



ENPI FLEG

Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in European Neighbourhood Policy Countries and Russia



Arboreum Georgia

September - November 2010
www.enpi-fleg.ge www.enpi-fleg.org

Editorial

A forest is born, it grows up and - sometimes – it dies. It dies when it cannot resist and adapt to changing conditions. Forest fires, climate change, illegal logging and smuggling - what on Earth can oppose the passion and force of Man... But humans can also help to protect and bring relief - they can simply love the forests. While there is love and care for nature, there is a chance for human survival. The new edition of Arboreum Georgia will explore what men are doing to protect and save the forest - in other words, to protect and save ourselves.

ENPI FLEG Program News

INVESTING IN ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION FOR BETTER FUTURE

photo by S. Pirgauru



On 23-26 October 2010, in Telavi (Georgia), IUCN organized TRAINING IN ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIL AND INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM.

Journalists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia were trained in civil journalism and environmental investigation skills. A total of 22 journalists from different media channels (TV, radio, internet, published media etc) were trained.

The training included theoretical sessions in environmental investigation skills; search and analysis of relevant actual information on forest/ environment issues, based on regional specifics; information dissemination through new media sources – creation of blogs, working in social media; and the creation of video material – script, editing, upload to video hosting

portals.

Also, field trips were organized where journalists had a chance to see legal and also illegal logging areas, the unique biodiversity of Georgian forests, as well as to meet representatives of the Forest Agency and Environmental Inspectorate

In the process of the training, 5 video clips 2 investigative articles were prepared, and 2 blogs were updated with forestry related posts. These materials will be soon placed on the www.enpi-fleg.org site. The journalists expressed their wish to cooperate in future, in the form of preparing regional environmental articles and investigations.

For more information about the training please contact ENPI FLEG program media consultant Ekaterine Nakashidze ekaterine.nakashidze@enpi-fleg.org or visit web site www.enpi-fleg.org

AN ASSESSMENT OF GEORGIAN LEGISLATION

In Summer 2010, Michael Garforth, carried out an assessment of Georgian Legislation within the Context of Verifying the Origin of Wood Harvested and Processed by Logging and Timber Processing Companies.

The objective of this assignment was to assess relevant Georgian legislation and regulations which are used for verifying the origin of wood (timber and fuelwood) and to prepare recommendations for their improvement, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. For the purposes of the assessment, a number of meetings were held with representatives of the state, NGO and private sectors to collect relevant information and learn about their perspectives on this issue.

The need for verifying the origin of wood harvested in forests was explained in the assessment. This was followed by the description of advanced policies and practices related to this field, including voluntary forest certification and Pan-European criteria and operational guidelines for sustainable forest management. The results of this assessment will be very useful for the state forestry sector of Georgia, which is presently undergoing significant institutional changes, while forestry-related legislation is also under revision.



photo by K. Nakashidze

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON TRANS-BOUNDARY TIMBER FLOW HELD IN GEORGIA

The Regional Workshop on Transboundary Timber Flow took place in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 17-18 November 2010. About 50 representatives of Governments, NGOs and the private sector of the seven countries involved in the Program (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine) plus Turkey, participated.



photo @ WWF CauPO

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- To assess the current situation with respect to transboundary timber trade in the countries of the ENA FLEG region and
- To identify existing problems / weaknesses in terms of legislation, relevant documentation, customs procedures and capacities, which create favourable grounds for wood smuggling and other illegal activities. Expected outcomes of the workshop were specific recommendations on how to reduce the risk of illegal transboundary timber trade.

Representatives of all countries made presentations. Key information provided by the presenters can be summarized as follows:

- The scale of illegal logging and transboundary timber trade is significant, but differs across the countries
- Key factors contributing to illegal activities include rural poverty, lack of awareness, strong market demand for wood, inadequate wood source verification documentation and a lack of capacities of state authorities
- Currently implemented measures to address illegal logging and illegal transboundary timber trade include national action plans, strict law enforcement, capacity building, improvements of legislation, and voluntary forest certification
- EU is implementing improved measures to protect its markets from illegal timber (e.g. Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the EU and timber-producing countries)
- Further measures are essential to significantly reduce the levels of illegal activities in the transboundary timber trade.

It was also mentioned that FLEG Program has become a very good discussion platform for governments, NGOs and private sector. The discussions which followed mainly focused on the wood control mechanisms currently used in these countries. The need for further capacity building as well as coordination among the customs and forestry authorities was emphasized. Participatory assessment of the scale of imports and exports of illegally logged timber and the factors facilitating illegal logging and trade in timber was carried out. Finally, the participants identified the following key actions for addressing these problems:

- Get information about the scale and nature of the problem
- Address weaknesses in producer countries' control mechanisms (design and implementation weaknesses)
- Introduce / strengthen "public" monitoring by NGOs and communities
- Improve official controls over the imports of timber
- Encourage companies and consumers voluntarily to buy only legal timber
- Promote cooperation between governments.

The outcomes of the workshop should contribute to the improvement of international (regional and sub-regional) collaboration and knowledge sharing. They should also enhance cooperation among key stakeholders involved in the forestry sector at the national and sub-national levels.

For more information, including presentations, please contact Iliia Osepashvili,
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Environmental News in Georgia

FINLAND TO GIVE €2.000.000 TO RESTORE FOREST BURNT BY WAR



The Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources Goga Khachidze invited the Finnish Ambassador Petri Olavi Salo to a meeting in Georgia. Members of the Government of Finland and representatives of the Ministry of Environment also attended the meeting. At the meeting, the parties discussed ongoing environmental projects to be realized through Finland's assistance. The €2.000.000 amount allocated by the Government of Finland will be used for the following priority projects: the rehabilitation of forest areas burnt down during military operations, and the improvement of natural disaster management and weather forecasting. (GHN).

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The meeting aimed at the improvement of the cooperation between Georgia and Finland and resulted in joint plans. The parties decided to continue the project on Improved Water Management, for which Finland has allocated €500.000.

REFORESTATION IN DEDOPLISTSKARO

The Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources, Mr. Giorgi Zedginidze, paid a visit to the Dedoplistskaro District where he met representatives of the "Climate-tolerant rehabilitation of degraded landscapes in Georgia" Project and familiarized himself with its activities. Representatives of The Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources participated in the working meeting, together with the German experts engaged in the Project, staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as some representatives of Dedoplistskaro Mayor's Office. (GHN).

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The activities to be implemented in the next, stage of the Project were discussed at the meeting. Including 20 Ha of stand to be wooded and fenced, the installation of migration routes and 2 basins supplied with groundwater to be arranged). 90 thousand GEL were allocated from the budget.

The Project is supported by the German Ministry of Environmental Protection (BMU), the Society of German Technical Assistance (GIZ) (formerly GTZ), the Georgian Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources, and also Dedoplistskaro District authorities.

Activities such as reforestation, the rehabilitation of windbreaks, several water units as well as an irrigation system are underway. At the same time, the activities of local residents (like the burn-out (clearance) of ploughed fields and pasturing of cattle on landplots allocated for windrow rehabilitation) can cause negative environmental impacts.

All existing windbreaks in the region were devastated years ago which resulted in increased climate change impacts and the desertification of land. Almost 30% of desertificated arable land has become wasteland.

The Project aims at the rehabilitation of windrows in Dedoplistskaro District, with the assistance of the Georgian government. This will raise the fertility of land in the district.

The Project's budget adds up to €1.900.000. It will be finalized in 2011.



FOREST GUARDS COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

The first stage of the Forest Guards Competition took place at the Police Academy. Papuna Khachidze, Chairman of the Forestry Agency of the Ministry of

Environment Protection, attended the examination.

"In the broad reform which the Forestry Agency is currently undertaking, this competition is of top importance. We believe that duly selected staff is a precondition for the effectiveness of the work of the Ministry", - Papuna Khachidze said. (GHN) .

SPECIAL PROJECT TO BE REALIZED TO CUTBACK ILLEGAL FELLING

An agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Environment Protection and GIZ (formerly GTZ - German Society for International Cooperation) was signed. The one-year agreement envisages the improvement of forest management, the establishment of electronic forest data management systems, and also the improvement of tree marking systems. These actions shall promote a decrease in illegal felling in the country.

"Several years of cooperation with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources resulted in big developments in Georgia's forestry sector. After the conversion of the Forest Department into the Agency, more opportunities have emerged to intensify our cooperation. This is a good start for forests sustainable management which will facilitate the achievement of both economic and environmental goals. Hopefully, our cooperation will be even more fruitful next year," – Program Manager of GIZ Frank Flasche said.

Rules for the collection of wild plants and hunting in forests should also be developed within the framework of the project. In addition, the concept of sustainable funding will be developed and applied to the Forestry Agency. (GHN) .

OVER 100,000 SAPLINGS PLANTED THIS SEASON

The Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources Goga Khachidze conducted a special briefing on the seasonal wide-scale afforestation project. At the initiative of the Ministry, the event named "Plant a Tree, Make the World Greener!" restarted last autumn. Special trucks loaded with saplings of various trees (beech, oak, hornbeam, acacia, poplar, alder-tree) were distributed for free among Tbilisi residents. "This is the second year this event takes place. We have already planted over 100 thousand young trees. This year is the 4th season of the event (the afforestation activities take place in spring and autumn). We can plant more trees now", Minister Goga Khachidze said.

Those who wish to take part in the event can call 070 anytime. (GHN)



INTERNSHIPS OPPORTUNITIES AT THE FOREST AGENCY

Papuna Khachidze, Chairman of the Forestry Agency of the Ministry of Environment Protection, paid a visit to the Agrarian University where he held a lecture for the students of the forest faculty. The head of the institution presented the status, activities and reform of the Agency.

At the initiative of Agency, the most prominent undergraduates of the Department will be offered internships at the Central Board, and the Regional Boards of the Agency. These initial contracts may result in employment contracts.

(GHN)

430 HA OF FOREST DESTROYED IN GEORGIA DURING TOURIST SEASON

The Chairman of the Forestry Agency Papuna Khachidze believes that both climate conditions and the population's negligence are to blame for the frequent forest fires in 2010.

Papuna Khachidze explained that during the tourist season, up to 430 Ha of forest land got burnt down. The Chairman of Agency once again asked the population to be more responsible. The individuals who cause forest fires will be judged.

According to the Chairman of the Forestry Agency, 20 Ha in the Borjomi-Bakuriani forestry, 300 Ha in Atskuri forestry, 10 Ha in the village of Surami (Daba Surami forestry), 20 Ha in Racha regional forestry, 20 Ha in Mtskheta-Tianeti



regional forestry, and also 50 Ha of forest land in Kvareli District forestry have been devastated in 2010.

“The employees of the Forestry Agency, the Inspection of Environment Protection, together with the representatives of the emergency department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs inspected the site (aerotechnics applied). Local residents and up to 500 military personnel also joined their efforts to combat forest fire,” – Chairman of Forestry Agency Papuna Khachidze said.

Khachidze also stated that currently the investigation on devastated forests will reveal whether natural rehabilitation is enough or artificial forest plantations are necessary for each specific area.

In accordance with the statistics, in 2008, 1,269.5 Ha of forest tract were destroyed at a country-scale. In 2009, this indicator equaled 717.9 Ha, while in 2010 it was 430 Ha.

TBILISI SAKREBULO TO CHANGE STATUS OF 99% OF CITY FORESTS INTO LANDSCAPE AND RECREATIONAL ZONES

Tbilisi Sakrebulo is planning to give the status of landscape and recreational zone to 99% of the city forest tracts. This issue has been discussed at the sessions of committees at Sakrebulo.

Following this decision, city forests will be withdrawn from the forest fund and transferred to the Tbilisi Mayor's Office. The Head of Tbilisi's Architectural Service Arisi Bochoridze has designed the plan. As he explained at the sessions, this measure will protect the city forests much better than where they were part of the forest fund.

With regards to the areas where conversion works are already finalized, the recreational status will restrict from any and all similar activities in the future.

Representatives of various committees (the Legal Committee, Urban Committee and Committee for Rehabilitation of Old Tbilisi, as well as the Environmental Committee) have all spoken in favour of this plan: the capital's forests should be formalized as landscape and recreational zones.

The Special Service Department will be established in the Department of Superintendence at the Mayor's Office of the capital.

According to First Deputy Head of Sakrebulo, Mamuka Akhvediani, the staff of this Special Service will include rangers and forest guards. (GHN)

Legislation

LAW ON ILLEGAL TIMBER PROCESSING NOW MORE STRINGENT

The law concerning the illegal processing of timber becomes stricter. The respective amendment to “The Code of Administrative Infractions” is on its way. According to the draft, culpable individuals would be fined 2,000 GEL for primary processing of wood in the state forest fund's area, irrespective of the fact of seizure, of instrument or the absence thereof. Individuals would be fined the same amount, and, in addition, the seizure of the wood and/or the first-processing products, as well as the seizure of the instrument owned by this individual.

This fine applies in case of a first offence. For a second offence, the individual will be fined 4,000 GEL, as well as the seizure of both wood products and instrument.

According to the existing law, 50-300 GEL fines and potential seizure of instrument apply for primary wood processing in the state forest fund's territory. With the existing law, the fines for the processing of illegally obtained wood have been from 100 to 300 GEL, with the additional possible seizure of instrument and wood. The existing law does not impose the seizure of the processed products, while the second offence is fined at only 600 GEL.

TOUGHER CONTROL OVER OUTFLOW OF CONSTRUCTION TIMBER AND FIREWOOD

During the winter season, the control over the outflow of firewood and building timber becomes tougher. The Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources has recently held a special briefing dedicated to this issue. The Head of the Service explained the legal procedures and documents, and appealed to the entire population to desist at least from excessive felling.

A person interested in firewood and building timber should first obtain the Forest Department's permission. The minimum period awarded is 15 (fifteen) days. 24 hours is the timeframe established by the law to get firewood and/or construction timber delivered to of its destination: this applies also to the shareholder who should leave the forest within this time. A Forest Farm is entitled to issue the documents certifying the origin and the legality of the wood/timber. As regards the rules of felling and transportation, these

are protected by the Inspection of Environment Protection. When an offence is reported, legal sanctions are applied against the infringer.

The following are the volumes established by the law: up to 130,000 cubic meters of firewood and up to 180,000 cubic meters of construction timber.

International News

NAGOYA 2010 CBD CONFERENCE



Celebrating Biodiversity

October 2010. IUCN welcomes the outcomes of the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Governments approved a new Strategic Plan for the next 10 years to reduce pressures on the planet's biodiversity and take action to restore the natural world. They agreed on a new protocol on managing genetic resources and pledged significant new resources to implement the agreements. For more information please visit: http://www.iucn.org/cbd/meetings/nagoya_2010/

FOUNDATION FOR CLIMATE DEAL LAID IN CANCUN - IUCN

Governments at the UN climate talks in Cancun, Mexico, managed to approve a series of tangible if modest steps that set up a 'global climate fund' to help poor nations create a mechanism to share clean technologies, protect tropical forests and help the poor adapt to impacts ranging from storms to rising sea levels, says IUCN. Adaptation, finance and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) were some of the key issues IUCN wanted to see the 194-nation talks move forward on. Today's deal is a move in the right direction, but in the end, only an equitable, comprehensive and legally binding agreement will bring the much needed international commitment to manage the climate crisis. The inclusion of REDD as part of the Cancun deal is a key step toward resolving the issue of climate change, says IUCN.



The REDD solution

<http://www.iucn.org/?6678/Foundation-for-climate-deal-laid-in-Cancun--IUCN>

Publications/ Online resources

BOTANICAL, MYCOLOGICAL, AND ZOOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE FORESTS BURNT AS A RESULT OF FIRE IN THE BORJOMI GORGE IN 2008

In summer 2010, within the framework of project Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Mitigation (CCADM), supported by USAID, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) studied the current condition of the Borjomi forest burnt as a result of the war in 2008. Please, see the report on this research on this URL.

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

A media monitoring report was prepared by IUCN Southern Caucasus Office in the framework of ENPI FLEG Program. The reports contains information about main published and online media of Georgia, in the context of coverage of FLEG related issues. It also contains recommendations on further development of media, what could be done to promote forest-related issues in press, and to increase awareness and commitment of journalists working in the field of environment. Please download english version from here: http://www.enpi-fleg.ge/enpi_fleg/pdf/MEDIA_MONITORING_REPORT_final_eng.pdf

IMPACT OF ILLEGAL LOGGING ON RURAL POPULATION OF GEORGIA - FINAL REPORT

Assessment of economic and social impacts of unsustainable forest practices and illegal logging on rural population of Georgia was conducted in the framework of EC funded Program "Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Countries and Russia (ENPI FLEG)". Present study was carried out by Vasil Gulisashvili Forest Institute contracted by IUCN, one of the implementing partners of ENPI FLEG Program in Georgia.

Please download from here (available only in Georgian): http://www.enpi-fleg.ge/enpi_fleg/pdf/research.pdf

Announcements

THE IUCN CAUCASUS COOPERATION CENTRE

Gland/Tbilisi. IUCN is changing its role in the Caucasus ecoregion. From January 2011 IUCN will strengthen its promotion and support of nature conservation in the region through its new structure – the Caucasus Cooperation Centre. A Concept Paper outlines IUCN's future role in the region.

On the basis of a situational analysis and through consultations with member organizations and partners, IUCN has developed a Concept Paper to respond to the evident challenges in the Caucasus region. With the overall aim of ensuring nature conservation in the region is more effective, IUCN will provide a range of services to all interested and engaged actors working in the field of conservation. Services will be offered in two priority programme areas: Biodiversity Conservation (with a focus on protected areas and species conservation) and Natural Resources Management (with a focus on forests and water). Services will include access to global nature conservation knowledge, the promotion of synergies among ongoing and planned activities via thematic networks, assistance in identifying gaps and trends in specific sectors and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes. IUCN has been present in the Caucasus since the mid-1990s. Over the last four years the IUCN Programme Office has focused on protected areas, biodiversity monitoring, improving forest governance and increasing environmental awareness, mainly through the implementation of projects. This new structure, the IUCN Caucasus Cooperation Centre, will assist existing and future actors in the nature conservation field to more effectively protect the region's biodiversity.



The IUCN Caucasus Cooperation Centre

Concept Paper for establishing a new IUCN presence in the Caucasus



About ENPI FLEG Program

The ENPI FLEG program supports governments of participating countries, civil society and the private sector in the development of sound and sustainable forest management practices, including the prevention of illegal forestry activities. Participating countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. This program is funded by the European Union.

www.enpi-fleg.org

Program Partners



World Bank

The World Bank is one of the world's largest sources of funding for the developing world. Its primary focus is on helping the poorest people and the poorest countries. It uses its financial resources, its staff, and extensive experience to help developing countries reduce poverty, increase economic growth, and improve their quality of life. www.worldbank.org



IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN works on biodiversity, climate change, energy, human livelihoods and greening the world economy by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. www.iucn.org



WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org

CONTACTS

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