

Aide Memoire

Joint Annual Review of the forestry sector 2013

The Policy and Strategy Paper 2010-20 for the forestry sector in Kosovo guides the development of the sector. The implementation of the Strategy is discussed every year in Joint Annual Reviews (JAR) with all major stakeholders.

The basic document for the JAR is the Sector Progress Report. The report for the year 2012 has been made in a format which can be a model for future reports (see Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector Development in Kosovo 2010-20, Annual Progress Report 2012).

The JAR 2013 was held 26-27 February, 2013. The 26th there was a field visit to Ahishte and Blinaje. The 27th there was a meeting in Emerald Hotel in Pristina. A short overview of the JAR is given in the document Report from the Joint Annual Review 2013 in the forestry sector.

In this Aide Memoire the conclusions from the JAR are presented. They build on the information and discussions during the field visit and the JAR meeting, and on the presentations made at the field visit and the JAR meeting.

Conclusions from the Joint Annual Review

There was a strong consensus at the JAR meeting on the major challenges and priorities for the continued development of the forestry sector. Based on the field visit, the Progress Report, the presentations and the group work, the following main priorities were identified.

1. Illegal logging

This was identified as the overriding challenge for the forestry sector at the present time. A number of mutually strengthening actions were identified:

1.1 Implement laws and new laws

Measures should be taken to implement the present laws so that the municipalities can increase their legal logging. The proposed new forestry law already contains measures against illegal logging such as increased fines and longer-time concessions. It was considered that also the organisation and the division of competence in the sector

should be looked into and fine-tuned. To increase the legal logging, the bureaucratic procedures for the private sector should be diminished and the possibilities for the municipalities to increase their legal logging should be supported. A specific legal issue is the contradiction between the laws on national parks and the forestry law, which should be resolved.

1.2 Increased inter-institutional cooperation

One major obstacle for combatting illegal logging is the problems in the court system. The cooperation between the municipalities, the courts, the inspection units and the central authorities should be given special attention.

1.3 Increased control

There is a need for increased budgets for investments in equipment (vehicles for transport of confiscated wood, cameras, equipment for forest guards) and for increased salaries and incentives for forest guards. A dialogue should be started with the municipalities to make them aware of the needs and the consequences of continued increase of illegal logging. Inspection should be strengthened at municipal and central levels and the issue of having a special forestry police should be studied.

1.4 Increased professionalism

The existing proposals for increased training at all levels in the forestry sector should be implemented. Increased knowledge would increase the possibilities to increase the legal logging.

1.5 Increased awareness

There is a need for a rapid increase of the awareness at the municipal level of the effects of illegal logging and how to decrease illegal logging. Also the general public should be targeted for more awareness building about the value of forests in Kosovo and the dangers of illegal logging.

2. Other main priorities

Combatting illegal logging is often done with the same measures that will increase the quality and volume of legal logging (implement laws, increased professionalism and awareness, clear division of competence, less bureaucracy, inter-institutional cooperation). There are also some specific priorities that were highlighted at the JAR:

2.1 Support to the private sector

The private sector plays an important role in the forestry sector. The administrative procedures for the privately owned forests should be simplified. Training and other support should be given to the private sector stakeholders to enable them to conduct sustainable management of their forests and other resources. The problem created by including private forests in the new national parks should be addressed.

2.2 Silvicultural measures

There is a need to focus more on use of small-dimension trees and forest waste. Actions should be supported to increase use of smaller dimension trees for industrial purposes. And forest waste and wood from increased thinning can be used more for heating purposes, together with pellets and other alternative fuels.

2.3 Inventory of wildlife and non-wood products

There is an unused potential for economic development in Kosovo in the areas of non-wood products, hunting and tourism. A first step should be an inventory of the resources.

2.4 Rehabilitation of damaged areas and prevention of fire and disease

The damaged areas should be treated and at the same time a preventive system for future fires and diseases should be planned, including awareness measures.