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Multifunctional regional forestry planning – Good practices and lessons learnt in Bulgaria

VASSIL STIPTZOV and CHRISTOPH DUERR

Keywords: Regional forestry planning; forest management; implementation; multifunctionality; Bulgaria. FDK 624 : 681 : 911 : (497.2)

1. Introduction

1.1 Bilateral cooperation between Switzerland and Bulgaria

From January 2007 Bulgaria will be eligible for accession to EU membership (together with Rumania), and will be compelled to make a large number of reforms in almost all aspects of society. Over the last few years the forestry sector has already undergone certain changes; the supervisory and operational functions of forest management have been separated; the restitution of non-state forest ownership has been returned to its pre 1947 status, and the privatisation of all forestry operations to specialised harvesting and processing enterprises has been effected. A National Forest Policy and Strategy has been drawn up over the last three years, and provides a sound basis for reforms planned in the state forest administration. Different international and bilateral programmes from various sources have supported this process, e.g. the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Programme, the German Government through GTZ and the Swiss Government through Intercooperation.

The Bulgarian-Swiss Forestry Programme (BSFP) has been financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation since 1996. The programme started with a scientific

exchange between the forestry departments from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) through the Department of Silviculture and the University of Sofia. This collaboration set the basis for promoting close-to-nature forest management in Bulgaria, and included the exchange of knowledge between forestry experts, technology transfer, support for experimental trials, and the publication of results, which have been submitted to experts at both national and local level. Based on these experiences, the programme has contributed to the National Forest Policy by establishing the Forest Sector Analysis for Bulgaria; drafting the National Forest Fire Management Concept and Strategy (NFFMS) and presenting the product at two national round tables; implementing a mini-media campaign on NFFMS; initiating a training programme on public relations at regional level; contributing to creative workshops and public relations activities concerning the National Forest Policy and Strategy (NFFS); initiating surveys on the use of wood energy in rural areas, and presenting them at regional workshops; organising and implementing different national, regional and local events based on surveys and research results supported by BSFP, and assisting in the preparation of normative documents related to the management of different forest types. *Table 1* provides some basic statistics on Bulgarian forestry.

1.2 Participatory forestry planning process as a major focus for collaboration

Multifunctional forestry planning has always been an important component of the bilateral forestry programme. Its current objective is to test the methodology of participatory planning (elements are described in KOSTOV *et al.* 2003, as well as in BOGDANOV & STIPTZOV 2003) in six pilot areas (*map 1*) – one in each of the six regions for regional planning in Bulgaria, comprising one or two municipalities covering a forest area of 15 000–25 000 hectares, and including both state and non-state forests (municipalities, cooperatives, private). Participation includes all major stakeholders and actors involved in forestry activities. The methodology applied principles taken from different models used in Switzerland, bearing in mind the high degree of diverse solutions applied (HORAT & BACHMANN 2004). The aim is to find appropriate adaptations for Bulgarian conditions. As new Bulgarian legislation on spatial planning only came into being in 2004, coordination with the two planning procedures is as yet only in its infancy.

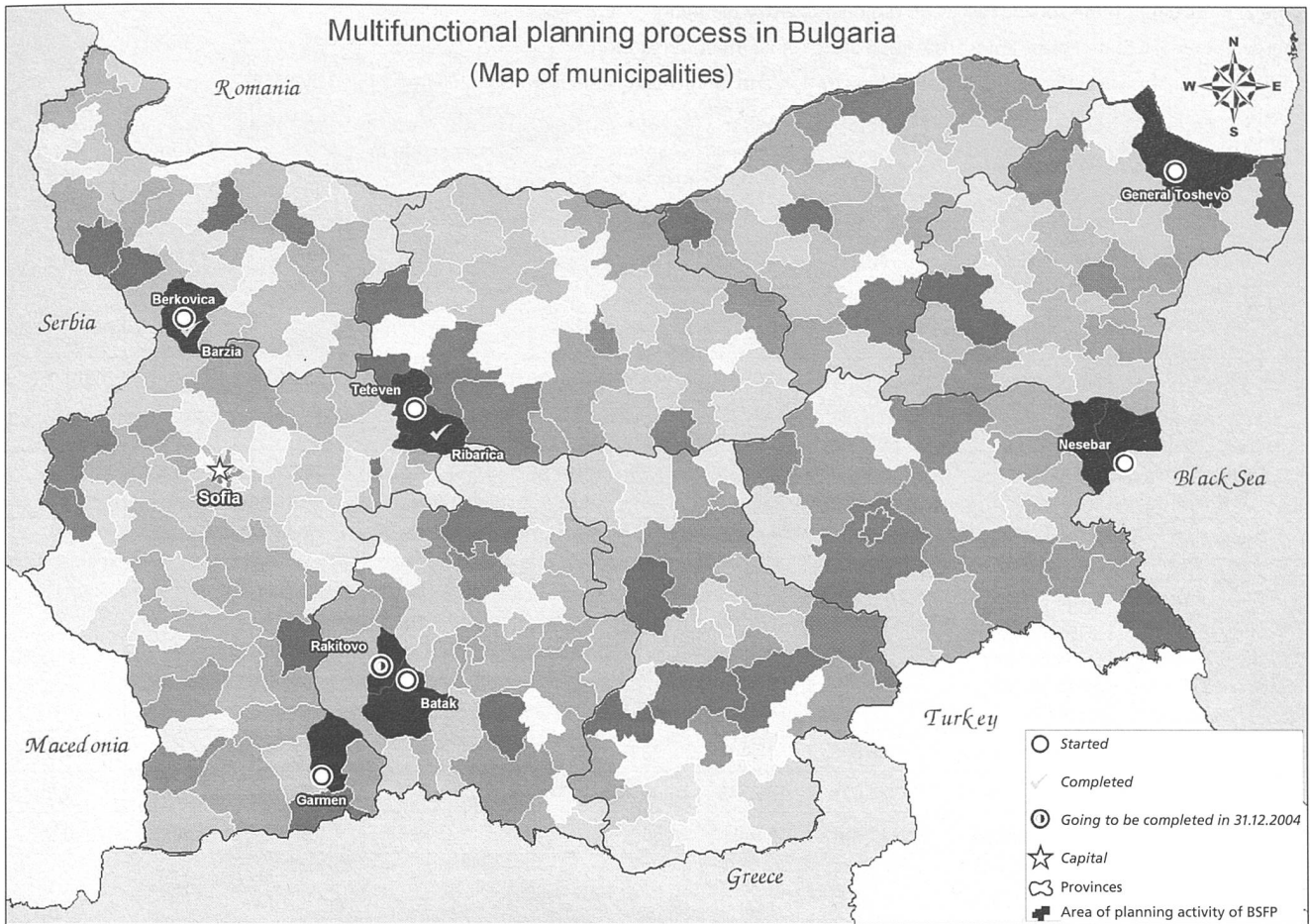
2. Forestry planning methodology with comprehensive stakeholder participation

The basic challenge of multifunctional forest planning is to open-up the forest sector to other stakeholders with interests in forest management, forest resources and forest territories. This kind of planning also seeks to give the local population an opportunity to participate in the forest management decision-making processes. In this way, close-to-nature and sus-

Table 1: Basic statistics on Bulgarian forestry.

Data compiled by BSFP from different recent sources 2004.

Total land area	110 910 km ²
Population	7,5 Million
Total forest area / in % of total	4,0 Mil. ha / 36%
Forest per capita	0,5 ha
Annual increment	12,3 Mil. m ³ (4 m ³ /ha)
Annual harvest of timber	4–5 Mil. m ³
Main tree species:	
– Oak (<i>Quercus spp.</i>)	32%
– Beach (<i>Fagus sylvatica L.</i>)	17%
– Scots Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris L.</i>)	17%
State forest administration	National Forestry Board (NFB) to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
– Regional Directorates	16
– State forest enterprises	144
– Game breeding stations	37 (plus 2 stations under the Council of Ministers)
– Annex Institutions	3 Seed control stations, 2 Stations for forest protection, 10 Directorates of Nature Parks
Persons working in administration	Approx. 10 000
Persons working in private sector	Approx. 35 000 (National Forest Policy and Strategy)
No. of political districts	22
No. of municipalities	264



Map 1: The six pilot areas for regional forestry planning are located all over Bulgaria.

Map prepared by BSFP on its Geographic Information System GIS.

tainable forest management views are gradually transformed into multifunctional forest management principles focused on benefits to the whole of society and forests alike. There are many approaches to solving forest problems. It requires a strong political will to integrate the interests of the whole of society in forest management and the use of resources. For example, forest resources play a vital role in rural village life by providing timber, firewood, fodder, medicinal herbs, berries, mushrooms and tourism (see figure 1).

2.1 Rationale to involve stakeholders in multifunctional forest planning

The main aims of participatory methodology are:

- To achieve harmonisation in planning activities both within and outside forest territories (agricultural territories and settlements). Such planning provides opportunities that encourage coordination between those planning activities devised by the forest service and other departments and organizations concerned about forests and forest territories;
- To take into account (as far as it is ecologically sound, economically possible and socially acceptable) the demands and interests of the people living within a given territory;

- To introduce clear framework conditions for forest management by prioritising forest functions;
- To identify conflicts and seek solutions through achieving consensus amongst key stakeholders;
- To assist forest authorities in the use of tools and methodologies so as to integrate stakeholders in planning silvicultural activities at local level. The ability of forest authorities



Figure 1: The forest is the main source of livelihood for the population in the mountainous regions (Shiroka Laka, Rhodopi mountain).

All photos are taken by Nikolay Rupchin, BSFP.

Table 2: Basic data on the six pilot areas on regional forestry planning.

Abbreviations: SFE State Forest Enterprise, SGBS State Game Breeding Station.

Origin of data: Statistical data from forest administration and municipality administration 2004 (compiled by BSFP).

S No	Pilot areas/ Municipalities	State Forest Units involved	Total area in ha	Forest area in ha	Forest cover in % of total	Forest ownership in %			Population	Forest in ha per capita
						State	Municipal	Private + others		
1	Berkovitzia and Varshetz	SFE-Berkovitzia Experimental Forestry – Petrohan	70 515	26 560	38%	75,0	1,0	24,0	32 534	0,8
2	Teteven	SFE-Teteven SFE-Ribaritzia SFE-Cherni Vit	69 716	44 660	64%	20,0	60,0	20,0	25 800	1,7
3	General-Toshevo	SFE-General Toshevo	98 224	7 085	7%	96,0	–	4,0	19 422	0,4
4	Nesebar	SGBS Nesebar	42 044	17 000	40%	66,9	33,0	0,2	19 000	0,9
5	Batak	SFE-Batak SGBS-Borino SGBS-Rhodope SGBS-Beglika SGBS-Shiroka polyana	67 731	55 000	81%	97,9	2,0	0,1	7 189	7,7
6	Garmen	SFE-Garmen	38 848	28 440	73%	98,0	–	2,0	14 934	1,9
Total pilot areas			387 078	178 745	46%	–	–	–	118 879	1,5
Total Bulgaria (as comparison)			111 mil.	4 mil.	34%	86	5	9	8 mil.	0,5

to communicate with the other stakeholders during the planning process becomes their major obligation.

Three major groups of interests are involved in the planning process. Forest owners (state and non-state) are the most active players; in most cases they are the most affected by this planning, and therefore the most interested. The second group comprises the municipalities, irrespective of whether they are forest owners or not. The third group of stakeholders includes hunting associations, harvesting and wood processing enterprises, nature protection and tourist organizations, and schools and universities that have different attitudes to nature and biodiversity as well as different expecta-

tions about forest use. *Table 2* provides an overview of the basic data of the six pilot areas.

2.2 Planning is a joint venture

The joint planning of activities provides transparency in both decision-making and implementation. Decisions taken by stakeholders on a broader base are more resistant to future political changes. Moreover, after the framework has been established, forest owners become more socially responsible for the maintenance of their forests. The challenge for Bulgaria in this new planning methodology is the opportunity to plan forestry activities «from bottom to up» with the participation of the people who live in the municipality. Bulgarian society had lived in a system of strong centralized decision-making for decades, and this still has a bearing on the forest sector.

The Regional Forest Board is responsible for the planning process. The local units of the National Forest Board (NFB) – state forest enterprises or game breeding stations – are responsible for implementing the plan. The time framework for the planning process varies from 12 to 18 months and encompasses three phases. During the first phase, which lasts 7–9 months, Geographic Information System (GIS) background information and map materials are prepared, the work and time frameworks are planned, and meetings are held within the municipality in order to set up the Leading and Working Group (see *figure 2*). The second phase is related to preparation of the plan itself; problems are discussed at workshops; the demands of stakeholders are recorded and classified. This phase lasts 6–9 months; during this period, drafts of the plan are drawn up, projects are discussed and



Figure 2: First meeting of the Working Group at the municipality (town) hall in Teteven (Stara planina region).

modified. In the third phase the plan is presented for public discussion in the municipality. It is modified (if necessary) to accommodate any new demands, and the final version is then submitted for approval.

2.3 Approval procedure of the plans

The plan or its abridged version is presented to the Municipal Council for examination. The head of the leading group presents the plan at a Municipal Council session. Municipal councillors discuss it and if they need further clarification they can put questions to the members of the leading group. The Municipal Council approves the plan. It remains accessible to the public. After the multifunctional forest management plan is approved, the NFB and its local units are then responsible for its implementation.

At present two plans have been approved by the respective municipality councils for the villages of Barzia and Ribaritsa as an integral part of their municipality plans. The respective legislative amendments have been outlined for approval by the NFB.

2.4 The important role of the working group and the leading group

Leading and working groups are established to initiate and lead the process of multifunctional forest planning.

The director of the local forestry unit (state forest enterprise or state game breeding station) chairs the leading group. The leading group also includes 1 or 2 heads of the forest-technical sections and 1 technical assistant. It is important to include representatives of the working group in the leading group; in most cases this is the mayor of municipality or a person designated by him – a deputy mayor responsible for issues concerning agriculture, forests, ecology. The leading group can also include a respected person from the region – a writer, an artist, a clergyman. For example, the leading group in the municipalities of Berkovitz and Varshetz included the abbot of Klisurski monastery, a young man much respected by the local population. The task of the leading group is to initiate the planning process, select the members of the working group and identify in advance the parameters of interests that could emerge. The role of the leading group is to inform the public, to organise the different steps in the process, to procure the necessary data and materials, to oversee publication, approval, and implementation, as well as to monitor the plan.

The working group includes representatives of various interests. Two guidelines should be observed in the selection of working group members – firstly, from the outset they have to be aware of what output is expected, of how much time will be involved, and of the rules governing participation. Secondly, the representatives of state authorities have to be distinguished from those of non-governmental organisations, forest owners' associations, municipalities, hunting associations, the private sector, tourists, etc.

The working group may involve independent specialists to clarify or explore specific problems relative to the management of protected forest territories, protected species, erosion territories, etc. A wide spectrum of representation is necessary in order to take account of as many stakeholders'

demands towards a given territory as possible. Working group forest authorities workshops should comply with public requirements, change their attitude towards stakeholders as well as their views about management on the basis of purely silvicultural principles. An independent chairman can contribute greatly to the success of the working group. In each of the pilot areas the municipality mayor or a deputy mayor is appointed as the chairperson of the working group, and as such assumes the cap of responsibility to manage the process.

A working group should not comprise more than 25–30 people, although some meetings of the working groups were attended by almost twice this number, because invitations were sent to everyone so as not to omit any stakeholder: representatives of private owners, representatives of municipal and public forests, associations (hunters, tourists, schools, etc.), harvesting and wood processing firms, local authority (village mayors), etc. Problems usually arise because many of these associations are not able to select appropriate representatives, and so everyone who has been invited attends the meeting. At subsequent working group meetings, participants are reduced by selecting representatives of the respective communities. Municipal services representatives constitute important working group members as they are directly concerned with land registration, agricultural land and forests. The director of the state forest enterprise or the state game breeding station by necessity represents state interests. Persons who do not represent any interests, or associations, which have nothing to do with the planning process, should be excluded from the working group. However, persons should not be excluded only because they express different views about forest use from those shared by the majority of participants.

2.5 Participation process – testing the practice

There are two main approaches to carrying out multifunctional forest management plans:

- a) to start from zero by first forming leading and working groups. To begin by collecting materials and gradually pass through different planning stages with the participation of all the stakeholders in the planning process; or
- b) the leading group (with the active participation of foresters) formulates their version of the plan and presents



Figure 3: The forests play a crucial role in water resource conservation (Dospat, Rhodopi mountain).

it to the other stakeholders for discussion. The first option was chosen in Bulgaria being deemed the more democratic, and stakeholders are involved in planning from the very beginning.

Financial provision for the Multifunctional Forest Management Plan (MFMP) is essential. According to BSFP calculations, regional planning amounts 5–10% of the total cost (which is about 7 Euro/ha) required to implement the forest management plan per forestry unit. This figure depends on the results of tenders that are regularly posted by the NFB. For the MFMPs most of the expenditure is required for the GIS and map material, which are paid for by the forest administration. The planning process is implemented by means of «state-



Figure 4: Sensitive issues are discussed in small working groups (Garmen municipality in Pirin mountain).

Table 3: Issues and problems identified by the working groups in the pilot areas.

Compiled by BSFP on the basis of minutes of the working group meetings.

Brief description – issues, problems and conflicts identified in the six pilot areas

Berkovitz/Varshetz

Northeast region, Western Balkan, beech forests, tourist region. Problems are – illegal felling; recreational forests and water catchment’s zones with regimes of limited use; insufficient water supply for populated areas in semi-mountainous and plain region; forest fires.

Teteven

North-Central region; Central Balkan, beech forests, tourist regions. Problems and conflicts – unregulated felling; aggravation of environmental situation due to burning of crop residues, non implementation of appropriate felling norms; lack of purification plants and equipment in the industrialized and tourist regions; insufficient environmental culture related to education, with minimal control and non-execution of the imposed penalties due to gaps in legislation. The fact that there is insufficient timber to satisfy the demands of both industry and the local population (mainly firewood), which leads to illegal felling, intentional arson, and building industry restrictions is a very serious problem.

General Toshovo

North region; plain part; oak forests. The region is dominated by 100,000 hectares of cultivated land and a dispersed forest network of shelterbelts and groves between them. Problems relate to the systematic burning of crop residues following the harvesting of the agricultural crops, which in turn leads to tree and bush vegetation damage, tree diseases, and the poor sanitary status of forests. Illegal felling due to scattered forests and lack of road networks, which makes control difficult, exacerbates these problems. Other problems identified are: non-regulated waste-disposal, illegal construction, lack of tourist routes and resting places, outdated forest equipment and the non-observance of the frontiers between the forest and agricultural funds.

Nessebar

South-East region, Southeast region of the Balkan, South Black Sea coastal area, oak forests. Problems and conflicts – illegal construction and illegal felling due to proximity to the sea and tourist centres. Over practice of unregulated pasturing of domestic and semi-wild pigs. This leads to genetic disturbance and pollution in the populations of wild boar, and also to the spread of diseases within the game population. One of the reasons for this is the poor coordination of activities between forest and municipal authorities, as well as the destruction of the forest road network during timber harvesting. Fire wood usage by the local population provokes conflict and requires better coordination of felling areas between forest owners, municipalities and the State Game Breeding Station.

Batak

South Central region, Rhodope mountains, timber harvesting and water catchment region. Problems and conflicts – uncontrolled use of non-timber forest products (herbs, mushrooms, forest fruits etc.), fees and penalties that are impossible to collect, decrease in biodiversity, disturbed game, arson, urban and industrial solid waste disposal, and a high unemployment rate. Insufficient drinking water due to a lack of purification plants and a dearth of regulations for the network and water sources is a big problem. Possible solutions include training in, and control of collecting, processing and usage of forest products, regulating the access to collect, strict control and punishment of violators, and enhancing the forest sector to create job opportunities. It is important to develop regulations for providing local companies with raw materials and technologies for processing timber waste. Other solutions include improvement and further development of forest roads in order to gain access to otherwise inaccessible regions, and the introduction of an appropriate system during implementation of timber harvesting activities.

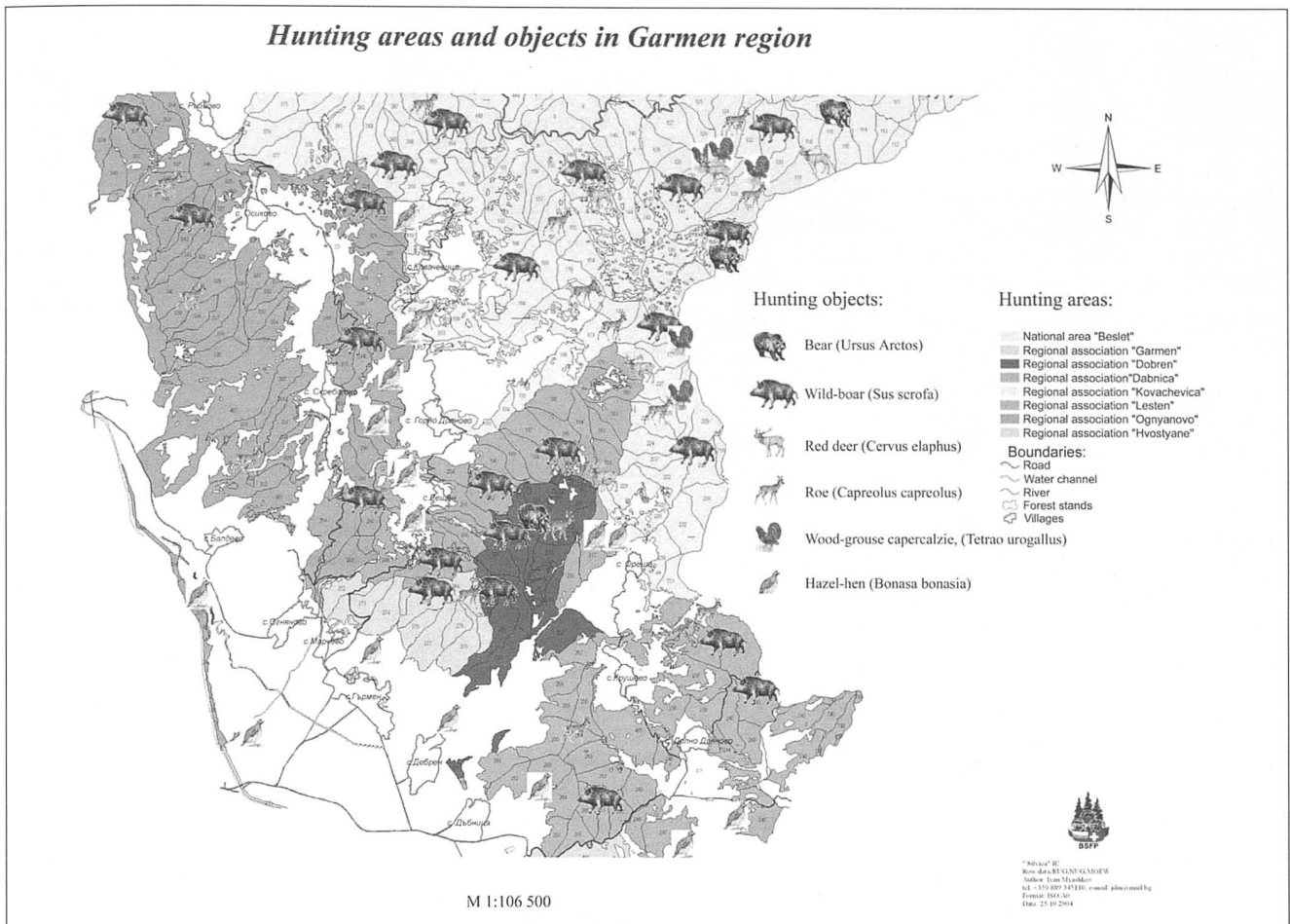
Garmen

Southwest region, West Rhodope mountains, coniferous forests. Timber harvesting region. Problems and conflicts – Bad condition of the forest road network; over felling and destruction of deciduous vegetation with no regulated re-planting strategy; timber harvesting in hunting fields during the hunting season; insufficient protected natural territories; no inventory of rare and protected species; unidentified and not protected water catchment zones, forest fires and their difficult management due to the bad forest road network. The main problem centres around the fact that timber harvesting has almost doubled on the basis of the recently formulated management plan (see figure 4).

public funds, therefore it should involve the participation of everyone, or at least most of the local people.

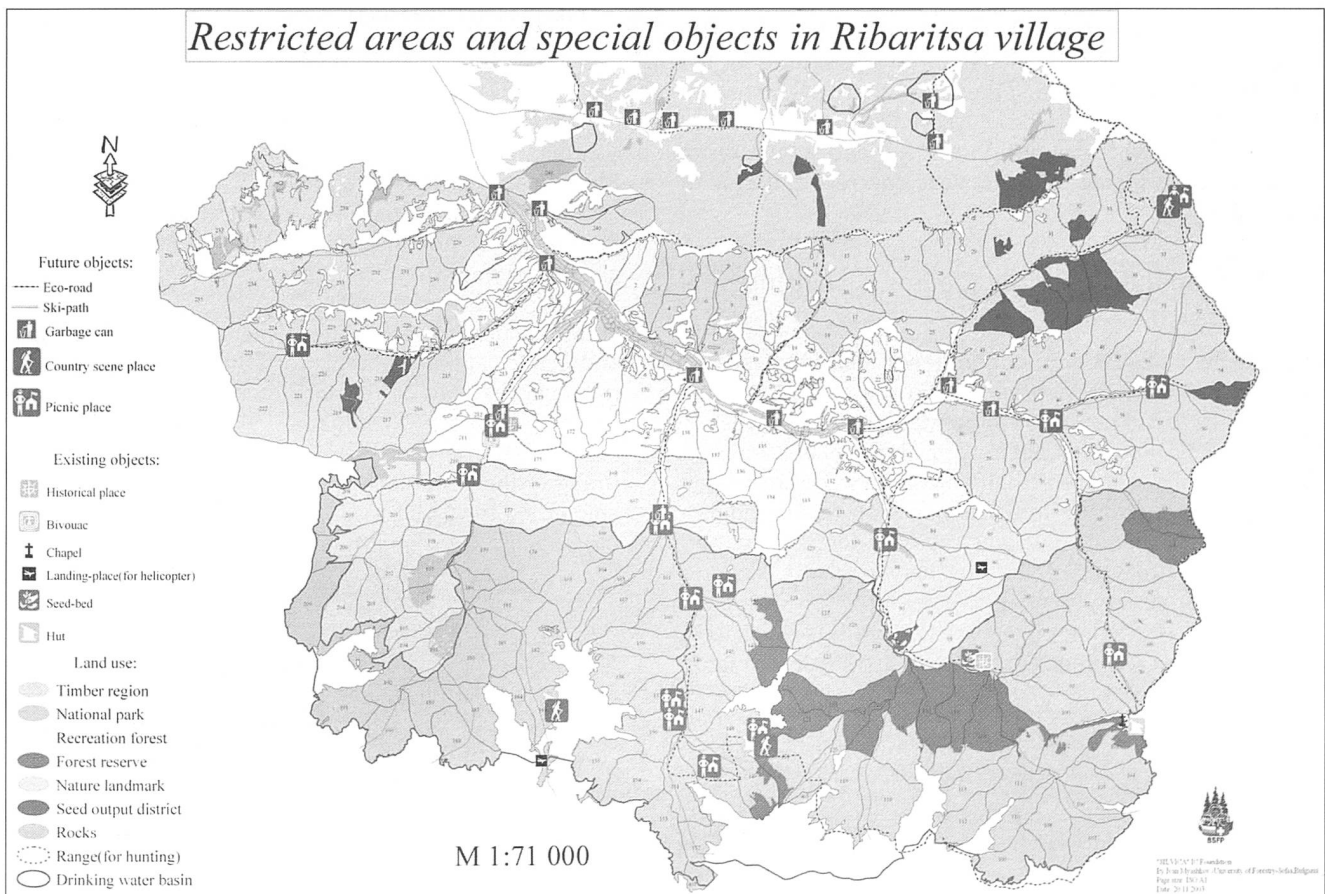
2.6 Specific areas have their specific local forestry problems

Common problems can be found in all pilot regions that are typical for the country as a whole. They include illegal felling, forest fire damage, insufficient water for domestic and industrial provision (see figure 3), illegal construction from the forest fund, non-regulated urban and industrial solid waste management, insufficient timber resources to cover local needs, etc. The development of the MFMP provides a basis for achieving consensus on a municipal level in order to tackle problems arising between interested parties. Table 3 shows important issues identified by local stakeholders during the working group meetings.



Map 2: Example of thematic GIS information on hunting objects.

Map prepared by BSFP on its GIS.



Map 3: Example of thematic GIS information on restricted areas and special objects.

Map prepared by BSFP on its GIS.



Figure 5: The beech forest regenerates naturally under the old trees cover (Experimental trial of Research Institute at Kjustendil, Osogovo mountain).

3. Product of the planning process and approval procedure

The visible output of the planning process is the plan itself – containing a textual part and a set of 8–12 thematic maps. The description of planning process objectives and tasks, with framework conditions (ecological, economic, social) is an essential component. An analysis of forest functions (the forest and its influence on the region, forest significance for the livelihood of local people) and their prioritisation is highly relevant to the planning process. Because the text is presented to stakeholders who may not possess the necessary forestry competences, it should be brief, clear, concrete and easy to understand.

3.1 GIS as an indispensable tool for visualising decisions

To implement the GIS information, tenders are requested in order to find the most appropriate firm for this highly specialised job. The visual part is presented on various types of thematic maps. Two examples are provided in *map 2* and *map 3*. The major maps needed for this planning stage are related to forest distribution by forest composition (main and secondary timber species), by forest age, by forest types and infrastructure (tree-nursery, fish-hatchery, road, etc.), by purpose (harvesting, environmentally forming forests, resort forests, parks, reserves, protected forests), objects with specific potential (for tourism, etc.); forest territory distribution with limited use regime (seed stations for collecting seeds, upper forest border, green zones, resort forests, nature landmarks, parks, reserves, etc.), forest distribution by type of ownership (state-public and private, municipal- public and private, private, other forest owners: schools, monasteries, etc.); forest roads and landuse maps. Interest in MFMP is greater when map materials are available in the course of planning. By using GIS-technology, the participants can record changes and make amendments on the maps. Mayors of small villages are always interested in the problems related to their

territory and raise issues specifically concerning the territory for which they are responsible. High interest was shown in the forest road network, water catchment's areas, fire hazard zones (ploughed or hand-made strips – removal of grass vegetation), places for fire precaution zones between agricultural land and forest areas, forest regeneration (see *figure 5*), forest ownership categories and hunting sites. GIS helps to ensure visibility, transparency and documentation of the planning process.

Although the use of GIS has many advantages, it also presents some problems. One such problem is data preservation. Software goes out of date quite fast and this requires timely updating, data verification, and software compatible with both old and new versions. Another problem is GIS-data maintenance, and its dissemination to all stakeholders – for which the forest service is responsible. The third problem stems from lack of exper-

enced staff and suitable software and hardware in various departments and organizations.

The problem related to lack of know-how and experience (staff capacity) in working with GIS could be solved by training stakeholders' representatives.

4. Implementation and monitoring

The concept of regional forestry planning and the participation of forestry stakeholders in the process are still in the initial stages in Bulgaria. For implementation different tools will play a role:

- Forest management plans provide a traditional and well-established mechanism. They are centrally organised by the State Forestry Administration (National Forestry Board), and are tendered to private specialists for making inventories and for writing the plan.
- State administration, private owners, private enterprises and municipalities can apply for EU accession funds, as is the common practice for agriculture. Little experience is available in forestry in Bulgaria.
- Preparation of a World Bank loan to support the restructuring of the Bulgarian Forest Sector predicts investments amounting to 40 Million US Dollars.
- Municipality plans might include some activities concerning the forests. The flow of finances depends on the amount of forest property belonging to the municipality.

A monitoring mechanism for the implementation process has still to be established, where the forest administration will probably play the most important role. Fields for monitoring are mentioned in *table 4*, as preliminary ideas by BSFP that need further consideration and testing.

5. Coordination with spatial planning

Multifunctional forest planning covers the entire state and non-state forest property. As mentioned above, the main planning objectives are to formulate long-term goals for for-

Table 4: Selected fields for monitoring the implementation of multifunctional forestry planning in one fictive example, elements proposed by BSFP.
Source of verification proposed for monitoring: SFE State Forest Enterprise, FMP Forest Management Plan.

S No	Criteria	Objective (indicator/standard/target)	Unit	Source of verification	Resp. for data collect	Frequency of observation (years)	Baseline (Year of plan prep.)	Achievements (Observation Period 10 years)															
								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
1. Forest resources																							
1.1	Forest area	Varies max. +/- 5%		Municipalland registration		5	20 000																
1.2	Diversity of forest species	Min. 5% of total trees are <i>Taxus baccata</i> L.	ha	FMP		10 (plan revision)	4,3%																
1.3	Natural forest levels (1)	Min. 50% of total trees are broad leaved trees	%	FMP		10 (plan revision)	48%																
1.4	Natural forest levels (2)	Min. 10% of total trees are <i>Abies alba</i> Miller over 100 years old	%	FMP		10 (plan revision)	10%																
1.5	Forest plantations (1)	5000 trees planted in existing forest area p.a. 1000 trees outside forest p.a.	No. of trees	Statistic data of SFE		Yearly																	
1.6	Forest plantations (2)	10 000 trees planted in existing forest area p.a. 4000 trees outside forest p.a.	No. of trees	Statistic data of SFE		Yearly																	
1.7	Young levels	Adjacent young levels (sub units <20 years) do not exceed 20 ha	ha	FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
1.8	Old levels	Old levels (subunits > 100 years) cover min. 700 ha	ha	FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
2. Timber production																							
2.1	Timber volume	Average timber stock is 220 m ³ /ha	m ³ /ha	Inventory for FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
2.2	Timber growth	Average timber growth is 6,0 m ³ /ha	m ³ /ha	Inventory for FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
2.3	Timber harvesting (amount)	Amount is +/- % of the planned amount	m ³	Statistic data of		annual																	
2.4	Timber harvesting (types)	60% of total harvested timber is of high quality (to be defined)	%	Statistic data of SFE		annual																	
3. Protection from natural hazards																							
3.1	Protective areas (erosion)	Forest areas (sub units) with signs of soil erosion less than 50 ha	ha	Inventory for FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
3.2	Sanitary areas guarded for drinking water	No pollution in water source	Data from analysis	Analysis of drinking water by specialists		5 (special analysis)																	
3.3	Forest areas affected by forest fire	Forest areas (sub units) with signs of forest fire less than 100 ha	ha	Inventory for FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
4. Infrastructure/roads																							
4.1	Access to forests by roads	Lengths of truckable forest road network increased by 20%	m	Inventory for FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
4.2	Infrastructure projects	50% of the planned projects completed	No.	Inventory for FMP		10 (plan revision)																	
5. Specific Projects																							
5.1	Status of implementation	No. of projects initiated	No.	?		Annual																	
5.2		No. of proj. completed		?																			
5.3		No. of projects blocked		'																			
6. Firewood																							
6.1	Firewood on reduced pricesx m ³ firewood sold	m ³	Statistic data of SFE		Annual																	
6.2	Firewood at market pricesx m ³ firewood sold	m ³	Statistic data of SFE		Annual																	
7. Process of plan preparation																							
7.1	Forest management plan	Plans approved on state forests 60% non-state forests	ha	Statistic data of SFE		Annual																	
		Plans approved on non-state forests	ha	Statistic data of SFE																			
7.2	Management plans of parks and reserves	Plans approved for the park areas	No. of plans	Statistic data of SFE		Annual																	
8. Public relation activities																							
8.2	Special events	No. of events organised and implemented	No. of events	Statistic data of SFE		Annual																	
8.3	Presence in mass media	No. articles published or interviews in radio/TV	No. of articles	Statistic data of SFE		Annual																	

est development in a given territory; to ensure the interests of civil society towards forest development; to identify the conflicts and try to solve them during the planning process together with the concerned parties and stakeholders. The major advantage of these plans is the opportunity to coordinate planning with other stakeholders. In the course of planning a number of unresolved problems between departments and organizations emerge. Electricity and water supply networks go through forest territories; the same is true for the activities of the fire brigade. It will therefore be necessary for these departments to coordinate their planning with the forest service. Forest and farmland owners (scattered in the forest area) are also stakeholders and are interested in forest activities implementation. MFMP appears to be a generalising unit for consensus on forest management, comparison of views and the demands of different departments.

As already indicated, the most active participants in planning are representatives of municipalities and local administrative authorities – mayors of settlements. This planning could be more effective if national and regional municipality associations get involved in the process. Bulgaria will be integrated in the EU and consequently every region should have plans and strategies for regional development. MFMP can become part of these plans and strategies only if the associations are involved and trained in multifunctional forest planning. Such partners could be the regional associations of municipalities in Stara Planina, the Black Sea coast, Dobrudza, the Rhodopes and others.

6. Legislative aspects

Multifunctional forest planning as an approach is based on NFPS adopted by the Council of Ministers (prepared by the MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY 2003). The strategy gives clear guidelines: «Strategic activities will be directed to preparation of regional plans and forest development programmes and their integration in regional development plans.» Another text in NFPS says: «The focus – support to strategic planning line, devolution of power and responsibilities in decision making, implementation and monitoring, opportunity for stakeholders to become credible partners of regional and local state forest bodies.»

Multifunctional forest management plans should be integrated in the state forest legislation related to territorial use and forest territory activities in order to become obligatory documents for forest administration, and to be observed by all state and social organizations. To become democratized and decentralized the forest sector should work openly and results should be transparent, its actions should be supported by society. Society should act as a corrective to authority; therefore its role and place should be firmly and clearly stated in the normative regulation.

The Bulgarian forest sector adopted the approach to involve civil society at local level through elaboration of MFMP. There are sufficient texts in the existing Forest Act that serve as a prerequisite for MFMP elaboration. A major prerequisite in the BULGARIAN FOREST ACT (1997) is: «forests and lands in the forest fund (which is 80%) are managed as national wealth and for the benefit of the whole society». The law obliges owners of forest and land from the forest fund to practice their ownership rights in a way that does not deteriorate their condition and does not cause any detriment to other forest or land owners or to society.» Special texts about MFMP were proposed to the NFB for inclusion in the Forest Act (specific parts are mentioned in the references). It was agreed that these texts will be presented and discussed at all initial meetings and workshops as well as during training ses-

sions of NFB staff and stakeholders. A national workshop on these problems will be held; it will discuss and propose texts about inclusion of normative documents. These texts are related to the establishment of regional and local forestry councils, MFMP formulation, tasks and objectives of the plans, their organization and implementation.

7. Outlook

The results of regional forestry planning in six pilot areas of Bulgaria presented above show only the beginning of a process that promises to continue over the coming years. Many issues still remain open, such as the integration of the planning process in the forestry and related legislation, the financial support for implementation of the plans, the responsibilities for an effective system of control, and clarification of the role of the private sector in case one national forest company will be established as planned.

The lessons learnt so far, however, indicate that the forest administration is capable of leading the process of moderating different interest groups. Participatory planning does not require a lot of additional financial resources, and forestry stakeholders show sufficient interest in participation in the planning process. They have sufficient local knowledge to discuss future forest management strategies in their own localities.

In the future, the Bulgarian forest sector will be exposed to a number of reforms to guarantee harmonisation with EU legislation and the socio-economic changes taking place in the country. With the increasing expectations of civil society and the demands of different stakeholders concerning the use of forest resources, the role of the state administration will change accordingly from a traditionally centralised administration to one of moderating actors in applying sustainable forest management and orienting multifunctional forestry as part of landscape management. The specific requirements of local problems and solutions also require decentralised decision making processes. In order to make these happen, local competence has to be strengthened – not only at the level of forestry experts but also at the level of forestry stakeholders, so that they can better express their views and expectations on forests. The BSFP can contribute to this dialogue at different levels by capitalising on its experiences and the lessons learnt so far (STIPTZOV & DUERR 2002 and 2004).

Summary

The present experiences with multifunctional regional forestry planning in six pilot areas of Bulgaria clearly indicate how different interest groups can actively participate in long-term forestry planning. These processes can play a guiding role for the general democratisation of municipalities, for a constructive collaboration with civil society, the private sector and state institutions. One condition for the effective implementation of the plans is the political will to set clear priorities for the multifunctionality of forests in order to provide appropriate financial resources for implementation together with a consistent controlling mechanism. Bilateral development cooperation between Bulgaria and Switzerland seeks to promote awareness amongst the actors, develop appropriate methodologies and educate and train stakeholders. What is still lacking in Bulgaria is the formulation of appropriate forestry legislation and guidelines for the preparation and implementation of the plans, an efficient monitoring system as well as the carefully formulated coordination with regional spatial development planning.

Zusammenfassung

Multifunktionale Waldentwicklungsplanung – gute Methoden und gelernte Lektionen in Bulgarien

Die bisher gemachten Erfahrungen mit Waldentwicklungsplänen in den sechs Pilotregionen Bulgariens zeigen deutliche Wege auf, wie sich verschiedenste Interessengruppen aktiv an der langfristigen Waldplanung beteiligen können. Diese Prozesse können eine Vorreiterrolle für den gesamten Demokratisierungsprozess in den Gemeinden und das konstruktive Zusammenwirken von Zivilgesellschaft, Privatsektor und staatlichen Institutionen spielen. Voraussetzungen für eine effektive Umsetzung der Pläne sind der politische Wille für eine klare Prioritätensetzung in der Multifunktionalität des Waldes, für die Bereitstellung der notwendigen Finanzmittel für die Umsetzung und für ein konsequentes Controlling. Bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zwischen Bulgarien und der Schweiz unterstützt die Sensibilisierung der Akteure, die Entwicklung von angepassten Methoden und auch die Ausbildung aller Beteiligten. Was in Bulgarien noch fehlt, ist die Ausarbeitung der entsprechenden forstlichen Gesetzesgrundlagen und Richtlinien für die Erarbeitung und Umsetzung der Pläne, ein effektives Monitoring-System sowie die sorgfältige Abstimmung mit der Raumplanung.

Übersetzung: CHRISTOPH DÜRR

Résumé

Plans directeurs forestiers multifonctionnels. Aspects positifs et enseignements tirés de l'expérience bulgare

Les expériences faites jusqu'ici en matière de plans directeurs forestiers dans les six régions pilotes de Bulgarie montrent clairement la manière de faire participer activement les différents groupes d'intérêts à la planification forestière à long terme. Ces processus sont susceptibles de jouer un rôle pionnier dans le mouvement global de démocratisation des communes et en matière de collaboration constructive avec la société civile, le secteur privé et les institutions publiques. La condition nécessaire à une mise en œuvre effective des plans est la volonté politique de définir clairement les priorités en matière de multifonctionnalité forestière afin d'assurer les moyens financiers indispensables et un controlling appropriés. La collaboration bilatérale entre la Bulgarie et la Suisse permet d'encourager la sensibilisation des acteurs en présence, le développement de méthodes adéquates ainsi que la formation des milieux concernés. En Bulgarie, les éléments suivants font encore défaut: des bases légales et des directives forestières pour l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre des plans, un système de monitoring effectif et une coordination efficace avec l'aménagement du territoire.

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