



Eco-Cottages on Kartsakhi Lake

The Javakheti Protected Area was established in 2011. It includes the Javakheti National Park, the Kartsakhi Managed Reserve, the Sulda Managed Reserve, the Khanchali Managed Reserve, the Bugdasheni Managed Reserve and the Madatapa Managed Reserve. The Javakheti Protected Area is located on the territory of the municipalities of Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda. There are no forests in Javakheti but there is a natural alpine forest located near Kartsakhi Lake on the border between Georgia and Turkey which is composed of white birch, Caucasian mountain-ash, cotoneaster and raspberry bushes. Kartsakhi Lake (known as Khozafin as well) is famous for its wildlife as well; especially, plovers which are a type of wading bird. The lake never thaws completely. Pelicans, gray geese and cranes fly back to Kartsakhi Lake, attracting domestic and foreign tourists who enjoy bird watching. Of course, tourists require a proper infrastructure and this is how the idea of the project was born. Representatives of the Javakheti Protected Area came up with the idea to build eco-cottages on Kartsakhi Lake. They addressed the Akhalkalaki Local Action Group for its support to prepare a project proposal. The project was selected and received financial support allocated by the European Union.

Currently, there are two-eco cottages on Kartsakhi Lake with each of them capable of hosting eight guests.



Employees: 2 locals
Total budget of the project: GEL 113,772.44
EU share: GEL 73,951.80
Co-financing: GEL 39,820.64



“The small wooden cottages get power from solar panels. There are eight beds per cottage and each is equipped with a kitchen as well. The space is quite cozy and comfortable, guests will enjoy it and the price is reasonable at GEL 20 per person.

The cottages are built near the bird watching towers. It’s an additional advantage of the place, don’t you think?” said Tamaz Karapetyan, Head of the Security Services of the Protected Areas.

The cottages built on Kartsakhi Lake have become popular in the region as well. Some families from Akhalkalaki go on vacation and spend few days there. Those who are not big fans of bird watching are free to go fishing (only fishing with a fishing rod is permitted).





Foreign tourists are especially attracted to the bicycle and walking paths. The route goes from the Kartsakhi Lake entrance to the Javakheti National Park and continues to the Turkish border. The path follows the lakeshore until it reaches the bird watching tower and then goes back with some detours. There are special places for picnics as well. This route is especially enchanting for professional ornithologists.

“It’s a great step forward for us to have these kinds of eco-cottages that also promote eco-tourism in the region. Setting up the abovementioned infrastructure will promote the touristic potential of Javakheti and increase its attractiveness. I would like to express my gratitude towards the European Union, GIPA and LAG for their support. I hope that the pandemic’s restrictions will be lifted next year and that our cottages will be fully operational,” said Tamaz Karapetyan.



The initiative has been financed by the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) through the project of promoting new approaches in Rural Development in Akhalkhalaki.

Project is being implemented by the Department of Rural Development and Vocational Education (DRDVE) of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). Project Partners are Mercy Corps, Elva – Community Engagement and West Cork Development Partnership.

The European Union supports agriculture and rural development of Georgia through the programme of ENPARD, which has been implemented in Georgia since 2013. The total budget is 179.5 mio EUR. The main goal of the ENPARD is to reduce the rural poverty. The main priority of the first phase of the program was to support agricultural development, whereas the main aim of the second and third phases is to promote economic opportunities and capacity building of people living in the rural areas. For the additional information, please follow the link: www.enpard.ge