

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Assisting in the Preparation of a Sustainable Forest Management Plan for Chokhatauri Forest Management Unit, Georgia

Background

1. The “European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) II Program” (the “Program”) is aimed to support the participating countries strengthen forest governance through enhancing their forest policy, legislation and institutional arrangements, and implementing sustainable forest management models on a pilot basis. The Program has been implemented in seven countries: Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation. It builds on initiatives undertaken under the first EU funded FLEG Program. The Program has been supported by the European Commission (EC) contributing to a single-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank (WB). Implementation of the Program is led by the WB, working in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

2. Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) provides additional funds to support Program activities in Armenia and Georgia. This is based on the Administration Agreement for the Trust Fund between the WB and ADC. The objectives of this Trust Fund are to support Armenia and Georgia in strengthening forest governance through enhancing forest policies, legislation and institutions, participating in international forestry-related processes, and developing and testing sustainable forest management models at the local level for future replication.

3. The EC-supported activities of the Program were completed within four-year period, which ended on December 31, 2016. For the ADC-supported activities in Georgia, a one-year no-cost extension was provided, ending on 31 December 2017. The component on sustainable forest management planning will be implemented during this extension period.

4. Sustainable forest management planning is one of the important components of the Program. It is essential to prepare and implement sustainable and innovative forest management plans for the forest management units operating in Georgia. These plans should be multipurpose, covering social, economic and ecological aspects. They should also be based on optimal functional zoning of the forest management unit, safeguarding maximum socio-economic benefits without jeopardizing biodiversity and ecological functions of natural ecosystems.

5. This component involves preparation of a sustainable forest management plan for Chokhatauri forest management unit (FMU) in Georgia. This FMU has been selected because local management regime, socio-economic conditions and natural forest types are characteristic of much of the country. These circumstances create favorable conditions for implementing similar activities in other FMUs in Georgia.

6. As the first step, the WB will support forest inventory in Chokhatauri FMU. This will be followed by functional zoning of forests supported by the IUCN and preparation of the Forest Management Plan (based on the inventory and zoning) by WWF-CauPO within this management unit.

7. This ToR outlines the assignment for the Assisting Consultant who will be contracted by WWF-CauPO (hereafter – the Client) to assist the leading consultant (also hired by WWF-CauPO under FLEG2 Program) in the preparation of the forest management plan (FMP) for Chokhatauri FMU. The extracts from the ToR for the latter are included into Annex 1 below and shall be used by both, by the consultant and assisting consultant for the guidance and coordination. The assistance will be provided with the purpose of incorporation the key elements of advanced international experience in forest management planning (for instance, relevant Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship Council or equivalent). Both, the Assisting Consultant and the leading consultant (together with the local GIS expert to be contracted by WWF) will work as a team. Each consultant will have to provide reports to WWF in line with their respective ToRs. However, the leading consultant will be eventually responsible for submitting the FMP.

a) Objective of the assignment

8. The objective of this assignment is: to help improve the draft FMP for Chokhatauri Forest Management Unit by incorporating relevant components of the advanced international experience in the field of forest management planning.

b) Scope of services

9. The target territory is located in Chokhatauri Municipality of Georgia, covering 52,509 ha of state forest fund forests managed by NFA. The FMP will be prepared for this entire area. Overall duration of the assignment will be around seven working days within the period of about one calendar month. Work will start by mid-September 2017. One visit to Chokhatauri FMU will be made, jointly with the consultant hired by WWF-CauPO for the preparation of the draft FMP (see Annex 1 below). The following stages of work are recommended:

1. Providing to the consultant (responsible for the preparation of the FMP) the examples of advanced forest management planning from different countries - one working day.
2. Visiting the target area to acquaint him/herself with the situation “on the ground” and collecting basic information for the provision of components mentioned in point 3 below – about three working days.
3. Drafting the components of international advanced experience in forest management planning for the incorporation into the FMP for Chokhatauri FMU and providing them to the consultant responsible for drafting the FMP (about three working days).

Relevant components of the FMP

10. The Assisting Consultant will elaborate relevant components of advanced experience and practice in forest management planning, focusing on the aspects of biodiversity conservation, ecologically sound ways of wood harvesting, public participation, monitoring of forest condition and

annual operating plans for forest management. The Assisting Consultant might suggest the incorporation of additional elements if he/she would deem necessary.

11. The outputs will include respective recommendations to the consultant (responsible for preparing the FMP) as well as written text (e.g. up to 15-20 pages in total) covering the above-mentioned aspects of forest management planning, which will go directly into the FMP.

c) Reporting and approval procedures

12. The Assisting Consultant will send a detailed work plan to the WWF Project Coordinator within about one calendar week from the contract signature date. This work plan shall be in line with the schedule of work of the lead consultant. For this purpose, both consultants shall coordinate their activities from the very beginning of work. The plan will outline the proposed methods of work, planned steps and respective time schedule. Final report will be provided by the Assisting Consultant after the completion of the entire work within about one calendar month from the beginning of the assignment. The report will include the description of the conducted work and used methods as well as the output text (recommendations and the respective components of FMP itself). The reports will be sent to Ilia Osepashvili, Project Coordinator, WWF-CauPO (iosepashvili@wwfcaucasus.org).

13. The Coordinator will provide feedback to the Assisting Consultant within five working days after receiving each report. If no response is received by the Consultant after the expiration of this period, the report will be deemed as accepted, unless a written request is sent by the Coordinator to the Consultant to allow for a few more days for the revision. The comments and requests for further information/corrections should be addressed by the Consultant in a timely manner. Only after the formal acceptance of the Final Report by the Coordinator (by signing the acceptance form by both parties - the Assisting Consultant and the Coordinator) can the contract be considered as completed.

d) Institutional arrangements

14. The Client will provide all information available at their office, which might be useful for the completion of this assignment, free of charge. The Assisting Consultant will closely communicate and cooperate with the consultant responsible to prepare the FMP, including on logistical matters. It is required that both consultants work in the project area together.

15. The assignment will be implemented in close cooperation with the relevant staff of Chokhatauri FMU, NFA and other relevant stakeholders. WWF-CauPO Project Coordinator will be responsible for supervising the Assisting Consultants' work. The Assisting Consultant will be directly accountable to the Coordinator and will send all applicable reports to the latter. The Coordinator is authorized to evaluate the Consultant's reports and either accept them or require further updates.

e) Qualification requirements

- University degree or equivalent in forestry or a related field
- At least five years of working experience in forestry
- Extent of advanced international experience in sustainable and multipurpose forest management planning

- Working experience in post-socialist countries and, in particular in Georgia, would be an asset
- Willingness and ability to travel to Chokhatauri Municipality and cooperate with the consultant responsible to draft the FMP and other relevant stakeholders in Georgia
- Working knowledge of English is an essential requirement.

ANNEX 1

Extracts from the ToR on Preparation of a Sustainable Forest Management Plan for Chokhatauri Forest Management Unit, Georgia

f) Objective of the assignment

1. The objective of this assignment is:
 - Prepare a sustainable and multipurpose FMP, based on internationally recognised and innovative principles and criteria such as those of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or equivalent. The Plan will be based on the forest inventory materials provided by the WB and functional zones identified and mapped by the IUCN -
2. The output of this activity will be a FMP in Georgian (both, an electronic version and a hard copy), which could later be approved and implemented by the National Forestry Agency (NFA) of Georgia. Consequently, this FMP has to be in strict compliance with relevant Georgian legislation and regulations. The consultant may select innovative international principles of forest management planning him/herself. However, these have to be agreed with the NFA to ensure the compliance with Georgian regulations.

g) Scope of services

3. The target territory is located in Chokhatauri Municipality of Georgia, covering 52,509 ha of state forest fund forests managed by NFA. Over 7,000 ha of this area is used by the private logging company possessing a 20-year logging license. The proposed forest management plan (FMP) will include all of Chokhatauri FMU, including the license area. The management plan will take into consideration not only local forestry and ecological factors, but also socio-economic needs of the local population.
4. Overall duration of the assignment will be 50 working days within the period of about four and a half calendar months. Work will start by mid-August 2017. One or more visits to Chokhatauri FMU will be made. The following stages of work are recommended:
 4. Collection of general information about forest resources and current forest management regime in Chokhatauri FMU (in the overall context of forest management in Georgia).
 5. Obtaining information on volumes of use of key forest products by local population.
 6. Studying overall condition of forests within Chokhatauri FMU.

7. Drafting the initial contents of the FMP and agreeing them with the WB's inventory team and NFA.
8. Obtaining information and maps on functional zones of forests (from IUCN consultants).
9. Collecting information on innovative international experience on forest management planning (from the international expert mentioned above).
10. Preparation of the first draft of the forest management plan, based on principles and criteria of FSC or equivalent (to be agreed with NFA by the consultant prior to drafting the FMP).
11. Meeting local population and other key stakeholder representatives in Chokhatauri Municipality to discuss initial findings.
12. Meeting with key stakeholder representatives in Tbilisi for the same purpose.
13. Preparing the final version of FMP, including the text, maps and other relevant information.

5. At the initial stages of work, the consultant will prepare the first structure/contents of the FMP and agree it with the forest inventory team (contracted by the WB) and NFA. The key comments and suggestions of the latter shall be taken into consideration. The final draft of the FMP will be based on this agreed structure.

6. The Consultant will be responsible for identifying relevant stakeholders, obtaining necessary information from them and conducting the analysis required for the preparation of the FMP. Final major meeting(s) with the stakeholders (most likely in Tbilisi) will be conducted about two calendar weeks before the completion of the assignment. The consultant shall attend this final stakeholder meeting and make a presentation of the key provisions of the FMP to the meeting participants.

Components of the FMP

7. The proposed FMP will cover the period of 10 years and will be in line with the requirements of relevant legislation in Georgia (enhanced by advanced international experience outlined above). Among others, the management plan shall contain the following components:

1. Background information about Chokhatauri FMU (natural conditions; socio-economic and cultural-historical aspects; Red List species, etc.).
2. Available wood and non-wood resources at the FMU (these will be obtained from the forest inventory team contracted by the WB).
3. Current forest management regime, including harvesting of wood and conservation of biodiversity (these will be obtained from the forest inventory team contracted by the WB)..
4. Brief description of key stakeholder groups.
5. Local demand for wood and other forest resources; balance of supply and demand for these resources.
6. Brief description of key negative impacts on forests and resulting forest condition.
7. Overall dynamics of forest cover (and condition in general) in the last 10 years.
8. Overall land use context in Chokhatauri Municipality and its influence on forests.
9. **Future management planning at Chokhatauri FMU:**
 - a. Concept and definition of sustainable forest management
 - b. Management objectives (as specific as possible)

- c. Functional zoning of forests as a basis for sustainable and multipurpose forestry – maps and descriptive information on each zone (these will be obtained from the consultants contracted by IUCN)
 - d. Sustainable allowable volumes of logging (totals from all types of cutting) for each forest sub-unit; annual volumes as well as cumulative figures for the entire period of the FMP - (these will be obtained from the forest inventory team contracted by the WB). The consultant should preferably estimate overall proportion of timber and fuelwood from these wood resources
 - e. Measures of biodiversity conservation (including the protection of rare and endangered species and forest ecosystems)
 - f. Measures of forest protection from poaching, fires and pests and diseases
 - g. Forest restoration measures, taking into consideration climate change aspects
 - h. At least approximate estimation of carbon absorption potential of forests of Chokhatauri FMU and recommended measures to enhance this potential (this will be obtained from the consultants contracted by IUCN)
 - i. Overall estimation of potential revenues from wood and non-wood forest products (within sustainable limits), and if possible, other sources (e.g. forest-based tourism) as well as management costs; this also includes recommendations on how to boost the revenues (i.e. by adding the values) and reduce costs
 - j. Plans to cooperate with local stakeholders and actively involve them in forest management
 - k. Verifiable targets or indicators which would allow the assessment of progress in fulfilment of the forest management objectives
 - l. Annual operating plans (contents, procedures)
10. Provisions for monitoring of the implementation of the FMP (respective indicators, as well as measures and frequency of their implementation, etc.).

8. The FMP will contain text, tables, figures, maps and other respective information. Overall land use context in the Municipality will be taken into consideration, while preparing the sustainable FMP.. **Specifically, the land uses adjacent to forests (pastures, arable land, infrastructure), which might influence the forest management itself, should be considered.**

9. It is expected that much of this information (for subsequent analysis) will be obtained from the forest inventory specialists contracted by the WB and IUCN. The Consultant will conduct analysis of this information, as the basis for the FMP. Detailed (tabular and descriptive) information on each sub-compartment and other forest management units, to be prepared by the WB's inventory team, will be regarded as parts of this FMP. Personal communication with representatives of the state forestry sector, NGOs and local communities are envisaged for supporting the collection of information. ,

10. The Client will provide all information available at their office, which might be useful for the completion of this assignment, free of charge. In addition, the Client will cover the cost of the common stakeholder meeting in Tbilisi aiming to discuss the draft of the plan. The Consultant will be helped by the international expert in the field of forest management planning and local GIS specialist (both will be contracted by WWF-CauPO). The Consultant shall cooperate closely with these two experts.

11. The Consultant will closely cooperate with the forest inventory team contracted by the WB and IUCN consultants and obtain all available information from them, necessary for the preparation of the FMP. The assisting expert will share information and experience with the Consultant with respect to modern, up-to-date forest management planning methods and relevant components (e.g. FSC criteria or equivalent). He/she will provide one or more concrete examples of the structure of modern, up-to-date FMPs, implemented in Europe or elsewhere (preferably in countries similar to Georgia in terms of natural conditions). The GIS expert (working in one team with the consultant and assisting expert) will prepare all relevant maps required for the FMP and provide these maps to the consultant. If required, the Consultant will help the international expert and GIS specialist in logistical issues related to the travel and accommodation at the project site.

12. The assignment will be implemented in close cooperation with the relevant staff of Chokhatauri FMU, NFA and other relevant stakeholders. WWF-CauPO Project Coordinator will be responsible for supervising the Consultants' work. The Consultant will be directly accountable to the Coordinator and will send all applicable reports to the latter. The Coordinator is authorized to evaluate the Consultant's reports and either accept them or require further updates.