

The Analysis of Lithuanian Forest Programme in European Context

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After the declaration of independence in Lithuania some new phenomena emerged in forestry: new modes of ownership (private forests), the formation of a free timber market, development of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) principles. The new aspects determined the changes of forest policy. A comparative analysis of Lithuanian forestry policy and the principles of National Forest Programmes (NFP) in Europe are presented in the paper.

Recent formation of Lithuanian forest policy is corresponded to the international concept of NFP. The Lithuanian forestry policy consists of the directions of forest policy, implementation strategy and actions plan. However, the principles of participatory mechanisms, inter-sectoral approaches are at an initial stage. Public participation in NFP formulation, implementation and evaluation could be improved so that people, individually or through organized groups, can exchange information, express opinions and have the potential to influence decision-making.

Key words: forest policy, national forest programmes, participation, inter-sectoral approach, iterative process

Introduction

During the Soviet time the long-term strategic planning was based on the methods of centralized state planning for five years and long-term plans for 15-20 years. The main base of centralist state planning was state forest property.

After the declaration of independence in Lithuania some new phenomena emerged in forestry: the formation of a free timber market; increasing timber export levels; new modes of ownership (private forests) and enterprise (private logging companies); the privatisation of forest industry (Mizaras 1993, 2002). The Pan-European criteria of SFM have been adopted. Countries with a market economy have great experience in formation and implementation of forest policies. This process is at initial stages in countries with transition. There are only few forest policy research in Lithuania, for example, Larsen, Brukas 2000. The concept of NFP was introduced in the International Panel of Forests (IPF) as a conceptual attempt to guide forestry towards SFM. This concept was developed in COST E19 Action activity „National Forest Programmes in an European context“. Lithuania participated in the activity of COST E19 Action in 2000-2003. The main objective of this activity was to evaluate the correspondence of Lithuanian forest policy formation and implementation processes to the NFP's concept and provide policy makers with improved means for formulating and implementing national forest pro-

grammes. The main task of this paper is a comparative analysis of Lithuanian forestry policy and Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) approach to NFP in Europe.

Methods

Step 1 of methodology: formulation of contents and principles of NFP. They are presented in MCPFE Vienna resolution 1 (MCPFE 2003).

Step 2: formulation of NFP in Lithuania. The emergence of NFP in Lithuania is analysed. What factors contributed to emergence of Lithuanian forest programme? In what ways the current programme is closer to NFP than the previous national programmes? How have political-institutional settings impacted the development of forest programme.

Step 3: Correspondence of Lithuanian forestry programme with NFP principles. Lithuanian programme was examined against basic principles of NFP.

Content and principles of NFP

Concept of NFP is used as an instrument for forestry sector planning and objectives implementation. In the modern forest policy literature NFP's are defined as a system of normative, strategic and operative planning (Egestad 1999). A plan of the normative level is also referred to as a policy. This is a course of an action adopted and pursued by the Government, political party, community or the private sector. Strate-

gic forest sector planning is a continuous process of decision making with a medium to long-term focus. The results at a strategic level plan also called a strategy. This is a broad course of action. Operational planning is a process of decision-making concerned mainly with detail of implementation. Results in an operational level plan also called an action plan.

Recently the goals of SFM are incorporated in to NFP conception and NFP's very often are defined as a mean of SFM. The NFP's definition has been defined in Resolutions of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE 2003): „A national forest programme constitutes a participatory, holistic, inter-sectoral and iterative process of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national and/or sub-national level in order to proceed towards the further improvement of sustainable forest management as defined in Helsinki Resolution H1“. The principles of NFPs in Europe are indicated in these Resolutions such as participation, holistic and inter-sectoral approach, iterative process with long-term commitment, capacity building, consistency with national legislation and policies, integration with national sustainable development strategies, consistency with international commitments recognizing synergies between international forest related initiatives and conventions, institutional and policy reform, ecosystem approach, partnership for implementation, raising awareness.

The principles of participation, holistic and inter-sectoral approach, iterative process are basic. They are in definition of NFP concept.

Lithuanian forest policy correspondence to the NFP's concept

The results of examining of Lithuanian forest policy against the basic principles of NFP according MCPFE Vienna resolution are presented below.

Participation. Participation can be described as a voluntary process whereby people individually or through organised groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of the matter at hand (MCPFE, 2003).

One of the principles of Lithuanian forest policy formation is participation that involves the collaboration of all interest groups. This principle features in a *Lithuanian Forestry policy and its Implementation Strategy* (The Ministry 2003). Forest policy judgments should consider all interest groups in society and balance the interests of private forest owners, forests managers and users, industry, environmental organizations and other interest groups connected with forests and forestry activity. All the main forest policy

propositions should take into account the different interests of society.

The working group for the elaboration of *Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy* was established by the Department of Forests and Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment on 9 February 2001. The working group elaborated the first draft of the document, which was then presented to different interest groups for proposals and comments. The working group considered the comments received and elaborated a second draft document. The forum *Policy and Strategy of the Lithuanian Forestry* was arranged for consideration of the project on 10 December 2001, with representation from the government, the wood industries, environmental NGOs and the academic sector. Representatives attended from the Ministry of Environment, the General State Forest Enterprise, the State Forest Enterprises, the Forest Management Institute, the Forest Research Institute of Lithuania, the Association of Lithuanian Wood Working Industry, the Forest Owners Association of Lithuania, the Nature Fund of Lithuania, the Forest Faculty of Agriculture University of Lithuania, the Forest Sanitary Protection Station, the Lithuanian Forest Tree Breeding and Seed Farming Centre. After the forum the draft of *Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy* was published in the foresters magazine "Mūsų girios" (2002, No 3).

As a result of the consultative process the initial draft of *Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy* has been improved in a number of ways. First, a "strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats" (SWOT) was introduced. Second, the latest draft of *Policy of Lithuanian Forestry and its Implementation Strategy* emphasizes the conception of an NFP as a system of normative, strategic and operational planning, with participation, inter-sectoral approaches and iterative planning elements. Third, the preparation of a *Plan of Action of Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy* (operational planning) has been scheduled. This plan was approved on 31 December 2002 (Lietuvos... 2003). The main task of the plan is to determine the main forest policy implementation instruments for 2003-2006. The implementation instruments for all policy priorities are set out in this document, along with the executive institutions and periods of implementation for each instrument. Fourth, public participation on decision-making process has been incorporated into the plan. The means of societal participation in decision making on the main forestry sector issues include societal surveys and analysis of the respondents' opinions; the initiation and organization of discussions in the media-mass; and the formation of representatives from different inter-

est groups (foresters, forest owners, etc.). Finally, the development of the state and the private forest sector has been more broadly situated in the context of rural development.

Participatory mechanisms are at an early stage of formation, and all sectors are not necessarily represented all the time. For instance, the forest industry is not represented in the Forestry Consulting Council under the Ministry of Environment (The Forestry Consulting Council was established on 31 March 2003). Moreover, the state forest authority has more power in forest policy decision-making than other interest groups.

Holistic and inter-sectoral approach. NFP adopt a holistic and inter-sectoral approach that considers the impact of the forest sector on other sectors and the impact of other sectors on the forest sector (MCP-FE 2003).

The Lithuanian ministries with a stake in forest and forest-related policy are the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economy. Forestry as a whole falls under the control of the Ministry of Environment. The National Land Service of the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for coordinating the process of land restitution and privatisation. Rural development is the responsibility of the Rural Development and Information Department. The Industry Strategy Division and the Business Department of the Ministry of Economy deal with problems of strategy associated with the forest industry.

Various ministries are involved in the formation and implementation of the state policy on forestry. Thirteen experts working groups were involved in the preparation of specific strategies for long-term economic development (up to the year 2015), such as the Strategy of Industry Development, the Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Strategy of Economic Actions of Environment Protection, and others. The various different elements of the forest policy have been integrated into these strategies. For example, the wood processing sector, and sectors using wood products, have been incorporated into the Strategy of Industry Development. The introduction of new research, knowledge and high technologies into business is a priority. The wood and furniture industry is ranked as an industry with a low-level adaptability to high technologies. The aim is to promote the wood industry as a traditional Lithuanian industry with an established infrastructure and the potential for growing trade in processed products (Ministry 2003).

The present legal frameworks do not create the possibility for forestry to be a part of rural development. Forestry is not treated as an agricultural activity in the Law of Agriculture and Rural Development. Furthermore, forestry is only briefly described in the

draft of *Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (Lietuvos... 2002)*. So the Ministry of Agriculture, which is responsible for agriculture and rural development policies, does not deal with forestry related issues. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for forestry, but does not deal with private forest sector integration into rural development process. In short, some problems of inter-sectoral coordination may be observed at the ministerial level in Lithuania.

The forestry and wood industry business sector of Lithuania is consists of state forest enterprises, private forest owners, wood processing and private logging companies, private forest co-operatives, paper and furniture companies.

The activities of state forest enterprises include reforestation, forest maintenance and protection, the usage of forest resources and the timber trade. The felling volume of state forests was 3.2 million cubic meters in 2003. The state forest enterprises have impacted upon forest policy formation process through their participation in discussions of the major forestry issues in the General Forest Enterprise, which is the main administrative body dealing with forest business.

The private forest sector constitutes 209 thousand private forest owners and 641.9 thousand hectares of private forest. The felling volume of private forest was 2.4 million cubic meters in 2002. The Forest Owners Association of Lithuania is represented by the interest of private forest owners and in co-operatives of private forest owners.

The major wood industry companies are united into production-financial groups. Currently five such groups are functioning in Lithuania. They influence forest policy formation through lobbying activity and active participation in discussions on drafts of legal acts. For instance, the corporation *Vakarų Lietuvos pramonės ir finansų korporacija* (West Lithuanian industry and financial corporation) manages seven wood industry companies.

The main non-governmental organizations dealing with forest policy formation in Lithuania are the Forest Owners Association of Lithuania, the Union of Foresters, the Lithuanian Green Movement, and the Association of Lithuanian Wood Working Industry. The Forest Owners Association of Lithuania represents and unites private forest owners.

Parliament defines the major forest policy trends through adopting legislation. The Ministry of Environment plays a central role in forest administration and policy. It formulates the national forest strategy and prepares the national forestry development programmes.

Iterative process with long-term commitment. NFP are long-term iterative process that are continuously

adapted to reflect new knowledge and changes in the natural, economic and socio-political environment. To ensure consistency and continuity, NFP are based on long-term high level political commitment and long-term engagement of stakeholders (MCPFE 2003).

After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990 the government approved the first NFP, the *Forestry and Wood Processing Industry Development Programme* in 1994 (Lietuvos... 1994). This document consisted of two parts: forestry; and the wood industry. The main chapters on forestry are: forest and forest resources; forecast of forest resources utilization; forestry policy; forest ownership and privatisation; forest management and control; reforestation; forest sanitary protection and fire prevention; timber production (logging); and the education of forestry specialists and forest workers. The main chapters on the wood industry are: production of wood products; timber consumption; domestic and foreign trade of timber; roundwood; wood products; firewood standards and measurement rules; and research.

In 1996 the *Forestry and Wood Processing Industry Development Programme* was revised and expanded with the addition of new chapters on the protection of forest biodiversity, research and scientific surveys. The action plan for 1996-2003 was also revised and enlarged (Lietuvos... 1996).

In October 2001, the life span of the Action Plan of the *Forestry and Wood Processing Industry Development Programme* (prepared in 1994 and revised in 1996) had expired, and the government of Lithuania made a decision to prepare the *Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy*, which was, in effect, the second Lithuanian NFP.

The original *Forestry and Wood Processing Industry Development Programme* required amendment for several reasons including:

- the Pan-European criteria of SFM have been adopted;
- the structure of forest ownership in Lithuania has changed;
- there has been an increase in the public role in forest management and environmental protection;
- the process of pan-European integration has accelerated since the original national forest policy was formulated.

The new NFP was approved in September 2002. It aims to continue the *Forestry and Wood Processing Industry Development Programme*. However forest ownership variety, the participation of society, development and strengthening of international relations, and efficiency of forestry activity and goals of rural development are all emphasized more strongly than in the first NFP.

The main strategic goals of the second NFP are preservation and enrichment of forest resources; ensuring the variety of forest ownership forms; participation of society in the solution of major forestry issues; presentation of information to society about the country's forests, their condition and management; development of education and training on forest issues; strengthening and development of international relations; sustainable and continuous usage of the forest resources with an increase of forest productivity and economic efficiency of forestry; ensuring the stability of ecosystems; preservation of biodiversity and improvement of forest health; meeting the general forest-related needs of society; and development of the state and private forest sectors in the rural development context.

A NFP requires a cyclic process comprising planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. *Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy* defines the key instruments for forest policy implementation for the period until 2015. The detailed action plan for 2003-2006 of the implementation of these instruments is already prepared, and implementation has started. However the systems of monitoring and evaluation for instruments fulfilment have not as yet been prepared.

Discussion

The role of state and private forests properties, development of protected areas and a compensation system for covering the losses accrued by forest owners due to restrictions on forest use in order to promote environment protection and conservation, NFP principles using for forest policy formation are aspects of Lithuanian forest policy, which should be discussed.

Private and state ownership. According to the Forest Act of the Lithuanian Republic, forests are divided into two ownership groups: state and private. The structure of forest ownership has changed due to an ongoing land reform process since Lithuania regained independence. 641.9 thousand hectares of forests were owned by private forest owners as in January 2004. This is 31% of total forest area, a figure that is projected to increase to 40-47% in the future. Private forest ownership may be seen as both a supporting and an impeding factor in Lithuania. In one respect it is a supporting factor, as it helps to promote the competition in the forestry sector and fully utilization of forest resources. However, the actual quantity of private forest areas that have not been reforested is increasing. Much therefore depends on the motives and interests of individual private owners.

Hunting right is very problematic in Lithuania. The Hunting Act was adopted by the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania on the 20th of June 2002. From the viewpoint of landowners Hunting Act contains several unacceptable provisions. Most crucial problems are the following: Hunting Act validates the possibility to use the private land for hunting having no acceptance from its owner. According to the Law the permission to the hunting clubs to use the hunting areas is issued by the authorities. Authorities do not need even inform landowner about this. The landowners do not have right to lease its' property for hunting. The Hunting Act does not foresee the leasing of hunting rights by the landowners. The former legislation allowed the forming of private hunting areas. The landowners had right to make agreements for establishing jointly the private hunting areas, if the area in one circular boundary was more than 100 hectares. Over 10 private hunting areas were established at that time based on existing legislation and have been registered passing all necessary legal procedures. This right has been abolished by the adaptation of the Hunting Act. Most of the landowners are deprived from the right to hunt in their own land. The hunting right belongs only to those landowners, whose property in one circular boundary is more than 1000 hectares. The average size of cadastral unit in rural areas is less than 8 hectares. Thus, most of the landowners do not have the right to hunt in their own land.

Protected areas and compensations system. One third of forests are under restricted forestry activities in Lithuania. The most significant restriction is increasing of cutting age and prohibition to cut forest. Forest owners are accrued the losses due to restrictions on forest use. The Law of Protected Areas stated that the compensation should be applied for landowners accrued the losses due to new-laid restrictions. However, the compensation order is not defined yet. Moreover, the statement to compensate the losses accrued only due to new-laid restriction should be negotiated.

Participation as element of forest policy. One of the principles of Lithuanian forest policy formation is participation that involves the collaboration of all interest groups. Forest policy judgments should consider all interest groups in society and balance the interests of private forest owners, forests managers and users, industry, environmental organizations and other interest groups connected with forests and forestry activity. All the main forest policy propositions should take into account the different interests of society.

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As a result of the consultative process the initial draft of *Policy of Lithuanian Forestry and its Implementation Strategy* has been improved.

Participatory mechanisms are at an early stage of formation, and all sectors are not necessarily represented all the time. For instance, the wood industry is not represented in the Forestry Consulting Council under the Ministry of Environment (The Forestry Consulting Council was established on 31 March 2003). Moreover, the state forest authority has more power in forest policy decision-making than other interest groups. Negotiation and conflict resolution mechanism would be developed. Various ministries are involved in the formation and implementation of the state policy on forestry. The Ministry of Environment co-ordinates that part of the forest sector dealing with forest resources and forest utilization, including the roundwood trade. The state regulation of forest industry is under the competence of the Ministry of Economy. Forestry problems arising in the context of rural development are the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. The coordination between these three ministries concerning the preparation and implementation of forestry development programmes is still inadequate. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economy do not have any specific strategy for the forestry sector. This inevitably results in the slow resolution of some problems in the forest sector (for example, the EU support programme for silviculture and the establishment of a pulpwood factory in Lithuania).

Formalized co-ordination between state and non-state actors is at an early stage. State institutions inform business actors and NGO's about the programmes and legal acts dealing with forestry, and invite the representatives to participate in joint committees and project teams. Representatives of business and NGO's are able to present proposals.

Concluding remarks

Lithuania has a long tradition of long-term strategic planning in the forest sector. During the Soviet time long-term strategic planning was based on the

methods of centralized state planning for five years and long-term plans for 15-20 years. After the restoration of independence the process of forestry planning corresponds to the concepts of the NFP as a systematic process of examining and defining policies, strategies and actions to achieve goals. The Lithuanian NFP's consists of the directions of forest policy, implementation strategy and actions plan. However, the principles of participatory mechanisms, negotiation and conflict resolution, inter-sectoral approaches are at an initial stage.

One of the principles of Lithuanian forest policy formation is participation that involves the collaboration of all relevant interest groups. All stakeholders have the opportunity to make proposals and initiate discussions during the public consideration of the NFP. Public participation in NFP formulation, implementation and evaluation could be improved so that people, individually or through organized groups, can exchange information, express opinions and have the potential to influence decision-making.

In Lithuania the NFP process has involved a mix of government, business actors and non-governmental organizations. These organizations and companies often have different interests. However a working group has been able to resolve many conflicts of interests through consensus. Where consensus is not reached, a decision is made by the state authority.

Information exchange and consultation between sectors is developing. The different sectors appear to have the intention of reaching consensus when initial disagreements arise. However, inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms – such as the arbitration of inter-sectoral differences and defining common limits by setting parameters for sector activities – have not yet been developed. There is a need for such mechanisms as shown by existing unresolved conflicts on, for example: utilization methods on abandoned agriculture land; the volume of forest cuttings; privatisation of forests; the area of protected forests; compensation of losses due to forest utilization restrictions in protected areas; and hunting in private forests. The

general inter-sectoral strategies should be prepared for development inter-sectoral coordination.

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АНАЛИЗ ЛЕСНЫХ ПРОГРАММ ЛИТВЫ В ЕВРОПЕЙСКОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ**С. Мизарас, Д. Мизарайте***Резюме*

После восстановления независимости в лесном хозяйстве Литвы, возникли новые явления: новые формы собственности (частная собственность), свободный рынок древесины и других лесных продуктов, развитие принципов непрерывного лесопользования. Эти новые аспекты определили изменения в лесной политике. В этой статье проведен сравнительный анализ лесной политики Литвы в свете национальных лесных программ Европы. Сделан вывод, что нынешняя лесная политика Литвы соответствует концепции и принципам национальных лесных программ Европы. В лесной политике Литвы сформулированы ее направления, стратегия и план действия. Однако, механизмы участия структурных подразделений и междусекториальный подход в процессах формирования и осуществления лесной политики находятся на начальной стадии. Участие общества в этих процессах должно быть улучшено. Так, чтобы люди индивидуально или через организованные группы могли бы влиять на процессы принятия решений.

Ключевые слова: лесная политика, национальные лесные программы, участие, интерсекториальный подход, итеративный процесс