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

Project/Activity Number: 20.2275.4-007.00/C3A1

Title of the assignment: Advising ECO.Georgia Project on Municipal Forest Management

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

GIZ has been supporting the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) and its main implementing partners, Biodiversity and Forestry Department (BFD), National Forestry Agency (NFA), Department of Environmental Supervision (DES), Rural Development Agency (RDA), as well as Environmental Information and Education Center (EIEC), in different directions dealing with forest sector reform, with a strong focus on introducing Ecosystem-based Sustainable Forest Management in Georgia.

In addition to ECO.Georgia's Component 1 ("Sustainable Forest Management") and Component 2 ("Market Development for Energy Efficiency and Alternative Fuels"), the third component funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) aims to ensure a socially balanced transition to the new forest management approach, taking into account the needs of rural households. The overall goal of the SDC project entitled "Strengthening Livelihoods and Social Inclusion in Georgia's Forest Sector Reform" is to diversify the livelihood opportunities and strengthen local self-governance in forest management to increase incomes and reduce socio-economic disparities.

To ensure that municipal authorities and citizens have the relevant technical and human capacities to participate in the sustainable management of forests, the SDC project helps to develop and introduce municipal-level tools, practices, plans and necessary capacities for participatory sustainable forest management and conservation. Additionally, mechanisms at the local level to better protect the interests of adversely affected stakeholders will be developed, promoted and tested.

To address the current forest management and harvest practices, the Government of Georgia (GoG) has initiated an extensive forest sector reform in 2013, followed by the National Forest Concept, the official forest policy approved by the Parliament of Georgia in 2014. A new Forest Code was approved in 2020, while policy-level Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM) were adopted in 2022. Based on the current legislation all wood-related commercial activities in state forests fall under the exclusive responsibility of public forest management bodies. Additionally, the New Forest Code introduced the principle of participatory forest management and the possibility for municipalities to manage forests of local importance themselves.

To develop the proper technical and human capacities for sustainable forest management in eight municipalities GIZ carried out the study and have determined for each municipalities the existing human, technical and financial capacities and their administrative and political interest. Subsequent actions included an agreement on the toolbox concept for decision-making related to MFM, the definition of required tools, and the commencement of the toolbox development process. The study has yielded that almost all municipalities have interest to engage in forest management, however there are needs to increase the necessary capacities to fulfill MFM requirements.

The project is focused in 3 target regions: Guria, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kakheti, and 8 targets municipalities: Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Chokhatauri, Tianeti, Akhmeta, Telavi, Kvareli, Dedoplistskaro, identified to plan and implement sustainable forestry as well as introduce of energy efficient measures.

Municipalities keep considering green spaces' management as a priority, which is a crucial step towards the eventual implementation of municipal forest management (MFM). During this reporting period, with active participation of municipal authorities, guideline/instruction for the green space management was developed and respective municipal staff from 8 municipalities were trained. In parallel, green spaces were identified and mapped in the project's target municipalities. All necessary preparation activities related to the management of green spaces have been completed, and the next steps will focus on practical implementation.

The decentralization approach in the natural resource management is a priority for the central government, as evidenced by the draft Biodiversity Law currently undergoing parliamentary hearings. The draft law aims to increase the roles and obligations of municipalities in biodiversity management, including green spaces. Specific issues addressed in the draft law include:

- Mandating the integration of biodiversity conservation issues, as well as necessary measures and goals for the sustainable use of biodiversity, into relevant state and municipal plans and programs.
- Emphasizing the importance of maintaining the integrity of the Emerald Network in the planning process at the central, autonomous republics, and municipal levels.
- Delegating numerous functions to municipalities for the management of biodiversity and green spaces.
- Requiring the Government of Georgia to provide municipalities with appropriate material and financial support for the implementation of delegated powers granted by this law until January 1, 2027.

According to the given description, the process can be evaluated as a favourable condition for strengthening municipalities in the direction of green space management and engagement in forest management.

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

The objectives of the assignment are a) providing recommendations and support to ECO.Georgia team on measures defined in above mentioned brief information on the Project, focused on implementation of forest sector reform, with consideration of their feasibility in current political landscape in Georgia with outreach to the target regions and b) implementing the planned activities within the framework of the project, directed to the target municipalities.

In particular, the consultant shall fulfil the following tasks:

Work Package I

Support ECO.Georgia team in implementing Local Contribution (LC) and grants in the target municipalities.

The competency of municipalities encompasses the management of green spaces. Over recent years, with the municipality's proactive involvement, a "Guideline for the Management of Green Spaces" has been developed. This guideline delineates methods and standards for effective management of green spaces. Additionally, through collaborative efforts with the municipality, green spaces within the administrative boundaries have been identified and mapped. At this stage, GIZ intends to provide financial

support to 4-5 municipalities, so that the municipalities themselves can implement practical measures related to the green space management, including eco-educational activities:

- Support GIZ team and Municipal authorities in planning and preparing the implementation roadmap, including development relevant concepts
- Support GIZ team and Municipal authorities in conducting relevant studies (ecological conditions of the green spaces) required by LC
- Support GIZ team and Municipal authorities in implementing, monitoring and reporting of the implemented work under the framework of LC
- Support GIZ team and Municipal authorities in documentation

Work Package II

GIZ is actively working with target municipalities to develop their capacity on the topic of forest and green space management. Accordingly, the proper communication and cooperation is very crucial to fulfil project indicators:

- Advise the Project on all aspects related to cooperation on SFM and MFM with the administration of the 8 target municipalities and administrations of the State Representatives of 3 target regions
- Advise the Project on all aspects related to cooperation with the different stakeholders of the 8 target municipalities, as NGOs, private forestry companies, organized private groups working in forest
- Support arrangement and participate in meetings and workshops in the target municipalities according to needs to fulfil the objectives of the assignment
- Advise the Project on biodiversity policy issues, as consideration of green space and individual tree management
- Advise the project on decentralization aspect related to green space and forest management
- Advise the Project in cooperation and arrangements with municipal authorities to fulfil project objectives and indicators

2.3. Outputs/deliverables

Expected outputs are:

1. Practical recommendation and supportive documents during the preparation and implementation of LS (in written/report format)
2. Recommendations and strategic advice to ECO.Georgia team according to needs related to coordination and cooperation with municipalities (in written/report format)
3. Practical recommendation during the preparation and implementation of meetings and strategic documents related to the new Forest Code and draft Biodiversity Law at municipal level and particular on new obligations (in written/report format)
4. The reports should be submitted every 3 months
5. Final report of implemented activities

2.4. Schedule and timeframe

	Deadline	Number of experts	Number of days per expert
• Output 1-5 / Deliverable 1-5	18.07.2025	1	60
Travel expenses		Number of experts	Number of days/nights per experts
• Overnight allowance in country of assignment		1	12
• Travel costs (train, private vehicle)		1	6

3. Experts' profile

Title of expert - Required competences and experience

- Working experience in biodiversity policy, forest policy, management of natural resources (2.1.1)
- 7 years working experience in national level public administration or management (2.1.1)
- 5 years working experience in municipal level public administration or management (2.1.2)
- Experience to work with different international and national governmental, non-governmental or scientific organizations (2.1.3)
- Experience to work in the MEPA is advantage (2.1.3)
- Language skills: sufficient level of written and oral English is required (2.1.4)

4. Timing and duration

From August 2024 to August 2025

5. Place of assignment

Georgia (target municipality)

6. Reporting

- All recommendations shall be delivered electronically (text files) in English or in Georgian, based on the request. **The consultant must submit a report every 3 months**
- The consultant is expected to work very closely with MEPA: BFD, NFA, DES and target municipalities.
- The consultant is expected to coordinate very closely with relevant staff members of the Project, including Project Regional Coordinators.
- The consultant shall keep a time sheet (8 hours = 1 working day).

7. Other provisions

Payments will be effected after provision of timesheet for accomplished 15 working days. Travel expenses will be included in the contract.

Participation expenses in the workshops, meetings, study tours requested by GIZ is not included in the contract and will be covered by GIZ.

8. Tender Procedure

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:

(1.1) Concept

- a. interpretation of the objective /assignment (1.1)
- b. strategy for the implementation reflecting other alternatives (1.1)
- c. implementation methods (structured by project) (1.1)

Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CV, the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

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

Requirements on the format of the financial bid

Please calculate your price bid in line with the costing requirements. The specifications for pricing are defined in the attached price schedule which is required to be used for the preparation of the financial offer.