



DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION TIPS TOOLS INSIGHTS PRACTICES

In practice

CZECHIA INTEGRATES PROJECTS FOR BETTER IMPACT IN THE ARAGVI PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

Key messages

Georgia's Aragvi area has natural resources that could stimulate tourism, but it lacks infrastructure and job prospects, leading people to search for work elsewhere. Czechia is working with partners to meet the socio-economic needs of local communities, while protecting natural and cultural heritage through an integrated approach.

Keywords

[Environment and climate](#) | [Institutional arrangement](#) | [Partnerships](#)

Key partner

[Czechia](#)

Challenge

The natural resources in Georgia's Aragvi area provide potential for tourism, but the area lacks infrastructure such as an electricity network and public services. It also lacks job prospects, leading people to search for work elsewhere. Some remote areas are inhabited only half the year.

Internally, Czechia wanted to better co-ordinate multiple projects and instruments in the region and make the most of its small bilateral budget to make a difference.

Approach

"[Sustainable development of the Area of Aragvi Protected Landscape](#)", launched in 2018, provides tailor-made solutions to challenges in multiple sectors. In this way, it meets the social and economic needs of local communities, while protecting natural and cultural heritage.

Initially, it had three key targets: community tourism and organic agriculture; social services such as health care and education; and inclusive and sustainable governance of the protected area.

With co-financing from Austria, the programme now mobilises strategies and funding instruments from both Czech and Slovak development co-operation for a total budget of USD 3 million to:

- building capacity
- raising awareness
- providing grants
- empowering local people for decision making
- providing technical assistance to manage the protected landscape and sustainable forestry.

Results

While development results have not yet been measured, the programme had several achievements between 2018-22:

- It finalised management plans for the Aragvi Protected Landscape and sustainable forestry.
- It trained personnel and provided 90 grants to local farmers and tourism-related service providers.
- It improved both external and internal co-ordination:
 - Externally, it leveraged more funding, engaging with Austria and the Slovak Republic (Slavkov co-operation).
 - Internally, it mobilised multiple Czech instruments around a shared goal to fill in any gaps in its bilateral portfolio in Georgia. When some farms could not take full advantage of installed solar panels, Czechia mobilised the small-scale project mechanism to fund feasibility studies and identify technical solutions. Another small project supported online schooling in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the programme will add a disaster risk reduction component. With support from the Czech humanitarian assistance budget, the United Nations Development Programme will deliver firefighting equipment and train rangers how to use it.

Lessons learnt

- **Investing time and expertise to prepare the programme is critical.** In-depth analysis and a solid management structure are needed to set up a realistic logical framework and measurable indicators.
- **Addressing gaps led to greater co-ordination.** When the programme identified gaps, it mobilised different tools and instruments across Czech development co-operation. These included humanitarian assistance, multilateral funds, small-scale projects, and tools managed by other ministries. In addition, it expanded financing beyond the Czech Development Agency. Delegating co-ordination to the embassy has been critical for success.
- **Identifying roles clearly proved helpful.** As the programme evolved, the parties developed a memorandum of understanding that set out responsibilities and duties. This was signed by Czechia, Austria, Slovakia, local municipalities and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

Further information

Aragvi Local Action Group (2023), website, www.aragvilag.ge/en.

Aragvi Protected Landscape (2020), website, www.aragvipl.ge.

Czech Republic Development Cooperation (2022), "Aragvi region", webpage, www.aragviregion.com/en-us/

Forest Management Institute (2023), "Project in Georgia", Ministry of Agriculture of Czechia, www.uhul.cz/portfolio/projekt-gruzie/?lang=en

OECD resources

OECD (2023), *OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Czech Republic 2023*, OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/eba15a0b-en>.

To learn more about the Czechia's development co-operation, see:

OECD, "Czechia", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/4e4c3092-en>.

See more *In Practice* examples from Czechia here: www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning?tag-key+partner=czechia#search.

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