

# Large and Small HPPs in Georgia and Armenia

[ecolur.org/en/news/energy/large-and-small-hpps-in-georgia-and-armenia/9602/](http://ecolur.org/en/news/energy/large-and-small-hpps-in-georgia-and-armenia/9602/)



## **EcoLur**

There is a real HPP construction boom both in Armenia and in our neighboring country – Georgia. But there is a difference: large HPPs are constructed on the mountain rivers in Georgia, while Armenia constructs SHPPs on the rivers and their tributaries.

Georgian “Green Alternative” investigated the social and ecological impact of NGOs and their role in the energetic system of the country. The findings of this investigation are summed up in “Sparkling Rivers” documentary, which was presented at the SunChild 7th International Environmental Festival. On 17 October the film was screened at “Article 3” Club.

Environmental activist Dato Chipashvili

walks around the rivers and communities, which are affected by HPPs and presents the damage they caused or potential damage.

After screening, “EcoLur” Informational NGO President Inga Zarafyan and Ichthyologist Samvel Pipoyan, Dr in Biological Sciences presented the current state of SHPPs in Armenia and their impact.

Inga Zarafyan outlined that both business and officials demonstrate social irresponsibility in the sector of HPPs both in Armenia and Georgia.

Since 2014 “EcoLur” NGO has been implementing the monitoring of SHPPs and has already studied around 120 SHPPs. “Now we don’t have even a river for new SHPPs. If the water is not sufficient, a HPP owner goes to the spring source, construct the second section and pipes this water,” Inga Zarafyan said. She outlined during the monitoring they have even met such SHPPs, which hadn’t undergone environmental expert assessments, as their projected capacity is lower than 1 MW and they are not subject to environmental impact assessment.

“There is no project submitted, no environmental impact assessment carried out, but you can see a huge dam on the river, while the production of electricity is too low. What is their contribution to our energetic system,” Inga Zarafyan said.

Ichthyologist Samvel Pipoyan mentioned that the fish passages don’t ensure the migration of the fish from the lower reach to the upper reach of the river, where the fish should flow for spawning and reproduction. One of the obstacles to the fish migration is the ponds getting formed above the HPP dam.

“The Marz River used to be full of fish and was a river for brown trout. The river used to have 15-20 kg of fish over one kilometre. Today there are no such reserves. There are 17 SHPPs constructed on the Yeghegis River and their tributaries. After each 3 km there is a new SHPP constructed on the river having length of 47 km, and, as a matter of fact, around 50% of the river is piped.

I was most shocked with the “Dzorahek” SHPP constructed on the Dzoraget River, which has been operating since 1931. The river water completely flows into the HPP tunnel and no drop of water flows into the riverbed, and it turns out that there has been communication between the fish in the lower and upper reaches of the river over the recent 70 years.

In 1940-1950 around 167 kg of fish was caught over 1 km in the middle reach of the Vorotan River. The scientists estimated that the Vorotan River used to be fuller of fish than Lake Sevan. The reservoirs and HPPs, which has been constructed on the river, have completely altered the fish world in the river not to speak about the ecological issues.”

**Brot**  
für die Welt

Bread for the World -  
Protestant  
Development Service

**GREEN**  
*Alternative*

---

18:50 October 18, 2017