



ENPI FLEG

Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in European Neighbourhood Policy Countries and Russia



Arboreum Georgia

Special Edition of Newsletter dedicated to Forest Reform in Georgia

June - July 2010

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Editorial

This special edition of Arboreum Georgia is dedicated to the ongoing forestry reform in Georgia. What will change in Georgian forest? Will the people be able to utilize the forest resources and at the same time be wise enough to save our nature for future generations... and... we might have a wonderful legislation and institutional structure, but it will not work without input from all of us...

ENPI FLEG Program News

FROM GOOD PRINCIPLES TO GOOD PRACTICES



On July 6th 2010, the Georgian Centre for the Conservation of Wildlife (GCCW) in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) organized a discussion on the draft final report of the Study on Current Practices of Forest Management in Georgia.

The Study is being initiated by IUCN under the ENPI FLEG Program and carried out by forestry expert Mr. Merab Machavariani. GCCW is co-implementing the study through a USAID funded project "Sustainable forestry in Georgia: sustainable production, sustainable consumption".

First, Mr. Merab Machavariani presented his report to participants. During his work he compared Georgian legislation and practices to the laws and practices of many countries – among them those that have forest management traditions, and a similar geographical distribution and type of forests. In accordance with his survey, the principles of Georgian forest legislation are quite similar to internationally acknowledged principles, but due to a lack of detailed bylaw acts and a low level of education among forestry staff, the principles are only declaratory in nature. Mr. Machavariani underlined that first of all, a minimal level of education and qualification, necessary for working in the forestry field, shall be defined by the law. Also, there shall be bylaw acts and detailed regulations, determining correct and sustainable timber harvesting, forest road design and construction, forest restoration etc.

Presentation of the final report will take place in September 2010. More information...

For more information about the study please contact Mr. Merab Machavariani: biodiv@caucasus.net

STATE AGENCY REFORM WILL BE ANALYZED

The World Bank is one of the ENPI FLEG Program implementing partners in Georgia. The organization is conducting activities related to: increasing national ownership, improving FLEG planning and monitoring by national institutions, capacity building of stakeholder authorities, and regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.

In light of the ongoing institutional reform in the Forestry Department (now the Forestry Agency), the World Bank invited an international expert to review the reform and to recommend possible improvements. Mr. Lennart Ljungman is a forestry specialist with over 15 years of professional background and previous work experience in Georgia. Together with the newly assigned World Bank local consultant, Mr. Rati Japaridze, (who had been the former Forestry Development Project Director under a World Bank-financed program) they visited the Forestry Agency and met other stakeholders, both in the capital and in the field to analyze relevant forestry reform legislation.

The results of the Review will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources by Autumn 2010.

For additional information on the WB/ENPI-FLEG activities in Georgia, please contact Mr. Ilia Kvitashvili (ikvitashvili@worldbank.org) and Mr. Rati Japaridze (rati.japaridze@enpi-fleg.org).

Environmental News in Georgia

FOREST SECTOR REFORMS STARTED IN GEORGIA

The Ministry of Environment implements forestry sector reform, targeting sustainable forest management. As a result of the reform it is expected that forest use will be carried out only in accordance with forest management plans, illegal cutting will be significantly reduced, eroded and degraded areas will decrease, and at the same time the forest will satisfy the demand of the population for fuel wood. (GHN) . More information...

TENDER ON LAKES AND FOREST AREAS



The Ministries of Environment and Economic Development jointly developed licensing conditions for the long-term use of 13 lakes in Georgia. Forest areas have also been prepared for licensing. "During the use of any natural resource, if there is a will from investors for its rational use and investing, then both ministries are ready to consider such propositions and to promote investments in such type of resources. We will permanently deliver information to the population" – the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Goga Khachidze said. (GHN). More information...

EMPLOYEES OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT DETAINED ON A BRIBE

As a result of a large scale special operation by officers of the Department of Constitution Security, 12 employees of the Department of the Ministry of Environment Protection have been detained for taking bribes. The chief of the Department of Constitutional Security of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Soso Topuridze made a statement at a special briefing carried out on June 14. (GHN) . More information...



LAW INFRINGEMENTS IN THE KAKHETI REGION

The Inspection of Environment Protection and Forest Department have revealed law infringements in the Kakheti region. The Chiefs of the Inspection of Environment Protection and Forest Department have carried out a special briefing in the Ministry of Environment Protection. Attention at the briefing was drawn to law infringements in the Kakheti region, which resulted in damage to the environment at a cost of up to 700,000 GEL. (GHN) . More information...

FUTURE OF COLLECTIVE FARM FORESTS - TO BE PRIVATIZED

Forests of former collective farms will be subject to privatization. This is envisaged by amendments to the Law on state property. As the initiator of the draft, Lasha Tordia, stated, at the sitting of the Agrarian Committee, up to now forests were not privatized, because it was not envisaged by the law. (GHN) . More information...

PRIVATIZATION OF A PART OF FOREST FUND WILL BE POSSIBLE

Privatization of part of the forest fund becomes possible. The mentioned issue is envisaged by the law "On state property". The acting version of the law does not anticipate for forest fund privatization. (GHN) More information...



Legislation

On 1st of August 2010 the law entered into force, in accordance with which the Forest Department of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia has been established as a legal entity under public law known as the Forest Agency.

The aim of the law "On the legal entity under public law –the Forest Agency" is to establish a Forestry Agency, and determine its main principles, institutional structure and competence.

In accordance with the law the main goals of the agency are: maintenance and restoration of the forests; and the steady use of the components of biodiversity on the territory of the forest fund..The main objectives include: correction of boundaries of the forest fund; management of the forest fund; regulation of forest use; implementation of measures for forest care and restoration; and control of the territory of the forest fund.

The Agency is financed from the state budget, as well as from other sources, such as: target grants, incomes received from auctions and from services, and income received from works made based on agreements.

The law establishes the competencies of the Agency as follows: monitoring and restoration of the forest fund, issue of logging tickets, preparation of objects for license, forest protection from illegal logging etc.

Besides the law, a number of by-laws have been prepared, including a rule on forest boundaries demarcation, the rule of care, and restoration of forest etc.

Moreover, a number of changes and amendments have been introduced in the Forest Code, with the aim of harmonization with the provisions of the Forest Agency.

International News

BAN ON THE SALE OF ILLEGALLY HARVESTED TIMBER IN THE EU

A ban on the sale of illegally-harvested timber, along with traceability measures and sanctions, has been given the green light by MEPs (Members of European Parliament). The new law aims to reduce illegal deforestation and give consumers better assurances about the products they buy.



After Parliament overwhelmingly approved an agreement reached with Council, Satu Hassi (Greens/EFA, FI), who took over parliamentary responsibility for this legislation from former MEP Caroline Lucas, said: "EU legislation to ban the sale of illegally-sourced timber represents a major international breakthrough, from the forests around the world that are ravaged by illegal logging to the EU market where timber and wood products are sold. The tough rules agreed would not have been possible without the strong backing of the European Parliament."

[More information...](#)

Publications/ Online resources

The UNECE/FAO Forestry & Timber Section has served as a trusted source of information, data and analysis about the forest sector in the UNECE region for more than 60 years. It also provides a forum for policy discussion about major issues that affect the forest sector. The section is unique in that it is a joint UNECE/FAO secretariat, servicing the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission and working closely with other members of the United Nations family and with country stakeholders. UNECE quarterly newspapers can be found [here](#).

FOREST REFORM IN GEORGIA - INTERVIEW

Interview with the chairman of Forest Department , Mr. Papuna Khachidze

Q: On 1st of August 2010 the law will be entered into force, in accordance with which the Forest Department will be transformed into the Forest Agency. What is the essence of the transformation and on what is the status of the institutional change?

A: *As you know, there were certain problems in the forest sector that complicated forest management and control of forest resource use. We were faced with problems such as illegal utilization – illegal logging, grazing, growing of agricultural crops on the lands of the forest fund, and the collection of non-timber resources without control. All this was done illegally, because it was not regulated by law.*

We decided to implement a reform of the sector, with which, first of all, all above mentioned activities will be covered by law, all forest resources shall be used fully, and the population shall be entitled to implement its activities with strict observance of the law.



Also investors will be authorized to implement their activities, including agricultural and recreational potential of forest s– to build hotels, arrange catering objects etc. – and to pay for it.

What is the main thing, in the scope of the reform the Forest Department will be transformed into the Forest Agency and will be able to receive income from its services. Our professionals work hard, they serve the population and various organizations – the payment for their services will increase the budget of the Agency, money that will be spent on its activities.

Q: When you talk about business activities, do you mean lands of forest fund or the forest itself?

A: *The lands in question are lands of the forest fund, that includes land covered by forest and lands without forest. All types of forest use possess their own param-*

eters. Mainly the activities will be implemented on the territories not covered with forest, but in certain cases it will be possible to implement certain activities in forested areas, for example the collection of medicinal herbs etc.

Q: Who will issue the rights on implementation of the activities - will it be the newly established Forest Agency?

A: *Yes, the forest agency will issue licenses on activity, they will enter into force also in August in line with the launch of the new law. Now we work on the by-law acts. The licenses will be issued in various forms. Mainly this implies right of use of lands for agricultural and non-agricultural purposes, and forest resources.*

Q: How will the reform affect the personnel working in the forest sector?

A: *The reform is carried out first of all for the sake of our people. I gave notice to each employer, that his / her working place is guaranteed together with an increased salary, if he /she works in close and permanent contact with the population, attracts the population's interest and brings the right messages to the population. They should know that their good performance will increase the Agency's income and will be directly reflected in their payrolls.*

Q: Will the number of rangers increase?

A: *First of all I would like to state that rangers will be again named as the forest guards. We plan to increase their number, but for the present this is unrealistic. I hope that their number will grow in stages along with the increased income of the Agency.*

Q: In your opinion what is an optimal territory that may be controlled by one guard, in the conditions of Georgian relief?

A: *In Georgia taking into account the relief of the territory it might be up to 1000-1200 hectares.*

Q: And how much is it at present?

A: *Today it makes on average 4000 hectares. In principle, control of 2000 hectares is admissible, because there are many inaccessible places in the forest areas.*

Q: It is interesting how the reform will affect the population that largely depends on forest resources. Will it reduce the number of

illegal logging cases?

A: The reform is implemented based on demands of the population and is intended for the interests of the population. My daily work, visits in regions and conversations with people assured me that the population must have more possibilities for legal activity. If you cannot give the population a possibility to act in a legal way, then it is forced to act illegally. And if it has a possibility of legal activity, it will not "force an open door". Of course, there will be certain a persistence period, but applying more strict sanctions on the one hand, and giving the possibility of legal activity on the other, will gradually improve the situation. And what is very important, I promise you a high quality of service in our Agency. Attempts at corruption will be reduced to a minimum; for example, every forest user will have a guaranteed right to use forest resources. A forest guard will have no possibility to hinder them.

Q: What quantity of resources will the population be able to use for personal consumption?

A: Taking into account seasonality and region, up to now it was 7-12 cub.m, in accordance with the new rules this figure will be 12-17 cub.m. At the same time, a different approach will be applied – a standing tree will be sold. Until now we could not control the situation; earlier there was a demand that a tree should be cut down up to 1 m, so that it could not be used as a commercial timber; this rule was always a source of conflict between foresters and population. Now the tree will be numbered, and sold fully – the proprietor will decide himself how to use the tree purchased. The only demand is to clean the place where the tree was cut. Taking into account this approach, the upper limit of admissible cubic meters has increased, that is related to the complete selling of a tree.

Q: And what about prices?

A: The prices will remain the same; for fuel wood – 2 GEL for coniferous, and 3 GEL for deciduous trees; for commercial timber - 22 and 47 GEL respectively. A service fee will be added, coming up to 3 GEL per cubic meter. This service fee is related to bank system services, to avoid payment delays. The received amounts will be used for the well-being of the forest.

Q: Today licenses relating to the forests are issued by the Ministry of Economic Development. What is envisaged by the reform?

A: The Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development will continue to issue licenses on use of fir cones as well as a general license on forest use, a special license on timber cutting, and a license of hunting economy. Licenses of all other types will be issued by the Forestry Agency.

Q: As to the state of the forests, will the reform affect it?

A: everything is connected with each other. If the population is satisfied, we will be satisfied too. We ask the population to use the forests in a sustainable way; plus, as the population will use the forest resources legally and not devastate them, the forests will survive. By mobilizing received income we will be able to investigate the conditions of the forest, carry out its phytosanitary protection and many other interesting arrangements, that are to be implemented in the forest sector.

Q: In other words, the maintenance and protection of the forest remains the function of the Agency?

A: Moreover, we will protect the forest more actively, because before we were not able to maintain the forest properly due to the limited budgets; forest restoration works were not implemented actively. Now I hope, we will be able to fulfill the works. The reform will help us to save Georgian forests.

The interview has been conducted by Ms. Ekaterine Otarashvili on 16.07.2010.

Announcements

CONSULTING COMPANY FOR IUCN

IUCN is announcing an opening for Consulting (Advertisement, Communication and Marketing) Organization to conduct preparation of external communication strategy, brand book and web site for a state Agency in the framework of the regional program "Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Countries and Russia" (ENPI FLEG). More information...

IT CONSULTING COMPANY FOR IUCN

IUCN is announcing an opening for IT Consulting Organization to conduct preparation, placement and promotion of forest-related java game/ Facebook application in the framework of the regional program "Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Countries and Russia" (ENPI FLEG). More information....

About ENPI FLEG Program

The ENPI FLEG program supports governments of participating countries, civil society and the private sector in the development of sound and sustainable forest management practices, including the prevention of illegal forestry activities. Participating countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. This program is funded by the European Union.

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Program Partners



World Bank

The World Bank is one of the world's largest sources of funding for the developing world. Its primary focus is on helping the poorest people and the poorest countries. It uses its financial resources, its staff, and extensive experience to help developing countries reduce poverty, increase economic growth, and improve their quality of life. www.worldbank.org



IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN works on biodiversity, climate change, energy, human livelihoods and greening the world economy by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. www.iucn.org



WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org

CONTACTS

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