

COUNTRY FACTSHEET

GEORGIA

Cooperation to strengthen climate ac-
tion ambitions on the way to Europe

Contributions of civil society to climate policies in Georgia

Georgia – Cooperation to strengthen climate action ambitions on the way to Europe

Although its NDCs could be more ambitious, Georgia's convergence to the European Union (EU) could lead to progress in its climate policy and more civil society participation. A civil society cooperating closely with government agencies is ready to contribute knowhow to the development of climate policies.

Climate policy of Georgia

Although Georgia's share on global greenhouse gas emissions is rather low (0.03% in 2012)¹, it is strongly affected by climate change.² As the costs of the resulting damages is expected to exceed the costs of a mitigation strategy by 8-10 billion US-Dollar³, the implementation of a mitigation

strategy is a prioritized scheme of the government. Additionally, the government plans to reduce Georgia's GHG emissions by 15% in comparison to a BAU scenario and prospects a 25% reduction if international support is granted.⁴

The NDCs are to be implemented by the Climate Committee installed by the government. The committee integrated climate issues in a variety of national energy policies (e.g. *National Energy Efficiency Action Plan - NEEAP*) or agriculture and forest management (e.g. *Sustainable Forest Management Plan - SFM*) and in the second *National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP-2)*. The Georgian government promotes climate protection initiatives as on biomass use and production, programs on green cities or programs to increase capacities for the implementation of a low emission development strategy. However, Georgia could be more ambitious as its BAU scenario is rather pessimistic resulting in easily

<u>Climate policy Georgia</u>	
Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI 2019)	
• Overall value	No data
• National climate policy	No data
Civic space	
• CIVICUS monitor	narrowed
• Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2017	
Freedom of expression	8 of 10
Civil society traditions	6 of 10
Civil society participation	6 of 10
Association/ assembly rights	9 of 10

¹ The given emissions do not include emission by forestry or land use changes. Source: WRI (2013); CAIT 2013

² *ibid.*

³ According to an expert judge estimation economic losses during 2021-2030 would amount to 10-12 billion US-Dollar while adaptation measures would cost 1.5-2 billion US-Dollar. Source: Republic of Georgia (2016).

⁴ Republic of Georgia (2016)

achievable reduction targets.⁵ Also, many climate protection instruments are non-binding plans or strategies only.⁶

Climate-driven civil society

In Georgia freedom of expression as well as assembly rights are guaranteed by the constitution and since the Rose Revolution in 2003 organizations representing minorities can register as legal persons.⁷ ⁸ Although Georgia is considered one of the most progressive countries in its region regarding media rights⁹, the implementation of some human and civil rights is still problematic.¹⁰ ¹¹

The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Energy plan to develop the infrequent consultations of environmental organizations into a structured cooperation on climate policies.¹² Civil society participation is not just promoted due to a desired convergence to the EU¹³ but also because the NGO's knowhow and expertise in designing and implementing climate policies is highly appreciated. This partly explains the relatively high amount of former NGO professionals in official government agencies.¹⁴ In spite of their political influence, civil society organizations in Georgia are mostly dependent on international donors and have only few members. Yet, the organizations are well organized in many coalitions although not that well regarding climate issues.¹⁵ ¹⁶

Among Georgia's NGOs groups working on climate issues are mainly to be found in the environmental movement which focuses on biodiversity protection. This climate-driven civil society has only few members and is primarily engaged on a subnational level. Its climate related work is more or less restricted to pilot projects on emission reductions and the provision of energy saving measures. Further, there are no civil society actors or NGOs systematically involved in the NDCs implementation.¹⁷ This is mainly due to a lack of resources and expertise which need to be improved for a goal-oriented cooperation with government institutions.

⁵ Lui, S within (2018)

⁶ Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2018)

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ CIVICUS Monitor

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2018)

¹² Final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy*

¹³ Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2018)

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Asian Development Bank (2011)

¹⁷ Final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy*

Climate-driven civil society activities in Georgia

As already mentioned the climate-driven civil society in Georgia comprises only a few actors of the environmental movement. Until the beginning of 2019, these actors have not yet agreed on a common strategy or an action plan on climate protection goals and their implementation. Therefore, the *Green Movement of Georgia (GMG)*, an environmental NGO engaged in climate issues, serves as an example to give an insight into the latest strategies of the Georgian climate-driven civil society.

Climate relevant activities of the GMC are mainly hands-on projects on specialized topics, e.g. renewable energies and mobility, which contribute to climate protection. Next to the implementation of climate protection measures on a local scale, as e.g. the installation of solar panels, the GMC mainly engages in educational work. This focuses on knowledge transfer regarding climate relevant processes and contexts or on individual actions for climate protection. A critical discussion of government action for climate protection takes no major part in GMCs work.

GMC is further characterized by a great willingness to cooperate with the government. Consequently, its climate policy emphasis lies on the provision of expertise and knowhow for decision makers, e.g. statements on climate relevant bills. This is tailored to the existing windows of opportunity provided by the government's climate policy agenda. The authors could not find information on any protests or alliances against the current Georgian climate policy or on open arguments about climate policies between civil society and the Georgian government.

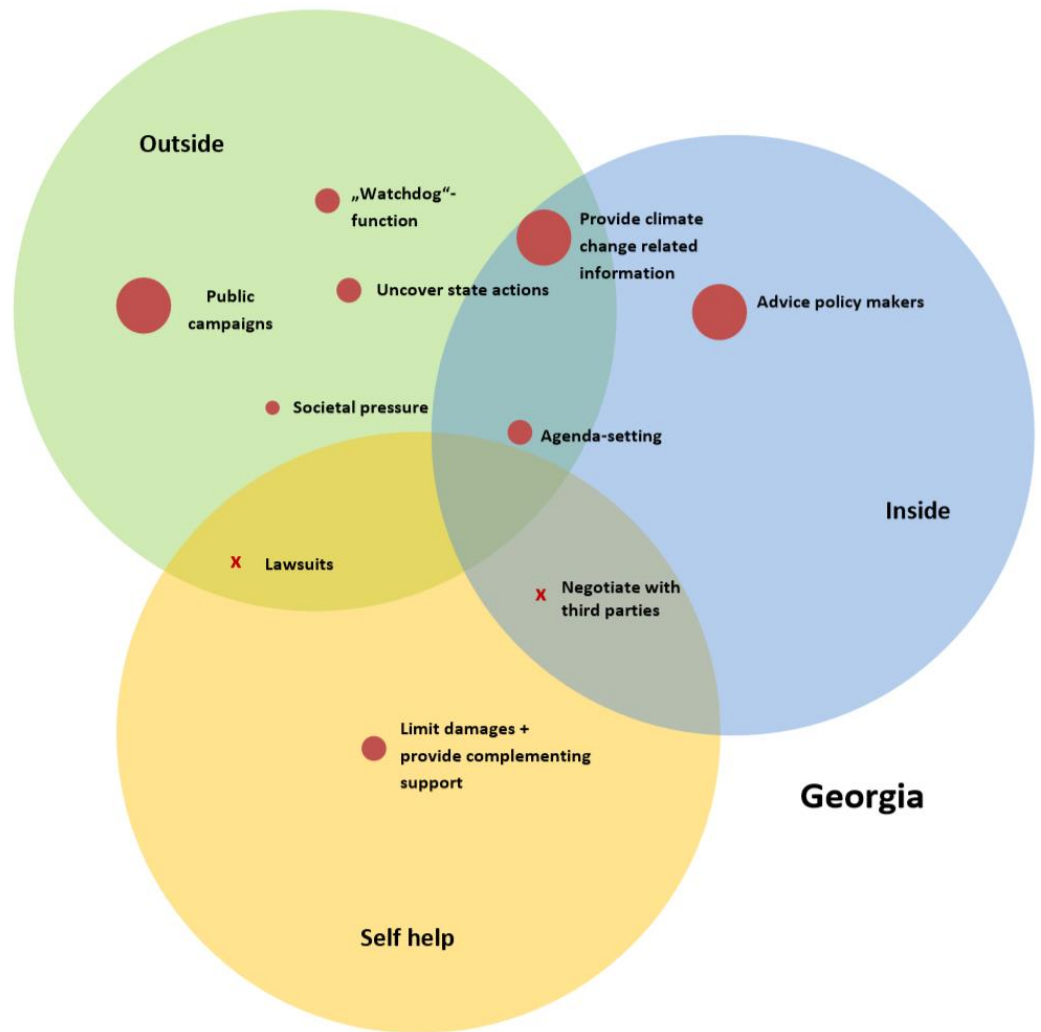


Figure 1: Activities of the climate-driven civil society in Georgia. The larger the dots the more important the respective activity. (own source)

Methodologies and definitions

In order to clarify the scope of this research, this chapter gives a definition of the key terms and the indicators used to analyse climate-driven civil society groups in different countries. The indicators were chosen based on a literature research. Also, it shortly introduces the central activities and capacities of civil society groups to advocate their interest, and the way they have been analysed in the examined country contexts.

Definition of terms

In contrast to the United Nations which define NGOs as all non-governmental actors,¹⁸ this analysis mostly refers to NGOs as all (sub-)national organizations that are organizationally structured, refrain from violence, act in alignment with human rights, make moral claims and claim to represent universal societal interests. In doing so, these publicly acting non-profit-organizations aim to influence political decisions on climate change and climate change adaptation¹⁹ but have not been initiated by government initiatives. Consequently, trade associations, commercial associations and labour unions are excepted from this definition.^{20,21} The analysis thereby focuses on cross-organizational structures, whereby important groups and tendencies within the climate-driven societies – if existing – were considered as well.

The term **climate-driven civil society (groups)** comprises all environmental organizations that deal with climate change. This includes NGOs primarily dealing with climate change related issues as well as environmental organizations covering climate change as a cross-cutting issue or as one independent issue among others.

Civic space refers to the conditions enabling civil societies to act. To assess the civic space, the preservation of civil rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, and the facilitation of their exercise are taken into account as well as the restriction of bureaucracy, excessive regulation and state control of foreign funding. Also, regarding civil society engagement on climate change related topics, the existence and promotion of, as well as access to (official) participatory processes dealing with climate policies is relevant for the assessment.²² This includes climate policy committees as well as possibilities to participate in planning committees for climate relevant policies of other line ministries.

For the comparability of civil society activities in different countries, several indices have been used. The respective scores can be found in the country fact sheets at the end of this report.

The *Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)* was used for an assessment

¹⁸ See Brunnengräber, Achim (2011)

¹⁹ See Brunnengräber et al. (2005)

²⁰ Roth, Roland (2005)

²¹ See Brunnengräber, Achim (2011)

²² Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung et al. (2016)

of the current climate policies of each country. This index assesses the NDC's ambition levels in addition to climate policy developments on a national scale.²³

The *CIVICUS Index*²⁴ as well as the *Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI)*²⁵ categories "Freedom of expression", "Civil society traditions", "Civil society participation" and "Association/ assembly rights" were drawn on to assess the civic space of each country examined. Countries not included in any of these indices were marked accordingly. Significant discrepancies between the indices' ratings and the authors' evaluation based on interviews or personal experience were explained in more detail in the texts.

Some sources used in this paper refer to the final report of the project *Strengthening civil society in the implementation of national climate policy* as well as to interviews conducted as part of it with experts in the field of climate policy and civil society and with representatives of the climate-driven civil society.

Activities of climate-driven civil society groups

Civil society organizations engage in different ways to make their voices heard by decision makers. Their climate policy related work includes the following

- Observation and definition of climate change related problems
- Provide civic education on climate polities
- Provide public information on and transparency in climate change related topics
- Control state compliance with its commitment on climate action

²³ The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) assesses and compares the climate protection performance of 56 countries as well as member states of the EU. Based on the analysis of 14 indices evaluating greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energies, energy use and climate policies the climate protection performance is categorized as very high, high, medium, low and very low and ranked accordingly. Here it is important to note that no country's climate protection performance was ranked very high and the top three ranks were left vacant in order to raise awareness for the generally low performance. The subcategory national climate policy comprises the latest political climate protection activities and was scored between 0 (no climate protection activities) to 100 (maximum performance) by experts of local NGOs. For further information see: <https://www.climate-change-performance-index.org/>

²⁴ The CIVICUS Index evaluates the scope of action for civil societies in different countries and categorizes these in descending order as open, narrow, obstructed, repressed or closed. Thereby, CIVICUS mainly analyses to what extent the government and government institutions attend to their duty to guarantee assembly rights, association rights and freedom of expression. The index is mainly based on expert evaluations and the latest data from the respective countries. For further information see: <https://monitor.civicus.org/methodology/>

²⁵ The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) assesses the status of the political transformation towards democracy and the transformation management of different states according to 10 categories and 38 subcategories. A score from 1 to 10 differentiates between total Autocracies (1) and Democracies in consolidation (10) in the category Democracy Status, and between failed, weak, moderate, good and very good in the Governance Index. The subcategories used in this study are those connected to civil society work. These are also scored from 1 to 10. 1 indicating a lack of tradition of civil society organizations, no assembly or association rights and no possibilities for civil society participation. Whereas 10 indicates diverse, longstanding civil society traditions as well as extensive possibilities for civil society participation and guaranteed assembly and association rights. For further information see: <https://www.bti-project.org/>

- Campaign work
- Exert societal pressure by demonstrations and the unification of individuals and groups with the same interests
- Limit harm in case of state failure
- Lawsuits
- Provide expertise and advocacy by directly cooperating with decision makers

Roth et al. (2005) differentiate these activities between (1) partly institutionalized, legal ways of participation in cooperation with decision makers or legal forms of criticism such as demonstrations (“**Inside**” according to Roth et al. (2015), also Inside-Strategies) and (2) spaces for political discourse and critical reflection on climate policies or civic education on climate policies (“**Outside**”, also Outside-Strategies). Another compilation of political activities “**Self help**” (3) was introduced by Müller et al. (2014). Self help comprises measures to improve the situation of those affected by climate change or reduce negative effects on them. In

For the analysis of the activities of climate-driven civil society, we have focused on the activities listed above, while we categorized them in consideration of the work of the authors listed above. The figure resulting from this categorization was used to summarize and to display the climate policy related activities in the surveyed countries. In the country factsheets, the activities related to each category are represented by a red dot. The size of the red dots indicates the amount of work taking place in that specific field. The results are based on scientific publications as well as interviews with experts and representatives of the climate-driven civil society of the respective countries. Thus, the score is to a certain degree subjective and can only serve as orientation.

Some sources used in this paper refer to the final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy* as well as to interviews conducted as part of it with experts in the field of climate policy and civil society or with representatives of the climate-driven civil society.

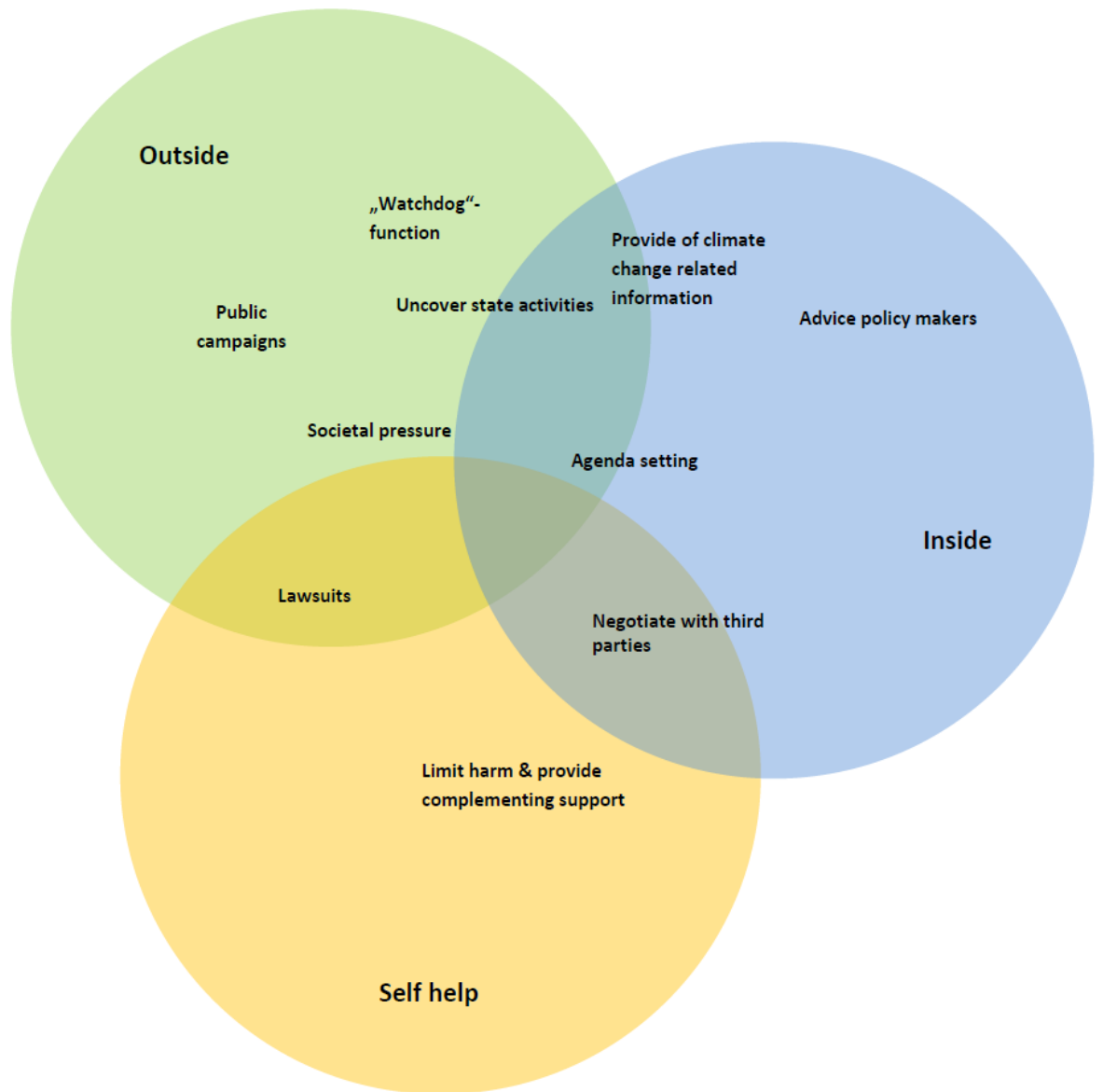


Figure 2: Climate policy related activities of the climate-driven civil society categorized according to the sections Inside, Outside and Self help (own figure).

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