

Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo
Qeveria –Vlada-Government

Ministria e Bujqësisë, Pylltarisë dhe Zhvillimit Rural
Ministarstvo Poljoprivrede, Šumarstva i Ruralnog Razvoja
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development

POLICY AND STRATEGY ON FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVO

2022-2030

POLICY AND STRATEGY ON FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVO

2022-2030

Pristina, December 2021

CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 6

1. INTRODUCTION 9

2. METHODOLOGY 10

3. STATE OF FORESTRY IN KOSOVO 10

3.1 Forest extent and condition 10

3.2 Forest health and vitality 11

3.3 Environment and biodiversity 11

3.4 Forest production 12

3.5 Policy, legal and instıtutional framework 13

Policies and Strategies 13

Legislation 15

Institutional 15

Government institutions 16

Non-governmental institutions 16

SWOT ANALYSIS 16

4. POLICY AND OBJECTIVES 19

Policy statement 19

Principles 19

Gender 19

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 19

Overall goal 20

Strategıc Objective 1: Forest Resources ıs enhanced 20

Specific objective 1.1: Forest related legal framework is improved 20

Specific objective 1.2: Entire public forest area ıs administered with management plans 21

Specific objective 1.3: Forest resources data ıs updated 21

Specific objective 1.4: Forest land cadaster ıs established 21

Specific objective 1.5: Mapping of forest functions 21

Specific objective 1.6: Forest area ıs increased 21

Specific objective 1.7: Forest tree seed and seedling production is increased 22

Specific objective 1.8: Forests are improved through silviculture measures 22

Strategic Objective 2: Forest Resources is protected 22
Specific objective 2.1: Illegal interventions in forests reduced 22
Specific objective 2.2: Fragmented forest lands are consolidated 22
Specific objective 2.3: Forest health ıs monıtored and protected 22
Specific objective 2.4: Biodiversity ıs conserved in production forests 23
Specific objective 2.5: Forest fire prevention measures are taken 23
Strategıc Objective 3: Forest resources are used ın a sustainable and multi-purpose way 23
Specific objective 3.1: Regular logging increased 23
Specific objective 3.2: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Criteria and Indicators are defined and implemented 23
Specific objective 3.3: NWFPs are used sustainably 24
Specific objective 3.4: Ecotourism ıs sustainably developed 24
Strategıc Objective 4: Capacity ıs developed 24
Specific objective 4.1: Formal education in forestry ıs advanced 24
Specific objective 4.2: Vocational training opportunities are established 24
Specific objective 4.3: Forestry and hunting administration and management institutions are strengthened 24
Specific objective 4.4: Private sector ıs financially and administratively supported 24
Strategıc Objective 5: Digitalization and improved communication 24
Specific objective 5.1: Forest information system is in function 25
Specific objective 5.2: Advancing communication and awareness in forestry 25
5. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS 25
6. BUDGETARY IMPACT OF PSP IMPLEMENTATION 26
Estimated overall cost of implementation of PSP on Forestry Development 2022 – 2020 27

ABBREVIATIONS

ARDP	Agriculture and Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 (Updated in 2009)
BIMR	Biodiversity Information Management and Reporting (GIZ-2017)
CCS	Climate Change Strategy of Kosovo (2019-2028)
DoF	Department of Forestry
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
IFR	Institute for Forest Research
KCA	Kosovo Cadastral Agency
KFA	Kosova Forestry Agency
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Rural Development
MESP	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure
MEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MIET	Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurships and Trade
NDS	National Development Strategy (2016-2021)
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NLBI	Non-Lagally Binding Instrument on Forestry (UN,2007)
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2011-2020)
PSP	Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector Development (2010-2020)
SOE	Social Owned Enterprise
UNSPF	United Nations Strategic Plan for Forestry (2017-2030)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In addition to their vital role in mitigating climate change, housing majority of terrestrial biodiversity and halting land degradation, forests provide many goods and services that directly contributes to the national economies and to the wellbeing of rural communities in particular. Despite all of these merits, deforestation and forest degradation have long been at the top of global environmental and developmental agenda for which many international and regional debates strive to achieve sustainable forest management. The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on Forests in 2007 (NLBI) and United Nations Strategic Plan on Forestry 2017-2030 (UNSPF) are the main outputs of these intensive debates which clearly exhibits how forests with their economic, ecologic and social functions contribute to the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Almost half of its land covered with forests and located at biodiversity hotspots of Europe, Kosovo is in an effort to build up a modern economy. Development of rural areas and alleviation of poverty have significant importance in this endeavor. When sustainable managed, forests in Kosovo have potential to greatly contribute to livelihood of rural people as well as to the national economy which has been recognized by the Law on Forestry. The law depicts that forests in Kosovo is a national resource and it shall be managed to provide goods and services and preserve biodiversity for the benefits of present and future generations.

Because of unfavorable conditions and unsustainable practices, Kosovo forests have not fulfilled their role at an expected level which is the main reference of this Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Development (PSP) for 2022-2030. Structured and prepared in the European approach, the PSP is an attempt to safeguard forest resources and promote their sustainable management in Kosovo. Insights provided by this PSP are developed around the common views of the stakeholders who actively took part in the process of preparation. Low technical and institutional capacities, inadequate infrastructure, ineffective coordination and cooperation between related institutions, ineffective law enforcement are the main drivers of the forest degradation exacerbated by poverty and insufficient reach to energy sources in the rural areas. There are overlaps and gaps in forest related legal frame which add to the problems. Uncontrolled cutting for fuelwood, on the other hand, leads to considerable economic losses which would otherwise provide valuable wood for forest industry and proliferate contribution of forests to the national economy through integrated forest management plans supported by well-established forest protection systems.

PSP mainly aims to conserve, expand and sustainably manage Kosovo forest resources to contribute to the national economy. This will be done in a way to keep the balance between economic, ecologic and social functions of the forests. All of the strategic objectives are designed to pave the road towards this overall goal in a ten-year period. The action plan is prepared for the first three-year period. Outputs and performance of the action plan will guide in the preparation of the subsequent action plans.

Five strategic objectives are identified as follows:

1- Forest resources are enhanced
2- Forest resources are safeguarded
3- Forest resources are used in a sustainable and multipurpose way
4- Forestry sector capacity is developed
5- Digitalization and improved communication

The first strategic objective is enhancement of the Kosovo forests. Increasing and properly tending the forest resources is crucial for the expected contributions of the forestry sector to the national economy and this highly depends on a sound management setup. Hence, the first strategic objective focuses on improving forestry related legislation, forest inventory and management planning system.

The main activities under this objective are structured in two categories: institutional and technical. Improvement of the forestry related legal frame will follow a path from analyzing the present context to drafting the Forest law and associated by-laws. The main topics of the work will develop around ownership issues, land use change, contracts, licenses, leases and cadaster. There is also a specific activity to explicit the economic loss caused by illegal logging.

From the technical side, completion of forest management plans and renewal of the national forest inventory are outstanding activities. This will be followed by preparing forest maps with functional layers and other necessary attributes such as registry. Forest tree seed and seedling production will be improved and increased to enable the planned reforestation and afforestation activities. Young forest stands will be tended through appropriate silvicultural measures and degraded plots will be restored.

The second strategic objective involves safeguarding forest resources. Legal arrangements and setting up a task force on timber legality are commonly agreed activities supported by equipment provision and trainings. Forest based value chain will also be analyzed and mapped. Fragmented private and public forest areas and their possible consolidation is among the activities which will include verification and registration of their boundaries. Another group of activities are those related to health of the forest resources and forest biodiversity. Monitoring capacity of forests pests and diseases will be increased, on job trainings will be organized and exchange of transboundary information will be facilitated. Endangered, rare and threatened species will be identified and protected. Biodiversity inventory will be carried out and the outputs will be integrated into forest management plans. It is commonly agreed that the climate change could lead to increasing incidences of forest fires and, thus, activities aimed to increase forest fire prevention and combating capacity are determined with an emphasis on building up a system strengthened by trainings and provision of equipment.

Given the fact that the present provision of goods and services from the Kosovo forests are far below their existing potential, the third strategic objective is devoted to proliferation of wood and non-wood products and services. Both technical and administrative procedure for forest use will be simplified and long term cutting permits will properly be regulated. The technical capacity of the forestry staff will be improved with regard to monitoring, inventorying, collection and processing of non-wood forest products. Markets for local products and potential areas for ecotourism will be identified. Gaps in the non-wood forest products and services related legislation will be identified and filled with necessary arrangements. An information center will be established.

Another important activity group under the third objective is the definition and implementation of national criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management in Kosovo (SFM C&I). Monitoring, assessment and reporting of the state and trends of forestry sector through verified data and in a participatory way will certainly help decision making mechanism for future planning. Implementation of SFM C&I has the potential to create multitude of contributions towards achieving sustainable forest management when applied at local levels. Therefore, a pilot study will be tested in one of the provinces.

The fourth strategic objective is about capacity development focused on formal education and vocational trainings. Provision of scholarships and opportunities for education in European countries are among the primary activities. A vocational high school will be opened and training programs will be carried out in the regional vocational training centers.

Forestry and hunting issues will be handled under the fourth objective. Reorganization needs will be assessed and subsequently a new structure will be determined. Cooperation, collaboration and exchange of information will be facilitated at the international level. Training for forestry staff will be designed and implemented.

Digitalization in forestry and improvement of communication is addressed in the fifth objective. Functionalizing and maintaining the existing Kosovo forest information system (KFIS) is a strategic aim of the objective. Within this frame; KFIS modules will be updated, KFIS admin unit will be set up, on-the-job trainings will be established and a guideline will be prepared. In terms of improvement of communication; a wide survey will be conducted to determine the perspectives of different social segments and based on the results of the survey, a communication strategy plan will be prepared and implemented. Awareness campaigns for high school students and summer schools for primary and secondary school students will be organized, media campaigns will be undertaken.

The PSP is completely in line with the existing National Development Strategy and other national strategies as well as the internationally agreed forestry arrangements. The results of recently held summit in Paris is an indication of a new era that brings forestry issues forefront at global level. It is, therefore, important to exert every effort for the successful implementation of the PSP. The key factor in the progress is an effective communication and collaboration with other sectors in Kosovo since most of the activities can be fulfilled with the engagement and contribution of related sectors including the private sector. Determination and political will is certainly prerequisite.

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental protection has been one of the priority items of the global agenda for the last 50 years. Being at alarming pace, forest damage and degradation have been among the substantial causes of this process and put in the spotlight of the international discussions. Now, it has been widely recognized that in addition to their vital role in the human wellbeing, forest, when sustainably managed, greatly contribute to the prevention and mitigation of climate change, conservation of biodiversity and prevention of land degradation.

In the long line of the intensive international debate on forestry, UN agreed on Non-Legally Binding Instrument on Forestry in 2007 (NLBI) and recently prepared the Strategic Plan for Forestry for 2017-2030 (UNSPF). Providing a global framework for action at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests, and to halt deforestation and forest degradation, UNSPF designates 6 global forest goals and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030. Forestry has an important role in the all 17 sustainable development goals either directly or indirectly by manifesting its low-carbon and bio-based attributes with the ability to store carbon and provide environment friendly goods.

Kosovo is fostering processes on reforms to build up a modern economy. One of the important segments of the Government's program is the development of rural areas and alleviation of poverty, which gives rise to expectations regarding the growth of the revenues of rural households, small enterprises and stability of municipalities. In this context the economic, social and ecological functions of forests are of significant importance to the sustainable development of Kosovo and for improving the quality of life, especially in rural and mountain areas. Based on the forest multipurpose functions, Kosovo perceives forests as part of national treasure/heritage. The Law on Forest states that the forest of Kosovo is a national resource and it shall be managed in such a way as to provide a valuable yield and at the same time preserve biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations.

Having almost 45 per cent of it is land covered with forests and being in one of the biodiversity hotspots of Europe, Kosovo took a step in the forestry sector by preparing and implementing the Policy and Strategy Paper (PSP) on Forest Development for 2010-2020. The PSP was an attempt to build a capacity to cope with unfavorable conditions and halt ongoing unsustainable practices. As it was also a response to the NLBI which invites countries to prepare national forest programs, PSP needed to be renewed for the 2022-2030 period based on the lessons learned and new possibilities emerged.

In a strategic fit with national development policy and in coherence with other related sectoral policies and strategies, Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Development for 2022-2030 has been prepared in a Forest Europe approach and in line with EU Forestry Strategy 2020 to safeguard Kosovo forest resources and promote their sustainable management. PSP 2022-2030 is structured according the SFM criteria agreed upon by Forest Europe. It takes into consideration the future political and socio-economic scenario of Kosovo, and the generation of theory of change which describes the steps and their linkages that will lead to the planned outcome.

2. METHODOLOGY

With the support of the donor funded project GCP/KOS/075/SWE implemented by FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) has arranged a program composed of a series of studies and participatory events for the formulation of the Policy and Strategy Paper (PSP) 2022-2030 on Forestry Sector Development. Gender mainstreaming, needs of the most disadvantaged groups and lessons learned from the PSP 2010-2020 were taken into account.

Preparation activities have started with reviews an evaluation of the implementation of PSP 2010 - 2020. Existing legal framework, organizational and management structures of the forestry sector, progress reports related to the forestry sector, the green books of MAFRD, reports of Kosovo Forestry Agency (KFA) and the Department of Forestry (DoF) have been reviewed and analysed. Various meetings have been held with the responsible institutions, line ministries, non-governmental organizations and other interested parties.

On February 2021, MAFRD established the Inter-Ministerial Working Group and sub-working groups composed of representatives of the key ministries and organizations for drafting the PSP 2022-2030. Through SWOT analyses and with the support of national and international experts, the sub-working groups have drafted reports to identify strategic and specific objectives and proposed actions as well as projects. It was ensured that gender issues are fully integrated into the analysis, objectives, and projects proposed.

The results of the work of the subgroups was presented and analysed at the joint meeting of the working subgroups held on 09.06.2021. Meanwhile, on 24-25 June 2021, the Forestry Sector Joint Review workshop was held in Pristina to discuss the outline and content of the draft PSP 2022-2030 and provide comments for improvements.

After an intensive work and series of formal and informal consultations, the draft PSP 2022-2030, along with its Action Plan are discussed in accordance with AI Nr 07/2018

3. STATE OF FORESTRY IN KOSOVO

3.1 FOREST EXTENT AND CONDITION

Forest area is defined as land with tree crown cover of more than 10% and area of more than 0.5 ha with trees able to reach a minimum height of 5 meter at maturity in situ. According to the National Forest Inventory (NFI) conducted in 2012, Kosovo forests has increased by 5% between 2002-2012 reaching to 481.000 ha (44.7 % of the total land area of Kosovo). In terms of ownership, 62 % of the forests owned by state and the remaining by private landowners. The forest coverage in Kosovo is bigger than that of neighboring countries (Albania 28%, Macedonia 39%, Montenegro 40%, and Serbia 31%).

Kosovo forests are dominated by broadleaved trees by 93% (449 400 ha). More than half of the forests is considered even-aged. Coniferous forests cover almost 5% of the forest area (23 800 ha). The total growing stock is 40,5 million m^3 (over bark) and has a stable trend. About 18.5 million m^3 of the growing stock resides in Beech forests (Fagus sp.), then comes Oak forests with over 9 million m^3. The average growing stock per hectare equals to 84 m^3 (European average 104 m^3/ha). The total carbon stock is

calculated to be over 24 million tons. Coppice forest covers 84% of the total forest area and are mainly managed by short rotations for firewood production and other household needs.

Not all forest management units (FMU) have management plans. Around 82% of public forests are covered by management plans. Currently, private forest owners do not prepare forest management plans for their forests. The average size of a private forest is around 1.4 ha.

3.2 Forest health and vitality

Data from the last NFI show that a total of 58.200 ha of forests is adversely affected by biotic and abiotic agents with a result of 5,8 million m³ damage. Insects and diseases are accountable for 14.600 ha of this area. Forest fires affected 12.200 ha and animal grazing 1.800 ha. Other damage is caused by various factors such as drought and frost. Illegal logging of forests for commercial purposes is among the most important drivers of the forest damage. Poor villagers living nearby forests cut wood for subsistence purposes. According to the current national forestry inventory, 40% of the public forests and 29% of the private forests in Kosovo are subject to uncontrolled or illegal harvesting activities. Large volumes of forest residues, very often remains in the forest after the harvesting, which results in loss of fibber, damage from insect attacks and increased risk of forest fires.

The outbreak of forest fires takes place due to the burning of harvested agricultural plots or grasslands by farmers and pastoralists. Careless camping and picnicking is another important cause of the forest fires. In 2020, around 2404 ha forest was damaged because of the fires. There is a clear need for a better coordination and cooperation between KFA and local authorities to build awareness of the entire society.

The quality and productivity of the existing forests is of a high concern as a result of continuous degradation. Soil erosion is prevalent in mountainous areas with alarming signals of damaging of forests, environment and biodiversity.

3.3 Environment and biodiversity

With many endemic and rare plant and animal species, Kosovo is one of the biodiversity hotspot in Europe. Many arrangements are underway in designation of protected areas in the last decade. But problems do exist, particularly due to insufficient financial and technical capacity. Information on biodiversity come from separate studies of different entities. There is no functional information system based on comprehensive databases and this makes it difficult to properly manage biodiversity in Kosovo.

Based on Kosovo red book there are 13 endemic plant species and 200 species that are endemic in Balkan region. Around 24 species are threatened by human activities. There are 46 species of mammals with regional and global importance. Because of wetland destructions and river pollution and degradation, some of water bird species have been lost.

Most of the forest area in Kosovo consists of mixed species stands (21% of the forest area consists of 4-5 different tree species). Almost 85% of forests regenerated through coppice sprouting. Planting is around 0.5%. Only 1% of the forests classified as undisturbed. In the South-East Europe the average figure for undisturbed forests is 6%. The rate of plantations is also far less than neighboring countries with 1%.

The introduced species, which are threat for natural forests of Kosovo, covers 0.6% of the forests. The main species is a southeastern USA native Black locust which was introduced first in Europe then in Kosovo for erosion control purposes. Black locust occupies 2400 ha and with Larch and Douglas fir the total area of introduced species amounts to 3.200 ha.

The average dead wood is 3.6 m³ per hectare which is far less than the average of the European countries. This can be explained by the intensive fire wood collection from forests in Kosovo. Despite this, a large amount of forest waste caused by legal and illegal logging and forest damage by abiotic factors remains unused in forests, which causes the releases of large amounts of Carbon (C), diseases and insects as well as forest fires. The removal of forest waste and their use will affect the production of renewable energy and the gradual removal of fossil fuels and de-carbonization of the economy in Kosovo as well as the fulfillment of the EU Commission's goal of carbon removal, provided that it is used sustainably.

In addition, the large percentage of forest cover in Kosovo affects the absorption of large amounts of carbon (C) and the release of oxygen (O2), which have an impact on preventive measures and mitigation of climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) effects. A highly functional and sustainable management of natural resources will improve our living conditions and ensure a healthy environment, job creation and provision of sustainable energy sources.

In Kosovo there are two forest areas that have been designated by the government as national parks: Sharri in southern Kosovo and Bjeshket e Nemuna in the western part of Kosovo. Both national parks are located in high elevation forested areas. Only the Sharri national park has so far been delineated and classified into zones according to management objectives. Most of the coniferous and mixed coniferous forests (almost 90%) are located within the borders of the national parks.

3.4 FOREST PRODUCTION

According to the NFI results, gross annual sustainable harvest is estimated at 1.45 million m³ with approximately 630 000 m³ in high-quality forest and 815 000 m³ in low-quality coppice forest. However, currently the annual timber harvest amounts to 1.6 million m³ which is about 1/4 higher than the recommended long-term level. Furthermore, only 10 – 15 % of the volume of forest is currently harvested according to existing regulations meaning that the MAFRD– Kosovo Forest Agency (KFA) is harvesting annually approximately 200 000 m³. The main reasons for this are unrestricted illegal and informal forest activities, fragmented and small private forest holdings (one/two hectares on average), and the low implementation rate of Forest Management Plans.

Although Kosovo's forests represent a great source of economic potential, present practises do not create significant revenue for the national economy. Weak rule of law enforcement, inefficient and ineffective governance lead to loss of economic yield that would otherwise contribute to local economies and improve sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, unregulated use of forest resources leads to deforestation which has serious negative effects on environment as well as on local and national economy.

Due to its geographical position, relief configuration, geologic and pedologic composition and climate conditions, Kosovo houses rich flora with a big number of endemic and steno-endemic plants. Especially river canyons provide habitat for relict and endemic relict species. Based on some sporadic inventories conducted by academic quarters, 84 species of commercial importance with 29.000 ton dried raw material have been identified so far.

NWFP (forest fruits, mushrooms and medicinal and aromatic plants) can be of considerable economic importance for the rural population. In Kosovo the use of these kinds of products and services is not

well organized. The main reason for this shortcoming is the limited development of supporting legislation. Socio-economy aspects

There is no sufficient data to concisely evaluate the contribution of forestry sector to the national economy and the existing data often undervalues the contribution. Although very important for the livelihoods of rural people, such as fire wood collection, the data for informal activities are not reliable. The statistics of employment, value added products and supply-demand balance of the wood products from public and private forests are not systematically recorded.

Based on scattered studies and reports of various projects we could conclude that:

The Kosovo forestry sector currently employs only about 2% of the total labor force. The formal and informal employment in logging operations range between 2500-3000. Forest related governmental institutions employs 288 people of which 48 are women. The wood processing industry has a greater share in the contribution to employment. There are 1778 wood and furniture businesses in Kosovo that are mostly micro-enterprises employing less than 10 persons. The total employment in forest industry is estimated to be around 5000-6000 people. The number of non-wood forest products (NWFP) collectors are calculated between 11.400-20.000. There are around 100 cultivators, 30-40 collection centers and 10 processing companies.

The contribution of forestry sector to GDP is roughly 1%. Round wood production ranges between 24-48 million € and wood-furniture industry between 40-50 million €. There is no official data for NWFP.

The export of wood products totaled 28.6 million € in 2019 which is 7.5% of total exports. The export of NWFP is calculated to be around 16.6 million €. The ratio between exports and imports is 1:7 which was 1:29 in 2012.

The total annual budget allocated for forestry sector is stable for the last 5 years with 2.2 million €. The revenues from forestry sector have slightly increased in the same period reaching 1.9 million € in 2019 which is more than the total expenditures by 0.5 million €.

3.5 Policy, legal and institutional framework

Policies and Strategies

The Government of Kosovo recognizes the importance of forests, and wood processing sector, as well as emphasizes the need to ensure sustainable forest management as an essential opportunity to ensure sustainable supply of wood material used for heating and industrial purposes. The government points out to the dire consequences of deforestation in biodiversity and land degradation noting also the importance of forests in mitigating climate change.

Kosovo is now in the process of the developing the new National Development Strategy (NDS).
The existing NDS (2016-2021) was a new approach to development policies. It addressed all factors that limited economic growth and standard of living. The strategy underlined the necessity to integrate existing policies and strategies of different sectors. This would lead not only to coherent actions but also to identification of country's priorities. Based on four pillars; human capital, the rule of law and good governance, development of competitive industries and development of infrastructure, NDS tasked forestry sector to ensure sustainable use as well as prevention of degradation of Kosovo's forests.

Steady and predictable supply of wood and non-wood products for Kosovo's industry was also handled in an ecosystem approach. NDS clearly indicated that deforestation could lead to major negative

economic and social impacts in addition to damages to ecosystem. High demand for wood and consequent pressure, overharvesting and illegal logging were shown among the causes of deforestation. It also identified that lack of proper forest management plans was an issue of concern. The insufficient capacity of institutions to sustainably manage forest resources was defined as the main barrier.

Document Policy and Strategy of the Forestry Sector Development 2022-2030 is in compliance within planned activities of the NDS, development strategies, and programs of line ministries, as well as within the European legal framework and international agreements related to multi-functional forest management.

The Program of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo 2020-2023 envisages afforestation of bare forest lands, and damaged forest areas and requests preventive measures, legal and institutional reconstruction changes that enable rational use of forests and strengthen the capacities of the Kosovo Forest Agency.

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) prioritize protection of forest resources and points out to the urgency of afforestation in new reclaimed areas. It states that for environmental, economic and social purposes an enabling environment should be created through the review and amendment of existing forestry related legislation.

Kosovo National Afforestation and Reforestation Program (NARP) 2018-2027 and National Forest Health Program (NFHP) 2018-2027 were prepared. NARP aimed to increase Kosovo forest by 5%, but it was assessed to be a very ambitious program difficult to be implemented. On the other hand, NFHP aimed to improve forest health but its implementation remains a challenge for the institutions responsible for the administration and management of forests due to lack of human and financial resources.

Climate Change Strategy (CCS-2019-2028) depicts that under the heavy burden of environmental problems accumulated over decades, Kosovo endeavors to restructure agriculture and forest sector for sustainable economic development based on European standards. Exploitation of natural resources, high population density, uncontrolled construction on agricultural land, uncontrolled use of forest, illegal logging, economic and industrial activities, mining and processing industry are the main causes of environmental degradation.

Agriculture and rural development plan (ARDP) was developed on 4 axes: competitiveness; environment and improved land use; rural diversification and quality of rural life; community based local development strategies. The overall vision was defined as “to make a balanced contribution to the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of rural areas, and Kosovo as a whole, through effective and profitable partnerships between the private sector, central/local government and local communities within the European context”. Improvement of natural resource management was given a high priority. Under Chapter 4 Measure 5, forestry development and afforestation was shown as an alternative for the use of agricultural land. It was acknowledged that forestry was an important economic activity in mountainous areas and could provide long term employment opportunities. The private forestry was marked as underdeveloped. ARDP supports sustainable use of forests economic, environmental and social functions. A particular emphasize was put on afforestation of abandoned agricultural lands. ARDP also committed to assist afforestation and agro-forestry systems, particularly in Natura 2000 areas.

National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP,2011-2020) refers to the Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector Development (PSP 2010-2020) stating that especially in rural areas wood will remain

the most important source of energy for heating. The introduction of systems and methods leading to improved use of forest resources for energy production purposes are supported. The strategy frames specific measures for the promotion of the use of energy from biomass. It estimates that 120 GWh of energy may be produced annually from biomass (forest debris), yet expresses concern that development of projects of these kind is halted mostly on the account of costs.

LEGISLATION

Forestry activities are carried out under the Law on Forestry No:2003/3 (14.10. 2004) and the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development is in a process to draft a new forest law. There are 45 by-laws (administrative instructions) related to forestry and hunting and some of them are amended and supplemented one or two times. In addition to Constitution and Law on Forests, there are around 13 laws directly or indirectly related to forests.

Based on the results of survey carried out within the study on baseline and indicators of timber legality, most of the institutions think that Forest law is not clear enough and needs to be changed. During the discussions, particular attention is drawn on division of tasks and competences between local authorities (municipalities) and central level institutions. It is also thought that the Forest Law is in conflict with many other laws and administrative instructions. Therefore, the Forest law could only be implemented partly.

Kosovo has made important efforts during the past years in taking part in regional and international initiatives and conventions related to biodiversity and environment conservation, but this process has been continuously burdened with political problems. Kosovo has become a cooperating member country of the European Environmental Agency (EEA) together with the other five other SEE economies which are nonmembers of the EU. Due to political reasons, Kosovo still did not ratify any of the international agreements in the field of biodiversity and/or environment.

INSTITUTIONAL

The Kosovo Forest Agency (KFA) within MAFRD is responsible for forest management on public and private lands including the collection of non-wood forest products. Based on Hunting Law, KFA is also partly responsible for hunting and wildlife management. Department of forestry, under MAFRD, is responsible for forest policy and strategies in forest sector. The Directorate of National Park "Sharri" and the Directorate of National Park "Bjeshket e Nemuna" are in charge of management of the two National Parks in Kosovo. They also sporadically collect biodiversity and ecosystem information at field level. The Inspectorate for Environment Protection is in charge of inspecting nature protection, while the inspectorate of forestry is under KFA, monitors sustainable forest management, wildlife management and non-wood forest products collection.

According to the Ministry of Finance's report, the total number of the staff working in forestry sector is 162 (155 in KFA and 7 in DoF at MAFRD), while the number of staff working at municipal level is 194. Some of the municipalities lack staff in this sector. With regard to the training of the staff, it has been reported that not enough trainings have been delivered during last 5 years, only 3 municipalities declared to have very few trainings. Kosovo Private Forest Owners Association organised 12 training for forestry use and 146 for other topics.

Municipalities have limited forestry staff capacity. Discouraging salaries, poor working conditions, lack of equipment and vehicles are among the problems that hampers forestry activities at field level.

The legal definition of forests as a national resource and a resource of general interest dictates the cooperation and coordination of many stakeholders, central government institutions and local governments and non-governmental associations.

Main stakeholders are:

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MFRD)- Kosovo Forest Agency (KFA)- Department of Forestry (DoF)- Forest Research Institute (FRI)
- Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI);
- Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure (MESPI);
- Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW);
- Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI);
- Kosovo Privatization Agency (KPA);
- Ministry of Finance
- Local governments (municipalities).

NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

- Association of Wood Processors in Kosovo (AWPK);
- Association of Private Forest Owners of Kosovo (APOK);
- Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC).

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis of the forestry sector in Kosovo, as shown below, clearly points out to the magnitude of problems and challenges. The institutional capacity is the most underlined with reference to technical and financial aspects. The existing legal framework and institutional organization is among the strengths of the sector, however, legal framework was considered weak for some certain areas. One of the noteworthy issues is the ongoing wood use practices that consequence huge economic losses. According to the analysis, attainment of sustainable wood production would certainly reverse the picture for the benefit of the national economy.

STRENGHTS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Strategic importance of forests (national resources) • Existence of strategic and legal framework and of administrative and management structures • National Afforestation and Reforestation Program 2018-2027 • National Forest Vitality Program • Rich biodiversity • Existence of Forestry Institute in Peja • Good percentage of forest land in private owndership • Forest under national parks represent areas of great importance for development and improvement of scientific research activities	• High quantity of technical wood is used as firewood • Lack of young professionals and motivated staff in the Forest Administration and companies due to discouraging salaries, and low number of forestry students • Lack of public and political support to the forestry sector • Low (modest) budget for the sector • Division of competencies against existing professional capacity • Unsatisfactory success of afforestation • Weak legal framework on lease and change of use of forest land

• Use of wood biomass as a renewable energy source	• Ongoing irregular logging in forests and damage of forest land • Poor forest infrastructure and lack of maintenance • Limited private sector capacity for provision of professional forestry services • Non-inclusion of the forestry sector in support measures (subsidies and grants, measure 202 and forest protection through IPARD) • Non-establishment of forest regeneration fund (according to Forest Law 2003/3, Article 8) • Lack of involvement of Gender Equality Officers, women's organization and locak women in local groups for forest management policy • Lack of wild animal inventory and update of aromatic and medicinal plants inventory • Insufficient funds for education about and research of environmental issues • Lack of forestry module in Regional Training Centers under the Employment Agency • Non-functioning of the laboratory at the institute (lack of professional staf for applied forestry research). • Use of forests only with short-term annual contracts through tendering, non-implementation of concessions and other forms of long-term and sustainable forest use • Lack of forest cadaster • Lack of counseling services for private forest owners • Lack of coordination with other ministries on forest management in national parks • Poor quality of education in forestry/non-implementation of on-the-job training • Lack of forestry experts (forestry engineers and technicians, especially women professionals in the field), and difficult working conditions, low salaries and lack of incentives; • Lack of development of the wood industry, and lack of coordination between primary production and the wood processing industry • Problems in forest management in the municipalities of Leposavic, Z. Potok and Zvecan

• **OPPORTUNITIES**	• **RISKS**
• Increased economic, social and environmental value through multi-purpose forest management • Increased employment • Increased contribution to GDP	• Continuous damage to forests by illegal logging, biotic and abiotic factors • Application of non-professional logging according to forest types • Impact of climate change

• Reproductive material, seeds and seedlings provided by forests of autochthonous origin • Increased regular logging and meeting of local population needs • Development of rural areas through multi-purpose use of forest resources • Expansion of forest area through afforestation • Improved situation in degraded forests (reforestation) • Use of wood biomass for renewable energy production • Increased production potential of forests • Forest certification according to international standards. • Improved efficiency and professionalism in forest management through reform of institutions responsible for management and administration • Private sector capacity building (licensing and standardization) • Development/empowerment of public-private partnership • Organization of legal wood and wood products markets • Establishment of department for provision of services in private forests • Encouragement of women to be part of forestry organizational structures through gender sensitive announcements (including implementation of affirmative measures) • Update of forest taxes of ruse of forest land and compensation of damage	• Damage to forest lands, landscape, causing erosion, • Pollution of air, water resources and water courses • Pollution of forest ecosystems by waste dumping • Annexation of forests and forest lands • Continued use/exploitation of private forests without MPs • Dominance of the conservation approach and non-compliance with the needs of the community around and within the territory of the parks • Introduction of invasive species • Loss of genetic base through the purchase of seeds abroad • Damage to forests by biotic and abiotic factors • Insufficient budget to implement development projects in the sector • Lack of adequate control from and monitoring of overuse endangering the extinction of certain species • Degradation of the environment and forest areas • Migration of young people from rural areas • Prejudice that forest work is the work of men and the inability of women to get involved • Annexation of forest lands and change of destination • Presence of forest fires, lack of ameliorative measures

4. POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

POLICY STATEMENT

Aware of the ongoing global environmental challenges in terms of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, and that sustainable forest management plays a crucial role in coping with these challenges,

Recalling that in line with UN Non Legally Binding Instrument on Forestry and Strategic Plan for Forestry, the Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector of Kosovo will also serve in reaching targets of Sustainable Development Goals,

Acknowledging that the new EU Forestry Strategy released in 2021 will maximize the contribution of forestry towards the achievement of carbon neutral Europe.

Recognizing importance of forests, and wood processing sector, as well as the need to ensure sustainable forest management as an essential opportunity to ensure a sustainable supply of wood material used for heating, and industrial purposes,

Also recognizing that forests in Kosovo has the potential to greatly contribute to the wellbeing of rural people by providing employment and income generating activities,

Noting the importance of forest protection for stable and healthy ecosystem,

Acknowledging that the potential of the forest resources is not used to its full potential due to limited availability of appropriate technology and trained personnel, weaknesses in organizational structures and enforcement of legislation regulating the protection and management of forest resources,

Expressing concern that private forests are too fragmented to be efficiently used and also the old state owned enterprises is a pending issue to be solved,

Reminding that current legal frame and governance models must encompass the proposed activities of the Policy and Strategy Paper but reforms in certain areas deemed to be necessary,

Reaffirming that the Action Plan of the Policy and Strategy Paper is dynamic in nature and will be renewed every three years to provide more scope based on the capacities developed and the results of the monitoring and assessment of its implementation,

PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector in Kosovo will be in conformity and consistency with national development objectives, policies, strategies and legislation. It will be carried out under the principles of strengthening cross and inter sectoral cooperation, ensuring participation of stakeholders, preserving cultural and traditional heritage and consistency with international commitments on forestry.

GENDER

The strategy will focus on encouraging gender parity in which the main aim is to provide equal opportunities for women and men in activities related to enabling of sustainable management of forests and restoration of degraded landscapes of Kosovo. This necessitates requires full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation for ecosystem conservation and restoration.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)

This PSP will provide a framework for forest related contributions to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development for the achievement of most sustainable development goals (SDGs). PSP aims to contribute to the sustainable management of forest resources in the country through strengthening

the enabling environment for the forestry sector, introduction of multipurpose forest management planning, restoration of degraded forest lands, and forest protection measures. These objectives will have direct contribution to SDG 15-Life on land (15.2 “By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase Afforestation and Reforestation (A/R) globally”) and also to other core goals; 6-Clear water and sanitation, 7-Affordable and clean energy, 8-Decent work and economic growth, 12-Responsible consumption and production, 13-Climate action. PSP is supportive in SDGs; 1-No poverty, 4-Quality education, 5-Gender equality, 9-Industry, innovation and infrastructure and 11-Sustainable cities and communities.

OVERALL GOAL

The overall goal of this PSP is to preserve and increase the value and potential of forest resources with an objective to increase their contribution to the national economy always through application of sustainable and multi-purpose management of forests.

To achieve this goal, the following priorities should be undertaken:

- Preventing illegal logging
- Protection of forests and forest land from other illicit interventions;
- Protection of forests health and vitality from biotic and abiotic factors;
- Increase of forest area by through afforestation, reforestation and natural regeneration, including afforestation of degraded lands, abandoned lands and reforestation of degraded forests;
- Increase of the value and productivity of forests through the multi-purpose use of the overall production potential of timber, non-timber forest products and other forest functions and aspects;
- Improvement of organizational structures and building of human resource capacities for transparent governance and multi-purpose forest management;
- Digitization of forest data and functioning of the Kosovo Forest Information System
- Increase and maintenance of optimal quality and density of forest roads, as well as ancillary infrastructure
- Advancement and improvement of inter-institutional, regional and international cooperation, and membership in relevant networks and organizations;
- Inclusion of forestry activities in governmental support schemes and development of cooperation with financial institutions and the general public;
- Encouragement of the development of associations of private forest owners, processors, collectors and users in order to strengthen their capacity to implement sustainable forest management**.**

Towards the overall goal, 5 strategic objectives are identified for the next ten years

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: FOREST RESOURCES IS ENHANCED

Forest resources will be maintained and enhanced to contribute to the environmental, economic and social development of Kosovo.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.1: FOREST RELATED LEGAL FRAMEWORK IS IMPROVED

Insufficient implementation of laws, by-laws, strategies and programs is mainly because of jurisdiction overlaps and conflict in certain cases. In addition, there is a gap in terms of legislation for issues related to forestry such as the status of former forest social enterprises, forest land consolidation and

categorization of forest landscape. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve the legal frame of forestry. Sound and consistent laws and by-laws will greatly help in streamlining the solutions to the problems of forest management and protection of forest resources.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.2: ENTIRE PUBLIC FOREST AREA IS ADMINISTERED WITH MANAGEMENT PLANS

Given the complexity of forest resources with many interacting bio processes, forest management plan is central to sustainably manage forests in balance and sustainment of economic, ecologic and social functions. Most of the Europe forests have forest management plans in different modalities. And, as new technological advancements emerge new opportunities become available for more comprehensive management plans. The recent approach is ecosystem based multipurpose integrated forest management plans in which many management classes for specified purposes are planned as interlinked modules. Dominated with coppice forests, however, Kosovo should focus on more simplified forest management plans for low public and private forests. The management planning process will be preceded with local stakeholder consultations which will facilitate participatory planning of forest resources. Kosovo should also develop and test integrated forest management plans in some certain pilot sites to pave the road for future forest management planning system.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.3: FOREST RESOURCES DATA IS UPDATED

National forest inventory is necessary for many reasons. Providing accurate information about the size, distribution, composition and condition of forests and their trend through the time, it helps policy makers in developing and monitoring sustainable management of forests. The national forest inventory is also an important information base for fulfilling international reporting obligations of Kosovo. The last national forestry inventory was done in 2012/2013 in Kosovo and it needs to be updated in 2022.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.4: FOREST LAND CADASTER IS ESTABLISHED

Many ownership conflicts and cadastral problems hamper the proper management of forest resources. They are also the hurdles in front of forestland consolidation processes. Clarifying the ownership related issues and delineation of forest borders depends on the efficiency of cadastral work in the current legal context. The PSP aims to reduce the land cadaster problems to a point that would not substantially affect the efforts towards sustainable forest management in the cycle of 2022-2030. The aim is to complete forest cadaster in the entire Kosovo.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.5: MAPPING OF FOREST FUNCTIONS

Forests have three main functions that are economic, ecologic and social. Management plans of forests are expected to identify the main functions of the planning units and prescribe appropriate silvicultural treatments for them. This is not an easy task for forest management crews working in traditional sampling methods. They must be provided with maps that shows the multitude layers of attributes associated with these functions. Biodiversity related information is of a particular importance. Key biodiversity areas, protected areas, buffer zones, ecologic corridors; potential non wood product zones, potential recreation areas, fire risk areas and many other attributes will help planners to design a comprehensive forest management plan to benefit from the economic, ecologic and social functions of forests in a sustainable way.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.6: FOREST AREA IS INCREASED

The rate of forest cover in Kosovo is 44,7% which is more than the world average (31%). However, forest area per people in Kosovo (0.28 ha) is below the world average (0.6 ha) and far below Europe

average (around 1.4 ha). Given the climatic and geographic conditions, there is potential to expand forest area in Kosovo and in ten-year period 3% increase is targeted.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.7: FOREST TREE SEED AND SEEDLING PRODUCTION IS INCREASED

Afforestation and reforestation activities highly depend on the availability of locally adapted seeds and seedlings. The nursery in Peja produces seedlings and there are 8 seed stands identified for seed collection. The overall output is very limited to meet the demand of programmed afforestation and reforestation. It is important to increase the production capacity by modernizing the nurseries and developing technical capacity to appropriately conduct the process from seed collection to sowing.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.8: FORESTS ARE IMPROVED THROUGH SILVICULTURE MEASURES

Substantial parts of Kosovo forests have been damaged because of uncontrolled and unsustainable practices. Limited technical and personal capacity is a barrier to restore the degraded forest landscapes. Moreover, as the concept of sustainable forest management is developing so do the silvicultural techniques. Modern forest silviculture is far beyond merely regenerating, thinning, rehabilitating, felling and planting to a point that involves many newly developed techniques. PSP should incorporate capacity development activities that would enable KFA to implement proper silviculture in forests.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: FOREST RESOURCES IS PROTECTED

Forest resources will be protected against biotic and abiotic factors, biodiversity will be conserved and protective functions of forests will be maintained.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1: ILLEGAL INTERVENTIONS IN FORESTS REDUCED

As underlined several times in this document, illegal interventions are the most concerning problems in Kosovo. Forest resources must be safeguarded to provide sustainable wood, non-wood products and services for the national wellbeing of the country. Hence, a program approach is needed to cope with this problem. Actions against illegal logging should not be confined within the law enforcement sphere; they must be complemented by rural development, poverty eradication, social forestry programs. Awareness building is also crucial part of the strategy that would minimize the adverse effects of illegal interventions. Particular attention will be given to illegal logging. The technical and institutional capacity of the forest protection organization will be enhanced and new forest surveillance technologies will be used.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2: FRAGMENTED FOREST LANDS ARE CONSOLIDATED

Forest land is highly fragmented in Kosovo. This is mainly because of small private forests. According to the data provided by the Kosovo National Association of Private Forest Owners (KNAPFO), there are 132000 private forest owners with an average size of 1.4 ha. Fragmentation at this scale makes it difficult to economically manage forests and many of them are left unattended. On the other hand, forestland consolidation is a complicated legal issue with unsatisfactory progress. It is necessary to review the existing legal frame associated to land consolidation and prepare a draft by-law to solve the issue. Such a draft should consider the ongoing studies with draft forest law which provides an opportunity to ease the problem.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.3: FOREST HEALTH IS MONITORED AND PROTECTED

Pest and diseases are common threat to forest resources. It is estimated that climate change will gradually worsen the situation. It was not possible to accurately identify the pest and disease sourced

damage to forests Kosovo. Therefore, it Is necessary to develop the capacity to monitor forest resources and suppress insect outbreaks and other health risks that could lead to loss of big amounts of economic value and threat forest health and vitality.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.4: BIODIVERSITY IS CONSERVED IN PRODUCTION FORESTS

Almost 70% of the terrestrial biodiversity exist in forests. Global effort to protect biodiversity only in protected areas is not an ultimate solution to the biodiversity loss. It is widely agreed that biodiversity should also be conserved in the production landscapes without sacrificing wood and non-wood production that are vital for national and local economies. Implementations such as reduced impact logging (RIL) and variable retention harvesting (VRH)should be introduced to Kosovo forests.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.5: FOREST FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES ARE TAKEN

Recent figures show that the annual damaged forest area from forest fires oscillates around 2.000 ha in Kosovo, thus, forest fire prevention activities must seriously be taken into consideration. Recent advancements in technology makes it possible to monitor forests and deploy early warning systems with affordable costs. Awareness building programs are also effective in prevention of forest fires. On the other hand, fire response capacity must be strengthened, communication and command system must be improved to effectively suppress fire breaks.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: FOREST RESOURCES ARE USED IN A SUSTAINABLE AND MULTI-PURPOSE WAY

Forests will be managed to provide sustainable wood and non-wood products to contribute to national socio-economy**.**

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.1: REGULAR LOGGING INCREASED

The demand for wood is increasing steadily. Particularly renewable energy sector and wood processing industry are developing in Kosovo. On the other hand, rural people uses wood for heating and cooking purposes. To meet this increasing demand, pre-commercial and commercial thinning should properly be done in untended coppice forests. The young forests in Kosovo are of particular importance in terms of the potential for renewable energy. Increase in wood production will slow down illegal logging and revitalize annual wood increment. Harvesting methods should be advanced and logging procedures in coppice forests must be simplified. Annual logging in production forests will not exceed 70% of their total annual increment.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.2: SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (SFM) CRITERIA AND INDICATORS ARE DEFINED AND IMPLEMENTED

Definition and implementation of criteria and indicators constitute a base to implement sustainable forest management with clear priorities and objectives by improving monitoring, reporting and assessment of key aspects in forestry. In an effort to integrate to the European forestry, Kosovo follows the principles and standards of Forest Europe process in which 6 criteria and associated 34 quantitative and 11 qualitative indicators were defined for Europe. Based on this regional SFM C&I, countries are expected to develop their own national set of criteria and indicators.

Kosovo will define nationally relevant and applicable criteria and indicators with a broadening stakeholder engagement to provide commonly agreed framework to monitor and evaluate the state and trend of forests and forestry. Definition and implementation of SFM C&I will guide forest sector reforms to harness the full potential of forests

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.3: NWFPS ARE USED SUSTAINABLY

Non-wood forest products are gaining importance in terms of value and they are crucial for the livelihood of the local communities. There is no wide spread inventory of non-wood forest products in Kosovo. Located in the cross of three eco zones, Kosovo forests are estimated to house rich variety of non-wood forest products. Inventory, collection, processing, storing and marketing of non-wood forest products of Kosovo is among prime strategic objectives.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.4: ECOTOURISM IS SUSTAINABLY DEVELOPED

With high recreational value, Kosovo forests provide opportunities for ecotourism which is one of the important aspects of social and economic functions of forests. Once wisely designed, ecotourism will increase the revenue from forest services through domestic and foreign visitors.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: CAPACITY IS DEVELOPED

Institutional and technical capacity of the forestry sector will be enhanced.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.1: FORMAL EDUCATION IN FORESTRY IS ADVANCED

Development of technical and institutional capacity is strictly related to the availability of youth educated on forestry. Among the highest youth population in Europe, Kosovo has an apparent advantage to benefit from the human source by reviewing and supporting the existing formal education system and providing opportunities for employment both in public service and in private sector.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.2: VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ARE ESTABLISHED

Vocational training is also important to build on the capacities of public service. Applied training, skill development and easy access to digital technologies will lead to more innovative practices that would enable forestry related institutions to cope with the problems effectively and improve the quality of work done.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.3: FORESTRY AND HUNTING ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS ARE STRENGTHENED

Smooth and efficient functioning of the forestry and hunting related institutions is a prime necessity to supervise, monitor and control forestry activities. The structure of the forestry organization, the roles and responsibilities of the municipalities and other forestry related public institutions must be reviewed, jurisdictional overlaps, gaps and weaknesses identified and necessary institutional strengthening measures be taken. For cross cutting issues, such as hunting, gender issues and ecotourism, necessary legal coordination and cooperation systems must be set up.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.4: PRIVATE SECTOR IS FINANCIALLY AND ADMINISTRATIVELY SUPPORTED

Strong and financially viable private sector will not only contribute to the national economy of Kosovo, but also trigger fast development of forestry sector. Private sector, in particular forest industry and forest owners, will be supported financially and administratively as well as with incentives to be able to more invest in green economy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: DIGITALIZATION AND IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

Forest data and information digitalized, improved transparence and stakeholders will actively involve in and contribute to the management of forests.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5.1: FOREST INFORMATION SYSTEM IS IN FUNCTION

Kosovo has an Electronic Governance Strategy, MAFRD and KFA are designing a forest information system to serve efficient and effective forest management planning, decision making processes, public participation and knowledge sharing. However, because of the lack of resources the forestry related modules of the system have not become operational. GIS based forest information system must be designed and furnished with tools that would help KFA and other stakeholders, including, scientific quarters, to have sound and timely data to be used in almost every aspect of sustainable forest management.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5.2: ADVANCING COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS IN FORESTRY

Weak communication and misinformation have resulted to misperceptions about forestry among societies and main sectoral institutions all over the world. The growing gap between perceptions and realities has impacted forest development in many countries. It is necessary to wisely communicate and truly inform the society and non-forest entities, in particular, to eliminate misperceptions and get their support to implement sustainable forest management. MAFRD has recently approved a communication strategy for the forestry sector annexed with an action plan. The action plan of the communication strategy will be considered for implementation.

5. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The government of Kosovo is the highest authority in supervising the implementation of the Policy and Strategy Paper on Forest Sector. The government will maintain and enhance the viability of the sector through providing a supportive regulatory and institutional framework, and ensure permanent financial mechanisms.

The Ministry responsible for Forestry is the leading institution of the implementation of PSP. The ministry, through its two forestry sub-units (the Department of Forestry and the Kosovo Forestry Agency), will implement, monitor and report the activities. The ministry and its forestry units will be in close cooperation with the line ministries, the Ministry responsible for Environment being of a particular importance, and their relevant institutions. Municipalities and the Forest Owners Association have substantial role in reaching the overall policy goal.

PSP was designed for ten tears (2022-2030) and its action plan was prepared for three years. Monitoring and assessment of the activities are planned to be at the end of each implementation period according to the actions plans (annually) and the results are expected to shape the action plan for the next implementation period.

Assessment of the activities and state and trends of forestry sector in Kosovo will be done by a national advisory board for sustainable forest management that will be established. The board will be composed of high level competent representatives of the stakeholders as listed in Chapter 4 of this document. Secretarial work will be handled by the Department of Forestry. The SFM National Advisory Board will review the reports of panel workshops in which the implementation of the PSP and the general trend of the state of the forest sector will be assessed in participatory way through SFM Criteria

and Indicators. The Board will approve and release a national annual SFM report for Kosovo. This report will also include recommendations for future arrangements including the update of the Policy and Strategy Paper on Forest Sector.

6. BUDGETARY IMPACT OF PSP IMPLEMENTATION

The financial planning for the implementation of Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Development 2022-2030 aims to ensure implementation of the general and specific objectives thereof and increase of the forestry sector contribution to the general economic, social, and environmental development.

The budgetary impact and the financial aspects of the implementation of the Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Development 2022-2030 were discussed during the work and consultations of the working group and subgroups and were determined based on the review and analysis of the following documents: Program of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo 2021-2025, Strategic and Operational Plan 2021-2025 of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Medium Term Expenditure Framework 2021-2024, and projects funded by donor organizations.

The largest share of the budget (about 90%) will be spent in projects aimed at resource rehabilitation, reduction of forest damage and degradation, advancement of management planning, including multifunctional forest management, afforestation, reforestation, silvicultural treatment of forests, creation of opportunities for providing education and training on forestry and human capacity building, private sector support, regulation of harvesting, processing and marketing of non-wood forest products (PPJD), ecotourism, hunting, etc.

The total budget for implementing PSP on Forestry Development 2022-2030 is estimated at 21,300,000 Euros, of which 13,360,000.00 Euros will be needed for the first three years. During this period, the allocation from the Budget of the Republic of Kosovo is estimated to reach 10, 125, 000.00 Euros, i.e., 8,425,000.00 Euros more than foreseen under the current MTEF (1,710,000.00 Euros).

The implementation of PSP on Forestry Development 2022-2030 will also be assisted by the donors who have traditionally supported Kosovo's forestry sector. These international organizations and donor countries, such as SIDA-Sweden, EU, FAO, and JICA, will continue implementing support projects, with a contribution of 3,235,000.00 Euros for the first three-year period.

Providing support to the private sector and private forest owners, entrepreneurs and processors of non-wood forest products remains a very important issue. This support can be provided by applying support measures (grants and subsidies) from EU funds (IPA and IPARD) as well as from state programs of the Republic of Kosovo.

ESTIMATED OVERALL COST OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PSP ON FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT 2022 – 2020

Strategic objective	Priority projects	Expected outcomes	Related institutions	Years	Cost in EUR
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE I **FOREST RESOURCES ARE ENHANCED**	Management planning for forest resources	Forest resources are managed with long-term, integrated, transparent and updated plans contributing to Kosovo's environmental, economic, and social development	KFA, MESPI, Municipalities, NAPFO, FI	2022-2030	9,500 000
	Sustainable use and treatment of new forest stands	Increased wood production through application of silviculture measures in accordance with timber demand			
	Forest health monitoring	Forest pest and disease risks identified, monitored, and reduced			
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE II **FOREST RESOURCES ARE PROTECTED**	Improved administration and consolidation of forest lands	Legal framework on administration, ownership, functions and criteria of forest land and forest utilization regulated	MAFRD, AKM MESPI, EMA	2022-2030	5,900,000
	Collection of seed and seedling material for afforestation of bare land and reforestation of	Forest area increased and quality forest stands established, nurseries produce seedlings of autochthonous seedlings			

	degraded areas and their maintenance	according to National Program recommendations			
	Establishment of forest fire prevention and protection system	Responsible institutions equipped with capacity and equipment for preventive measures and forest fire prevention and combating in the field			
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE III **FOREST RESOURCES ARE USED IN A SUSTAINABLE AND MULTI-PURPOSE WAY**	Timber legality	Forest management plans implemented for legal logging and capacity improved for preventing illegal logging and identifying functions and benefits from socio-economic and environmental aspects of forests	MAFRD, MESPI, NAPFO, APFOs, MIET, Municipalities,	2022-2030	1 900 000
	Regulation of non-wood forest product use	NWFP Inventory conducted, and capacity established to implement administrative instruction on use of these products			
	Landscape improvement and ecotourism development	Plans developed for improving the forest landscape and subsidizing ecotourism			
	Identification of criteria and indicators for multi-purpose and sustainable forest management	Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management implementation and monitoring approved			

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE IV **CAPACITY IS DEVELOPED**	Capacity building for forestry staff and digitization	Forestry staff attends regular refresh and digitization training and participates in regional and international initiatives	MAFRD, KFA, MoF, MEST	2022–2030	2,500 000
	Organization of vocational education and training on forestry	Training center organized to operate across Kosovo assists in improving forestry staff skills			
	Establishment and improvement of opportunities for forestry high education development/pursuance	Kosovo youth can enroll in forestry studies			
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE V **DIGITALIZATION AND COMMUNICATION ARE IMPROVED**	Implementation of communication and information action plan in the forestry sector	Public and stakeholders are aware on the role of forests and their environmental, economic, and social functions	MAFRD, KFA, NAPFO, APFOs, Municipalities,	2022–2025	1, 500 000
	Support to forest owner associations and environmental NGOs	Private forest owners are organized and represented, and stakeholders are actively involved in and contribute to forest management			
	Provision of useful and timely information to forestry sector entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs are informed and able to implement efficient environment-friendly operations			