

# Investigation reveals Georgia's Nenskra hydropower plant violates international standards

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Agenda.ge, 10 Sep 2020 - 18:22, Tbilisi, Georgia

After more than two years of investigation, the Nenskra hydropower plant (HPP) project, planned for the upper Svaneti region of Georgia, has been found non-compliant with the environmental and social policies of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), announces Georgian non-governmental organisation.

## **The project does not meet the banks' requirements in the following areas of human rights and environmental protection:**

- Indigenous people's rights
- Protection of cultural heritage
- Gender issues
- Assessment and management of environmental and social impacts
- Information disclosure and engagement of local communities and other stakeholders

The investigation started after complaints were submitted to the EBRD and EIB in 2018 by CEE Bankwatch Network, Green Alternative, and community representatives from the potentially affected areas.

EIB Complaints Mechanism confirmed our allegations that this project simply violates the rights of the impacted community of Svans who risk their livelihood and culture being swept by the Nenskra project. The mechanism confirmed that the project has been improperly implemented from the very beginning starting with the problematic consideration of the project's alternative option", said EIB Policy Officer at CEE Bankwatch Network Anna Roggenbuck.

Nenskra HPP is a 280 MW hydropower plant project on the River Nenskra and Nakra valleys of Mestia Municipality in Georgia.

Nenskra HPP represents one of the 35 power plants planned to be constructed in Zemo Svaneti. The project is being implemented by the state-owned shareholding company Partnership Fund and the Korean State company K-water.

Both the EBRD and EIB have approved loans for the Nenskra HPP project, in the amount of \$214 million and \$150 million respectively. However, neither has signed the final loan contracts yet. The Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are also involved in the project and are currently considering loans totalling \$414 million.

Since the Nenskra project's launch in 2015, local Svans have been continuously raising their concerns over the 280-megawatt hydropower plant as it will flood communal lands and vast territories in Svaneti.

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