

## ALABNIAN NATIONAL REPORT

The overcome of the difficult situation on the forest sector, created after 1990's enforced the need to prepare the strategy of the development of forests and pastures sector, which is approbated in the 1998. The strategy was part of the Forestry Project (1996-2004), financed by the World Bank and the governments of Italy, Switzerland and Japan. Its implementation influenced on some direction, reforming the situation. But during this period, within the framework of general changes, in addition to the achievements, has had unrealized completely some objectives too. More important were the institutional reform and the control illegal logging.

In the implementation of the government program, that emphasize the need to re-examine and to ameliorate the strategy of development of forests and pastures sector. The sector need essential changes to ensure the sustainable management, and multifunctional development of forestry and pasture resources, in accordance with the governmental policy for the environment on the whole.

The new strategy is prepared based on the socio-economic development of our country, reduction of poverty in rural areas, essential changes that have taken place and will concern the demographic movement and the need for a multifunctional estimate of forestry and pasture resources where we could distinguish: forests as an energy source, as a source of biomass and prior productions, as a source of biological diversity and carbon sequestration etc.

The continuous conservation, the rational usage and the right estimation of the public benefits of forests and pasture in accordance with the interests of the different levels of the society are revised to realize through a sustainable multifunction management .

It needs to be coordinated with the regional and global strategies which are linked and conditioned to the protection and sustainable management of natural recourses (forests and pastures).

The strategy determines the main directions of the activities. It makes up a national program for forests and pastures, a number of actions, which will be carried out in the next 10 years, in collaboration with the partners.

The European Forest Sector Outlook Study is a big support to analyze the situation and create the possibilities to discuss between all actors, national and international, which are interested to find better solutions for the development of the forest sector. For these reasons we appreciate this Study and we think it will help us to improve the national policy of the development of the forest sector.

### **1. In what way are the EFSOS “Conclusions and Policy Recommendations” (pages 209-226) relevant for your country?**

Based on the actual situation of forestry sector and the problems to resolve in the future, the EFSOS “Conclusions and Policy Recommendations” are relevant for our country with some objectives of the Forest Sector Development Strategy.

In the face of the urgent need to stimulate the sound use of wood, in this direction has else the lack, because of the insufficient collaboration between all interested parts. On the other hand the state structures has not provided enough information to promote and to sound use of the wood. However the trend will be toward the development to a closely collaboration among state institutions and all other actors. (Section 5.9.1)

The transition period has created many problems for the forestry sector, endangering seriously the sustainability of forest management. The poverty, the high consumption of fire wood, overgrazing, illegal cutting and other illegal activities, have damaged the natural resources, increasing the deforestation areas and the erosion intensity.

Preoccupied to the degradation of the natural resources in our country and to develop the experience earned by the Forest Project (1996-2004), the Albanian government has demanded by the World Bank to continue the support to enlarge the management of the natural resources, based on the rural communities, through the Natural Resources Development Project, which will start on the autumn of this year and will extend for 5 years.

This project aims a better management of the natural resources, and the rehabilitation of the damaged forests and pastures, the decrease of the degradation of the terrain, the amelioration of the watershed regime, the protection of the biodiversity and the increase of the economic activities, over 660.000 ha, on the hilly and the mountain areas, where are 218 communes. The participants within this project will be the local communities, the central and local governance structures and the divers NGO's. (Section 5.9.2)

Some of the directions and the objectives of the Forest Sector Development Strategy are as follows:

- Enhancement of the public information level on the environmental multiple values, recreational, productive and economical of forestry resources;
- Promotion of the multifunctional use of the forest resources and establishment of conditions to develop the economical activities;
- Enhancement of inter-sectoral collaboration and co-operation for sustainable forest management, with the support of the Natural Resources Development Project;
- Strengthening the support of scientific institutions, of the education quality and training. (Section 5.9.4)

Since some decades, the major problem to forest sector is the very high consumption of fire wood for heating, by rural population mainly. While the consumption on 2003s was 2 times less than 1992s, it still is high. At present the fire wood consumption, by rural population, it's estimated over 2 millions m<sup>3</sup> a year, about 3 times higher than annual increment. Generally the fire wood is harvested in the uncontrollable way.

This problem is major and complicated. Primary step it is to manage this problem through of the usufruct rights or ownership transfer of forests to the local government, for fire wood harvesting, by increasing the number of families that make profits from the forest productions. This process is initiated some years ago and the forecast is it to transfer the local government 400.000 ha forest and shrub areas about, or 40 % of total forest area. However this does not resolve completely the problem.

While the demand is decreased compare with 1992s, the fire wood is and will be important, for some decades. The consumption of fire wood is a big challenge for the forestry sector.

To resolve this problem we would review the strategic line and we would collaborate closely with other national and international institutions and all interested parts, including the NGOs, to find other alternative resources. (Section 5.9.5)

In collaboration with other state agencies and technical assistance of FAO and World Bank through Forestry Project, we prepared the new forest law, which is approved by the government.

The law restrains improvement of communication between national and local levels for preventing and deterring the crimes in forest resources, a proper involvement of civil society in forest management activities, strengthening penalties and sanctions against illegal cutting,

rewards for responsible behavior/motivation, clarification of roles, responsibilities and authorities among different government levels, private sector and civil society, etc.

For reducing of illegal cutting a number of recommendations have been elaborated and presented at the government.

Improvement of coherence between the laws: the law on environment, on tourism, and the mine law.

Encourage responsible behavior and discourage criminal and corruptive one through salaries, code of ethics, etc.

However is our obligation to implement correctly the forest law, in collaboration with other institutions. (Section 5.9.7)

Since some years ago it has started the reformation of the forest administration, which aims the adaptation within news socio – economic conditions. The principal goal is the separation of regulatory and controlling functions from managerial ones, which is one of the most important objective of the Forest Sector Development Strategy. In this framework is important the creation of all structures, in all the levels of forestry service administration. This is for better management of natural resources and the control to the implementation of the legislation and rules by state institutions, local government and private owners.

We have made the first step, with the preparation of new forest law, which is actually approved by the government. The other steps will be the creation and fulfillment of legislative and rules framework, in accordance with the new organization structure and the challenges of the market economy. Apart from the work we have made, we are ready to greet the international assistance. (Section 5.9.8)

After the efforts to improve the monitoring process of the biodiversity environmental indicators, with regard to monitoring the social benefits, from forests and forestry, because of lack of the necessary instruments. This issue is very important for us, in the framework of the objective for decreasing the rural population poverty. (Section 5.9.9)

The need of the good management of the forest resources, it has dictated the dialog between forest sector and all other society's actors, which is developed in several forms, as round tables, workshops, etc. Until now, our experience and results can be considered satisfactory, notably in the dialog and the collaboration with local communities and the associations of the forest and pastures users.

But this process was not satisfactory with other state institutions, the business representatives and the different environmental NGO - s. The old forest law has had the problems with the mines, tourism, environment and city planning laws, due to the superposition of the some competences. Consequently the natural resources management was not good enough. Although new forest law has resolved these problems, our objective is to collaborate better than now and to enlarge this collaboration. (Section 5.9.10)

According to the statistics, the phenomenon of wildfire occurrence is growing in the last decade. This increase is seen in both directions, in number of forest fire occurrence and in the average of area burned from a fire. Based on the causes of forest fires, the main ones are human misuse of fire during the land use of forest and agricultural land. Last 3 years, the government has support the forest service in the field of fire management. Right now the forest service is implementing the action plan of the forest fire national management strategy and realizing of the recommendations and findings of this document.

After the approving of the National Forest Fires Management Strategy, in may 2004, we have review the national management plan.

Until now, there is no an international cooperation for the forest fire management, despite the field of the training courses and workshops, organised form different countries like Spain and Italy. There is a big need for cooperation in international level, especially with the neighbouring countries for sharing information, knowledge and if necessary to support each other with personnel and technical during the big fire situations. We are trying to make agreements with the neighbouring countries. There is much to be done in this direction and it is another objective. (Section 5.9.11)

## **2. Which of the policy scenario assumptions made in EFSOS fits best to the situation in your country (see Chapter 3)?**

**More emphasis on nature conservation and the promotion of biological diversity of forest ecosystems.** One of the main priority of the forestry strategy is the nature protection and biodiversity conservation. In this framework the strategy aims increasing the protected areas, which will go with decrease of cutting in these areas, and will improved the management of these ones.

**Increasing demand for certification of forest management and wood products.** Actually Albania does not take part in any certification systems. Inclusion of the country in any existing certification systems is another aim of the forestry sector, because it is considered as a good measure to decrease the illegal cutting. (Section 3.3.3)

In Albania negative influence has had the weakness of forest sector institution and other state institutions to implement the forest law and all in all legislation. This fact is followed with negative consequences, because it has hardly damaged the situation of the forest resources. The objectives of the Forest Sector Development Strategy aim to develop the market framework in our country. This aim is the part of the efforts to integrate Albania within EU. (Section 3.3.5)

## **3. What kind of significant changes are you expecting with regard to your country's forest sector policy in the next 3-5 years as a (direct or indirect) result of the EFSOS analysis, conclusions and recommendations?**

With regards to our country, we are expecting some significant changes in the next 3-5 years as result of the implementation of Forest Sector Development Strategy, expressed by the conclusions and recommendations of the EFSOS analysis, as follows:

1. The institutional reformation of the forest sector, separating the management functions by the regulatory and controlling ones, through the establishment of the special (individual) structures;
2. Better capabilities to the sustainable forest management;
3. Strengthening of the forest sector institutions and other state institutions, capable to implement the forest law and all other rules;
4. Intensify of the policy dialog between other policy areas such as agricultural, trade, environment and energy to the social and environmental benefits.
5. Strengthening of the collaboration and co-operation with the rural communities, business representatives and NGOs;
6. The active participation of rural population and local government in the forest sector development;

7. Collaboration in international level, especially with the neighboring countries, on the field of the forest fire control;
8. Enhance of the public awareness to the environmental multiple values, recreational, productive and economical of forest resources;
9. Incorporation within one of the certification system;
10. Reduction of the poverty in the rural areas;

**4. Who uses the information, conclusions and recommendations presented in EFSOS in your country? Who else could potentially benefit from EFSOS?**

The information, conclusions and recommendations presented in EFSOS, especially it is used by staff of General Directorate of Forestry and Pastures. From EFSOS could also benefit the other state institutions and all stakeholders of other areas policy, such as agriculture, trade, environment and energy, also NGO-s

**5. What process is used to make EFSOS known and review it at the national level?**

Until now we don't have used any process to make EFSOS known it at the national level. But we have planed initially to inform the forest specialists, at the district level and the public with the EFSOS conclusions and recommendations, through the diverse publications. After this we will organize round tables, workshops, etc, together with all other interested parts, to discuss the problems, with a view to approach cross - sectoral collaboration.

**6. What are significant information/ analysis/ideas to national policy debate (inside and outside sector) added by EFSOS?**

**7. Do you have any comments on the EFSOS country profile for your country (see attachment)?**

With regard to the EFSOS our country profile, we have some comments, because after new National Forest Inventory, prepared in 2004, the data of forest resources has changed.

Growing stock in the forest areas has decreased during last decade, because of the over harvesting, for row material and especially for fuel wood. As result, change in the age-classes of the forests, has occurred. Actually we have new age stands and the annual cutting is lower than our historical figures.

For these reasons the annual cutting will decrease especially for row material and will reflect on the roundwood production.

We can specify some figures afterword, because we are in the elaboration process of data.

**8. What are your suggestions and comments with regard to further UNECE/FAO Forest Sector Outlook activities?**

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