ESS Implementation: Good Practices, Challenges and Lessons Learnt ECO.Georgia

Marine Kavtarishvili
Advisor on ESS and Gender
ECO.Georgia
October 8, 2026

Implemented by

Enabling the Implementation of Georgia's Forest Sector Reform - ECO.Georgia Project

The project supports forest sector reform in Georgia by:

- Supporting the establishment of a nation-wide Sustainable Forest Management system;
- In parallel promoting market development for energy efficient stoves and alternative fuels
- Diversifying livelihood opportunities and strengthening local self-governance in forest adjoining rural communities.

Target area: 3 regions, 8 municipalities



Implementation timeframe: April 2021-May 2030

The 179 Mln Euro project is funded by the GCF, BMZ, SDC and with the significant contribution from the Government of Georgia.

Good Practices

Creation of Environmental, Social, Health and Safety Management System (ESHS-MS), reflected in web-based monitoring system.

Creation of a legal basis for establishment of ESS system in the forestry sector; Effective cooperation mechanism involving state partners is in place;

Application of ESS in all infrastructure under the project: ESS screening& monitoring of all Business Service Yards/forest road construction/rehabilitation projects; construction of forest roads considering the best international standards;

Energy Efficient stove/Alternative Fuel production trained in waste management, minimization of noise and dust, as well as Personal Protective Equipment; Random monitoring conducted;

Inclusiveness: LNOB principle applied in all participation- and livelihood creation activities; Public participation/Grievance Redress Mechanisms developed and tested at municipal levels; transient and less represented groups involved.

Challenges

General

Setting up ESS system:

- Mainly faced during the first years of implementation, due to absence of knowledge on ESS and capacities at key partners at national and local levels.

Specific

Business Service Yard construction in Jokolo village:

- Risk of social conflict with ethnic minorities
- After coordinated actions with National Forestry Agency/municipal authorities project cancelled;

Shua Surebi forest road construction:

- Incompliance with the Environmental standards – biodiversity, river crossing;
- Alternative location identified.

Lessons Learnt

ESS support the early identification and management of environmental and social risks.

It is crucial to ensure that ESS is recognized not merely as a donor requirement, but as a requirement of Georgian legislation, already implemented by various state institutions within their mandates.

The GCF ESS framework is challenging and resource-intensive to establish and understand at the beginning of a project. However, it creates a strong opportunity to embed the topic sustainably within partner systems by:

- Consolidating international best practices and relevant national legal requirements.
- Fostering cooperation among different agencies.

Thank you!