

VOLUNTARY THEMATIC REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

OF EXPANDED PROGRAMME OF WORK ON FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material, which was used as a basis for the report.

The *Report on Implementation of expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity* was prepared at the Department of Forestry, the Ministry of the Environment, in collaboration and on a basis of information provided by the Forest Research Institute in Warsaw.

The following documents were used:

- The Act on Forests (1991 with later amendments);
- The National Forestry Policy (1997);
- The Act on Protection of Agricultural and Forest Lands (1995);
- The Nature Conservation Act (1991 with later amendments);
- The Environmental Protection Law Act (2001);
- The Act on Forest Reproductive Material (2001);
- The Hunting Law Act (1995 with later amendments);
- Regulation by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry, on Establishment of a List of Game Animals and the Hunting Period for Them (1996, revised in 2001);
- Regulations by the General Director on the Establishment of Promotional Forest Complexes (1994, 1999 and 2002);
- Regulations by the General Director of State Forests, No 11 (1995) and No 11a (1999) on ecological bases of forest management;
- Regulation by the General Director of State Forests establishing the Programme on Conservation of Nature and Cultural Values in Forest Districts (1996);
- Instruction for preparation of the Nature Protection Programme as an integrated part of the Forest Management Plan for each forest district (1996);
- Instruction of Forest Management Plan (1994);
- National Programme for the Augmentation of Forest Cover (1995, revised in 2002);
- National Programme for the Forest Gene Resources Protection and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees in Poland, in the period 1991 – 2010 (1993);
- Regulation by the General Director of State Forests Establishing the Programme for Nature and Culture Values Protection in Forest Areas (1996);
- Regulation by the General Director of the State Forests: No 65 (2002) on the framework guidelines on preparation of “Regional Operational Programs of the Forestry Policy as a base for elaboration of the National Forest Programme”;
- Regulation by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Nature Resources and Forestry on detailed rules of elaborating forest management plans, simplified forest management plans and forest inventories (1998);

- Regulation by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry on detailed rules of timber labelling, the designs of labelling devices and the guidelines for their usage, as well as the pattern of the document guaranteeing the legality of harvested timber (1999);
- Mountain Forest Watershed Management in Poland - a report prepared by the Ministry of the Environment and the Forest Research Institute. (2002);
- Forest Conditions in Poland in 2001. A report prepared by Forest Research Institute, Department of Forest Inventory and Forest Monitoring (2002);
- Evaluation of the Impact of the Forest Management Practices on Biological Biodiversity in Central Europe. (1999).

**VOLUNTARY REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPANDED PROGRAMME OF WORK ON
FOREST BIODIVERSITY**

Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity

Annex to Decision VI/22

1. Has your country identified priority goals, objectives and activities included in the expanded programme of work for implementation at the national level?	
a) no (please specify the reasons)	
b) yes (please provide a list of priorities identified)	X
Further comments on identification of priority goals, objectives and activities	
<p>The Polish priorities are included within the framework of the PROGRAMME ELEMENT 1. CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND BENEFIT-SHARING.</p> <p>Poland is especially interested in the fulfillment of provisions set by the GOAL 1 that is relating to the development of the ecosystem approach to the management of all types of forests. The Objective 1 (Development of practical methods, guidelines, indicators and strategies to apply the ecosystem approach adapted to regional differences to forests both inside and outside protected forest areas as well as both in managed and unmanaged forests) of the above mentioned Element 1 is very high on Polish priority list. However, the other priority goals and objectives are also the very important issues for the Polish forestry.</p>	
2. From the list of priorities, did some or all of them produce the expected impacts after their implementation (i.e. a success)?	
a) no (please specify the reasons)	
b) yes (please specify success stories)	X
Further comments on impacts of implementation of priority activities	
<p>The main rules of sustainable forest management, including provisions, relating to the forest biodiversity, were elaborated by the National Forestry Policy (approved by Polish Government in 1997). The above mentioned document goes in line with not only the expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity but also with the international agreements especially with the aims of Resolutions adopted on the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). The fulfillment of the Element 1 (Objective 1) would be very important from point of view of international agreements to which Poland is a Party.</p>	
3. Were there any challenges/impediments to the implementation of priority activities that could have negatively affected their chance of success?	
a) yes (please specify the activities and the main challenges/impediments)	
b) no	
Further comments on challenges/impediments to implementation of priority activities	
<p>One of the most important challenges for the Polish forestry is now further improvement of sustainable forest management that have been elaborated by the National Forestry Policy. The elaboration of additional documents such as Regional Operational Programmes of the National Forest Policy, that are being conducted now, as a result should meet the aims of the above mentioned Objective 1 of the expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity.</p>	

4. Is your country collaborating with other Governments and regional and international organizations and processes to implement regional or international activities in the expanded programme of work?	
a) no	
b) yes, limited collaboration (please provide details)	
c) yes, significant collaboration (please provide details)	X
Further comments on collaboration with other Governments and regional and international organizations and processes to implement regional or international activities in the expanded programme of work	
<p>The main direction of Polish activities concerning the co-operation on the expanded programme of work within the regional process is focused on a collaboration with the European Countries - Parties to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). The issues connected with the Ecosystem Approach and the Forest Biodiversity were covered by the Vienna Declaration and the Vienna Conference Resolution no. 4 "Conserving and Enhancing Forest Biodiversity".</p> <p>Poland will have been the president of the MCPFE since 2004.</p> <p>Poland, as a member of General Co-ordinating Committee of the MCPFE, is one of the four countries sharing the MCPFE annual budget. The budget is spent, <i>inter alia</i>, on Expert Level Meetings held twice a year, as well as other MCPFE activities. Several Central and Eastern European Countries receive financial aid to allow them to participate in the above mentioned meetings.</p> <p>The preservation of durability of forests is maintained particularly through the development of international co-operation, including co-operation agreements, participation in regional (European) and global conferences, participation in works of various organisations, such as OECD, ECE UN, the Timber Committee of the UNECE, the European Forestry Commission of FAO, and the International Union of the Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), European Forest Institute and the European Forester's Union.</p>	

Programme Element 1: Conservation, Sustainable Use and Benefit-sharing

5. Has your country developed practical methods, guidelines and/or indicators to apply the ecosystem approach in relation to sustainable forest management?	
a) no (please specify the reasons)	
b) relevant methods, guidelines and indicators under development	
c) some methods, guidelines and indicators developed (please provide details)	
d) a comprehensive set of methods, guidelines and indicators developed (please provide details)	X
Further comments on the practical methods, guidelines and indicators to apply the ecosystem approach in relation to sustainable forest management	

The guidelines connected with the ecosystem approach in relation to sustainable forest management (SFM) can be found within the framework provisions of the following documents: The Act on Forests (1991 with the later amendments) and the National Forestry Policy (NFP, 1997).

The Act on Forests contains many provisions that ensure sustainable forest management and maintenance of biological diversity of forests and takes account of: conservation of forests - their natural fragments, gene resources and landscape and climate; protection of forests and their sustainable use; conservation of biological diversity; protection against wild fires; conservation of protective forests (water-protecting, soil-protecting); protection of forests damaged by the industry; conservation of midland dunes, wildlife refuges, endangered species, plots of scientific importance and areas of special management. NFP settles obligations for forest management plan and inserts the programme of nature protection into the forest management plan. Its integral part forbids certain harmful activities in forests. Depending on their function, protective forests of different kind are subject to modified management procedures (e.g.: clear-cutting is limited, felling age is raised, species composition is adjusted to better meet the allotted task, recreational management is engaged, etc.).

The National Forestry Policy (1997) extends the meaning of nature conservation beyond the conservation itself, and with reference to all the forests. The goals of special protection of nature in forests are built into the concept of sustainable, balanced, and multifunctional forest economy, for example implementing forest management regulating rules into practice favours the fulfilment of nature conservation requirements.

Apart from the Act on Forests and the National Forestry Policy, certain guidelines on conservation of forest nature can be found in the following documents: National Programme of Forest Gene Resources Conservation and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees in Poland, in period 1991 - 2010 (1993), Decision No 23 by the Minister of the Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry concerning the protection of Bialowieza Primeval Forests (1994), Regulations by the General Director of State Forests on Establishment of Promotional Forest Complexes (1994, 1999 and 2002), National Programme of Augmentation of Forest Cover (1995, revised in 2002), Regulations of the General Director of State Forests: No 11 (1995) and No 11a (1999) on Forest Management Practice on Ecological Bases, Regulation of the General Director of State Forests Establishing the Programme for Nature and Culture Values Protection in Forest Areas (1996), Complex Policy of Forest Resources Protection (1994), Instruction for the preparation of the Nature Protection Programme for forest district as an integrated part of the Forest Management Plan for each forest district (1996) the Instruction of Forest Management (1994).

The Polish forestry legislation respects all documents defining the global forestry policy framework, which includes: Forestry Principles adopted in Rio de Janeiro (1992), Agenda 21 (1992), IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, the Strasbourg Resolutions S1-6, the Helsinki Resolutions H 1-4 and the Resolutions L 1-2 adopted at the 3rd Ministerial Conference in Lisbon (1998). In 1996, amendments of several technical-economic documents, such as: Principles of Forest Management, Principles of Silviculture and Instruction of Forest Protection, were implemented.

Poland has recently started the implementation of the V4 Resolution adopted at 4th Ministerial Conference in Vienna (2003) and the Improved Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management.

The forestry practices pursued in Poland are in line with a global trend, set out in the Forestry Principles, adopted by 170 countries during the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. The European Commission expressed an opinion in a report on the bilateral review of law within the Agriculture chapter of accession negotiations that Polish legislation regarding forestry is also congruent with EU policy on forests.

6. Has your country taken any measures to prevent the introduction of invasive alien species that threaten ecosystems, and mitigate their negative impacts on forest biodiversity in accordance with international law?	
a) no	
b) relevant measures under development	
c) yes, some measures taken (please outline the measures)	X
d) yes, comprehensive measures taken (please outline the measures)	
Further comments on the measures taken	
<p>According to the Nature Conservation Act of September (1991 with later amendments), the management of natural resources and components of nature is aimed at preservation of optimum numbers of domestic wild-living animals and plants, and protection of their genetic diversity as much as possible. At the same time, introducing into free nature and relocating animals and plants that are of foreign origin into domestic flora and fauna without the consent of the Minister of the Environment is prohibited. Due to the serious threat to the domestic biodiversity caused by alien invasive species, certain amendments were introduced to the Hunting Law Act (1995, revised in 2002) and to the Regulation on Establishment of a List of Game Animals and the Hunting Period for Them (1996, revised in 2001), for example hunting period for the American mink (<i>Mustela vison</i>) and the racoon dog (<i>Nyctereutes procynoides</i>) was extended. The introduction of invasive alien species that threaten our ecosystems is a very important issue, but so far these species have not caused serious damage to Polish nature.</p>	
7. Has your country taken any measures to mitigate the impact of pollution on forest biodiversity?	
a) no	
b) under consideration	
c) relevant measures under development	
d) yes, some measures taken (please provide details)	X
e) yes, comprehensive measures taken (please provide details)	
Further comments on the measures taken to mitigate the impact of pollution on forest biodiversity	

One of the legal measures taken to mitigate the impact of pollution is maximum allowable amount of air polluting substances established within the Regulation by the Minister of the Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry (1998).

Permanent monitoring of the negative impacts of pollution on forest biodiversity is another method connected to the alleviation of the harmful influence of pollution on forests. This monitoring is conducted on the permanent observation plots (POP) of I and II level. There are currently 433 of I level POPs and 148 of II level POPs. Both first and second level POPs are subject of research programmes. The methodology of this research programme is recommended by the ICP-Forests (International Co-operative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests) with exclusion to assessment of biotic elements of forest ecosystems. The following measurements and observations have been carried out: monitoring of damage to stand (assessment of defoliation and discolouration of the assimilatory apparatus), monitoring of contamination with chemical elements, such as N, P, K, Pb in the assimilatory apparatus (chemical analyses of foliage samples), monitoring of health of pine seeds, monitoring of pollutant deposition (determination of concentrations of SO₂ and NO₂), estimation of population densities of leaf-eating insects in the coniferous stands, monitoring of phytophagous fungi.

The results of the above mentioned monitoring related to, *inter alia*, crown conditions, soil inventory, increment deposition, ground vegetation have showed a slight improvement of the level of health of forest stands. In Poland the results of analyses of composition of air pollutants over forest areas confirm a decreasing trend in concentration of SO₂ and NO₂, however, the rate for the second one is slower what may be related to an increase in road transport.

8. Has your country taken any measures to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on forest biodiversity?

a) no

b) relevant research and monitoring programmes under development

c) some research and monitoring activities being undertaken but no measures taken

X

d) yes, some measures taken (please outline the measures)

e) yes, comprehensive measures taken (please outline the measures)

Further comments on the measures taken to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on forest biodiversity

At the present time, absorption in Poland's forests compensates for c. 6% of national emissions of carbon dioxide. The Polish situation is thus in need of improving, *inter alia*, through: an increase of the area of forests by planting formerly agricultural land, a steady increase in a made of forest timber until this is in line with the permissible annual increment, a prolongation of a lifespan of wood products and encouragement of recycling, a reduction in emissions via the use of timber in place of fossil fuels, and an increase in carbon-retaining properties of soils.

The forest monitoring programme was introduced in 1989; however, the initial scope was greatly extended in 1995. During the period 1989 - 1994 significant changes in the level of threat to forests ecosystems posed by environmental factors was observed. A comprehensive increase in the number of devices limiting emission of gases and dusts, as well as the introduction of modern technologies into the industry resulted in improvement of the quality of atmosphere over Poland. Emission of gaseous pollutants, particularly sulphur dioxide, was decreased by ca. 50% and the level of dust emission was significantly lowered. A lesser decrease was observed in emission of nitrous dioxides. All these favourable changes contributed to improving the health status of forests in Poland. The decrease of the level of air pollution within forest areas, implementation of afforestation programmes and programmes on the increase of forest biological diversity and the area of protected forests create a realistic basis for gradual improvement of forest condition, also in the future. In case of deciduous forests, the improvement is most noticeable in birch and beech stands, and least noticeable in oak woods. In the nearest future, further improvement of health of the Polish forests can be expected.

The decline of threat posed by atmospheric pollutants enabled introducing into the forest monitoring programme new components aimed at relations between the forest management and environment and nature protection, namely assessment of carbon sequestration in forest ecosystems (as related to the Kyoto Protocol).

Having taken into account the role of forest in the mitigation of climate change, the process of elaboration of the National Forest Programme in Poland has just been launched by issuing in 2002 the Regulation No 65 by the General Director of the State Forests. These Regulations gave the framework guidelines for preparation of "Regional Operational Programmes of the Forestry Policy as a base for elaboration of the National Forest Programme".

9. Has your country taken any measures to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of forest fires and fire suppression (where fire is a natural disturbance agent)?

a) no	
b) relevant measures being considered	
c) relevant measures under development	
d) yes, some measures undertaken (please specify)	X
e) yes, many measures being undertaken (please specify)	

Further comments on the measures to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of forest fires and fire suppression

Forests in Poland are strongly endangered by fires, especially in the southern and western parts of the country. Fire hazard is created due to a combination of several phenomena, such as frequent periods without precipitation, air pollution, illegal meadow burning and intensive vehicle and tourist traffic.

The maintenance of biological diversity and sustainable forests through the protection against wild fires is ensured by the provisions of the Act on Forests (1991). According to the provisions of this Act, the forest owners are obliged to afforestation of damaged by fires areas within 5 years.

The Environmental Protection Law Act (2001), which regulates practically all issues related to environmental protection, demands i.e. protection of forests and stands against pollution and fire.

The above mentioned matters are also regulated by the Act on Fire Protection by the Minister of Interior and Administration (1991) and the Regulation by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry on the Detailed Rules of Forest Protection against Fire (1999). According to the provisions of the above mentioned documents the protection against fire relates to the forest category and the level of fire threat. The permanent forest monitoring is conducted on the areas of the highest fire threat.

Following the provisions of the Regulation by Minister of Interior and Administration on the Protection against Fire of Buildings, Communal Objects and Areas (1992 with later amendments) and the Regulation by the Minister of the Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry on Detailed Rules of Forest Protection against Fire (1999 with later amendments), as well as the inner Instruction on the protection of forests against fires, all territory of Poland was divided into 3 main categories of fire risk (high, medium, low) relating to the habitat classes the classes of stand age, the number of fires within the last 10 years, industrial pollution, tourist traffic and climatic conditions.

Moreover, the State Forests recently installed a new system for early detection of fires, and reached a high level of organisational efficiency and technical outfitting of the fire prevention services, equipped with modern ground and air fire-fighting equipment.

The forest fire risk has increased, for instance in 2002 more than 10,000 fires occurred in Polish forests, almost two and a half times more than in the previous year.

10. Is your country mitigating effects of the loss of natural disturbances necessary to maintain biodiversity in regions where these no longer occur?

a) no	
b) monitoring and assessment of effects ongoing	
c) potential measures identified	
d) yes, some adopted and being implemented (please provide details)	X
e) yes, comprehensive measures adopted and being implemented (please provide further details)	
Further comments on measures adopted to mitigate effects of the loss of natural disturbances necessary to maintain biodiversity in regions where these no longer occur	

There is a strong legal basis in Poland for preventing deforestation, reflected by the actions so as to increase forest area and preserve its continuity and biological diversity.

According to the Act on Forests (1991), the main principles used in running forest management in Poland are: general protection of forests, sustainable maintenance of forests, continuity of forest use and enlargement of forest resources. In accordance with these principles, the State Forests and forest owners are obliged to ensure the continuity of forest use that includes an obligation for reintroduction of forest stands within 2 years after stand removal and within 5 years in case of damages caused by fires and/or other natural disasters.

Moreover, in accordance with the anticipated effects of the implementation of the National Policy on Forests (1997), a comprehensive protection of forest resources should ensure an increase of Polish forest cover up to 30 % by 2020.

Regardless of works related to the protection of existing forest ecosystems, the actions have been taken in order to increase the forest area. The concept of increasing the forest and tree cover, with a preference being afforded to the environment-creating role of forests, is a basic tenet of the National Programme for the Augmentation of Forest Cover, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1995. The Programme provides an increase in the forest cover from the present 28.5% to 30% in the year 2020 and 33% in the year 2050, anticipating mobilisation of economic mechanisms that will stimulate the forest based use of land of marginal significance to agriculture, along with defining the spatial priorities reflecting the role of forests in shaping of the environment.

According to the provisions of the Act on Protection of Agricultural and Forest Lands (1995) the protection of forest lands is based "upon (...) limiting their assignation for non-forest or non-agricultural purposes, (...) prevention of processes of degradation or devastation of forest lands due to non-forest activity, (...) restoring of value of lands that were used for non-forest purposes and (...) improvement of their stability".

The Environmental Protection Law Act (2001) regulates practically all issues related to the environmental protection. The demands such as "preservation of valuable ecosystems, biological diversity and natural balance (...), prevention and limitation of negative impacts that may influence negatively a state of plants and animals, protection of forests and stands against pollution and fire (...) and afforestation" are required due to natural needs.

A major influence on improving the habitat and stand quality will be exerted by introducing into 40-60 year-old pine stands broad-leaved understorey that will consist mainly of a single species. In addition, stand conversion measures, for instance an adjustment of the species composition to new ecological conditions reflecting pollution from the industry or transport, has been introduced. Also, agro-technical work has been carried out and supplementary drainage was installed throughout stands.

11. Is your country preventing and mitigating losses of forest biodiversity due to fragmentation and conversion to other land uses?

a) no

b) potential measures identified

c) yes, some measures undertaken

b) yes, comprehensive measures undertaken

X

12. Is your country restoring forest biological diversity in degraded secondary forests and in forests established on former forestlands and other landscapes?

a) no

b) potential measures identified

c) yes, some measures implemented in some areas (please provide details)

X

d) yes, comprehensive measures implemented in major areas (please provide details)	
Further comments on the measures to restore forest biological diversity in degraded secondary forests and in forests established on former forestlands and other landscapes	
<p>According to the Act on Protection of Agricultural and Forest Lands of February 2nd, 1995, the protection of forest lands is based, "upon (...) limiting their assignation for non-forest or non-agricultural purposes, (...) prevention of processes of degradation or devastation of forest lands due to non-forest activity, (...) restoring of value of lands that were used for non-forest purposes and (...) improvement of their stability."</p> <p>The active forms of <i>in situ</i> protection are based on ecosystem re-naturalisation programmes and the restitution of endangered and threatened species. The restoration of forest biological diversity in forests established on former industrial lands is included in the framework of special programmes on management of former industrial lands, such as hard coal field in Upper Silesia, copper fields in the Lower Silesia, hard coal mines in the Upper Silesia, brown coal fields near Bełchatów, Turoszów, Konin, sulphur fields in Tarnobrzeg and others.</p> <p>The preservation of the persistence of degraded secondary forests and forests established on former forest lands and other landscapes is maintained particularly through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the stand reconstruction in line with the principle of adjusting the species composition of stands to the habitat conditions; - the implementation of the programme for small-scale retention of water in forests (limiting in deterioration in water relations, recognised as one of the factors determining the persistence of forests); - combating of the threat of fire; - propagation of the forest protection concept in the society, i.e. through organisation of forest education centres, publication of informational and promotional materials, co-operation with schools and local authorities, etc. 	
13. Is your country promoting forest management practices that further the conservation of endemic and threatened species?	
a) no	
b) relevant forest management practices under development	X
c) yes, some practices adopted and promoted (please provide details)	
d) yes, some practices being implemented (please provide details)	
Further comments on the forest management practices that further the conservation of endemic and threatened species	

The Forest Act of 1991, revised in 1997, contains many provisions ensuring sustainable forest management and maintenance of biological diversity of forest, namely protection of most valuable forest ecosystems and flora and fauna threatened components through a special forest management, taking into account the highest conservation regulations concerning the wildlife refuges and endangered species.

The significant role in the process of conservation of endemic and threatened species is played by the Programme of Forest Genetic Resources Conservation and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees in Poland for Years 1991 - 2010. The above-mentioned programme enables the following activities:

- elaboration and implementation of regional programmes of genetic resources conservation,
- extension of activities towards the protection of rare and endangered tree and shrub species, wild fruit trees, relict plant species and restitution of *Pinus cembra* L. in the Karpaty Mountains and *Abies alba* Mill. in the Western Sudety mountains,
- improvement of forest land division for the origins of seeds and seedlings.

The active forms of *in situ* protection are based on ecosystem re-naturalisation programmes and the restitution of endangered and threatened species.

Another form of the conservation of endemic and threatened species is the research on the *ex situ* protection of forest genetic resources (cryogenic methods, embryogenesis and tissue cultures). Such activities have been conducted the Forest Research Institute at Warsaw and the Forest Gene Bank at Kostrzyca. The above mentioned activities include also an establishment of the clone archive of endangered species.

14. Is your country ensuring adequate and effective protected forest area networks?

a) no

b) networks of protected areas being planned

c) some protected areas established but networks not in place

X

d) networks of protected areas taking shape

e) major networks of protected areas established

15. Is your country promoting sustainable use of forest resources to enhance the conservation of forest biological diversity?

a) no

b) relevant policy and programme under development

c) yes, some policies and programmes in place (please provide details)

d) yes, comprehensive policies and programmes in place (please provide details)

X

Further comments on the policies and programmes for promoting sustainable use of forest resources to enhance the conservation of forest biodiversity

The programmes and policies for promoting the sustainable use of forest resources to enhance the conservation of forest biodiversity are listed in point No 5.

The Act on Forests, approved in the year 1991 (before conferences in Rio de Janeiro and Helsinki) transformed the value of forests by adding social functions and a task of environmental creation achieved an equal position with production functions. The development of forestry in accordance with its regulations is the warranty of preservation of extensive biodiversity of forest areas. The new forest policy together with the amended forest law, which favours ecological model of forest management, assures better protection of forest biodiversity. Applied system regulating the size of allowable harvest does not hinder the use of mechanisms leading towards conservation of biological diversity. Full compliance with provisions of the Act on Forests is undoubtedly a great challenge for the forestry sector, since it assumes:

- preservation of forests and their beneficial influence on the environment,
- protection of forests, in particular natural forests
- protection of soils and land facing particular threats,
- production of wood and other forest products.

The preservation of persistence of forests, referred to the above, is particularly maintained through:

- diagnosing of conditions of forests,
- monitoring of ongoing changes and threats posed by biotic, non-biotic and anthropogenic factors,
- devising and implementing of far reaching forestry programmes (including forest management plans for programmes of seed production, stand reconstruction and conservation of nature),
- designation and protection of forests and mid-forests ecosystems of particular value due to their biodiversity,
- pursuit of stand reconstruction in line with the principle of adjusting the species composition of stands to the habitat conditions,
- implementation of the programme for small-scale retention of water in forests (limiting of deterioration in water relations, recognised as one of the factors determining the persistence of forests),
- combating of the threat of fire.

The above mentioned list of tasks includes also propagating the idea of forest protection in the society through the organisation of forest education centres, publication of promotional materials, co-operation with schools and local authorities, etc., which plays a significant role in the process of preservation of forests. A relatively big area covered by reserves, protective forests and landscape parks, where certain limitations occur referring to the utilisation of these areas can guarantee conservation of biological diversity in some forests.

16. Is your country preventing losses caused by unsustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest resources?

a) no	
b) potential measures identified	
c) some measures undertaken (please provide details)	X
d) comprehensive measures undertaken (please provide details)	

Further comments on the measures to prevent losses caused by unsustainable harvesting of timber and non-timbering forest resources

Poland maintains 8.9 million ha forests that are 28.5% of the country total area (2002). Polish forestry generates 0.4% of gross value added. Public forests account for 83%, with the State Forests National Forest Holding owning almost 79% of the forest land.

There is a provision in the Act on forests (1991 with later amendments) stating, that forest management is to be performed in accordance with the forest management plan, considering targets, which include timber production (based on rational management), as well as the utilisation of non-wood raw material and products. The issues connected with the sustainable utilisation of forests are stated in the Regulation by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Nature Resources and Forestry on Detailed Rules of Elaborating Forest Management Plans, Simplified Forest Management Plans and Forest Inventories(1998). The Act on Forest and the Regulation obligate forest owners to the rational utilisation of forest, the way that can permanently ensure optimal compliance with all forest functions, by: timber harvesting in amounts not exceeding the forest productive abilities and harvesting of non-wood raw materials and products in the way securing possibilities of their biological regeneration and protection of the ground cover, as well. Timber harvested is marked, and if it is removed from forests not owned by the State Treasury, there must be a certificate of legal harvesting issued.

In addition, the issues connected to sustainable harvesting are regulated by the Regulation by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry on Detailed Rules of Timber Labelling, Patterns of the Designs of Labelling Devices and the Guidelines for Their Usage, as well as the Pattern of the Document Guaranteeing the Legality of Harvested Timber (1999).

According to the provisions of the Act on Forests (1991), the collection of forest fruits from herbaceous cover is allowed in the state owned forests, both for own needs and for a commercial goal, but the collection for commercial purposes requires a contract with a forest district. Chapter 5, Section 30 in the Act defines activities that are prohibited in forests, e.g.: destructing trees, shrubs and other plants, gathering or disturbing litter and damaging mushrooms.

One of undertaken measures to prevent unsustainable harvesting of timber is introducing of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate.

In Poland, 6.7 million ha of forests are subject to certification, accounting for 76% of the total forest area. Sixteen out of seventeen Regional Directorates of State Forests have already been granted the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate. It is expected that by the end of 2003 all wood coming from the "State Forests" National Forest Holding will be certified. This will guarantee that materials come from legal sources and from well managed forests. Approximately 130 companies have also been granted the Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate. Producers of small wooden garden products and producers of sawmilling products are the majority (34% and 22%, respectively) among the CoC certified makers. At the same time, preliminary work has been undertaken to implement the Pan-European Forest Certification (PEFC) programme.

Illegal logging is still an important issue in Poland, in spite of the requirement to mark wood and to certify the legality of the sources of wood coming from forests that are not property of the Treasury. The Forest Guard that co-operates with the police forces, Fishing Guard, Nature Protection, and other services are responsible for preventing theft and other illegal activities in forests. The Forest Guard are authorised to instigate investigations, track down perpetrators and monitor illegal felling in privately owned forests (i.e.: felling that violates the current simplified forest management plan). On the strength of the Forest Act, Forest Guard officers are also authorised to inspect wood shipments carried on public roads and wood processing plants. According to the provisions of the Act on Forests, Forest Guard officers are also authorised to inspect wood shipments carried on public roads and wood processing plants.

17. Is your country taking any measure to enable indigenous and local communities to develop and implement adaptive community-management systems to conserve and sustainably use forest biological diversity?	
a) no	
b) not applicable	X
c) relevant policy and programme under development	
d) yes, some policies and programmes in place (please specify)	
Further comments on the policies and programmes to enable indigenous and local communities to develop and implement adaptive community-management systems to conserve and sustainably use forest biological diversity	
<p>There is no issue concerning indigenous people in Poland. However, the land tenure and property rights are fully respected. Thus, according to a new forest law, each forest owner is obliged above all to manage forest strictly following principal rules, that are sustainability, common forest protection and enlargement of forest resources. The law accepts and respects the ownership rights of owners. Moreover, according to the aims and priorities of the National Policy on Forests, actions enhancing the functions of forests, especially public forests, will be directed towards social functions, i.e.: through integration of the aims of forestry with those of the sustainable development of society on the local, regional and national levels, as well as a closer co-operation with local communities in the development of local models for sustainable development that take into the account the state of forest resources and their functions. More often the regional societies become spokesmen of the protection of cultural values and look for the solutions for the regional protection.</p>	
18. Has your country developed effective and equitable information systems and strategies and promoted implementation of those strategies for <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic diversity?	
a) no	
b) relevant information system and strategy under development	
c) relevant information system in place	
d) relevant strategies in place (please provide details)	X
e) relevant information system and strategies in place (please provide details)	
Further comments on the strategies for <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic diversity	

The Programme of forest gene resources conservation and selective breeding of forest trees in Poland, in period 1991 - 2010 (1993) defines the following goals and tasks:

- conservation of forest genetic resources, which are to serve preservation of ecological continuity, especially forest sustainability, and to enable restitution of ecological process continuity and to enable restitution in forests on depreciated or destroyed areas,
- improvement of seed base to assure a stable supply of reproductive material satisfying quality requirements,
- forest tree selection to assure an increase of forest production and to improve its quality taking into consideration plasticity and resistance of trees to biotic threats.

According to the provisions of the above mentioned programme, the State Forests seed base and a system of 21 seed extraction plants, 44 regional seed stores, 7 seed testing stations and 4 seed quality monitoring stations fulfil the needs of both the State Forests and private owned forests, in terms of both the quality and native origin of material for planting. A particular place in the strategy for the protection of genetic resources is taken by forest gene banks (e.g. the Kostrzyca Gene Bank). Their task is an active protection of Polish genetic resources of currently threatened species of trees, shrubs and the forest floor plants. The Forest Gene Bank in Kostrzyca also produces seedlings of native origin trees. It also maintains an arboretum and container a nursery.

The research on *ex situ* protection of forest genetic resources (cryogenic methods, embryogenesis and tissue cultures) was undertaken by the Forestry Research Institute in Warsaw. The above mentioned methods have been developed and implemented by the Forest Gene Bank in Kostrzyca. On basis of stocktaking of phenotypes of the main forest tree species and genotypes of their seeds, Poland was divided into specific regions and the rules of trade of forest reproductive material were established. The Act on Forest Reproductive Material (2001), which implements the resolutions of the European Union Directive on trade of reproductive material into the Polish legislation, will have entered into the force after Poland will become the European Union Member. The other form of *ex situ* conservation of endangered species is an establishment of the clone archive.

The significant form of *in situ* protection is the utilisation of forest resources itself, which is based on sustainable forest management.

The matters connected with the in situ protection that have the character of ecosystems re-naturalisation was mentioned in the point no 12. of this Report.

19. Is your country promoting the fair and equitable sharing of benefits resulting from the utilization of forest genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge?

a) no	x
b) relevant policies and programmes under development	
c) some policies and programmes in place (please specify)	
d) comprehensive policies and programmes in place (please specify)	

Further comments on the policies and programmes for promoting the fair and equitable sharing of benefits resulting from the utilization of forest genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge

The issue of traditional knowledge associated with the utilisation of forest genetic resources has not been debated so far. However, each forest owner is obliged to manage forests strictly following the principal rules of preservation presently existing biodiversity (at the genetic, species, ecosystem and landscape levels), the future enrichment, utilisation of adaptable abilities of forest nature in case of new threats.

The basic assumption underpinning the utilisation of forests as renewable sources of raw timber is harvesting of timber at the levels set in forest management plans that accord with cultivation and protective needs of stands and are in line with the principles regarding the permanence of forests and the enlargement of their resources.

If your country wishes to provide additional information on implementation of this programme element, please do this in the following space.

In April 1997, the Polish Government adopted the National Policy on Forests - the document, which included the aims and trends of development of forestry in the XXI Century. According to this document the forest law has to respect the strategy of sustainable development and the importance of ecological, economic and social functions of forests. The methods of forest management must stay in harmony with ecological functions of forests and take into account their economic and social conditions. The main idea behind the new forest policy is that the subjects of the policy are forests under all forms of ownership. Other subjects of this policy are the aims and the principles of forest management and the links between forestry, society and other divisions of the national economy. Consequently, according to a new forest law, each forest owner is obliged to manage forest strictly following principal rules, that are: forest sustainability, common protection and the enlargement of forest resources. The law accepts and respects the ownership. According to the National Policy on Forests, safeguarding of the permanence of forests along with their versatile role, will be achieved by:

- increasing the country forest resources,
- improving the state of forest resources and providing them with comprehensive protection,
- reorienting forest management away from the previous domination of a raw-material model towards a pro-ecological and economically balanced model of versatile forest management. Current activities of the Ministry of the Environment concentrate on supplementing the National Policy on Forest by Regional Operational Programmes.

Programme Element 2: Institutional and Socio-economic Enabling Environment

20. Is your country improving the understanding of the various causes of forest biodiversity losses?	
a) no	
b) a limited analysis being undertaken	
c) a thorough analysis being undertaken	
d) yes, some analyses completed and results available (please outline some findings from these analyses)	X
e) yes, comprehensive analysis completed and results available (please provide some findings from these analyses)	
Further comments on the analysis of the various causes of forest biodiversity losses	

Polish forests are some of European most endangered stands. This state reflects constant and simultaneous impacts of the number of factors (abiotic, biotic and anthropogenic) that give rise to unfavourable phenomena and changes in biodiversity and the health state of trees. Three main factors are responsible for the present condition of forests in Poland, especially those situated in the Polish mountains: air pollution, which causes an increased acidification of soils, anomalous weather conditions that result in floods, soil erosion and landslides and pest outbreaks, and the consequences of silviculture procedures in the past In general, the main threat to the forests are anthropogenic changes in the environment, including:

- air pollution with gasses and particles,
- soil and water pollution,
- decreasing of the level of ground water,
- excessive fragmentation of forest areas,
- land use change related to mining,
- intensified penetration of forests by people, pollution and cluttering of forest areas,
- schematic forest management, oriented towards obtaining raw materials (including the substitution of mixed and broadleaved forest being natural climax communities of he Central European lowlands by high-production coniferous monocultures in the past),
- fires (the most frequent causes of fires are: arson, lack of care, and/or an expansion of fire from non-forested areas).

21. Has your country integrated biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into forest and other sector policies and programmes?

a) no	
b) under consideration	
c) yes, integrated into policies and programmes in some sectors (please provide details)	X
d) yes, integrated into policies and programmes in major sectors (please provide details)	

Further comments on the integration of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into forest and other sector policies and programmes

The Regulation No 65 by the General Director of the State Forests (2002) that has just launched the National Forest Programme (NFP) in Poland provides framework guidelines on preparation "Regional Operational Programmes of the Forestry Policy as a base for elaboration of the National Forest Programme". This Regulation also defines the main actors of the process and points out the regional forest authorities responsible for providing the platform for work. It should be mentioned here that the present structure of the State Forest Administration is an advantage in promoting and facilitating the bottom-up approach in this regard. The bottom-up approach enables a broad participation of stakeholders and it aims at cross-sectoral harmonization of forest economy with other sectors, in particular, with agriculture, energy and transport industries, as well as environmental protection, national spatial policy and programming of a development throughout rural areas. The NFP will define a role of forest in the climate change, as well as principles of using forest resources. NFP will also establish links to the main Governmental programmes and strategies launched recently, such as: the National Programme for the Augmentation of Forest Cover (1995 revised in 2002), the National Programme for the Forest Gene Resources Protection and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees in Poland in the period 1991 - 2010 (1993), Regulation by the General Director of State Forests Establishing the Programme for Nature and Culture Values Protection in Forest Areas (1996).

The Ministry of the Environment co-operates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, within the framework of the National Programme for Augmentation of the Forest Cover (1995) and the Act on Protection of Agricultural and Forest Lands (1995) and the Act on the Designation of Rural Lands to Afforestation (2001). There is also a possibility of afforestation of lands formerly owned by the army, i.e. military training grounds.

As it was mentioned in point No 10 of this Report, lands of marginal significance for agriculture can be a subject of afforestation following the goals determined in the National Programme for Augmentation of the Forest Cover (1995).

Next to the afforestation of post agricultural lands, another very important priority in the National Programme for the Augmentation of Forest Cover (1995) is introducing within private forests management practices based on ecological bases.

According to the provisions of the above-mentioned official documents, the marginal abandoned lands may be afforested only in line with the principle of adjusting the species composition of stands to the habitat.

22. Has your country developed good governance practices, reviewed and revised and implemented forest and forest-related laws, tenure and planning systems, to provide a sound basis for conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity?

a) no

b) review under way

c) review and revision completed

d) some good governance practices and related laws developed and implemented (please provide details)

X

e) a comprehensive set of practices and laws developed and implemented (please provide details)

Further comments on the practices and laws developed and implemented to provide a sound basis for conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity

In Poland, the National Forest Programme (NFP) plays a significant role in the process of preparation of the law that can provide a sound basis for conservation and the sustainable use of forest biodiversity. NFP has just been launched by issuing the Regulation No 65 by the General Director of the State Forests (2002). The Regulation defines the main actors of the process and points out the regional forest authorities responsible for providing the platform for the work. It also establishes links to the main governmental programmes and strategies launched recently, such as the National Programme for the Augmentation of Forest Cover (1995 revised in 2002), the National Programme for the Forest Gene Resources Protection and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees for the period 1991 - 2010 (1993) and the Programme for Nature and Culture Values Protection in Forest Areas (1996).

The objectives such as promoting pro-ecological, multifunctional and sustainable forestry and shaping the public environmental awareness together with creating the proper attitude toward forests and forestry are attained in Promotional Forests Complexes on educational trails and at ecological information points.

23. Is your country promoting forest law enforcement and addressing related trade?

a) no	
b) review under way	
c) potential measures identified	
d) yes, some measures in place to strengthen law enforcement and address related trade	x
e) yes, comprehensive measures in place to strengthen law enforcement and address related trade	

24. Is your country mitigating the economic failures and distortions that lead to decisions that result in loss of forest biodiversity?

a) no	
b) review under way	
c) potential measures identified	
d) yes, some measures taken (please provide details)	x
e) yes, comprehensive measures taken (please provide details)	

Further comments on the measures taken to mitigate economic failures and distortions that lead to decisions that result in loss of forest biodiversity

The forest policy in Poland ensures compensation system for forest owners by providing non-market environmental benefits from public and private forests. This instrument consists of tax relief for forests 40 years old and above registered in the register of national heritage sites, and it subsidises afforestation, budgetary support for actions aimed at reduction of negative effects of pests and diseases.

25. Is your country increasing public support and understanding of the value of forest biodiversity and its goods and services at all levels?

a) no	
b) relevant programme under development	
c) yes, some programmes in place	
d) yes, comprehensive programmes in place	

If your country wishes to provide additional information on implementation of this programme element, please do this in the following space.

The main aims of nature-forest related education in the State Forests are: shaping of the public environmental awareness and the proper attitude toward forest and forestry, multilateral, rational co-operation with nature conservation organisations and environmental NGOs and promoting pro-ecological, multifunctional and sustainable forestry.

These objectives are attained in Promotional Forests Complexes on educational trails and at ecological education (information) points. The basic aim of Promotional Forest Complexes is to introduce into forestry practices the principles of directing its economy while totally accepting the status and the need to fulfil nature conservation requirements. The tasks of the Promotional Forest Complexes are first and foremost:

- a various recognition of state of forest biocenoses and of their biotopic condition, as well as trends to the ongoing changes;
- a permanent retention or re-establishment of valuable natural features of forests by rational forestry management pursued on ecological bases;
- popularisation of sustainable forestry;
- carrying-out of research work and experiments to determine opportunities and conditions for the principles of eco-development that would be disseminated throughout the State forests;
- training of the Forest Service and ecological education to the society as a whole.

The Promotional Forests Complexes are a place for implementing protection on a deep scale and, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity for reconciling economic and conservationist goals - preserving all the organisms occurring in the forests and especially supporting those that, for different reasons, have the greatest value. These include species and biocenoses along with their habitats that are protected by law or deserve legal protection. Simultaneously, PFC plays an important role in the process of shaping awareness on the aims of sustainable forest management.

Additionally, the Forest Culture Centre in Gołuchów and the Forest Education Centre in Rogów play an important role in ecological education conducted by State Forests.

Programme Element 3: Knowledge, Assessment and Monitoring

26. Has your country reviewed and adopted a minimum forest classification system, based on harmonized and accepted forest definitions and addressing key forest biodiversity elements?

a) no	
b) review under way	X
c) review completed	
d) a forest classification system adopted	

27. Has your country developed national forest ecosystem classification systems and maps that use agreed international standards and protocols?

a) no	
b) early stages of development	x
c) advanced stages of development	
d) yes, classification systems in place	

28. Has your country developed specific forest ecosystems surveys in priority areas for conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity?	
a) no	
b) under consideration	
c) relevant surveys being planned	
d) relevant surveys completed (please provide details)	x
e) results of relevant surveys available (please provide details)	
Further comments on the surveys of specific forest ecosystems in priority areas for conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity	
<p>There is no national programme on forest research regarding the taxonomy. Nevertheless, the taxonomy research is conducted occasionally and randomly as a part of the realisations of other tasks. This research concerns fauna, mainly insects, and flora, mainly undergrowth species. In 1995, the State Forests conducted a special stocktaking of biological diversity limited to main groups of plants and animals. There is an urgent need for taxonomic identification of lower systematic groups. The National Environmental Monitoring Network, with a financial support of the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection and the Department of Forestry in the Ministry of the Environment implements new initiatives concerning the forest monitoring.</p> <p>The State Forests land encompasses most of precious elements of biological diversity. These include the most attractive landscapes that are subject to higher form and manifestations of real nature conservation, as well as many species of flora and fauna. Foresters inventory is conducted on regular basis in the process devising programmes for nature conservation in a given Forest District. Particular attention is paid to natural and/or ecologically important fragments of forest ecosystems, i.e. acidophilus beech forests, rich beech forests, termophilus oak forests, Galio-Carpinetum oak-hornbeam forests, riparian mixed forests with <i>Quercus robur</i>, <i>Ulmus laevis</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>, alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>, willow scrubs (like near-natural stands of native origin or forests in moist or dune habitats), as well as forms and objects of significance to the protection and preservation of forest biodiversity, including marshes, swamps, peatlands and bodies of water. Within the State Forests, a particular attention is paid to the development of trees and stands. This is manifested, <i>inter alia</i>, by a precise reconnaissance of soil and habitat conditions. That requires appropriate connections between species and habitat conditions to be retained or re-established, as well as, the protection of near-natural ecosystems (i.e. riparian woodland and alder carr, bodies of water and watercourses with forests, marshes peat lands, heaths and sites or strongholds for rare plant or animal species. Equally important are issues, such as: enrichment of the species composition of forest biocenosis, a limitation of clear felling, a preference for the natural restocking and renewal of forests and an effort to diversify the forest margin.</p>	
29. Is your country advancing the development and implementation of international, regional and national criteria and indicators based on key regional, subregional and national measures within the framework of sustainable forest management?	
a) no	
b) relevant programme under development	
c) some criteria and indicators developed (please provide details)	x
d) comprehensive indicators developed (please provide details)	
Further comments on the development and implementation of criteria and indicators	

Polish "Criteria and indicators of forest biodiversity" are built according to the European agreements. The European criteria and indicators strongly accent the ecological-environmental point of view, focusing less attention on social-economical aspects. Forming of the European ("Helsinki") criteria and indicators was initiated in 1993 and concentrated on extending of health of European forests. Expert Conference in 1994 agreed to 6 criteria and 27 quantity indicators. Third Ministerial Conference in Lisbon (1998) resolved "Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest management". This work takes under consideration all aspects of biodiversity protection arising from European "Criteria and Indicators", as well as from "Guidelines". Criterion IV "Maintenance, Conservation and Appropriate Enhancement of Biological Diversity in Forest Ecosystems" has been created to assess and monitor the biological diversity of production forests. In this context, the Criterion IV focused much more our attention than the previous Criteria adopted by the Helsinki Conference. At the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Vienna (2003) the Resolution no 4 "Conserving and Enhancing Forest Biodiversity in Europe" and the Improved Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management were adopted. The above mentioned Criterion no 4 goes in line with the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity (adopted on the 6th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2002)). The following indicators are adopted by the 4th MCPFE: tree species composition, regeneration, introduced tree species, deadwood, genetic resources, landscape pattern, threatened forest species, protected forests.

30. Has your country conducted key research programmes on the role of forest biodiversity and ecosystem functioning?

a) no

b) research programs under development

x

c) yes, some research programs conducted

d) yes, comprehensive research programs conducted

31. Is your country enhancing and improving the technical capacity at the national level to monitor forest biodiversity, benefiting from the opportunities offered through the Clearing House Mechanism of CBD?

a) no

b) capacity building programme under development

x

c) yes, some programmes in place (please provide details)

d) yes, comprehensive programmes in place (please provide details)

Further comments on the programmes to enhance and improve the technical capacity at the national level to monitor forest biodiversity

Numerous groups of scientific experts, representing not only the forestry but also other sectors, have been taking part in the process of improving of monitoring of forest biodiversity. The work will result in the elaboration of the Forest Code, which will include general principles and directions of forest development and conditions of sustainable forest management and its monitoring.

If your country wishes to provide additional information on implementation of this programme element, please do this in the following space.

The forest law in Poland has been modified during the last decade and now it is in line with international developments. Subsequently, the strategic and executive documents resulting in further improvement of sustainable forest management have been elaborated (the National Forestry Policy, Regulations on Development of Promotional Forest Complexes, Regulations by the General Director of State Forests on Ecological Basis of Forest Management; the Instruction for Preparation of the Nature Protection Programme as an integrated part of the Forest Management Plan for each forest district) or are being elaborated now (Regional Operational Programmes of the National Forest Policy).

Sufficiency of all above mentioned activities is well reflected in the state of forest resources in Poland, especially those owned by the State and managed by the Forest Service. Further improvement is needed in private owned forests. A very weak interest of private forest owners in following the latest developments on SFM is the major disadvantage.

In this regard solutions might be sought in elaboration of strategies and programmes for rural areas development and implementing agro-environmental and forestry measures in agricultural holdings, using external financing.

Also, further involvement of the society in SFM is needed. It should be reached by the development of educational and informational campaigns.

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