Ways of improving the methodology of the targeted program approach in the forestry sector with the aim of increasing the efficiency of forest management in the Russian Federation

Summary

This study was undertaken as part of the Regional EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT (ENPI) EAST COUNTRIES FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE (FLEG) II PROGRAM (ENPI EAST Countries FLEG II) by a team of Consultants to the World Bank.

The main objective of the study was to identify specific and systemic gaps in the development of strategic planning documents on forest governance, including in particular, federal programs and regional targeted programs of forestry development. The scope of the study was limited to the following six Russian regions: Arkhangelsk, Voronezh and Moscow Oblasts, Krasnoyarsk, Primorsky and Khabarovsk Krays. Their selection as FLEG II model regions is based on their high representativeness of the challenges and key issues in the area of forest governance and enables to take into account the social, economic and environmental diversity and specifics of various Russian regions.

The study methodology includes an overview and analysis of available literature, review of the legal and regulatory frameworks, and a comparative analysis of approved and/or draft forest development targeted programs of the pilot regions and the National Forestry Development Program for the Period of 2013-2020. The study also included a benchmarking exercise to evaluate the compliance of the forestry development targeted programs with the international criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management of the Montreal Process, as well as a survey of specialists from the forest authorities of the pilot regions, responsible for the preparation of forestry development targeted programs.

The output of the study consists of conclusions and recommendation on how to improve the effectiveness of the performance-based approach to forest governance in the Russian Federation.

The review of the existing legal and regulatory frameworks revealed the following gaps:

- There are no regional regulations, setting regional forest policy priorities and defining priority areas and/or activities, aimed at good forest governance;
- In the pilot regions, there are no regional regulations, containing lists of performance indicators or procedures for their determination in the course of drawing up targeted programs,
with due regard to the regional forest sector’s specifics, current status and projected development;
- There are no procedures for professional external and independent reviews of draft targeted programs;
- There is no mechanism of interagency coordination and collaboration with ‘adjacent’ sectors to address ‘overlapping’ issues;
- There are no procedures for involving local self-governance bodies in forest governance activities, including the process of designing targeted programs;
- The standard rates for costs of forest management operations under the national targeted program fail to match the regional specifics of such operations and to reflect actual needs, or do not exist at all.

The completed comparative analysis of the ongoing forest development targeted programs and the survey of specialists, responsible for their preparation at the federal level and in the pilot regions, reveal a number of systemic deficiencies in the existing practice of strategic planning. It is found out that there is no single methodological approach to manage the processes of program development. It results into the ‘TOP DOWN’ planning in most Russian regions. This practice prevents from accommodating opinions of rayon and municipal level specialists, personally responsible for the implementation of ‘handed down’ plans and activities.

Goals and objectives of regional programs sometimes fail to be based on forest development priorities or to take into account economic, environmental and social specifics of a given Russian region.

In many cases, performance indicators for the national program disagree with those for the regional programs. Moreover, there are mistakes in some targets for performance indicators.

The current inflation levels are included neither in the estimation of annual cost-related targets, nor in the budgeting of revenue and expenditure parts of the targeted programs.

Though the Russian Forest Policy Framework is aimed, among other things, at promoting multiple forest use, it still remains beyond the scope of strategic planning, and hence, is not integrated into forest governance as none of the forestry development programs includes activities or targets for multiple use of forest resources and forest lands. In addition, practically in all pilot regions, forestry development plans fail to agree with plans of timber industry development.

An evaluation of how the Russian Federation meets its voluntary commitments under the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (the Montreal Process) shows that the sustainable forest management (SFM) criteria and indicators are not fully mainstreamed in the process of targeted planning and programming of forestry development at the federal and regional level. Some important SFM areas are still left beyond the scope of strategic planning, activities and targets for forestry development programs.

Basing on the findings from the study, its authors offer the following key recommendations on directions of action and specific measures to make the performance-based approach to forest governance more effective:
1). With a view to improving the regulatory and legal framework for drawing up targeted programs, it is recommended to:
- Develop regional forest policies (i.e. forest use, protection and renewal policies);
- Prepare and approve guidelines on drawing up forestry development targeted programs;
- Prepare and approve an indicative list of targets to be used for purposes of drawing up regional forestry development targeted programs in Russian regions and to reflect regional specifics and regional forest policy priorities;
- Amend Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation # 588 of 02.08.2010, as well as respective regional regulations, governing such elements of the development, approval and implementation of targeted programs as the establishment of mandatory procedures for public consultations and independent professional review of draft targeted programs as well as regulations on feedback accommodation;
- Amend laws and regulations, governing such elements of the development, approval and implementation of government and agency-specific targeted programs as their preparation and endorsement with involvement other stakeholder agencies;
- Amend laws and regulations, governing the development, approval and implementation of agency-specific targeted programs which require application of procedures for involving local self-governance bodies in their development and/or approval.

2). With a view to improving the methodological frameworks for the development of targeted programs, it is recommended to:
- Develop a manual (guidelines) on drawing up regional forest sector development targeted programs;
- Ensure that the guidelines should cover multiple use of forest resources and forest lands as well as measures to increase forest revenue through improving the intensity and efficiency of forest use;
- Develop and approve federal and regional regulations, defining site-specific procedures for, quality and cost of forest management operations;
- Accommodate the current and anticipated inflation levels into calculations of cost-related targets as well as into revenue and expenditure budgeting.

3). With a view to harmonizing objectives and activities of the national and regional programs with those of the international processes, promoting sustainable forest management, it is recommended to:
- Advise those who draw up forest programs to broaden the reliance on the SFM indicators of the Montreal Process when setting targets for performance and evaluating such important aspects of forest governance as the quality of financial planning; forest revenue; employment in the forest sector; satisfaction of people’s needs for forest products, etc.

4). With a view to building up human resource capacity and providing for professional development, it is recommended to:
- Develop a special training and/or professional development program, drawing upon international best practices in the area of strategic planning and evaluation of forest management sustainability, including the experience, gained through international SFM processes; and
- Organize a broad-scaled exchange of experience in strategic planning and targeted programming among Russian regions and FLEG participating countries.

The findings were discussed and assessed at such major international fora and events as the Arkhangelsk International Forest Forum (April 2014, Arkhangelsk); Khabarovsk International Forest Congress (October 2014, Khabarovsk); 24th Meeting of the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal
Forests (the Montreal Process) (August 2014, Krasnoyarsk); 72\textsuperscript{nd} Session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) (November 2014, Kazan).