Green jobs in the forest sector
joint efforts of FOREST EUROPE, ILO, UNECE, FAO

Michal Vančo, FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit Bratislava

Promoting Green Jobs in the Forest Sector, 27-28 June 2017, Bratislava, Slovakia
joint FOREST EUROPE, UNECE, FAO workshop
Almost **3 million people** in Europe earn their living from working in forestry and forest-based industries.

The forest sector offers great potential to provide **new job opportunities** and income for **rural households**: this might help to counter the loss and aging of the population in rural areas.

**Number of employees in the forest sector is decreasing**
Forest sector workforce is ageing

Around **30% of all people employed in forestry in Europe are 49 years old or over.**

The recruitment of new, younger workers into the sector is a challenge to be addressed.

---

Forest sector has a bad image 😞

- low wages
- poor working conditions
- lack of social recognition in comparison to other sectors
- weak social security system
- working in rural areas
Training and education are essential to make forestry competitive and profitable

Over the last 25 years, the number of highly qualified employees has increased in Europe, ...however:

- Skills levels, work safety and health and work quality has decreased in many countries
- Lack of qualified workforce in many European countries and a lot of jobs are occupied by low qualified workers, often migrant workers in some countries
- Significant differences in the level of qualification between foresters and forest workers
Training and education are essential to make forestry competitive and profitable

Education and training systems should be adapted to changing conditions and innovative technologies. New skills generating and promoting new green jobs are required, for example:

- bio-economy and circular economy (e.g. wooden houses, new products);
- environmental services, land management, landscape architecture;
- exploring multiple use of forests and non-wood forest products;
- communication, conflict management and entrepreneurship skills.
Occupational health and safety

Annually, about **1 in 10** workers in the sector suffers from an accident. Despite the fact that occupational accidents decreased considerably in the last 25 years, forestry work remains a dangerous occupation.

Improving the occupational health and safety situation in the forest sector remains a **challenge**.
Social equity and gender equality

- Social inclusion and gender equality should be promoted along the whole forest value chain.

- Women are usually under-represented in management and decision-making.

Across Europe, women only account for 20% of the overall workforce employed in forestry.
Social issues - Job stability, fair remuneration, working conditions

- One of the main problems in the forest sector is the prevalence of short duration contracts for specific jobs, since outsourcing is very widespread, a large proportion of forest workers are not direct employees.

- According to the experts lack of legislation that could provide legal security and contribute to job stability, make the implementation of effective employment policies in the forest sector difficult.
This problem must be faced especially in the case of small companies. Collective organisation of workers, the self-employed and small forest entrepreneurs would facilitate dialogue with big forest companies, as well as with the state, and make the situation more balanced.

- Right to form or join trade unions and the right to collective bargaining.
- The ILO core conventions and other relevant ILO conventions could provide the guidance.
Social issues

Involvement of migrant workers in the forest sector also opens questions related to decent work.

Informal work/employment, especially taking into account diversity of ownership structures across the region, brings other implications, which need to be considered in the modern forest sector.
Bio-economy and circular economy

... enhance the contribution of sustainable forest management in a bio-based low carbon economy stressing its importance for the development of economic growth and jobs
Forests offer us countless opportunities for recreation:
At least **90%** of the forests in Europe are **accessible to the public** for recreational purposes.

And the benefits to health (physical and mental) provided by forests are innumerable.
Processing of various non-wood goods and using positive impacts of forests on human health, well-being and as a setting for recreation and recovery have a great potential to generate new green jobs and entrepreneurship based on ecotourism, forest related education and healing therapy programmes in forest areas and increasing quality of life.

Among the cultural heritage sites recorded within forest in Europe there are, for instance, 238,600 trees with cultural and spiritual values.
Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy

1. C.0.1 Review forest sector workforce issues
2. C.1.1 Improve monitoring and analysis of the forest-sector workforce
3. C.1.2 Review main threats to sustainability of the workforce
4. C.2.1 Raise the level of political will to improve the safety and health of the workforce, by studying workforce status and trends
5. C.2.2 Radically improve the monitoring of occupational safety and health of the forestry workforce.
Recommendations on social aspects of employment in forest sector and forestry education were formulated.

Need for more information on social aspects of SFM was pointed out.

Definition of green jobs in the forest sector was developed based on ILO and UNEP concepts.
II. Enhancing the social aspects of sustainable forest management, including promoting green jobs in forests

11. Promote a forest sector and its related value chain that provides society with increasing opportunities for green jobs, which means that they are decent and connected to the management and use of forests and to environmentally friendly production processes based on goods and services from sustainably managed forests.

12. Adapt education and training systems to changing conditions, technologies and new skills required in the forest sector and beyond.

13. Promote social inclusion and efforts towards gender equality along the whole forest value chain.
Workshop on Threats to Sustainability of the Forest Sector Workforce (Geneva, Switzerland)

- Recommended to develop a list of green jobs in the forestry sector
- Recommended to develop a clear link between the forestry education and forestry jobs
- Recommended to improve data collection about the forestry jobs in the region
- ILO/UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Green Jobs asked to work in that direction
Workshop on Promoting Green Jobs in the Forest Sector (Bratislava, Slovakia)

- Review and discuss at policy level the main threats to sustainability of the workforce
- Share lessons learned and stimulate discussion on promotion of green jobs and development of new skills for the European forest sector
- Recommendations will serve as input to the guidelines on the promotion of green jobs in the forest sector in the region

- Support the implementation of the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy Pillar C – Decent Green Jobs
- Review forest sector workforce issues at policy and technical levels
- Map and describe forestry education curricula and identify skill requirements in the region (Open Book)
- Develop a list of existing and possible green jobs in the forest sector
EXPERT GROUP assists Liaison Unit to implement pan-Europian actions defined by Madrid Ministerial Resolution:

- develop pan-European guidelines on the promotion of green jobs in the forest sector.
- exchange knowledge and experience in education and requirements for new skills
- apply gender mainstreaming to these activities
Possible measures to strengthen social aspects and promote green jobs

Policies and policy tools

Cross-sectoral coordination

Communication

Research, innovation, Training and education
FOREST EUROPE
Liaison Unit Bratislava
c/o National Forest Centre
T. G. Masaryka 22
960 92 Zvolen, Slovakia

liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org