

CHIATURA REFERENCE PLAN

COMMUNITY LED URBAN STRATEGIES IN HISTORIC TOWNS
(COMUS)

Chiatura, 2016

Abstract

For the purposes of social and economic development of Chiatura Municipality, in terms of limited resources, it is the most important to identify priorities correctly and ensure efficient use of funds. The reference plan aims to support the Administration of Chiatura Municipality to identify strategic goals, tasks and actions for medium and long-term development on the basis of local engagement, which will be the basis of the further levels for monitoring their implementation and performance.

According to the guidelines developed by the Council of Europe, the reference plan reflects the objective possibilities for Chiatura development, identified through participation of the stakeholders and serves to improvement of the living environment and social and economic conditions for local residents through rehabilitation of cultural heritage.



Analysis

1. Basic information

Administrative Centre of Chiatura Municipality, - the city of Chiatura, - is situated in the west Georgia, in the narrow valley of the Qvirila River and Chiatura plateau at 350-500 metres above the sea level. Chiatura has been mentioned in historical sources since 1879, and acquired the status of a town in 1917. As of the year of 2016, population of the town equals to 12 800 persons.

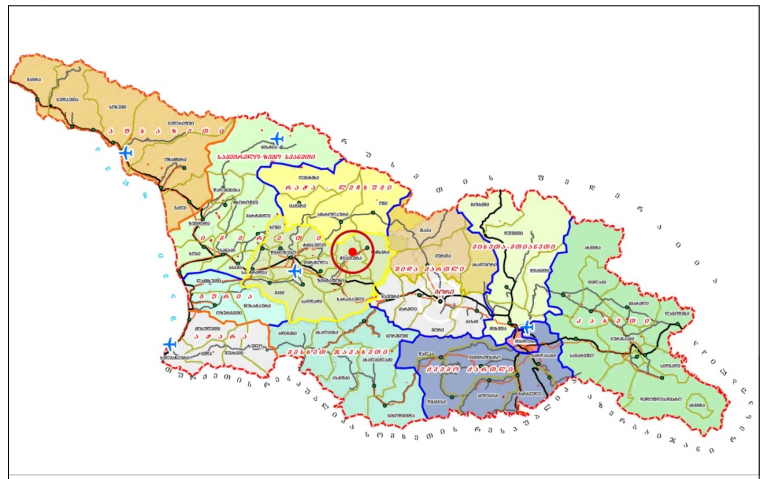
In compliance with territorial arrangement of Georgia, in terms of structural hierarchy, position of Chiatura is defined as follows:

- i. National level
- ii. Imereti region
- iii. Chiatura Municipality
- iv. Administrative Unit of Chiatura - the town of Chiatura

The climate in Chiatura is quite humid, subtropical sea climate, the winter is of moderate cold and relatively dry, hot summer. Average air temperature in the Municipality is +13⁰ C. Precipitation is 1100 mm per year. Average humidity is 70% per year.

Regional land connection is provided through the Gomi-Sachkhere-Chiatura-Zestaponi motorway and Sachkhere-Chiatura-Zestaponi railway. The distance between Tbilisi and Chiatura is 200 km, and the distance between Chiatura and Kutaisi is 82 km. The nearest international airport is located in Kutaisi. And the nearest sea port Poti is 167 km away from Chiatura.

Map 1. Location of Chiatura in the context of the country.



2. The importance of the town

Chiatura holds an outstanding place among the cities of Georgia with its importance, which, above all is determined by the Manganese industry. However, the town has other resources which today are very important in the course of searching the ways for its sustainable development.

a) Manganese industry and other minerals

Chiatura is rightly considered to be one of the first industrial cities in Georgia. Rapid development of exploration, extraction and processing of the Manganese resulted in formation of Chiatura as a town. Manganese industry is an integral part of the history and present of the town. In various periods manganese was exported and processed by private enterprises or by the state. Consequently, its benefit for the town and the country was changing. Regardless this fact, Manganese industry remains the most important economic resource for the country. Chiatura, as the only area for extracting manganese in Georgia, is significant with its importance for the economy of the country.

The municipality territory is rich with other minerals as well. Extracting and processing the high quality marble and quartz sands took an important place in the Soviet period and it still has the potential to promote economic development at local, regional and national levels.

b) Urban landscape

Industrial and urban infrastructure located in the deep canyon and on the plateaus of the Qvirila River is the interesting solution for city planning of the synthesis of these two different functional elements the essential and integral element of which is the network of aerial cableways. It is considered that the first passenger cableway in the Soviet Union was in Chiatura (1953), although in Chiatura it was used much earlier for industrial purposes.

Human influence on nature and consequent change of historical landscape is obvious in Chiatura. It is, on the one hand, the characteristic of the town following its traditional mining industry, and on the other hand, it requires regulation in order to comply with aspects of environmental and landscape protection.

c) Diverse and unique cultural heritage

Chiatura stands out with diversity of its cultural heritage both, typologically and chronologically. The town represents an unbroken history of human development from the ancient period to modernity, where each epoch made its significant and valuable imprint.

The majority of karst caves in the territory of the city and municipality **maintains the remains of settlements of humans from palaeolithic era**. Very few of these caves are explored and they contain enormous potential in terms of archaeological and speleological scientific research. **The traces of the most ancient thread in the world**, discovered in Dzudzuala and Bondi Caves, is confirmation of absolute international importance of Chiatura in scientific and research terms.

One of the landmarks of Chiatura is the **architecture of medieval centuries**, such as **Mgvimevi Monastery, Katskhi Monastery and the unique Katskhi Pillar**, located ten kilometres away from the city, and which is the excellent example of joint creation of man and nature .

The historical **urban fabric** of the town is rich with architecture of the late 19th and 20th centuries. One can find here Eclecticism, Art Nouveau, Constructivism, Soviet Empire and late Modernism here. However, urban value and identity of Chiatura is mainly determined by the architecture of the 20th century. The most of these constructions are abandoned and subject to rehabilitation, although in the case of appropriate approach, they have the potential to become an important spatial resource for the town development.

Among the architectural objects , the most significant are **cableway stations**, including the most distinguished station of so called Stalinist architecture and its engineering infrastructure (1953), which has been preserved in its original form and is the earliest operating passenger cableway , as well as stations constructed in Modernist and Brutalist styles in 1969-70s. Along with the industrial heritage, **the major factor to determine the international awareness of Chiatura is the aerial cableway network attracting foreign visitors to the town.**

The major quality of the town is the **industrial infrastructure related to manganese industry** giving distinctive and unique character in terms of cultural heritage. In the town and its surroundings there are a lot of unused, as well as operating historical mines, shafts, cargo cableways, ore enrichment plants, narrow-gauge railway and their engineering infrastructure. Maintenance, careful rehabilitation and new use, if necessary, to the most valuable elements of this infrastructure contains enormous opportunity for development of Chiatura.

The following main challenges are in view of the cultural heritage as a resource for social and economic development of the town:

- Since 1990s, degraded manganese industry and general social and economic downturn of the country has inflicted a lot of damage to Chiatura. Phased rehabilitation of depreciated urban and industrial infrastructure is one of the main challenges of the town. A part of this problem is the degradation of public transport, and in particular, cableway and railway systems.
- The biggest problem of the town is that its territory was included in mining allotment of the licence issued to a private company in 2006, what is the hindering factor for real self-government and sustainable spatial development.
- The main problem for Chiatura, as well as for the other industrial cities of Georgia, is the extremely polluted environment as a result of the failure to comply with standards of ore extraction and processing. Resolving the issue related to provision of pure drinking water, purification of rivers,

prevention of air pollution, rehabilitation of recreational infrastructure, etc., is one of the preconditions for sustainable development and creating healthy living conditions.

- Similar to other small town, limited financial and human resources of self government and state institutions is still the main challenge for Chiatura. Lack of professional resources is mainly associated with high levels of emigration and unemployment.
- Lack of collaboration of civil society and positive engagement experience, what is essentially caused by the fact that they were not engaged in matters related to identifying the priorities for social and economic development of the city, as well as in matters related to improvement of living conditions.

4. COMUS action area and the city

COMUS action area involves the central part of the town, where the main administrative, cultural, educational, trade and commercial functions located. A cultural centre, music school, former cinema, theatre and a restaurant, various services, banks, pharmacies, small food and shopping centres are located in this perimeter. This area is the urban core of the city.



Caption 1: Chiatura theatre, 2016

5. Review of Chiatura Historical Development

A lot of archaeological and architectural monuments in the Chiatura territory are the proof of the facts that this area has been settled since the ancient era. However, the origin of Chiatura, as the town, was prompted by the discovery of rich manganese deposit in this territory. Since 80s of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Chiatura has become famous as the rich source of manganese deposit. The pioneer of its scientific research was considered the German geologist Hermann von Abich, and beginning of real extraction of manganese is associated to the name of Akaki Tsereteli, the Georgian writer, poet and statesman, who laid down the foundation to this business in 1879. The history of development of Chiatura, as the town, started from that point.

The rapid growth of industry was facilitated by favourable conditions for deposit extraction development, high quality of extracted ore and increasing industry of steel in West European countries and the United States. Georgian manganese was mainly intended for export. Georgian ore was consumed by the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, the United States, etc.¹ Chiatura Manganese was consumed by such iron and steel plants, as American Bethlehem Steel Corporation, German Krupp, Italian ILVA, etc.²

Regardless a number of challenges, from the first day of processing the deposit up to the beginning the World War I, ore extraction and export was stably increasing and reached its zenith in 1913. 788 tons of manganese was sent to international market yearly in 1910-1914. By 1913 Georgia was the biggest exporting country of manganese ore, i.e. Georgia was exporting 50% of manganese throughout the world.³

Following the development of manganese industry, the village of Chiatura of Shorapani County eventually became the centre of mining industry. Chiatura was the first collecting point for extracted ore, where deposit loaders, mine workers and local residents were gathering. In order to satisfy needs of population and workers employed in the industry, by the initiative of 'Entrepreneurs Congress' at the beginning of the 20th century, a number of facilities of urban infrastructure were constructed, including Chiatura Town School, a bath, a hospital, a weekend school, a theatre (1894, 1906), a canteen for workers, etc..⁴ By the entrepreneurs' initiative, central power plant was constructed, water supply and sewerage system, as well as electric lighting and telephone network were built⁵ (1907). The more Chiatura looked like an urban settlement, the more it was considered to introduce the city-type governance system in Chiatura. Finally, Chiatura was declared as a town in 1917⁶.

The World War I and the Dardanelles blocking, made the industry in its zenith to collapse suddenly. It was accompanied by the complicated internal political situation. As a result, by 1921, manganese ore industry was completely closed.

¹Chiatura-Zestaponi industrial unit, collection of works of Vakhushti Bagrationi Institute of Geography of Georgian of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia. Edited by Iankoshvili, Tbilisi, 1973, p 139

²Vladimer Tchanishvili, *ibid.* p.404

³Chiatura-Zestaponi industrial... p. 85

⁴Vladimer Tchanishvili, *ibid.* p. 265

⁵*Ibid.* p. 379

⁶City of Black Gold, Soviet Georgia, 1979, p. 12

A new stage of Georgian manganese industry and subsequently, Chiatura development started after establishment of the Soviet regime. Under the Resolution of Revolution Committee, the manganese ore enterprises were nationalised. In 1925, the right to produce Chiatura manganese was transferred to the American politician and entrepreneur W.Averell Harriman (1891-1986) through the concession procedure. Harriman had to recover the failed production, though his activity appeared to be unsuccessful in Chiatura. The contract was revoked in 1928 and the right to produce the manganese, was completely transferred to the State. In the same year, under the Resolution of Communist Party, the first five-year economic development plan was launched aiming at rapid industrialisation of the country. Fundamental changes were applied to the Chiatura manganese industry. In the first 'five-year period' (1928-1932) constructing Zestaponi ferro-alloy plant started, which is one of the main consumers of manganese ore of Chiatura to present. From that period, the ore production and domestic exports were increased, at the same time, Georgian manganese remained in the international market.

In 1928, at the early stage of Soviet governance, the Chiatura manganese trust was established and a new stage of Chiatura development began. In 1953, the first full fledged passenger cableway was built in Chiatura connecting the town centre and the industrial zone. In 1949 theatre building was constructed, and culture centre was constructed in 1968.

The Chiatura manganese industry once again faced to challenges caused by political and economic breakdown of 1990s. The industrial infrastructure, such as underground tunnels, plants and their facilities, goods cableways, etc., was destroyed. From 2006, the deposit, industry and the entire infrastructure was transferred to 'Georgian Manganese Holding LTD' by a long-term licence, which was the owner of "Chiaturmanganumi", Zestaponi ferro-alloy plant and Vartsikhe hydro power plant.



Caption 2. View of Chiatura, 2016

6. The role of heritage in the city development

6.1 Importance of cultural heritage

Chiatura is distinguished by diversity of cultural heritage both, typologically and chronologically. The city is a kind of continuous history of human development from the ancient period to modernity, where each epoch made its significant and valuable impact. On the territory of the municipality there are scattered dozens of karst caves, churches, monasteries and cave fortresses. The historical and cultural importance of these monuments is confirmed by a number of scientific research and work.

The first settlements have been founded in present-day Chiatura region since ancient times (BC III-IV millennium BC), which is confirmed by the artefacts discovered on the territory of Chiatura. Dzudzuana and Bondi caves, where remains of the oldest thread in the world was found, made the name of Chiatura known internationally. In Chiatura surroundings there are caves of Tchipianisklde and Satopavi, interesting in terms of tourism development. Only a small number of these caves have been explored. They contain greatest potential from archaeological and speleological point of view.

One of the landmarks of Chiatura is the medieval **architecture**, such as **Mgvimevi Monastery, Katskhi Monastery and the unique Katskhi Pillar**, located ten kilometres away from the town, and which is the excellent example of joint work of man and nature

The settlement of the historical centre of Chiatura, located on the right bank of the Qvirila River, is crossed by winding roads leading uphill. Charm of spontaneous development of the town is still felt in this district. The left bank of the river is rich with 'European style' buildings. The trace of the first industrial activity is still felt here. There are number of architectural examples of the late 19th and the 20th centuries in the town, such as: Eclecticism, Art nouveau, Constructivism, Soviet Empire and late Modernism. The most of these constructions are abandoned and are subject to rehabilitation, however, in the case of the correct approach, they will become the most important spatial resources for the town development.

Today, only several sites are included in the list of the cultural heritage monuments, although it is possible to increase this list as a result of the careful inventory. The survey of industrial heritage in 2015 identified about 80 important sites requiring further research, protection and rehabilitation.

Cableways

Chiatura aerial cableways is the most significant among the cultural heritage sites, which are the one of the top attractions determining the visibility of the town.

The issue regarding the arrangement of cableways in Chiatura was raised as early as at the end of the 19th century.⁷ However, the idea has been fully realised only since the 50s of the 20th century. A number of cargo and passenger cableways were constructed by local professionals. The ore was continuously delivered to the ore enrichment plants through the cargo cableways, while the passenger cableways were providing the connection between mines and villages located on plateaus, as well as between the districts of Chiatura.

⁷Ibid. p. 209

Cableway system development was prompted by complicated geography, and the cableway soon turned into comfortable and convenient mean of urban transport.

It is considered that the first passenger aerial cableway in the Soviet Union was constructed in Chiatura. Such was the one constructed between Chiatura and Perevisa (so called 'twenty-five'), later on one more line - 'Sashevardno',- was added to it. The engineer Giorgi Pantsulaia (1911-1982) supervised the development of Chiatura cableways, a number of aerial cableways were constructed under his initiative not only in Georgia, but in the Soviet Union as well.

Passenger cableway stations are scattered on the way between Chiatura and Sachkhere, in the settlements and villages located on plateaus, as well as in different parts of the town . A subject of attention is the engineering solution of cableways and stylistic diversity of stations. Here you may find small hut-like buildings, as well as originally designed architectural works peculiar to various periods of Soviet architecture.

Monumental volumes of cableways, typical for 'Stalinist' architecture, plain, linear and versatile forms characteristic for the late Soviet Modernism, high-rise metal constructions typical for Brutalist architecture and monolithic forms processed with coarse concrete are read as accents in the city landscape. Well developed cableway system and perfect and diverse architectural appearance of stations adds particular charm to the city and is one of its landmarks.

A part of goods cableway is still operating in Chiatura, although the tendency to transfer the ore by trucks is increasing. Transferring the ore by road transport causes deterioration of road and air quality. From today's perspective, the advantages to transfer the ore by aerial transport are further evident, although rehabilitation of this infrastructure is related to considerable expenses and it is not currently considered by the owner company.

Industrial heritage

The major quality of the city is the **industrial infrastructure related to manganese industry** giving distinctive and unique character in terms of cultural heritage. In the city territory and in surroundings there are a lot of unused, as well as operating historical mine galleries, tunnels, goods cableways, ore enrichment plants, narrow-gauge railway and their engineering infrastructure. Maintenance, careful rehabilitation and assigning new functions, if necessary, to the most valuable elements of this infrastructure contains enormous opportunity for development of Chiatura.

The history of manganese industry is a valuable and integral part of social and economic lifestyle of the country, as well as scientific and technological development of the country, and the industrial culture of Georgia in general.

Research of importance and potential of industrial heritage of Georgia has been started recently. There is no current knowledge of this issue in the systematised form. It is scattered in different institutions, professionals and personal histories of workers and experiences. Thus, it is not available for public and young generations.

Important architectural and technological artefacts are exposed to risk of loss by the industry modernisation, and their recovery will be impossible in the future. Having regard the abovementioned, establishment of industry museum in Chiatura is becoming particularly topical.



Caption 3: Central enrichment plant, 2016

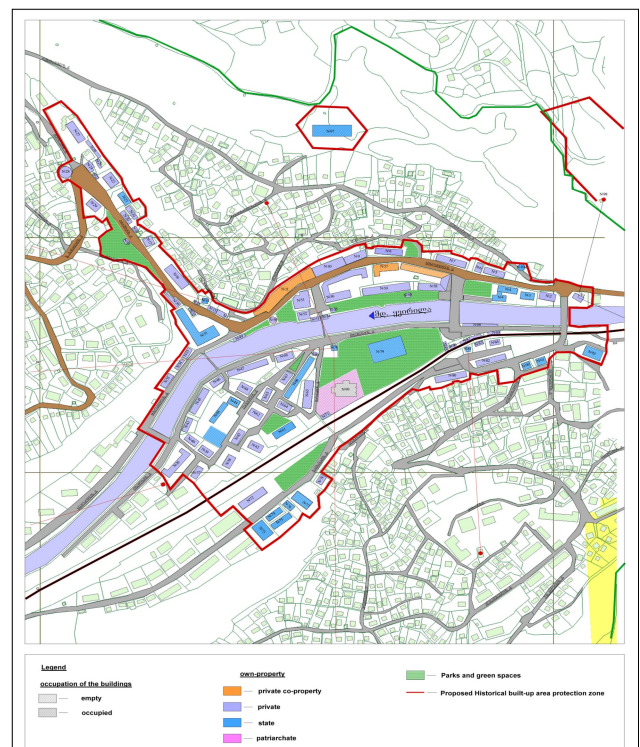
6.2 Use of cultural heritage

A number of cultural heritage sites of Chiatara, unfortunately, is vacant, abandoned or is physically in a bad condition. This tendency is mostly caused by the massive emigration of population from the town, degradation of urban functions and by economical hardships.

As a result of a research, conducted in 2011, within the action area of the project, a number of valuable and abandoned buildings were identified. The physical condition of these abandoned or partially abandoned buildings is deteriorating from year to year due to their non-functionality. Among such abandoned buildings there is a former bus station, former bank building, non-functioning cableway stations, former hospital, so called pioneer palace, etc. Important rehabilitation works are required for a football stadium, as well as for the municipal administration building, whose non-functioning assembly hall may have a number of interesting functions.

Recovery of these buildings and returning their initial functions or assigning another ones, is equal to maintaining the identity of Chiatara and is directly related to functional development of urban diversity of the city.

Map 2: Ownership of buildings, 2016



6.3 Threats and risks for cultural heritage sites

The most dangerous threats to which Chiatura may be exposed, as well as the cultural heritage of the other small towns, is physical degradation and destruction caused by negligence and its non-functionality.

No investments are made to construct new buildings in the town. On the contrary, dismantling old buildings and selling them as a second hand material is a type of source of income (e.g. central enrichment plants (CFP 1 and 2) which exposes to real risk of destruction the buildings of architectural value. Permanent reconstructions by the owners may inflict the additional damage to the authenticity and architectural identity of the buildings.

In terms of regulating this situation it is very urgent to update the list of cultural heritage monuments of Chiatura, to develop cultural heritage protection zones, as well as the historical and cultural base plan and to introduce the relevant regulations.



Caption 4: Interior, cableway station, town of Perevisa, 2016

7. Social and economic conditions

7.1 Demography

According to the data of census of 17 January 2002, resident population of Chiatura consisted of 13788 persons, currently the number of population is 12800.

Number population and growth rate were characterised by different data at different times (illustration 4).

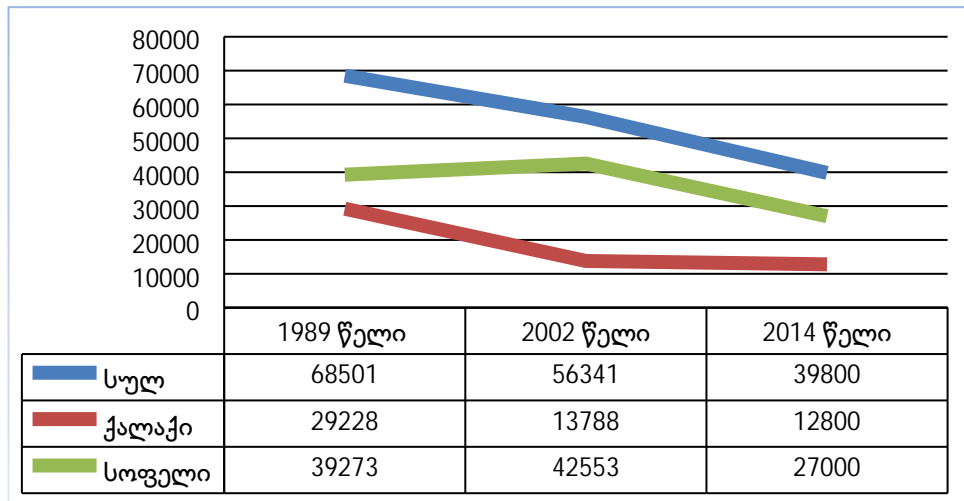


Table 1. Dynamics of the population of Chiatura according to the census data

Within the period of 1989-2014 the number of population was reduced to 44%, i.e. average annual rate of reduction was 1.76%. The process of population movement affected the age structure the most. Migration first of all, loses young productivity age resulting in 'demographic ageing' of population the rate of which is typically very high in Chiatura.

According to the information of 2002 census, in national composition of Chiatura municipality population the relative share of Georgian nationals was 99%. Among the ethnic minorities, the number of Armenian nationals exceeds the number of the other nationals; Russian, Ossetian, Ukrainian, Azerbaijani and other nationals also live there.

7.2 Economy

Industrial sector of the Chiatura Municipality was always distinguished by a large number of large-scale industrial enterprises where approximately 20 thousand of people were employed in the Soviet period. In 1990s, the industrial production was significantly reduced and resulted in reduction of relative share of industry in domestic product of the town. Most enterprises could not manage to operate efficiently on the basis of the main profile and their activity was limited by performing single, small-scale orders and by obtaining other temporary revenues (rent out or let on lease the enterprise premises, or sell the property, etc.).

Due to these circumstances and the state policy of the Post-Soviet period, the most of the enterprises, including Chiatura manganese industry, were sold to private companies and corporations, but privatisation has not made any significant improvement in the city development.

Regardless the lower capacity of production compared to the Soviet period, the manganese industry plays the essential role in the economy of the city, which is the major employer of the local population. Chiatura remains one of the most important centres of manganese extraction and processing in South Caucasus. Manganese extracted in Chiatura is 10% of exporting material of Georgia.

Integral parts of manganese industry are Zestaponi ferro-alloy plant, Vartsikhe hydropower plant and the railway. Ferro-alloy plant and hydropower plant, together with the manganese deposit and local processing plants, belong to 'Georgian Manganese'. Currently, 3500 people are employed in manganese industry.

Among other resources of the municipality, forest resources (approximately 45% of the municipality territory) and rare minerals, such as marble, quartz sand, inert materials, construction stone, etc. are very important. In the agricultural sector animal husbandry, bee-keeping and viticulture are relatively developed.

The major social and economic problem of the town is the high rate of unemployment (10.7% according to the 2014 data). The number of self-employed people is higher and it is 14-16 % of economically active population.

8. Quality of urban environment

Chiatura is exposed to the serious ecological problems. Polluted air, soil and water is easy to observe. Anyone may detect layers of black dust in the streets, on the roadsides, plant leaves, in and on the buildings, muddy and blurry colour of tap water and the Qvirila River. This is the result of non-compliance with the rules of manganese extraction. Manganese extraction and processing produces compound of manganese and iron which spreads in the form of dust on the territory of the town and villages, is mixed with the air, settles on plants and soil and penetrates into the deep layers of soil together with precipitation, where it pollutes groundwater consumed by population for various purposes.

8.1. Air quality

The level of air pollution in Chiatura is much higher than the allowed limit of concentration. The air is polluted with the manganese dioxide and trioxide, as well as with heavy metals. Level of hazardous compositions concentrated in the air is hundreds of times higher than the allowed limit of concentration, lies in the form of dust on roadsides, silts the streets of the town during the rainy seasons. Enterprises extracting the ore, must be obliged to ensure reduction of the dust using different mechanisms (washing the streets, transferring ore with covered trucks, etc.) which is unfortunately not implemented.

8.2. Water quality and waste waters

Water supply systems in Chiatura are totally deteriorated and water supply to the population still remains the problem. At the same time, along with the scheduled water supply, the water pollution is also a severe problem, which is to some extent caused by open pit mining of manganese. As the most of the drinking water in Chiatura is of the karst origin, during the heavy precipitations the polluted surface water mixes with the potable water causing its turbidity and pollution and results in cancellation of water supply to population for several days. At the same time, the potable water is not purified (Chlorinated) before being released to the water supply system.

Waste water system is totally obsolete. The system has not been rehabilitated for several decades, resulting in frequent accidents. The town has sewage collectors, although waste water treatment plant is not arranged and waste waters join the river without treatment.

The Qvirila river is extremely polluted. Apart from abovementioned, one more source of its pollution is that the plant waste waters are not purified and waste waters polluted with manganese waste directly flows into the river. In addition, the water is polluted by the ore waste precipitated on the river banks, so called "tails" are additional source of air, soil and water pollution. The water of the Qvirila River is in the list of particularly highly polluted water sites, which means that the consumption of this water shall be inadmissible. In the case if the water is filtered and its chemical composition is controlled, the water of the Qvirila River will not be hazardous for human health.

8.3. Solid waste management

In Chiatura municipality collection and cleaning of waste is carried out by N(N)LE Chiatura Cleaning and Improvement Service Centre. The waste is transferred to landfill site 15 km away from Chiatura. The equipment on the balance sheet of the enterprise has been renewing gradually. The majority of impermissible landfills, which do not comply with established sanitary conditions, are located on the river banks and in canyons, resulting in washing the waste into rivers during precipitations and floods.

8.4. Natural disasters

The municipality, in terms of geological threat and climate change, is one of the complicated and vulnerable areas and is characterised by landslides, flash floods, erosion processes, floods and inundation by ground waters. Periodically it is characterised by high seismic background formation. Activation of processes, along with the geological and morphological conditions, is caused by impact of climate change and global warming. Various natural disasters, such as flood, landslide and torrents, are significantly activated in the municipality. Increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters has intensified the soil erosion and damage to agricultural lands.

Natural disasters threaten dwellings and public infrastructure. At the same time, landslides mainly damage houses and public infrastructure (roads, water pipes).

9. Possibilities for intervention

9.1. Institutional arrangement and management

Chiatura is not the self-governing town, thus it is governed through representative and executive authorities of municipal self-government, as well as by representatives appointed by the municipal governor within the municipal territorial unit.

Representative body of Chiatura municipality is a local government composed of 15 persons elected under proportional electoral system and 16 majoritarian members elected in single-seat electoral districts;

The executive body is Chiatura Municipality local government (Gamageoba). Local government consists of structural (units of local government) and territorial units, involving the town of Chiatura and 15 administrative Units (network of settlements). The head of territorial body is the representative of a self-governing unit who, in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Public Service, shall be appointed and dismissed by the local governor.

The biggest problem of the town related to its governance, is that its territory is included in the mining allotment. The territory of the town was included in the mining allotment of the licence issued to the company in 2006, under which the licence holder company shall be authorised to make decisions on issues related to spatial development or any other issues of the city. This is the hindering factor for self-governance and healthy development of the city.

9.2. Financial resources

The budget of Chiatura Municipality by 2016 is GEL 17660221 (GEL 11410000 is its own revenue, including GEL 1100000 obtained from property tax and GEL 820000 obtained from income tax). GEL 10734029 is the transfer allocated from the state budget. Finances are planned as a result of identification and evaluation of the local needs.

9.3. Legislative context

Within the period of the Soviet Union, particular status of establishments, - a village, small settlement, town, was determined by the legislative normative documents regulating the city planning. The criteria were established differentially, according to specific conditions in Soviet Republic by the *"Planner's Reference: Townplanning"*, the section: *'Basic criteria for assigning the status of cities and workers' (city type) towns to settlements'* published in 1963. For the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia these criteria were the following: for towns- population not less than 5000; composition of population - workers and servicepersons and their family members not less than 75%, and for town-like settlements, correspondingly - 2000 and 75%. At the same time, legislation of Georgian SSR was permitting, as an exception, to assign the status of town to the settlements with less population, considered to be promising from the economic, cultural and administrative point of view.

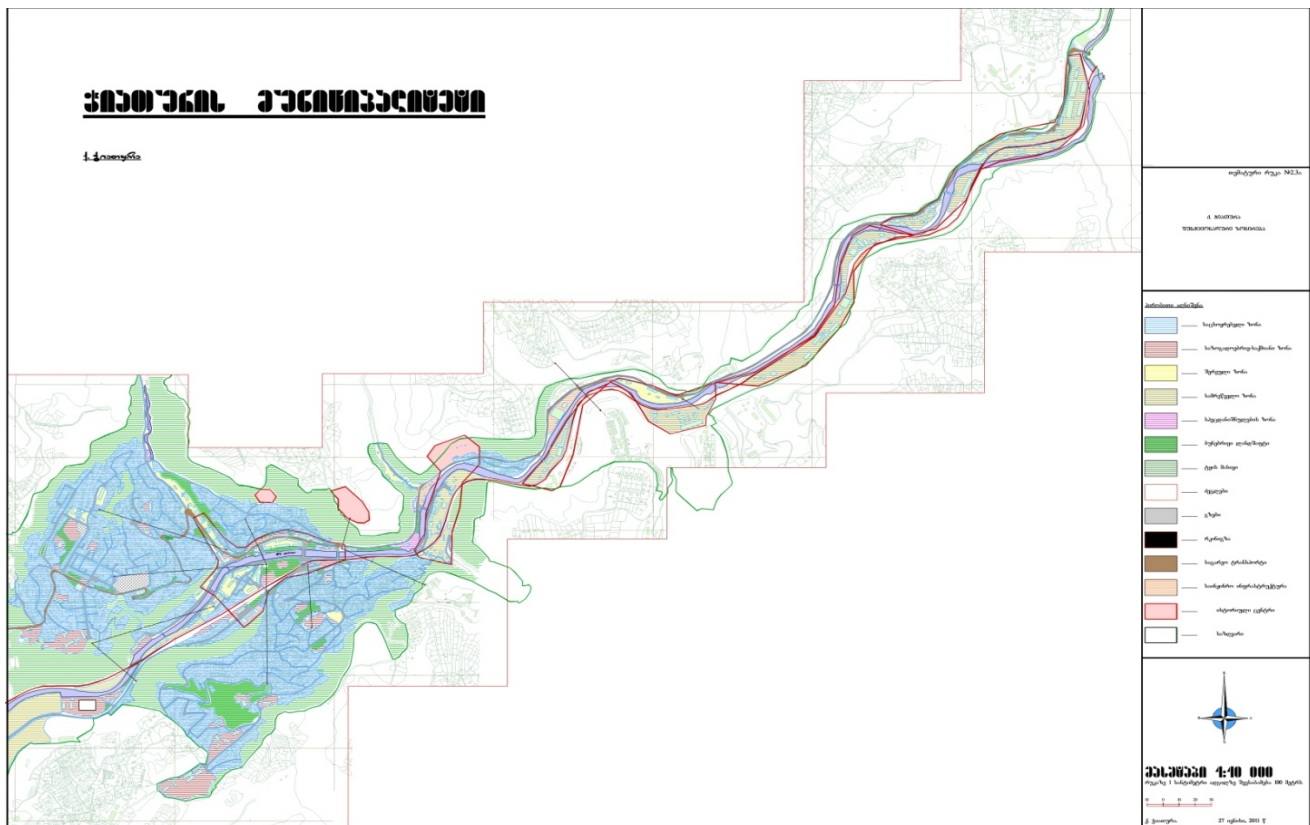
After the collapse of Soviet system the criteria for assigning the status to settlements were changed. Nowadays, these criteria are determined by the Organic Law of Georgia Local Self Government Code of 5 February 2014. Pursuant to Article 4 'city- a settlement in the territory of which industrial enterprises and a network of tourist, medical and socio-cultural institutions are located, and which carries out functions of a local economic and cultural centre. A city's infrastructure is not essentially focused on carrying out agricultural activities. A settlement with a registered population of over 5 000 may fall within the category of a city. A settlement with a registered population of less than 5 000 may be assigned the category of a city if it is an administrative centre of a self-governing unit, or if it has prospects of further economic development and population growth, or if, according to Article 3(2) of this Law, it has been defined as a self-governing city.'

Thus, Chiatura, whose population is over 12000 and which meets the standards given above, deserves the status of self-governing city (see Map 3).

10. Urban functions/characteristics for land utilization

10. 1. Main forms of land use

Today, the city does not have the general plan of land use and the document for legal zoning. General plan drafted in 1979, where the forms of land use is given, and which basically involved industrial, residential, administrative and recreation zones, almost comply with the present situation.



Map 3. . Functional zoning of Chiatura, 2011

10. 2. Basic functions and use

The basic functional element of the city is the industry of manganese extraction and enrichment and appropriate infrastructure. Manganese industry is functioning currently, although after the collapse of the Soviet Union the most of the enrichment plants and infrastructure is out of function or partially operating due to the reduced capacity.

Among the functions in the city centre, administrative, commercial, educational and recreation functions are the most significant. There is a football stadium in the city with 10 000 seats, a museum, theatre and culture centre. The most of these buildings need to be restored and rehabilitated due to the lack of renovation during the past 25 years.

There are seven public and two private schools (with up to 2500 pupils) and 11 preschool facilities. There is a vocational school in the city as well, training professionals in mining.

Among cultural institutions the following are worth to be mentioned:

a) Culture centre. It was established in 1967. It was designed by K. Chkheidze. The ceiling of the concert hall was painted by Robert Sturua, and the ceiling of exhibition hall of the present museum was painted by Koka Ignatov. Currently, the culture centre serves to more than 800 pupils.

b) Akaki Tsereteli Chiatura State Drama theatre. It was established in 1949. Its architect was V. Chkheidze and it was painted by Robert Sturua. A number of famous actors were among the crew of Chiatura theatre, such as: Grigol Tkabladze, Alexander Imedashvili, Alexander Tsutsunava, Tamar Abashidze, Giorgi Nutsubifze, Mikheil Vashadze, Pavle Prangishvili, Nodar Chachanidze, etc.

c) Chiatura Local History Museum. It was established in 1962. Today, it is located in the culture centre. Bronze axes, spearheads, pins, necklaces, numismatic and ethnographic exhibits, paintings and artworks of local artists, photo materials, various kinds of documentary materials discovered during archaeological digs and dated by the 3rd millennium of B.C. are preserved in this museum.

An educational and culture centre, two music schools, arts school, 10 libraries operating under the governance of the central library and 15 libraries operating under the culture centre are functioning in the town.

Tourist infrastructure is very poor in Chiatura. There is no information centre for visitors. Visitors cannot obtain information regarding the sightseeing of the town. There are two small hotels and three guesthouses, although the offered services are not of favourably high quality. Restaurants, cafés and fast food are mostly targeting low-income consumers.

There is a hospital and polyclinics in the town. Hospital ('GeoHospitals' Inc) built in 2012, is designed for 25 beds. Keeping in mind that Chiatura is the industrial city and over 3000 people are employed in Georgian Manganese, 25-bed hospital is not sufficient. There are a lot of accidents due to out-of-date mining infrastructure and machinery, the accidents in some cases have fatal results.

The following sports facilities are available in the town, which are on the balance sheet of N(N)LE №27 Chiatura municipality sport school: Central sports complex including football pitch, basketball court, wrestling hall, athletic area and water polo pool; Sports complex located in 'Naguti', one of the settlements of Chiatura, where there are judo and heavy athletics halls, freestyle wrestling and boxing halls, closed mini football pitch, 'Chiatura' FC. Football school on the base of Naguti football stadium.

10. 3. Transport, engineering and technical infrastructure

The total length of the roads in the municipality is 651.5 km, of which the territory of the municipality is crossed by 20 km section of Gomi- Sachkhere-Chiatura-Zestponi motorway of national importance, while the rest of the roads are inter-village and inter-district roads. 339.7 km of the roads are covered by asphalt and/or concrete, 311.8 km is covered with gravel.

A part of Chiatura roads are deteriorated. Internal district roads are in particularly bad conditions, which are often damaged due to difficult terrain of the town. Drainage channels are also problematic, they need to be recovered and restored.

There are four transport bridges and five pedestrian bridges in the city, which were constructed along with development of the town and are comfortably combined with the urban fabric .

Zestaponi - Sachkhere railway section is passing through Chiatura, as well as the Zestaponi-Chiatura-Sachkhere-Gomi motorway of national importance, which is the shortest way from Chiatura to Tbilisi.

Types of internal municipal transport are buses, vans and aerial cableways, and almost all the parts of the city are connected to the centre through these means of transports.

Movement and cargo transfer is available through motor and railway transportation and cableways. Aerial transport played a great role in the city development. Today, most of them are depreciated, though they are functioning as ecologically clean mean of transport having no alternative.

The contract between Governments of Georgia and France was concluded in 2014, in accordance to which dismantling of the deteriorated central three-line cableway and its replacement with a modern one is planned.

There used to be another ecologically clean means of transport, such as trolley-bus connecting Chiatura to the neighbouring municipality of Sachkhere. Currently, this transport is not functioning.

The main flow of passengers and goods are the following: Chiatura Municipality - Tbilisi, Chiatura Municipality - Kutaisi, as well as routes to Chiatura municipality villages and communities. Flows are season-related and it is less intensive in winter. The villages are connected to the municipality centre mainly on market days.

Passenger transfers in the territory of the municipality is provided by private-owned and 100% state-owned companies. State company owns only two units of buses which are obsolete. Bus park needs to be renovated.

11. Housing

Different types of residential developments are characteristic for different stages of development of Chiatura. From the beginning of the 20th century, multi apartment blocks of different periods, architectural style and scale were integrated in detached housing. The high-rise apartment buildings constructed in 1970-80s are significant elements of the town landscape. After the abolition of the Soviet governance, the abovementioned housing fund was transferred to residents for private ownership free of charge. Due to economic hardship and lack of maintenance, the physical condition of these buildings has been deteriorated so much that they are at risk of collapse.

The municipality does not own necessary funds for rehabilitation of the buildings in private ownership and consequently, degradation process continues. Additionally, situation is deteriorating by population migration and increasing number of empty flats and houses in the town.

It shall be noted that in a number of residential areas the quality of urban environment is high or satisfactory, meaning the presence of facilities and services. There are recreation zones, public transport and small shopping points in almost all the residential areas, although this infrastructure needs to be renovated. It is also necessary to conduct restoration works for supporting infrastructure.

There are valuable buildings of 1960-70s in terms of architecture which are in private ownership and are being damaged due to ageing and abandonment. It is necessary to register such buildings and constructions as monuments of cultural heritage in order to protect them.

12. SWOT analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Threats	Opportunities
Social and economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geopolitical and geo-economic location • Existing transport (roads, railways) • Favourable natural-climatic conditions • Rich and diverse natural resources • Increasing dynamics of investment • Multiple and diverse cultural and natural heritage • Entry into force of the Law of Georgia on High Mountainous Regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monofunctionality and dependence on private industry of manganese; • High level of migration of working-age and productive population; • High level of unemployment; • Little possibility of diversified employment in youth • Little possibility to support business by the local government; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macroeconomic and political instability at national level; • Lack of coordination at national and local levels; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of alternative activities, including tourism • Development of state programmes supporting the agriculture;
Education, culture, sports and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich teaching and scientific traditions and perspectives of their development • Sports traditions (the first tennis experience in Georgia) • Prospectives to develop extreme sports (rock climbing) • Rich theatrical tradition since the 19th century 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drain of qualified workforce • Youth emigration • High level of unemployment • Low rate of youth employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding and support at national and local levels; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of state and local programmes oriented on development of educational, arts, sports and health institutions
Cultural heritage and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive landscape; • The abundance of cultural and natural heritage monuments in the city and its surroundings • Typological and chronological diversity of cultural heritage; • Industrial and engineering heritage - new field and the greatest potential in Georgia; • Archaeological zones; • Local cuisine and hospitality traditions; • History of manganese industry development and related famous public figures; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of perception of industrial and engineering heritage of the city on the part of the local residents and leaders of manganese industry; • A number of industrial heritage ruined in recent years; • Absence of stocktaking and updated lists of monuments, accordingly uncontrollable attachments to and remakes of historical buildings; • A number of abandoned and vacant historical buildings; • Polluted and degraded environment as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding and support at national level; • Lack of coordination at national and local levels; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of tourism potential of Chiatura; • Development of cultural, scientific and adventure tourism; • Increasing income for local residents through their engagement in the traditional production and business of service;

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Threats	Opportunities
		<p>a result of manganese industry;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative image of the city as a result of problems regarding the manganese industry and depreciated infrastructure; 		
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing means of transport communication (roads, railway) Cheap workforce Presence of municipal programmes of accommodation infrastructure improvement Presence of action plan for environmental protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drain of qualified workforce Lack of the system for training and retraining the workforce Obsolete industrial technical base Insufficient amount of investments Depreciated housing fund Pollutions of rivers with industrial and household waste Lack of a unified base (maps) of infrastructural network (underground and surface communication) of the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding and improper support at national level; Lack of coordination at national and local levels; In the case of lack of coordination, inappropriate use of existing funds; Natural disasters; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the investors' interest Increasing engagement of international partners in settlement of problems of the city

Vision

In a long-term perspective, Chiatura is one of the rapidly developing self-governing towns, where efficient and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage resources has been ensured. Risks of natural disasters, potential damage of human health and ecosystems and economic losses are minimised.

Industry, innovative technologies and tourism are leading fields of economy of the town. Migration is being reduced and the number of population is increasing, small and medium entrepreneurship is developed. Population is engaged in self-governance.

Strategic Objectives and Actions



Objective 1: Constructing, rehabilitation and putting into operation the infrastructure

Priority actions:

- Drafting and approval of documents for general plan for land use of the city and the urban development;
- In accordance with the plan, constructing, reconstructing and taking care of public areas, including roads and pavements;
- Rehabilitation and putting into operation the street lights and traffic lights;
- Rehabilitation and maintenance of children's playgrounds, sports grounds, parks and recreation areas, including placing public toilets therein;
- Arrangement and rehabilitation of sewage systems, drainage and water systems;
- Rehabilitation and repair of residential fund;

Objective 2: Promoting economic development

Priority actions:

- Registration of self-government property and development of the programmes for its use, adaptation and development;
- Promoting micro and small enterprises, including different fields of agriculture with cooperation of respective state agencies;
- Identifying interested groups of population, conducting trainings and information meetings in different areas (agriculture, tourism, crafting, etc.) for promoting small business (drafting a business plan, marketing and branding, technologies etc.).
- Promoting tourism, including cultural, scientific, ecological, agri- and extreme tourism and arranging the appropriate infrastructure.

Objective 3: environmental protection

Priority actions:

- Monitoring the impact of the manganese industry process and taking care to reduce environmental degradation; including exploring state of rock areas, monitoring and drafting and implementation of risk reduction plan;
- Development and implementation of concept for urban greening, maintenance of plants;
- Management of domestic waste.

Objective 4: Culture, Education and Sports

Priority actions:

- Cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia in the context of development and implementation of the framework and the action plan of Chiatura as the city of creative industry;
- In accordance with this framework, supporting creative groups, tours, festivals and various cultural events;
- Restoration of manganese extraction museum in Chiatura and support its development;
- Involving Chiatura in industrial heritage rout of the Council of Europe;
- With cooperation of the National Agency of Cultural Heritage Protection exploring and stocktaking the cultural heritage of Chiatura and ensuring appropriate protection and rehabilitation;
- Evaluating abilities of promoting industrial and archaeological heritage of Chiatura at international level, including analysis the ability to enter in the UNESCO World Heritage Preliminary list;
- Promoting popular types of sports, including tennis, rugby, football and rock climbing;
- Promoting theme and youth camps;
- Promoting the establishment of the Youth Centre of Innovations with cooperation of national agencies.