



Agricultural Policy Forum 2022

Agriculture and Rural Development in the context of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans: Overcoming the Impact of the Global Challenges

Working Group 2: Sustainable Forest Management in the Western Balkans

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN WESTERN BALKAN REGION

Country Report ALBANIA

Prof. Asoc. Leonidha Peri

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Tirana, Albania





REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Background and introduction

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- Forest resources in Albania in the last 60 years under a great pressure
- Considerable loss in area and standing volume
- The forest sector has suffered much more from the transition period than the other sectors
- Several reforms with a strong focus on the decentralization processes have been undertaken in the forest sector the last 25 years
- Decentralization reforms in the forest sector are seen today as a policy option to tackle the unsustainable management of natural resources including forest resources
- These policies follow mainly three objectives: (i) *empowering local "forest communities" to sustainably manage the forests*; (ii) *improve the condition of the degraded forest areas* and (iii) *reducing/alleviating the poverty of these communities*



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General Agent: BME,
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European
Commission



Strategic and legal framework in the country/territory

- **“ON THE POLICIES OF THE FOREST SECTOR IN ALBANIA - 2030”** is the main forest sector policy document
- **Main Aim** ... “Sustainable contribution of forests to a better life for society today and future generations”
- **Mission** ... “Restoring the balances in the Forest Ecosystems”
- **Vision** ... “An all-green shelter, a sustainable resource, a living organism and an invaluable capital”



Strategic and legal framework in the country/territory

- *The Albanian Constitution* prescribes in the Chapter V/Social Objectives, Article 59/dh, the principle of sustainable governance for the use of natural resources, including forest resources namely: *“rational use of forests, waters, pastures and other natural resources on the basis of the principle of sustainable development”*
- *Law No. 57/2020, date 30.04.2020 “On Forests”*
- *Law No. 5/2016, February 4, 2016 “For the declaration of the moratorium in the forests in the RoA*
- *Law No. 81/2017, date 04.05.2017 “On protected areas”*
- *Law No 13/2015 “For local self-government“*
- *Law No. 10431, date 09.06.2011 “On the environment protection” (amended)*

Other laws whose dispositions set up rules for and regulate forestry related activities in Albania, include:

- *Law No.10253, date 11.03.2010 "On hunting"*
- *Law No. 61/2016, date 02.06.2016 "For the declaration the moratorium on hunting in the RoA"*
- *Law No. 10006, date 23.10.2008 "On the protection of wild fauna" (amended).*
- *Law No. 10120, date 23.04.2009 "On the protection of natural medicinal and oil-etheric plants" (amended)*
- *Law No. 9867, date 31.01.2008 "On regulations and procedures for international trade of endangered wild flora and fauna".*
- *Law No. 9587, date 20.07.2006, "On biodiversity protection" (amended)*





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Institutional framework in the country/territory

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- **The Ministry of Tourism and Environment** is the highest policy-making and regulatory institution
- The **National Forestry Agency** is a legal, public, budgetary entity, subordinate to the Minister of Tourism and Environment, whose mission is the good governance of forests at the national level, their preservation and development, the sustainable and multifunctional use of resources in the forest fund national, as a natural asset of national importance
- **The National Agency of Protected Areas** is the central state institution responsible for protected areas, under the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, according to the special legislation for protected areas
- The **Municipality** structure responsible for the governance of forests is a specialized structure at the local level, which administers the national forest fund in ownership



Implemented by:



■ Environmental Services Project (2014 – 2021)

The major recent donor intervention in the forest sector was the **Environmental Services Project (ESP)**.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) was to support sustainable land management practices and increase communities' monetary and non-monetary benefits in targeted Project areas which are mainly in erosion prone rural upland areas

■ Forests for Local Economic Development

- The four-year project “**Forests for Local Economic Development**” was implemented by CNVP with financial support from Swedish Development Cooperation through SIDA. The main objective of the project was “Improved decentralized and sustainable Communal Forestry providing increased production, service and income to rural communities”



■ Afforestation & Reforestation of Refused Lands in Albania BioCarbon Fund Project (2012 – 2020)

The Project Development Objective (PDO) was to increase carbon sequestration through afforestation and reforestation of highly degraded land in Albania, leading to enhanced sources of livelihood and incomes in poor rural areas, reduced soil degradation and improved water quality and conservation of biodiversity

■ Enhancing financial sustainability of the protected area system in Albania (UNDP 2017-2021)

The project was designed to assist the GoA in reducing existing funding gaps for the system of protected areas, improving the management of individual protected areas, improving cost-efficiencies in individual protected areas, and building the financial management capacities of protected area staff in the NAPA

Identified deficits/gaps for achieving Sustainable Forest Management in the country /territory

- Drafting and implementation of a 10-year National Afforestation Program
- Enhance the digitalization in the forestry sector
- Consolidation the institutional and the legislative framework of the forest sector
- Financial support for the Municipalities
- Establishing an integrated system for the protection of forests
- Implementation of EUTR/FLEGT Regulations



Conclusions

- SFM is accepted as the primary approach in the development of the forest and pasture sector in Albania, sanctioned in all the main forest policy documents
- The practical implementation of this concept leaves much to be desired for many reasons.
- The forest sector has continued to be in a state of transition, since the decentralization reform changed the structure of ownership and responsibility over forests
- The municipalities as forest owners have a significant lack of human and infrastructural capacities, making it difficult to apply SFM in practice
- The creation of the National Forestry Agency can support the local government units to put the governance of the sector on the path of implementing the SFM
- In this context, the forests of Albania today have an urgent need to be served and taken care of (afforestations, reforestations, clearing, thinning, protection from fires, pest diseases, etc.)



Recommendations

- Undertaking an analysis of the document "ON THE POLICIES OF THE FOREST SECTOR IN ALBANIA - 2030", as an overdue legal obligation
- Drafting of a National Forestry Program with an extension of at least 10 years in the FLR approach in accordance with the EU Forest Strategy 2030, EU Green Deal and Green Agenda for WB
- Full implementation in the territory of the organizational structure of the National Forestry Agency, and increasing the human and infrastructural capacities of NFA
- The immediate start of the implementing process of the new National Forest Inventory, according to the 8-year rotation approach sanctioned in the Law on Forests, as the most important process to support the design of and the analysis of the impacts of forest policies
- Making the Albanian Forest Information System (ALFIS) fully functional



Recommendations

- Consolidate and standardize the structures responsible for forests in the 61 municipalities of the country
- Support for the municipalities with direct investments for the design of all forest management plans
- Increasing the number of forest specialists in the municipalities, according to the obligations sanctioned by the Law on Forests
- Enabling the structures responsible for forests at the central and local level for the implementation of EUTR/FLEGT Regulations, in cooperation with other government structures.
- A clear orientation of scientific research and innovation in forests in support of solving problems on the way to SFM

