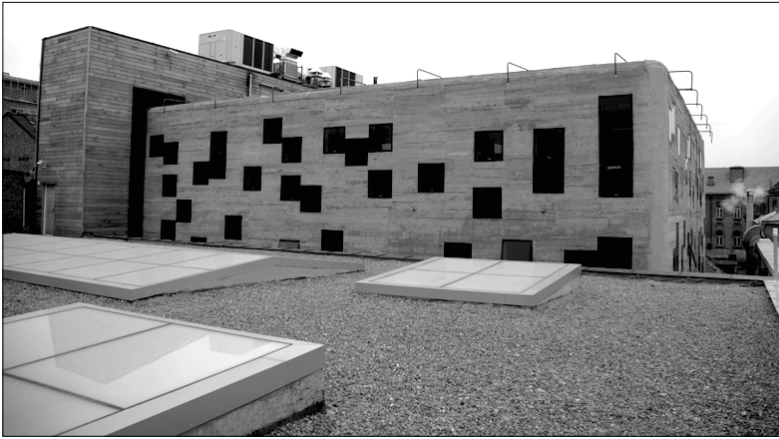


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## financial news



## Green Building-Double Winner of Architectural Award 2007

### The FINANCIAL

Green Building became double winner of the Architectural Award 2007 organized by Style Magazine and Caparol Georgia. The annual ceremony presenting 6 nominations included 107 Georgian and foreign architects and designers and a total of 105 registered works and projects which participated in the international competition this year. Green Building was awarded Best Public Construction and also became sole winner of the Grand Prize. The event was held on November 28 at Merab Berdzenishvili International Cultural Centre Muza.

Professional Panel of International Architectural Award 2007 selected the best projects realized or planned within the last 5 years and gave an unbiased evaluation of the level of modern architecture and new trends of developing in this sphere.

"The professional jury named the Green Building- Best Public Building, while the alternative public jury evaluated the latter as Best Architectural Construction. All jury members made the decisions independently and by themselves," Nino Laghidze, the Editor of Style magazine told The FINANCIAL.

In 2006 Style Magazine initiated the innovative project Architectural Award 2006, aiming at identification of the best architectural works and interior designs, encouraging and promotion of local architects and increasing popularity of architecture and construction. The project continued into 2007, with Style Magazine and Caparol Georgia organizing the international competition Architectural Award 2007.

Repair work-restorations were conducted under projects of the architects Levan Mushkudiani and George Kiknadze.

The teamwork of the two started in their student years. Their first joint project was among the winners at the Cergy-Pontoise Summer University. In 1986 the student architects got 1<sup>st</sup> garde diplomas for the Best Graduation Work of the USSR in Moscow. Later they received diplomas for the best architectural works in Georgia: TBC Bank Headquarters, Bata Building, Median Amusement Centre. In 2005 the two architects founded the architectural

studio Architects.ge.

"The reconstruction works were guided and conducted in a highly-professional way so that the building maintained the exquisite artistic-historical features of 20<sup>th</sup> Century which it was initially known for. The renovated construction fits in perfectly with the street's overall architecture," stated Mushkudiani, founder of Architects.ge.

Green Building - the best class A office estate in Tbilisi. The building standards, high quality materials used-elevators, the windows, and door frames, were imported from Turkey and France. The same people, the international project team in charge of the construction of the U.S Embassy, were involved in this project.

"The Green Building has retained its initial image which was lost during Communist times. We dealt with a huge responsibility with this project as the building is a cultural heritage," stated Mushkudiani.

Restoration of the Green Building was carried out by the New Construction Company (NCC), the same firm which was responsible for the renovation of the former department store building which now houses the TBC Bank offices.

"The Green Building is the best mixture of old and new architectural traditions. The two buildings separated by a modern glass atrium are in the first place completely independent constructions but on the other hand, the very modern glass atrium conveys that alternate implication of what's called a refreshed perfection of the past," said Mushkudiani.

**Acclaimed architect Bruno Taut said, "If we want our culture to rise to a higher level, we are obligated for better or for worse, to change our architecture. And this only becomes possible if we take away the closed character from the rooms in which we live. We can only do that by introducing glass architecture, which lets in the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars."**

The Green Building was constructed during the years from 1902 to 1907. The building fell in to disrepair under the Soviet regime. It was constructed by the architect Leopold Bifeldom and belonged to the daughter of the vice-consul

of Sweden in the Caucasian region Evfrosinii Martinovskoj.

The total value of the investments provided in the acquisition and renovation of the Green Building is USD 5 million. The annual leasing prices vary from USD 300 to USD 360 1-sq/m, excluding Value Added Tax (VAT).

Today the Green Building, representing greater historical and architectural value in the centre of Tbilisi, is completely restored.

The idea about restoration of a historical building belongs to the company GRDC which got the property in 2005.

GRDC is a leading real estate and development company with operations in the Republic of Georgia. The company invests in and develops office, retail, resort and prime residential properties.

"GRDC intended to make Marjanishvili St a business centre of the capital and hence the Green Building - an international standard office estate. The renovation works were finished in the shortest time possible - 11 months," Irakli Kilauridze, Georgian Reconstruction & Development Company (GRDC) General Director, told The FINANCIAL.

During the 3 months of its exploitation, GRDC officials claim their expectations have come true as the building's tenants include such well-known companies as the EBRD, and Borjomi.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was the first tenant of the building having a regional Head Office moved into the new location- the new major business centre on the left bank of the river Mtkvari. On March 15, 2007, GRDC signed a 5-year contract with the EBRD in the frame of the Green Building office estate-leasing project, part of the Tbilisi City initiative.

"GRDC's involvement in the Green Building project was mainly conditioned by the location factor. A beautiful historical building situated in the heart of the city sounded a valuable proposal for us. That's how GRDC got down to business with a primary intention of making the building an international standard office estate that would itself serve a solid financial benefit for the company," said Kilauridze.

## German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Elkana's Future Activities

### The FINANCIAL

The association Elkana, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia organized an exhibition and conference this previous week. The key topics of the conference were Organic Farming Development Perspectives in the South Caucasus and QUALITY MANAGEMENT - the farmer produces what the market demands. The aim of this conference was to make Georgian bio products far more popular and show how to distribute them in European countries.

"These conferences held by Elkana and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) are being supported by the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia. The aim of this conference is to introduce and exhibit biological products. All conference details: the promotion campaign, hiring of the exhibition hall and others are wholly financed by the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia. The investment amount is not known", Mariam Jorjadze, Director of Elkana, the Biological Farming Association, declared to The FINANCIAL.

"The aim of GTZ is to help each Georgian farmer in producing high quality products which will be suitable to acknowledged world standards. Mostly these products are getting beaten and have problems even on the local market level. Georgian products are more expensive and are lower quality compared to distributed products and their sales indexes are not very high. This conference is being held for the successful solution to these problems," Riner Neidhardt, the director of GTZ Agriculture Development Project, declared to The FINANCIAL.

According to Riner Neidhardt, this project aims to have the direct cooperation of Georgian farmers and to introduce novelties already existing elsewhere in the world.

"The company has a consulting centre in the regions of Georgia. The project also foresees the financing of Georgian farmers, but the company's budget is not so great to be able to finance each farmer at this stage," Riner Neidhardt said.

"Today the situation on the market is changed as the farmers have to produce those products which are greatly demanded by the consumers. For instance Elkana fosters the production of biological farm products without chemical contamination. These goods are highly in demand internationally if their biological condition is properly certified under internationally recognized rules and standards," Riner Neidhardt added.

"Georgian biological products are already realized in the Georgian market, but their quantity is not enough yet to be distributed in European countries," Mariam Jorjadze declared.

Elkana is an association which unites member farmers from the different regions of Georgia. The association membership is open to any citizen of Georgia interested in the development of organic farming in the country, as well as protection of the environment. At present Elkana unites 450 members. The company aims at the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the population of Georgia and the environmental protection through fostering the development of sustainable organic farming and increasing the self-reliance of the rural population.

According to Jorjadze, the conference is not dedicated to only Georgian biological products' perspectives, but South Caucasus countries' as well.

"Elkana has partners in Azerbaijan and in Armenia, they are taking part in this conference with foreign experts. The countries are trying to share their experiences and discuss organic market development tendencies and difficulties in the South Caucasus", Jorjadze added.

According to Riner Neidhardt, today GTZ's project is working in Shida Kartli on the development of apples breed improvement.

"The company is also working on the sorting of apple breeds and is offering new ones which are suitable for European standards. These new products are well sold compared to the old ones. Of course this does not mean that GTZ is against the traditional breeds. The main thing is that products must satisfy consumers' demand: high quality and good taste. Products which are free of pesticides are more demanded by customers in Georgia, as well as in Europe", Neidhardt said.

According to Mariam Jorjadze, Georgia must not be oriented on mass-produced products but high quality ones, which will then be exported abroad.

"Elkana knows that Georgian agriculture cannot begin to create simply bio products straightaway, but this aspect will need developing", Jorjadze added.

"GTZ made detailed researches at the central super markets of Tbilisi and it seems that Georgian products are being represented in a small amount. This problem is mostly distinguished early in the spring, when imported fruits and vegetables occupy all Georgian markets," Neidhardt declared.

"The problem is that good packing equipments do not exist in Georgia yet and farmers have a problem in keeping the products during the winter season. That is why Georgian marketing centres import foreign products from abroad," Neidhardt said.

"Supposedly this conference, which is focused on country presentations and sharing of the information on achievements, problems, perspectives and cooperation opportunities in the field of organic farming in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as well as on the experience of organic market development in European countries will be successful and the country will soon see the positive results," Jorjadze declared.