

SUMMARY

Tapping Urban Potential for Economic Growth



Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. The country's vision is to leverage its strategic location and develop its capital city Tbilisi as a transport and logistics hub. Photo credit: Daro Sulakauri/ADB.

Systematic and sustainable urban development will help support Georgia's national strategy for unlocking its full growth potential through urban planning and balanced regional development.

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Overview

Georgia, located in the Southern Caucasus at the crossroads of Europe and Asia is an important transit corridor for Central and West Asia and a vital point for regional trade. This summary of an ADB publication looks at how meeting urban development challenges can help support the country's national plan for inclusive growth, allowing it to fully benefit from its strategic geographic location.

In 2014, the Government of Georgia approved the Socio Economic Development Strategy of Georgia, (Georgia 2020), which sets out its plans for achieving inclusive and sustainable national economic growth through to 2020.

To support the Government in achieving its objectives, ADB organized an urban visioning and stakeholder consultation workshop in December 2014, at ADB's Georgia Resident Mission. This was actively attended by government officials, development partner representatives, civil society

representatives, academia and urban experts, with the goal of assessing Georgia's national urban needs.

This summary is based on *Realizing the Urban Potential in Georgia: National Urban Assessment* published by the Asian Development Bank.

Key Findings

The workshop identified key actions needed to support sustainable urban development:

For a competitive economy

- Enabling industry and business to generate employment
- Exploring public-private partnership options for financing infrastructure
- Unlocking tourism potential in the regions

For sustainable and resilient environment

- Increasing the green areas – parks and trees – in cities
- Using modern environmentally-friendly technologies
- Compiling a carbon dioxide emissions inventory and reducing emissions
- Tightening the regulatory framework for environmental and construction standards

For increased equity

- Universal access – differently-abled, elderly, children and women
- Equal opportunities for all across the income strata
- Social safety nets
- Public transport – improving mobility, accessibility, affordability and safety
- Housing for all incomes – rehabilitation of existing housing stock, affordable housing
- Improving infrastructure and services – expansion, coverage, and access; efficient operations and maintenance
- Health protection
- Regulatory framework, and design standards
- Participatory Urban planning – Integrated urban plans, city wide visioning, public awareness campaigns

Conclusion

The vision of Georgia is to leverage its strategic location and develop its capital city Tbilisi as a transport and logistics hub. The urban vision is to develop regionally competitive, connected, and livable urban areas tapping the tourism potential through an inclusive and adaptive approach to urban planning which:

- responds to the specific requirements of secondary towns and villages, reflecting their individual assets, strengths, and weaknesses;

- supports knowledge transfers through the replication of global good practices and experience;
- boosts the use of technological innovations to help urban areas meet international emission standards and improve their environments; and
- supports the provision of efficient and affordable urban services.

Resources

Asian Development Bank. 2016. Realizing the Urban Potential in Georgia: National Urban Assessment. Country Sector and Thematic Assessments. Manila.

ADB. 2018. Asian Development Bank and Georgia: Fact Sheet. Manila.



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Ramola is with the Urban Development and Water Division. She supports ADB's urban sector development with a focus on integrated development for Livable Cities.

She co-led the preparation of the framework for National Urban Assessments and the Inclusive Cities toolkit under ADB's Urban Operational Plan 2012-2020, and co-led ADB's GrEEEn Cities Initiative in Southeast Asia to develop GrEEEn City Action Plans. Ramola is interested in engaging with people to take ownership for shaping their cities, and exploring the interface between urban development, urban-rural linkages, and regional integration.

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