

Annex 8a
Gender Assessment

of the Project

**“Enabling implementation of forest sector reform in Georgia to reduce GHG emissions
from forest degradation”**

Submitted to the Green Climate Fund (GCF)

Written By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Alternative Fuels
APA	Agency of Protected Areas
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEDEW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CENN	Caucasus Environmental NGO Netowrk
DES	Department of Environmental Supervision
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Program for Agriculture and Rural Development
ECF	Eco-Corridor Fund
EE	Energy Efficient
EU	European Union
GA	Gender Assessment
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNTA	Georgian National Tourism Administration
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
MoEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	New Democratic Institute
NFA	National Forestry Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
RDA	Rural Development Agency

SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SOP	Standard Operational Procedures
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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1. Introduction

This Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan has been prepared for the submission to the Green Climate Fund with the proposal “Enabling implementation of forest sector reform in Georgia to reduce GHG emissions from forest degradation”. This assessment aims to provide an overview of the gender situation in Georgia, identify gender issues that may be relevant to the project, and to examine potential gender mainstreaming opportunities.

The project aims at reducing emissions from forest degradation through sustainable management of forests as well as promoting energy efficiency and alternative fuels to reduce fuel wood consumption as a main driver of forest degradation. The project will result in the reduction of national GHG emissions, equivalent to approximately 5.2 million tCO₂ over seven years implementation period. It is comprised of three distinct but closely inter-linked components:

- Component 1 - Sustainable Forest Management (SFM),
- Component 2 - Market Development for Energy Efficiency (EE) and Alternative Fuels (AF), and
- Component 3 - Livelihood opportunities and local self-governance in forest management

Forests play a pivotal role for Georgia: They curb the occurrence of natural hazards and are essential for ensuring protection of water resources and providing clean air. Forests are sources of fuel wood and construction wood materials, provide space for grazing, hunting, collection of berries, food and medicinal plants for family consumption and commercial purposes. The growth of tourism activities increases the recreation value of forests.

Long-term effects that forest exert besides the universal one also have a differential gender effect. Impacts of forest degradation reflect on women more severely than on men, as they are more involved in agriculture, and as primary care givers use water and fuel more than men, are more hardly hit when faced with problems in food production (Schimall, 2015). Besides, the fast-growing hospitality business involves more women than men, who in many cases are owners and managers of guest rooms and small hotels. Therefore, they heavily depend on recreation value of forests. Meanwhile wood cutting and processing, selling of firewood is the main income generating activity of many men, living in the vicinity of forests. Men go and use forests more often than women not only for felling trees, but also for hunting and herding. At the same time, women remain the main consumers of fuel wood, as they manage and control space heating, cooking and water heating.

Effective measures targeting preservation of forests should rest on recognition of needs, interests and capabilities of both, women and men in relation of forest use. Therefore, before planning any policies for forest regeneration the needs of men and women should be recognized and taken into consideration.

Resting on biological features and traditional role differentiation, gender in many respects determines difference in needs, possibilities and responsibilities for women and men. These

differences have to be acknowledged and addressed. Although, gender equality is understood as both sexes having equal opportunities, it should stay at the centre of any policy-making or decisions.

In 2015, the UN adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. Gender equality has been mainstreamed across the SDGs, but a whole SDG (SDG 5) is dedicated solely to it, aiming to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It contains nine targets, including: ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls; ending all forms of violence against women and girls; eliminating harmful practices, such as early, forced and child marriage; achieving women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life; and, adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels, among others (UN WOMEN, 2018a). The proposed project is in line with the aims outlined in the SDGs.

2. GCF and GIZ Guidelines for the Promotion of Gender Equality

According to the GCF's Gender Policy, "proposed projects or programmes submitted to the Fund are required to be aligned with national policies and priorities on gender and with the Fund's gender policy". In the GCF's Action Plan 2019 – 2021 it is further described that core elements include:

- 1) A mandatory initial socioeconomic and gender assessment, complementary to the environmental and social safeguards (ESS) process, which accredited entities will be required to undertake in order to collect baseline data, and to:
 - (i) Determine how the project/programme can respond to the needs of women and men in view of the specific climate change issue to be addressed;
 - (ii) Identify the drivers of change and the gender dynamics in order to achieve the project/programme adaptation or mitigation goals;
 - (iii) Identify and design the specific gender elements to be included in the project/programme activities;
 - (iv) Estimate the implementation budgets;
 - (v) Select output, outcome and impact indicators; and
 - (vi) Design project/programme implementation and monitoring institutional arrangements.
- 2) Gender equitable stakeholders' consultations with the gender parameters provided in the policy.
- 3) Inclusion of gender perspective in the application of the mandatory project/programme social and environmental safeguards in line with project/programme-specific requirements of the Fund's ESS in accordance with decision B.07/02.
- 4) Project screening for gender sensitivity at the various stages of the project preparation, appraisal, approval, and monitoring process, by the relevant bodies (Nationally Determined Authority [NDAs], accredited entities, the Secretariat).

The updated GCF Gender Policy and Action Plan 2018 – 2020 builds on the previous core elements. The updates and lessons learnt can be summarized in five key aspects:

- 1) The policy emphasizes gender responsiveness rather than gender sensitivity. Being gender responsive means that instead of only identifying gender issues or ensuring a “do no harm” approach, a process will substantially help to overcome historical gender biases. This is in line with the language used in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decision Conference of the Party 20 (Lima Work Programme) and the Paris Agreement;
- 2) In addition to requiring gender assessment, the policy suggests a mandatory requirement to submit project-level gender action plans;
- 3) The policy outlines clear requirements at the project inception, implementation, monitoring and reporting stages as well as regarding roles and responsibilities among GCF, Accredited Entities, and National Designated Authorities/focal points;
- 4) The policy aligns with the United Nations (SDGs), which make explicit commitments to gender equality both as a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment in SDG5 and as a cross-cutting theme across all the SDGs; and
- 5) The action plan provides portfolio-level gender-responsive indicators to the Action Plan of the updated Gender Policy, together with indicative budgetary provisions related to knowledge management, capacity development, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

In line with the above mentioned GCF Gender Policy and respective update, GIZ’s Safeguards + Gender Management System and Gender Strategy require that a gender analysis is conducted at an early stage of the preparation phase of a project to identify potentials for promoting gender equality and risks that need to be avoided or at least mitigated through specific measures. The results and recommendations of this analysis are directly considered for the objective, indicators, the methodological approach and the results monitoring system of the project.

3. Methodology of the Gender Assessment

3.1 Overview of the Methodology

The implementation of the Gender Assessment (GA) and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) used the following methodology and stages:

- Review of all relevant project documentation, including regulatory documentation and the standards that the project will need to abide by;
- Analysis of secondary (existing documentation);
- Information gathering and stakeholder consultation in Tbilisi and the three target regions in Georgia identified by the project and preparation of the stakeholder engagement report;

- Analysis of primary data from stakeholder engagement process;
- Preparation of the GA and GAP.

Procedures of stakeholder engagement were pursued following the review of project documentation and analysis of secondary data. Stakeholder engagement is a tool for identifying and mobilizing project stakeholders. It is the framework for all interactions with stakeholders (central and local government, individuals, associations, groups) that are impacted or have an interest in the project. The purpose of establishing engagement with stakeholders is to establish a transparent two-way communication/dialogue between the project and stakeholders, convey a strong commitment towards meeting the requirements of the GIZ, GCF and understand and manage the needs, interests, fears and motivations of stakeholders, and anticipate potential negative responses from women and men and provide mitigation measures. The aims of stakeholder consultations were defined as follows:

- 1) Introducing the project;
- 2) Identification of impacts and mitigations from stakeholder perspective;
- 3) Understanding stakeholder suggestions and concerns;
- 4) Obtaining a preliminary understanding of barriers towards pro-environment behavior (what drives the current behavior and how rural communities might be motivated to change behavior despite of the value of the felled tree) and understanding of socio-economic, cultural and gender barriers associated with using energy efficient stoves and alternative fuels (for example are there preferences for cooking with fuel wood and what would motivate a change in behavior);
- 5) Assessment from the gender perspective of the level of participation of population in decision-making on community issues and envisaging effective ways for increasing it;
- 6) Estimation of the feeling of ownership of forests and ways for increasing it.
- 7) Assessment of the gender composition of the three departments/institutions of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA) (National Forestry Agency, Biodiversity and Forest Department, Department of Environmental Supervision) responsible for forest management.

Stakeholder consultations were carried out in the period of March 5th 2019 to April, 8th 2019 in Tbilisi, Kakheti, Guria and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions, jointly with the ESS expert (see also Stakeholder Engagement Report, Annex 7a to the Funding Proposal for details). As a result of the stakeholder mapping process, the following stakeholders were identified and consulted:

1. Representatives of Georgian Government
 - National Forestry Agency (NFA) at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture;
 - Department of Biodiversity and Forest Policy at MoEPA;
 - Department of Environmental Supervision (DES) at MoEPA;

- Representatives of NFA in Kakheti, Guria and Mtskheta-Mtianeti;
- Representatives of regional self-governance of Kakheti, Guria and Mtskheta-Mtianeti;
- Representatives of Municipalities of Telavi, Akhmeta, Kvareli, Dedoplistskaro, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Chokhatauri, Tianeti.

2. Population of Kakheti and Guria

Population of the regions were selected with the aim to have representatives of urban and rural population living in close or in more remote distance from forests. Consultations in the following settlements were carried out: Vardisubani, Angokhi, Shilda and Dedoplistskaro in Kakheti region; Zoti, Lesa and Mtispiri in Guria region.

3. Representatives of ecological Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- Representative of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) of Georgia.
- Representative of Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN)

4. Representatives of women's NGOs

- Director of Women's Information Center
- Director of Taso Foundation

In total, 175 persons were consulted, among them 36 percent women and 64 percent men. The list of consulted individuals and groups is presented in Annex 2 of this report.

3.2 Amendment to the Methodology

This Gender Assessment was originally conducted for Components 1 and 2. The third component is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It envisages supporting the operationalization and implementation of the Forest Sector Reform and the new Forest Code with a special focus on Livelihood opportunities and local self-governance in forest management as part of the multi-donor project.

The specific sub-activities under Component 3 were elaborated in quarter one of 2021 based on a detailed assessment of the baseline situation, barriers and priority measures, based on participatory processes. It has been designed to ensure its alignment with the other two components, and the overarching project impacts. Based on the elaboration of the sub-activities under Component 3, the original gender assessment has been reviewed and amended to cover all three components of the project. Environmental and Social Safeguard Documents have also been amended.

Stakeholder consultations were carried out in December 2020 and January 2021 by the national expert team for Component 3. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, many of these interviews have been conducted remotely. In addition to the consultations conducted with the

original assessment, the following stakeholders consulted for the second review. Gender and social and environmental topics were mainstreamed throughout all interview guidelines.

1. Representatives of Georgian Government and Public Institutions

- NFA
- Representatives of Telavi municipality, Kvareli municipality, Kakheti regional forestry, Dedoplistskaro municipality, Tianeti Municipal Council, Akhmeta municipality, Chokhatauri municipality, Guria region, Guria regional forestry, Lanchkhuti municipality
- Heads of communities in the different municipalities
- Representatives of Biodiversity and Forest Department at Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- Representatives of the National Wildlife Agency
- Agricultural Scientific Research Center
- Agricultural University of Georgia
- Ilia State University
- Technical University
- Telavi State University
- National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
- Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA)

2. Representatives of civil society and donor projects

- Tusheti Protected Landscape Association
- Promoting Sustainable Forest Management For Climate Resilient Rural Development In Georgia"/ CENN,
- Good Governance for Local Development Project conducted by GIZ
- Eco-Corridor Fund (ECF)
- WWF / Adjara forestry project
- REC Caucasus
- The SUCCOW Foundation
- Austrian Development Agency
- Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

3. Private sector

- Ana Bakhtadze, Tourism Expert
- Geoland Mapping Company
- Enterprise Georgia
- Explore Georgia, Tour Operator
- Georgian International Tour Operator Association

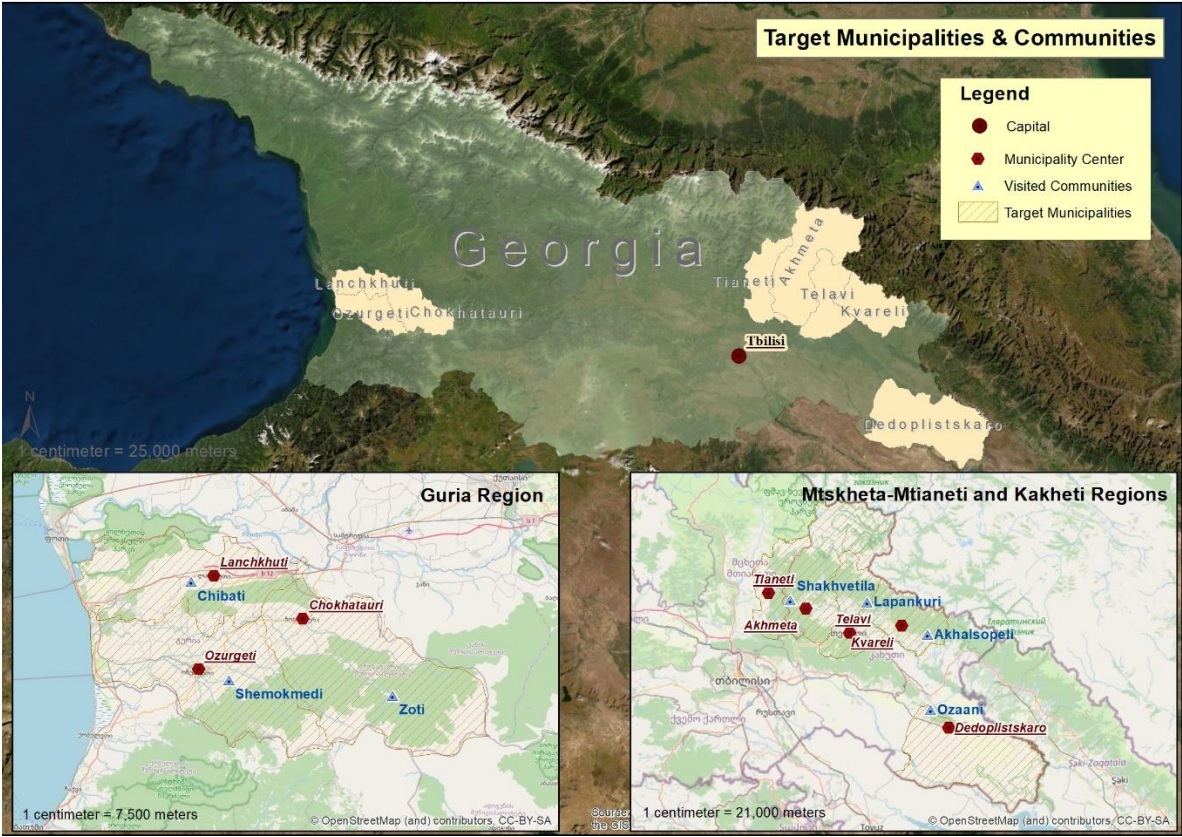
4, Local consultations

Local consultations in the target regions were also carried out in all 8 districts (see Table 1 and Figure 1 below).

Table 1. Overview of local consultations held in January 2021 to inform the design of Component 3

Region	Municipality/ Forest District	Communities visited
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Tianeti	Artani
Kakheti	Akhmeta	Shakhvetila
	Telavi	Lapankuri
	Dedoplistskaro	Ozaani
	Kvareli	Akhalsopeli
Guria	Lanchkhuti	Chibati
	Chokhatauri	Zoti
	Ozurgeti	Shemokmedi

Figure 1: Locations of target municipalities and communities visited during local consultations in 2020/2021



4. Gender Equality: Georgia by International Indices and National Framework Conditions

Georgia is not among the champions in gender equality. Its standing is rather low in the two most acknowledged international indices of gender inequality carried out annually by UNDP and the World Economic Forum:

According to UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII), which is a composite measure of inequalities in reproductive health (maternal mortality rate and the adolescent birth ratio), empowerment (share of Parliament seats held by women and share of women with some secondary education) and labour force participation (proportion of women employed among women in working age population). In 2017, Georgia was ranked 78 among 160 countries (UNDP, 2018a).

Another composite measure of gender equality, the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, was introduced in 2006 to measure the magnitude of gender-based disparities on four sub-indexes with scoring from 0 to 1. In 2018, Georgia ranked as 99 (score 0.677) among 149 countries, ranking 60 for educational attainment (score 0.996), 85 for economic participation and opportunities (score 0.654), 119 for political empowerment (score 0.093) and 123 for health and survival (score 0.967) (World Economic Forum, 2018).

Popular perception of gender equality in the country is in line with international indices, pointing at the low level of equality. According to the results of one national survey, less than a quarter of Georgians (25 percent of men, and 21 percent of women) think that there is gender equality in the country (CRRC 2015).

Article 11 of the Georgian Constitution warrants gender equality. Since the declaration of independence in 1991, Georgia adopted a number of laws and regulations targeted at the achievement of gender equality and became signatory of all main International Conventions on gender equality:

- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)
- UNDP 1325 resolution on women, peace and security
- Georgia is among 193 signatories of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); 17 principles of sustainable development make explicit commitments to gender equality both as a stand-alone goal and as a cross-cutting theme across all the SDGs' SDG 5 refers to gender equality and has 14 indicators, of which 11 have established methodology and standards.

A number of laws dealing with gender equality have been adopted, among them:

- Law of Georgia on Combating Trafficking

- Law of Georgia on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to the Victims of Domestic Violence
- Law of Georgia on Gender Equality

Several institutional mechanisms were established for the achievement of gender equality, ~~and they include~~ including:

- Gender Equality Advisory Council in the Parliament with the mandate to develop and monitor action plan for ensuring gender equality
- Gender Equality Department as a standing unit in the structure of the Public Defender's Office
- The Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues

Key findings for the ~~proposed~~ project

Legal mechanisms warranting gender equality are in place, but they do not ensure equality. The international indices as well as popular perception points on low gender parity. While the project's primary goal is not achieving gender equality, it still aims to promote gender empowerment through making existing legal mechanisms viable.

5. Gender Equality in the Public Space: Representation and Participation

Equality is linked with having the power to make decisions. Representation and participation are therefore necessary conditions.

Representation

To be adequately considered, women's concerns have to be voiced and heard. Hence, representation of women in executive bodies, and decision-making processes within public and private institutions is necessary-

Representation of women in Parliament is low, with only 16 percent of women as Members of Parliament (MPs), which is lower than the world average of 23.7 percent (UNWOMEN, 2018a). Three women occupy high posts in Georgian Parliament, one being a deputy chair and two as heads of committees. At the local level women comprise only 13 percent of 2058 members of Sakrebulo¹ (City Council). Moreover, out of 64 mayors/governors in the country, only one is a woman.

¹ Sakrebulo - a representative body, which exercises self-governance in the municipalities as defined by the Organic Law of Georgia on Local Self-Government.

In project regions, the representation of women in Sakrebulo is even lower than country average, women comprise only 12.7 percent of elected members (Table 1).

Table 1: Sakrebulo's gender composition in target municipalities

Municipality	Number		
	Women	Men	Total
Telavi	3	29	32
Kvareli	4	23	27
Akhmeta	2	17	19
Dedoplistskaro	2	26	28
Ozurgeti	7	38	45
Lanchkhuti	5	27	32
Chokhatauri	6	30	36
Tianeti	4	23	27
Total	33	227	260
%	12.7	87.3	100

The situation is similar at the executive power level. Among eleven ministers, only four are women. These are the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, Minister of Economy and State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality.

The situation is better in the judiciary, where 52 percent of judges are women. Among 58 ambassadors of Georgia, only six are women.

Men form the majority of public servants. Among 74,532 employees of 166 public authorities of Georgia, the majority (70.7 percent) of staff are male and 29.3 percent are women. Gender imbalance is especially prevalent in law enforcement agencies, where men comprise 86.2 percent of the staff. Gender imbalance is especially apparent in high-ranking positions, even excluding male-dominated law enforcement agencies, where men occupy 70.3 and women only 29.7 percent of decision-making positions. Inequality is more evident in self-governance bodies where women comprise only 24 percent of high-ranking officials (IDFI,2013).

Despite the limited representation of women in decision-making positions, the attitude of the population towards female leadership, both at national and local levels, is generally positive. Many surveys demonstrated that both, men and women favour women's participation in public sphere. For example, Population's Life Experiences in Georgia Survey (EBRD, 2016) found that 92.5 percent of men and 95.6 percent of women think that women make good local leaders. Further, 89.5 percent of men and 93.4 percent of women consider that women are as competent as men to occupy the position of either the president or the prime minister of the country. According to an NDI poll Georgians believe that there are too few women in parliament and self-governance, and 63 percent support quota legislation to increase women's representation (NDI, 2018).

Participation

Civic participation in the country is low. Like some other post-communist countries Georgia is considered to be in a state of a “never ending transition to democracy”, with public space characterized by powerless citizens, a dominating state and a lack of issue-driven debate on public policy (Lutsevych, 2013). The population is rarely involved in decision-making on important country issues.

Voting dynamics over years are stable and low: In Parliamentary elections voters’ turnout in 2008 was 53.2 percent, 59.3 percent in 2012 and 51.6 percent in 2016. The voting rate on presidential elections was 46.1 percent in 2013 and 56.2 percent in the 2018 run off (IDFI, 2019).

The organic law of Georgia on Local Self Government (2014) provides the legal framework for ensuring public participation.

Article 85 obliges self-government to ensure participation of citizen in the activities of municipality, including sessions of Municipal bodies. The law lists five mechanisms for civil participation in local decision-making processes, these being:

- I. A general assembly of settlement, which shall be duly constituted if it is attended by at least 20 percent of its members’
- II. A petition;
- III. A Council of Civil Advisers; a deliberative body of a municipality Gamgebeli, or a Mayor or a district Gamgebeli, which shall be composed of entrepreneurial legal entities, NGOs and of the municipality population, comprising at least ten members, with one third of representatives of one gender at least;
- IV. Participation in the sessions of Municipality Sakrebulo and sessions of its commission;
- V. Hearing reports on the work performed by Gamgebeli/Mayor of the municipality and by a member of Municipality Sakrebulo.

However, these legal provisions do not guarantee participation. The National Assessment of Georgian Municipalities points that only 7 percent of population is informed about the work of municipalities. Advisory Councils often are not operational, and in some municipalities they have not even been formed (IDFI, 2017). According to the study of public policy (Transparency International, 2014), only 4 percent of surveyed persons attended any session of their local Municipal council, and only 30 percent responded that Local Government represents the interests of local people. A gender difference in these perceptions was not indicated in this study.

Council of Civil Advisors

Results of the consultations in the framework of the project are in line with the aforementioned findings. A Council of Civil Advisors still has not been established in every municipality within the project area. Among eight municipalities, which were consulted by the project, two do not have a council (Tianeti and Akhmeta), and in the remaining six municipalities, councils have been recently established and have not yet met (Telavi municipality) or meet once in 3 or 4 months and are not considered to be particularly effective. On average, women constitute 39 percent of Civil Advisory Councils in studied municipalities.

Table 2: Number of members of Council of Civil Advisors

Municipality	Number		
	Women	Men	Total
Telavi	4	8	12
Kvareli	5	6	11
Akhmeta			n/a
Dedoplistskaro	3	9	12
Ozurgeti	9	6	15
Lanchkhuti	4	6	10
Chokhatauri	4	12	16
Tianeti			n/a
Total	29	47	76
%	38.2	61.8	100

Source: Information of municipalities

In fact, the main way a mayor communicates with the population is through the mayor’s trustees. Such a mechanism operates in each of the target regions. Each settlement or a group of small size settlements has a trustee that is appointed by the mayor. This trustee acts as a liaison between the population and the municipality, spreads information and mobilizes the population. During consultations, all interviewed members of municipalities pointed out that the most effective way of communication is through face-to-face communication with the population—mainly through via trustees, as well as meetings in villages.

In the Kakheti regional office, the male representative evaluated the engagement of its population as very low. He accounted this to the lack of trust towards authorities.

“Generally speaking, people think that their ideas will not be considered.”

The same reason for the low level of public engagement was also cited in Kvareli municipality.

Indirect indication of the validity of such an explanation comes from a positive example of participation and women’s involvement in decision-making processes, associated with the renewal of “The Village Development Program” by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Local Self-Governance. The Ministry assigns a fixed amount of funds to each village, depending on the size of the settlement. To this sum the local municipality adds half of the amount from the local budget. The decision on selecting the project to be implemented in the community is made by

a majority vote by the settlement assembly, which is considered eligible if it consists of at least of 30 persons of the other gender. In the project implementation phase, the local population will have the opportunity to find jobs in the forestry sector as forest work specialists.

“[The] Village Development Program serves as a perfect tool for the engagement of the population in dialogue. It is also a great opportunity for the government to collect information on problems within the community” (Male regional administration representative of Kakheti).

Mayor’s advisors on gender

Special legal provisions are made for increasing women’s participation in self-governing bodies. Amendments to the Law on Gender Equality, adopted in July 2017 points out that a mayor can appoint civil servants responsible for gender equality issues. As no provision was made in the law regarding building capacity of the mayor’s advisor on gender issues, it often is of a formal nature and does not contribute to promoting gender equality. Some municipalities, such as Tianeti, have an advisor, who combines advising on gender issues with their position as the Mayor’ assistant. The situation in Kvareli is similar where the advisor also attends to other duties, and is not paid for advising on gender issues nor do they have a job description for the position. In Guria, none of the three municipalities have a position of an advisor on gender issues. In Telavi, Dedoplistskaro and Akhmeta municipalities, the gender advisor has a clear job description and is paid for their work on gender issues.

The formal character of gender advisors is stressed in UNDP’s Gender Equality Report. The report proposes to strengthen the effectiveness of gender equality mechanisms at the sub-national level by: a) formalizing the gender focal point positions; b) ensuring their presence in all 64 municipalities; and c) standardizing job descriptions for gender focal points and ensuring their continuous training (UNDP, 2018b).

Women rooms

In order to strengthen women’s participation, since 2012 municipalities are supposed to have women’s rooms. The idea of a women’s room according to the regional administration of Kakheti is to create a venue for a dialogue between stakeholders, women and men alike. All municipalities in Kakheti have Women’s Rooms. They were established in 2018 by Mercy Corps and EKS/ESPER, so the region now has eight women’s rooms, seven in municipalities and one in the Azeri inhabited village of Lformugalo. The activities carried out in this space so far are limited to giving advice about municipality functions, copying materials and looking after children while caregivers visit authorities. Gender advisors do not have any strategic plans for using the rooms, although some, e.g. in Akhmeta, are currently working on it. The room is mostly seen as a space for arranging meetings with persons with disabilities and organizing language courses. Today, not having an overall strategy, the effectiveness of the rooms depends on the initiative and creativity of their managers. The rooms in all municipalities of

Kakheti are equipped in a similar way, with a sofa, shelves, a table and chairs, and table and chairs for children, a copying machine and a computer.

“Now we are in the process of defining operational strategy of Women’s Rooms in region in order to make them effective and more vibrant” (Female representative of regional administration in Kakheti).

Note that Guria and Mtsketa-Mtianeti municipalities do not have Women’s Rooms.

NGOs and CSOs

Civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are considered as the most common venues of participation. The non-governmental sector is well developed in Georgia, although its distribution is uneven. The overwhelming majority of organizations are located in the capital Tbilisi. Presently, 32 women’s NGOs are active in Georgia. There are more organisations present in the regions where donors have been active.

About 50 NGOs are working on environmental issues and are active in the country. Most of their work is focused on climate change, water contamination, waste management, forests and biodiversity (The Centre of Environmental Information and Education, 2014).

In the consulted regions, the NGO sector is regarded as underdeveloped. In total, ten NGOs are registered in Kakheti region, including the NGO “Pankisi Elderly Women’s Council” in Pankisi Gorge. An additional sixteen NGOs are registered in Guria, where two explicitly work on gender-related topics – “Women for Guria” and “Women’s Initiative Group”. At least 21 NGOs are represented in Mtskheta Mtianeti, where two work for women empowerment in the region - Women’s Association „Bazaleti“ and “Women for Healthy Future”. Consultations with the government as well as local persons stated that the NGO sector is not very active at the regional or municipal level. The only exception where an NGO is very active is Pankisi Gorge in the Kakheti Region. Some NGOs based in Tbilisi are working on gender issues in the project region, e.g. Taso in Guria and “Women for Peace” in Dedoplistskaro.

Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are also rare. In Mtsketa-Mtianeti there is only one in Kazbegi, and in Guria there are two. The situation is much better in Kakheti. Members of the Kakheti regional administration pointed to their positive experience with CBOs.

”The decisions are made more easily and effectively in the villages that have CBOs”.

The majority of existing community organisations in Kakheti are headed by women, and are selected by majority vote.

Cooperatives

Despite several attempts to boost the creation of business cooperatives, their number is rather limited. Within the country, there are 1,538 registered agricultural cooperatives with 13,677

persons of which 3,674 are women. Among them are 61 cooperatives in which all members are women, numbering 389 persons (UNWOMEN, 2019b)

The biggest number of cooperatives in targeted regions is in Kakheti, where more than 100 cooperatives operate. Their members are mostly men. However, in donor-funded cooperatives, women's participation is promoted and it works well. For example, there are cooperatives for honey production, which entirely consist of women. Mostly female members form the association of Kakheti are honey producers. Animal husbandry and viticulture cooperatives are predominantly male.

In Guria, 45 cooperatives are registered: 22 in Lanchkhuti, 13 in Ozurgeti and 10 in Chokhatauri.

In Tianeti municipality (Mtskheta-Mtianeti region) twelve cooperatives are operative. Within the framework of EU funded ENPARD program in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, some fruit processing small factories were opened. Tianeti factory is a cooperative comprising eleven members, out of which seven are women. Forest fruits and herbs, but also fruits from local gardens and are dried both by solar and electric power. During the main production season, the factory employs additional 200 persons.

While women head many NGOs and CBOs, business cooperatives are rather headed by men. However, some donor projects make the participation of women a requirement. In these cases, women are usually among the leaders. Some projects have made good experience with promoting the formation of women cooperatives, where they provide grants for women cooperatives that use forest resources for generating additional income. For instance, in Pshavi a cooperative has been formed with support of CENN that crafts carpets with colouring made from forest products. Another women's cooperative will be a provider of both commercial and social services related to non-timber forest products (NTFPs). They plan to use network marketing, bring various products directly to the market, or use online sales. The legal status of the group has not been determined yet, but a need assessment has been carried out and a strategy has been developed. Establishing Women's Cooperatives can facilitate policy dialogue that raises issues on behalf of its member organizations and protects their interests

Women's representation and participation in the rural development context

UNDP (2018, p. 5) found the engagement of women in public life to be small, and even smaller in rural than in urban setting. They come up with the example that women rarely participated in consultations in regions held by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure regarding planning regional development programs. Similarly, the USAID Gender assessment in Georgia (2010) (as quoted in the Krieg 2018, p. 35) claims that "without affirmative measures women will not be included in decision-making around natural resource use. For instance, when asked about the inclusion of women in such processes, 28 % of men, as compared to 14 % of women, stated that there was "no value" to women's participation, based on two rationales- that women are too busy with family matters and therefore lack the time for other activities or that women should only be concerned with family matters. In contrast, when asked

if they were personally ready to be included in decision-making about natural resources, given the opportunity, 66 % of women affirmed their willingness.”

An important indicator for the influence on decision making is the ownership of land. In Georgia, female-headed households are less likely to own land compared to male-headed households, all else being equal (Gassmann et al., 2013). In rural areas of Georgia land property, administration and inheritance matters usually lay in the hands of the husbands and will be decided in favour of the sons. (Krieg 2018). Lacking or unsecure property rights influence the ability to participate in decision making and develop an own business. An example shared during the stakeholder consultations highlighted that female entrepreneurs may be more vulnerable than other groups. For example, in Telavi municipality, on the territory of Sviana forest, Pshaveli Women’s Council started using the area according to a usufruct use right (2 years) and began to generate income through baking bread, serving coffee, and renting utensils. After these two years, the municipality did not extend the usufruct and decided to announce an auction to receive revenue from this land, causing those women to lose their income opportunity.

Women generally form a vulnerable group among the local population. Yet, also among the women there are differences in their ability to participate in consultations and decision-making, some groups face multiple discrimination. For instance, women living in rural areas and internally displaced women face fewer opportunities and more constraints (USAID Georgia, 2010). Due to the two internal conflicts, Georgia has many internally displaced persons (IDP). The 2009–2012 State Strategy on IDPs covers gender aspects, but IDP women and rural women are in most vulnerable conditions resulting into the low economic status and poverty and having less access to information, rights, and skills (Krieg 2018).

With the new forest code, an improvement of the situation of women among the local population is not guaranteed. According to the stakeholder consultations, one identified weakness of the new forest code is that it does not oblige management bodies to ensure a balanced involvement of women and men in the decision-making process. The New Forest Code states “State/autonomous republic/municipal bodies, that are parties to forest-related legal relations, shall ensure the publicity and availability of information on forest management, as well as the participation of the public in the decision-making process regarding forest management as provided for by the legislation of Georgia” (Article 17, paragraph 2). However, there is substantial room for interpretation, and it does not make mandatory the engagement of the local population, nor does it mention gender. In terms of the operationalization of the code, some interviewed stakeholders do not see women sufficiently represented in local decision making and highlighted that substantial work is needed to ensure that women are represented and included as members of the village council and are actively involved in the decision-making process. Such processes should take into account the capacities of women, and potentially the need for targeted leadership and capacity development trainings. One interviewee from MoEPA recommended to work with existing women’s councils, and potentially promote such councils elsewhere, as an innovative platform to support women’s engagement in participatory forest management planning and the implementation of sustainable livelihood activities.

Experience with women's empowerment at local level

Ongoing or past projects in Georgia have experience applying different approaches to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. CENN sees strong potential for female participation in eco-tourism and NTFP collection, which is in line with the findings above. In their view, rural development can be promoted by government and donors providing and supporting programs for initiating female businesses and supporting start-ups. Other tourism stakeholders involved in the tourism sector further highlighted this as a key entry point for empowering women in rural areas. Although billions have been invested in agriculture, research has shown that revenues from agriculture are declining, and the population does not see much potential in this area. Many interviewees noted that local men and women increasingly see more opportunities for themselves in the growing tourism sector.

The importance of supporting female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses has further been highlighted by various actors, emphasizing the need to improve access to finance, and strengthen education and skill development (e.g. World Bank, 2021). In the context of increasing women's influence and participation in decision making by forming interest groups, the ECOserve project made experiences working with Rural Women Councils. The ECOserve Gender Analysis (Krieg 2018), emphasized the promotion of Rural Women Councils, which had been formed for solving environmental problems in their immediate surroundings, such as: water supply, waste management, access to energy and natural resources. They coordinated closely with the local councils and the private sector (Krieg 2018). One important mean to increase women's participation in decision-making bodies at all levels, was the establishment of quotas, which ensured that women are represented in relevant structures, and helped to overcome the resistance of the electorate and appointing bodies to selecting women (UNEP et al. 2013, as quoted in Krieg 2018).

Key findings for the proposed project

- Representation of women in national and local representative and executive bodies is inadequate;
- The level of participation of the local population in decision-making on local issues is inadequate;
- For some women, the reason for the lack of public involvement is the feeling that one's position will not be considered;
- Self-governance initiatives provide a structure for citizen's participation, but are often not effective and face diverse challenges. Citizen's Advisory Councils are not established in many municipalities and where they are established, they often do not function effectively. Nonetheless, interviewed stakeholders noted the relevance to continue to promote such processes and initiatives, recommending the design of diverse flexible approaches that can be adapted to diverse local contexts. Such mechanisms and platforms, however, need

to be accompanied by capacity development in the early years to build up capacities of participating men and women, and to ensure mechanisms are in place for equitable benefit-sharing, transparent decision making, social and environmental safeguard management, and conflict-management.

- In regions, CSOs, CBOs and NGOs are few and are far from being vibrant. Community organisations with elected heads are effective but are rare so far.
- The number of cooperatives is different among target regions, with the biggest number been in Kakheti and the smallest in Mtskheta-Mtianeti;
- The main channel of communication of citizens with self-governance bodies is face to face, through a trustee, appointed by the Mayor;
- Municipalities have three main mechanisms focused on women's empowerment: The position of a gender advisor to Mayor, women councils (piloted in Kakheti), and Women's Room in municipality. However, not all municipalities have either advisor or women's room. In Kakheti region where rooms are in place, they do not function effectively.
- The project should seek to involve with women's organisations, e.g. in providing advocacy and organizing information campaigns to increase women's visibility and generate knowledge within the community on the key role women play for the successful implementation of EE-AF solutions.
- Support the development and implementation of activities to strengthen the engagement of women in participatory forest management approaches under the new Forest Code that can be upscaled in other municipalities. Such approaches should be varied and flexible, so that they can be adapted to the diverse socio-economic, cultural and environmental contexts in Georgia. Special attention should be paid to gender in the context of representation and participation in decision-making processes, benefit sharing, conflict resolution, and inclusive forest management and related business opportunities.
- Draw on existing experience on gender empowerment of civil society organizations and donor projects when strengthening value chains. Those can be value chains where women are already represented such as NTFP commercialization or hospitality, but also other value chains such as wood and eco-tourism.
- Foster the establishment of women groups (e.g. cooperatives or municipal women's rooms/ councils) and cooperate with already existing initiatives to continue to build capacities.
- Introduce quotas for female participation in certain project activities, such as participatory forest management, trainings, or value chain development. This should be accompanied by gender-sensitization of men and women participating in such structures, as well as authorities involved in coordinating and interacting with such structures (e.g. municipal authorities).
- Support skill development and education of women, through formal education (e.g. Technical Vocational Education and Training - TVET institutions, or Universities) or training opportunities.

Ensure that the activity “Strengthening the participation of local communities in FMP development and implementation” foreseen under Activity 3.2 sufficiently applies measures to ensure the representation of needs and interests of women (e.g. including: gender-equitable consultations, targeted consultations with women’s groups or associations, conducting gender-responsive household surveys, facilitating knowledge exchange with ongoing gender-focused activities of other donors and NGOs, and involving external expertise on gender where needed (e.g., short-term consultants or trainers).

6. Gender Equality in the Private Space: Decision-Making and Time Poverty

Next to public space, gender inequality is also apparent in private space. Women own less material resources than men, exercise less power in family decision-making process, and are more likely to experience time poverty due to a higher load of non-unpaid domestic and care work.

Traditional gender role division in Georgia is still very common, especially in rural areas. It is supported and practiced by both women and men. Gender roles refer to ownership and decision-making, stressing man’s role of provider for the family and woman’s role as home keeper. Survey results confirm such attitude as 85.1 percent of men and 81.6 percent of women think that woman’s most important role is to keep family going, 68.3 percent of men and 59.0 percent of women think that it is better for everyone if the man earns money and woman takes care of home and children (UNWOMEN, 2018).

Household composition

There are more men- than women-headed households, which account for 39 percent in Georgia. The share of women headed households is bigger in urban settlements (GEOSTAT, 2018). Among 34 percent of single member households, women comprise 28 percent. This tendency could be explained on the one hand by a higher life expectancy of women and higher share of unmarried women compared to unmarried men. In general, women-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty (UNDP, 2017).

Households comprise on average 3.3 persons. In Kakheti and Guria the number is 3.2 and in Mtskheta-Mtianeti 2.1.

Table 3: Population distribution by regions and gender, and average number of household members

Region	Population	Male %	Female %	Average number of HH members
Georgia	3,713,804	47.7	52.3	3.3
Tbilisi	1,108,717	45.4	54.6	3.3
Imereti	533,906	48.4	51.6	3.1
KvemoKartli	423,986	49.2	50.8	3.7

Ajara	333,953	48.8	51.2	4.0
Samegrelo-ZemoSvaneti	330,761	48.1	51.9	3.3
Kakheti	318,583	49.0	51.0	3.2
ShidaKartli	263,382	48.7	51.3	3.3
Guria	113,350	48.2	51.8	3.2
Samtske-Javakheti	160,504	48.9	51.1	3.6
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	94,573	50.4	49.6	3.1
Racha-Lechkhumi and KvemoSvaneti	32,089	48.6	51.4	2.5

Source: UNFPA

Ownership of family assets

The Law on Gender Equality (Article 10.1) ensures equal ownership rights to men and women. Although inheritance practice is most often founded on customary law and favors men in ownership rights of parental house and land plots. In households with adult male members property is usually registered on male's name. This practice accounts for the gender-based disproportion in ownership, it is more common among men than among women. Ownership of dwelling, as well as means for agriculture and animal husbandry is higher among men. About 80 percent of men and 76 percent of women report ownership of dwelling. Men own 62.3 percent of agricultural parcels, 53.4 percent of large livestock, and 66.7 percent of large agricultural equipment. (GEOSTAT, 2018). Land parcels owned by women are smaller than those owned by men (UNWOMEN, 2015).

In the project regions women own in Guria 43.8 percent of agricultural land plots, in Kakheti 39.1 percent and in Mtskheta-Mtianeti 39.1 percent (UNWOMEN 2018b).

Decision-making power

Obtaining objective information on as who makes final decisions at home is not an easy task. As a rule, opinions differ among spouses and surveys often do not show similar results. E.g. According to the EBRD (2016) survey, decision-making power more often rests with men. In line with the existing practice majority considers this rightful. Both women (56 percent) and men (76 percent) think that man should make decisions at home. 57.8 percent of men and 42.2 percent of women reported making decisions over spending agricultural income (EBRD, 2016). Another survey points to making mostly joint decisions on spending income. This refers to income from selling agriculture products (73 percent), salaries (71 percent), income from business (67 percent) and informal employment (64 percent) to pensions and government benefits (49 percent). Whenever decisions are made mainly by one spouse, in all cases except spending income from business, more women than men make decisions (UNWOMEN, 2018a).

During project consultations, the consulted population declared that spouses or the whole family mostly make the decisions jointly, although some claimed that the household member

with the higher income had more power, and this could be either men or women, although in reality most often it was the man.

Time poverty and household tasks

One of the problems women face is time poverty. The amount of household tasks and caring activities, most often coupled with employment and/or farming do not leave much time to women for rest, entertainment and personal development. The lack of access to kindergartens in many regions further aggravates the problem - the only exception in the consultations being Dedoplistskaro.

Women perform the majority of household tasks. About 46.3 percent of them are performed solely by women, while only 23.7 percent of them are done solely by men, the remaining 30 percent are performed jointly (Gender and Generation Survey, 2010). Making repairs and paying bills are the only tasks where men outnumber women (UNDP, 2017). Besides household tasks, women devote much of their time to the care of the children or sick family members. According to survey, women spend 45 hours a week on household tasks and caring for children, old and ill family members while men spend only 15 hours (UN WOMEN, 2018b).

Women are also more engaged in farming and agricultural works working 80.33 days more than men. Women work 344.25 days per year, while men work 263.92 days. Women also spend more days in animal husbandry. The largest gap, constituting 130 days is noted in Kakheti region. Gender division is apparent in many agricultural and farming activities and types of work done. Poultry and small animal husbandry usually are seen as one of the women's duties, while men and women do husbandry of larger animals jointly. If men are engaged more in income-generating agricultural and farming works, women usually spend more time in subsistence farming; e.g. men spend 91.34 days and women 54.76 for working in crops value chains (UN WOMEN, 2016).

Key findings for the proposed project

- Despite existing provisions ensuring equality in ownership, men own more material assets than women;
- Decisions at household levels are mostly done jointly by spouses, but in cases of disagreement men more often have a final say;
- Women face time poverty as they perform the majority of household chores. Besides, they bear the main responsibility for caring after children and sick family members and all this is often coupled with paid employment or/and subsistence farming.
- As women are less represented in private (and public) decision-making processes and may benefit less from the project. Potential challenges that keep women away from getting involve in project activities need to be closely monitored including: participation barriers (e.g. timing of meetings), finance barriers (e.g. low access to finance, or lack of collateral

to access loans), power dynamics in committees (e.g. unfair benefit sharing, decision making dynamics), Measures should be put in place to overcome these challenges (e.g. supporting women-led SMEs and female entrepreneurs to develop business plans and access finance, supporting women’s skill development and education, providing leadership trainings for women, supporting gender sensitization for men and women, and developing gender-sensitive mechanisms for benefit sharing, outreach and conflict resolution). The project should support gender empowerment, especially supporting women to strengthen their economic standing. This could include providing technical support to female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses to develop business plans and access finance and supporting women to access skill building opportunities and education, among others.

- Gender-sensitization of both men and women should be cross-cutting throughout the project, where awareness is raised on gender equality in both the public and private sphere, and capacities are continuously built on gender equality and social inclusion in the context of the project.
- The planning and implementation of project sub-activities should be gender-sensitive and should be informed by (where suitable): gender-equitable consultations, targeted consultations with women’s groups or associations, gender-responsive household surveys, knowledge exchange with ongoing gender-focused activities of other donors and NGOs, actively monitoring participation and receiving feedback from stakeholders on how to make meetings more accessible, and the involvement of external expertise on gender (e.g., short-term consultants or trainers), among others.

7. Human Capital

Poverty

Poverty associated with high unemployment constitutes one of the main problem of the country. With Per Capita GDP in 2017 being 4,100 USD (World Bank, 2018) 32 percent of population lives under 2.5 USD per day. 18.8 percent of rural and 14.3 percent of urban dwellers are qualified as persistent poor (WB, 2016). According to Geostat, the number of people living in poverty declined from 38.8% in 2007 to 21.9% in 2017 (Geostat, 2018). Georgia counts 258,595 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) out of a total population of 3.72 million, many of whom, like those experiencing extreme poverty, are particularly disadvantaged regarding the access to basic services and social inclusion. Children are at a higher risk of poverty than any other age group. Households headed by women, big size families and families with children under 15 are particularly vulnerable to poverty as well. Households with children comprise 78 percent of households living in extreme poverty, the higher the number of children in the household, the greater the poverty risk (UNDP, 2017).

Poverty rates not only differ across settlement type or family composition, but across regions as well.

Table 4: Poverty headcount by regions (2.5 USD a day)

No	Region	Percent
1	ShidaKartli	51.9

No	Region	Percent
2	Mtskheta-Mtianeti	49.3
3	Guria	45.3
4	KvemoKartli	42.4
5	Samegrelo & ZemoSvaneti	36.8
6	Kakheti	35.3
7	Racha-Lechkhumi & KvemoSvaneti	34.6
8	Imereti	34.6
9	Ajara	31.9
10	Tbilisi	18.6
11	Samtskhe-Javakheti	17.6

Source: World Bank, 2016

As can be seen in the Table 4, the targeted project regions are among those experiencing high rates of poverty. In Mtskheta-Mtianeti the poverty rate accounts for 49.3 percent, in Guria 45.3 and in Kakheti 35.3 percent.

Poverty was cited as the most urgent problem during consultations. All prospective decisions upon purchasing energy-efficient stoves, insulation and use of alternative fuels were considered mostly only in regard to the prices.

As stated earlier, one of the main reasons for poverty is high unemployment. According to official statistics 12.7 percent of the population is unemployed, but real numbers are much higher, as those having plots are considered as employed (GEOSTAT, 2019). According to the 2014 Census, only 36.3 percent of employed men and 28.6 percent of employed women are hired workers (Khakkert & Sumbadze, 2017). More men (63 percent) than women (51 percent) are employed among the economically-active population (GEOSTAT, 2018). In 2018, the ratio of female to male labor force participation was 73.4 percent, higher than the world average of 67.3 (World Bank, 2018a).

More than 23 percent of the population is engaged in informal employment, with men and women equally involved in it. Informal employment is more widely spread in rural than in urban areas. The majority (60 percent) work in agriculture, 23 percent provide different services, 8 percent, mostly men, are busy with repairs, 7 percent, mostly women, are doing domestic work and 6 percent are in sales (UNWOMEN, 2018b).

The gender wage gap can be considered as rather big, which amounted to 427 GEL in 2017. Men earned 1,197 GEL against women earning only 770 GEL. Difference in income is accounted by both horizontal and vertical segregation. The horizontal segregation is the result of women's choice of traditionally female professions, which are the least remunerated. Women mostly can be found in such professions as life science and health; teaching professionals or associate professionals; and customer services clerks. Men are most occupied in the armed forces; they are legislators, general managers, physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals or associate professionals. In 2015, 47.2 percent of women were employed in the three sectors health, education and culture (World Bank 2018b).

In all professions, vertical segregation is also present, with women occupying lower positions than men and correspondingly earning less. For example, women comprise 65 percent of medical staff, but are usually rarely found on high managerial and hence well-paid positions (GEOSTAT, 2018).

Employed women often experience dual burden as they have to fulfill their obligations at work and at home. The Labor Code of Georgia often is criticized for not corresponding to internationally accepted standards. Compensated Maternity leave amounts to 126 days (Article 27 of Labor Code). Additional parental leave amounts to a minimum two weeks per year, maximum 12 weeks until the child turns five years old and can be given to childcare-giver of either sex. The Law does not provide any protection to pregnant women from being dismissed by the employer, pressing women to restrain from using maternal leave. In the private sector, the provision of maternity leave is at the discretion of the employer. The state warrants only a one-time payment in the amount of 1,000 GEL.

Agriculture is the biggest sector of employment, as approximately 43.4 percent of country's territory is designated as agricultural land. It employs 50.9 percent of the active population, 54.1 percent of which are women. However, women are more engaged in low-value-added and a small-scale agricultural production (UNWOMEN, 2018c). About 40 percent grant beneficiaries of the programme "Produce in Georgia" are women, but this concerns only small and medium size businesses (SMEs). There are no women among large-scale grant beneficiaries. Gender equality issues are not reflected in the Regional Development Strategies 2017-2021 and are not detailed in Georgia's Rural Development Strategy 2017-2020.

The stakeholder consultations demonstrated that although the population speaks of economic activation of women in recent years, and that in many household women are the main generators of income, men still remain the principal earners. The main economic activities in the studied regions concern: agriculture, animal husbandry, services and employment in public institutions. Many women are employed in public institutions, such as schools, kindergartens and municipalities.

Small-scale agriculture and farming constitute the main income and subsistence sources for the local population. In Guria, seasonal work in Turkey also plays a significant role. In Kakheti wine production, grain and sunflower harvesting, as well as animal husbandry are the main income sources. Vineyards are associated also with development of touristic activities. The wine route – a network of vineyards, often with adjoining restaurants and guesthouses - is a favourable touristic attraction, especially during autumn. While in wine production more men than women are engaged, the opposite can be said of hospitality business that is more in the women's hands.

In all types of agricultural works and animal husbandry, both women and men are equally engaged. Nonetheless, the majority of tasks are gender-specific. In animal farms, men are occupied with herding and hay~~key~~ production, while women are busy in production of milk products. In agriculture, mechanical works are entirely done by men, while women are assigned to hoeing. Both women and men work as daily hired labourers. Here, in most cases the work is also gender specific. In all regions, there are organized teams of workers. In

Kakheti, these are female, male and mixed gender teams, in Guria mostly mixed gender. The teams are well organized, ensure contracts and transportation. Women teams are also mostly led by women. Men and women get equal pay, the amount of course depends on the task. It fluctuates between 30 and 50 GEL in Guria and Kakheti. In wine factories, women are employed for sticking labels to bottles and for doing similar tasks. In Guria, the main crop is maize. Hazelnuts have been the main import product of the region, but in recent years pests have destroyed them. In Guria many women work in sewing factories in Poti where they commute daily. In total, 200 women are employed in Ozurgeti in sewing factories of famous brands.

Unemployment is the main obstacle for men and women equally throughout the country – the same applies to the targeted regions. It stimulates both migration to other regions in Georgia as well as migration to other countries. Mountainous villages are especially threatened, e.g. in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region out of 289 villages, 50 are deserted, in addition in 50 villages the population does not exceed ten persons.

Health

Women's life expectancy in Georgia exceeds men's by 8.6 years - 77.2 years for women and 68.6 years for men in 2014. Women constitute 62.2 percent among those over 65 years of age in Georgia. In total, 40 percent of men and 25 percent of women evaluate their health as good or very good in representative survey (CRRC, 2018), although the share of those with registered disability status is higher among male adult population, being 2.8 percent, than among women (2.4 percent) (Hakkert & Sumbadze, 2017).

As can be seen from Table 5 in the targeted project regions occurrence of disability is high. In Guria 3.4 percent of males and 3.1 percent of females, in Kakheti 3.1 percent of males and 2.5 percent of females and in Mtskheta-Mtianeti 3.1 percent of males and 2.6 percent of females have a registered disability status.

Table 5: Persons with officially recognized disability status according to sex and regions.

Region	Population Male	Disabled Male	%	Population Female	Disabled Female	%
Tbilisi	502,890	11,115	2.2	605,827	10,986	1.8
Adjara	162,928	4,104	2.5	171,025	4,319	2.5
Guria	54,660	1,886	3.4	58,690	1,822	3.1
Imereti	258,598	9,691	3.7	275,308	8,954	3.2
Kakheti	156,154	4,886	3.1	162,429	4,067	2.5
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	47,645	1,469	3.1	46,928	1,224	2.6
Racha-Lechkhumi&KvemoSvaneti	15,584	887	5.7	16,505	935	5.7
Samegrelo&ZemoSvaneti	159,070	4,779	3.0	171,691	4,572	2.7

Region	Population Male	Disabled Male	%	Population Female	Disabled Female	%
Samtskhe-Javkheti	78,521	2,113	2.7	81,983	1,849	2.3
KvemoKartli	208,532	3,685	1.8	215,454	3,355	1.6
ShidaKartli	128,282	4,454	3.5	135,100	3,789	2.8
Georgia	1,772,864	49,069	2.8	1,940,940	45,872	2.4

Source: Calculated based on the 2014 General Population Census

Maternal mortality remains a problem. In 2013, World Bank estimations show that it was 23 per 100 000 childbirths (Transparency International, 2016).

Education

Georgia has a good record concerning education. Girls constitute 47 percent of basic level and 49 percent of high school graduates. Girls outperform boys in national exams in almost all subjects, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The share of girls and boys is similar among Vocational Education and Training (VET) graduates, but with 54 percent girls comprise the majority of University students (Sumbadze, 2015).

Domestic violence and early marriage

Domestic violence and early marriages are the barriers to health and education, concerning in much greater extent women than men. About 81 percent of population considers domestic violence and 72 percent the early marriages as problems (NDI, 2018). The cases of domestic violence are high and since 2015 show 50 percent increase, though some experts account this not to higher incidence rates, but rather to higher reporting. Incidences of domestic and gender-based violence correspond to global and regional averages (WHO, 2013). In 2017, 3,599 women and 497 men were registered as victims of domestic violence and 393 women and 3,492 men as perpetrators (IDIF, 2019).

Regions of Georgia differ by the reporting incidences of domestic violence. In years 2013-2018, the least number of incidences were registered in Guria, while in other targeted by the project region, Kakheti, the number was one of the highest in the country. When the number of incidences are calculated concerning population, Kakheti ranks second (0.25 percent) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti third (0.24 percent) by the share of registered incidences, while Guria has one of the smallest share (0.16 percent).

Table 6: Number of incidences of domestic violence in 2013-2018 by regions

Region	Number of incidences	Population	%
Samtske-Javakheti	421	160,504	0.26

Region	Number of incidences	Population	%
Kakheti	784	318,583	0.25
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	231	94,573	0.24
Imereti and Racha-lechkhumi	1166	565,995	0.21
ShidaKartli	527	263,382	0.20
Ajara	648	333,953	0.19
Guria	187	113,350	0.16
KvemoKartli	702	423,986	0.16
Tbilisi	1779	1,108,717	0.16
Samegrelo-ZemoSvaneti	340	330,761	0.10
Georgia	6,785	3,713,804	0.18

Source: Calculations based on IDFI and UNFPA data

Nonetheless, incidences of domestic violence are much higher than officially registered. A 2017 nationwide study conducted by UNWOMEN revealed that one of every seven women experienced sexual abuse during her lifetime. Study findings indicate that women and men show a high degree of tolerance towards physical violence against women in relationships, as almost one quarter of women (22 percent) and one third of men (31 percent) believe that beating the wife is justified at least under some circumstances. Moreover, almost one quarter of all women (23 percent) and nearly half of all men (42 percent) believe that a wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees (UNWOMEN, 2018).

World Bank study on gender-based violence in Georgia (WB, 2017) identified vulnerable domestic violence groups. Compared to the others, women who got married before the age of 18 were much more likely to suffer emotional abuse, sexual and physical violence. The analysis demonstrates that respondents with stressed partners, who are unemployed or drink and stay away from home, report higher levels of violence. Over half of all women declared they had no personal income, compared to less than a quarter of men. Men also control most household assets. Even in the cases where women are the legal owners of the property often, the men control the wealth. Women often lack the job skills or networking capabilities to find work and achieve economic independence. This makes them reliant on their spouses. Therefore, they cannot easily report abusive behavior without risking their own economic survival.

Another problem impeding development of human capital is early marriage. According to information provided by the Georgian Ministry of Justice, in 2015, 611 child marriages were registered. In 2016, there decreased to only five. The number of parents who were still minors when registering the birth of a child also declined from 1,449 in 2015 to 1,278 in 2016. However, the figures for the number of minor parents having children considerably exceed the figures on early marriage, clearly indicating that the phenomenon continues, but marriages are not registered due to constraints introduced by law. The legal minimum age for marriage is

established at 18 years. An amendment to Article 1108 of the Civil Code in 2015 postulates that for the marriage of a person younger than 18 years a court decision is needed.

Early marriage negatively reflects on the mother's and newborn's health. It restricts women's education and hence her chances for employment and prosperity. Early marriage very often results in dropping out of school. In 2015, 408 pupils aged 13-17 left schools because of marriage. Dropout for the reason of marriage is more common among girls than boys. Even when married girls want to continue school education, they encounter resistance, as parents of their classmates protest and say they do not want their children to have classes together with married women (Sumbadze, 2015).

The surveys noted above demonstrate that early marriage often makes woman more vulnerable to domestic violence (World Bank, 2017). Early marriages are rooted in customs and traditions closely linked with religion and ethnicity. UNFPA (2014c) found that in the Kvemo-Kartli region 32 percent of married women among the Azeri were married before the age of 18, while five percent got married at the age of 13-14, and 16 percent at the age of 15-16. As can be seen from Table 8, Kakheti (12.4 percent) and Guria (10.2 percent) have a high share of married women younger than 18 years (Hakkert & Sumbadze, 2017).

Table 7: Percentage of married women aged 15-17 by region, area of residence and type of union (all marriages and only registered marriages)

Region	Urban		Rural		Total	
	All	Registered	All	Registered	All	Registered
Tbilisi	2.6	0.8	8.8	2.3	2.7	0.9
Adjara	9.9	4.5	8.8	4.7	9.4	4.6
Guria	9.6	2.9	10.5	4.1	10.2	3.7
Imereti	5.7	2.0	8.2	3.0	6.9	2.5
Kakheti	9.0	1.7	13.5	4.1	12.4	3.5
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	3.2	0.6	5.0	0.9	4.5	0.8
Racha-Lechkhumi&KvemoSvane	2.5	1.3	3.4	0.4	3.1	0.6
Samegrelo&ZemoSvaneti	6.4	2.9	8.6	3.6	7.7	3.3
Samtskhe-Javakhe	4.9	1.3	6.8	2.6	6.2	2.2
KvemoKartli	6.0	1.2	20.8	6.4	14.4	4.2
ShidaKartli	4.1	1.7	7.9	2.2	6.3	2.0
Georgia	4.4	1.5	10.9	3.8	7.1	

Source: Hakkert & Sumbadze, 2017

Key findings for the proposed project

- Poverty is a main problem of the country as one third of the population lives on less than 2.5 USD a day.
- Unemployment is the main reason of poverty; it is higher among men, than women.
- Agriculture is the biggest sector for employment.
- Women spend more time than men in agricultural works, although men are more occupied in value added chains, while women are busier in subsistence farming.
- The majority of agricultural tasks are gender-specific.
- Wage Gender Gap constitutes 427 GEL and is accounted by horizontal and vertical gender segregation.
- Women's life expectancy by 8.6 years exceeds men's'. Women constitute 62.2 percent of persons over 65.
- Women have slightly better educational attainment than men.
- Domestic violence and early marriages are the main impediments of human capital – they are more frequent and have heavier consequences for women than men.

8. Covid-19's Impact on Women and Girls in Georgia

The outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 has strongly impacted Georgia's economy, as well as the livelihoods of Georgians through (among other impacts): economic decline and job loss, changed market dynamics, disrupted supply chains, rising inequality, decreased mobility and access to services (UNICEF, 2020; KfW, 2020; World Bank, 2020a; ADB, 2020). The economic situation worsened since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and poverty is estimated to increase by almost 3% (World Bank, 2020b). Sectors such as tourism had devastating impacts, where domestic and international tourism experienced losses of 80-90% compared to 2019 (Georgia National Tourism Association, n.d.).

The pandemic has affected both men and women. Globally, studies show that women have been particularly affected due to an increase in care work, loss of jobs, and other factors which have resulted in women losing over USD \$800 billion in lost income (Oxfam International, 2021). This figure doesn't take into account the informal sector, where women are often employed. The executive director of Oxfam International (2021) notes "the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic is having a harsher impact on women, who are disproportionately represented in sectors offering low wages, few benefits and the least secure jobs."

In Georgia the full gendered-differentiated impacts of the pandemic are not fully understood. Municipal interviewees were not aware of the full extent of impacts. A few surveys have been conducted to provide insights into potential impacts, and some of the preliminary findings are as follows:

- Job loss or reduced hours: UN Women (2020)² found that around 30% of men and women lost their jobs, and 33% had reduced hours (with similar results for men and women). It further found that ethnic minorities were particularly adversely affected by the pandemic, as 53% of ethnic men and women reported they lost their jobs (gender differences were not significant). The study also found 78% of rural respondents are worried they will fail to keep up with their daily expenses due to the pandemic, especially due to economic slow down and impacts of lockdowns on local economies. A Georgia High Frequency Survey in Georgia from December 2020 found 42% of formally employed persons surveyed in March 2020 were since unemployed, of which 50% were women and 35% were male (GHFS 2020 in World Bank, 2021).
- Increased domestic work: Women and men both reported that their unpaid domestic work has increased with the pandemic, with 42% of women reporting spending more time on at least one extra domestic task, compared to 35% of men. Women are often responsible for childcare, home-schooling and care of the elderly, and due to covid there are more requirements for home schooling and caring for the sick or family members with covid or chronic impacts.
- Lower access to employment protections: Women are more represented in informal sectors. As such they have less formal protections in case of social and labour laws (World Bank, 2020).
- Reduced access to public services: Access to many services and goods has been limited due to the provision, including access to medical supplies, or access to medical treatment (e.g. appointments postponed over covid-19 fears, or reduced staff capacities). This was particularly strong in rural areas where 36% of respondents who required medical attention noted difficulty to access services (in comparison to 30% of urban and 25% of Tbilisi respondents). Rural respondents were also considered to be in a particularly vulnerable position, with respondents noting the lack of supporting services (including government financial support for furloughed employees).
- Increase in domestic violence: The pandemic has been associated with an increase in domestic violence, although there are no reliable statistics available for Georgia. UN Women (2020b) refers to the rise in domestic violence as a “shadow pandemic”. Curfews and restrictions on movement, which are important to curb the spread of Covid-19, limit women’s access to services and support networks (Vaeza 2020). Stress, job loss and economic instability linked to the pandemic further exacerbate domestic violence. In some cases existing women’s shelters and resources are overwhelmed with the increase in demand (Vaeza 2020). In Georgia, Women’s shelters in Tbilisi noted an increase in demand of their services, and highlighted the needs to open additional shelters elsewhere in the country (including Mtsheta-Mtaneti; US Embassy, 2020.).

These are just some preliminary insights into the impact of the covid-19 impact on women.

Key findings for the project

² The UN Women (2020) survey occurred relatively early on in the covid-19 pandemic in May 2020, and Georgia has been particularly strongly affected by the second wave of covid in late 2020/ early 2021.

- Covid-19 continues to greatly affect Georgia’s population and economy. There are differentiated impacts on men and women, however women in particular experience a higher domestic workload (and increasing time poverty), and further face more limited access to economic opportunities than men and are leaving the workforce at a greater pace.
- Women are also particularly affected by domestic violence, which has increased due to the pandemic.
- There is a need for more comprehensive assessments of gender-differentiated impacts of covid-19 in Georgia to fully understand the extent of impacts on women and girls, especially as the pandemic is ongoing continues to affect Georgia and its population. Special attention should also be paid to differentiated groups of vulnerable people (e.g. IDPs, ethnic minorities, disabled persons, widows, among others).
- Where possible, the project could distribute information (e.g. pamphlets) on available resources for domestic violence victims (e.g. sharing information from organizations and institutions working on the topic).
- The project should promote a gender-responsive and equitable green recovery to the pandemic. In particular the project should support women to improve access to opportunities to strengthen their economic status. Interventions could include: strengthening opportunities for skill development, education and training; strengthening value chains with substantial gender-benefits; supporting female-entrepreneurs and women-led business to strengthen and implement sustainable business models (where possible also providing trainings on financial literacy and business skill development), among others. Gender-sensitization should accompany this, to raise awareness about the benefits of women’s economic empowerment and encourage men to support women to reduce time poverty and share domestic tasks.

9. Gender-specific Patterns of Forest and Fuel Use

In an article about barriers to women’s labour force participation in Georgia, the US Embassy (2018) states “Community or family beliefs undermine the potential role of women in contributing to sustainable and productive livelihoods. Gender stereotypes about the kinds of work women and men ‘should’ do limit students from pursuing satisfying careers in non-traditional areas. Negative gender norms and beliefs hold back girls and women from applying for traditionally male-dominated trades in lieu of female-dominated trades, which may not necessarily lead to profitable work.” This is particularly true about the forestry sector, where women are strongly under-represented. Forest specialists and foresters are more often male, wood processing and sawmill activities are further predominated by males. Eco-tourism activities, while having substantially more opportunities for women, also have certain positions (e.g. drivers, guides), which are dominated by men. This includes under-representation of women in related educational and training (e.g. Universities and TVET colleges), which further limits them to enter the job market in this sector. The following sections provide an overview of these gender-specific patterns.

Forest use for NTFPs

Forests are used both by men and women, but with different intensity and purpose. Men go to forests much more frequently than women and they do this more for economic gain, e.g. for obtaining fuel wood and construction materials - not only for home consumption, but also for sale. In case of use of forests for non-timber products, men again do this for commercial means, collecting mostly mushrooms, chestnuts, walnuts, bladder nuts and decorative plants. Women restrain from going to forests due to threat of being attacked by animals. However, in cases when they go, they collect dewberries, raspberries, bilberries, cornelian cherries, "Ganzili"- wild garlic, dog rose and herbs mostly for household consumption, but also for commercial purposes.

Stakeholders interviewed during the project development process noted that women and men tend to use the forest differently. Men often use the forest for obtaining fuelwood, construction materials and collecting economically profitable NTFPs, while women often use forests for collecting berries, fruit and herbs - mostly for home consumption, but also for selling.

This is partly confirmed by a study on forest dependency in Tianeti, Georgia³ (ENPI East FLEG, 2014), which found that men are primarily in charge

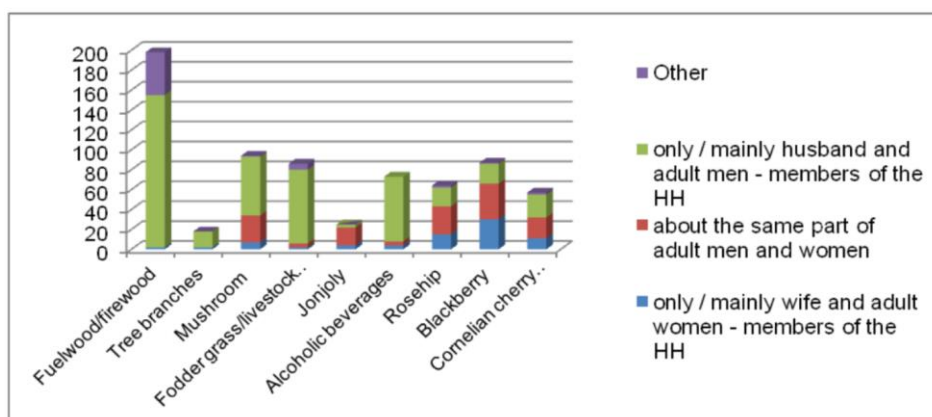


Figure 2. Forest Product Collection by Family Members

Source: ENPI East FLEG 2014

of firewood and forage collection. However, women are equally or more engaged in the collection of non-timber forest products such as berries and fruits (see Figure 2). The study concludes that the products that are used for household purposes (firewood, forage) are collected by men, and women are more likely to be involved in the marketing of the products (food crops).

During the stakeholder interviews, no significant differences between men and women were identified in terms of their involvement in NTFP collection. However, interviewees did indicate that women are slightly more involved in the collection process than men, and that the involvement of one or the other is determined by the time availability of each family member. The main difference lies in the type of NTFP and how physically demanding it to collect it. The relatively easy-to-collect products are mainly collected by women (dog roses, berries,

³ The study conducted a household survey in Tianeti Municipality, interviewing 200 households in five villages.

mushrooms, etc.), while men are mainly engaged in collecting forest fruits which are picked from the trees. Some interviewees perceived firewood consumption as a gender sensitive topic from a user perspective, because having energy efficient ovens, heat, or hot water influence the quality of women's life. Mostly women use fuel wood and control their consumption. Therefore, they claim, women's contexts and needs require further studies and analysis, considering also diverse local and regional contexts within Georgia.

More generally, interviews conducted at the local level (within target municipalities) indicated that obtaining non-timber forest products is not of great economic importance to the population. Cases of collecting resources for sale are rare and the population mainly collects for their personal needs. In some cases (during a specific season), resellers / intermediaries come to the community and buy the collected product from the population. One exception was the municipality of Tianeti, where there is a relatively large collector of NTFP, which collects virtually all types of forest resources. The collection of the NTFP seems to be rather the activity of the poorest sections of the population.

Some interviewees, especially NGOs, noted that there are substantial untapped opportunities for NTFP's as a business for women since a lot of women are already collecting non-timber forest products (e.g., berries, mushrooms). However, it should not be assumed that women's participation in and profit from NTFP collection go hand in hand. The sector, at least from a professional business perspective, appears to be dominated by men. Consequently, the project needs to take measures to ensure equal participation and opportunities in NTFP value chain development. Thus, there is a need to accompany such processes with targeted affirmative measures that empower women and women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and address gaps that limit them from fully profiting from the sustainable use of NTFPs.

Livestock

Forty percent of the country's agricultural land is located in the Kakheti Region. In terms of pastures and hay meadows, Kakheti is the first in Georgia, followed by Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. Pasture management in Georgia consists of semi-nomadic pastoralism⁴

⁴ Semi-Nomadic pastoralism/Transhumance is a widely common practice in Georgia. The system is based on a flexible and climatically adopted utilization of natural grasslands – high mountainous ones in summer, and the ones in lower altitude (valleys and lowlands) in winter. Sheep, as well as, cattle (especially dry livestock) is brought to alpine pastures in summer (at the end of May), while it is herded in lowland areas to get over winter (starting from mid-October). This semi-mobile practice of pastures utilization is especially attributed to sheep farming. One of its most vivid examples is the seasonal migration of sheep from pastures located in the south-eastern part of Kakheti (winter pastures of Shiraki) to high mountainous alpine pastures (in Tusheti). Both mobile and local sedentary sheep farmers/pastoral farmers use the winter pastures. In summer, it is a widely held practice to herd livestock on subalpine and alpine pastures in the western regions of Georgia. However, the migration distance is relatively small compared to the Kakheti route. The villages in high mountainous regions use the nearest alpine and subalpine grasslands. The grazing on high mountainous grasslands is intensive from the beginning of summer to autumn. Mainly dry livestock is herded on summer alpine pastures. Dairy cows are left on place and graze on nearby village pastures (sometimes other agricultural lands and neighbouring forests). Several villages hire herders who herd their and trusted livestock on alpine pastures during the whole summer season. Due to decrease in population of livestock in high mountainous regions, it is observed that subalpine and alpine pastures are being naturally forested, whereas the bottleneck of pastoral use of grasslands are winter pasture areas.

and sedentary pastoralism.⁵ Many people are using forests as pastures, which can lead to conflicts with forest managers due to forest degradation caused by livestock. NFA staff in Guria noted examples where unauthorized livestock grazing limited the effectiveness of forest restoration.

Interviews highlighted men are more often involved with livestock and herding than women. FAO (2018), confirms that men are more involved with financial decisions regarding livestock, and are more likely to be involved in cattle maintenance and pasturing. FAO further notes that women often spend more time on livestock than men and are involved in milking and milk processing. Currently dairy production is more common than meat production in Georgia.

Fuel use

Wood for fuel is used universally for heating. Everywhere, notwithstanding having or not having piped gas, people in Georgia use fuel wood for heating. The overwhelming majority of the population heats only one room irrespective of either the size of the house or the number of the household members. In rare cases, two rooms are heated. The public institutions are also mostly heated by fuel wood or briquettes, only in rare cases large schools have a central gas heating system.

People most often pay for fuel wood, but many depend heavily on obtaining it out of the forest for free. As one of the villagers commented:

“Why should we buy fuel wood, when it is in abundance behind our houses?”

During consultations such opinions were mainly heard from the villagers living in mountainous areas, where forest are close to their houses. They also expressed great discontent with the activities of licensed enterprises that were cutting trees there.

In Guria, some villagers have plots where they grow trees for fuel. These are rapidly growing species, elms and acacia, that they cut and use as fuel wood.

Fuel wood is usually cut in the forest by men, this may be a household member or a hired person. However, further splitting of wood, carrying it home and putting it in stoves is performed by women. So in fact, women are rather the ones who control the consumption of fuel wood.

Besides heating, cooking and warming water, fuel wood is used for fireplaces, traditional baking of bread, distilling “Chacha”- spirit beverage and making preserves.

⁵ Households use unfenced meadows near their villages as common pastures for their livestock. Sometimes arable lands that have been left uncultivated for years are used as pasture as well. In addition, in some areas mowed hayfields and harvested fields are seasonally used as pastures in late autumn and winter. Villagers themselves (in rotating shifts) or by employing hired herdsmen move village livestock to the pastures every morning. In the evening, the livestock returns back its homestead where it (often) receives additional fodder. Pastures are rarely irrigated. Measures of pastures maintenance and productivity enhancement, such as soil fertilization or the elimination of shrubs and weeds, are rarely practiced. In some regions, pastures are informally distributed among communities and villages.

Nowadays, in many kindergartens in Guria and Dedoplistskaro, briquettes are used. Teachers, who are almost exclusively female, are quite content with them.

“We are very satisfied with briquettes, they are easy in use and depending on the type of tree they are made of, give much warmth” (Teacher of a kindergarten in Lesa).

The only problem in Guria is the storage where humidity is high, which negatively affects the quality of the briquettes.

Use of stoves

Some portion of the population uses more-energy efficient (the so called “Svanetian stoves”, which last for about 5 years). However, majority uses the cheaper, traditional ones, lasting for just one or two seasons. The choice is determined entirely due to restricted economic situation of the household. In five years-perspective, both stoves probably cost approximately the same, but despite understanding that more energy-efficient stoves have a better effect, for many it is difficult to pay a big sum at once.

“We will buy enhanced stoves if the price would be lower than Svanetian stoves or if it would be possible to pay gradually” (Female participant of consultation in Guria).

This restriction is more prominent for households who are below the poverty line, single-women households and households comprising of only pensioners.

Recreational use of forests

The use of forests for recreational purposes is rather rare and differs across regions. In Kakheti, there are many worshiping sites, which are frequented both by local population and internal or foreign tourists while there are very few such sites in Guria and Tianeti. The common problem in Kakheti is their accessibility as they are situated deep and high in the forests. The religious sites are kept very well, but camping sites are oftentimes littered:

“Up to 15-20 km from Angokhi are beautiful waterfalls. Villagers go, but as for tourists to visit it, the road is needed (Female participant in Angokhi).

The schools rarely take pupils to the forests; parents also seldom take children there.

Women in eco-tourism and hospitality

As discussed, traditional gender norms, prevail in much of rural Georgia where women are often responsible for most of the domestic work related to cleaning, cooking, caregiving, and taking care of livestock and home gardens. Nonetheless, women have increasingly found new opportunities within the tourism sector. In 2010, employment figures in the hospitality sector

(restaurants and hotels) were fairly balanced between men and women, with slightly more women being employed in Georgia than men. (Krieg 2018). Women are typically involved in:

- Cooking and serving local cuisine: Many women collecting non-timber forest products (berries, mushrooms, etc.) which can be used in the preparation of meals for guests.
- Working in or running a guesthouse business: In local guesthouses, women typically hold roles related to hospitality. They often “hold the purse” to buy goods and receive payments for services. Men on the other hand are often involved with larger financial matters vis-à-vis banks and tax authorities. Men are also more likely employed as drivers, horse-back riders, and trail guides. Slowly, more women are becoming guides, in particular for the less physically demanding trips, which still is in the men’s domain. In Tusheti PLA, for instance, there has been a boom in women-operated guesthouses and Tusheti women, through their hard work in the mountains in the summer, contribute to the financial wellbeing of Tusheti communities in Kvemo Alvani, Zemo Alvani and Laliskuri.

Two interviewees from the tourism sector agreed that in general women have good opportunities in the hospitality sector, however there are still cultural norms and customary reasons that restrict women from being more involved in leadership roles and other positions that are more often occupied by men (e.g. guides).

Moreover, there is a risk for women engagement associated with the use of community-based planning tools like the proposed eco-tourism development action plan. Men are often the ones attending public events and there is a risk that women do not get enough influence in the tourism development processes. They must be equally involved in all community stakeholder meetings and offered the same de-facto opportunities as their male counterparts. If this is culturally not possible to hold mixed community meetings, an alternative strategy is to organize gender-specific meetings and later merge inputs from men and women, before they are discussed at a final meeting involving the leaders of both gender groups. Thus, there is a considerable risk that women do not get enough influence in the tourism development processes. Some interviewees find women are not equally involved in community stakeholder meetings, and as a result they are often not offered the same de-facto opportunities as their male counterparts. In addition, women’s lower ownership of productive assets, especially land, and limited access to finance (often due to lack of collateral) often serve as barriers that limit female-entrepreneurship in the sector.

As the Government of Georgia increasingly looks at the potential to support eco-tourism within NFA-managed areas, there is substantial opportunity to develop opportunities for women’s economic empowerment in the sector. Several interviews (e.g., ECF, CENN, SUCCOW) highlighted the important role that tourism development can play to benefit and empower women. Nonetheless, special attention needs to be paid to addressing barriers including: overcoming gender norms and promoting women in diverse roles within the sector, supporting women to improve formal control over productive resources, strengthening financial inclusion, and related skill development (directly related to tourism, as well as business plan development and implementation).

Wood production and processing

The availability of data on women in timber production and processing is limited. According to a World Bank Study (WB 2020, p. 6) forest and wood processing sectors in the South Caucasus region are characterized by data scarcity. This also applies to social and gender data as well. General information on labour is not readily available, not to mention detailed gender-specific data. However, interviews noted that the field is predominantly occupied by men. According to an Interview with NFA, women are rather employed in NTFP collection than in timber production: “The ‘forest specialist has to work hard to produce timber, which is not to say that it will not be popular, especially for women, but when it comes to involving women and young people in forest-related value chains, they have traditionally been informally employed collecting and selling non-timber products.” As stated above, these traditional gender norms and beliefs limit women’s participation in related training and educational opportunities, and in the labour market within the forestry sector.

Ownership of forests

Ownership entails usage right, legal or customary, and protection. The feeling of ownership of forests differs across geographic vicinity of settlement to forest and across gender. Perceived ownership is very high among men living in villages bordering forests. The ownership is expressed both in a protest against use of forests by private businesses, and also in understanding of the need of their protection.

“The forest is behind my house, and if I cut the tree today, tomorrow my house may be flooded.” (Men in Angokhi).

Villagers living near forests claim a control over forest use for themselves, although this is not legally recognized. For example, the population of Zoti,, an isolated village situated in highlands of Guria, proposed to form village committee, which will check the acclaimed needs of inhabitants for wood materials for the construction or repair of their wooden houses, and will issue cutting permit. However, based on the New Forest Code, this is not legal.

The New Forest Code includes additional provisions for participation with local forest users in an attempt to find mutually beneficial outcomes based on the sustainable management of forests. However, this is relatively new for the country, and there is a need to build up gender-equitable and inclusive mechanisms to enable coordination, benefit sharing, and potentially conflict resolution with local forest users.

Key findings for the proposed project

- Wood for fuel and as construction material is used frequently
- Mostly women use fuel wood and control their consumption;
- Men use the forest much more intensively than women. In some places, women do not go to the forest at all. Men use forest mostly for obtaining fuel wood and construction materials

and collecting economically profitable non-timber products, while women use forests for collecting berries, fruit and herbs mostly for home consumption, but for selling as well;

- The feeling of ownership of forest differs by the distance of settlement from the forest. It is much higher in villages located near forests. The feeling was expressed mostly by men.
- Attitude to using briquettes is positive due to experience of their use in public institutions. As the women constitute the majority of employees of such organisations, they are most active proponents of briquette use.
- The use of forests for recreational purposes is not widely spread. Schoolchildren are rarely taken for camping into forests. A bit more frequented are sites of worship, but their remote location and lack of roads makes them difficult to access.
- There are mixed understandings of the local framework, and there may be conflicts with local communities over the use of local forests. While the new forest code and this project (especially Component 3) aim to mitigate this risk, it is important gender-sensitive, transparent and accessible conflict resolution and benefit sharing mechanisms are developed.
- In the context of NTFP value chain development it needs to be ensured that value chains are included in which women play an active role. Targets for support to women-led SMEs and female entrepreneurs should be set and monitored. Where possible, supporting studies and assessments related to NTFP value chains should include gender considerations.
- Targeted support should be provided to women and vulnerable households to help them overcome some of the additional challenges they may face (e.g. time poverty, limited formal control of land or resources that may ultimately limit access to credit). Relevant measures should be formulated for the specific NTFPs, and other forest-related value chains.
- The development of tourism value chains should actively involve women. In this context, the project should take measures that women have equal opportunities also in other fields than hospitality. This could involve trainings on business skills, eco-tourism guiding, interpretation, or related fields. It should further include gender-sensitization to help overcome traditional norms and ideas of roles and opportunities for women within the sector. Where possible, the project should also strengthen access to finance, which remains a barrier for women as they are less likely to hold property rights.
- Related to the aforementioned forest-related value chains, the project should also consider gender within access to education, trainings and skill building opportunities. This includes ensuring curricula and programs are gender-sensitive, teachers are trained on gender equality and social inclusion, and in making programs that are more accessible to women (e.g. courses offered at municipal TVET branches, short-cycle educational programs, etc.), and conducting targeted outreach to increase awareness and participation of women

10. Gender Composition of Staff of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture

The forestry sector is dominated by male employees. In the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA) departments of Biodiversity and Forest Policy, Department of Environmental Supervision (DES) and National Forestry Agency (NFA) are governmental bodies responsible for forests. Protected areas are managed by LEPL” Agency of Protected Areas (APA)”.

Staff of the ministry

As can be seen from Table 8, male personnel comprise 86.1 percent of the staff of all three bodies managing forests. Men are in the majority and comprise 75 percent on decision-making positions. The heads of all three departments are men.

Table 8: Gender distribution of the staff responsible for forest management in MoEPA

Positions	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total
Department of Biodiversity			
Head	1		1
Deputy head		1	1
Division head	1	1	2
Number of decision-makers	2	2	4
Employees	12	8	20
Total	14	10	24
National Forestry Agency (NFA)			
Head	1		1
Deputy head	2	1	3
Division head	2		2
Services head	3	1	4
Number of decision-makers	8	2	10
Employees	378	95	473
Total	386	97	483
Department of Environmental Supervision (DES)			
Head	1		1
Deputy head	2	1	3
Division head	2		2
Services head	4	4	8
Territorial body head	8		8

Positions	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total
Number of decision makers	17	5	22
Employees	788	82	870
Total	805	87	892
Total			
Decision-makers	27	9	36
Percent	75	25	100
Employees	1,178	185	1,363
Percent	86.4%	13.6%	100%
All	1,205	194	1,399
Percent	86.1%	13.9%	100%

Source: Interviews with heads and deputy heads of departments

In the regional branches of the NFA, similar gender imbalance exists. In Kakheti, out of 44 employees, only five are women. They work in the sphere of analyses (three persons) and services (two persons). In Mtsketa-Mtianeti, among 35 employees only four are women, who work as analysts and in chancellery. In Guria, the forestry department employs 25 persons. The head and deputy heads are men. The department has two divisions in Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri, which are both headed by men. Three women work on analyses and two more in chancellery.

Gender imbalance in the forestry sector is often accounted by Ministry staff and heads of territorial departments of targeted regions as rooted in sex differences, namely physical strength and endurance needed for fulfilling the tasks associated with being a ranger, in most cases an entry point to the profession. This is further linked with the lack of women with adequate education since women are reluctant to pursue the profession of a forester. Currently, many ~~Therefore~~, women who work in the forestry sector are specialized on forestry policy and analysis and are not engaged in actual inspection of forests.

However, in 2021 an interviewee from NFA noted that the lack of women in the sector is due to a “lack of awareness and persisting stereotypes”. In their view, more information and awareness raising is needed to make sure that forest related work is not considered as man’s work only, especially because women would not see themselves in certain positions nor pursue related educational opportunities due to these norms and gender-biases. According to NFA, the agency is working on a policy that discusses equal payment to women, however salaries in NFA, as in every public agency, are defined according to position rather than gender.

11. Gendered considerations related to education in forestry and forest-related value chains

As of 2021, three Universities in Georgia offer forestry courses. The Agricultural University of Georgia and the Technical University of Georgia both offer accredited bachelor, master and doctoral forestry programs. Ilia State University offers masters-level modules on forestry, as part of a master's degree on Natural Resource Management. For the period of 2010-2014, the total number of Bachelor Forestry programs graduates amounted to about 295 students, 29 graduates were awarded the master's degree and only one received a PhD degree at Agricultural University of Georgia. Unfortunately, there is no specific data available on the number of women enrolled and their motivations.

TVET education in forestry (III, IV, V levels) can be obtained in Batumi University and of levels I-III in vocational colleges "Horizon", Ozurgeti and Javakhsivili Borjomi Private School. Vocational education programme - Forest Work Specialist (Level IV) in Akhaltsikhe, VET college "OPIZARI", in Kachreti VET college "AISL" in Kobuleti - VET college "NEW WAVE" and in Mtskheta, VET college "Tsinamdzghvriantkari". A single TVET College forestry program produces an average of 25-35 forestry specialist qualified graduates per year, 2-3% of which are women (Aaslamazashvili 2020; Khakhutaishvili 2020; Djafaridze 2020).

The most problematic issues students are facing is a poor knowledge base, lack of motivation to become a forester, outdated curricula and training modules, lack of modern training infrastructure and materials, and poor opportunities for on-the-job and mid-career training (Forest Education, 2015). Forestry education in TVET colleges has made important strides in updating the forestry program over the last five years. Nonetheless, with the approval of the new forest code in 2020 there is a need to further update curricula, which could serve as an important opportunity to revise it from a gender-perspective and facilitate gender mainstreaming. A major gap in TVET education is in forest-related value chains. An interview with NFA highlighted the importance of adding new modules related to non-timber resources, eco-tourism, and forest-related value chains, highlighting that these programs would become more attractive for women, and could incentivize more women to become formally engaged in the sector.

Moreover, it was highlighted that there is a low awareness of opportunities in the sector by women, and there is a need for a local information campaign to attract more women. Beyond this, women have typically lower levels of mobility than men. Where possible the project should focus on improving accessibility of courses to women. This includes offering courses in municipal TVET branches or local villages (as rural women tend to have more mobility restrictions than men), offering short-cycle educational programs and/ or trainings, and offering trainings at suitable times or with a degree of flexibility that enable women to work around their busy schedule.

Key findings for the project

- Curricula and programs need to be planned in a gender-responsive manner (e.g. through conducting consultations with women forest users and women's organizations prior and during course design, hiring gender experts to contribute to curricula development).
- Teachers and professors should be trained on gender-equality and social inclusion.
- Focused outreach should be conducted to ensure women are able to participate in offered courses and benefit from SFM and forest-related value chains.
- Design respective project activities under Component 3 to tackle those risks:
 - Gender-differentiated assessment of training needs at the local level.
 - Improve the suitability and accessibility of TVET programs considering gender (ensuring gender-sensitive programming and curricula, promotion of courses at suitable times for women, developing short-cycle education programs and trainings, and where possible offering TVET courses at municipal TVET branches)
 - Monitor and strengthen the participation of women in TVET programs related to forestry and forest-related value chains.
 - Improving outreach of forest related TVET programs and fostering intake of local men and women and SMEs.
 - Strengthen cooperation with the private sector to improve linkages to labour markets, including gender-considerations. Women often have more difficulties finding a job after finishing TVET programs (US Embassy of Georgia, 2018), and special attention should be paid to networking opportunities for both male and female students.

12. General Conclusions and Implications for the Project

It has become obvious that women on the one hand are still negatively impacted due to gender stereotypes, but on the other hand also have the potential to be important change agents in achieving the overall objective to enable the implementation of forest sector reform in Georgia to reduce GHG emissions from forest degradation. However, to strengthen women in their agency capacities is only one pillar to achieve a sustainable change. The societal and organisational structures also need to be supported in order to provide an enabling environment for gender-responsive governance.

Based on the assessment, five intervention areas are identified:

- 1) Strengthening of gender competencies in partner structures
- 2) Gender-responsive framework conditions
- 3) Women as key actors and target group
- 4) Access of women to resources and benefits of the project
- 5) Gender Mainstreaming and data collection

Specific interventions for strengthening gender competencies in partner structures:

As the analysis shows, gender is still in most partner institutions a concept either unknown or at a very nascent stage of being mainstreamed. Taking into account the specific role of women in the project concerning fuel use, appliance use, forest use, access to resources and benefits of the project and decision making it is crucial to create a case for action, strengthen competencies and institutionalize gender aspects in the respective partner organisations. It will enable organizations to implement the Forest Sector Reform and the market development for energy efficient appliances and alternative fuels in a gender-sensitive manner.

The following interventions in the partner structures have to be considered to close specific gender gaps identified in the gender assessment:

- With the new mandate under the Forest Sector Reform of also supervising forest use, the Department of Environmental Supervision will in future engage even more with local population to control illegal activities in the forests. This may lead to potential conflict with forest users, men and women alike. It is therefore crucial to capacitate the Department on gender-differentiated aspects of forest, wood and non-timber forest products use. Further, it is essential to ensure gender-mainstreaming of the new training system and include a module/component that focuses solely on the gendered nature of patterns in forest and fuel use. For the institutionalization of gender perspectives gender focal points/resource persons should be appointed in partner structures (MoEPA, NFA, DES, and the Rural Development Agency (RDA)).⁶ These focal points should ensure that gender aspects are considered in the strategies, Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) and activities of the respective institutions. Once respective persons are identified, training needs need to be addressed based on clear terms of reference of their role as gender resource persons. In addition, a network among them should be established to facilitate exchange and lessons learned.
- Decisions at household levels, including investment decisions, are mostly done jointly by spouses, but in cases of disagreement men more often have a final say. In addition, many women-led households are more vulnerable to poverty and have specific needs in lending processes. It is therefore crucial that in the implementation of consumer financing instruments for energy efficient (EE)- and alternative fuel (AF) solutions, the identified financial institutions providing loans to households for EE stoves and/or alternative fuels receive gender-specific advice on the design of loan programmes based on a need's assessment. This will ensure that gender aspects are considered by the financial institutions.
- Capacity building measures conducted at municipal level on forest management tools, practices and plans should be gender-sensitive and the representation of needs and interests of women should be ensured. Municipal staff should be trained on gender equality

⁶ From July 1, 2019 the official title of Agricultural Projects Management Agency (APMA) was changed into Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA). In 2020 the agency changed their name to the Rural Development Agency (RDA).

and social inclusion, as well as best practices for conflict resolution, and participatory forest management.

Specific interventions to establish gender-responsive framework conditions

Key for success and sustainability of project activities is a) the creation of a legislative and regulative framework, which safeguards project interventions and b) the development of implementation plans and standard operating procedures, which provide guidance for a medium-term period to all involved stakeholders. Since regulations, plans and SOPs set strategic directions it is critical that gender-aspects are considered properly when developing and implementing them. Gender-responsiveness and gender-sensitivity should be set as a minimum standard. Enhancing gender capacities in partner structures is an important step for ensuring gender-responsive frameworks. Both intervention areas should closely be linked.

The following processes should be reviewed by a gender expert, guaranteeing that revised or new policies and regulations are gender-sensitive and responsive:

- Sustainable FMPs and business plans to ensure they are gender sensitive and - responsive, equally reflecting areas traditionally used by men and women;
- The representation of needs and interests of women should be promoted in the feasibility studies for MFM application and the development of institutional, legal and regulatory framework for MFM under Component 3.
- A similar process should be applied for the development of a toolbox on municipal forest management for national and municipal level decision-makers under Component 3.
- Training, capacity building and guidance should be provided to support the implementation of participatory forest management (at both the planning and implementation stage), for both forest management bodies (e.g. NFA and DES), as well as municipal authorities and local forest users. Potential mechanisms coordination, benefit-sharing and conflict resolution should be explored, while ensuring sufficient diversity and flexibility of platforms and mechanisms to fit the diverse local contexts in the project regions and target municipalities.
- (SOPs) on the provision of sustainably produced fuelwood and implementation of SFM by NFA / on forest supervisions by DES / on the financial investment instruments of ARDA;
- Policies and regulations for the EE-AF sector.
- There is no formal grievance redress mechanism in the forestry sector. The project should support the establishment of a GRM that will be operational in the long-term and enable local men and women to file complaints and grievances, if necessary.
- Ensuring gender-sensitive curriculum during the revision of existing curricula, or development of new curricula related to forestry and forest-related value chains.

Any further regulations and policies that might take place and be advised by project staff will also have to be reviewed to ensure gender-responsiveness and gender-sensitivity.

Specific interventions to include women as key actors:

The assessment shows that women face constraints to participate in decision making in their households and public processes. Reasons are manifold: As clearly stated in the gender assessment, men have more power in the private realm as they have a higher income and own and control more property than women do. Poverty is the problem for a large part of the population, but women are affected by it on a larger scale than men are. Women-headed households, single member families, which mostly comprise of women or elderly, among which are more women than men, are the most vulnerable people. Moreover, women are more prone to time poverty as they usually combine employment with care-giving responsibilities, leaving almost no time for leisure activities and personal development. Such dynamics have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, where there is a need for a gender-responsive and equitable green recovery from the pandemic.

To achieve the overall project objective, it is critical to include women as key actors and change agents. By acknowledging women as key actors, their role and visibility within the society will be increased, which in turn can lead to a transformative change by giving more opportunities to women. Nonetheless, even by including women more actively in planning and decision-making processes, the measures need to be designed to address the barriers women are facing. The project should focus on the following measures to integrate women as key actors and decision makers:

- To address the aspect of time poverty, the project activities (such as trainings and consultations) should not take part in the evening hours, during weekends and over longer periods of time (more than two or three days) away from their hometown, as to not collide with their duties at home. If possible, the provision of childcare services during the planned measures and activities should be made available. In addition, to provide protected space, women specific consultations should be held in the women rooms (in Kakheti region).
- In the development and implementation of sustainable forest management plans in Guria, Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti, women need to be included in the planning and decision-making processes regarding FMPs. Based on the minimum target of 30% share of women, any consultation processes with local communities should include this amount or ideally reflecting the gender composition of the target municipality. Given the low number of women as elected representatives in municipal councils, the goal should be to always specifically invite all women who have a seat in the municipal council. In order to make the most of existing institutional mechanisms, the municipal Gender Focal Point should be informed and whenever possible included in processes. The employment of women for fuelwood and wood~~timber~~ marketing should be encouraged. Women in general have a higher educational attainment and second, have a better understanding and access to the main consumer target group, since women control the use of fuel and oven use. To include

higher numbers of women as forest patrollers and inspectors in the DES, it must be ensured that the infrastructure is appropriate for women as well (bathroom, changing rooms, safety precautions) and all staff has been undergone a Code of Conduct including aspects of sexual harassment.

- For a sustainable EE-AF supply chain development, it is critical to encourage the participation of female entrepreneurs. Women's rooms in municipalities can be used and/or reactivated for additional women's-only training and coaching sessions to provide a safe space. Training of Trainers (ToT) can be used in two ways to improve women's participation: First ToT can be specifically held for women with the purpose of women training women and second, to generate a gender balance in the talent pool of trainers. This allows women to generate an additional income and be in an instructor's position in front of a mixed-gender group (which helps overcoming stereotypes). While scouting for potential trainers and female trainees, women cooperatives can serve here as multipliers. Women cooperatives also have a potentially crucial role in the supply chain of raw materials for alternative fuel production. They can help in identifying as well as strengthening existing and new female EE-AF producers to adequately represent women as asset holders and incorporate their experiences and perspectives. As has been pointed out in the assessment, women have a stronger voice in the NGO sector. Hence, advocacy and information campaigns need to be organized and led by women's organisations to increase women's visibility and generate knowledge within the community on the key role women play for the successful implementation of EE-AF solutions.
- Introduce quotas for female participation in certain project activities (e.g. participatory forest management, trainings, or value chain development). This should be accompanied by gender-sensitization of men and women participating in such structures, as well as authorities involved in coordinating and interacting with such structures (e.g. municipal authorities).
- Special attention should be paid to empowering women and helping them overcome the disproportionate impacts experienced during the pandemic. This includes supporting female entrepreneurship and women-led SMEs and supporting women to build their skills and capacities to strengthen their socio-economic position. Specific attention should be paid to barriers for female entrepreneurs and businesses, including often lack of formal land rights, and related barriers to access finance (e.g. often due to the lack of collateral). Women should be promoted in the context of local value chain development under Component 3. The interviews showed that women dominate in a few areas and can act as key actors for certain products or services. This could be, for instance, the collection and processing of berries and fruits in the NTFP sector or hospitality in the eco-tourism sector.

In addition, women are less likely to access TVET programs in the forestry sector. There is a need to improve gender mainstreaming in curriculum, support awareness raising, train teachers on gender-equality and social inclusion, develop courses related to forest-related value chains with substantial gender benefits (including short-cycle educational programs and trainings), strengthen linkages between female graduates and the private sector in terms of labour opportunities for graduates, and increase the accessibility of these programs/ courses

to women (e.g. in municipal TVET branches). Beyond only focusing on women, it is recommended that gender-sensitization is a cross-cutting element in trainings and project activities, to improve the awareness of both women and men on gender equality and social inclusion, and to raise awareness of outdated stereotypes.

Specific interventions to ensure access to resources and benefits of the project:

Since women and especially women-led households are structurally disadvantaged in Georgia, it is essential that access to resources and benefits of the project is ensured and promoted. This includes access to fuel and stoves, forest products, and information.

The project has to ensure that gender gaps in access to resources and project benefits are addressed by the following measures:

Access to fuel, stoves and respective support programmes:

Access to high quality fuel is crucial for women, since they are the main users of fuel. The new fuelwood delivery mechanism (fuelwood harvesting, drying and storage plus delivery to households by NFA) ensures that only dry fuelwood of high quality reaches the households. At the same time, it is being used in more efficient heating and cooking appliances, which provide better heating and cooking patterns. Women as main users of fuelwood for heating and cooking benefit via less exposure to in-house fumes (reduced health impacts), faster and better heating of the house (comfort increase) and via less need of re-fueling the appliance (time saving). In addition, men do not have to collect and harvest fuelwood by themselves anymore, which also frees their time for economic activities.

To ensure that quality fuelwood benefits women and reaches also women-led households NFA should ease the access to the fuelwood delivery system for women, especially for women-headed households. NFA should establish a respective monitoring system to track accessibility.

Women are also the main users of the new stoves and alternative fuels and access to the respective support programmes is crucial. The project has to ensure uptake of EE and AF with women-led households and financial incentives are attractive and accessible to women led households as well as women who are married.

The project has to make sure that women-led households are a specific target group, being addressed via targeted measures in the awareness raising activities of the project (see below, access to information). This will lead to a high rate of women-led households being specifically informed on the benefits of EE-AF solutions. Second, to strengthen the access to the micro-finance component financial literacy workshops should be organised jointly with the gender councils and gender focal points of the municipalities. Third, a gender impact assessment should be done to assess the accessibility of loan programme for women and women led households and adjustments to the programme will be done accordingly. Fourth, it is

recommended that the project commits itself to have at certain percentage of beneficiaries of the voucher programme to be women led households.

Access to forest products:

The assessment has shown that women collect non-timber forest products (NTFP) mainly for non-commercial use. In principle, NTFP also provide a potential source of income for women via value chain development. According to the new Forest Code, there are no restrictions on collection of non-timber forest products for household consumption purposes. It will still be allowed to access the forest and to collect these products. For commercial use negotiations have to take place to include the commercial utilization of these products by rural communities into the SFMPs (see above proposed measures on women's participation in SFMP development).

The project has to ensure that collection of NTFP for personal consumption by women is respected by DES in its forest supervision function (see proposed measures above). In addition, it has to enable rural communities and especially women to create additional income sources via commercial utilization of NTFPs. Component 3 focuses on creating additional livelihood value chains for NTFP products and agro-forestry value chains with a specific focus on women and vulnerable groups. Moreover, the Component aims to introduce a dispute settlement mechanism for the municipal forest sector so that potential conflicts on access to forest resources can will be consulted on and can eventually be solved.

Access to opportunities in the eco-tourism sector

Eco-tourism in the context of NFA's forests present a new opportunity, with substantial potential to empower rural women, and strengthen their economic position. The development of eco-tourism value chains should actively involve women and include affirmative measures to encourage their participation in the sector, not only in traditional hospitality roles. The project should implement trainings on business skills (including targeted workshops for women), eco-tourism guiding, interpretation, and other related fields. It should further include gender-sensitization to help overcome traditional norms and ideas of roles and opportunities for women within the sector. Where possible, the project should also strengthen access to finance for female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses, which often remains a barrier.

Access to information on forest use, forest-related value chains, and alternative fuels and energy efficient stoves:

Access to information for women is a pre-condition to participate in discussions and to facilitate women's decision-making. Women need to be informed about the changes in forest use, the opportunities linked to it and about the benefits and opportunities in energy efficiency and use of alternative fuels. Timely and transparent information targeted to women and women-led households will enable them to take informed decision on household investments and potential

income generation opportunities. The foreseen awareness activities of the project (Activity 2.3) should take these aspects into account by utilizing instruments and mechanisms, which directly target women and women-led households.

To facilitate access to information for this specific group the awareness activities should include the following design elements:

- Include the institutional mechanism of the municipal gender focal point and gender council for advocating purposes;
- Establish working relations between local information points and municipal gender focal points to reach women and to feed in diverse women's perspectives;
- Focus household advisory services for EE-AF solutions specifically on women-headed and vulnerable households in order to increase the information sovereignty among before mentioned households.
- Ensure gender mainstreaming in all ~~mainstream~~ awareness raising materials, and trainings.
- Support women to develop their professional skills and gain knowledge related to forest management, and forest-related value chains through vocational education and training and international university partnerships with centres of knowledge. Special attention should be paid to female local forest users, who are particularly affected by the forest reform, and include focused outreach to ensure women are able to effectively participate in offered courses and benefit from SFM and forest-related value chains.

Lastly, household advisory services for EE-AF should specifically focus on women-headed and vulnerable households in order to increase the information sovereignty among before mentioned households.

Specific interventions to ensure gender mainstreaming:

Gender Mainstreaming should be ensured through either external experts or by building up internal capacities. This is essential to ensure that any campaign, knowledge management and compilation of information specific to the forest sector reform and fuel use includes implicitly and explicitly the gender dimension. Successful gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive policy making depends on the availability of gender disaggregated data and needs to be supported throughout the project.

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2006. Adoption of the State Concept on Gender Equality by the Parliament.

2006. Adoption of the Law of Georgia on Combating Trafficking.

2006. Adoption of the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to the Victims of Domestic Violence.

2010. Adoption of the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality.

2013. Appointment of Prime Minister's Assistant on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues.

2013. Establishment of Gender Equality Department as a standing unit in the structure of the Public Defender's Office.

2014. Adoption of the Law on Non-discrimination.

2014. Signing the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

2016. Presentation of initial plan of Nationalization of SDGs. Georgia is among 193 signatories of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 17 principals of sustainable development make explicit commitments to gender equality both as a stand-alone goal and as a cross-cutting theme across all the SDGs. SDG 5 refers to gender equality and has 14 indicators.

2017. Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. (Istanbul Convention).

2017. Establishment of the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues.

2018 .Establishment of Human Rights Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

2018. Adoption of National Action Plan for 2018-2020 on the Human Rights.

2018. Adoption of National Action Plan for 2018-2020 on Women, Peace and Security (UN SCR 1325).

2018. Adoption of National Action Plan for 2018-2020 on the Measures for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors.

Annex 2: List of groups and persons consulted

List of initial consultations help in 2019

#	Municipality	Community	Stakeholder	Men	Women	Total
1	Tbilisi	n/a	MoEPA (Biodiversity and Forestry Division, NFA)	1	3	4
2	Tbilisi	n/a	MoEPA (Environmental Supervision)	0	1	1
3	Tbilisi	n/a	WWF	1	0	1
4	Telavi	Telavi	Regional Government	3	1	4
5	Telavi	Telavi	Regional Forestry Service Department	2	0	2
6	Telavi	Vardisubani	Community Members	15	0	15
7	Akhmeta	Akhmeta	Municipality staff	1	2	3
8	Akhmeta	Angokhi	Community Members	15	2	17
9	Kvareli	Kvareli	Municipality staff	0	2	2
10	Kvareli	Shilda	Community Members	16	0	16
11	Tbilisi	n/a	WWF	1	0	1
12	Tbilisi	n/a	Energy Efficiency	1	1	2
13	Tbilisi	n/a	Green Movement and Women for Common Future	0	2	2
14	Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuri, Chokhatauri	Ozurgeti	Regional Government, Municipality staff	38	11	19
15	Lanchkhuti	Zodi	Community Members	18	5	23
16	Ozurgeti	Mtispiri	Community Members	5	22	27
17	Chokhatauri	Lesa	Community Members	12	4	16
18	Ozurgeti	Ozurgeti	NFA	5	0	5
19	Dedoplistskharo	Dedoplistskharo and Khornabuji	Community Members	5	5	10
20	Dedoplistskharo	Dedoplistskharo	Municipality staff	2	1	3
21	Tbilisi	n/a	Women's Information Center	0	1	1
22	Tbilisi	n/a	Taso Foundation	0	1	1
	Total			111	64	175