covers production, consumption, waste management, secondary raw materials, innovation, investments as well as ongoing initiatives in different sectors implemented by different players that are at different stages of the value chain or different stages of development.

The first step in the accelerated transition to circularity is the mapping how circular is the economy of Georgia and developing recommendations for the Circular Economy Strategy. This initiative was commenced in 2020 as a part of the ongoing circular economy programme implemented by CSO Georgian Society of Nature Explorers “Orchis” (GSNE “Orchis”) in close cooperation with the GoG and with the financial support of the Government of Sweden.

The circularity mapping is a complex process. To perform it, the task team has conducted an assessment of economic sectors of Georgia in terms of circularity. At the initial stage a screening exercise was conducted to select out of the 90 sectors (economic activities) listed in the register of National Office of Statistics those sectors, which may be prospective for transition to circular models of economy. Two simple criteria have been used for screening: economic criteria characterizing the role of the sector in the country’s economy (input in GDP; annual production; number of employees); and volumes of waste generated or losses. As a result of the screening, 14 sectors have been identified as having potential (medium; high; extremely high) for developing circularity. Subsequently, the task team has assessed the 14 selected sectors and prepared a snap-shot description of each, including mass flows of materials (raw materials, products, by-products and wastes), losses and wastes generated, share of recycled wastes and estimation of potential for recycling. The task team also recommended appropriate national quantitative circular economy policy targets and circular ambitions, identified sectoral opportunities, defined sector-specific policy options and developed a set of recommendations for the Circular Economy Road Map and Strategy for Georgia.

The circularity mapping is currently at its final stages and will be completed by the end of October 2022. The mapping process took 24 months of intensive work by 13 experts representing the highest level at various economic sectors. The experts interacted closely with the Inter-ministerial Co-ordination Board consisting of 36 experts from various ministries and governmental agencies under the leadership of Accad. Solomon Pavliashvili - Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. In addition, experts carried out extensive consultations and interviews with business leaders and reviewed 82 most relevant and most recent reference documents. The Circularity Mapping Report has been finalised and its key findings and recommendations will be presented at the National Meeting on 31st October 2022.