

**Project Title:** Enabling the Implementation of Georgia's Forest Sector Reform (ECO.Georgia)

**Project/Activity Number:** 20.2275.4-002.00/C1A1

**Title of the assignment:** Backstopping for ensuring environmental and social safeguards within forest road construction

## 1. Brief information on the project

Climate change impacts and the demand for fuelwood from rural population put significant pressure on Georgia's forests: up to 90% of rural households (1.43 million people) rely on fuelwood for their energy needs. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that households use obsolete technologies, such as traditional stoves with a lifetime of two years and an efficiency of 35% or less. Fuelwood demand exceeds sustainable harvesting levels, considering reduced productivity of many forests in the country because of extensive forest degradation. This forest degradation leads to a loss of carbon absorption capacity which is projected to decrease by five times between 1990 and 2030.

In order to address this negative development, the project "Enabling the Implementation of Georgia's Forest Sector Reform - ECO.Georgia" supports the Government of Georgia to implement its transformational forest sector reform agenda to put the entire nation's forests under the framework for sustainable forest management (SFM). It will do so by supporting the establishment of a nation-wide SFM system (Component 1) and in parallel promoting market development for energy efficient appliances and alternative fuels (Component 2) to address the main driver of forest degradation. The project will safeguard the reform implementation by diversifying livelihood opportunities and strengthening local self-governance in forest adjoining rural communities (Component 3).

The project is funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) with GIZ being the project's accredited entity. The German contribution is part of the wider German support in the priority area "Environmental policy, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the South Caucasus", which aims at the sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation and climate protection, particularly for the benefit of the rural population. Similarly, both the share of renewables in the energy composition as well as the energy efficiency levels will increase.

Especially rural households using firewood as their source of heating energy will benefit from improved air quality and reduced fuelwood demand through eased access to energy efficient stoves. Forest-related small and medium-sized enterprises and their employees will receive support to improve economic efficiency and environmental sustainability of their business activities. Additionally, staff members of relevant public institutions (National Forestry Agency NFA, Department of Environmental Supervision DES, Environmental Information and Education Center EIEC, Rural Development Agency RDA, municipalities) will receive direct support through human capacity development measures and grant finance.

ECO.Georgia primarily contributes to achieving the SDG 15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems) of the 2030 Agenda of the UN, but also to achieving SDG 7 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts), SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), and SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).

The duration of ECO.Georgia is from April 2021 until March 2029.

## **2. Description of the Assignment**

### **2.1. Context**

Since 2012, GIZ is working closely with different partners and in different directions dealing with the forest sector reform, with strong focus on introduction of ecosystem-based Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) into forestry practice. The LEPL National Forestry Agency (NFA) is one of the most relevant grantees under the ECO.Georgia project and is responsible for the implementation of SFM in eight forest districts (Kvareli, Dedoplistskaro, Telavi, Tianeti, Chokhatauri, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, and Akhmeta) within the three target regions (Kakheti, Guria and Mtskheta-Mtianeti), covering 270,807 ha of NFA-managed forest land. Two so-called Forest Model areas near Akhmeta and Chokhatauri will serve as focal point for SFM implementation, training and best practice examples from 2024 onwards.

The planning and construction of a resilient network of forest roads to access the forest and skidding trails to implement forestry operations is among the critical issues where capacity development and the modern expertise, considering ecosystem-based SFM and methods to reduce the environmental and social impact of forest management, is needed.

Reducing the impact of (logging and) skidding on forest soils, forest stands, and forest infrastructure is a crucial element of the planned implementation of SFM in Georgia. Ecological disturbance in forest ecosystems through forest road construction works must be minimized to preserve biodiversity and economic viability. The consideration of social safeguards includes among others occupational health and work safety aspects and the involvement of stakeholders like local communities.

ECO.Georgia is required to ensure adherence to and implementation of the GCF's environmental and social safeguard policies, to achieve improvements in environmental and social outcomes while addressing any unintended adverse impacts of all the GCF-financed activities.

The rehabilitation and construction of selected forest roads will be implemented partly by NFA itself (Forest Use Department), as well as by the contracted construction company hired by the NFA and financed by the Eco.Georgia project. This counts both for the planning as well as the construction process. The construction works will be conducted partly in parallel in Kakheti, Mzcheta-Mtianeti and Guria regions. Construction works will be supervised by NFA staff and, if involved, contracted construction companies. To ensure the compliance of the construction works with ESS policies and rules, the contractor shall work independently but also closely cooperate with the abovementioned parties.

### **2.2. Objective(s) of the assignment and work packages/tasks**

The objectives of the assignments are to develop rapid environmental and social assessment methodology for forest road projects (meaning rehabilitation and construction of new roads) for the project implementation partner NFA and eventually other involved parties such as private sector and ensure as external expert that the environmental and social standards set out in the various ECO.Georgia project documents are complied with during the planning and implementation of forest roads in selected areas in the three target regions (Guria, Kakheti and Mzcheta-Mtianeti). This shall be guaranteed by rapid environmental and social screening activity and rapid vegetation assessments prior to any construction as well as by regular supervision of forest road projects in the field. The main tasks are:

- Development of a rapid environmental and social assessment methodology for forest road projects

- Environmental and Social Screening and a Rapid Vegetation Assessment prior to forest road construction activities
- Supervision of forest road planning and construction works performed or tendered by NFA in the three target regions (Guria, Kakheti and Mzcheta-Mtianeti)

In particular, the consultant shall fulfil the following tasks:

### **Work packages 1: Develop a rapid environmental and social assessment methodology**

- The methodology shall also include a questionnaire to be used prior forest road construction-rehabilitation works to identify the potential social and environmental impacts, risks, and mitigation measures. The questionnaire should be designed to include relevant stakeholders, such as local communities, environmental authorities, and NGOs or CBOs, to ensure their input.
- The national legal framework and the ESS policies and plans of the ECO.Georgia must be reflected. Consideration shall be given especially to destructive impact on soil, plants and wildlife, water sources, water regimes and cultural sites as well as to waste generation, noise and dust pollution and pouring (including chemicals). On the social side, work safety and occupational health issues are among the most relevant aspects.
- Existing reports and guidelines shall be studied and reflected (e.g. FAO Guide for Designing Forest Roads in Mountainous Terrain, US Department of Agriculture: Landowner's Guide to Forest Access Road Construction, Guidelines developed in 2014 - planning and construction of forest roads for Georgia, etc.).
- The methodology shall include a Rapid Environmental and Social Screening and a Rapid Vegetation Assessment (vegetation clearing using chemicals is not permitted, only mechanical removal of vegetation will be used) which must be conducted prior to any construction activity.

### **Work packages 2: Develop and present impact mitigation measures**

- Based on common and best practice, feasible general mitigation measures must be developed and presented to NFA. For example, to be used gravel material must be procured from verified sources and meet to be defined ESS standards.
- Relevant implementation steps must be supported with practical guidance if necessary.

### **Work package 3: Rapid Environmental and Social Screening and Rapid Vegetation Assessment**

- Conduct a **Rapid Environmental and Social Screening** prior to any construction activity and **Rapid Vegetation Assessment** (vegetation clearing using chemicals is not permitted, only mechanical removal of vegetation will be used).

### **Work package 4: Monitoring the forest road planning processes**

- **Monitoring the planning processes** related to forest roads to ensure that ESS are reflected adequately in all plans so that future implementation will be in line with legislations and relevant policies and plans. This includes the proposal of suitable mitigation measures.

### **Work package 5: Site supervision of the forest road construction works**

- **Site supervision of the forest road construction works** to ensure EES during the implementation period including:

- regular site visits for due and proper supervision of the execution of the construction works to ensure that they conform with all applicable regulations related to ESS;
- conformity with prior ESS recommendations given in the planning materials, including the elaborated ESS screening and vegetation assessment (if relevant);
- evaluation of the quality control of to be used building materials (e.g. gravel from verified sources);
- participation of intermediate and final acceptance and acceptance procedures during the construction process;
- preparation of written reports on site supervision per forest road project (splitted into parts if needed, tbd) and based on construction stages: e.g. cleaning/preparation, stabilizing, construction, etc.; including photos in sufficient number and quality to understand the details of the report;
- revision of a list of defects and deficiencies as well as monitoring the corrective measures;
- explain and raise awareness for ESS among the directly involved partners if necessary and feasible (e.g. local foresters, excavator drivers).

The following requirements must be considered:

- GIZ will hire an international forest road expert under a separate contract. It is expected that the national expert works partly in tandem with the international expert who will be equipped with technical expertise regarding planning and implementation forest roads (and a network of skid trails).

### 2.3. Outputs/deliverables

Expected outputs are:

**Output 1:** Rapid environmental and social assessment methodology and questionnaire

**Output 2:** Develop and present impact mitigation measures

**Output 3:** Rapid Environmental and Social Screening and Rapid Vegetation Assessment reports prior forest road projects

**Output 4:** Monitoring the planning processes

**Output 5:** Supervision and respective reports per forest road construction project, including photos

### 2.4. Schedule and timeframe

	Deadline	Number of experts	Number of days per expert
Output 1	After 1 month	1	10
Output 2	After 2 months	1	5
Output 3	During the whole contracting period	1	25
Output 4	During the whole contracting period	1	20

Output 5	During the whole contracting period	1	70
<b>Travel expenses</b>		<b>Number of experts</b>	<b>Number of days/nights per experts</b>
Travel costs (transport)		1	60
Accommodation		1	30

### 3. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to submit a technical proposal showing how the objectives defined in Chapter 2 are to be achieved and if applicable under consideration of further method-related requirements (technical-methodological concept).

The technical proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the assessment grid which consists of followings:

(2.1) Concept (technical approach/methodical procedures)

- a. interpretation of the objectives (2.1)
- b. interpretation of the terms of references (2.1)
- c. strategy/methods for the implementation (structured by project phase or subsector), including a work plan in a visual form (2.1)

### 4. Experts' profile

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who is suited to filling the position described, or who has the required expertise, on the basis of a submitted CV, the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

The CVs of the personnel proposed meeting the requirements below must be submitted using the format specified in the terms and conditions for application. The CVs shall not exceed 4 pages. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long.

#### Expert 1

- (5.1.1) General qualification: **Education:** University qualification (first degree) in forestry, ecology, natural resources management or engineering is required.
- (5.1.2) Specific qualification:
  - close-to-nature forestry, including experience in planning and implementation of forest roads and skidding trails (at least 6 years' experience), or
  - experience in environmental and social assessments related to construction projects (at least 4 years' experience) or supervision of forest road projects including ESS (at least 4 years' experience)
- (5.1.4) **Language skills:** Fluency in Georgian, business fluency in English language

### 5. Timing and duration

From March 2024 to December 2026.

## 6. Place of assignment

Georgia, for the contract execution manifold missions to the listed target regions necessary.

## 7. Reporting

- Reports are to be prepared according to the GIZ template to be provided by the project (work packages 1 and 2);
- All documents shall be delivered electronically in English and in Georgian;
- The consultant shall report to Giorgi Kolbin, Senior advisor, GIZ/ECO.Georgia
- The consultant is expected to coordinate very closely with Marine Kavtarishvili, ESS (and Gender) advisor, GIZ/ECO.Georgia as well as with the international expert for forest road construction (see above)
- Preparation of written reports for work packages 3 and 5 per forest road project (splitted into parts) and based on construction stages: e.g. cleaning/preparation, stabilizing, construction, etc.; including photos in sufficient number and quality to understand the details of the report. For the reports, a template shall be used. After completion of a forest road project, a final report (combination of work package 3-5, comprising information of all relevant stages/prior reports) per project shall be submitted.

## 8. Other provisions

### 8.1 Budgeting and payment

The consultant shall keep a time sheet (8 hours = 1 working day) for documentation of work packages 3-5.

Interim payments can be initiated as follow:

First interim payment upon submitting of outputs 1, 2 and written confirmation from the GIZ for up to 15 working days.

Interim payments can be effected after provision of timesheet for accomplished 30, respectively 60 and 90 working days.

Final payment up to 25 working days will be effective upon submitting of outputs 3, 4 and 5 and after provision all final reports given above.

Travel expenses shall be included in the financial proposal and will be included in the contract.

### Annex:

- ESMP ECO.Georgia and other documents will be provided after contract assignment.