



# Tskaltubo Development Potential Report Baseline Study



The Baseline Study - *Tskaltubo Development Potential Report* is prepared by the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) in 2019, within the framework of the Tskaltubo Action Group project (implemented by the People in Need – PIN), with the participation of Tskaltubo Local Action Group potential members.

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## Acronyms:

ENPARD - European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development

LDS – Local Development Strategy

LAG – Local Action Group

DRDVE of GIPA - Department of Rural Development and Vocational Education of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs  
PIN – People In Need

LEADER – abbreviation from French *Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale* – meaning *Links between actions for the development of the rural economy*

PRA - Participatory Rural Appraisal

EIA- Environmental Impact Assessment

UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organization

## Introduction

The main objective of the Baseline Study was to collect data for exploring Tskaltubo area needs and development potential, that will be relied upon in the future by the Tskaltubo Local Action Group (LAG) to develop a Local Development Strategy (LDS). In addition, it was important to involve potential LAG members in the process and to promote the development of their capabilities. The research was performed by a group of researchers from the Department of Rural Development and Vocational Education of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (DRDVE of GIPA), within the framework of the “Tskaltubo Action Group”, financially supported by the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD, which is being delivered by the Czech organization “People in need” (PIN). The project envisages introduction of the bottom-up, inclusive model of rural development to Tskaltubo Municipality and ensuring full compliance of the project implementation process with the EU LEADER approach. According to the existing model, local residents decide themselves what is needed for their municipality development, create their own development strategy and choose priorities.

Therefore, considering the experience accumulated in Georgia, the aim of the research was to identify and document the regional issues and needs by inquiring the local community, businesses, experts, NGOs, private and public sectors representatives, which will be used further for revealing local development priorities and designing the development strategy.

The Baseline Study revealed the local problems through the rural population, studied their vision of local needs, their priorities and expectations and presented further local development perspectives.

The results of the Baseline Study will help to take into account the local community interests in the animation process of the LDS concept, strategic directions planning and effective measures on the local level.

### 1. Baseline Study design, methodology and stages

Based on the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) principles and its methodology, the Baseline Study identifies the local needs and reveals socio-economic potential with the maximum engagement of local population, using the existing knowledge and competence of the community, taking into account the views of women, young people and vulnerable groups. The PRA methodology includes the following stages: selecting the team members; defining the task and objectives; forming sub-themes and thematic groups; selecting interview (survey) methods, design and respondents; conducting interviews; conducting the desktop research; organizing workshops and presentations of thematic groups; preparing a report document.

The research covers Tskaltubo Municipality total population, which is 56,883 people according to census 2014. The Municipality comprises 43 municipality units, including the town of Tskaltubo<sup>1</sup>. More specifically, the municipality consists of the following administrative-territorial units: the town of Tskaltubo; 12 communities (uniting several villages) - Gvishtibi, Gumbra, Dghnorisa, Maghlaki, Mekvena, Mukhiani, Opurchkheti, Patriketi, Rioni, Kvitiri, Tskhunkuri, Tskaltubo; and 4 villages - Geguti, Opshkviti, Sakulia and Partskhanakanevi.

The research tool is discussing the issues in the form of an open questionnaire (see questionnaires in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), prepared for various target groups, including discussion topics for specific sectors or services.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://tskaltubo.gov.ge/about?id=1>

The qualitative research was conducted in the above-mentioned twelve communities, 4 villages and the town of Tskaltubo (17 in total). The survey method was a focus group interview with the local population (communities / villages) along with an individual interview with local and regional level experts, representatives of business, non-governmental organizations, private and public sectors. The number of participants in the focus group is 10-15 people.

The stakeholders were informed and invited to the focus group interviews. The GIPA Regional Coordinator provided communities mobilization according to the contact list of potential LAG members prepared by PIN, and with the help of Tskaltubo Municipality representatives in the administrative units. Focus group interviews were conducted in public institutions (see meeting schedule in Appendix 3).

Respondents / organizations were selected for individual interviews based on PIN and GIPA contact data, respondents' advice, the issues identified through the focus group interviews, and with the help of potential LAG members. Meetings were held on the spot (see the list of respondents in Annex 4).

Methodology of collecting data	
<i>method</i>	Qualitative
<i>technique</i>	Individual and Focus Group Interview
<i>Target group</i>	Representatives of 42 Municipal units , including the town of Tskaltubo; the number of animated focus groups - 17 (criterium : focus group size 10 -15 people, who will represent local competences, experiences and gender balance.
<i>Selection measure</i>	Population of 255 Tskaltubo municipalities (population - 56 883 people; reliability level – 95%; selection error – 6.12%)
<i>Selectin type</i>	random, targeted
<i>Research area</i>	Tskhltubo Municipality, Imereti Region, Georgia
<i>Interview Duration</i>	60-90 minutes

#### Research preparation stage

- Prior to the start of the Baseline Study , it was important to carry out a preliminary study with the maximum integration and engagement of potential members in the processes, in order to develop their knowledge and skills. For the purpose there have been conducted the following preparatory activities:
- The GIPA-Research Group meeting with potential members of Tskaltubo Local Action Group(LAG); introducing the task and methodology of designing the report on Tskaltubo development potential ;
- Based on the project statement, there were identified at least five intended sectors to study; discussed and verified five different directions of research: (i) tourism, (ii) agriculture, (iii) education and skills, (iv) social protection system and vulnerable groups condition (v)

environment and related risks.

- 10 people were identified and selected out of the LAG potential members who will be involved in the collection of field information based on the following criteria: Municipal covering with geographical marker (lives or knows the community); Industry competence; Involving the young and women ;
- The selected LAG potential members were divided into 5 community interviewers' groups (2 people in a single group) who would participate with GIPA researchers in conducting focus group interviews in the communities (villages) to collect field data from the primary source;
- The selected LAG-potential members were distributed into 5 sectoral / industrial groups: (i) tourism, (ii) agriculture, (iii) education and skills, (iv) social protection system and vulnerable group condition (v) environment and related risks ;
- The action plan matrice was developed and introduced to the selected LAG potential members and agreed on the activities of the sector / industrial groups, the implementation period, the accountability, etc.;
- The training was organized by the GIPA researchers group for the selected LAG candidates on participatory village evaluation principles, field data gathering ( methods of data collecting, questionnaire design, the interview techniques, etc.) the desktop research conducting and data analysis;
- The questionnaire testing and a practical training course for the selected LAG candidates was conducted by the GIPA group of researchers through piloting the focus group interview in the town of Tskaltubo.

#### Searching for the available information and conducting the desktop investigation

GIPA team of researchers have collected information related to the research sectors, got acquainted with the works related to Tskaltubo Municipality :studies, official statistics, action plans, etc. The data were also studied in a broader context on the regional (Imereti) and national level. Information was collected and analyzed through the materials provided by various stakeholders and organizations. The explored sectors and topics are : tourism; agriculture; education and skills; social security systems and vulnerable groups conditions; environment and related risks .

The following key sources were studied during the desktop research:

- Tskaltubo Economic Development Plan for 2019-2020;
- Tskaltubo Municipal Waste Management Plan 2018-2022;
- Arranging a picnic place in Tskaltubo Central Park, Preliminary Assessment Report on Environment and Social Influence, February 2017;
- Report on the Environmental Impact Assessment after the change in the construction and operation terms in the project (low Namakhvani) of the Two-Level HPP Cascade on the river Rioni (Tvishi HPP with an installed capacity of 100 MW and Namakhvani-Zhoneti HPP with an installed capacity of 333 MW) by Enka Riniuebels Ltd;
- Tskaltubo municipality Budget for 2017, 2018 2019;
- Georgian Tourism statistics survey for 2016-2017-2018;
- Wastewater Sustainable Management Project .Construction and operation of Tskaltubo sewerage treatment plant (6171 m<sup>3</sup> / day production capacity) and environmental impact assessment report, 2017;
- Tskaltubo Municipality Priorities Document for 2019-2022;
- Imereti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021;
- Construction and exploitation project of the cascade of hydroelectric power plants on the river Rioni (Tvishi HPP - 100 MW, Namakhvani HPP - 333 MW), report on the impact

- assessment on the microclimate, August 2019;
- Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2017-2020;
  - Main results of census 2014 of the National Statistics Office of Georgia;
  - Information obtained from the website of the National Statistics Office of Georgia;
  - Information obtained from the website of the Social Services Agency and the data provided by the Agency;
  - Information provided by the Information Consultancy Service of the Rural Development Agency;
  - Information provided by Tskaltubo Education Resource Center;
  - Other.

The cross-check of the desk research was carried out on the basis of information obtained through the focus group and individual interviews. The information extracted from the desktop research was used in the document.

### Primary information search and analysis

Primary data collection was performed through focus group and individual expert interviews. Focus group interviews were in the format of community meetings. In total, 17 community meetings were held, in which 255 local residents participated. Individual interviews were conducted locally and regionally with the experts and the core of the service provider, private and public representatives. 29 experts / organizations took part in the individual interview.

The collection of primary data is based on the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) principles envisaged by the project and the technique of its usage. It involves the use of local communications, relationships and knowledge, in order to reveal the needs of local issues and to find ways of their resolution, involving the local community with maximum of engagement and vast representation. This approach helps to timely provide reliable information. 10 potential members of LAG were actively involved in the field work.

Based on the information obtained from the primary data, the cross-examination of the desk-top research was performed. Relying on the available information a working version of the "Tskaltubo Development Potential Report" (Baseline Study document) was designed.

The focus group consists of people living in the community, who present or work in the following fields:

- Agriculture: primary producers (farmers and cooperative members) and processors, extension suppliers;
- Tourism: businesses involved in the sector (hotels, travel companies; Other service facilities);
- Education and skills development: school teachers, kindergarten and vocational teachers, lecturers, experts;
- Health and social issues: doctors, nurses, social workers, etc.;
- Environmental protection and biodiversity;
- Other local businesses: entrepreneurs, industrialists, service providers;
- Art, culture, sports and heritage;
- Infrastructure, construction and energy;
- Local NGOs / Civil Society;
- Women's and youth issues;
- Local government.

And / or having the following status:

- Socially vulnerable group;
- The disabled ;
- Highland population;
- Ethnic minority;
- Migrant / Eco-Migrant;
- Internally displaced.

The focus group composition envisaged the local youth participation and the need to maintain gender balance.

A focus group participant could represent one or more of the sectors / areas listed above.

Focus group interviews were conducted with a group of community interviewers consisting of 2 potential LAG members and a GIPA researcher. The interviews were conducted around the open discussion issues, according to the thematic framework including the sub-issues. Discussion topics were designed by a group of researches and agreed with the project implementing organization- People in Need (PIN) and 10 potential members of LAG. Questions were asked about the main target communities / sectors:

- Tourism;
- Agriculture;
- Education, qualification / skills development, culture, art and sports;
- Social issues and protection;
- Environment.

#### Analysis and presentation of community outcomes

The total number of interviews conducted includes 17 meetings, which are documented by a voice recording.

After the meetings, the analysis of the interviews revealed that the following 3 zones communities are similar in their issues: High Zone -Mekvena and Dghnorisa, Middle zone-Tskhunkuri, the town of Tskaltubo, the village of Tskaltubo; Rioni; Opurchkheti; Gumbra and Gvishtibi and the low zone - Kvitiri, Partskhanakanevi; Sakulia; Patriketi; Opshkviti; Mukhiani; Maghlaki and Geguti. Consequently, the information was grouped according to the above-mentioned zones, LAG-potential members were distributed in the respective zones; 3 presentations were made. During the presentations, the primary information extracted in the communities / villages was processed and consolidated according to the high, middle and low zones of the municipality. The presentations were aimed at uniting the communities (villages) in the given zones and analyzing the problems and needs according to the general characteristics. Together with the GIPA researchers, the collected information was summarized, lack of certain types of information was identified, and further steps were taken for extracting the required information.

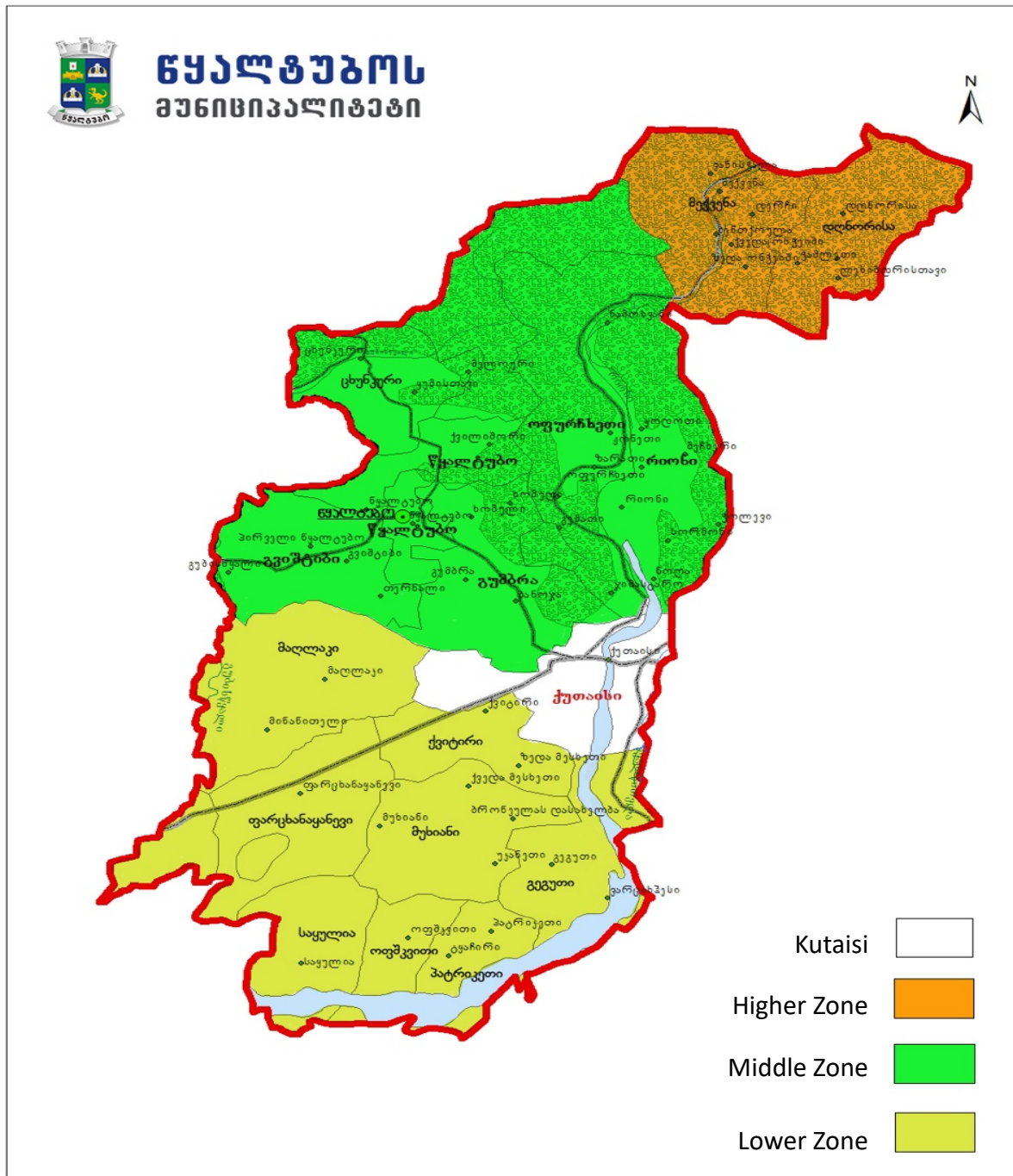
#### Analysis and presentation of the sectoral interviews results

In parallel with the community meetings, 30 expert interviews were conducted with the main experts of the target communities / sectors in the municipality, representatives of the business sector, non-governmental organizations, private and public service providers. For this purpose Individual open-ended questionnaires were developed; with the help of the Tskaltubo Project Implementation Team (PIN and GIPA) and 10 potential members of LAG, the target respondents



were identified. Sectoral interviews were conducted by GIPA researchers with the involvement of LAG potential members, who were divided into 5 thematic / sectoral groups. In the municipality the expert -interviews, individual or group (maximum three), were held with the field experts or practitioners who work in the above-mentioned communities / sectors.

Afterwards, based on the results of the focus group / expert interviews and their merging, the potential members of LAG presented 5 sectoral presentations, which were finally developed by the GIPA group of researchers and presented as the final document, along with the desktop research resources. The document is presented in the next chapters taking into account the context of the three-zone division of the municipality.



*Zonal division of Tskaltubo municipality*

## 2. Baseline Study data results

### 2.1. Tourism

#### General

Tskaltubo Spa resort is located 17 km from Kutaisi, 24 km from the Kopitnari International Airport and 250 km from Tbilisi. Compared to other municipalities in the region, Tskaltubo Municipality is most attractive to live and work, to develop tourism and make investments.

Apart from agriculture, tourism is considered to be one of the leading and profiling fields of the municipality economy. The middle and high zones of the municipality are particularly distinguished with tourism potential. Here a special role is played by the resort of Tskaltubo, known since the Soviet times for its thermal water, as well as with relaxation and healing procedures. Worth noting are the Sataplia State Natural Reserve and the peological monuments, like the Sataplia karst cave, along with the caves in Kumistavi, Khomuli, Tetri Mghvime (white cave) and Satsurbliia. The city has had a status of a balneological resort since 1920 and attracted tourists from all parts of the Soviet Union. At that time it could accommodate 15,000 tourists. A special train-“Moscow-Tskaltubo” operated. According to the Tskaltubo Tourism Development Center, at present it is possible to accommodate just up to 1,000 visitors for the balneological treatment and up to 5,000 for a night-stay.

Tskaltubo is visited by the both kinds of visitors: long-term tourists, Georgians or foreigners, who are interested in balneological procedures, and small-term ones who do not intend to visit the balneological resort and are interested in entertainment, cognitive tourism and limit themselves to visiting the caves. According to the information provided by the municipality, in the 6 months of 2019, the number of tourists visiting Tskaltubo was 21,483 visitors. By the Tskaltubo Tourist Information Center, in 2018, there were 315,000 visitors and holiday-makers in Tskaltubo municipality, 155,000 of which visited Prometheus Cave, about 75,000 - Sataplia, and the rest were distributed to hotels, baths and family-type hotels. Israel ranks first in terms of foreign visitors, followed by Poland in the second place, Germany -in the third, Russia -in the fourth and Azerbaijan- in the fifth. Mostly arrive tourists under 40. The above figures are very low for tourism development. Foreign visitors are not well -informed about the resort. They appear here by chance or mostly learn about the resort while visiting Kutaisi. The tourist season is mainly in August-September.

#### Resources

Given the current resources, the municipality has the opportunity to develop different types of tourism. In particular: speleological, cultural-cognitive, therapeutic (middle zone), eco-tourism (high-and middle zones), adventure/extreme tourism on the Rioni River, as well as cycling-tourism (high-and middle zones), agritourism (high and middle zones ) and wine tourism (high zone).

Tskaltubo's unique mineral waters are known for their particularly stable physico-chemical characteristics. Light and smellless thermal-radon water flows naturally. Its temperature (33-35 degrees Celsius) allows the water to be used without preheating. In addition, clean drinking water resource of the municipality is also noteworthy.

On 78 hectares of the resort area more than 150 different varieties of perennial deciduous and coniferous trees have been planted. An artificial "cold lake" was created on the location in the 1930s.

Tskaltubo is famous for its rich mining resources. Of note is the bentonite clay of industrial importance. Its primary processing takes place in the village of Gumbra. Two types of products are produced here: bleaching, used for oil titration, and molding, used in a powder form to make molds in metallurgy. Gumbrini is also found in Tskhunkuri and Kumistavi. Limestone and granite deposits are around the zone. Lime and natural stone building blocks are made from limestone<sup>2</sup>.

According to the locals, there was once a medicinal mud in the village of Dghnorisa that cured joint diseases, but today its trace has disappeared.

## Services

### Hotels and similar accommodation

By the information of November 2019, on the well-known hotel website booking.com, 24 hotels were found in the town center. 19 hotels were shown on the Municipality website. Unfortunately, the website includes just the hotel names and addresses and those only in Georgian. It is impossible to get additional information about the hotels, even the contact details. There is no link to further information. It was difficult to find statistics on the number of guests received by hotels and cafe-bars in 2019.

The hotels/family-type hotels in the Municipality are mostly located in Tskaltubo, only a few family hotels function in the villages around the town. There are two hotels in Kvitiri, two family hotels in Mekvena and two family hotels in Partskhanakanevi. In summer one can see very few foreign tourists in the area. They mostly appear here occasionally or after following the map-provided information.

The town of Tskaltubo has had many family hotels since the last century, which are mainly concentrated in the city center. There are also high-class hotels, such as Tskaltubo Plaza, Oasis, Argo, Prometheus and Imereti. Restored sanatoriums "Spa Resort" and boarding house "Tskaltubo" also function. There is no international brand in Tskaltubo. The price of hotels on a double room ranges from 70 to 330 GEL, breakfast included.

According to the calculations of the Local Action Group, the number of family hotels does not exceed 50 units. Price ranges from 10-40 GEL per person - without breakfast. Out of them 15-20 hotels work actively. Guests from Azerbaijan stay in family hotels for a long time, who have been coming to the balneological resort for treatment for years.

### Treatment, wellness and spa

From the perspective of medical tourism development, in Tskaltubo Municipality already exists a significant infrastructure. Here function four baths of high standard, serving visitors. The resort's main tourist attraction is the "Balneoresort Tskaltubo", a treatment and healing complex, which has been hosting foreign tourists since 1892.

Karst caves can also serve as natural remedies. The microclimate of the caves with their positive/curing effect is used for the treatment of various diseases. Satsurbliia Cave (village of Kumistavi) is the first international standard speleo-healing cave, in which people with respiratory disorders, particularly, asthmatic problems can take healing procedures. As part of the project, a visitor center and an outpatient clinic were built. A lighting system was installed in the cave. Satsurbliia Cave is divided into active and passive zones. A playground for children was set up in the active zone, and sunbeds were placed in the passive one.

<sup>2</sup> <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3959762?publication=0>

Restoration is currently underway and by 2020, two caves will be completed: the White Cave, which is located 500 meters from the town of Tskaltubo and is connected to the city. In addition to the healing halls for people suffering from with asthma, there will be a wine tasting hall. The second, Duknistskaro cave, located in the village of Khomuli, has been leased and repair work will soon begin.

### Entertainment and cognition

Tskaltubo does not have a lot of entertainment places to attract tourists, where they could spend money. Tourists mostly go to the market, which, in its turn does not meet modern standards. In addition, there is a shortage of the “tourist taste” goods, and the existing products are not “marketed”.

According to the Tskaltubo Tourism Development Center, there are two main locations, which also attract a large number of tourists:

**Prometheus Cave** in the village of Kumistavi, discovered in 1984 by Jumber Jishkariani, a member of the Academy of Sciences' expedition to the Kumistavi area. The Prometheus Cave is recognized as unique for its size, variety of solidification, the importance of subterranean rivers and the diversity of landscapes. In the Prometheus Cave it is possible have a boat trip.

**Sataplia Cave**, discovered in 1925 by Peter Chabukiani while looking for the primitive human's dwelling. The stalactites, stalagmites and stalagmites presented as decorations create different halls and amazing landscapes here: the constant temperature in the cave is 14 degrees. Sataplia State Reserve combines the Colchian forest, the karst cave and the dinosaur footprints. The infrastructure of Sataplia State Reserve includes: a visitor center, a dinosaur footprint conservation facility, an exhibition hall, a panoramic glass view, cafes, souvenir shops, a well-equipped cave and marked paths. Here visitors can visit the fossilized footprints of the dinosaur, the karst cave, the rock trail, the Colchis forest, panoramic views. Sataplia Reserve is located in Imereti region, Tskaltubo municipality, where traces of both -predatory and herbivorous dinosaurs of different epochs have been found.

In addition to the above popular places, there are also other exciting destinations for visitors, such as:

- Geguti Fortress-Hall (village of Geguti );
- Khomuli Castle (village of Khomuli);
- Kvilishori castle (village of Kvilishori);
- Museum of Local Lore (Tskaltubo);
- Niko Lortkipanidze House-Museum (in the village of Chuneshi)
- Otia Ioseliani House-Museum (Tskaltubo);
- Khomuli cave (village of Khomuli);
- Cracked lake -Rushava waterfall (village of Kumistavi);
- Cholevi monastery, Zarati Church (village of Cholevi);
- Church of St. Kvirike (village of Tkachiri);
- Ioane the Baptist Church (village Derchi).

There is a Stalin villa and a bath that can be turned into a museum. Part of the visitors are attracted by the unique architecture of the sanatoriums and their surrounding nature to take photographs.

### Caffees, restaurants and vine cellars

There are several restaurants and café bars in Tskaltubo and its surroundings, such as: “Lake Side”, “Magnolia”, “Kalakuri”, “Iona Café”, “Khvamli”, “Violin”, restaurant “Smoke” , cafe “Nectar”, restaurant "Stalactida", restaurant "Prometheus Veranda", restaurant "Our City", cafe-restaurant "Nadzvebi", "Grand Palace"; bars and restaurants are in the hotels: "Tskaltubo Plaza", "Oasis", "Prometheus". The food is affordable for any kind of a holidaymaker.

Guests can visit local wineries, enjoy variety of traditional wines and local cuisine , feel the special Georgian hospitality. There are 4 cellars in the municipality: Otia yard - in Tskaltubo; Gogia Cellar – in the village of Gvishtibi; Khomuli Cellar – in the village of Gvishtibi and Mate Marani - in the village of Banoja. A large hotel near the Prometheus Cave in Kumistavi is under construction, where a pitcher-shaped tasting cellar will be located.

However, more different types of services should be created that will make tourists want to stay longer.

### Transport

There is no access to public transport in the villages of the high zone. In some villages, the population have to walk several kilometers and use the public transport of other municipalities. It is also noteworthy that Tskaltubo is just an administrative center and cannot attract the population of its municipality (villages / communities) socio-economically. The city of Kutaisi is its alternative .

Minibuses- Tbilisi-Tskaltubo ride daily from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Minibuses (# 4, 10.34 and 44) leave every half hour in the direction of Kutaisi-Tskaltubo.

The minibus leaves Tskaltubo for the Prometheus Cave every hour. The train, Kutaisi-Tskaltubo, is very uncomfortable and is limited to two trips a day.

In general, it should be noted that public transport is outdated, uncomfortable and inconsistent with modern standards. There is also a dirt road in the villages and in heavy rainfall in the highland villages the movement is restricted.

### **Human resource and labor market**

The shortage of a qualified staff is apparant in all the areas of tourism and hospitality industries. The youth outflow adds to the problem. In Kutisi there are both- modular and short study courses in horeca business. Consequently, the problem of training and retraining professionals is not an unsolvable problem.

### **Communications**

The total length of the roads in Tskaltubo municipality is 335 km. 80-90% of the local budget infrastructure is spent on the roads and outdoor lighting. 40% of the roads are rehabilitated. Energo Pro Georgia operates in Tskaltubo municipality, supplying it with electricity 24-hours non-stop. 90% of the municipality is gasified. By 2022, all villages will have been gasified. TV communications are available everywhere. The exception is made by low quality internet.

### **Positioning and marketing**

Tskaltubo is the greenest balneological resort in Georgia. It is not a seasonal but a year-round resort with the 12 month capacity. The treatment here has been popular since the XII-XIII centuries. The resort had its Gold Era in the Soviet Union time. Its popularity and luxury is still living in the historical memory. This is evidenced by the zonal planning of the resort (zone 1: water fountains and its surrounding park;



2<sup>nd</sup> zone; sanatoriums, baths and other service/entertainments objects; 3<sup>rd</sup> zone: residential). Still are preserved the ruins of the sanatoriums, demonstrating their architecture and tremendous size.

Tskaltubo has a resort of international significance, which is distinguished by its unique microclimate, greenery and hydrogeological structure. However, apart from medical tourism, there is also a potential for other tourist trends development. A large number of foreign tourists are attracted by an adventure -type tourism for its protected territories, grottos, caves and historical and cultural sites, which create the best conditions for eco-tourism.

In 2018, Tskaltubo, as a balneological resort, became a member of the European Association of Historical and Thermal Cities, which will help the spa-resort to preserve and develop its balneological heritage. This fact will also contribute to cooperation with various balneological cities around the world, such as Baden-Baden, Vichy and others. In 2019 Tskaltubo as a balneoresort became an affiliate member of the World Tourism organization (UNWTO). It is a leading international organization in the field of tourism and contributes to the development of viable and affordable tourism, especially in developing countries.

For the purpose, with the Tskaltubo tourism Centre support, there are provided such activities as: participation in tourist exhibitions, organizing info-tours and press-tours by inviting powerful media representatives, as well as travellers' clubs and tourist companies, and offering them various services.

### Potential

According to statistics provided by the Tskaltubo Economic Development Strategic Plan for 2019-2020, 6% of the total municipal product comes from tourism, although the percentage of revenue from tourism is actually higher, as it does not demonstrate the percentage of other services directly or indirectly related to tourism. Accordingly, the second main strategic task is to develop the tourist infrastructure and services.

In the activities to deliver it is considered to organize tourist infrastructure facilities, marketing activities, inclusive tourism facilities, to implement the measures promoting agritourism development in highland villages, to arrange signposts for tourist destinations, to rehabilitate important sites, to provide short-term training / retraining courses in the field of tourism services, to participate in the exhibitions and sales of local products, to form the unified database for the unemployed in the municipality, to set up an information/consultancy centre, to inform the private sector representatives. The two latter activities are more global, although they do address the underlying issues associated with tourism.

Starting, implementing and completing infrastructural projects from the central and local government will trigger the interest of businesses to invest in various projects.

The issue of public transport is urgent across the municipality. In addition, from the very beginning, it is necessary to consider routes, schedules, introduction of the ecologically clean transport precedent. Timely resolution of this issue will contribute to enhancing the local economy and tourism.

Based on the available resources and facilities, should be studied other countries experience in what additional entertainment facilities can be built and where. Accordingly, it is necessary to design a new development plan.

After solving the basic problems and designing a new development plan, when a healthy investment environment has been created, we should launch investment offers / packages, active communications- consulting and encouraging businesses, promoting small and medium businesses, which is also a purely state prerogative. According to the Tskaltubo Municipality City

Hall Economic Development and Property Management Service, the state has already started working and conducting relevant research on the city development plan.

Regardless of the specific efforts made, along with the activities already delivered or planned, it is necessary to make constant efforts to raise the public awareness of the resort and popularize it by means of advertisements, slides, presentations, videos, commercials, distributing printed or similar materials through various channels on the national and international levels. Tskaltubo also has the potential for domestic tourism. According to the Strategic Development Document, it is necessary to timely set up a working group, to increase Tskaltubo's investment attractiveness, popularize and advertise the municipality, find strategic partners, attract tourists and investors, provide access to the information about the municipality through appropriate information channels which will be highly flexible, transparent and help businesses to get information in one space.

Given all this, tourism development sectors in Tskaltubo can be divided into:

Wellness - guests can enjoy a wide selection of water treatments and spa massages, relax and unwind from the daily routine of life, relieve stress in the big green park in the middle of the city, spend time with family and friends;

Healing and Curing - Guests can be treated for diseases such as: circulatory, nervous, muscular and skin diseases. karst caves make possible to treat lung diseases. Procedures can also be performed by healthy people who simply care for their health;

Meetings - guests will have the opportunity to organize business meetings, conferences, parties, evenings and similar events;

Agro, wine and gastronomic tours - a new and very popular destination that is combined well with the culture of Georgian hospitality, rural life and traditional winemaking;

Eco and Adventure Tourism - A large part of foreign tourists in Tskaltubo Municipality are attracted by eco and adventure tourism. Caves, protected areas, mountains, rivers, lakes and various related attractions, which can be developed, will be a real reason why guests should stay longer in Tskaltubo.

Particular attention and designing of specific tasks together with its action plan is necessary for the villages of the high zone, since the development of tourism there requires much more to be done in order to create favorable conditions for tourism. This will prevent the villages from being emptied. It is necessary to apply targeted programs. It is critical to show the best examples and implement various types of support projects focusing on tourism facilities development. It is important to share and get acquainted with the experience in other highland villages of Georgia. Residents should be given the motivation to do something interesting that will be also marketable and profitable. The road infrastructure must be improved.

It is important to inform and advise business operators on the legal requirements of food and labor safety, and on the introduction of standards.

According to local residents and experts, in order to develop the resort, it is necessary to regulate the following questions:

- Parking infrastructure: to renovate and increase the number of squares, to set up a fountain. Wastewater treatment needs timely and regular cleaning;
- Arrange children entertainment zones: attractions, sand, work out grounds.
- Arrange youth open cafes;
- Arrange public toilets;

- Create entertainment and cognitive centers for the older people;
- Arrange a spring cinema;
- Organize different equipments for sports activities;
- Set up flower clubs;
- Put stalls where local population will sell their handmade small items;
- Make a souvenir salon, where tourists can create different kinds of souvenirs themselves;
- Develop new tourist routes;
- Train guides who will offer walking tours to the visitors.

The priority of the municipality is to attract investors for the sanatoriums, free from IDPs and useless at present stage. The steps taken so far in this regard are the privatization of the sanatoriums: "Meshakhte", "Iveria" and "Tsiskari" by direct management, investment, privatization, which considers the arrangement of high-comfort hotels. It will contribute to the economic development of the municipality, employ locals and create a comfortable environment for tourists. There still are sanatoriums where internally displaced people live. Thus, it is advisable for the state to decide on the issue of their housing, which has been partly initiated; to promote the sanatoriums privatization and the horeca industry development with the involvement of the private sector. According to the available information, the process of privatization by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia will continue and every interested person and investor, will have the opportunity to get involved in tourism industry.

## 2.2. Agriculture

### Area and zoning

Tskaltubo Municipality is located in the central part of west Georgia, to the east of the Kolkheti lowlands, in the valleys of the Rioni River and Gubistskali. It is bordered to the east by Kutaisi, to the west - by Samtredia and Khoni, to the north, - by Tsageri and Ambrolauri, from the south by Baghdati and Vani municipalities. The total area of the administrative unit is 70,100 hectares, 29,208 hectares of which are agricultural lands. The natural wealth of Tskaltubo Municipality is its woods, which occupy 25,000 hectares. The defining physical-geographical factor of the municipality is a wide oval deepening with the cave-mineral springs, separated from each other by the boundaries of the mountain ranges and only open to the Kolchian lowlands. The landscapes around the cave have different heights and exposition, the relief is mostly low hilly. In the municipality, the climate is marine sub-subtropical, with the characteristic short winters and hot summers. On the one hand, the municipality of Tskaltubo is one of the warmest corners in Georgia. The average annual temperature is 15 degrees.

For the hottest month of the year- August, the average temperature reaches +30. For the coldest, - January-February, - 5. The average annual humidity is 76%. The average annual precipitation is 1420 mm / year. Tskaltubo Municipality is rich in water resources, the main artery of which is the river Rioni, with tributaries. Tskaltubo and Gubistskali. The main mineral resource of the region is the famous Tskaltubo thermal water, unique in its physical and chemical properties. Its main characteristic is radioactivity.

The municipality is divided into higher, middle and lower zones. The differences and similarities are according to the zoning.



In the villages of the **higher zone**, the lands are small, there are no conditions for intensive production, services are less available, the labor resources are deficient, the transportation problem is also present.

Viticulture, poultry, livestock, beekeeping have traditionally been developed here, along with trout farms, but over time the villages have been depopulated and nowadays viticulture and beekeeping are the main sources of income. Due to the high migration rate from the village and the fact that the village is actually empty, the remained population get by their household agricultural products: fruits, corn, beans.

The plots are fragmented. In most of the production, the farm is oriented towards satisfying its own needs, but there are certain directions that manage to realize the production - mostly in the inner market, such as beekeeping, viticulture, fruit growing. The potential for winemaking and the related agro / wine tourism development is noteworthy here.

Good geographical-climatic conditions and ecologically clean environment create undisputedly favorable conditions for local agriculture. However, the lack of modern types of enterprises, technologies and services is still a challenge. It is noteworthy that the upper zones of the municipality are threatened by landslides, washing off the banks (in the middle and the lower zones of the River Rioni) and strong winds. This can be a major threat to the residential buildings and the public infrastructure (roads, bridges), arable lands and pastures. Landslides and the related issues will be discussed in the environmental section, with Namakhvani HPP project.

**Lower and middle zone** villages have much in common in terms of the specifics of agricultural development. For most of these villages, the main field of agriculture is horticulture, where the main trend can be the production of fruits and vegetables, mainly in greenhouses, as well as berries. In addition, livestock (milk and meat production), arable crops cultivation, and, to a lesser extent, beekeeping, fishing, and viticulture are more or less developed in almost every village. Since farms in different villages vary in size and volume, under the incomplete information it is difficult to determine exactly how many products are produced within each zone.

### Traditional fields

Agriculture is one of the most important industries of Tskaltubo Municipality. Three trends are distinguished here : greenhouses, livestock and grain crops growing.

The agricultural profiling sectors are: fruit growing, animal husbandry, grain production, beekeeping, horticulture and vegetable growing.

Agricultural lands cover 29.2 thousand hectares, arable land - 13 205 hectares.

In the administrative unit, horticulture is widely distributed. Vegetable, horticulture, corn, vine and fruit are most spread from the priority cultures. Vegetable yield is 20 t / ha, horticulture is 30-40 t / ha: these cultures are spread in the lower-zones of the municipality. Corn yield is 3 t / ha, vine is 10 t / ha. Based on the obtained data, the production volume of herbs-the main products of the zone -averages 3-7 tons per year, the maximum production may be 10 tons per hectare. The size of each greenhouse is 500-1000 sq.m. M. (50-60 m in length). An average of 15-25 people (both local and from other municipality) are employed in one greenhouse.

The price for 1 kg.of herbs is 1-2 GEL (average wholesale), maximum 4 GEL (very rare). The cost of cucumber and tomato is 30-40 tetri, and its wholesale price is 1 GEL.

There are many possible ways to improve the yield of vegetables and fruits, such as: to produce high-yield seeds, and to increase the yield of fertilizers.

In the municipality, animal husbandry has become widespread, though last decade it was noticeable a cattle decrease in number. The main direction of animal husbandry is the production of milk and dairy products. There are no meat breeds and therefore no production is developed. However, both directions have a real perspective on development. As of 2012, the municipality had 35,000 cattles. There are no modernized farms. The cattles are mainly a part of the domestic economy. The low productivity in the livestock sector is due to the bad structure of all animal breeds, owned privately by people /economies, presenting the largest share of the cattle (in addition to poultry). These non-productive breeds are traditionally fed on free pastures that lead to the overgrazing of the abandoned state and community lands. The overgrazed pastures do not provide the necessary base for meat or milk growth.

The aggravation of the problems related to the veterinary service will lead to the fact that Georgian farmers are not well versed in the issue of animal diseases. Most have no education in the field; The Regional Veterinary Association of Imereti Veterans, which carries out both consulting and practical services, functions in parallel with the state operations.

Tskaltubo Municipality possesses meat breed of sheep. The total amount is about 1,400 .

**Viticulture** is of special importance. The field has a great perspective, because of the growing interest in traditional species and the introduction of the principle of local production, which strengthened the commercial interest and demand on the production. The development of agri-tourism and the field of tourism in general, will further enhance the trend, that can be proved by the increased demand on visiting traditional wine cellars. The construction of local vineyards is very promising for the local population, which is confirmed by the growing dynamics of vineyard areas.

The exploration of traditional crops reveals significant problems, namely, the unprofitability of some areas: corn, horticulture, and livestock. In crops and greenhouse business it is revealed that only nitrogen is used in corn, which works only on green mass and not on fruit. In greenhouses pesticides are used in excessive doses and the crop is saturated with nitrates. In general there is no knowledge of modern technology. Most farmers have small greenhouses and plots for greens and market-gardening .The fact that the greenhouses do not use insect repellent nets, but excessive amounts of pesticides adds to the problem. Greenhouses can not control the humidity. The major problem in livestock is the interbreeding of low-yielding traditional varieties and the lack of artificial insemination practices. Seasonal processing of livestock and full private vaccination (veterinary services) are not carried out.

There is virtually no amelioration in the municipality.

The fundamental problems listed above require a complex and professional approach to achieve long-term sustainable results. The municipality faces the following issues: the scarcity of pastures; the high prices for fertilizers; the malfunctioning infrastructure of the roads linking to the arable plots, especially in the highlands; the lack of qualified agronomists; strong winds that destroy greenhouses; lack of processing (canning) plant; high competitiveness on the market abroad; the perishable products; the unfavorable regulations for the local producer that reduces the quality of the product and, consequently, its competitiveness.

The fundamental problems listed above require a complex and professional approach for achieving long-term sustainable results.

## Services (consultation, mechanization, technical assistance)

Advice on service and extension is available at both- the State (Ministry of Environment and Agriculture) and private (the Center for private farmers) levels. It is very important when there is lack of professional agronomists.

According to the local population, the Municipal Representation of the Rural Development Agency and the experts, most farmers follow agriculture without pre-selection, or they have no education in the field. Therefore, they may not know the superiority of one product over the other. Even when they do understand that a high-quality product brings profit, they are not able to make it. For example, a farmer may need fertilizer, but he may not know, which one and how to use it.

Particular attention should be paid to the arrangement of demonstrative plots, especially to the popularization of traditional and new cultures (e.g. berries). This issue has been brought up more than once by the farmers.

As for the mechanization: there is a mechanization center (according to the service prices are as follows – ploughing 140 GEL, 180 GEL (barren land); using different sizes of disc from 70 to 220 GEL; harrowing; sowing 65-70 GEL; corn reaping-190 GEL, with chopper-200 GEL, reaping Soyo-200 GEL), baso creating 150 GEL, presser-50 GEL, with scythe 5-70 GEL.

Required – Rotating mower, Mulcher, Vegetable Planter, trailed corn harvester with selectors. Additional equipment is required, as the existing resources cannot meet even half of the demand. It also takes a long time to repair the equipment. The high demand is conditioned by the land shortage (0.25-0.5 ha).

## Resources

### Land resources

Tskaltubo municipality covers an area of 700.1 square km. The agricultural lands of the administrative unit are 29,208 hectares, which is about 42% of the total area. Of these, 14,815 are arable which is 51% of agricultural holdings. Fruit and perennial orchards occupy 2,355 ha (8%), pastures cover 11,954 ha (41%). Land data are based on the results of the 2004 inventory. The land inventory has not been carried out since.

Both agricultural and rural development are affected by structural issues such as the lack of agricultural land in the region, difficulty of the terrain, very fragmented agricultural land owned by families, as well as barriers to private land registration. The agricultural lands owned by families are mostly small plots and therefore no structural changes can be made to ensure a more competitive system of production. These structural issues are important challenges, the solution of which in the long run will guarantee the development of a more dynamic agricultural sector and contribute to the unification of lands, the development of land trade, the expansion of production facilities.

People who do not want to be engaged in the agricultural economy in the villages, will have the opportunity to trade, rent and lease.

It is noteworthy that the landscape of the municipality is threatened by landslides washing off the banks (in the middle and lower zones of the Rioni), and by strong winds. All of the above will mainly threaten the residential area, the infrastructure (roads and bridges), arable lands and pastures. For the differences caused by the inappropriate use of the land and the climate change, the municipality should work out a program to protect resources, with a focus on improving the landscape use.

In this regard, priority is given to the measures aimed at reducing soil damage, landslides and erosion processes. The practice of land use on the slopes is reducing the plant cover, enhance soil erosion, water and soil fertility loss, affecting the soil productivity.

### Human Resources

As of 2014, the population of Tskaltubo Municipality is 56,883, the 19.8% of them live in the city. The share of the employable population (age group 15-64 years) is 66.3%, and the share of the population aged 65 and over is 17.6%.<sup>3</sup> Human resources are provided by the local population and hired workers from other villages in the region.

Low qualification of the workers adds to the problem of their small number.

The municipality has the capacity to develop greenery and horticulture (greenhouse farming), livestock (dairy and meat products), partly- fruit growing, fisheries, winemaking, beekeeping, grain and other industries, but does not have the potential of its actualization and development. The feasibility to develop this field without intellectual resources is very low. All this requires the training of young agrarians. In order to develop the profiling and high-capacity agricultural sectors of the municipality, it is necessary to raise the level of education in the agrarian direction, to promote the development of vocational schools.

It is necessary to raise the awareness of the farmers engaged in their small and home economies and help them with modern technologies, the production organization, standardization, safety requirements, marketing and income management, as well as environmental protection.

### **Modern type production (reality, problems - marketing, sales, post-harvest management)**

In the town of Tskaltubo and in the villages of Tkachiri, Geguti and Maghlaki, refrigerator farms are functioning, which keep and pack greens to export.

With the financial support of the state, Herbia Ltd., after upgrading with modern standards, has created a greenhouse, where different types of greens are grown. The total cost of the project was 3,000,000 GEL, 592,000 GEL of which was a grant and 1,050,000 GEL was a reduced-rate loan. It was also actively supported by donors (has received grant within USAID - REAP program).

Herbia, a herb producing company, is the first in the country having the highest standards and exporting high-quality greens to European markets.

The introduction of technology helps with herbs selecting, sorting, placing in plastic boxes and preparing for sending to consumers. "Herbia" Ltd. realizes the products with the help of the German and Dutch traders, through the distribution net.

The greenhouses owned by the cooperative "Janelidzes" occupy 3 hectares. In the closed ground, vegetables and various kinds of herbs are produced. The products are sold in local wholesale markets. Based on the agreement signed with Herbia Ltd., the products are also exported. Among the agricultural priorities of the municipality, the promotion of agricultural cooperation is the

<sup>3</sup><https://www.geostat.ge/media/20679/2014-wlis-aRweris-ZiriTadi-Sedegebi.pdf>

most significant. Cooperation contributes to the introduction of modern technologies, more income for farmers and increased production of competitive agricultural products, which is a prerequisite for ensuring the local replacement of imported products. The Agricultural Cooperative "Janelidzes" is another example of how production should be developed and how Georgia can be an exporter of agri-food products. These types of organizations are the solution for small entrepreneurs and small greenhouses if they are unable to create a sustainable marketing and sales system. It should be noted that in parallel with financial support, such enterprises should introduce modern technologies and standards in small and domestic farms.

Vegetable consumers are both locals and foreigners (mostly from the CIS and Eastern European countries). Herbs are mainly sold in the foreign market (80-90%), while the domestic market is 10-20%; 100% consumers of the cucumber and tomato crop are local. Other products mainly cover the local market.

The main customers are: vendors (individuals and companies), processing plants, food outlets.

The herbs are marketed mainly in the foreign market, in wholesale form; cucumbers and tomatoes on the domestic market are mostly wholesale.

The private sector, processing plants, food outlets and companies can be considered as auxiliary sectors.

In almost every village there is a potential for the development of existing industries, but they can not be fully developed due to the lack of material resources, pastures and proper infrastructure and extremely low profitability of manufactured products.

## Potential

The creation of a **greenhouse cluster** aims at increasing revenue and promoting access to new markets by stimulating the use of the full potential of the greenhouse sector as a traditional export field in western Georgia.

New tourist opportunities appear in Tskaltubo. This increased demand requires a supply of quality local products.

**The growth of agriculture productivity** is feasible through the development of profiling fields, with the introduction of new breeds and technologies. Achieving this task requires ensuring the access to appropriate education and services, encouraging alternative and diversified agricultural production, and the harmonious development of all the subjects in the value chain. At present, the main goal is **to produce quality and competitive products**, create jobs for which the appropriate infrastructure and a production recycling plant should be launched, technical equipment improved, that will interest the local population. The process of introducing new crops should further diversify production and to some extent appear as an alternative for small-scale farmers.

**Further Development and perfection of consultancy and technical services** is an essential term for meeting the modern challenges of agriculture. This load is equally distributed on the state and private sectors.

Providing information, agri-collaboration, introduction of modern methods and requirements, implementation of the basics of climate-wise and environmental economy, improvement of mechanization service and technical assistance - especially in the field of sales (post-harvest management, marketing, branding, local access to the final market)-these issues make a list that should be followed by all stakeholders in the local community in the near future. As a result, the main benefits will be given to the representatives of the local community (producers and



employees). The implementation will be delivered by the representatives of the local community, interested in obtaining desired results.

### 2.3. Education and skills development

*In the document of the priorities of Tskaltubo Municipality, prepared for 2019-2022, there is a development perspective, which also includes education: "Education, youth and innovation. Educated, motivated, entrepreneurial, self-confident young people will become the main beneficiaries, who will place the municipality among other successful municipalities of Georgia and other countries, having a developed and innovative economy. Therefore, innovative projects will be encouraged to promote the development of growing generation."*

#### Schools

There are 42 schools in Tskaltubo Municipality. Two of them are public schools - "Dream" and "Theological Seminary"; 30 – secondary and 12 - basic level. Besides, in the municipality there operate 1 art school and 1 music school. As of 2019, the number of students in the municipality was 5446 students (source: educational resource center. According to the municipality, the number of students in the municipality is more, - 5800 students). There are 6 schools on the territory of the town: the above mentioned two private schools and 4- public ones. It should be noted that the villages near the town also make use of Tskaltubo schools. Mekvena public school does not function for not having pupils. The construction of new schools has started in the villages of Geguti and Chunesi, based on the information provided by Tskaltubo Municipality Economic Development and Property Management Service

In recent years, there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of students, primarily due to the outflow of population from the municipality. Kutaisi schools compete with the schools located near Kutaisi. Some parents prefer to take their child to school in Kutaisi. As they explain, there is a relatively better infrastructure and higher quality of education. However, part of the outflow of students is due to the parents mobility - their activities / jobs related to the city.

In some public schools there function handicraft and creative circles. Within the framework of the development of professional skills at the Otia Ioseliani Public School N1, LEPL, in the town of Tskaltubo, artistic processing of felt is carried out, which is a three-month short certificate program (free of charge) implemented by Akaki Tsereteli State University and provided by a specialist in the relevant field. 12 students are taking part in the program, 9 of them are students of Otia Ioseliani LEPL Tskaltubo Public School N1, 1- LEPL Mamuka Samakashvili Tskaltubo N2 Public School and 2 of LEPL Gvishtibi Public School. The first semester began in October and ended in December, and the second semester will begin in March and continue through May. In the similar direction, the Sunday School operates at the initiative of the Otia Ioseliani Society. However, the school has no connection with public schools in Tskaltubo Municipality.

**Infrastructure** – Almost all the schools of the municipality need partial rehabilitation. Among them, there is an urgent need for renovation of the buildings in the villages of Gumbrini, Kumistavi, Sakulia, Derchi. Despite the fact that every year the municipality schools are partially renovated, the complete arrangement of the buildings is still a distant prospect.

The heating of school buildings is regulated: 28 of them heat the building with wood, 8 – with natural gas, 2 – with coal and 1 -with electricity.

**Material and technical base** - Nowadays, the equipment of public schools is presented with the outdated computer technology and Soviet-era inherited physics and chemistry laboratories.

Consequently, the computer database and modern laboratories for exact natural science disciplines, as well as practical materials and visual aids need to be updated. Most libraries have long been in need of new and modern textbooks / reading materials. Schools also have poor access to the Internet. In order to establish a healthy lifestyle, it is necessary to arrange modern sports halls and open sports playgrounds in schools, with modern sports equipments, which will be used in the teaching process.

Personnel – out of the 733 teachers in the municipality, 204 are practitioners; 452 seniors; 67 leading teachers and 10 mentors. Lack of teachers is observed in the high mountain zone schools of the municipality (Sachkheuri, Dghnorisa and Derchi). These schools are approximately 80 km away from the center. At the same time, each has a small contingent and, consequently, in the following disciplines (biology, English, chemistry and physics) there is a shortage of qualified personnel. To eradicate this the Ministry needs to make additional efforts every year.

Teacher qualification is satisfactory, although it is desired to improve it to the modern standards. At the same time, it should be noted that there has been a partial renewal of the teaching staff - the older teachers have been replaced by new staff, which proved to enhance the quality of education. This, in turn, was facilitated by the financial motivation of teachers.

There are only 5 schools in the municipality which have their individual doctor. It is necessary for all educational institutions to have a qualified psychologist and physician.

### Kindergartens

There are 23 kindergartens under the “Tskaltubo Municipality Kindergarten’s Union”, (NE)(NC)LE. Four (4) of them are on the town territory. There is also one private kindergarten. The 100% of the kindergartens depend on the municipal funding. It is noteworthy that the number of gardens is increasing (18 kindergartens in 2015). As of November 2019, the number of students aged 2 to 6 is 1,850. For each child, 35 GEL a month is allocated from the budget; from the next year, it will go up to 40 GEL.

NE(NC)LE "Tskaltubo Municipality kindergartens' Union" unites 385 employees. Each kindergarten employs one nurse. Kindergartens are located in old buildings, but meet the general standards, have separate entrances, enough rooms; sanitary inspections for food and water supply are provided.

According to the Union’s management, kindergartens are almost in every village, where the demand is.

There are cases when parents ask to add groups; the Union meets their requirements. Groups were added in the villages of Kvitiri, Khomuli and Partskhanakanevi. 3 new buildings in the town have been built for the kindergartens. By 2022, a new sports hall will start operating. Constructing a new pre-school is planned for 6-8 groups, which will be a help for the overloaded kindergartens. According to the Tskaltubo Municipality Economic Development and Property Management Service, it is necessary to build or arrange an additional kindergarten based on the resources and applications. The Danish Refugee Council has shown particular interest in the issue, and the construction of a kindergarten in the IDP settlement on 9 April Street in Tskaltubo has been planned. By now, the land plot has been allocated and the construction of the kindergarten will start in the near future.

Below are given the proposals submitted by NE(NC)LE "Tskaltubo Municipality Kindergarten Union". Here are the requirements and needs necessary for the management of the educational process at a high level and for the most effective delivery of pre-school education:

- There is a lack of children's entertainment yards in Tskaltubo, where children will be able to play and take a walk in the fresh air. It is necessary to arrange the yards and physical environment of the kindergartens in accordance with the standards, which includes: arranging sports playgrounds, paving the area, drawing and filling the yards with a green cover; also, decorating with necessary accessories for different age-groups: yard toys, shadows, sand boxes, etc .;
- It is necessary:
- to control the use of environmentally friendly construction materials and inventory, as well as refurbishing with modern types of furniture, such as wardrobes, age-related tables and chairs;
- to provide bunk beds for rural kindergartens located in atypical buildings with little space in the rooms;
- to equip all kindergartens with sports age-related equipment: rings, bowlings, balls, basketball boards, Swedish ladder wall bars, workout chairs, and mattresses;
- to provide all kindergartens with age-related educational resources, such as puzzles, lotteries, materials for mathematical manipulations, different types of visual aids, etc.;
- to arrange a proper music hall in all kindergartens and equip it with musical inventory, to purchase different types of musical instruments according to the child's age, such as tambourines, jingles, Georgian folk instruments, visual aids, etc .;
- to buy ecologically clean toys for play centers in all kindergartens: dolls, cars, kitchen and medical toy set, and many more.

## Youth House

Fourteen circles in different subjects, handicraft, art or sports operate in the Youth house within the framework of the Tskaltubo Municipality Youth House, where 289 students between the ages of 6 and 18 receive non-formal education. The goal of the House is to bring-up a healthy and educated generation by promoting non-formal education, involving more children in different circles, seeing their potential and guiding them in the right direction.

The most in-demand circles can be considered the choreography circle (ballet), vocal circle, as well as sports circle (taekwondo, chess), handicraft. The number of students in each circle is determined from 14 (half time) to 28 students (full time). The institution operates with the co-financing of the local budget. The institution employs 14 teachers, a manager and his/her deputy. Teachers' qualifications are satisfactory, but still desired to improve. The cost of training in each circle is 5 GEL per month.

Various events of the local importance are often held here - New Year, events dedicated to the International Children's Day; children participate in outdoor events - music and choreography festivals, sports competitions, subject circles representatives are involved in educational and creative conferences.

Since 2012, the optimization has led to a small decrease in the number of students (by 50 ). In addition, gaining the right to opening similar circles by public schools has created a kind of competition and a problem of attracting contingent. However, the main challenge remains the scarcity of financial resources, which makes it impossible to organize children's outings in the country and abroad; to improve the infrastructure and material and technical base (including equipping with new computers). The center has the potential to identify and add other areas that will attract children and make the center more competitive. According to the House



management, socially unprotected / vulnerable families have limited access to the center's services due to the lack of the minimum financial resources needed for monthly tuition fee and transportation.

### Professional orientation

The average number of high school graduates (about 60%) plan to continue their studies in a higher education institution. About 20% apply to a vocational school. The remaining 20% of school graduates stay without professional / higher education.

According to the Tskaltubo Education Resource Center, in 2017-2018, within the framework of the "Professional Orientation and Career Planning Program " there was conducted a study on students' abilities and capabilities (using Holland's self-directed research test) along with the individual enquiries in 9th and 11th grades. It turned out that students would prefer and always choose the so called "fashionable " - (Lawyer, Economist), stereotypical (Doctor, Teacher, Pharmacist), highly-paid professions; they wish to become businessmen, lawyers, economists. Actually, the labour market demands absolutely different professions where there is lack of specialists or in most cases the employees are not able to meet the standards.

It is also necessary to improve the qualification of the staff working in tourism. At the same time, there is a severe shortage of specialists in the relevant fields of agriculture. The following professions can be named as the most demanded: all kinds of agrarian specialists, agronomists, veterinarians, gardeners, landscape designers, masseurs, balneology specialists, nurse assistants (caregivers), cooks, horeca clerks.

In 2020 it is planned to open a multidisciplinary vocational school that will primarily train specialists in the fields of tourism and agriculture.

### Summary

For education and skills development it is of principal importance to improve the quality of education, to provide young people with modern knowledge and to maximize their potential. The main challenges are the lack of financial resources and the disorganized infrastructure.

It is necessary to create an appropriate infrastructure: education, culture and art houses and sports halls, to rehabilitate existing facilities. This should be done in the nearest future with all stakeholders assistance. The local community representatives- children and young people can be considered as the primary beneficiaries.

The measures will be carried out by the local administration representatives and the stakeholders, supported by the central authorities, the local government and non-governmental organizations.

Last year, under the chairmanship of the Culture, Education, Tourism, Sports and Youth Commission of Tskaltubo Municipality, a three-year program for the development of culture was designed, which will fully rehabilitate cultural and educational institutions.

It takes about 4 million dollars to complete the plan. In addition to the local budget, there should be launched the process of attracting funds from the Regional Development Fund. The search for other sources of funding is underway.

It is noteworthy that the teachers' motivation has increased, the contingent has been rejuvenated, their qualifications have been comparatively enhanced, although more is to be done. There is a lack of qualified specialists in various fields, the curricula and textbooks are not

consistent with the present-day requirements. The institute of private tutors continues to strengthen, which reduces the role of school education.

Rural infrastructure is mostly faulty.

In almost every village in the low and middle zones of the municipality, there is at least one kindergarten and one public school. Most of the villages have a library. In some villages there is a House of Culture, but most of the villages are deprived of this opportunity due to the lack of proper infrastructure.

An extremely difficult demographical picture is in high-altitude villages. In fact, the process of depopulation is incepted, that poses threats to the environment. The number of migrants from other villages increases daily. This is reflected in education and other areas. There are 10 students in Mekvena and Derchi. They have not had a first-grader for four years already. With 13 teachers they start classes from the 5th grade. As a result, we will face emptied villages. In Dghnorisa there are 22 pupils in the secondary school. Next year, according to the school teachers, they will not have the 10th grade. Currently, there are 4 first-graders. There are no young people in the village. The school looks poor. There is no heating. Conditions for learning are not favourable, there is no kindergarten, no playground/ sports field or an entertainment area.

Sports infrastructure is mainly based on the old stadiums and buildings, which in most cases need reconstruction and relevant equipment. As a result, in the villages sports activities are not held appropriately. The town has a new stadium, outer playgrounds, various sports sections. In the city education system many infrastructures have been improved. Cultural and sports activities are frequent in the municipality. Demands and various ideas for organizing activities are a lot. Every year, the local and central budget considers the allocation of financial resources in various projects, although it is important to distribute the financial resources on the community level in the right way.

On the municipal level, it is necessary to strengthen the direction of professional orientation and actively use/popularize a self-directed research mechanism. At present there is no professional educational institution in the municipality, though it is planned to open a multi-discipline one. The Municipality has an advantageous location: it is near Kutaisi, the city with a number of professional and higher education institutions. It is possible to develop a variety of fields in almost every village, such as knitting, embroidery, decorative handicraft, jewelry, etc. Accordingly, there are specialists of the appropriate fields and also buildings, which in some cases require capital repairs and material and technical equipment. It is necessary to study the requirements of the labor market and to prepare / retrain qualified personnel for the local level.

## 2.4. The Social Protection System and Condition of the Vulnerable Groups

### Social Services Agency

According to the data of the Social Service Agency of November 2019, there are registered 57,100 people in the municipality. Apart from the local population, Tskaltubo is a home to a large number of internally displaced persons – IDPs (by the latest data – 4,670). A part of them have already been given accommodation, the other part is still waiting for it.

According to the November 2019 data, the amount of the pension packages was 12,104, about 70% of which are women.

The number of social package recipients is 3,033, 81.5% of which are the disabled. The number

of refugees receiving IDP status was 939. The number of IDPs receiving the social package is 393, 82% of which are disabled.

In the highland population, the number of people who have always had the status of a permanent resident and received the state pension was 316. In the high-altitude region the number of people receiving a social package bonus is 56.

According to various state agencies, the number of compensation and scholarship recipients is 290. The number of recipients of state subsidies is 329.

As of November 2019, the number of registered people in the *Unified Database of Socially Vulnerable Families* in the targeted social assistance program amounted to 4,949 families (13,493 persons), however, 1,499 families (5,137 persons) received their subsistence allowances, i.e. 70% of the registered for the subsistence allowances have not received it. It is noteworthy that the percentage of the registered is 23,6 % of the entire population of the municipality<sup>4</sup>.

1,499 families (5,137 people) were given the targeted social assistance in monetary form aiming to improve the socio-economic status of poor families, and to reduce / prevent poverty .

As a result of the increased electricity tariff, the electricity subsidy is gained by 1,309 families, while the real number of the electricity beneficiaries receiving electricity subsidies is 1,214 .

As of November 2019, the number of registered people for the program of providing medicines for chronic diseases reached 351 people.

In the high-zone settlements the number of the permanent residents/employed/contracted who receive bonus is 2 doctors and 2 nurses. The number of the families, having “ the third and the next child” is 207, but actually, only one family receives this kind of support.

### City Hall Health and Social Protection Service

In order to improve the accessibility of social services to the population, the municipality is implementing different social programs:

- Material assistance for the centenarians (100 years) and over (1000 GEL);
- Material incentives to improve the demographical situation (one-time financial assistance in the range of 200 to 1000 GEL);
- Citizens' ritual expenses (250 GEL);
- One-time financial assistance to citizens (depending on the categories from 150 to 1800 GEL);
- Financing of citizens' medical care (50% of the amount paid by the patient - not more than 1000 GEL);
- Assistance to the registered citizens affected by natural disasters, fires (not more than 2000 GEL).

For the last three years, the funds spent by the Tskaltubo municipality from the budget on social and health care programs are as follows:

2017 factual	2018 factual	2019 plan
1 235 200 GEL- 7.6% of the entire budget (16 176 200 GEL)	1 321 500 GEL - 8% of the entire budget (16 360 700 GEL)	1 388 800 GEL - 7.3% of the entire budget (19 015 400 GEL)

<sup>4</sup> This data is based on the pre-results of census, November 5, 2014 and the sum of the last 2 months growth of 2014 (natural + migration balance ).

### Public Health Center

In Tskaltubo Municipality area the population health care and the prevention of diseases is carried out by the “Tskaltubo Muicipality public healthcare centre”, NE(NC)LE. It includes 17 medical clinics, employing 32 doctors and 32 nurses. Healthcare Center competence is collection of epidemiological data; planning anti-epidemic activities; supervision of sanitary and hygienic norms in educational institutions; diagnostics of parasitic diseases, and giving recommendation; systematic monitoring of the antirabies cabinet; vaccination and immunization; monitoring of malaria prophylaxis; the prevention of particularly dangerous infections. In the highlands on Fridays and Saturdays, doctors go up in Mekvena, Dghnorisa, Chashleti and Derchi.

### Tskaltubo Regional Hospital

Tskaltubo Regional Hospital Ltd. is a mutyfunctional medical istance, uniting Tskaltubo regional hospital, maternity hospital, ambulatory and tubdispansery. The equipment and infrastructure meet the modern standards. The hospital has a license in the following : family medicine, endocrinology, pediatrics, neurology, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology, cardiology, surgery, gynecology, neonatology and phthisiology.

About 130 patients visit the clinic every day. Citizens living in the Tskaltutubo Municipality may apply for the following services: family medicine, laboratory tests, prophylactic injections, incurable and diabetes mellitus, for identifying phthisiology, psychiatric, endocrinology patiets and give them emergency medical aid.

### Inclusive Center

In 2015, the Tskaltaltubo Municipality opened the first Inclusive Children's Center (NE(NC)LE), which aims at helping children with rehabilitation / habilitation, developing life and academic habits and integration into the community. Tskaltubo Municipality fully finances it from the local budget. The beneficiaris may be here from the 15-20 km away villages. One can join the inclusive centre on the basis of the parents application.

The center currently has 14 beneficiaries, waiting for one more by the end of 2019. It can serve a total of 15 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of the center(between 7 and 18 years old) spend here six hours a day. They are provided with one-time meals (2.50 GEL per day per person), transportation (which is the property of the center), a psychologist, a speech specialist and a social worker.

The Centre serves the beneficiaries with the autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and mental retardation .

The service center has 17 employees. Its area is 209 sq.m., whichis given on terms of perpetuity by usufruct. The inclusive center has aminibus taxi that serves the beneficiaries.

To make the service more efficient it must be extensive. The center needs more space to serve more beneficiaries. The most important problem is that people who turn 18, can no longer benefit from the services and consequently, lock in themselves at their homes. There were suicide attempts. In this case it is essential to design individual programmes and take care of skills and habits necessary for work. It is important to equip sports grounds and adapt them to the disabled. It is obligatory to purchase sensory matrreses for sensory rooms and, in addition, to buy ecologically clean toys. In the villages the disabled are not able to get the service. Accordingly, the necessary branches must be added to those villages having no access to the inclusive service.

### NE (NC) LE "House of Virtues"

The institution started operating in 2012. It is funded from the local budget by the municipality and includes 190 beneficiaries (more 10 beneficiaries are included on the additional list). They are selected by a special commission according to the number of points. In addition, the beneficiary may be selected on the basis of a personal statement. Services are provided daily. This year, the daily budget for one beneficiary is 1.67 GEL. The beneficiary can be a representative of any age and social category living on the territory of Tskaltubo district, the number of family members is not limited. There are about 50 seats in the building. In many cases, one of the members of the beneficiary's family comes to the institution and brings food for the other members of the family. Maximum 50% of the beneficiaries are fed on the spot.

The facility employs 8 people - manager, deputy, accountant, business manager, cook, cook assistant, laundress and cleaner. There is also an access to essential medicines.

The main goal of the House of Virtue is to satisfy all the needy people with food. Funding is provided from only one source (Municipal budget). The funds provided by the local budget are quite enough to satisfy all the beneficiaries. The quality of food is satisfactory, the infrastructure is satisfactory too.

Extending the service is needed to make it more efficient. Adding one cook is required. It is necessary to offer a homecare program that provides food delivery and laundry for the beneficiaries, who are the most helpless people, those who find it difficult to move independently. To do this, adding the cost of several cars, the relevant staff and its services expenses is needed.

### Summary

The situation and problems in the sector seen by the local social and healthcare professionals and the professional vision of finding ways to solve them can be summarized as follows: the main challenge for the municipality is to improve the socio-economic situation of the population, which will create more jobs and reduce migration, enhance the quality of health care services, establish social enterprises, improve the services of retirees and provide long-term support for social programs.

An abundance of central and local social programs in the municipality can be considered as an advantage. Notable is the universal health care program, which includes socially vulnerable people, pensioners, children from 0 to 6, teachers, students, internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, their treatment and medicines expenses. Also, the projects funded from the budget of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, the program of IDP social security, considers provision of one-time assistance (depending on the categories, from 150 to 200 GEL). These programs contain almost every vulnerable group. Nevertheless, the resources available for the implementation of social programs are still insufficient. At the same time, most of the existing programs are one-time, which threatens their sustainability. Priority should be given to the effective steps to develop the capabilities of people with disabilities and integrate them into the population.

In the municipality, there are promising directions for the development of the economy in tourism, agriculture and power engineering. Every village is characterised by self-employment (mainly in agriculture), though there are also several enterprises (with rare exceptions) connected to agriculture. There are no exact statistics available on the number of employed and unemployed people on the ground, although locals estimate that about 70% of the workable



population are unemployed. The largest employers in the municipality are the state, herb and vegetable manufacturers, and the companies implementing infrastructure projects. There is no single social enterprise in the municipality. The outflow of the young people is very high – though there is no statistics. Ten villages in Tskaltubo Municipality have been granted the highland settlement status and their residents, people of different professions and business start-uppers can get benefit from the social and tax benefits. It is important to develop employment programs at the municipal level, to study the labor market, to identify the demanded professions, to improve the employer-employee relations, and to provide professional training. For the period of 2019-2020, it is planned to create a common database of the municipal data on the number of unemployed by the Municipality and National Statistics Office. It is also planned to create an information / consultation center.

One of the directions, revealed as a necessity, is the creation of the Social residential house on the municipality territory, which will significantly solve the problem of homelessness.

In general, there is a serious problem in the whole municipality with the health care system: the villages have an ambulance problem. Due to the long distance, the ambulance is unable to arrive on time from Tskaltubo. There are also problems in the hospitals with equipment, medicines and internet connection. This is especially true for highland population. In reality, they needed a hospital, and an immediate medical care provided when necessary. The village of Mekvena is served by a doctor only 2 days a week, and by a nurse on the other 5 days. Today, 250 households are registered in the community. There is no first aid center or an outpatient clinic in the village. In case of emergency, residents will have to wait 1.5 hours or more to get help from Tskaltubo and, in addition, it depends on how busy the ambulances are.

In case of the availability of appropriate medical establishments with proper equipment, emergency medical services, their quality improvement and accessibility would improve the local population medical services, which generally saves material costs.

Residents of the high zone villages unanimously point to the delay of fire-rescue brigades and their inflexible operation, the main reason for which is the distance between the fire-rescue point and the villages.

According to the information provided by the Tskaltubo Municipality City Hall Economic Development and Property management Service, there was not an appropriate building for the ambulance service for many years That was considered as one of the essential issues. The municipality allotted an area for the construction, which is completed by now.

The problem of access to food in the villages is less noticeable for the small number of shops on the ground and proximity to Tskaltubo and Kutaisi. However, access to medicines has been stated as a major challenge in rural areas.

## 2.5. Environment and related risks

In Tskaltubo Municipality there is a maritime sub-tropical climate, characterized by short winters and hot summers. As to the air temperature, here is one of the warmest municipalities in Georgia. The average annual temperature is 15°C. The hottest month is August, with the average temperature +30°C, and the coldest are January-February, with - 5°C<sup>5</sup>. The average annual humidity is 76%. The average annual precipitation is 1420 mm / year.

<sup>5</sup><https://georgiantravelguide.com/ka/tsqaltubo>

In Tskaltubo Municipality there are the following basic environmental threats:

- Climate change;
- Decrease in water resources;
- strong wind;
- Heavy rain;
- Erosion of river banks;
- Earthquake;
- Partial drought.

As to the environment-related risks prevention and reduction, it is necessary to design environment policy and actions plan on the regional and municipal levels, which will be in accordance with the national and international legislative system.

Environmental policy is concerned with the unity of obligations presented in the form of laws, regulations and policies. Environmental sustainable development, in turn, includes questions such as the protection of bio-diversity and natural resources, waste management, water and air pollution, and the management of ecosystems. Part of the environmental policy is made by the regulation of energetic and toxic materials, pesticides and other types of industrial waste.

Taking into account human factors, the purpose of this policy is to monitor and prevent possible actions that may cause natural disasters affecting the environment.<sup>6</sup>

One of the main objectives of the Imereti Region Development Strategy 2014-2021 is to develop ecologically clean, safe and secure environment, which includes the following objectives:

- Developing the natural disaster risk management and action plan, especially the monitoring system of vulnerable territories;
- Designing and implementing the adjustment measures plan for climate change negative impact;
- Installation of water and air quality monitoring points and laboratories, regular monitoring performance and prevention of surface water and water pollution;
- Developing the plan of strengthening the river banks;
- Improving the situation of regional forests and restoring the wind-breaks;
- Raising the awareness level of the population on environmental issues;
- Developing the protected areas infrastructure in the region and establishing an efficient management system ;
- Facilitating the appropriate measures for protecting and managing the region's water resources usage, including mineral waters;
- Promoting the implementation of energy-effective projects in the region in order to reduce the energy consumption and impact on the environment, to develop an energy management institute;
- Enhance the access to the information on solar, wind, and renewable energy.

Tskaltubo Economic Development Plan 2019-2020, prepared by the European Commission's Technical Assistance for "Mayors for Economic Development", discussed with the World Bank

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<http://www.eiec.gov.ge/%E1%83%97%E1%83%94%E1%83%9B%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98/%E1%83%92%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%9B%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A1%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%AA%E1%83%95%E1%83%98%E1%83%97%E1%83%98-%E1%83%9E%E1%83%9D%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%E1%83%A2%E1%83%98%E1%83%99%E1%83%90.aspx>

and recognized as a working document, does not include initiatives in the environment protection.

It is important to note the common challenge – that there are no special plans for land use and infrastructure projects in the municipality. The system for monitoring the quality of environmental pollution is weak. According to the Meteorological Service, the situation on water or air in Tskaltubo has never been studied, as the municipality has always been considered the greenest since the Soviet times. The municipality does not have a system for recording natural disasters; therefore, it is impossible to analyze the dynamics of the processes, as the information of the previous events about the caused damage and its compensation is beyond the public reach. The central government is reacting to the natural disasters, but the prevention mechanisms are weak.

On a positive side, we should note the fact that there is an increasing number of implemented projects by the state or international organizations to fulfill the undertaken responsibilities in the field of environmental protection under the Association Agreement with the European Union, etc. The collaboration of governmental structures, non-governmental organizations and scientific circles in the field of environmental protection is strengthening. The system of protected areas management has been established. An observing mode net has been installed in the landslide areas in Tskaltubo Municipality, village of Zarati, in Ambrolauri Municipality, the village of Tola, in Tsageri Municipality, village of Larchvali. This will help with monitoring and prognosticating landslide process to timely prevent its damage. There is a real chance of reducing the impact on the environment by the development of renewable energy.

## Waste

In connection with waste management, the regional waste management strategy has been designed. Tskaltubo Municipality has approved the “Tskaltubo Municipal Waste Management Plan 2018-2022”, which will help to establish a sustainable and effective management system.

To the sources of municipal waste management belong :

- Households (families living in private and multi-storey buildings);
- Production facilities;
- Educational institutions (schools, preschools);
- Service facilities (trade and food facilities);
- State and non-governmental organizations;
- other organizations.

Municipalities collect and transport household waste. There is a waste management service in the municipality NE(NC)LE "Cleaning Service", responsible for collecting waste, calculating the volume and placing it on the polygon. In order to improve waste management, 5 large plus 1 small cars and 450 units were purchased in recent years. To completely utilize waste, three times more technicians is obligatory. It should be noted that in the high zone there are neither bins, nor the waste disposal practice.

The rest of the remains are placed on Geguti landfills. There are 25-25 tons of leftovers flowing from the municipality every day, but in August-September the volume increases to 30-35 tons.

According to the waste management plan, there is a realistic forecast for more waste generation.



Approximately 40% of the Tskaltubo Municipality population uses the municipal waste management. According to the municipal waste management plan, by 2020 this figure will reach 80%. Based on the “Cleaning Service” information, the company serves only the registered customers. Waste is taken out of Tskaltubo and its surrounding villages (from garbage bins, located in the village centers). It is not possible to remove the waste from the villages, as there has been no final registration of the service subscribers in the municipality. The population left out of the cleaning service are dumping waste in riverbeds or at the road edges. There is also a large number of illegal landfills that cannot be controlled.

There is no information about the amount of the waste placed on such sites. In addition, it is hard to withdraw tax from established / registered subscribers. At present, it happens through the court of law. Recently, a fine was introduced based on the administrative violation code. Trash bills cover 10% of the expenses, while the remaining expenses are on the municipal subsidy (2018 - 815,200.00 GEL and 2019 - 902,500.00 GEL).

According to the cleaning service, there is no place for construction waste, and construction and demolition waste often ends up on the official landfills (that is not allowed).

In the municipality, there is no practice of waste sorting and organic waste composting. Construction waste utilization remains a problem. When it comes to hazardous medical waste, operating hospitals and other medical establishments place it in special, hermetically sealed containers and a private company provides its transportation to Tbilisi by a special vehicle.

According to the municipal waste management plan, in the next five years, the separation of waste will be launched in case of plastics and paper. The cleaning service has a plastic waste disposal press, but it is no longer installed and used.

Currently, in Imereti Region landfills do not respond to environmental, sanitary, and hygienic requirements. Landfills are located on the banks of the river, and the waste is washed away in rain and flood. Landfills are not fenced and protected that allows cattle to cross it freely.

The most important thing is to change the behavior of the population and raise the awareness of the environmental protection. According to the municipal waste management plan, significant attention will be paid to the separation of paper waste. It is planned to place special containers at schools and public institutions. Significant attention should be paid to the popularization and introduction of biodegradable waste compost. Since horticulture is developed in the municipality, and 40-45% of the waste generated is biodegradable, composting will not only reduce the amount of waste on the landfill, but also provide farming families with compost, which will be used in agriculture. Compost will reduce the demand on fertilizers and promote high quality production.

## Air

Due to the fact that the Batumi-Tbilisi Automobile Road- the main transport passage for Georgia is located in the Tskaltubo Municipality, the concentration of air contaminants is higher than the allowable limit, that impacts the air quality.

In order to protect the area from the fumes, it is advisable to build a protective belt along the highway (which is now under construction) (Imereti Region Development Strategy 2014–2021)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup><http://imereti.gov.ge/res/docs/strategia.pdf>

## Water

Tskaltubo Municipality is distinguished by the abundance of surface and ground waters, mainly supplied from the riv. Rioni, riv. Tskaltubu and riv. Gubistskali. Tskaltubo is also distinguished with thermal water resources, characterized by healing properties for its physical and chemical composition, which is manifested in the radioactivity, making the water more unique.<sup>8</sup>

The water resources meet the needs, however, the municipality does not have information on the amount of surface and ground water resources and their consume. There is no hydrological station in the municipality. Accordingly, the water supply monitoring is not carried out. No water pollution is monitored, therefore no cases of pollution are registered.

Tskaltubo Municipality supplies Kutaisi with water. In Tskaltubo Municipality, surface water is used for industrial water supply and irrigation, while groundwater is utilized for the population needs. In addition to the urban water supply, most of the territorial settlements are not provided with centralized water supply. 60% of Tskaltubo have sewage collectors, but there are no treatment facilities. For decades, in Tskaltubo faeces masses flowed into the river. Currently, a modern biological treatment plant is being built in Tskaltubo, through which flowing water in the river will be filtered and the yearslong problem will be eradicated. Tskaltubo Municipality centralized service -United Water Supply Company is responsible for the water resource management.

Tskaltubo is supplied 24 hours non-stop from 3 reservoirs. The quality of the supplied water is regularly checked by the laboratory. A number of villages are supplied by scheduled delivery: Gvishtibi, Gumbra, Ternali, Khomuli and a village of Tskaltubo. There is no water supply in the mountain villages at present, but it is planned in the future. Water supply problems come up in the summer season. Rural water supply network is to be changed. The company does not carry out repair work as the pipes are on the City Hall balance. The old pipes make a big loss. Water Supply Company has troubles with paying taxes by the population.

Due to the scarcity of industrial activities in the region, there are no negative consequences for the industry (Imereti Region Development Strategy 2014–2021<sup>9</sup>).

The estimated deadline for the completion of the wastewater treatment plant was 2017, though for the volume of work and costs will take quite a long time to completely eliminate the sources of water pollution<sup>10</sup>.

On the territory of Tskaltubo Municipality large quantities of inert material are extracted from the Rioni riverbed. The dynamics of river banks and the engineering constructions are poorly monitored by the state.

On the territory of the municipality, on the riv. Rioni, there are three hydro-energetical reservoirs in Gumati, Rioni and Vartsikhe. These reservoirs significantly contribute to the erosion of river banks, which manifests itself on the areas of Zarati, Rioni, Zhoneti, Namokhvani, Zeda Meskheta and Mekvena. The erosion of the banks and the riverbed damages the general infrastructure. Projects are being designed and delivered against the above-mentioned

<sup>8</sup> [http://nala.ge/climatechange/uploads/BaselinePerMunicipality/57\\_ckaltubo.pdf](http://nala.ge/climatechange/uploads/BaselinePerMunicipality/57_ckaltubo.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://imereti.gov.ge/res/docs/strategia.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://imereti.gov.ge/res/docs/strategia.pdf>

destruction, in particular, banks reinforcement, restoration of bridges and inertive materias extraction.

45% of the electricity generated in the Imereti region is developed in Tskaltubo Municipality<sup>11</sup>. In this way, the Municipality has not used to the full the whole range of natural resources available, although it is important to note that any new project that involves energetics, should be well-studied in the light of addressing environmental issues.

On December 24, 2015, JSC Georgian Energy Development Fund expressed its interest in the construction, operation and ownership of the project of Namakhvani two cascade HPP in the Tskaltubo and Tsageri municipalities, which is territorially located in Tskaltubo and Tsageri municipalities. The winner of the January 16, 2017 project was announced the "Clean Energy Georgia Group", which is currently implemented by Enka Riniuebels Ltd. Based on the decree of the Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia of February 14, 2019, the changes in the project by the investor company (changes in operating conditions) will be a subject to environmental impact assessment.

According to the official information of the Georgian Energy Development Fund, the renovated permission was planned for the fall of 2019, the next stage of which will be the start of construction work. The installed capacity of Namakhvani HPP will be 433 MW, and the estimated annual output will be 1496 GWh. The HPP is expected to be operational in 2023<sup>12</sup>. It is noteworthy that about 1,800 people will be employed in the construction sector, which will have the most of local share. The Georgian Energy System will be provided with additional electricity, which is of great importance for the country's energetical independence. As a result of the project implementation more money will go into the budget, the tax on property among them, which will be used to develop various infrastructure projects in the region.

According to experts, the construction of the HPP poses a great threat to neighboring villages and the city of Kutaisi, as it is located in a seismic and landslide-prone area. About 157 ha will be covered with water, three populated villages among them, a part of the Kutaisi-Alpana- Mamisoni motorway, monuments of cultural heritage and agricultural lands. It will change the ecosystems and microclimates, destroy numerous plants, unique varieties of vines (e.g. Twishi, Tsoликаuri, and Usakhelouri) among them, endanger the biodiversity of water, including ichthyofauna.

The environmental impact report on the Enka Riniuebels Ltd. project of the two-step HPP cascade on the riv. Rioni (Tvishi HPP with an installed capacity of 100 MW and Namakhvani-Zhoneti HPP - with a capacity of 333 MW) says, that based on the academic research on the impact of the similar and bigger scale projects on the microclimate, it is established that the horizontal impact of the project on temperature and humidity can be observed only in 100 meters from the reservoir banks. Accordingly, the impact on the local micro-climate (temperature, wind, humidity) will be localized on the surface of the reservoir and directly around it. The horizontal spread of the microclimate generated by the reservoir, is limited by the topography of the base of the valley, the unevenness of the terrain (e.g. trees) and winds<sup>13</sup>.

Due to its volume, the reservoir provided for the project cannot have a significant impact on the seasonal temperature contrast, although there will be some differences in the proximity of the

<sup>11</sup> <http://imereti.gov.ge/res/docs/strategia.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://gedf.com.ge/project/23-namakhvanis-hesebis-kaskadi>

<sup>13</sup> <https://mepa.gov.ge/Ge/PublicInformation/17132>

reservoir, for example, the daily minimum and maximum temperatures will change. In the event of frost, the temperatures near the reservoir may be slightly higher, while in the case of heat, the heat wave may be slightly lower. A small increase in humidity and a more moderate temperature are expected.

The EIA states that there are no specific guidelines in the literature for the impact of local climate reservoirs on wine regions, although many studies confirm that the wine region's climate is influenced by topography and proximity to large reservoirs (sea, lake or large river). In addition, local breezes affect the local climatic conditions of neighboring land surfaces, which in turn can affect viticulture and agriculture in general.

The presented EIA focuses on N6 (Goni massif) and N8 (the village of Korenishi) landslide zones. The expected negative consequences of the landslides intensification may extend to HPP communications and beyond HPP boundaries. In case of landslides, the riverbed will be blocked and the upper part of the reservoir will be flooded. The negative impact will spread on the settlements above the reservoir as well. To avoid risks, there has been selected a relatively low-risk area in terms of activating dangerous geodynamic processes, to locate the HPP's power node and substation infrastructure facilities.

In N6 landslide contour a modern instrumental monitoring system will be installed. At the base of N8 landslide, a stone gabion will be formed, which will reduce the erosion of the riverbank and the dynamics of the landslide process. On the road leading to the N8 landslide body and on the entire landslide body, the engineers-geologists will periodically carry out visual monitoring and, if necessary, appropriate reinforcement works will be performed along the road. In extreme cases, the road will be moved to higher slopes.

According to the EIA, the construction process will not migrate the livestock and poultry far. In addition to the ichthyofauna, the animals / birds will return to their original habitat after the “stop” of the construction and disturbance. It should be noted that according to the IUCN Red List, all species of sturgeons distributed in Georgia are at risk of being endangered. Based on data from the 2018 World Wide Fund for Nature Protection (WWF) survey, the Rioni is one of the few rivers in the world where sturgeon spawning sites are still preserved, where their reproduction takes place in their natural habitat. In this regard, the riv. Rioni has special national, regional and global significance for the survival of sturgeon and the restoration of their viable populations. In order to protect these species, it is planned to create a new protected area on a certain section of the Rioni and to grant the status of a protected area to the confluence and the adjacent space by expanding the Colchis National Park.

Despite the above reasoning, some environmentalists, in the case of hydropower construction, question the existence of a hydroelectric power plant and the Spa-resort Tskaltubo. According to them, it has not been studying properly, whether Tskaltubo water, the karst caves and the underground streams are in danger or not.

## Forest

Tskaltubo's natural wealth is forest. In the municipality there are industrial, subalpine terrains, groves and protected territories (Sataplia reserve) forests. The total area of the forest was about 25,000 hectares. Most of the forests belong to the first group. The forest land in the region is 34.9 percent (Tskaltubo Municipal Waste Management Plan 2018-2022). The forestry

management is not under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Administration.

The survey of the municipal population revealed that wood cutting is still going on. However, recently, after the gasification of the villages and a severe control, it has been significantly reduced. However, the amount of windbreaks on the territory has significantly decreased after the 1990s.

In the forests, 2-3 small fires are recorded annually<sup>14</sup>, but there is no information available about the damaged areas. Due to the lack of the data, landslides, torrents and erosion are not associated with deforestation. The board has no information about the forest restoration projects.

Among the numerous caves on the protected areas of Imereti, only Sataplia Reservation and Aghkviteli have been studied botanically. Sataplia Reserve is located in the humid subtropical zone. 98% of the reserve's territory is covered with a young Colchis-type subtropical forest. These areas are dominated by beech - boxwood sub forest and hornbeam –oriental hornbeam. Among the conifers we find the yew (*Taxus baccata*). 67 species of woody plants have been described in the reserve area, including 30 trees and 37 shrubs. Of the presented species, 59 are deciduous, and 8 are evergreen. Almost half of the woody plants are relict. Among them are Caucasian hornbeam, Georgian oak, eastern beech, chestnut and others<sup>15</sup>.

Of the elements of the Colchis forest, 8 species are spread in the reserve: Hartvisi Oak, Imereti Khashavi, Shkeri, Tagvisara, Dzmerkhli, Colchian Jonjoli, High Cranberry and Colchian Boz. Among the elements of Poltava flora can be found here: Box, Colchian ivy, Pontic rhododendron and others. In addition, 482 species of herbaceous plants are common. It is noteworthy that 9 rare and endangered tree species included in the "Red list" of Georgia, can be found in the Sataplia Reserve: Yew (*Taxus baccata*), Colchis Box (*Buxus colchica* Pojark), chestnut (*Castanea sativa* Millret.), Imereti Oak მუხა (*Quercus imeretina* ex. Maleev.), Colchis capers (*Staphylea colchica* Stev.), Zelcova, (*Zelcova carpifolia* (Pall.) C. Koch.) and others<sup>16</sup>.

Sataplia Reserve is a home to 12 species of mammals, 5 species of reptiles, 4 species of amphibians and 30 species of birds. Among the large mammals, jackal, badger, forest marten, Caucasian European rabbit and fox can be found, and rarely wolf and roe deer. The reserve is home to swallows, Caucasian finch, siskin, blackbirds and magpies. These areas are often visited by hoofs, quail, and forest chickens.<sup>17</sup>

## Production and agriculture

Production is not developed in the municipality. Apart from hydro-energy facilities here function only inert materials processing, construction, paving stones production and small food enterprises. In enterprises there is no practice of using energy-efficient technologies and waste disposal-processing-utilization. Neither functions industrial and hazardous waste disposal system. In industrial production older technologies are used. There is no sewerage system. Contamination with nitrates and other wastes used in agricultural activities is not controlled.

In dealing with environmental issues, the most important problem for the local population is the need of a better ecological situation. It was revealed that the raising of the population awareness

<sup>14</sup> [http://nala.ge/climatechange/uploads/BaselinePerMunicipality/57\\_ckaltubo.pdf](http://nala.ge/climatechange/uploads/BaselinePerMunicipality/57_ckaltubo.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://apa.gov.ge/ge/biomravalfervneba/imeretis-mgvimeebis-daculi-teritoriebis-biomravalfervneba>

<sup>16</sup> <https://nationalparks.ge/ka/site/sataplia/natureCulture>

<sup>17</sup> <https://apa.gov.ge/ge/biomravalfervneba/imeretis-mgvimeebis-daculi-teritoriebis-biomravalfervneba>



on the environment protection issues is needed. Villages require placing litter bins and disposing of waste in a timely manner. There should be a complete elimination of open and illegal landfills (especially an issue in Geguti and kvemo Meskheti); the Introduction of new methods of waste processing (composting, etc.) is obligatory. The problem of drinking water supply and quality must be settled that is resolvable. The population throws the litter and garbage into the riv. Rioni, thus the control over it and generally, the illegal dumping must be tightened. Due to the irregularity of the irrigation canals, a major part of the lands remains unploughed. Especially, in Kvitiri and neighboring villages, where the drought is especially high. The career works pollute the air in Ofurchkheti. In the village of Tskhunkuri, the Sem riverbed and water debit is significantly reduced. In summer the water supply is lost. There is a lack of street cleaners in Tskaltubo and it is necessary to control the cutting of trees.

### 3. Conclusion

In order to find effective ways of solving the existing challenges, it is necessary to introduce systematic approaches through the sustainable use of modern mechanisms for development and inclusive economic growth in the village.

The development of tourism and agriculture is the main priority of the Tskaltubo Municipality. The traditional methods used in the fields, which are well-known and profiled for the municipality, have proved to be weak. Moreover, they do not distinguish the municipality for the best practices and effects. Therefore, it is important to make a reasonable contribution to the development of local economy and profiling sectors in order to increase their export potential. The appropriate and innovative positioning of the Tskaltubo Municipality and its economic fields with strong marketing support is also significant. There are also new economic perspectives that need to be introduced, tested, and popularized.

Promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and stimulating doing business locally is an important factor for employment, income growth and reducing population outflow.

The economic development of the municipality should be aimed at increasing the capacity of human resources, developing young people with low-qualification, enhancing the labor market, stopping the migration process and raising the capacity of the disabled who are at risk of discrimination. As it turned out, there is a shortage of almost all professionals with qualifications. It is important to train new staff, retrain the existing ones, develop their entrepreneurial skills, and all of this should be done considering the needs of the labor market and the prospects for economic development, using scientific, research-based approaches.

It is necessary to establish and provide quality social services, as well as to create equal opportunities and promote forming new employments to overcome poverty, with the full involvement of the workforce and more effective mobilization for strengthening the link between private-public cooperation.

The development and improvement of municipal infrastructure is a key issue. It is directly related to the well-being of the municipality's population. Improving infrastructure (water, roads, lighting, sewerage, communications, public transport, etc.) helps to attract investment to the municipality, which is a prerequisite for the development of tourism, industry, agriculture and other sectors.

Finally, let's not forget that nature sustains us. Environmental protection, bio-diversity, introduction of climate-wise technologies and raising green awareness are the key and essential challenges for the future of the green city.

## Appendix 1: Discussion questionnaire for focus group and individual interviews

### Territory

**Community(ies):**

**villages:**

<b>Introducing the goal of the Baseline Study</b>
.....
<b>The attendees introducing themselves to the group</b>
.....
<b>Historical outline ( What the attendees remember about their own village, community)</b>
.....
<b>Topic 1:</b> <b>Agriculture</b> Primary production and processing (livestock - dairy and meat production, horticulture - fruit and vegetable crops, greenhouses, arable crops, beekeeping, fishing, etc.)
<b>Discussion:</b> What do we produce? What is the average yield? What is the current volume of output? What is the maximum production capacity? What size farms / enterprises do we have? How many people are employed by the enterprise / farm? What financial calculations do we know (e.g. production of one liter / kg, its cost, profit margin, average retail and wholesale price)?  <u>Production Factors affecting competitiveness :</u> What natural resources are there? What human resources are there? What capital is there? What is the geographical location and transport infrastructure? What is the other infrastructure like? What technologies do we use? What innovations have we introduced?  <u>Market factors:</u> Who are your customers and what size is your market? What are the customer characteristics (what segment of customer do we serve)? What are the main sales channels (internal / external / retail / wholesale)?  Who are the participants and what are the processes in the value chain?  Name the auxiliary sectors directly or indirectly related?  Name the state regulations and standards in contact?  What other fields or cultures development potential do we see in the future, and what is the real ground for this argument/claim ? <b>SWOT</b> Advantages - Strengths, Disadvantages - main problems, opportunities and threats  <b>What is our goal - what do we want to achieve?</b>  <b>Tasks / activities to achieve the goal:</b> What measures should be taken (for example, to promote the development of the sector)?

Where should it be implemented?  
 When / what period should specific activities be carried out?  
 Who will benefit - the main target groups / beneficiaries?  
 Who provides for the measures delivery and how?  
 Will there be co-operative / supportive / support organizations?

**Topic 2: Tourism**  
 Types of tourism; booking, arrival-departure, accommodation; rest; fun; recreation; gastronomy; other services (protected areas, picnics, camping zones, fishing, hunting, accompanying guide).

**Discussion :**  
 What do we produce ( digital data desired )?  
 What is the current volume of production (for example, the number of domestic and international tourists)?  
 What is the maximum production potential?  
 What size of enterprises / businesses do we have?  
 How many people are employed by the enterprise / business?  
 What financial calculations do we know (e.g. double room price for the season and off-season, cost, profit margin)?

Production Factors affecting competitiveness:

What is seasonality like?  
 What natural resources are there?  
 What human resources are there?  
 What capital is there?  
 What is the geographical location and transport infrastructure?  
 What is the other infrastructure like?  
 What technologies do we use?  
 What innovations have we introduced?

Market factors:  
 Who are your customers and what size is your market?  
 What are the customer's characteristics (what segment of customer do we serve)?  
 How is the market diversified?  
 What are the main sales channels (internal / external / group / individual / online / agency, etc.)?

Who are the participants and what are the processes in the value chain?

Name the auxiliary sectors directly or indirectly related?

Name the state regulations and standards in contact?

Which tourism product ( any other direction / service related to it) development potential do we see in the future, and what is the real ground for this argument / claim?

**SWOT**

Advantages - Strengths, Disadvantages - The main problems, opportunities and threats

**What is our goal - what do we want to achieve? Education / Culture / Art / Sports)**

**Tasks / activities to achieve the goal:**  
 What measures should be taken (for example, to promote the field / sector development)?  
 Where should they be implemented?  
 When / what period should specific activities be carried out?  
 Who will benefit - the main target groups / beneficiaries?  
 Who provides for the measures delivery and how?  
 Will there be co-operative / supportive / assisting organizations?



**Topic 3: Education, Qualification / Skills Development, Culture, Art and Sports**

Access to education: kindergartens, schools, vocational and higher education, training and retraining; education in intensive service areas; professions in demand;  
art and creative industries (handicrafts);  
Cultural heritage, social and cultural environment (facilities and activities);  
Sports environment (activities and infrastructure).

**Discussion:**

What educational institutions do we have?  
What is the dynamics of the increase/decrease in the number of students during the last 10 years?  
What are the qualifications of lecturers and is there a need for professionals in subjects?  
Name the professions in demand.  
How accessible are qualified specialists?  
What fields of art and handicrafts are developed?  
What cultural heritage do we have (objects)?  
What socio-cultural events are /were held?  
What sports infrastructure do we own (facilities)?  
What sports events are/ were held?

What other educational trends development potential do we see in the future, and what is the real ground for this argument/claim ?  
What other socio-cultural trends development potential do we see as the potential for development in the future, and what is the real ground for this argument/claim ?  
What other art and handicraft trends development potential do we see in the future and what is the real ground for this argument/claim ?  
Which sports development potential do we see in the future and what is the real ground for this argument / claim ?

**SWOT (Education / Culture / Art / Sports)**

Advantages - Strengths, Disadvantages - The main problems, opportunities and threats

**What is our goal - what do we want to achieve? Education / Culture / Art / Sports)**

**Tasks / activities to achieve the goal:**

What measures should be taken (for example, to promote the field / sector development)?  
Where should they be implemented?  
When / what period should specific activities be carried out?  
Who will benefit - the main target groups / beneficiaries?  
Who provides for the measures delivery and how?  
Will there be co-operative / supportive / assisting organizations?

**Topic 4: Social issues and healthcare**

Demographic Information (Municipal Villages and town);  
labor market - employment and unemployment;  
social enterprises;  
access to the basic resources (eg, medical services, shops, hairdressers, etc.) for healthy social and economical existence;  
the elderly; single-parent families;  
ethnic diversity and migrants; the disabled;  
food, welfare and industry;  
involvement in local self-government issues.

Demographic data, population size, age data, employable population, average family size.  
What socio-economic services are at the local level?  
What social programs are at the local level?  
Which industries and companies are the main employers?  
The number of employees and the unemployed on the ground?  
What social enterprises do we have in the community / town?  
What is the situation with the elderly, single-parent families, ethnic groups, migrants, people with disabilities? What digital data do we have in this regard?  
How is the availability of food?  
How is the availability of medicines?

Do you know how much the local budget is and what projects use specific funds?  
Which social direction development potential do we see in the future and what is the real ground for this real argument / claim?

**SWOT**

Advantages - Strengths, Disadvantages - The main problems, opportunities and threats

**What is our goal - what do we want to achieve?**

**Tasks / activities to achieve the goal:**

What measures shall be taken (for example, to promote the field / sector development)?

Where shall they be implemented?

When / what period shall specific activities be carried out?

Will anyone benefit - the main target groups / beneficiaries?

Who provides for the measures delivery and how?

Will there be co-operative / supportive / assisting organizations?

**Topic 5: Environmental protection**

Protected territories; use of land and natural resources; waste management; bio-diversity; climate change, air / water / soil pollution; renewable energy and climate adaptation.

Do we have protected areas? Name them .

What is the distribution of the land resources?

What natural resources do we have? And how much of them do we use?

How is waste management done?

What measures / projects are being implemented in relation to biodiversity?

What measures / projects are being implemented in relation to climate change?

What measures / projects are being implemented in relation with air / water / soil pollution?

What measures / projects are being implemented to generate renewable energy?

What measures / projects are being implemented to adapt to climate change?

Which environmental trend development potential do we see in the future and what is the real ground for this argument / claim?

**SWOT**

Advantages - Strengths, Disadvantages - The main problems, opportunities and threats

**What is our goal - what do we want to achieve?**

**Tasks / activities to achieve the goal:**

What measures shall be taken (for example, to promote the field / sector development)?

Where shall they be implemented?

When / what period shall specific activities be carried out?

Will anyone benefit - the main target groups / beneficiaries?

Who provides for the measures delivery and how?

Will there be co-operative / supportive / assisting organizations?

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for major service provider organizations

1	The resource Centre of the Ministry of Education	<p>Number of students in the municipality;          Number of schools;          Number of rehabilitated / renovated schools;          Number of schools needing rehabilitation/renovation;          Number of equipped schools ;          Number of unequipped schools;          Number of teachers;          Statistics on High School Graduates Continuing Education in Vocational and Higher Education Institutions;          Number of children in the municipality;          Number of kindergartens;          Average number of children in kindergartens;          The need for kindergartens (where?);          Number of rehabilitated / renovated kindergartens;          Number of kindergartens needing rehabilitation/renovation;          Number of equipped kindergartens ;          Number of unequipped kindergartens.</p>
2	Sanitary service	<p>Activities; scale of service coverage; problems and needs; annual budget; material and technical base; human resources; landfills and their condition; utilization of hazardous waste (pesticides); (Subsidy vs taxes).</p>
3	GWP	<p>Activities; the scale of service coverage ; problems and needs; water quality; water pipes; what part of the population is supplied with the central drinking water ; who pays for the water supply service; annual budget (subsidy vs taxes).</p>
4	Energo-Pro Georgia (electricity)	<p>Activities; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs; electricity bill; tax benefits; the issue of electricity supply / availability in farms and enterprises (delivery costs, metering, procedures and deadlines).</p>
5	Social Service Agency	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage ; problems and needs; elderly population; people with disabilities; vulnerable groups (families); number of retirees; the number of people dependent on social assistance; employment and unemployment rates;          Youth employment rates; labor safety control and employee rights.</p>
6	Local self-government Social Service Agency	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs; elderly population; people with disabilities; vulnerable groups (families); number of retirees; number of people dependent on social assistance; employment and unemployment rates;          Youth employment rates; Labor safety control and employee rights.</p>
7	Local self-government economic development service	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage ; problems and needs; leading economic sectors; types of local businesses; priority directions in local economic development;          local budget statistics and its sources (state transfers, taxes, fees, penalties, etc.).</p>
8	Local self-government infrastructure, spatial planning, architecture and construction service	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs; road infrastructure; implemented or planned construction / architectural projects; local budget; full road infrastructure plan and deadlines; other infrastructure projects; road infrastructure to tourist destinations.</p>
9	Local self-government education, culture, sport, tourism, youth affairs and gender politics	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs;          sports activities; service coverage area; problems and needs;          youth activities; service coverage area; problems and needs;          gender activities; service coverage area; problems and needs.</p>
10	Local gas supplier company	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs; ongoing projects; full municipality coverage plan and deadlines.</p>
11	Ministry of Agriculture information and consultancy service	<p>Activities / programs; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs; current /active cooperatives, their activities and location;          Funded programs (private and public); statistical data on agricultural production,</p>



		yield, prices, number of farmers / enterprises, etc. Common species and crops. Types of extension and consulting services; research activities practice (own center, cooperation with universities, etc.); the capacity for breeding and seedling farming; existing agricultural infrastructure and its condition (pastures, overpasses, windbreaks); Existing processing infrastructure (e.g. milk collection and processing / production, slaughterhouse, mill, warehouse, refrigerator, packaging plant, etc.); personnel issues and qualified specialists.
12	National Food Agency	Activities / programs; price; the scale of services coverage; problems and needs; animal health; food safety; population ; number of veterinarians; laboratories and their access; plant diseases; personnel issues and qualified specialists.
13	Amelioration	Activities / programs; price; the scale of service coverage; problems and needs; what part of the municipality territory is irrigated; the potential of the system to cover the entire municipality.
14	Agro-service centre (mechanization)	Activities / programs; required services and prices; potential services; problems and needs; what are the size of the farms we are dealing with; how much the demand for services is and how supply meets the demand.
15	veterinary	Activities / programs; required services and prices; potential services; problems and needs; what size farms we are dealing with; how big is the demand for services and how well supply meets demand.
16	Imereti Caves Protected Areas Administration	Activities / programs; services and prices; problems and needs; what percentage of the area is under the protected area control; poaching statistics.
17	public healthcare	Activities / programs; the scale of services coverage; problems and needs; ambulances, pharmacies, hospitals, polyclinics, outpatient clinics, clinics in the communities; equipment; staff (number of doctors / nurses) and qualifications.
18	Tourist information centre	Number of visitors, proportion of visiting countries, seasonality, sights, most demanded / interesting places / routes, tourist services, infrastructure, markets and trade facilities, catering facilities; affordable services offered by local hotels and similar accommodation facilities (e.g. family hotel, hostel, etc.); prices for hotels and similar accommodation.
19	Communications company	Services and prices; the scale of services coverage; problems and needs.

### Appendix 3: The meetings Schedule

Community Grouping	The meetings Schedule														
	18 Oct	19 Oct	20 Oct	21 Oct	22 Oct	23 Oct	24 Oct	25 Oct	26 Oct	27 Oct	28 Oct	29 Oct	30 Oct	31 Oct	1Nov
Partskhanakanebi							14:00								
Mukhiani						13:00									
Maghlaki														13:00	
Opurchkhети						13:00									
Rioni														12:00	
Kvitiri								14:00							
Gumbra							13:00								
Gvishtibi														15:00	
Tskaltubo (town)	13:00														
Geguti								12:00							
Patriketi						12:00									
Opshkviti															13:00
Sakulia															14:00
Dghnorisa								13:00							
Mekvena/Derchi								11:00							
Tskaltubo (village)							13:00								
Tskhunkuri															13:00

#### Appendix 4: The list of the interviewed organizations performing the main services and programs

#	Organization	Field	The interview Date
1	Tskaltubo Social Service Agency	Social service	28.10.2019
2	Tskaltubo Municipality City Hall Healthcare and Social services Department	Social servces	28.10.2019
3	The Culture, Sport, Tourism, Youth Policy Service	culture/sport / tourism	29.10.2019
4	Tskaltubo Municipality City Hall Property Management and Economic Development Service	Economy	29.10.2019
5	NE(NC)LE Tskaltubo Municipality Public Healthcare Center	Healthcare	29.10.2019
6	Imereti Regional Division of National Food Agency,	Veterinary	31.11.2019
7	Tskaltubo Municipality City Hall Infrastructure, Spatial Planning, Architecture and Construction Service	infrastructure	31.10.2019
8	Tskaltubo United Water Supply Service Center	Water supply	31.10.2019
9	Energo-Pro Georgia Service Center	Infrastructure, electric power	31.10.2019
10	SOCAR Gaz Georgia	Infrastructure, gas	31.10.2019
11	Imereti Bureau of the National Food Agency	Food safety	1.11.2019
12	Imereti Service Center of the Georgian Amelioration	Amelioration	1.11. 2019
13	Resource Centre of the Georgian Ministry of education	Education and skills	25.10.2019
14	Tskaltubo Municipality Supervision Service	Local self-governance, security	01.11.2019
15	Agricultural Information and Consulting Center	Agriculture	25.10.2019
16	Ltd. Agricultural Logistics and Service Company	Mechanization, agriculture	06.11.2019
17	NE(NC)LE Tskaltubo Municipality Torism development Coordation Centre	Tourism	25.10.2019
18	NE(NC)LE "Tskaltubo Municipality kindergartens Union"	Education	9.12.2019
19	Assembly commission of culture, education, tourism, sports and youth affairs	Culture, education, sport, and youth affairs	15.11.2019
20	NE(NC)LE Tskaltubo Municipality Children's and Youth Center	Culture, education, sport, and youth affairs	15.11.2019
21	City Hall Social Affairs and healthcare Service	Social affairs and healthcare	14.11.2019
22	NE(NC)LE "Satnoebis sakhli" (House of Virtue)	social	14.11.2019
23	hotel "Tskaltubo Plaza"	tourism	17.11.2019
24	Otia Ioseliani house-museum and the "Otia's Ezo"	tourism	15.11.2019
25	NE(NC)LE Tskaltubo Municipality Tourism Development Coordnatig Centre	tourism	16.11.2019
26	restaurant "Violin"	service	14.11.2019
27	café-bar "Nectar"	service	14.11.2019
28	Tskaltubo Event Garden	service	28.11.2019
29	Family hotel "King Mirian"	tourism	05.12.2019