

**Report**  
**On Forestry Use Policy**  
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**Forest Resources**

Tajikistan is a mountainous country with surface altitudes of between 300 and 7495m above sea level, and 93% of its territory is occupied by mountain ranges. The complex orographic structure of the country's territory is the reason for the climatic differences between its regions, the sharp contrast in the distribution of the rainfall across the territory and the diversity in vegetation species.

These special geographical conditions are linked to environmental qualities such as a dry and continental climate, an uneven redistribution of water resources and the prevalence of arid and semi-arid landscapes.

Tajikistan is sparsely-forested, only 3% of its territory is covered by forest, and these are continuously thinning out and losing their protective functions due to negative anthropologic impact. Forest crop reserves are falling and are calculated at 5 million m<sup>3</sup>, which is less than a single cubic metre per citizen. One consequence of the mountainous character of the country is that the forests have adapted themselves, for the most part, to mountains, and the dendro-flora comprises 268 species of trees and bushes. All the forests belong to the first category, and logging for general purposes is prohibited; all forestry activities concentrate on the preservation, expansion and improvement of forest conditions.

The distribution of areas covered by forest, arranged according to the type of their dominant species, is as follows.

The State Forest Authority (SFA) is in charge of 13% of the territory of the republic. Forestry is therefore in a position to significantly influence the economic development of the country.

- Transition to a market economy
- Adoption of land reform
- Adoption of new forms of management in forestry
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Forestry, in common with other spheres of production, has seen repeated falls in production levels and a significant proportion of employees have lost their jobs. Due to poor rates of pay, 70% of forest specialists have left their jobs in the sector, which also impacts on the sustainable management of forest resources.

The living standards of any population are closely related to the state of the environment in the country. According to data for 2005, when the country had recovered from the consequences of war and economic collapse and embarked on a course of reforms, the Tajik poverty level was 63%. The last 12-15 years have seen general deterioration and loss of biodiversity, which has provoked deforestation and a general degradation in ecosystems. A sudden and sharp drop in the supply of electricity, gas, coal and other fuel caused frequent rises in the scale of illegal logging

on mountain slopes and around settlements. Today the continuous unregulated destruction of slope forests is resulting in the desertification of mountain slopes. Approximately 70% of the mountain slopes of the country are now lifeless mountain deserts. Annual soil erosion stands at 87 million tons, while the annual loss of humus has reached 11-13 million tons.

#### Obstacles to sustainable forestry development

- Forestry, in common with other spheres of production, has seen repeated reductions in production levels and a significant proportion of employees have lost their jobs. Due to poor rates of pay, 70% of forest specialists have left their jobs in the sector, which also impacts on the sustainable management of forest resources.
- Tajikistan is a republic with traditionally high levels of the population growth. This will produce a natural need for the population to acquire new tillable lands in mountainous areas. Land available for cultivation as well as for reforestation is shrinking.
  - Cultivating mountain slopes with a gradient above 15% leads to an intensive escalation of slope erosion. The total land of the SFA occupies 1.72 million hectares, or 13% of the territory of the country. About one million hectares, or more than 50% of SFA territory, is allotted to the long-term use of agricultural farms as grazing lands.
  - The need to meet the local population's need for fuel and timber for construction.
  - Tajikistan does not have its own mineral fuel resources (oil, gas)
  - Low take-up of hydro-energy potential (up to 0.5%)
  - Increasing orientation towards the production of raw materials, especially in the main export industries – aluminum and cotton wool.
  - Underdevelopment in the financial and credit sectors

#### **Changes in the mechanisms and institutions of forestry policy management**

In accordance with Article 13 of the Constitution of Tajikistan, its 'land, mineral resources, water, atmosphere, flora and fauna and other natural resources are the property of the state and the state shall guarantee their effective utilization for the benefit of the nation'.

The state forest lands, in accordance with the Land Code of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) and The Forest Code of RT, are the property of the leshozes (territorial forest management units, organized with a vertical hierarchical structure of planning, financing and reporting) and their principle purpose is the management of forestry. In the Republic of Tajikistan, pursuant to the Resolution of the Tajik Government, the land areas of the SFA are allocated for the long-term use of the agricultural farms. In recent years, lease-based land use has become a widespread practice in forestry. It reassures land lessees that government land reform is irreversible. The lessee's profit is determined primarily by the results of his or her own work, and depends mainly on him or her. Alongside the individual leasing contracts, family agreements and contracts with workers brigades are made, which ensure that part of the harvest is kept by the lessee. Long-term land leases are permitted (10-20 years and longer) and even life-long land use with the right of inheritance, including the right to pass the land to a member of the family living and working together, or to members of a brigade of workers (leasing team).

Lease relationships are regulated by a special law 'On Lease in the Republic of Tajikistan' while the law 'On Land Assessment', adopted by the Government of RT on 12 May 2001, sets forth the legal basis for land assessment. A state cadastre assessment of land is performed to permit evaluation of the cadastre value of land parcels used for different purposes.

Land assessment is made to determine the normative price of the land to allow an objective calculation of tax and lease payments for these lands. In this way, the land-cadastre documentation of the land user forms the basis of the land tax assessment. The right to private ownership of land does not exist in forestry legislation.

**The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has recently taken many steps towards the regeneration of forestry,**

- Increases in finance
- Forest preservation measures, even if the volume is insufficient
- Expansion of the network of nursery gardens designed for the propagation of seedlings of trees and bushes species
- Development and adoption of fundamental legislative and normative acts
- Steady supply of kit to forest protection officers
- The speech of the President of the RT, Emomali Rakhmon on the necessity for annual reforestation and improvement of the land of the republic has given impetus to the campaign to raise public awareness of the necessity of preserving existing forests and planting new ones.
- In recent years there has been a growing tendency to plant poplars, a valuable fast-growing species, which is capable of regeneration after losses from unregulated logging, and in the future will be able to provide the practical timber needed by the local populations, agricultural farms and state institutes that use it for construction.

In the first years of Tajik independence, state policy was directed at the development of legislation that would enable the development sustainable forestry in the new political and economic conditions, as well as producing program documents, laying out the strategy for economic development. At present, the fundamental legislative and policy documents that define the policies and path for forestry development in RT are the following:

- National Development Strategy of the RT for the period 2007-2015 (including sections on environmental sustainability)
- The Concept of Forestry Development of the RT for 2003-2008
- State ecological program for the development of the RT for the period 1998-2008
- State program of environmental education in RT up to 2010
- Regulations for the state control of the condition, use, renewal, preservation and protection of forests
- Economic Development Plan of the RT for the period up to 2015
- A Forest Code that takes into account the period of transition is currently being elaborated and approved
- Ecological Monitoring Strategy
- Regulations on forest preservation

Tajik forestry is expanding its international cooperation through close association with international institutions that play a key role in forestry development. Tajikistan has joined and ratified nine international Conventions. The forestry work of the RT is closely linked to the implementation of the following main international programs:

- The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- The National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in Tajikistan



- Strategy to decrease pollution and accelerate the phasing out of greenhouse gases
- Planned

implementation of the Programs for Global Assessment of Forestry in line with the Forest Sector Outlook Study on the countries of the Central Asia.

To promote the positive resolution of environmental problems, the curbing of anthropogenic pressure on forests and the prevention of possible environmental catastrophes in the republic, the following measures are planned

- An increase in the level of energy supply in mountainous and sub-mountainous regions;
- Implementation of projects for supplying gas to various regions of the country;
- Creation of forest areas to combat the processes of land erosion on plains and mountainous areas;
- Expanding the construction of the micro- and mini hydro-electric stations in the mountainous areas of the country;
- Promoting the production of alternative sources of energy in industrial and domestic use;
- Enlarging recreation zones in mountainous areas, while simultaneously limiting industrial production in these areas, which damages natural ecosystems in general and forests in particular;
- Changing over to progressive methods of irrigation for land that is vulnerable to water erosion
- Arranging the monitoring of the state of the glaciers, mountainous lakes, dangerous slopes and mountains.

The main driving force determining the future of forests and the development of forestry as a branch of industry is, first and foremost, its environmental significance as the repository of a rich variety of flora and fauna species and the necessity to preserve its unique natural ecosystems. State policies have to bear this in mind now, as well as in the future. In the light of this, the National Development Strategy of the RT for the period 2007-2015 envisages:

- Establishment of community forests, elaboration of a system of material incentives to motivate the local population to reforest areas which have been destroyed over the past 150-200 years;
- Promoting the spread and development of farming (gardening and foresting enterprises) to develop horticultural, forest-horticultural and forest ranges, particularly in central, southern and south-eastern parts of Tajikistan. This is especially important for the restoration of pistachio, Bukhara almond and walnut growing, as well as the planting of other species which are important for trade and nutrition;
- Foundation of new forest nurseries and a rise in the production of seedlings to 6 million per annum;

- Establishment of forest plantations of fast-growing species of trees for construction purposes in the mountainous and sub-mountainous regions of the country;
- Enlargement of the territory of the specially-protected nature reserves (nature reserves, partial reserves, nature parks and national parks);
- Toughening national legislative measures on the protection of the environment.

Market mechanisms are now having an increasingly powerful impact on economic forces in operation, and this results in a fuller utilization of natural resources, often to the detriment of these resources. Unfortunately, we now take more from nature than we should, without taking into account the conditions needed for preserving natural potential for the future. This is particularly evident in forestry. In order to combat this, a series of measures aimed at the preservation of forest resources will be implemented. The following measures are planned for reforestation, planting and propagation of seedlings for the period up to 2015:

#### **Reforestation (future outlook)**

Measures	Units of measurement	Years		
		2005	2010	2015
Reforestation, in total	ha	2300	2800	3300
including sowing seeds and planting	ha	1800	2300	2800

Preservation of biodiversity will be achieved through the expansion of the network of national parks and nature parks, reserves and other types of protected natural areas, as well as through the strengthening of protection for flora and fauna.

The following may provide the resources to finance environmental measures:

- resources from the central and local budgets
- resources from taxes on land, water, grazing land, as well as resources set aside to offset the consequences of natural disasters
- resources from the collection of fines for damage to the environment
- foreign investments and other sources

Forestry in Tajikistan calls for a modern strategy for its development, reform and to fit it to meet the difficulties arising from reform.

The main priorities for the next two decades can be listed as follows:

1. combating poverty
2. environmental protection

Combating poverty, now and in the future, will require concentration on the production of basic consumer goods as well as increases in the income levels of the local population. At the same time, environmental protection demands we prioritize the protection of natural resources: the preservation of bio-diversity, water sources, forest resources, as well as the struggle against the process of degradation of land and desertification.

In order to address these important priorities we need to mobilize all positive and active forces and take into account all factors that might influence the future development of forestry, while avoiding any of their negative effects.

The active involvement of the public sector is necessary to create the conditions for the more effective and sustainable development of forestry in the future. In order to boost the efficiency of the informal sector, private enterprises need to be encouraged through the provision of relevant state institutions and legal frameworks.

Strengthening the public, private and informal sectors of the economy will help reveal and develop the economic levers that will improve forestry management.

Preparation for the significant transformations arising from forestry reform in Tajikistan will comprise the following measures:

- Implementation of the National Development strategy of the country
- Institutional changes
- Elaboration of the necessary normative legal basis
- Formation of the Forestry Service
- Introduction of continual monitoring.

The first reform changes are scheduled to take place over the period 2007-2010, and significant changes in forestry initiated by the reform will be clearly felt after 2010.

If Tajikistan, now embarking on the path of democratization of society and the pursuit of political, economic and social reform, succeeds as expected in effecting significant improvements, then already over the next 5-10 years environmental protection will become the key issue, and successful economic reform designed to reconcile society to market relations will raise the living standards of the whole nation.

In modern society, the key to success is the professional expertise of personnel.

- Creation of the conditions for the professional growth, retraining of personnel and the upgrading of their qualifications;
- Development and retention of staff potential;
- Creating a reserve of human resources;
- Providing continuity in personnel generations;
- Creating effective motivation for personnel.