

Identification and Assessment of Business Companies in Georgia which Take the Lead – or Could Take the Lead in Incorporating Biodiversity in their Plans and Practices

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

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Executive summary

This document describes a transfer project which was implemented within the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Program by Niko Malazonia.

Main objective of the project was the assessment of Georgian business companies, their attitude towards nature conservation, and future views on if and how biodiversity considerations can be incorporated in their work and practices, also a rapid assessment of the environmental legal framework and hindering factors for sustainable operations of business companies. Besides focusing on listed areas the project intended to support the on-going TEEB process in Georgia and contribute to awareness raising in business companies.

Within the study a questionnaire was developed for conducting personal interviews with 6 companies from 2 different business sectors. The “best” and the “business as usual” practices were identified. The best case has been represented by a branch of an international company and the business as usual case has been represented by a medium/smaller national company. It was possible to carry out a gap analysis and based on identified gaps elaborate respective recommendations. Main outputs of this study are areas of recommendations on actions needed from different stakeholders to make operations of business companies more biodiversity friendly in Georgia.

Three main problematic areas identified within the study are: a) lack of proper laws, policies and regulations; b) absence of governmental monitoring and c) lack of law enforcement.

The Study results show that the important prerequisite for improving current situation is close collaboration between the Ministry of Environment Protection, business companies and other stakeholders. Companies generally agree that the legal framework should be refined, but they see ineffective law enforcement mechanisms as one of the most problematic issues (Environmental Police Department, responsible for site monitoring and law enforcement, has been abolished in 2011; currently local municipalities and/or police have to deal with environmental problems. Those often do not have capacities and expertise to do this work, and the responsibilities are often unclear). Additionally the study shows that smaller business companies often do not have capacities to make their operations more nature friendly. Policies and laws are sometimes overregulated and overburdened through supervision of governmental institutions and this practice makes functioning of a small business less effective.

This final report, including the recommendations will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia and to the WWF Caucasus Programme Office. Tangible outcome of the project is the raised awareness of companies about the TEEB process in Georgia and willingness to participate in planned projects. Other important outcomes will be achieved if the Ministry uses the recommendations in the future and the WWF considers the findings of the study in the planning process of the National TEEB Study which will commence in 2013.