

Ajara Rural Water and Wastewater Treatment Programme

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The Importance of Biodiversity Researches

Our existence and well-being depend massively on the products and services provided by nature. Biodiversity is our natural capital, the preservation of which is an integral part of the country's sustainable development process.

One of the fundamental goals of the Rural Ajara Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Program is to protect the environment in Ajara and reduce the negative impacts on nature.

In order to protect the environment and conserve it, biodiversity studies were conducted in the villages of Ajara, where the rehabilitation of the water and wastewater systems is planned.

Within the biodiversity study, the presence of protected, endemic, rare and of living organisms with other different statuses in the construction site was investigated to assess the impact of the planned works and to take preventive measures.

It is noteworthy that no similar studies had been conducted in Ajara, which gives us more incentive to create an appropriate database and to plan and implement mitigation measures. We can confidently say that we are pioneers in terms of such an important initiative.

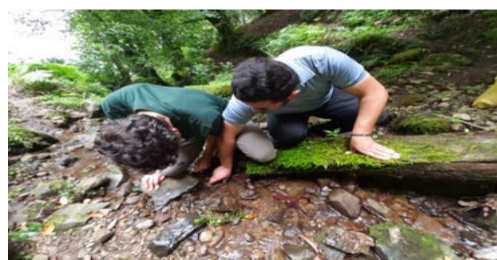
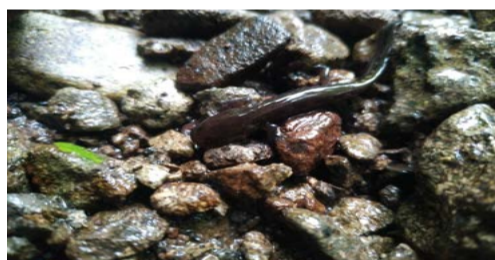
Due to its species and habitat variety, as well as globally important ecosystems, Georgia is included in the list of nature conservation priority areas. The country's diversity index is certainly owed to the uniqueness of its regions, among which Ajara holds a distinguished place.

Having all this in mind, it is of utmost importance for this Program and any further developments in Ajara not to put its precious biodiversity at risk. In accordance with international standards, we conduct biodiversity studies wherever negative impacts may arise.

The studies are done early on in the design process, so that their conclusions and recommendations can be duly integrated into the final project design, making sure that the impact on biodiversity is kept at a minimum.

In July and August 2020, the first biodiversity surveys were conducted in the villages: Lower Vashlovani, Duadzeebi, Okruashvilebi, Kirnati and Tibeta.

Four endemic plant species were observed in Lower Vashlovani (*Astragalus adzharicus*, *Amaracus rotundifolius*, *Anthemis woronowii* and *Euphorbia pontica*) along the planned project corridor, which will be replanted. As for terrestrial fauna, IUCN and Georgian Red List specie, the Caucasian salamander (*Mertensiella caucasica*), was identified in the village Kirnati. In Tibeta, the Georgian Red List specie Brown trout (*Salmo trutta fario*) was found. To mitigate potential negative effects on these species, a minimum ecological flow in the intended water sources of at least 10 % will be kept.



General Information for any Informative Bulletin

"Rural Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment Programme-Ajara" is co-financed by the German Federal Republic Government through the KfW Development Bank and the EU funds.

The Programme aims to create the modern standard water supply and waste water treatment systems in all municipalities of Ajara. "Rural Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment Programme-Ajara" is being implemented by the JSC "Ajara Water Alliance".

The mentioned Programme will have an essential contribution to the improvement of the level of life, health and the hygiene in general for the citizens of the villages in Ajara as the Programme will keep the environment safe through avoiding contamination and pollution of the environment and water bodies by directly discharged effluent.

The content of the Programme "Rural Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment Programme-Ajara" is the unique in Georgia with its potential to influence the water supply and waste water infrastructure development in the villages of the region.