Recommendations regarding legislative amendments
• Established by a group of scholars in 1991 as a company specialized in natural resources, in particular ground water studies, Gamma is now reputed as one of the leading consultancy companies in Georgia.

• The sphere of activities of the company gradually expanded to include environmental studies and design.

• Presently the company utilises extensive technical facilities and skills of 70 strong multidisciplinary staff.

• One of the major assets of the company is its laboratory.

• Company is providing consultancy and lab services to private and public companies and institutions in Georgia and the region, has experience in cooperation with IFIs.
**Main Units**

GAMMA is offering a comprehensive package of services:

- Research and advice in development and use of natural resources;
- Environmental studies and consultancy for different industrial and infrastructure developments;
- Design, civil engineering and field supervision;
- Lab services (chemical and microbiological examination of soil, water, air);
- Consultancy for bottled water/beverage industry and water/product quality issues.
Certificates & licences

- ISO 17025 - General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories (GEO 268-20503772-3.1, validity 24 June 2014)
- Licence – design and civil construction works
Within the last five years the company has developed environmental impact assessment studies for 150 new and existing developments. Environmental studies were developed for various projects, including:

- Power generation facilities (hydropower and thermal power plants, transmission lines);
- Transport infrastructure (ports, railway, road, terminals);
- Various industries, including mining and metallurgical.

18 projects have been developed with consideration of the IFIs requirements and safeguards:
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<td>Rehabilitation of the road connecting Godziashvili street and lake Lisi, Tbilisi - EIA</td>
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Recommendations re legislative changes in environmental impact assessment

- ‘Separation’ of environmental impact permit from construction permit procedure;

- Harmonisation of environmental impact permitting procedure with environmental and social policy of IFIs, in particular - introduction of two-stage approach;

- Introduction of screening procedure prior to assessment of the project’s impact on environment;

- Introduction of social impact assessment procedure.
‘Separation’ of environmental impact and construction permit issuance procedure

The law on Licences and Permits sets ‘one-window’ approach, according to which environmental impact permit is a part of construction permit issuance procedure.

This creates significant problems.

Time allocated for ecological examination is limited.

It is advisable to incorporate conclusions of ecological examination in the project prior to issuance of construction permit – with current procedure in place, this is not possible.

The statement that conclusion of ecological expertise is the basis for issuance of construction permit must be preserved, but environmental expertise must be carried out prior to commencement of the construction permit procedure.
Introduction of two-phase EIA procedure

• According to the current legislation, EIA is performed for design docs, acceptability of the site for the planned development is not evaluated. This creates a range of ecological, economical and organization problem.

• Introduction of two-stage internationally approved procedure is advisable.

• Stage I – preliminary environmental assessment: assessment of feasibility of the planned development; identification of 2-3 acceptable alternatives; determination of the types of potential impact on environment and impact mitigation measures; development of a list of issues to be addressed on the second stage of assessment;

• Stage II - assessment of impact on environment.

• On the first stage - the Ministry approves initial EA report and issues recommendations for the scope of works/studies for the second stage;

• On the second stage - the Ministry implements ecological examination and issues conclusion of ecological expertise;

• At both stages - effective engagement of stakeholders must be ensured. Current legislation requests one meeting with stakeholders, which does not guarantee sound involvement of stakeholders in the process.
Introduction of screening procedure

The law on Environmental Impact Permit (Article 4, clause 1) sets the list of activities subjected to ecological examination.

This approach is rigid and does not ‘cover’ all activities with potential significant negative impact on environment.

To improve the situation we deem advisable to:

• revise/refine the law on Environmental Impact Assessment, categorize the list of activities subject to ecological expertise; or

• introduce obligatory screening procedure – this will help to identify the need of ecological expertise and environmental impact assessment for any planned development at early stage of the project

Screening document must a part of the report presented at the first stage of environmental impact assessment.
Introduction of social impact assessment procedure

Unlike the international practice, Georgian legislation pays less attention to assessment of impact on social environment.

Having regard to the fact that impact on social environment is the main issue local community is interested in, revision of the law so to address this aspects is advisable.

The following amendment is assumed to be worthwhile:

- Assessment must consider both - impact on biophysical and social environment;
- With consideration of international practice, major criteria for assessment of social impact must be defined;
- The law must specify conditions with regard to development of Resettlement framework and Resettlement action plan and their coordination/approval by relevant state authorities.
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