

CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMME IN GEORGIA MAPPING CIRCULARITY IN 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 has recently embarked on an accelerated path to transition to the circular economy. With the concerted efforts of the Government, civil society organisations, academia and international partners, Georgia initiated the development of the circular economy strategy and roadmap aimed at comprehensive approach from multiple points of view including production, consumption, waste management, secondary raw materials, innovation, investments as well as ongoing initiatives, in different sectors, by different players, and at different stages of the value chain or different stages of development.

The first step in the accelerated transition to circularity is mapping how circular is the economy of Georgia and developing recommendations for the Circular Economy Strategy. These activities have already commenced as a part of the ongoing programme implemented by CSO Georgian Society of Nature Explorers “Orchis” within the framework of “Keep Georgia Tidy” Project and supported by the Government of Sweden,

The key objectives of this call for a close cooperation of the international and local group of experts and the representatives of the Government of Georgia to map the current level of circularity, to establish appropriate national quantitative circular economy policy targets and circular ambitions, identify sectoral opportunities and determine sector-specific policy options and subsequently develop recommendations for the Circular Economy Roadmap and Strategy of Georgia.

The implementation of the programme is led by an International Expert in the Circular Economy supported by a National Expert in Sustainable Development and a group of local Georgian experts with a sound knowledge of the Georgian economy and environmental, social and governance issues. In addition, the Government of Georgia has formed an inter-ministerial working group which includes members from different government departments, to ensure broad expertise as well as early buy-in from these key departments. The first kick-off meeting of the project took place on 23rd April 2021. The subsequent plenary meeting of both groups of experts is planned on 1st July 2021.