

# Georgian Journal

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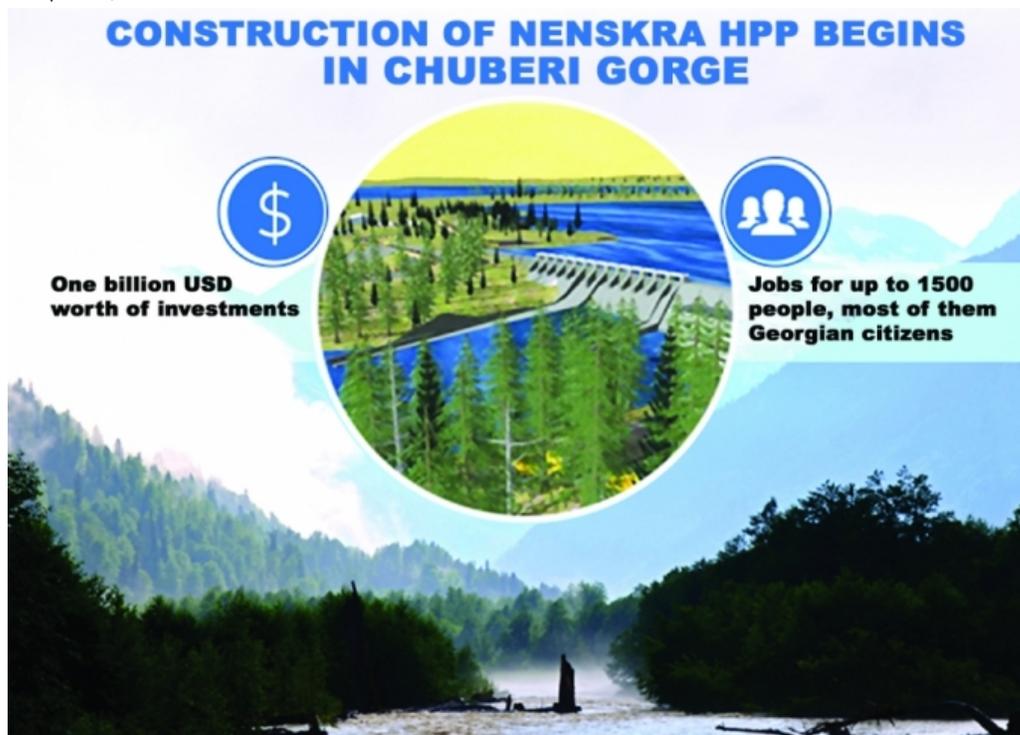
POLITICS SOCIETY **ECONOMY** LAW GEORGIAN REVIEW GEORGIAN CUISINE DISCOVER GEORGIA WORLD ENTERTAINMENT SPORTS MILITARY CULTURE BLOG

## ECONOMY

### Building hydropower plants without considering the risks



04 September, 2015



Georgia's abundant water resources are being actively utilized for numerous hydropower plants. No one argues that having one's own energy sources is good for the country's development, but alarms are still being sounded – according to environmentalists, almost all of Georgia's new HPPs are built or being built without extensive prior research. Besides, there is little to no support for involving the society into discussions on the new projects, event though holding public debates and considering the local population's opinion represents one of the EU directives.

**According to environmentalists, almost all of Georgia's new HPPs are built or being built without extensive prior research. Besides, there is little to no support for involving the society into discussions on the new projects.**

The Association Agreement Georgia signed with the EU in 2014 has obliged Georgia to tweak its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation. The tweaks should envision procedures necessary for involvement of the society in the process, such as screening and scoping.

“Screening and scoping stages of construction determine whether the project necessitates an EIA report. It is precisely at these stages that it is decided whether the project is worth proceeding with or not. In Georgia, however, the EIA is just a formality; this is confirmed by the way public discussions are going,” says Dato Chipashvili, representative of Green Alternative organization.

## Breaking News

Price of 1 USD equals 2.3805 GEL

Sending a unified and consolidated diplomatic message is of utmost importance for a country like Georgia - Giorgi Margvelashvili

If any of the talk shows were closed, this decision was made by their channels' leadership - Prime Minister

Criminal prosecution launched against the Managing Director and Head of Monitoring Service of Casino Adjara

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## PHOTO OF THE DAY



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## GEL Exchange

	1	USD	2.3593
	1	EUR	2.6476
	1	GBP	3.6045
	100	RUB	3.5182



Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia and Vasilyeva case



Therefore, as European Union’s Directorate-General for the Environment tells us through its press service, it is necessary for power over conduction of EIA to become accessible to the society: “Regardless of the case, a dialogue between the government’s authorized representatives and all interested parties is important at the project’s initial stage for it to proceed.”

Georgia’s Environment Protection Ministry is already working on this issue. The bill it is going to propose will be discussed by the Parliament before the end of this year.

“The main thing about the new bill envisioning EIA is that involvement of the society will be taken to a whole new level. Every single citizen who is able and interested in this or that project will be held informed at its earliest stage and his opinions on it will be taken into consideration,” says Maia Bitadze, vice Environment Minister.

But before the codex reflecting the EU directives takes effect, Georgia’s Energy Ministry is very actively signing memorandums of understanding with companies in charge of various hydropower projects. A few weeks ago, one of these was signed with Feri, a company in charge of building, owning and operating the Oni Cascade HPP. Denizens of the Racha region, however, are fiercely opposed to the project proceeding without their involvement.

“They are actively trying to circumvent the people with this project. They care nothing about the people’s opinions, the nature or anything else – the only thing that interests them is profit. We want them to come here, talk to them, hear them explain themselves and maybe reach some sort of mutual understanding. The fact that this is not happening is what pains us most,” says Giorgi Khomasuridze, a resident of Oni. Director of Feri company Lasha Iordanishvili promises to take the people’s opinion into account, however:

“The local population will be informed about the project and our plans from top to bottom. Their observations will be considered. We are planning to start construction after receiving the permit, which should not come later than summer of 2016.”



Lack of public involvement is the hot topic of other hydropower projects in Georgia as well, such as the Nenskra HPP planned to be built in Svaneti region. All legal and technical details pertaining to the project have already been sorted out and mobilization for the construction effort will begin in a few days.

“The investors try to make sure as few people as possible hear about the projects’ public discussions. In the Nenskra HPP case, for example, only two people have accidentally discovered that the project’s EIA report was discussed on June 1 and 2,” says Dato Chipashvili.

Nato Subari, a local denizen, did not attend these public discussions, but she is convinced that erecting a hydropower plant at Nenskra River would lead to serious problems:

“Every spring, a landslide occurs at the slope at the river’s source, causing a flood. If the river gets dammed, that flood might not only destroy the dam itself but also completely wreck whatever is nearby. This hydropower plant threatens our village with utter decimation.”

However, the Energy Ministry counters the dissenting voices by saying that boosting the country’s energy production is their top priority.

“It is very important for Georgia to have all these HPPs – namely, Khudoni, Nenskra, Oni and Namakhvani – in order to have better yearly regulation and generate more electricity during the winter period that is usually associated with energy deficit. Priorities vary, though, and everyone’s interests should be

Georgian Journal ...

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**ARTICLES**

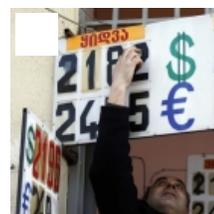


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**Georgia trapped in economic maelstrom**  
Georgia is in the midst of an economic maelstrom, Euronews reports.



**Mineral water market expanding in Georgia**  
Situation at Georgia’s mineral water market is interesting: over the last year, the volume of export has grown by 56 percent.

According to “GeoStat”, over \$114 million worth of mineral water was sold



**Exchange rate on dollar rising by the hour: “This is the fault of economic policy”**

Some of Georgia’s commercial banks are already buying at 2 GEL per \$1. Their webpages are

publishing information regarding national currency’s exchange rate in real-time mode.



**Ukraine in Same Bind as Georgia Was: Giorgi Kadagidze on Bloomberg**

Georgia’s central bank governor Giorgi Kadagidze says Ukraine is in the same bind as

Georgia was in when Russia banned its neighbor’s exports in 2006

of admission, food and drinks reduced azantip”

considered – as long as their complaints are accompanied by solid argumentation,” says Liza Tavdumadze, head of the ministry’s investment projects department.

At the moment, there are 86 hydropower plants active in Georgia, with the potential of constructing 91 more. The amount of HPP projects implemented before the new EIA legislation takes effect depends on the whims of energy and environment ministries.

### Nenskra Hydropower Plant construction launched

Partnership Fund is constructing a 280 megawatt Nenskra Hydropower Plant together with Korean company K-Water in Svaneti region on the tributary of Enguri River. The HPP is expected to produce 1.2 billion kilowatts of electricity per year. The plant will start operating in 2019 and the project is planned to be fully completed by 2021. Nenskra HPP is estimated to have a total cost of about \$1 billion USD. Its construction will be financed by European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Asian Development Bank and Export-Import Bank of Korea. The construction of the HPP is being carried out by an Italian company Salini Impregilo.

Author: Tamta Jijavadze



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Food and drinks at the territory of “Kazantip Republic” became cheaper. Some bars and food providers reduced their prices by 20% to 50%. For example, khinkali that cost 2 GEL



**2 Lari per khinkali - Inflated prices at “Kazantip”**

On the 20th of August, at 9 in the evening, “Kazantip” festival was declared officially open, with both multitudes of foreign guests and

local denizens attending.



**Georgian Lari to have its own symbol**

From now on, Georgian national currency, the Lari, will have its own symbol. Georgia’s National Bank declared a contest to

select the symbol in December of 2013.



**Why were car prices reduced in Georgia**

Georgian auto business is under the threat of collapse. There’s an unusual lack of people at Rustavi Automarket, yet

despite the forced reduction of prices recently, many cars



**Georgia signs landmark trade deal with EU – Al Jazeera**

Georgia has signed a so called Association Agreement with the European Union in Brussels.



**‘Panorama Tbilisi’ – How Ivanishvili’s ambitious project looks like**

Gardabani’s greenhouse economy is on its first stage of replacing 30% of imported tomatoes

with locally produced ones.

### September 2015

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