

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

Project/Activity Number: 20.2275.4-007.00 / 0302

Title of the assignment: Backstopping for Managing Customer Complaints and Feedback Mechanism of Forest Sector

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

Implementation of forest sector reform implies improving legal framework and strengthening institutional capacities of forest management institutions, including effective law enforcement. This may lead to potential conflicts between the government and the local population. To effectively resolve and eliminate any conflict, as well as to reduce risks, it is necessary to develop engagement and benefit-sharing mechanisms to enable conflict avoidance before they occur and to enforce the principle of "do no harm". However, if conflicts still occur, the process must ensure the resolution of issues by protecting all respective interests, through efficient and fair administrative complaints mechanism. Customer grievance and administrative complaints mechanisms shall support better and more inclusive participation and improvement of local governance.

Principles of citizen participation, feedback and administrative complaints management is in line with the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour and approaches established by the General Administrative Code of Georgia. Implementation of feedback and administrative complaints management mechanisms is defined as one of the prerequisites for good public service in the Public Services Development Strategy developed in the framework of Public Administration Reform (PAR).

The Public Service Development Strategy, by offering approaches based on international best practices, creates an opportunity for public institutions to create rapid response procedures. In those public institutions, where not only administrative complaints review mechanism is established to study the needs and grievances of citizens, but also a structured, systematic approach is applied to the feedback management as a whole, a favourable environment is created for uncovering opportunities for continuous improvement.

Hence, the implementation of effective administrative complaints and feedback management mechanisms at the National Forestry Agency will support the strengthening of the Agency's capacity in responding to the public's demand in a timely and efficient manner. This is especially important considering abolishing the existing practice of social cuts from January 2026 and introducing the new fuelwood supply system, which will result in 1000s of customers approaching NFA for fuelwood. By that time, the introduction of feedback management tools will help the Agency to make data-saturated, informed decisions, which is an important prerequisite for the successful functioning of the organization and the continuous improvement of the services it provides.

Concept on managing customer complaints and feedback at the National Forestry Agency (ECO.Georgia, 2023) envisages the requirements provided by the Public Service Development Agency for public institutions with regards to feedback management mechanisms. The concept is in line with the following principles of the Public Service Development Strategy:

- Principle 2: Rapid feedback cycle
- Principle 13: Continuous improvement
- Principle 17: Evidence-based decision-making.

The starting point of the concept is to create a variety of feedback and complaints channels in the National Forestry Agency, which are adapted to the needs and abilities of each user. The idea behind the concept is to ensure that feedback and complaints submission and handling is collaborative/customer-oriented, rather than formal, bureaucratic feedback and complaints

process. This implies that grievance/complaint/opinion by all customers will be heard by an authorized person of the Agency.

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

The goal of the assignment is to support implementation of effective administrative complaints and feedback management mechanisms at the National Forestry Agency, as defined in the concept on managing customer complaints and feedback at the National Forestry Agency (ECO.Georgia, 2023).

The objective of the assignment is to support creating feedback and complaints mechanism, which will be accessible to those categories of customers of forest resources, which may have the greatest influence on the course of the reform and its successful implementation.

The consultant shall support the NFA in setting up a forest sector feedback and complaints mechanism in terms of organizational/logistical and capacity strengthening. In particular, the consultant shall fulfil the following tasks:

Work package 1: Support in preparation for testing of the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback

- Based on the concept on managing customer complaints and feedback at the National Forestry Agency and in cooperation with the NFA, development of a step-by step instruction/guide on testing of the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback and institutionalization covering the period May 2024-June 2025, including roles and responsibilities of different actors and with the emphasis on the needs of women. The stepwise approach will be a guiding document for the implementation of the assignment.
- In cooperation with the NFA, setting up the infrastructure for managing customer complaints and feedback (the grievance boxes, NFA's website, e-mail, call center, social media channel/chat, etc.).
- Development and printing of respective materials (templates for application, customer complaints and feedback brochures etc).
- Conduct workshops on awareness raising (in cooperation with CENN¹) to municipal authorities and local focus groups (including representatives of the baseline perception survey focus groups) about new system, among others involving local women. Present the concept for managing customer complaints and feedback and step-by step instruction/guide during the workshops.
- Capacity development of respective staff of the NFA and other central and/or regional/local institutions, in a gender-sensitive manner:
 - Conduct one ToT at central level for respective staff of the NFA on categorization and processing/responding to the complaints.
 - Conduct one ToT for regional staff of the NFA on managing customer complaints and feedback mechanisms at local level.
 - Provide ToT in ECO.Georgia target regions, involving the representatives from local forestry services, business service yards and municipal staff of target municipalities.

¹ CENN is responsible for supporting testing the GRM system through raising awareness at local level, as well as participating in review of testing phase.

Work package 2: Support in testing of the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback

- Based on the results of the inception phase, support the NFA in initiating and implementing testing of the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback.
- Closely cooperate with the NFA and other central and/or regional/local institutions and provide support during the testing phase.
- Conduct technical assessment of all infrastructure used during the testing phase and provide recommendations for improvement (in cooperation with CENN).
- In the process of assessment of the testing phase, closely cooperate with CENN to coordinate actions.
- Consolidate the findings of the testing phase in the specially designed feedback and review mechanism (in coordination with CENN).
- In cooperation with the NFA organize a NFP meeting to present and discuss the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback system, key findings of testing and recommendations for institutionalization.

Work Package 3: Support in institutionalization of the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback

- Based on the testing and the results of assessment as defined in work package 2, adapt the concept on system for managing customer complaints and feedback. The special needs of women (if applicable) should be considered.
- Support NFA in reflecting the recommendations/suggestions in the system for managing customer complaints and feedback, including respective infrastructure and other related materials.
- In close cooperation with the NFA, ensure countrywide capacity development of responsible staff of the NFA and other central and/or regional/local institutions on system for managing customer complaints and feedback (re-fresh trainings).

The consultant should have close liaison, consultation, feedback loop with GIZ and NFA throughout the assignment.

2.3. Outputs/deliverables

Expected outputs are:

Output 1: Report and evidences of preparatory work for testing of the new on system for managing customer complaints and feedback, including training reports.

Output 2: Report on testing and assessment of the new system for managing customer complaints and feedback, as well as consolidation of the findings of the testing phase in the specially designed feedback and review mechanism.

Output 3: The consultant shall submit the following deliverables:

- a) adapted concept on system for managing customer complaints and feedback;
- b) report on reflecting the recommendations/suggestions in the system for managing customer complaints and feedback;
- c) report on capacity development activities.

2.4. Schedule and timeframe

	Deadline	Number of experts	Number of days in total
Output 1	After 2 months from signing of the contract	2	Up to 25
Output 2	December 30, 2024	2	Up to 10
Output 3	June 30, 2025	2	Up to 20
Travel expenses			Number of days/nights per expert
Transportation		2	9 days
Accommodation (full board)		2	5 overnights per expert
In case of full day training refreshments for participants			6 trainings in regions and Tbilisi

**Experts are to travel by (own or rental) car; for reimbursement of the cost, lump sum rate per day can be agreed, but this applies only for one car. It is expected that the experts travel together in one car.*

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

- a. interpretation of the objective /assignment (2.1)
- b. strategy for the implementation reflecting other alternatives
- c. cooperation during the implementation (stakeholders in the implementation, reference projects etc.) (2.1)
- d. a work plan in a visual form (2.1)

4. Company and Experts' profile

Company/organization - Required competences

- At least 5 years of experience in public sector development, institutional development, environmental projects, conflict management or sociology (1.1)

Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CVs, 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 each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long.

Expert 1 – Team leader

- (5.1.1) General qualification: **Education:** Master's degree in public law
- (5.1.2) Specific qualification: **Professional experience:**
 - 10 years of experience in public sector development, including designing and implementation of public sector reform projects in Georgia. Experience in elaboration of the concepts/guidelines;
 - Experience in facilitating workshops, and conducting of trainings (3 years' experience)
- (5.1.4) **Language skills:** Fluency in Georgian and English.

Expert 2 – Public service expert

- (5.2.1) General qualification: **Education:** Master's degree in Law, Economy, Institutional and capacity development or other respective fields.
- (5.2.2) Specific qualification: **Professional experience:**
 - 7 years of experience in respective technical areas cited in the scope of work, with a minimum of five years of experience in Georgia, preferably including areas such as public sector development projects.
 - 3 years 'experience in providing consultations, trainings and expert support to different organisations concerning public sector reform and legal issues.
- (5.2.4) **Language skills:** Fluency in Georgian and English.

5. Timing and duration

From June 2024 to September 2025.

6. Place of assignment

Georgia

7. Reporting

- Reports are to be prepared according to the GIZ template to be provided by the project;
- All documents shall be delivered electronically (text files,PPT) in English and in Georgian;
- The consultant shall report to the ESS and Gender advisor, GIZ/ECO.Georgia.
- The consultant is expected to coordinate very closely with the ESS and Gender advisor, GIZ/ECO.Georgia.

8. Other provisions

8.1 Budgeting and payment

Interim payment can be effected after submitting of outputs 1 and 2 and written confirmation from the GIZ.

Final payment upon submitting of output 3 and after provision all reports given above.

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

8.2 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.