1. Forestry policy and strategy

Lithuanian forestry policy is based on the principles of sustainable forest management and first of all is aimed at the implementation of resolutions of Strasbourg (1990), Helsinki (1993) and Lisbon (1998) Ministerial Conferences on Protection of Forests in Europe, development of sustainable and multiple-use forest management, protection of biodiversity, increasing of forest area via afforestation of abandoned agricultural land, development of forestry research, education, extension and etc. The Principles underlying Lithuania’s forest policy are set up in the Forest Law. The Forest Law was issued on 22 November 1994. It was updated in 1996 and in 1999. The Forest Law establishes rights and duties of all forest managers, owners and users of the Republic of Lithuania to utilize, reproduce, grow and protect forests, strikes a balance between the interests of forest owners and society, establishes the main principles of forest management. The Forest law covers all main issues of forest policy: trends of forestry policy, forest ownership, forest management and supervision, economic regulation of forestry, forest use, regeneration, growing and felling, forest protection and etc.

In addition to the law a “Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme” was approved by the Government in 1994 and updated in 1996. It contains many issues related to forestry policy. The Action Plan, which is annexed to the programme, foresees the actions to be undertaken in forestry sector up to the year 2023.

International processes, treaties or agreements influence the formation and implementation of Lithuanian forest policy and strategy. Lithuania has signed Strasbourg (1990), Helsinki (1993) and Lisbon (1998) Ministerial Conferences on Protection of Forests in Europe Resolutions and BERN Convention as well. CITES Convention is being prepared for Parliament ratification in 2000. Since 1988 Lithuania has been participating in the international ICP-Forests programme and is a member of EUFORGEN since 1995. The state policy to join European Union has reflection on forestry policy as well.

At present the new Forestry policy statement as the separate document is under preparation. In 1999-2000 the FAO project "Development of the Private Forestry Sector in Lithuania" has been preceded. During the implementation of this project the FAO experts assisted Lithuanian specialists in the process of the formulation and preparation of the Forestry policy statement, carried out a preliminary assessment of Lithuania’s current legal status in relation to the General Declarations and Resolutions adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Lisbon 1998), discussed compliance with international standards on forest management.

The results of this project, suggestions of FAO experts and their comments on the formulation of Lithuanian forestry policy will be considered as well. The first draft of the Forestry policy statement is under preparation. It will be submitted for comments and suggestions to NGOs and other interesting parties. After their comments and suggestions the draft of the Forestry policy statement will be updated and presented to the public discussions. It is expected that new document on forestry policy will be approved by the Government in the year 2001.

Several measures have been undertaken in order to harmonize cross-sectoral policies related to forests (e.g. environment, agriculture, land use, industry, air, water and economy). For instance, the State and private forest use and management rules have been updated by including measures for biodiversity conservation and implementing principles of sustainable forest management. Forestry and Forest Industry Development
Programme promotes the use of wood based energy what is closely related to the National energy strategy. Afforestation of abandoned agricultural lands, which is a part of the rural development strategy, is reflected in Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme as well.

2. Forestry programme

Besides the Forest Law the forest policy and strategy are further elaborated in the Forestry and Wood Processing Industry Development Programme, approved by the Government in 1994 and updated in 1996. The Action Plan, which is annexed to the programme, foresees the actions to be undertaken up to the year 2023. Forestry strategy guidelines have been prepared and included into the up-dated National Programme for Development of Forestry and Forest Industry. This programme includes:

- Forestry policy
- Lithuanian forest and timber resources
- Forest ownership and privatisation
- Trends in timber resource utilisation
- Forest management and control
- Reforestation and afforestation
- Forest fire protection and control of insect pests and diseases
- Timber production
- Development of game management
- Conservation of biological diversity in forests
- Forestry research, education and extension
- Timber industry
- Timber production
- Wood consumption
- Domestic and international timber trade.

The long-term trends in supply and demand for wood have been assessed in National Program for Development of Forestry and Forest Industry.

Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme has linkages with Programme of Diversification of activities in areas less suitable for farming and with Rural Development strategy as well. As it was mentioned above Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme promotes the use of wood based energy what is closely related to the National energy strategy. Afforestation of abandoned agricultural lands, which is a part of the rural development strategy, is reflected in Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme as well.

At present the new Forestry strategy statement as the separate document is under preparation. In 1999-2000 the FAO project "Development of the Private Forestry Sector in Lithuania" has been preceded. The results of this project, suggestions of FAO experts and their comments on the formulation of Lithuanian forestry strategy will be considered. The first draft of the Forestry strategy statement is under preparation. It will be submitted for comments and suggestions to NGOs and other interesting parties. After their comments and suggestions the draft of the Forestry strategy statement will be updated and presented to the public discussions. It is expected that new document on forestry strategy will be approved by the Government in the year 2001.
3. Forestry legislation

The Forest Law is the main legal instrument, which set up the forestry policy and strategy. It was passed by the Parliament on 22 November 1994 and updated in 1996 and 1999. Further amendments are expected in the year 2001. The Forest Law establishes rights and duties of all forest managers, owners and users of the Republic of Lithuania to utilize, reproduce, grow and protect forests, strikes a balance between the interests of forest owners and society, establishes the main principles of forest management.

In addition to the Forest Law “Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme” has been approved by the Government in 1994 and updated in 1996. It is one of the main legal instruments as well, which serves for further implementation of forest policy and strategy. This programme is closely related to Lithuanian national sustainable development strategy. The Action Plan, which is annexed to the program, foresees the actions to be undertaken up to the year 2023. Forest Law and Forestry and Forest Industry Development Programme are two main legal instruments, which describe forest policy and strategy, foresee measures for it’s implementation and supervision.

In the light of the implementation of the Forest Law the following regulations and rules have been issued:

- Regulations of Department of Forests and Protected Areas (1999);
- Regulations of General Forest Enterprise (2000);
- Regulations on Management and Use of Private Forests (1995, updated 1997);
- Regulations for Final Forest Felling (1999);
- Rules of Thinings and Sanitary Felling (2000);
- Rules of Roundwood Marking (1999);
- Rules of Fire Prevention Service (1995);
- Regulation of Sanitary Forest Protection (1996);
- Hunting Regulations (2000);
- Rules on Hunting in Lithuania (2000);
- Special Conditions of Land and Forest Use (1992, last update 1999);

Law on the Restoration of the Right of Ownership of the citizens to the existing Real Property was issued on 18 June 1991. During 1991 - 1997 several amendments and updates to this Law have been issued, where customary and traditional rights of forest owners have been promoted in a higher level. The liberalisation of management of private forests has been provided in updated Regulations on Management and Harvesting in Private Forests.

Environmental Protection Law was issued at January 21, 1992 and updated in 1996 and 1997. Lithuanian Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and corresponding action plan was prepared by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and approved by Parliament in 1998.

The following environmental Laws / Regulations have been issued:
- Law on Environmental Monitoring (1997)
- Law on Wildlife (1997)
• Law on Wild flora (1999)
• Law on Waste Management (1998)
• Law on Protected (endangered) Species of Plants, Animals, Funguses and their Communities (1997)
• Law on Tax for Environment Pollution (1991, last update 1996)
4. Forestry administration

The Forestry Administration in Lithuania

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS AND PROTECTED AREAS

GENERAL FOREST ENTERPRISE

State Environmental Inspection

Forest Faculty of Lithuanian University of Agriculture
Lithuanian Forest Research Institute
Kaunas Forestry College
Institute of Forest Inventory and Management
Consulting Service for Private Forest Owners
Forest Seed Control Station
Centre of Forest Economics
Centre of Lithuanian Forest Tree and Seed Breeding
Station of Sanitary Forest Protection
National Parks (4)
Regional Parks (28)
Forest Enterprises (42)
Private forest owners

Function relation:

control
management
subordination
coordination
5. CERTIFICATION

Lithuania is the country, which exports roundwood and its products, so the forest certification is becoming the important part of Lithuanian forest policy and strategy. The international certification schemes have been analyzing in Lithuania since 1997. The first initiatives of forest certification started in state forestry authorities. The Department of Forests and Protected Areas since 1997 started to analyze the possibility to implement international forest certification schemes (Forest Stewardship Council - FSC, Pan-European Forest Certification - PEFC) in Lithuanian forest sector. The main purpose of this analyses - considering the interests of all stakeholders choose the forest certification scheme which financially effectively and economically usefully could be implemented in Lithuanian forest sector and could ensure the supply of Lithuanian timber products in international timber markets. The report "The overview of forest certification schemes and the possibility to implement it in Lithuania" has been prepared in 1998. Since 1999 representatives from Lithuania as observers participate in the PEFC process. The preparation work is being carried seeking to become the member of PEFC.

Department of Forests and Protected Areas shows the main and biggest initiatives to forest certification. Department of Forests and Protected Areas not only analyzes the international forest certification schemes, the possibility to implement it in Lithuanian forest sector but makes concrete actions to forest certification as well.

Two state forest enterprises are going to be certified according FSC scheme. Department of Forests and Protected Areas has signed agreements with UK Company "SGS Forestry" for forest certification of two state forest enterprises (Birzai and Panevezys forest enterprises) according to FSC scheme (totally 70 thou. ha). On July of 2000 the certification process according to FSC scheme in two state forest enterprises (Birzai and Panevezys forest enterprises) started. UK Company "SGS Forestry" which certifies according QUALIFOR programme and is accredited by FSC carries out the certification. At the beginning of July of 2000 the pre-assessment work has been done in state forest enterprises mentioned above. It is planned that at the first half of the year 2001 the certification activities in Birzai and Panevezys state forest enterprises (together with the unit of timber processing in Birzai state forest enterprise) will be finished and these state forest enterprises will obtain FSC certificates.