

National workshop on Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in Georgia

Tbilisi, Georgia, 9th to the 11th of June 2014

Part of a UNDA funded initiative, implemented by UNECE/FAO in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia with organisation support from REC Caucasus

WORKSHOP REPORT

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Introduction

This report summarises the three days of a national multi-stakeholder national workshop on Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in Georgia held on 9-11 June in Tbilisi, in the framework of the UNECE / FAO two-year capacity-building project “A greener economy in Central Asia and the Caucasus with sustainable forests”. This workshop focused on forest-policy formulation, bioenergy generation from wood, data collection on forests and forests products, trends in forest ownership and the role and rights of local communities and private sector.

The initiative is supported by the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and is a capacity development support project which aims through training and policy advisory services to assist countries in the region develop context specific strategies to more fully harness the potential of sustainable forest management for greener economies. A key outcome of the initiative will be the development of national action plans (referred to as strategies throughout this report) for implementing sustainable forest management to enhance the forest sector’s contribution to a green economy. The project will guide and support country level teams through a process of developing this plan. More information on the initiative is available from <http://www.unece.org/forests-welcome/areas-of-work/forestsforestpolicieswelcome/capacity-building-in-central-asia-and-caucasus.html>

Background, rationale and objectives

Globally governments have increased the pace of change towards more sustainable development through policies for greener economies. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a green economy is low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive. Unlocking the full potential of sustainable forestry can deliver a range of economic, social and ecological functions that play a key role in greening the economy. There are many opportunities from forestry related to increasing sources of renewable materials and energy, environmental services, more green jobs and improved livelihoods whilst enhancing biodiversity, water and soil. To fully realise the potential of forestry requires a responsive and inclusive forest sector, enabling policies and supportive institutions to help broaden opportunities related to forest management, products and services.

In Georgia, State Forest Fund occupies just over three million hectares, while the area covered by forests is approximately 2.8 million hectares which is about 40% of the country’s territory. Forests represent a valuable natural resource having special significance for Georgia and for the entire region. They play an essential role in the life and economic development of the country. Forests in Georgia, as the forests of the mountainous country,

perform important soil protective and water retention functions, facilitate maintenance of the energy potential of rivers, and improve climatic conditions. Forest ecosystems in Georgia represent important habitat for rich and unique biodiversity, and cover 75% of Georgian protected areas. Forest creates favourable environment for development of tourism and sustainable development of country in general. However, the effects of unsustainable forest management and illegal forestry activities include degradation of forest ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. This is especially disturbing, as out of 34 worldwide biodiversity hot spots, which include Caucasus, eco-systems of Georgian forest occupy distinguished place. The main threats to the region's forests are unsustainable logging for industrial timber and fuelwood, unsustainable grazing and inappropriate operational practices.

National government institutions play a central role in planning, decision making and enforcement monitoring. Government acts as owner, manager and regulator. The National Forestry Agency is responsible for formulating policies and strategies as well as managing the forests. In Georgia, local self-governing bodies have certain rights and responsibilities over forests but their nature and scope is not clear.

Before its independence from the former Soviet Union Georgia had plentiful and reliable fossil fuel and hydro-electricity supplies. Following the re-gaining of independence and the collapse of the energy supply system rural households became heavily dependent on fuelwood for heating and cooking. Although the situation has been significantly improved in terms of fossil energy (mainly natural gas and electricity) supply, much remains to be done. Rural households also use forests for grazing and for non-timber forest products for their own consumption and for income. These pressures are very significant, but at the same time there is a general lack of concern for the environment because of more immediate problems and lack of awareness. Basically fuelwood is not considered a renewable resource, and every effort is being made to reduce its use.

There are a large number of small businesses engaged in harvesting and processing of timber for the industrial timber and fuel wood markets and only a small number of medium to large enterprises, which have the largest share of production for export. The sector is characterized by substantial over-capacity and has a low level of sensitivity to environmental issues.

There are a large number of local NGOs but only few are engaged with the forestry sector. International NGOs such as IUCN and WWF are engaged in the forestry sector in fieldwork, monitoring or advocacy. REC Caucasus, Green Alternative, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) Transparency International, Georgian Centre for the Conservation of Wildlife (GCCW), NACRES, Transboundary Joint Secretariat, Bank Watch and several other organizations are also involved in the forestry sector to various extents.

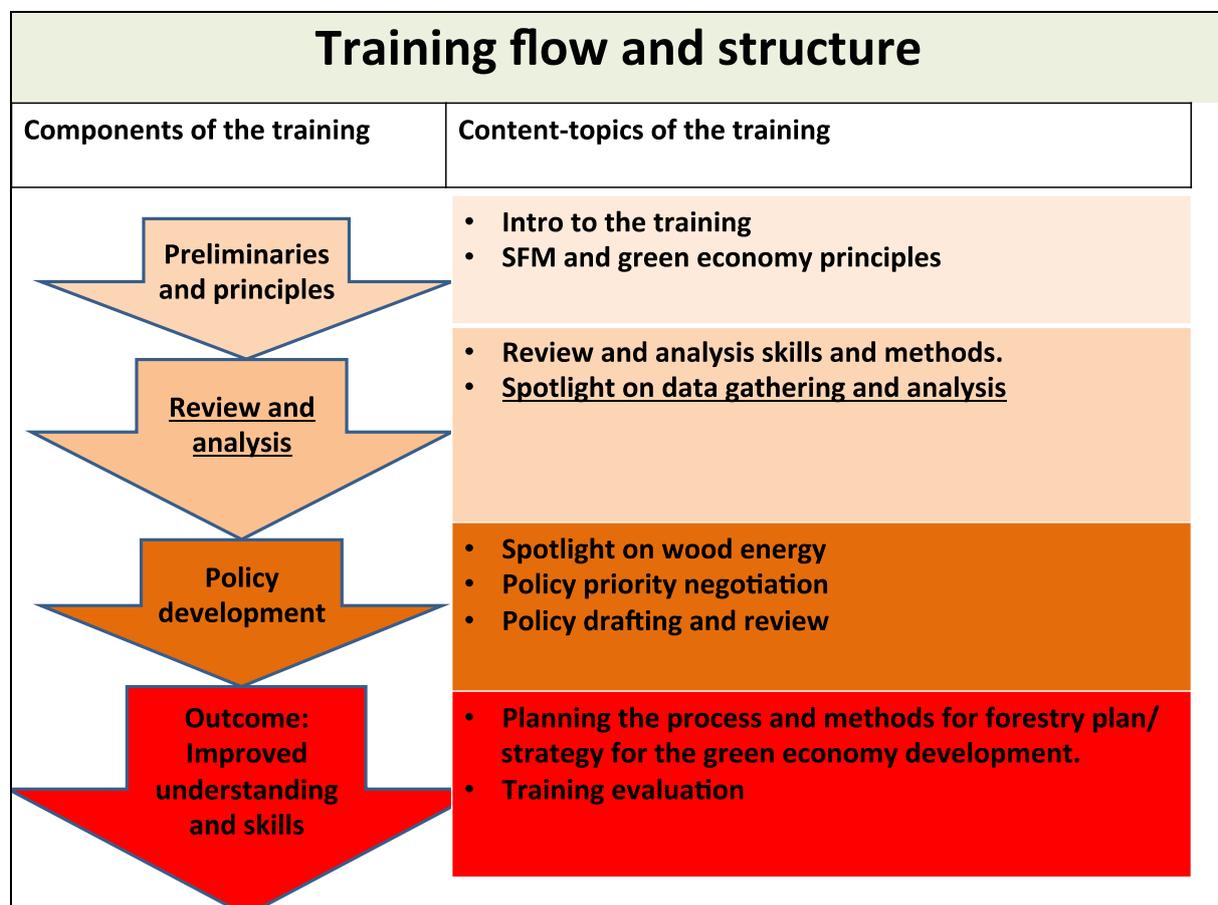
In December 2013 the Georgian Forestry Concept was adopted. "For the purpose of solving existing problems in the forestry sector, facilitating poverty alleviation and well-being of the population and promoting sustainable development of the country the goal of the Concept shall be establishing a system of sustainable forest management which will ensure: improvement of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the Georgian forests, protection of biological diversity, effective use of the economic potential of forests taking into account their ecological values, public participation in forest management related issues and fair distribution of derived benefits."

The main objective of this this national workshop in Georgia was to examine how to further develop and link forestry to green growth. The workshop covered a range of topics including:

- Principles of greener economies and sustainable forest management;
- Stakeholder engagement in forest policy processes;
- Forestry data gathering and management;
- Bioenergy generation from wood;
- Action planning and replication of capacity develop in the provinces of Georgia.

Content and key discussions

The workshop has covered the following components and content-topics:



The approach of the workshop incorporated both content guidance with regards to the principles and practices of sustainable forest management for a green economy, but also at the same time within the workshop delivery and group exercises demonstrated a 'toolbox' of methods. The participants responded well to the participatory methods.

Key discussions during the workshop focused on the ownership of the forests and the use of fuel wood.

The National Forest Agency wants to remain in lead and fears that giving out ownership rights to local population or private sector might bring further degradation of forests. It has to be noted however, that at the end of the workshop the participants saw the significance of outreach, partnerships, and collaboration with those who have overlapping responsibilities and concerns and agreed that it would be beneficial for the national forest policy to include actively all the stakeholders in decision-making processes.

The participants consider extensive cuts and grazing as the root causes of significant degradation of forest stock and think that continuation of such harmful processes may bring irrevocable economic and ecological damage. The intensive use of fuel wood was considered to be damaging for forest stock. . The law only allows sanitary cuts; although in the past (and present) illegal cuts have been a problem. It was interesting to note that during the workshop the problem was reframed from 'firewood use' to 'ensuring the forest is actively managed to replenish more than is used'. In this new light the participants admitted that firewood could be an opportunity to motivate farmers to manage forest if tenure is secure. Further discussions ensued on:

- How to stimulate active/productive forest management and use, that doesn't destroy forest? Long term.
- How to stimulate legal/regulated enterprises in sustainable wood energy production?
- How to stimulate more efficient use?
- How to monitor and evaluate in a simple way?

Two presentations were delivered during the workshop, on the use of fuel wood and on data gathering. The latter is a common problem, as no reliable and well-assorted statistical data exists for today. Inventory of forests has been identified as a big problem.

Participants

The workshop was well attended. It attracted 23 participants while the workshop was planned for maximum 25 participants. Georgian forests are generally managed by the National Forestry Agency, but the forests within the country's protected areas fall under the responsibility of the Agency of Protected Areas, both within the Ministry of Environment and Protection of Natural Resources. Therefore the majority of the participants were from the National Forestry Agency of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia; others included related line ministries and NGOs.

The list of participants is attached as Annex 2.

The Lead Facilitator for the workshop was Peter O'Hara, Participatory Natural Resources Management. Ms Elina Warsta, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section represented UNECE/FAO. Ms Nato Kirvalidze, National Consultant assisted in the facilitation of the workshop as well as helped in explaining in local language during the theory as well as participatory sessions. It has to be noted also that most of the working

materials and handouts were delivered to the participants in their native language.

Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus was responsible for the local organization of the Workshop.

Mr. Bidzina Giorgobiani, Head of the Forestry Agency of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia, formally opened the Workshop. He stressed the importance of forests and sustainable forest management in the transition to a green economy. Sustainable forest management can contribute to a low-carbon green economy, increasing provision of wood and non-wood products and eco-system services. He also emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the role of forests in the process of transition to a green economy.

The participants received their participation certificates during the closing session.

Annex 1. Agenda

Agenda for the national workshop on Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in Georgia

Tbilisi, Georgia, 9th to the 11th of June 2014

Globally governments have increased the pace of change towards more sustainable development through policies for greener economies. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a green economy is low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive. Unlocking the full potential of sustainable forestry can deliver a range of economic, social and ecological functions that play a key role in greening the economy. There are many opportunities from forestry related to increasing sources of renewable materials and energy, environmental services, more green jobs and improved livelihoods whilst enhancing biodiversity, water and soil. To fully realise the potential of forestry requires a responsive and inclusive forest sector, enabling policies and supportive institutions to help broaden opportunities related to forest management, products and services.

In October 2013, United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) launched a capacity development project which aims through training and policy advisory services to assist countries in the region develop context specific strategies to more fully harness the potential of sustainable forest management for greener economies. More information on the initiative is available from <http://www.unece.org/forests-welcome/areas-of-work/forestsforestpolicieswelcome/capacity-building-in-central-asia-and-caucasus.html>

As part of this initiative, this national workshop has been arranged in Georgia to examine how to further develop and link forestry to green growth. The workshop will focus on a range of topics including;

- Principles of greener economies and sustainable forest management
- Stakeholder engagement in forest policy processes
- Forestry data gathering and management
- Bioenergy generation from wood
- Action planning and replication of capacity develop in the provinces of Georgia

Target audience: A maximum of 25 people. Those with influence over forestry decision-making or implementation and **responsibilities for different provinces in the country**. For example policy makers and implementers from key government agencies including those focussing on forestry, but also from related areas such as environment and nature protection, agriculture/grazing, energy and finance. In addition those with forestry related roles from private sector, non-government organisations, training and academic institutions.

Expectations for participants: All participants must be available for the duration of the workshop, as all parts of the workshop are interconnected. Participants must be willing and able to support changes in forestry sectors to further develop sustainable forest management for greener economies, including using/replicating this training workshop.

Language and approach: Workshop in English but with materials provided both in English and Russian and interpretation offered into Georgian. The workshop approach will be informal and interactive.

	9 th of June	10 th of June	11 th of June
A M	I. Preliminaries and Green Economy and Sustainable Forest management Principles. 1. Start sharp at 8.30. Opening remarks, introductions and objectives. 8.30 – 9.30 2. Key principles of Sustainable Forest Management for the Green Economy. <i>Presentation.</i> 9.30 to 10.15	Start 8.30 8. Training approach recap. <i>Presentation.</i> 8.30-8.45 Spotlight on forest data gathering and management; rationale, principles and practice. 8.45 - 10.00. <i>Presentation, Q and A.</i> 10. Gap analysis on information gathering and management according to key Green Economy criteria. <i>Group work.</i> 10.00 -10.15	Start 8.30 15. Training approach recap. <i>Presentation.</i> 8.30-8.45 16. Intro presentation on effective forest policy formulation. <i>Presentation.</i> 8.45-9.15 17. Exercise on coherent policy statement development to support SFM for Greener Economies. <i>Exercise.</i> 9.15- 10.15
	Break 10.15-10.45	Break 10.15 -10.45	Break 10.15 – 10.45
	II. Forestry Context Analysis 3. Presentation of forestry context analysis exercises and assessment of forestry sectors against Green Economy criteria. 10.45 – 12.30 <i>Exercise.</i>	10. Contd. 10.45 – 11.30 11. Presentation of gap analysis for peer review. <i>Participant presentation.</i> 11.30 – 12.30	17. Contd. 10.45-11.30 18. Presentation of policy statements for peer review – examining the policy statement from different stakeholder perspectives. <i>Exercise.</i> 11.30 to 12.30.
	Lunch 12.30 to 13.30	Lunch 12.30 – 13.30	Lunch 12.30-13.30
P M	4. Effective forestry context analysis methods. <i>Presentation.</i> 13.30 – 14.00 5. Stakeholder analysis; problem analysis; rights, revenues and responsibilities analysis and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis. <i>Exercise –group work.</i> 14.00 – 15.15	III. Policy development. 12. Spotlight on wood energy; rationale, principles and practice. <i>Presentation. and Q and A.</i> 13.30 -14.45 13. Policy negotiation exercise – with focus on fuel wood policy. <i>Exercise.</i> 14.45 – 15.15	IV. Planning next steps. 19. Intro to action planning. <i>Presentation.</i> 13.30- 14.00 20. Intro to effective training delivery. <i>Presentation.</i> 14.00-14.15 21. Development of capacity development plan for replication of the training in provinces of Georgia. <i>Exercise.</i> 14.15-15.15
	Break 15.15- 15.45	Break 15.15-15.45	Break 15.15-15.45
	5. continued. 15.45 to 16.30 6. Presentation of methods outputs for peer review. <i>Presentation by participants.</i> 16.30 – 17.30 7. Training reflection team review. <i>Exercise.</i> After training meeting	13.Contd.15.45 – 17.30 14. Training reflection team review. <i>Exercise.</i> After training meeting.	22. Presentation of training delivery plans for peer review. <i>Participant presentation.</i> 15.45 -17.00 23. Workshop evaluation, closing remarks and next steps. <i>Participant and organiser reflections and comments.</i> 17.00-17.30
	Close 17.30	Close 17.30	Close 17.30

Annex 2. List of Participants

Workshop Participants

	Name	Position/Organization	Contact Details
1.	Eka Balarjishvili	Forest Inventory Department National Forestry Agency of Georgia	6 G. Gulua Str. 0114. Tbilisi, Georgia Tel: +995 32 272 72 83 ekaterine721@gmail.com
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UNECE / FAO

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International and National Consultants

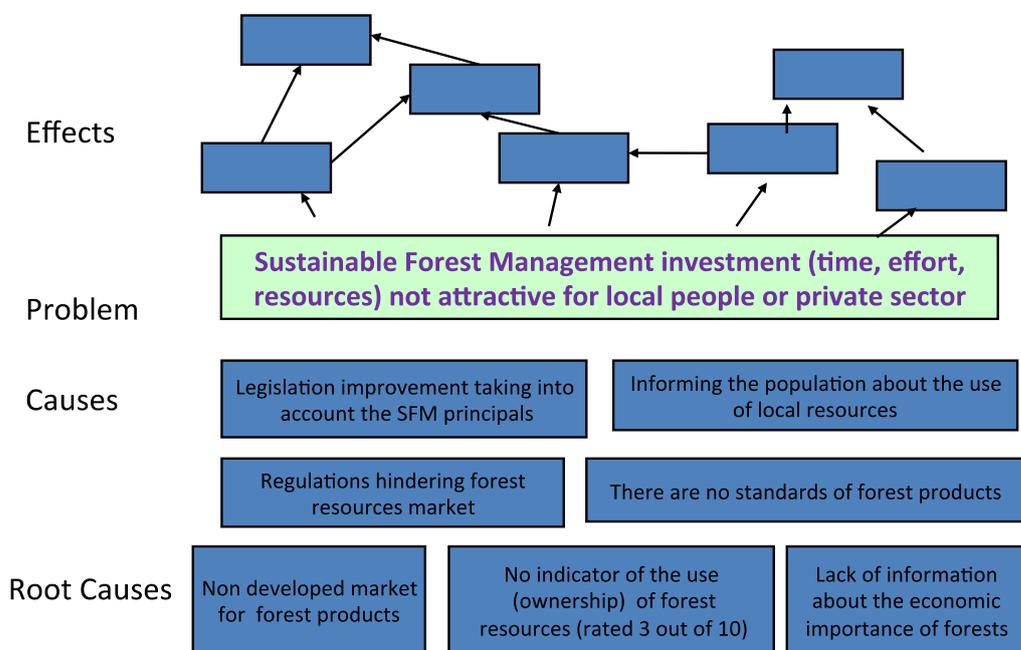
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Organizers

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Annex 3. Example outputs from exercises in the workshop

Problem analysis procedure



Rights (ownership), revenues (benefits) and responsibilities analysis procedure

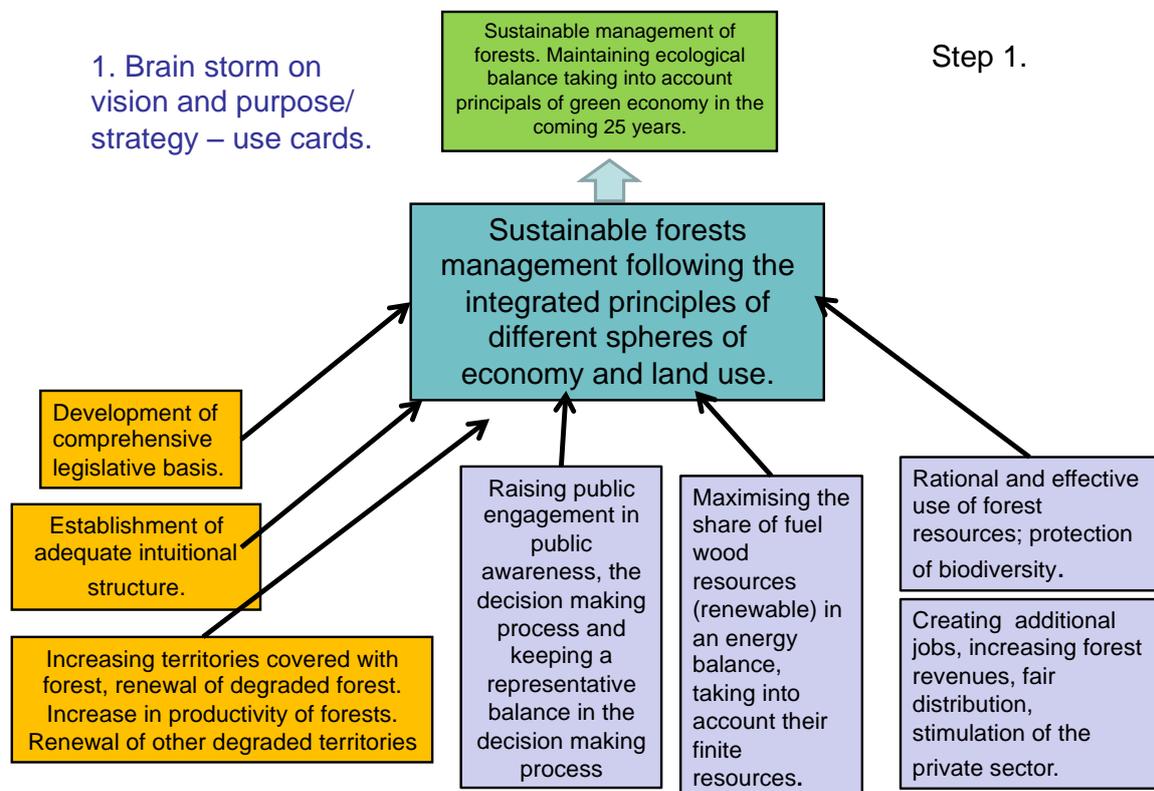
	Rights (Tenure/ownership)	Revenues and benefits	Responsibilities
Current situation for forest communities	Notwithstanding that according to legislation that states all forests must be state owned, the local population in several regions of Georgia independently manage and utilise the local resources.	On the territory of the state forest they record annually 80,000 cubic metres of state resources and besides the use of non wood resources, (mushrooms or fruits) and also highly intensive grazing.	The local population is not motivated to sustainably manage the forest which is conditioned by the low level of economic development, and lack of knowledge of legislation, law awareness and by the fact that they are using the illegally extracted resources for commercial reasons. The responsibilities are defined by general administrative code.
	Tenure/ownership over the forest	Revenues and benefits.	Responsibility. Motivation for sustainable Forest Management
Ideal situation for forest communities in ideal Sustainable Forest Management for a Green Economy	Maximum development of community forests	It will grow because the forest use will be taking place by the sustainable SFM principles.	The motivation and responsibilities for forest management will develop due to the fact that they will not want to lose income.

Data gathering and management - exercise

5. Policy development and monitoring of the forest sector in relation to a green economy.

Identify up to 3 common data gaps and explain why they are important to fill.	Suitable criteria (what to measure?)	Suitable Indicators(How to measure?)	How to make the data collection feasible/ cost effective?
1. Lack of certification and standards	Specification of wood and non wood resources	Quantity of certified products	Information from certificated service
2. Lack of forest management plans.	Quantity of inventoried forest	Quantitative and qualitative indicators of inventorised forest.	National forest agency
3. Lack of assessment of market potential	Basket of wood and non wood products	Quantitative indicator of demand and supply of market Qualitative assessment of market demands	Marketing service

Policy drafting and review –structuring forest policy exercise, solution tree



Step 2. Structuring the policy – using logical framework guide		
<p>A. Context analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key strengths, limitations (root causes), opportunities and threats in the forest sector (4 sentences) • Rationale for updating the policy (2 sentences) <p>Introduction of sustainable forestry</p> <p>Proper monitoring in connection with green economy and the existence proper and effective legislation basis</p>		
<p>B. Vision: The impact/ positive change that the policy wants to achieve in 25 years time (1 sentence)</p> <p>Introduction and development of green economy</p>		
<p>C. Purpose: Summary of the key strategy or strategies that will help achieve this vision (Maximum 3 sentences)</p> <p>Development of forest services offering services to the population</p>		
D. Objectives/ Components of the policy.	E. Expected Results (Must be measurable)	F. Assumptions – positive conditions necessary. Rate it. Must be more than 80% chance.
<p>Component Objective 1.</p> <p>Improvement of ecological state of forest</p>	<p>Outcome of 1</p> <p>Elimination of illegal logging</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Improvement of eco systems , encourage the natural renewal of forests</p>

Component Objective 2. Simplify of the use of wood and non wood resources	Outcome of 2. Acquiring wood resources with less physical and material costs	2. Increase of the employment of people in this sphere
Component Objective 3. Improvement of existing legislative basis	Outcome of 3. Simplification of procedures	3. Introduction of green economy
Component Objective 4. Strengthening the monitoring.	Outcome of 4. Enforcement of changes	4. Implementation of the legal procedures within legal framework.
Component Objective 5. Making an inventory	Outcome of 5. Defining the existing resources and potential (of the state of forests)	5. Proper management of forest resources
Component Objective 6. Define the types of forest uses	Outcome of 6. Increasing revenues, excess to forest services	6. Financial growth
Component Objective 7. Balanced participation of state non-governmental and private sector	Outcome of 7. Long term effective provision of sustainable forest management	7. Introduction of green economy

Step 2. Structuring the policy – using logical framework guide
<p>B. Context analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key strengths, limitations (root causes), opportunities and threats in the forest sector(4 sentences) • Rationale for updating the policy (2 sentences)

<p>B. Vision: The impact/ positive change that the policy wants to achieve in 25 years time (1 sentence)</p> <p>Sustainable management of forests. Maintaining ecological balance taking into account principals of green economy in the coming 25 years.</p>		
<p>C. Purpose: Summary of the key strategy or strategies that will help achieve this vision (Maximum 3 sentences)</p> <p>Sustainable forests management following the integrated principles of different spheres of economy and land use.</p>		
<p>D. Objectives/ Components of the policy.</p>	<p>E. Expected Results (Must be measurable)</p>	<p>F. Assumptions – positive conditions necessary. Rate it. Must be more than 80% chance.</p>
<p>Component Objective 1.</p> <p>Development of comprehensive legislative basis.</p>	<p>Outcome of 1 (expected change)</p> <p>Forest code, norms and regulations, standards.</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Political will</p>
<p>Component Objective 2.</p> <p>Establishment of adequate intuitional structure.</p>	<p>Outcome of 2</p> <p>Establishment of state organisations having commercial rights, establishment of municipal management structure and promoting private sector activities.</p>	<p>2.</p> <p>Financial resources</p>
<p>Component Objective 3.</p> <p>Increasing the territories covered with forest, Renewal of degraded forest. Increase in productivity of forests.</p>	<p>Outcome of 3. 20% increase in reserves of wood resources.</p>	<p>3.</p> <p>Professional personnel, finances.</p>

Renewal of other degraded territories		
<p>Component Objective 4.</p> <p>Raising public engagement in public awareness, the decision making process and keeping a representative balance in the decision making process.</p>	<p>Outcome of 4.</p> <p>Decreasing the illegal actions by 90%</p>	<p>4.</p> <p>Legislation, public interest.</p>
<p>Component Objective 5.</p> <p>Rational and effective use of forest resources; protection of biodiversity.</p>	<p>Outcome of 5.</p> <p>Increase of forest resources by 30%</p>	<p>5.</p> <p>Knowledge, experience, finances</p>
<p>Component Objective 6.</p> <p>Maximising the share of fuel wood resources (renewable) in an energy balance, taking into account their finite resources.</p>	<p>Outcome of 6.</p> <p>Increase of energy efficiency by 50%</p>	<p>6.</p> <p>Professional personnel, finances</p>
<p>Component Objective 7.</p> <p>Creating additional jobs, increasing forest revenues, fair distribution, stimulation of private sector.</p>	<p>Outcome of 7.</p> <p>Increase in revenues and employment minimum by 100%</p>	<p>7.</p> <p>Taking in to account the above conditions</p>