

Annex 3
ALBANIAN COUNTRY REPORT

Report topics

0. Abstract.

- 0.1 The long period of the transition in Albania from a centralized to a trade market economy, has caused a lot of challenge for the forest sector. One of the main problems for the Albanian Forest Service is the prevention and reduction of illegal logging in forests.
- 0.2 Strengthen penalties and sanctions against illegal logging, legal amendments regarding the licensing process of wood processing units and control of their chains from production to export. From year 2000, an inter-ministerial Task Force is working on, to coordinate the efforts and the measurements of the government agencies to reduce the illegal logging.
- 0.3 The causes of the illegal logging are;
Illegal logging stimulated by commercial interests
Illegal logging stimulated by poverty in rural areas
- 0.4 Wide range of poverty in the rural area.
- 0.5 Development of institutional restriction of the forest administration rewards for responsible behavior/motivation. The Government has approved the Strategy for the development of the forest sector, the separation of the management from the control function inside the forest administration
- 0.6 Lack of ownership, a proper involvement of civic society in forest and pastures management activities
- 0.7 Lack of adequate legal framework. Harmonization of legislation in terms of governing overlapping and passing over the forest authorities in some of the laws

1. Illegal logging

1.1. Types of illegal logging

- Illegal logging stimulated by commercial interests.
- Illegal logging stimulated by poverty in rural areas.

1.1.1. Logging without permission or concession from public forests. In the forest plots the villagers cut and transport the timber to the sawmills without the permission of the forest authorities mainly during the night. The problems with the ownership of the forest plots. This type of illegal logging is occurring in the northern part of the country where forest administration is dealing with security problems. It is stimulated mainly by commercial interests.

1.1.2. Wood theft or illegal logging from private forests, the forest on private ownership in Albania are limited, they are more protected and has less pressure from the illegal logging. Only in the cases when there are misunderstanding for the borders or conflicts between the holders itself.

1.1.3. False declaration of volumes, species, values or origins of harvested wood, this is a problem that comes out during the transportation of the timber from the forest to the sawmills centers by the private companies. According to the customer statistics there are cases where the exported and imported wood companies try to false declaration of volume and the origin. For the exported wood production we use origin certification of all the forest products. Roadblocks control the volumes and the origin of wood.

1.1.4. Logging in protected areas such as national parks, the damage of this type has happened in the national parks in the north Albania especially in Lura and Valbona National Park.

1.1.5. Logging in prohibited areas, we have cases of these types in the watersheds of hydropowers and in some other forest with land protection functions.

1.1.6. Removing oversized or undersized trees, it is a problem that last 2 years has decreased permanently, due to the improvement of the measures taken from the forest administration with big support of the Task-Force commission.

1.1.7. Obtaining logging authorization through bribes, it happened all over the country, the authorization are given to fit the needs of the people living in the village included firewood and timber. But they sell the wood to the illegal merchants.

1.1.8. Killing or burning trees so that they can be logged, it doesn't happen in Albania.

1.2. What mechanisms are in place to monitor or estimate their importance?

- Improvement of legal framework to support the forest police.
- The forest service has set up a unification of the monitoring system, for illegal cutting in all levels.
- Increase of the forest police unites in the forests; as a result, we have more persecutions for the damages. The support of inter-ministerial Task Force for the coordination the efforts and the measurements of the government agencies to reduce the illegal logging.
- Strengthening of the control in all levels especially in the most problematic districts.
- Organization of meetings in the Forest Service Directorates in Districts, the reorganize the actions according to specific condition, and for the coordination of the work with other state institution.
- Logistic support for the forest police units with hand radios and transportation means, motorcycles and vehicles.
- Set up 24 hours road blocks and moveable road blocks inside the forest area all over the country.
- Sensibilization of public, and the incrisement of the investments from other state institutions for forest protection

1.3. In total, in your opinion, what is the volume of illegally logged wood in your country, as a percent of removals?

1.3.1. Less than 1%, 1-5%, 5-10%, 10-25%, over 25%?

Less than

1.3.2. What is this estimate based on?

The estimation is based on the percentage that the volume of illegally logged wood has on the total volume of legally chatted wood and illegally.

1.3.2.1. Comparison of production, import and export, and consumption data

	Production m3		Import m3		Export m3		Consumption m3	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
Fuel wood	222200	221000			67300	56300	154900	164700
Industrial round wood	82600	75200	400	590	29300	470	53700	75320

1.3.2.2. Sample surveys

The illegal logging rate in Albania is decreasing year by year. The Directorate General of Forest and Pasture (DGFP) are in the way of implementing several strategies and action for the future. The efforts taken to reduce illegal logging and control the trade of illegally derived forest products is subject of the work of the inter-ministerial Task Force.

This year the amount of wood imported is growing very fast. 1.3.2.3. Judicial records

1.3.2.4. Expert estimates, for example from reports of forest authorities

In the least 5 years the volume of illegal logging wood is decreased constantly year by year. This conclusion comes from the evaluations of the evidences of the forest administration.

1.3.2.5. Other?

The fuel wood is still a primary means of fulfilling family needs, like heating and cooking in rural areas. There are very poor households who use almost the forest products as recourse for their incomes.

1.4. Additional comments on the causes and extent of illegal logging in your country

The lack of a National Strategy for heating, using other alternative resources.

The lack of the legal status for the Forest Service Police with necessary attributes payment incentive. The Local government and underestimation of forests violations do still not collect fines for the violations in forests by judicially institution.

Inadequate Legislation and the conflicting laws, lenient measures for violations in forest.

Insufficient traveling means for the forestry personnel and for transporting timber sequestered in the forest.

The poor economic state of the rural communities near the forest.

2. Trade in products of illegal logging

2.1. Are you aware of any of the following?

2.1.1. Smuggling of round wood or forest products (import or export)

We don't have evidences of the phenomenon.

2.1.2. False declaration of goods (value, species, origin)

In this case we coordinate the work with the costume offices and share information with them.

2.1.3. Other trade related falsification (e.g. falsification of certificates of sustainable forest management). We have cases of this falsification.

2.2. What mechanisms are in place to monitor discrepancies between declared imports and exports and actual imports and exports? We share information with the Costume offices.

2.3. In your opinion what is the volume exported and imported of illegally-sourced wood as percentage of total wood exports?

2.3.1. Less than 5%, 5-25%, over 25%?

Less than 5%,

2.4. If there are significant volumes or values involved, please describe what is known about the type of fraud, its estimated volume and its causes. The declaration of less volume or the species they export.

2.5. Additional comments on the causes and extent of trade in products from illegal logging in your country

The wood processing industry is very difficult to be controlled because the internal trade of the furniture has a lot of problems and because the problem to the tax administration and control.

3. Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade policies

3.1. Is your country involved in any bilateral or multilateral initiatives on FLEGT?

No

3.2. Does your country have official policies to reduce or eliminate illegal logging?

Annually the forest administration estimates the problem of illegal logging and based on the experience and conclusions we build up programs and improve the official policies to reduce and eliminate the illegal logging. Forest Police function according to the law 7623, dated 13.10.1992, "On Forests and Forest Service Police". The strategy of the development of the forest sector is part of the entire process.

The main problem of the Forest Police, during the last 10 years, is the illegal cutting in the forests. Based on the Prime Minister Decision nr. 253 dated. 23.11.2000 "On the

protection of the forest resources”, a Task Force, headed by the Minister of the Agriculture and Food was established, in which representatives of the main state institutions are participating.

3.3. Does your country have official policies to reduce or eliminate trade of products from illegal logging?

We are working on it in the light of converting the legislation with the EU standards.

4. Additional information (optional). As little is known about the topic as yet, it would help if you would provide any other information or ideas you consider relevant. For example, send in advance or bring for distribution at the workshop, any reports (published or unpublished) which may be available. (Please specify whether they are for the secretariat's internal use or for distribution at the workshop.)