



EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD
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EAST COUNTRIES FOREST LAW
ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE
II PROGRAM



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Dependency of Russian Villages on Forest Resources

Executive Summary of the Analytical Report

Based on the Case Study in Pskov Region (Bezhanitsy, Kraskyi Luch, Tsevlo),
Altaisky Krai (Tyumentsevo, Volchno-Burlinskoe, Yeltsovka) and Khabarovsk Krai
(Mukhen, Sita, Sikachi-Alan)

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Forests and forest use in Russia

Forests are the main type of vegetation in Russia occupying 46.6% of its territory. Russia has the world's largest forest resources. For 2012, the area of the forest woodland was 86501 million hectares, and the total timber volume - 83.1 billion cubic meters, representing respectively 21.4 and 15.8% of the world resources. Forests play an important role in the gas balance of the atmosphere and the regulation of the global climate of the Earth. The main stocks of the Russian forests are in Siberia and the Far East, as well as in the European North. Maximum percentage of forested area is in the Irkutsk Region and Primorsky Krai, somewhat lower than they are in the south of Khabarovsk Krai, southern Yakutia, in Krasnoyarsky Krai close to the Yenisey River and in the Republic of Komi, Vologda, Kostroma and Perm regions.

Forests significantly contribute to the Russian economy as a source of wood and many raw materials, both of plant (resin, mushrooms, berries, medicinal plants) and animal (meat, furs, beaver jet, bear bile etc.) origin. For many Russian people forest is the main environment (Finno-Ugric, Evenki ethnicities, etc.). For the modern Russian population forest is the most important recreational resource.

The survey procedure

Due to extensive territory of the country, the survey in Russia was conducted in three regions with different level of forest cover. They represent contrasting geographical conditions, including the position within the country, neighbouring countries, landscapes, infrastructure and the population structure. They were placed evenly across the country, one in the North-West European Russia (Pskov Region) (referred hereafter as NWR), one in the central Siberia (Altaisky Krai) (Altai), and one in the Russian Far East (Khabarovsk Krai) (RFE).

A unified sampling design including the same sample number in each region was elaborated to obtain the same amount of data from each of three regions. Most important criterion within a region was that a village is situated close to or not very far from a forest. Each community must have private houses with some piece of land (as opposed to multistorey block houses with no land for each of the households). Within a village, random selection among available households was done, e.g. complete random sampling was not always possible.

In each region, three types of villages were selected. They were ascribed to categories of small, medium and large settlements based on the population of the region. In small village, 10 households were selected, in medium one - 20 households, and in large one - 40 households. Total number of households were 70 per region and 210 for the whole country. There were simultaneous samplings done by different interviewers hired for this period.

All households were divided into three groups, rich, medium and poor. The criterion for selecting medium class from poor was the presence of a car among assets. Those who have extra machinery are ascribed to rich households.

Income share by source

In NWR, the majority of population have two major sources of income. These are "Other income" (27%) and "Direct Forest" (28%). Among other income, there are mainly pensions of retired people. The general demographic situation in the rural areas of NWR tends to increase elderly people while younger are moving to the cities. Moreover, there is no work for those who stay in the villages. The wage rate is almost negligible, 9%. So, they need to earn money indirectly by having private agricultural activity. Many people have additional income from agriculture and livestock, totally in the region (37%). Most of them produce potatoes and some other vegetables (carrots, red beet) and milk and eggs.

The population in the region do not have any businesses.

In Altai, there is a much unexpected situation: the majority of population has incomes expected for Russian rural population overall, but several households were extremely rich. Few households are involved into farming: they rent hundreds of hectares of land to grow potatoes, grains and keep big park of machines. Their business income was 100-500 times higher than the mean annual income in the village that drastically skewed the situation. Hence, below provided a description of the income structure with these rich families excluded. The rest of the population have “Other sources” as a major source of income (25%). “Direct Forest” was only (9%) which can be connected with a relatively low forest cover in the region and poor forests in terms of productivity. Many people have additional income from agriculture and livestock, totally in the region (52%). They also grow potatoes and vegetables, some have berries. The wage rate is even lower that in NWR, 6%. This is a sign of high unemployment and general degradation of the villages in Altai.

In RFE, the situation is somewhat similar to that in NWR. Vast majority of population depends on “Other income” (56%) indicating that the rate of pensioners and unemployed people is extremely high. “Direct Forest” is relatively low (11%) given high level of poverty. Not many people have additional income from agriculture and livestock, totally in the region (23%). Many people grow potatoes and other major vegetables: carrot, cabbage and red beet. However they produce only as much as they need for one winter, not for sale. The wage rate is the same as in NWR, 9%. The population in the region do not have any businesses. Unlike in Altai, people doing business are more criminalized, and would not be interested in participating in the interviews.

Rural communities across the country are dependent on subsidies from the budget, meaning that there are mainly pensioners living in these communities. Many people are dependent on the forest resources due to bad economic situation, collecting mainly firewood. The latter is provided by the state only partly, and many people have to collect it illegally. The subsistence of forest food products is not that high since the population ensures their survival based on the agricultural products from their own land. The regions are drastically different in amounts and kinds of products collected in the forest due to their geographical position.

Rich people in the villages are often having their financial success due to forest products. Some forest products important for the region are collected by “professionals” – sometimes non-local people.

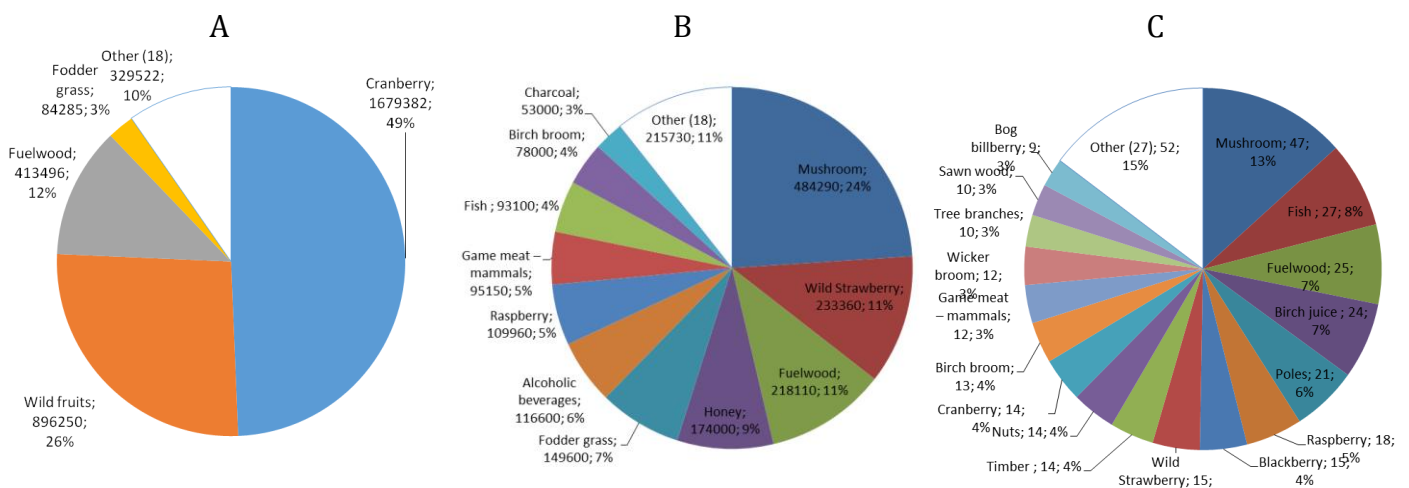
Frequency and value of forest products

In NWR, people are collecting not less than 23 forest products. Four major forest products are mushrooms, cranberries, blackberries and fuelwood (12-16% each). There are relatively few products due to extensive bogs intermingled with forests here. Although bringing much money to the households, bogs are not very variable in products. Fuelwood is important due to harsh winters and expensive fuelwood provided by the state. Berries are to some extent a component of cultural traditions, and partly used in subsistence of the families. But, from the other side, cranberries are relatively easy to collect, and bring relatively big money during a short period of harvesting season. However, these products are much different in economic value. Far beyond the others are cranberries, bringing almost the half of forest income (49%). Another quarter is due to wild fruits (26%).

In Altai, there are not less than 33 forest products collected. Major three by frequency of them are mushroom, wild strawberry (15% each) and fuelwood (11%). Above 5% are raspberries, fish and birch broom. More products are collected by sole families. Unlike NWR, forest products by value in Altai follow the frequency rank. Mushroom income is almost a quarter (24%), whilst strawberry and fuelwood make another 22% with equal contributions. More valuable products collected in the forest are honey and alcoholic beverages produced of honey and wild fruit/berries (9% and 5%, respectively), although they are not listed among frequently collected/produced. These beverages produced by sole

families, mainly by men, and consumed by either these families and friends/visitors, or sold locally. Some of them are delivered to the tourists. One product almost not represented in the diagram is pine nuts, that are collected by sole people who are gaining lots of their income from this, as can be seen from the focus group questionnaire. To collect tons of nuts is laborious for sole people, so they gather into brigades.

In RFE, the variety of forest products is much bigger than in the other two regions (not less than 44). Forests in this region are among of the most productive due to biogeography and history: they have never been glaciated, and have direct connections with the subtropics. Hence, there is a unique combination of boreal, temporal and more southern species occurring here. Among those, mushrooms are collected by 13% of households, and fish, fuelwood, and birch wood by 7-8% each. Mushrooms are popular across all the country due to traditional and trophic reasons. Fish is more popular here since there are many types of rivers, and proximity of the ocean. There are anadromous species of fish like salmon which go upstream the rivers from the ocean to breed, which makes them an easy target. Poles, raspberry are collected by 5-6% of households. The rest of products are hardly collected by more than 5% of families. Interestingly, only 3% of families collect sawn wood. If we compare the values of those products, sawn wood makes up 17% as much as that by fuelwood. So, the activity of few families by collecting various types of wood provides relatively important income. Poles (8%) and timber (9%) add to describe wood-oriented usage of forest by rural people of RFE. In total, they get 51% of income from wood among forest products. Fish (10%) and mushroom (12%) are the only non-wood products contributing seriously to total value.



Value of forest products' collection in North-West Russia (A), Altai (B), and Russian Far East (C).

Fuelwood

Fuelwood plays major role in RFE, contributing to 17% of income unlike the other two regions, where this parameter remains at a level of 11-12%. In general, forests are collected by various ways in different regions. In NWR, there are mainly sole collectors, while in RFE there are sometimes groups collecting both for sale and for own families. Partly the wood collected is transferred legally or illegally across the border, mainly to China. However, fuelwood is collected in Altai and NWR by the same 11-12%, whilst at RFE it is collected by 7% only. Altai is not connected directly to trans-country border (except for Kazakhstan which is not the case) and there is no such traffic of wood abroad. There are serious constrains for collecting wood by local people since adoption of the Forest Code of the Russian

Federation (2006).

Cash and subsistence of forest products

Major forest product in NWR, cranberries, brings to people more than 1.6 mil RUB a year. Among those, more than 99% is used for sale. Majority of collected berries go to resellers. This is one of the basic products in the region. Second important product, wild fruits with above 0.8 mil RUB, is also used mainly for sale. Only the third most important product, fuelwood, used mainly for subsistence. Any other product is not comparable by value, but all of them are used mainly for subsistence.

In Altai, mushrooms are the only one product close to 0.5 mil RUB by income. Approximately half of those are used for cash. None of the products produced in Altai is directed for sale abroad; except for they are bought by resellers. Other products for sale are honey and alcoholic beverages with 120-150 thou. RUB cash. Except for these three products, all others are used for subsistence.

Population of RFE do not gain much from the forest products. Only fuel wood and sawn wood bring 250 thou. RUB each, with majority of either product being consumed by households themselves. Sawn wood is more used for sale. High proportion of a product for sale is for birch juice but the absolute values of cash are rather low (less than 50 thou. RUB). In the case of RFE, the exported wood is much expected although the collectors don't sale it themselves. The proportion of the forest exported illegally from RFE, is extremely high and may be as much as 80%.

RFI over income quintiles

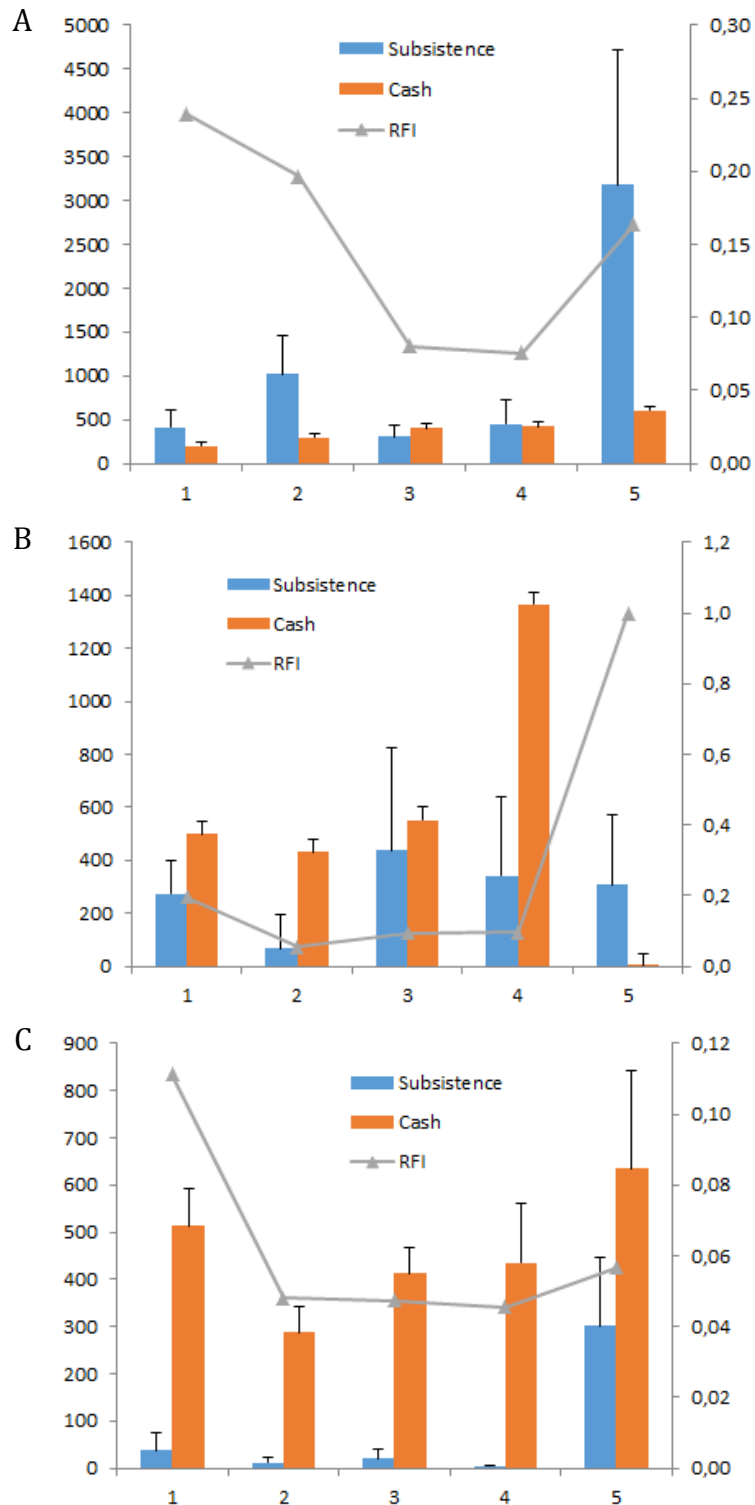
In NWR, the poorest part of population uses forest to a very little degree. Unlike them, the richest part receives cash from forest products in huge amounts. In the latter category, cash from forest products overwhelms subsistence almost 10 times. The curve of forest cash has exponential increase from poorest to richest families. In contrast, the subsistence curve increases slowly. The richest families in NWR are rich due to forest products which are cranberries, as seen from the section above.

In Altai, the subsistence bars are always taller than that of cash. The curve of forest cash increases from poorest to richest families. The subsistence curve increases with the approximately the same progress, but the richest families do not get much subsistence from the forest, however they do gain maximum cash among five quintile groups. The richest families in Altai are to some extent obtain their income from the forest.

In RFE, the subsistence bars are always taller than that of cash, sometimes many times. The curve of forest cash increases from poorest to richest families, although the cash income for the two poorest quintiles is almost negligible. The richest people get extensive part of their income from the forest. These are mainly wood products, such as sawn wood, and fuelwood. The subsistence curve increases with the slower progress, but the richest families do not get much subsistence from the forest, however they do gain maximum cash among five quintile groups.

RFI over asset groups

RFI curve across five groups of people ranked by wealthiness in NWR is extremely uneven. Although the RFI varies within a rather limited interval between 0.12 and 0.22, the highest amounts obtained for the richest quintile group. This highlights the conclusions of the section above that rich people in NWR are rich thanks to the forest. Divided into rich, poor and medium groups, households revealed tendencies. Rich families are rich in NRW due to collecting cranberries. For subsistence they use some amount of berries but they are not very nutritive as potatoes or meat, hence they couldn't serve as the only source of food. The RFI curve has an uneven shape due to high forest income in NWR.



Cash and subsistence of forest products per AEU and Relative Forest Income (RFI) in five richness classes in North-West Russia (A), Altai (B), and Russian Far East (C).

RFI curve across five groups of people ranked by wealthiness in Altai decreases from poorest to richest. The poorest people are most dependent on the forest products. The middle class is less dependent as compared to more wealthier people. This is probably due to higher proportion of pensioners in the middle class. Rich families are getting much cash from the forest, mainly collecting Siberian pine nuts. Medium class are based on low salaries, but this consumes all the time of the people working in governmental organizations. Hence they do not have time to collect products from the forests. RFI is decreasing with the increasing assets income in households.

RFI curve across five groups of people ranked by wealthiness in RFE decreases from poorest towards richest. However, quintile 4 is less dependent on the forest as compared with the richest group. The richest people obtain fuelwood and sawn wood from the forest, making essential part of their income on this product.

Most important products

In NWR, population does not see much products decreasing, except for the main product in the region, cranberries. In the area, this is the most valuable product, and many people try to earn as much money as possible during the harvesting season. The season is rather short, and competition between collectors is high. So, some of them, especially young, and non-locals, use scrapers which are much faster to collect berries, but they damage the plants and decrease potential of these shrubs to have high yield a year later. About other products, they do not see any increase or decrease, which may be caused that they do not care much about those.

In Altai, two categories among four are decreasing. Fuelwood is judged to decrease due to reduced forested area. There are cuts both legal and illegal, which decrease forests around the villages. This results in decreasing forest products delivered by these ecosystems. There are two main products in category 2: the villages in Altai were not consistent. Two villages indicated mushrooms, and the third one indicated nuts. Nuts are mainly from Siberian pine, which are subsequently decreasing with the main source of these nuts. There are people from the cities arriving to the villages to collect pine nuts, and they sometime use harmful techniques to collect nuts. Surprisingly, mushrooms are believed to decrease due to climatic changes. The seasons are becoming less rainy, which may have caused this phenomenon. Surprisingly, one village voted for increasing fuelwood in local forests. There is no official improved access rights to the forest lately, but the reason for indicating this might be a lower control.

Population at RFE see only the improvement with forest products, from categories 2 and 3. They do not report increasing or decreasing forest availability itself but some secondary products are increasing. Mushrooms are less collected by both locals and outsiders. The reasons could be due to decreasing population in those villages, especially in small ones. Increasing fodder grass could be caused by less control as well as in Altai.

Many people do recognize changes in the availability of forest resources. Since the Forest Code (2006) decreased the number of foresters many-fold, there are fewer chances to get caught while collecting fuelwood. However, people acknowledge the changes occurring due to climatic changes too.

There was a general demand in many villages to improve the legislative situation in Russia with the forestry and forest use. The IUCN was believed by many people to get a chance to affect Russian Government towards changing catastrophic legislation. This hope was one of the reasons for many to participate in the survey.

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The Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) II European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Program supports participating countries' forest governance. At the regional level, the Program aims to implement the 2005 St. Petersburg FLEG Ministerial Declaration and support countries to commit to a time-bound action plan; at the national level the Program will review or revise forest sector policies and legal and administrative structures; and improve knowledge of and support for sustainable forest management and good forest governance in the participating countries, and at the sub-national (local) level the Program will test and demonstrate best practices for sustainable forest management and the feasibility of improved forest governance practices at the field-level on a pilot basis. Participating countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. The Program is funded by the European Union. <http://www.enpi-fleg.org>

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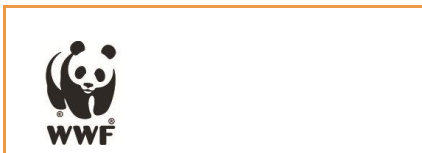
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