



EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD
AND PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT
EAST COUNTRIES FOREST LAW
ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE
II PROGRAM



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Summary (Mikhail Popkov)

Ukraine's acting legislation directly defines the powers and responsibilities of authorities in the preparation and implementation of the "state policy in forest relations". However, explicit forest policy of the country has not yet been formulated.

The national forest policy in Ukraine is replaced with various documents (Concepts, Programs, Roadmaps) developed by the forestry agency that are lacking basic signs of documents for the strategic and political guidance. In their development:

- departmental and economic objectives take the place of vision of strategic goals and activities;
- the need for communication and public debate at the national, regional and sectoral level was replaced with formal departmental coordination;
- interests of individual departments and state owned entities are treated as national ones.

Main provisions of forestry development embodied in acting documents (Forestry Reform and Development Concept and the State Program "Forests of Ukraine") are the declarative. They are detached from reality, not properly controlled and, as a result, not fulfilled. They are replaced with orders of the forestry agency management, which do not always comply with the institutionalized priorities and change frequently. As a result, over the past 8-12 years:

- Criteria for effective forest management have not been developed;
- Reforestation program has not been implemented;
- Plans to improve the resource and environmental capacity and enhance the resilience of forests have not been implemented;
- Protection of forest biodiversity at the proper level has not been ensured;
- Financial and economic mechanisms for forest management have not been changed, or changed without the participation of forest specialists and not for the better;
- Self-sustainability of the forest sector has not been achieved even in the most forest-rich areas of the country.

There are negative changes in the forests and forest sector dynamics, among them:

- Dropped forest care volumes, a sharp increase in sanitary felling, chronic underutilization of cutting areas with low profitability of harvesting, overexploitation of available (adjacent to settlements and roads) woodlands;
- Deterioration of the structure, quality and sustainability of forests;
- Falling and stagnant production in the woodworking segment of the forest sector;
- Growing backlog of enterprises subordinated to the State Forestry Resources Agency of Ukraine as compared to public forestry companies of European countries in terms of economic indicators, as well as the technical, technological and personnel support;
- Growth of corruption and shadow segment in the forestry business.

Currently, with the revision of the country's development priorities, favorable opportunities for the forest reform have arisen. Its main areas are predetermined by the state policy aimed at radically reducing the level of corruption and European integration. Strategic problems of the forest sector include:

1. Anti-corruption in the forest sector.
2. Improvement of relations connected with the implementation of property rights to forests and forest lands.
3. Improvement of the institutional structure of the forest sector. The state forest management system development.
4. A comprehensive review of the forest legislation.
5. Improving the financial and economic mechanisms to ensure sustainable forest management.
6. Ensuring preservation and restoration of biodiversity.
7. Ensuring the development of competitive woodworking segment of the forest sector. Improving the system of access to forest resources.
8. Ensuring multi-purpose, sustainable and intensive forest management practices on a regional basis.
9. Development of protective afforestation, agrosilviculture and agroforestry. Establishment of wood plantations with shorter growing period on agricultural land.
10. Improving the quality and accessibility of information about forests, forestry and the forest sector as a whole.
11. Complex challenges related to European integration and response to global changes in economy and environment.

Each line of action is accompanied by key problems and ways of their solution outlined.