

Fourth edition



**WATR**

*Waste Management Technologies in Regions*

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER  
2015



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## Dear Readers,

The *Waste Management Technologies in Georgia* (WMTR) program is pleased to share with you our Fourth Newsletter, which describes the work accomplished during the period of April-June, 2015. Through this newsletter, we hope we can have more interactive communication with colleagues and participants in the development of solid waste management sectors. Your comments and suggestions are highly appreciated; please contact us at the following address/email:

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Sincerely, WMTR Program

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## About the Program

*Waste Management Technologies in Regions* (WMTR) is a 4-year program that was launched on March 18, 2014. The initiative is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), together with CENN<sup>1</sup> – a local partner and a sub recipient.

WMTR is assisting the Government of Georgia in designing an adequate waste management system in the regions of Adjara and Kakheti. The program objective is to support a cleaner and healthier environment, minimize adverse impacts from waste on human health and natural resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.

## Activity Highlights

### *Developing the Telavi Pilot Project*

The WMTR team is preparing to implement a Piloting of Integrated Waste Management Systems in Target Areas of Telavi Municipality project in five selected villages of Telavi municipality in the fall of 2015. The project is already approved by USAID, and ICMA and Telavi municipality signed an in-kind grant agreement to provide waste bins, technical assistance, and capacity building in the area. The grant will allow for 75 bins to be installed in the villages in order to carry out wet-dry waste separation. Bins placement will be accompanied by an aware-

<sup>1</sup> Caucasus Environmental NGO Network



ness campaign to draw public attention to critical issues in solid waste management.

This pilot project aims to demonstrate the benefits of Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) practices via the provision of technical assistance, co-financing support, and the establishment of an integrated solid waste management (ISWM) system, as well raising the awareness of local governmental structures and the public at large.

During the first stage of the project, the team in cooperation with Telavi municipality will select villages based on readiness of their residents to be involved in waste management related activities, and willingness and readiness of Trustees in the villages to be involved in the process. Other important selection criteria will include: availability of active community groups/CBOs/NGOs, socio-economic situation, population size, availability of small processing enterprises, and a number of large farms.

Within the framework of the project, integrated solid waste management practices will be introduced to the villages via expanding the waste collection service, introducing separated waste collection bins along with promoting recycling and composting activities, closing illegal waste disposal areas and introducing a waste fee collection scheme. Additionally, the project aims to develop capacity/institution building of Telavi Municipality and the waste collection service provider company in terms of integrated solid waste management, as well as to launch the public awareness raising component (directed by the 4R principles – reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle), focusing on behavioral change amongst the young generation in the target areas.

### ***Design and Implementation of the City-to-City Exchange Program***

In March 2015 WMTR established City-to-City partnership linkages between the Georgian municipalities of Telavi and Batumi and Catawba County, NC, and the City of Golden, CO (respectively). The activity was kicked off with the US local government representatives visiting Georgia to learn about the existing state and issues facing municipal solid waste management. Georgian delegations from Telavi and Batumi returned visits to the US during July 27–31 and August 10-14. These two visits were designed as experience sharing and learning opportunities to increase the knowledge of waste management issues among Georgian municipal officials, and to help them develop the skills to better plan waste management related activities in their cities.

Delegation members were selected in close cooperation with local and national government representatives based on their current responsibilities and how they relate to waste management, and approved for participation by US-AID. Knowledge and experience dealing with waste management issues were also taken into consideration.

Before both visits, the WMTR team, in close coordination with Telavi, Batumi, and their US counterparts, developed

trip agendas focusing on the issues that self-governing Georgian cities face in the area of waste management. When in the US, the delegations and WMTR representatives finalized draft action plans to address identified priority solid waste management needs in participating municipalities. These action plans will serve as a basis for future cooperation between the cities of Georgia (Telavi and Batumi) and their US partners (Catawba County and the City of Golden, respectively).

The Georgian delegation to Golden included Lasha Nakashidze, Head of the Division for Strategic Planning, Investments and Economic Development. Lasha is a designated point of contact and a coordinator within Batumi municipality with the WMTR project. The delegation also included Irakli Chavleishvili, Deputy Chairman of Sakrebulo (Local Assembly) of Batumi Municipality, Lasha Sirabidze, a member of Batumi Municipality and a Chairman of the Committee of Infrastructure Development of Sakrebulo. Nino Shavgulidze, WMTR Deputy Chief of Party, also participated in the visit of Golden.

The delegation to Catawba County included Platon Kalmakhelidze, Telavi Mayor, Tengiz Mtvarelshvili, Telavi Vice Mayor, George Erukidze, Head of Administration Department. George Kiknadze, Head of the Service of Property Management, Infrastructure, Spatial Arrangement, Architecture and Construction Works, Alverd Chankseliani, Head of Waste and Chemical Substances Department, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia. Nino Tevzadze, WMTR Component 1 leader, also visited Catawba County as part of the group.

### ***Development of the Gurjaani Landfill Closure Plan***

One of the main issues related to waste management in Georgia is the existence of unsanitary landfills that do not comply with international requirements. All landfills in WMTR target regions are designed in a similar way:



they do not have bottom isolation, layering or drainage, organics collection systems. Unsanitary landfills pose a serious threat to the environment and to the health of the surrounding communities. WMTR is supporting the Government of Georgia in developing closure/remediation plans for these illegal landfills.

The operations, management, and monitoring of the existing landfills (excluding Tbilisi and Adjara Region), construction planning of new regional landfills in compliance with EU regulations, and closure of the existing landfills that do not meet international requirements is the responsibility of the Solid Waste Management Company of Georgia (SWMCG).

In May, 2015 the WMTR project signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SWMCG on the development of the Gurjaani landfill closure plan in accordance with the international requirements and, as the second phase, on the actual closing of the landfill to be carried out by SWMCG itself.

SWMCG terminated Gurjaani landfill operations in 2014 and is now planning to allocate funds in the 2016 budget to close it. The development of a closure plan is essential because of the landfill location in a boggy area and its current conditions that may lead to potential complications.

WMTR engaged a team of international and local technical experts and prepared the draft of the document for SWMCG's review and comments. The closure plan took into consideration the requirements of national legislation, international best practices, and EU directives.

#### **Registration of Waste Management Association in the National Agency of Public Registry**

The National Agency of Public Registry approved the Charter of Waste Management Association (WMA) in June 2015. This approval granted the association the right to officially register according to the requirements of the Georgian legislation.



The WMTR program has played a significant role in the development of WMA. WMTR has done this by organizing and facilitating meetings between the founders of the Association in order to elect its Board Members and President. WMTR was also actively involved in assisting WMA with the creation of its charter.

Consistent with the Charter, the WMA will cooperate with national and international projects and donor organizations, develop recommendations aimed at solving waste management issues, and initiate and implement new waste management approaches. WMA will also liaise with relevant government agencies to obtain permissions to implement appropriate activities as needed. Other WMA goals include participating in design and implementation of projects on national and international levels, and – eventually – contribution to drawing up draft laws and approaching legislative and executive authorities with legislative initiatives in case of conflicting or deficient laws.

The members of the Association will periodically meet to discuss solutions to common problems. The Association's activities will contribute to the further development of the waste recycling sector and will lead to the development of solutions to problems currently faced.

#### **Support LTD Zugo in Developing Environmental Impact Assessment Report**

The WMTR project supported LTD Zugo, a plastic recycling company; in preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report required for recycling companies in Georgia to receive an environmental permit from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MoENRP).

According to the Law on Permit for Impact on the Environment in Georgia, activities related to waste disposal, treatment or recycling, incineration, and landfill design and operation, are subject to permits and mandatory EIAs. Therefore, any recycling activity requires a permit from the Ministry based on an EIA, which considers possible impacts on, and risks to, the physical, biological, and human environments.

It must be noted that none of the companies currently operating in WMTR target regions have environmental permits, and thus their operations could be deemed illegal.

The report, prepared with the support of WMTR national experts, provides general information about the company, offers a legislative analysis and review of the applicable EU regulations, describes environmental conditions and alternatives, as well as the potential impact on natural and social environments as a result of a production facility. It also looks at infrastructure issues, social and socio-economic indicators, the emergency response plan and the methods of cumulative impact control and the monitoring of the environment.

The final report was submitted to the Permit Department of the MoENRP for comments, followed by a public hearing on July 3, 2015. The feedback from the MoENRP and the public hearing was incorporated into the document and also resulted in inclusion of the information on the ecological expertise process at the MoENRP. The result of the expertise process will be known in the beginning of September.

## **Public Lectures on the Role of Tariffs in the Economy of a Country**

On May 1 and 5, 2015 WMTR organized a public lecture on the “Economic Aspects of Waste Management: Role of Tariffs in the Economy of a Country”, in Batumi and Telavi State Universities. An estimated 120 University students and academic staff attended. The goal of the lecture was to provide an assessment of regional municipal waste tariff systems in Kakheti and Adjara.



The lectures also covered possible solutions to tariff-related problems, the role of tariffs in the current economy, best international practices, and the legal basis for tariffs. The lecture also described possible ways the current Georgian legislation could be brought into compliance with the requirements of the Association Agreement.

## **Development of Public Service Announcement (PSA)**

In July 2015 the program finalized a Public Service Announcement (PSA) aimed at raising awareness about the importance of the tariff system, and linking tariff collection and a clean and healthy environment. The PSA with reanimated character of one of the most popular Georgian paintings “Meezove” (yard keeper) by Pirosmiani delivers the key message – did you pay the waste collection fee? – in a short and humorous manner. The objective of the PSA was to encourage them to be socially responsible and to understand that they play their role in cleaner environment by paying their part of the waste collection fee. The PSA is being broadcast via Public Broadcaster and is spread in social networks. To watch the PSA on Youtube, please follow the link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfFV\\_mEr8Lw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfFV_mEr8Lw)



## **World Run Event in Telavi**

With the goal to raise awareness of integrated waste management issues, WMTR Program and Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources participated in Life World Run – a global running event in aid of the search for a cure to spinal cord injuries held in Kakheti on May 3.

Separation bins for plastic bottles and cans were placed in three different areas at the event. Fifty volunteers participated in the clean-up activity, collecting plastic bottles, cans and other waste. As a result, estimated 10,000 plastic bottles and cans were collected for further recycling.

## **Training on Project Cycle Management for Kakheti and Adjara School Students**

In order to introduce the WMTR grants program in schools, the team implemented three training workshops on Project Cycle Management for Kakheti and Adjara public school students. A total of 47 school students in grades 9-11 participated in the three-day training courses held at Bulachauri Green Centre. The training deployed a “learning by doing” approach having students work in the groups of 4-5 people.



During the training, teams came up with the ideas of raising awareness about waste management to bring about change in a community. The training also included an educational simulation where kids were given a problem, budget, and time frame to create change. Students also identified target groups, created a problem tree, project indicators, thought through alternative problem solutions, planned activities, and generated a budget.

The training will help students in WMTR target regions acquire the skills necessary for planning and implementing environmental activities. We plan on continuing student trainings in the future.

### **Earth Day Celebration**

In order to educate youth about the importance of the 4Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle) approach, the WMTR program worked with NGO “ECOVISION”, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Tbilisi City Hall and the Solid Waste Management Company of Georgia to celebrate the 45th annual Earth Day Celebration at Tbilisi Zoo.

Georgia Mission director Stephen Haykin welcomed participants by explaining the significance of Earth Day and why it was important that young people are involved in environmental campaigns. He also talked about the importance of waste management in Georgia.





The celebration also included an exhibition of Earth Day competition posters and recycled art made using plastic bottle caps and a globe. Additionally, the WMTR facilitated a donation of used toys and books to a children's shelter. The winners and the participants of the Slogan & Poster on Sustainable Waste Management competition received prizes.



### **WMTR and EC-LEDS Clean Energy Programs at the America Days Festival**

WMTR and EC-LEDS, two USAID funded projects, joined forces to participate in the America Days Festival at Rike Park on June 6, 2015.

The joint venture hosted an informational tent offering hand-outs on energy efficiency and sustainable waste management. Guests were introduced to WMTR and EC-LEDS activities, and learned how they could reduce energy usage, waste accumulation and save money. Booklets, t-shirts and caps were also distributed.

The event was a great way to tie educational material with fun activities. Both groups felt it was a success, and it ended with a concert by an American band named Dangerflow.





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