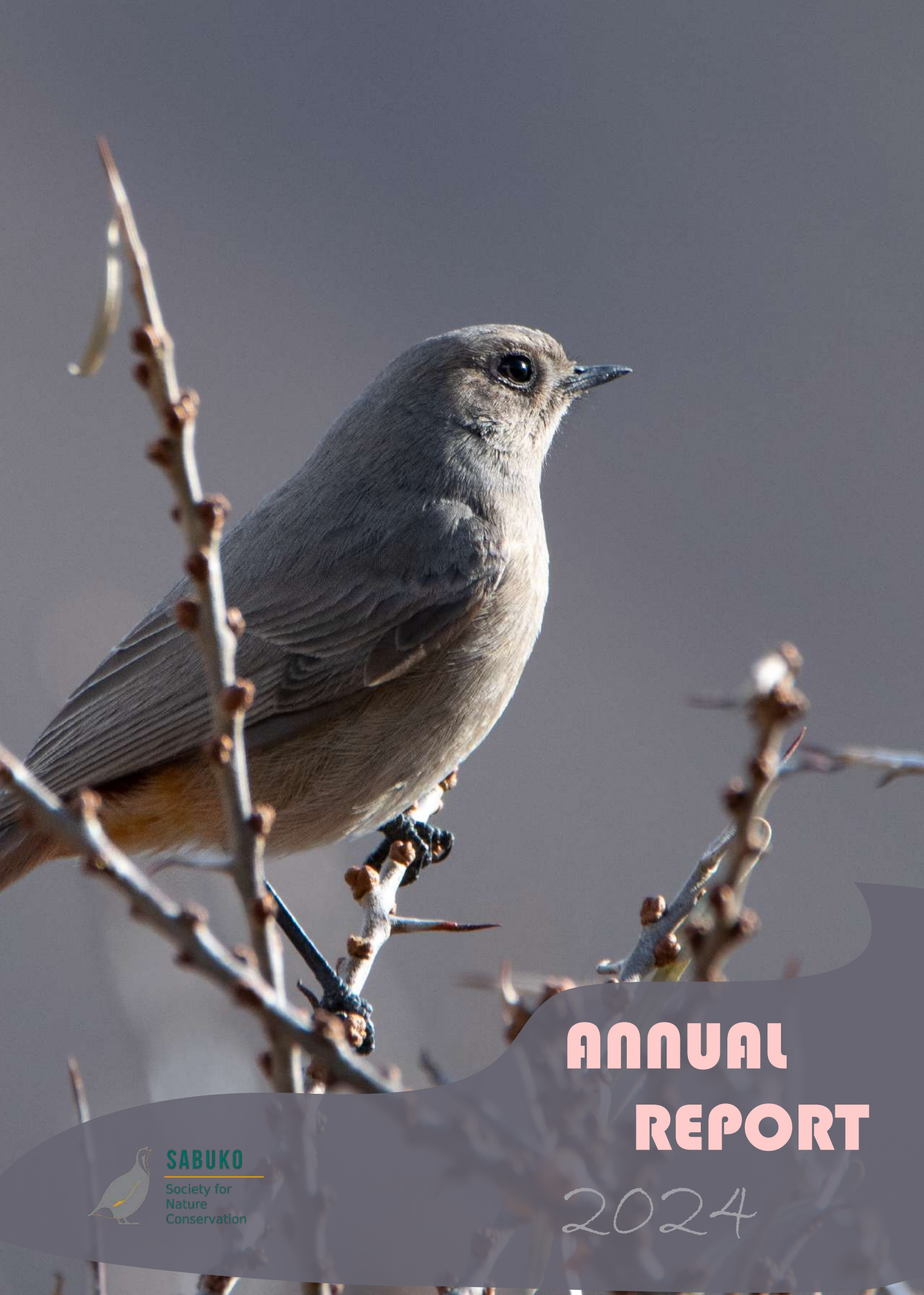


ANNUAL REPORT

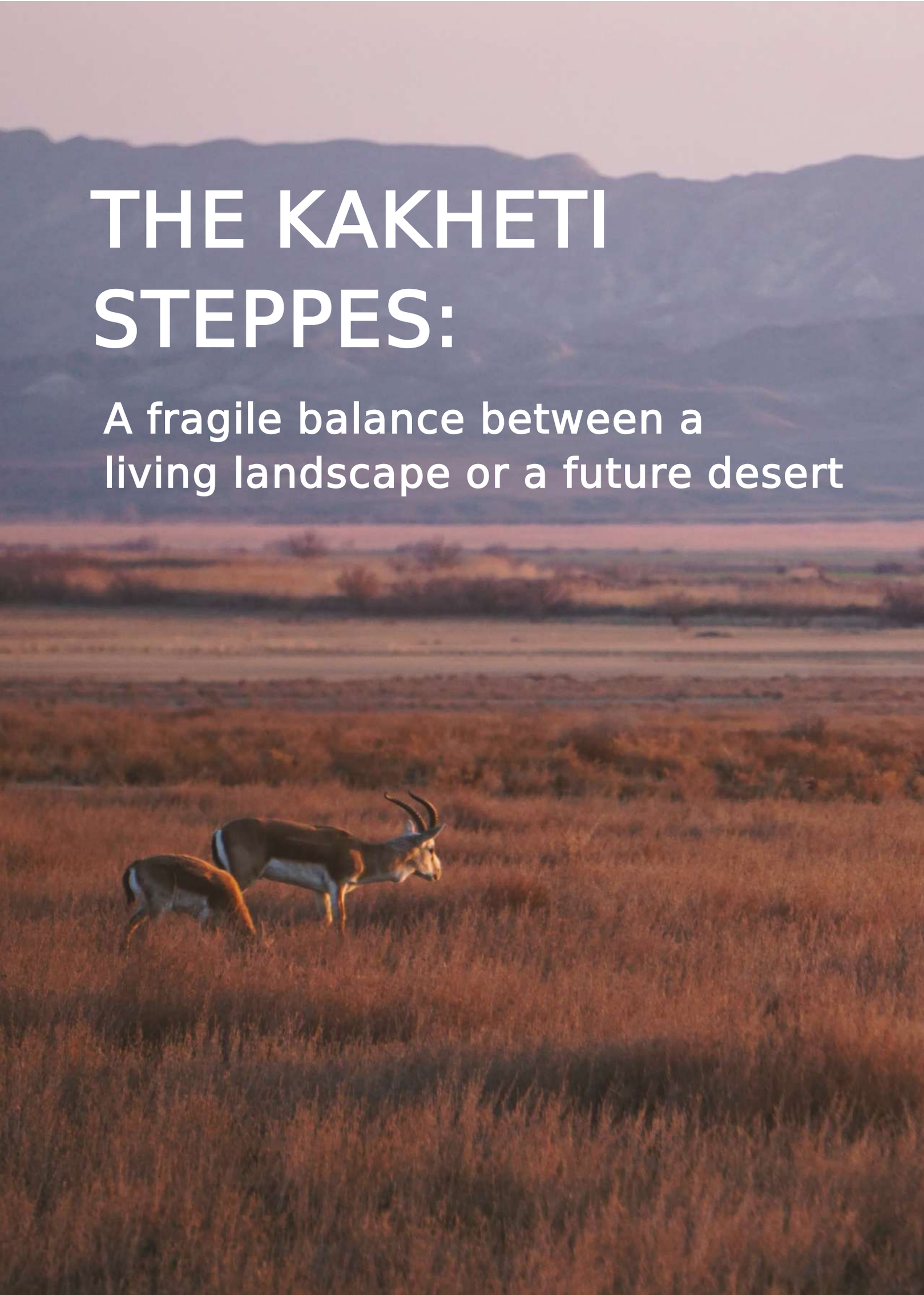
2024

SABUKO

Society for Nature Conservation

THE KAKHETI STEPPES:

A fragile balance between a living landscape or a future desert



The primary objective of the project is to preserve species and habitats within a unified ecological network, facilitating the harmonious coexistence of wildlife and human beings. The project is being implemented on the Iori Plateau and includes the Vashlovani Protected Areas, Chachuna Managed Reserve, Nugzar Zazanashvili Samukhi Multipurpose Use Protected Area, and the Kotsakhura Ridge Emerald Site.

The project encompasses the implementation of a sustainable grazing system in the Iori Valley, the restoration and enhancement of pasture conditions and biodiversity,
scientific research on species populations and habitats, the formulation of conservation strategies, the restoration of the Iori gallery forest and other ecosystems, increasing environmental knowledge and awareness, and the development of a system of protected areas.

This project was supported by the Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELSP), managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative in partnership with the charity foundation of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin - Arcadia.

Photo: Mariam Archuadze

Our vision for the Iori plateau is to restore and maintain a thriving, sustainable landscape by 2050 that balances local communities' needs with the preservation of the area’s rich biodiversity. The landscape faces growing challenges, including overgrazing, habitat degradation, and the looming threat of desertification. To combat these threats, we are committed to restoring natural habitats, protecting key species, and promoting sustainable land use practices that support both productivity and environmental resilience.

By integrating community engagement, scientific research, and policy advocacy, we strive to prevent the Kakheti Steppes from becoming a future desert. Instead, we envision a vibrant landscape where flourishing ecosystems provide essential services, biodiversity is preserved, and local populations experience enhanced well-being through sustainable development.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This year's natural resource management efforts on the Iori Plateau have focused on promoting sustainable grassland management, enhancing biodiversity, and improving the livelihoods of local communities. Our work has spanned mapping and monitoring land use, implementing rotational grazing schemes, restoring degraded lands, fostering community engagement through conservation agreements and socio-economic support, and exploring innovative financing mechanisms to support long-term sustainability.

Sustainable Grassland Management

A cornerstone of our work has been the implementation and monitoring of rotational grazing. We empower developing management plans for both private and protected lands, incorporating insights from socio-economic surveys conducted with 87 local farmers. These plans are designed to optimize grazing practices, prevent overgrazing, and promote grassland recovery.

A dedicated ranger patrol system, equipped with detailed monitoring plans, training, and technology like goat tagging, ensures compliance with these plans. This system has proven effective, reducing grazing breaches from 35 to 15 annually.

Restoring degraded plots

We have restored 6 hectares of degraded plots using techniques like erosion control, targeted manure application, and the spreading of hay clippings with local seeds. To strengthen our efforts, we have implemented electric fences across key areas to control mob grazing, promote seed dispersal, and enhance vegetation recovery.

The integration of goat tagging technology has improved our ability to monitor livestock movements and ensure compliance with sustainable grazing practices.

To further support rotational grazing and pasture restoration efforts, we have developed land use maps for the project area using GIS, official data, on-site assessments, and drone imagery. These maps are updated annually to reflect land use changes and inform conservation policies.

Early Warning System

We are also developing an early warning system for real-time land use monitoring, utilizing a combination of drone imagery, field surveys, and satellite data, to help farmers and policymakers proactively address risks like overgrazing and drought.

Photo: Nika Budaghashvili

CONSERVATION

Eastern Imperial Eagle *(Aquila heliaca)*

The year was dedicated to the collection and analysis of previously gathered data, which served as the foundation for developing a conservation plan for the species. Additionally, this period was used to identify a novel research direction and to design an appropriate research methodology, addressing data gaps from prior years of Imperial Eagle population studies and conservation efforts. The newly developed methodology aims to enhance our understanding of the species' food base, which will be correlated with habitat conditions to assess overall habitat quality based on food availability.

Cinereous Vulture *(Aegypius monachus)*

In 2024, we upheld the long-standing tradition of studying bird migration in Georgia. In collaboration with researchers from Ilia State University, we successfully fitted a GPS transmitter to a Cinereous Vulture *(Aegypius monachus)* that hatched in the Chachuna Managed Reserve. The vulture is currently wintering in Saudi Arabia.

Monitoring Larks to Guide Habitat Restoration and Grassland Conservation

We are conducting baseline monitoring of five key grassland bird species, including the Crested Lark *(Galerida cristata)*, Calandra Lark *(Melanocorypha calandra)*, Greater Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*), Turkestan Short-toed Lark (*Alaudala heinei*), and Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris)*, as part of our efforts to assess habitat conditions and inform grassland restoration strategies on the Iori Plateau. These species were selected due to their varying sensitivity to grazing pressure and habitat degradation, making them valuable indicators of ecosystem health. Data collected includes species abundance, habitat type, and site-specific characteristics, which will be correlated with vegetation data to identify habitat preferences and areas requiring targeted restoration. Monitoring will continue in future years to track changes and guide adaptive management. The findings will help shape recommendations for habitat protection, restoration, and sustainable grazing practices to support lark populations and broader grassland biodiversity.

Study on Goitered Gazelle and Lynx to Inform Conservation Efforts

We are actively studying wildlife species, including the Goitered Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) and the Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*), as part of our broader efforts to guide conservation strategies on the Iori Plateau.

For the Goitered Gazelle, monthly population surveys are conducted along strategically placed transects in Samukhi PA. These surveys gather data on dynamics, habitat use, and seasonal activity patterns. For lynx monitoring, we are building on camera trap studies by deploying an extended survey across critical areas. By capturing images of lynx through paired camera traps, we identify individuals using their unique coat patterns. Both monitoring programs are designed to provide essential insights.

The findings will directly contribute to adaptive management, habitat restoration, and cross-border conservation planning, ensuring that the Kakheti Steppes remain a living, biodiverse landscape.

Photo: Vako Tevdoradze

Human-Wildlife Conflict Study

To understand human-wildlife conflict on the Iori Plateau, we implemented a study using semi-structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews across Georgian and Azerbaijani communities to gather diverse perspectives and information about predator attacks. We introduced our results at the 10th Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Symposium in Canakkale, Turkey. The conference brought together experts from around the world to discuss biodiversity conservation, ecological challenges, and sustainable solutions. The study findings will inform legislative updates as well as the development of practical, on-the-ground conflict mitigation strategies. Data on predator attacks on livestock has been finalized and will guide the development of preventive measures.

Iori Floodplain Forest Restoration

Based on recent hydrological studies, we are modeling flood scenarios and evaluating the use of gabion structure to enhance the ecological resilience of the Iori Floodplain Forest. This modeling will inform the optimal placement of gabions to stabilize riverbanks and ensure that controlled water releases from the Dali Reservoir continue to support the forest's health. An annual report detailing sedimentation rates in the Dali Reservoir has been produced, providing key insights into the reservoir's impact on downstream habitats.

POLICY RESEARCH

This year, the Environmental Policy Programme focused its efforts on the Iori Plateau by advocating for sustainable land management and promoting responsible water use. Through targeted policy analysis and stakeholder engagement, we have advocated to shape environmental legislation and practice in ways that ensure long-term ecosystem resilience.

Alignment with European Union's Environmental Standards

Recognizing the importance of harmonizing Georgian environmental regulations with international best practices, we collaborated with an international consultant to align water management and habitat protection policies with key European Union directives—specifically the Water Framework Directive, the Environmental Liability Directive, Birds and Habitat directives and the EIA Directive. We developed comparison tables that map Georgia's legal framework against these directives, providing a strong foundation for future policy materials and targeted reforms.

Policy Review and Legislative Analysis

Building on our research publication, Review of Legislation & Practices Related to Natural Resource Management, we identified several areas where policy reforms could strengthen conservation on the Iori Plateau. Our findings showed the need for more transparent and participatory land-use decision-making processes, alongside enhanced legal protections for ecologically sensitive areas.

By integrating these recommendations into our advocacy, we have pushed clearer regulations on monoculture expansion, stricter water extraction limits, and the restoration of degraded grasslands for significant development projects. Through these advocacy efforts, we have successfully secured conservation agreements that incorporate these vital guidelines and promote sustainable grazing practices.

Advocacy for Sustainable Infrastructure Developments

In our efforts to protect the Iori Plateau, we have taken a proactive approach to evaluating and influencing infrastructure projects. Through targeted advocacy, we successfully halted a major project, such as suspending a 315-hectare pistachio orchard development pending further research and requiring a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an Emerald Network impact assessment for a 230-hectare almond orchard project. By urging a holistic approach that goes beyond local regulations, we ensured that these developments undergo rigorous analysis of potential water pressures and environmental impacts before proceeding.

Engagement Efforts in Water Resource Management

We advocated for shaping the new River Basin Management Plan for Iori River by actively participating in EU4Dialogue and EU4Environment Water and Data discussions, emphasizing the importance of controlled water releases from the Dali Reservoir to maintain river health and protect floodplain forests. To guide evidence-based decision-making, we introduced radar water metering for real-time monitoring and launched a hydrological study of the Iori River.

Advocacy for Holistic Water Resource Assessments

Parallel to our data collection and restoration efforts, we have identified a critical gap in the state's current approach to water resource management. Presently, permits are issued based on fragmented evaluations that fail to consider the cumulative impacts of water extraction and use on the ecosystem. To address this shortcoming, we are actively advocating for a shift towards systematic and integrative water resource assessments. By promoting a more holistic approach to water management, we aim to ensure responsible decision-making that considers the long-term sustainability of the Iori Plateau's water resources and the health of its interconnected ecosystems.

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

This year's education and capacity-building initiatives on the Iori Plateau have strengthened conservation knowledge, empowered local communities, and enhanced the management of protected areas. Through education programs, school outreach, targeted ranger training, international knowledge exchange, and community engagement, we are fostering long-term environmental stewardship and sustainable land use practices.

Community Awareness Campaign for Leopard Recovery

We developed a targeted awareness-raising campaign to prepare local communities for the potential return of the leopard. Thorough surveys of local dynamics and perceived risks have informed this campaign, which will focus on building trust, mitigating potential human-wildlife conflict, and promoting species recovery by highlighting the leopard's vital role in maintaining ecosystem balance.

Engaging the Next Generation

The "SABUKO for Schools" program engaged 27 schools through the Autumn Challenge 2023 and Spring Challenge 2024, involving students in practical, nature-based activities and field trips. Complementing these activities, we developed educational tools, e.g. biodiversity kits, memory board games on local flora and fauna, and animal classification posters, which promote biodiversity education across different age groups, from school children to community stakeholders.

Cultivating Future Conservationists

Our sustainable grassland management course at Ilia State University, offering 12 ECTS credits, combines academic knowledge with practical fieldwork. Two students completed key modules and are equipped with critical knowledge in sustainable rangeland management.

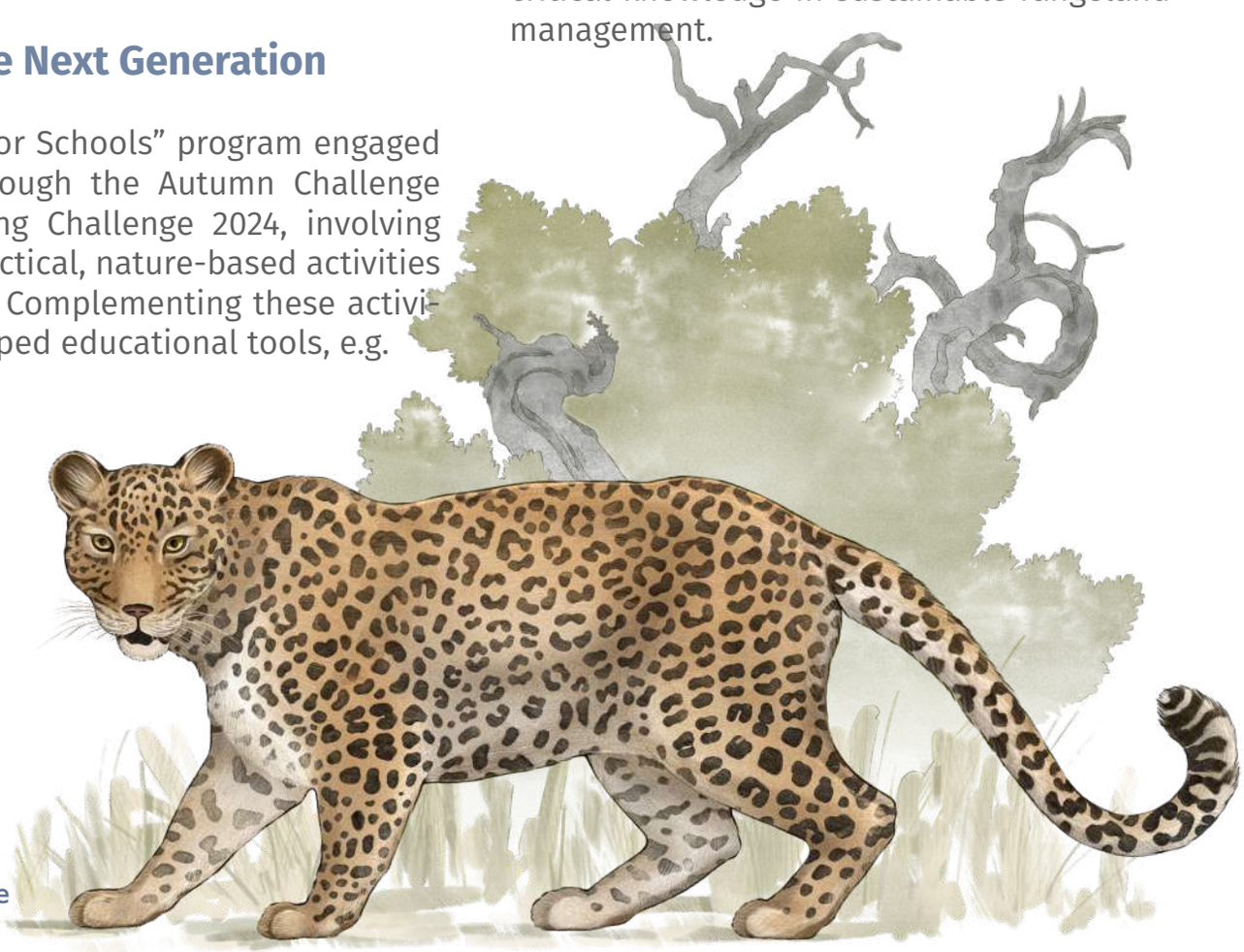


Illustration:
Luka Tkemaladze

Capacity Building for Protected Area Administration

We have provided targeted training for 28 rangers and administrative staff across Vashlovani PA, Chachuna MR, and Nugzar Zazanashvili Samukhi Multipurpose Use Protected Area. The training covered biodiversity monitoring, species identification, habitat restoration, the use of modern tools like camera traps and indicator forms, and first aid. Two groups, totaling 39 participants, completed first aid training.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS-RAISING

This year, our public awareness and community engagement strategy has focused on building broad support for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation on the Iori Plateau. We have employed a multi-faceted approach, encompassing expanded social media presence, public meetings, media outreach, collaboration with national institutions, and impactful storytelling initiatives.

Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods

Our strategy focuses on protecting the ecosystem by reducing the local sheep population while increasing farmers' income through value-added products. We are building a strong brand identity for sustainably produced goods from the Iori Plateau and engaging farmers in both rotational grazing schemes and sustainable production of sheep milk cheese and felt goods. This involves ongoing communication with stakeholders, constant support to farmers as they transition to sustainable practices, marketplace analysis to guide branding and distribution strategies, and the production of initial branded samples to gauge consumer response. We are also forging ties with local and international organizations, including the Export Development Association, to explore market opportunities in the EU and Gulf regions.

Collaboration with a local branding company will create promotional materials and a product catalog. Ongoing training for sheep cheese production, in collaboration with the Georgian Dairy and Cheese Producers Associations, ensures the maintenance of sustainable practices. This process requires regular review to ensure we achieve higher product prices, expand market opportunities, and maintain ecological balance. Our approach and progress were presented at the Society for Ecological Restoration Conference 2024, allowing us to share experiences, receive valuable feedback, and explore new promotional strategies for sustainable growth.

Creative Awareness Initiatives

- Postal Stamps: In collaboration with the Georgian Post, we created a series of postal stamps showcasing key project areas, local species, and their habitats. These stamps serve as a unique and visually compelling way to raise public awareness of biodiversity protection and instill pride in Georgia's natural heritage, reaching both local and international audiences.

- Documentary Film: We are producing a documentary film that captures the unique landscape of the Iori Plateau, the deep connection between people and nature, and the daily lives of local farmers, emphasizing their sustainable pasture management practices. This film will be a powerful tool for raising awareness about conservation and inspiring broader support for our efforts.

- Branding for Sustainable Products: We developed a brand book for locally produced sheep milk cheese and wool, showcasing the eco-friendly methods behind these products and elevating their presence in local and international markets. This initiative promotes sustainable economic opportunities while supporting conservation goals.

RACHA-LIKHI RIDGE

Enhancing Landscape Connectivity and Resilience

Photo: Nika Budaghashvili

The project focuses on the Racha Ridge, a crucial part of the Greater Caucasus, which intersects with the Likhi Ridge—the only natural corridor linking the Greater and Lesser Caucasus.

Our goal is to develop a comprehensive large-scale restoration plan that strengthens ecological connectivity, restores key habitats and ensures the sustainable use of natural resources. By prioritizing landscape integrity and ecosystem recovery, the project aims to deliver lasting benefits for both nature and local communities, fostering biodiversity protection and long-term resilience.

As part of this initiative, Sabuko will lead efforts to prepare and implement a restoration plan, ensuring the protection of biodiversity and the responsible management of Racha's natural resources.

This project is supported by the Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELSP), managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative.

Building on the research conducted and the experience gained, we developed digital maps identifying potential restoration sites and have begun working on the creation of a new protected area in Racha. This initiative is fully aligned with our vision for Racha by 2050. SABUKO envisions Racha as a landscape where people live in harmony with nature, with biodiversity conservation and equity-based sustainable use forming the foundation of the region's socio-economic development.

CONSERVATION

This year, Sabuko's goal was to collect essential baseline data to guide future conservation efforts in Racha.

A Camera Trap Survey

To collect baseline data on the biodiversity within the project area, a comprehensive biodiversity survey was conducted using camera traps. This ongoing survey will continue, enabling us to monitor biodiversity trends, identify the needs and specific sites for restoration, and pinpoint critical hotspots that will be prioritized for further protection and conservation actions.

Photo: Eto Arsanidze

Human-Wildlife Conflict Study

The summer and fall of 2024 were spent conducting a survey to assess the current human-wildlife conflict in Racha . The survey encompassed approximately 40 villages within the Oni and Ambrolauri municipalities and adjacent areas. Both quantitative and in-depth interview methods were employed to gather data. The findings from this survey will provide critical insights into the existing conflict and support the development of strategies to manage and mitigate its impact.

Scoping study of grasslands regeneration potential

As the first step in assessing the condition of the grasslands and their regeneration potential, Sabuko initiated a survey in Racha. According to our scoping study, while Racha's grasslands seem healthy, they are increasingly threatened by changes in land use and abandonment, which may be worsened by climate change. Reintroducing European bison could help restore the ecosystem, as the area's varied habitats are ideal for the species, and historical records show they once lived there. Strong local community support also makes rewilding efforts more feasible, and planned monitoring missions will ensure a well-informed study before moving forward with reintroduction.

Racha Forest Survey

In the same year, we completed a comprehensive forest study that encompassed the parts of the Great Caucasus, Likhi and Racha Ridges, which involved a detailed assessment of forest health, biodiversity, and the impact of human activity on forest ecosystems. This study is essential for informed sustainable forest management and effective conservation planning.

A Plan for Monitoring Ecosystem Services

We identified the key ecosystem services in Racha as the foundation for developing a Plan for Monitoring Ecosystem Services. For this study, TEEB's (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) approach was used. TEEB is a global initiative focused on "making nature's values visible". For the identification of the main ecosystem services in Racha, the ecosystem services change analysis was developed. The ecosystem services change analysis is important to recognize the value of biodiversity and ecosystems and demonstrate it to decision-makers, businesses, and local stakeholders. Each ecosystem service was analysed considering the major threats to landscape/landscape integrity (hydropower development, mining, poaching, unsustainable use of natural resources such as timber, NTFP, and pastures).

Methodologies for Future Researches

We developed a methodology for assessing woodpeckers (*Picidae*) as indicators of bird diversity and habitat structure in the Racha-Likhi Ridge forests. Given the widespread exploitation of forests through practices like selective logging, monitoring forest health and biodiversity is crucial for sustainable management. Due to the challenges of comprehensive monitoring, indicator species like woodpeckers, which respond negatively to habitat degradation, provide valuable insights into ecosystem health. Our study aims to generate reliable data on biodiversity-rich zones, supporting effective conservation efforts in the Racha.

Updating Important Bird Areas

We updated a document on Important Bird Area Racha - IBA (GEO13) and initiated com - munication to upload the relevant information with Birdlife International.

Policy Research

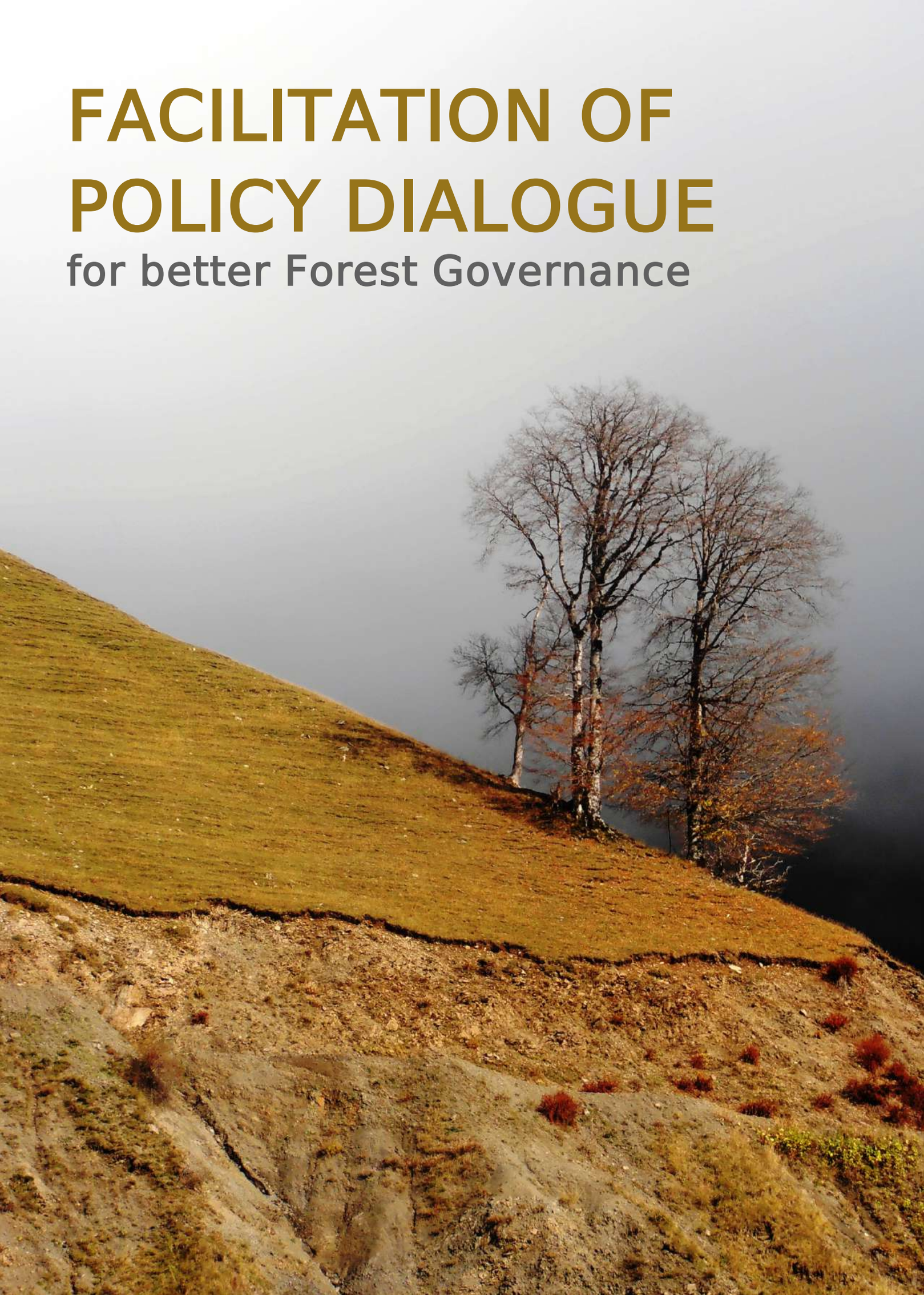
In the area of policy, Sabuko prepared a desk report detailing the legal, institutional, and land-use factors including evaluation of hunting, logging, and mining licenses. The aim of the study is the identification of legal and institutional factors that influence restoration.

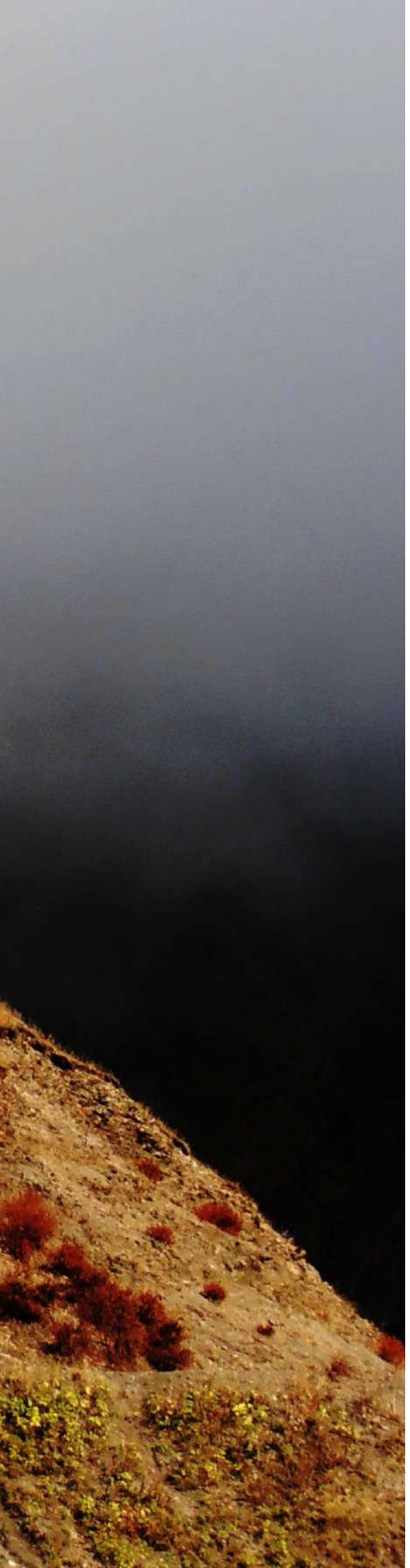
Communication

We initiated a series of face-to-face and online meetings in Racha to map stakeholder attitudes towards conservation and restoration efforts. These meetings allowed us to engage directly with local communities and other key stakeholders, fostering a deeper understanding of their concerns and perspectives. This dialogue is essential for building trust and ensuring that conservation strategies align with local needs and priorities.

FACILITATION OF POLICY DIALOGUE

for better Forest Governance

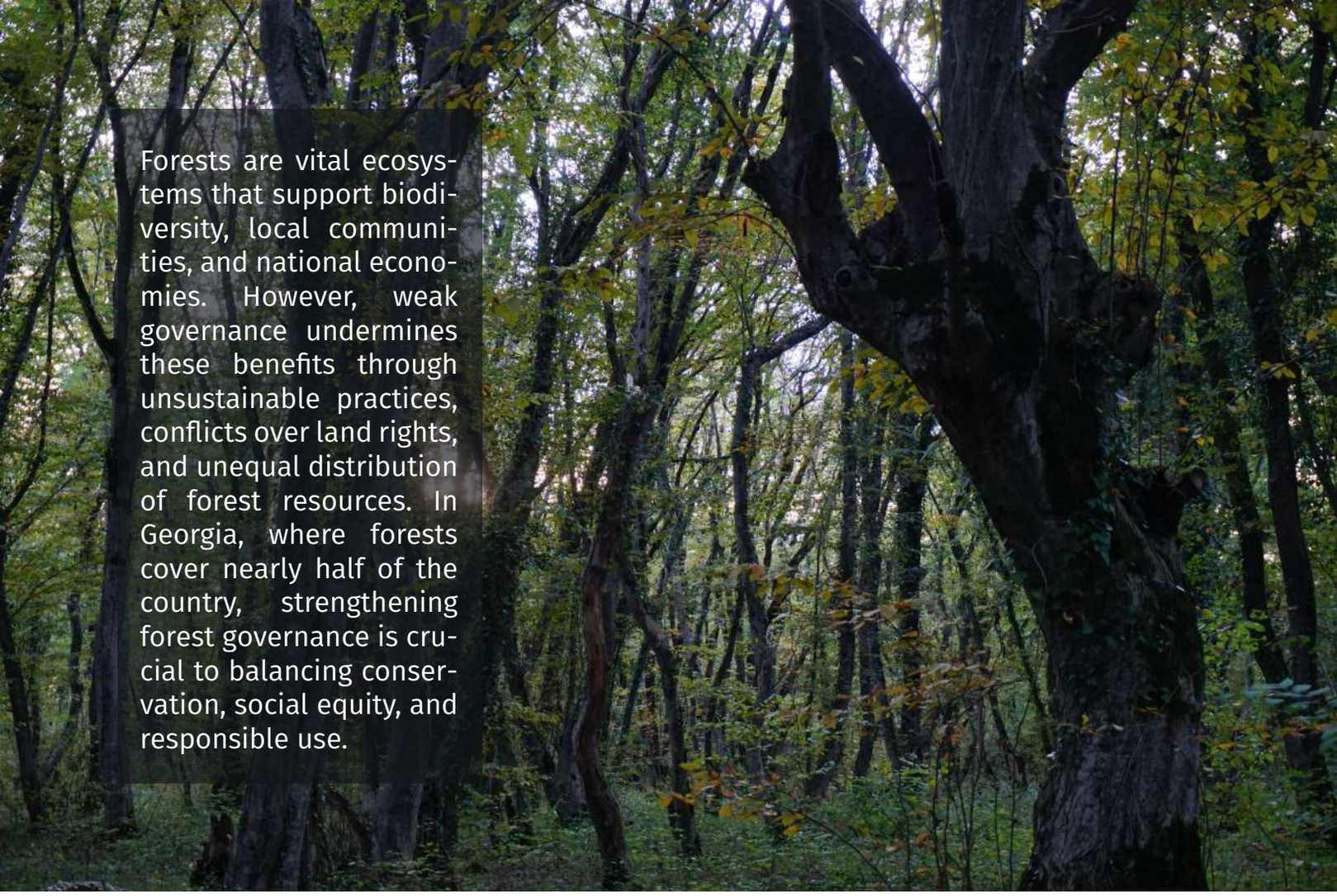




Facilitation of Policy Dialogue for Better Forest Governance” aims to facilitate policy dialogue through Forest Governance Assessment and capacity building of various stakeholders.

The idea of the project is to assess the forest governance in Georgia, using the Indicator Framework proposed by the World Resource Institute’s Governance of Forest Initiative (GFI) to assess reforms comprehensively, build stakeholder capacity and advocate for policy changes.

The project was launched in April 2024 in collaboration with the Tbilisi office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



Forests are vital ecosystems that support biodiversity, local communities, and national economies. However, weak governance undermines these benefits through unsustainable practices, conflicts over land rights, and unequal distribution of forest resources. In Georgia, where forests cover nearly half of the country, strengthening forest governance is crucial to balancing conservation, social equity, and responsible use.

SABUKO held a working meeting to update stakeholders on the project and ensure their involvement. Participants from various regions emphasized the need to focus on regional forest use issues. The team conducted field visits to 20 of the 54 timber yards across 7 municipalities to assess the system's functioning. Interviews highlighted that donor-funded equipment is crucial for effective operations. For example, in Kakheti, modern machinery provided through international aid has significantly improved timber processing efficiency and safety at several yards. However, many facilities still lack basic infrastructure, leading to suboptimal practices and environmental risks.

The legal analysis, data review, and interviews were compiled into a detailed study and policy brief, which identified shortcomings in forest sector governance when compared to best practices.

Key gaps include insufficient public participation, weak transparency and oversight, and conflicts of interest among managing authorities.

SABUKO developed specific, actionable recommendations to address these issues.

The project has produced valuable outputs and engaged key stakeholders, including:

- A detailed assessment of Georgia's forest governance challenges and opportunities.
- A working meeting and field visits that involved diverse participants in setting priorities.
- A comprehensive study and policy brief with evidence-based recommendations for enhancing sector governance
- Interviews documenting real-world experiences of timber yard operations and varying ownership models.

Despite these achievements, the project faced significant challenges in engaging decision-makers due to the deteriorating political situation in Georgia. The current political climate presents major obstacles to involving government officials in discussions about critical issues related to the forest sector. In a context where basic civil liberties are being undermined, initiating discussions on democratic governance within the forest sector is currently unfeasible.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The financial support enables organizations like SABUKO to focus on the important components of their work that were not covered by other project-oriented grants.
The purpose of Sigrid Rausing Trust is to promote the values and principles of human rights, equality and the rule of law, and to preserve nature from further degradation.

Capacity Building and Organizational Development

SRT's support has strengthened SABUKO's internal capabilities, resilience, and governance. A new strategy, action plan, bylaws, biodiversity data collection and storage policy, and a comprehensive biodiversity database have been developed. A biodiversity data policy ensures accurate, accessible information for informed conservation decisions and long-term monitoring. It helps preserve data for future use in protecting biodiversity.

Sabuko's development strategy is an instrument for achieving the organization's statutory goals and mission. It is based on Sabuko's vision, analysis of existing problems and challenges, assessment of needs and opportunities. The strategy aligns with the strategic directions and global programs of Birdlife International. The planned goals and actions consider the global conservation priorities. The organization strives to employ innovative conservation methods. By executing the actions outlined in the strategy, Sabuko enhances individual, institutional, and systemic capacities.

During the reporting period, staff members participated in essential training sessions, such as graphic design and English Language courses. Several key positions, including data analysts and field officers, were filled to ensure the successful achievement of the organization's objectives.

SABUKO actively participated in international events, including the European Partnership Meeting Week hosted by BirdLife partner ACBK in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the IUCN Congress in Bruges, Belgium. At these events, SABUKO contributed to discussions on regional conservation priorities, nature restoration, migratory bird flyways, and the transition to nature-positive energy systems.

Photo: Nika Budaghashvili

White Stork Monitoring for Balancing Conservation and Renewable Energy

SABUKO has advanced its monitoring of white stork populations, collecting data crucial for minimizing the impact of wind energy projects on these birds. A sensitivity map will be created to guide future renewable energy developments, contributing to balancing biodiversity conservation with the growth of wind energy projects. A scientific article based on the collected data was published in the international peer-reviewed journal "Caucasiana".

Biodiversity Monitoring

SABUKO has updated biodiversity data in Racha, one of Georgia's most biodiverse regions. The data collected is being used to inform effective conservation strategies and support the expansion of protected areas, directly contributing to preserving Racha's ecosystems for the long-term benefit of local communities who depend on these natural resources for their livelihoods and well-being.

The ongoing biodiversity study provides insights into the region's ecological value, enabling SABUKO to develop and implement targeted conservation actions in partnership with local communities. We are involving locals in the process to strengthen a sense of ownership and stewardship over these natural assets, intending to align biodiversity conservation efforts with community needs and values.

Photo: Vako Tevdoradze

Citizen Science and Environmental Education

SABUKO's expansion of its teacher network has had a direct impact on raising environmental awareness in schools across Georgia. By equipping 28 teachers with tools and knowledge to educate their students on biodiversity, the initiative is fostering a generation of environmentally conscious citizens, with 300 students now better informed about the importance of conservation.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

SABUKO's community engagement efforts go beyond traditional surveys and feedback sessions. In the village of Balda, SABUKO has taken a proactive approach to support the local community in their fight for environmental justice.

By providing expert knowledge and collaborating with local media, SABUKO helps amplify the voices and concerns of Balda's residents.

SABUKO continues to contribute to the development of the State Policy on Protected and Other Conservation Areas. Through submitting comments, suggestions, and advocating for important issues, SABUKO ensures that the interests of local communities are represented in the policy-making process.

By combining advocacy, expertise, and on-the-ground support, the organisation demonstrates its commitment to empowering communities to play an active role in shaping the environmental policies and projects that affect their lives and livelihoods.

Forest Sector Governance Assessment and Advocacy

The SRT's support enabled SABUKO to employ two interns who contributed to the assessment of Georgia's forest sector governance using the World Resources Institute methodology on Forest Governance. The study provides actionable recommendations to improve policies, protection, and restoration, equipping organisation, activists and media to advocate for improvements benefiting the environment and forest-dependent communities.

Human-Wildlife Conflict Assessment and Mitigation

SABUKO has used SRT funding to assess and address human-wildlife conflict in Racha region. Community interviews have identified key tension areas, and the data will help develop mitigation strategies to foster long-term community resilience and coexistence with wildlife. The report, due in spring 2025, will provide concrete solutions to improve human-wildlife relationships.

The preliminary results were presented at the 10th Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Symposium in Turkey.

Ecosystem Services Assessment for Sustainable Development

SABUKO has undertaken a vital assessment of ecosystem services on the Iori Plateau, which will contribute to better land-use planning and sustainable development strategies. The results, expected in April 2025, will guide the implementation of environmental protection measures, ensuring that the region's ecosystem services - vital for local communities are maintained for future generations.

DONOR	AMOUNT
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	39614.58 GEL
BirdLife International	2045392.98 GEL
EU, Black Sea Basin Cooperation (BSB Cooperation), Project - BSB Eco-Monitoring	92033.26 GEL
Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Program	12887.78 GEL
Total Income from Grants	2189928.6 GEL
Total Spent	2184443.52 GEL

DONORS

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL | Partnership for nature and people

ENDANGERED LANDSCAPES & SEASCAPES PROGRAMME

Cambridge Conservation Initiative

ARCADIA

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG თბილისი სამხრეთ კავკასია