

Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Policy and Strategy



Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Agriculture
and Rural Development

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Introduction

Owing to the regressive practice pursued for quite a long time and despite the existence of favorable conditions for forest resource development, conservation and utilization, our country was not able to harness the expected economic, social and natural benefits from the forest sub-sector. Deforestation for agricultural land as a result of ever increasing population growth, increase in demand for fuel wood and construction material, illegal settlement within forests, logging and the expansion of illegal trade are at the forefront of the factors contributing to the stated nominal benefits from forest resources. This has resulted in the deterioration of our forest resources, reduction of biodiversity, incidences of soil erosion, land slide, land degradation and desertification, and recurrence of drought and famine. Thus, with a view to contributing to the economic development of the country, maintaining the ecological balance and conserving and enhancing our biodiversity through the sustainable utilization and development of forest resources, it has become necessary to prepare a forest policy and strategy that can bring about sustainable development through community participation.

Objectives of the Policy

General Objectives

The basic aim of the policy is to meet public demand in forest products and foster the contribution of forests in enhancing the economy of the country through appropriately conserving and developing forest resources.

Specific Objectives

- I. To encourage sustainable forest development by rendering professional and technical assistance to farmers, pastoralists, investors and institutions engaged in forest resource development;

2. To adequately meet the forest and forest product demands of the public through sustainably enhancing the production of forest resources in areas that are suitable for forest and forest resource development;
3. To foster the contribution of forest resources to food security and industrial development through the identification, rejuvenation, multiplication and distribution of tree species that are suitable for our country and capable of giving diverse benefits;
4. To lay the foundation wherein forest resources deliver all-embracing services to the country in a sustainable manner, through the prevention of threats as well as the conservation and development of forest resources;
5. To ensure maintenance of the natural ecological balance through adequately conserving and developing the forest resources of the country.

The policy and strategy presented herein below is therefore prepared by giving due regard to the aforementioned objectives, and also to align efforts of conservation, development and sustainable utilization of forest resources with government policies (in particularly those pertinent to land administration and utilization law) adopted to address various economic and social issues.

Policy and Strategy

1. Fostering Private Forest Development and Conservation

- 1.1 Development of forests intended as a source of fuel wood, material for construction, industry, environmental conservation and other purposes will be undertaken through individuals, associations and organizations.

Strategies

- a. Grant free from lease payment, as appropriate and according to existing regional land administration and utilization laws of the regions, lands that currently are or designated for forest development, for afforestation purposes and production of various forest products by individuals, organizations and associations,
 - b. Lay a conducive environment to ensure that investors, associations and organizations engaged in forest development are exempt, with a view to sustaining their pursuance in the development of the sector, from an annual tax duty of any form levied on the land until such time that the forest attains its maturity stage,
 - c. Render the requisite professional and technical support to private individuals, associations and organizations engaged in forest development and assist them in their effort of managing and developing forests.
 - d. Designate productive forest areas within state forests that are identified for their potential to be afforested through concessions given to private individuals, organizations and associations,
 - e. Ensure that individuals, associations or organizations have access to seeds or seedlings on a fair price basis from governmental and non-governmental sources, for the purpose of afforestation in the service of environmental protection and conservation,
 - f. Facilitate access to credit services by individuals interested in engaging in forest development and forest industries,
 - g. Based on research, determine forest lands and investment options that enable the engagement of private individuals in forest industry investment,
 - h. Facilitate the introduction of tax reduction schemes, prorated on the basis of the size of agricultural land designated for agro-forestry development, for farmers and agro-pastoralists that have set aside part of their land for agro-forestry development,
- 1.2. The ownership guarantee of any private individual, association and organization will be respected for forest development within the area under ownership or within a concession area in state forests.

Strategies

- a. Grant certificates guaranteeing ownership, based on land administration and utilization laws and implementation directives to be issued hereafter, to lands designated for forest development by private individuals, associations and organizations,
- b. Ensure the implementation of the right to use and transfer lands by those owning forests, based on the Rural Land Administration and Utilization Law,
- c. Monitor and follow up, through an appropriate body, that the person conferred with the right of using land for forest development purposes is acting accordingly and solely for such objectives and by adhering to the adopted management plan.

2. Expansion of Forest Development Technology

- 2.1 Forest development will be fostered and widely made use of through the appropriate use of technologies destined for forest development, conservation and utilization.

Strategies

- a. Ensure the dissemination to and utilization by users, of appropriate forest technologies that are enriched through research and are deemed to be suitable to the various agro-ecological zones.
- b. Periodically update, through a continuous process of consultation with the communities, the technologies of forest development, conservation and utilization that were disseminated to users on the basis of the specific needs of their agro-ecologies,
- c. Establish and strengthen a system for the provision of indigenous and exotic tree species and seed inputs that are suitable for the different agro-ecological zones,
- d. Make use of tree species suitable for industrial forestry, procured from within and outside the country, by collecting, selecting and adapting such on the basis of research and development,

- e. Undertake successive research and development on the germination and growth characteristics as well as the techniques of conservation, development and utilization of forests by giving preeminence to indigenous varieties that have high economic value and are under the threat of extinction,
- f. Inculcate agro-forestry practices among the community, develop means of providing vocational / technical skills as well as plant seeds and seedlings,
- g. Select and disseminate to users tree species that are proven to be productive based on agro-forestry oriented research and development on suitable/ benefit accruing species,
- h. Expand, through agro-ecological schemes, the development of multi purpose trees that have economic significance and also contribute to the enhancement of the agricultural sector,
- i. Assist the farmer/ agro-pastoralist in identifying and planting tree species that are suitable to protect agricultural land in his/her possession from soil erosion, for the purpose of delineating boundaries and those that are important for use as fodder, and also to render professional assistance for conservation of existing plantations,
- j. Train and educate those engaged in forest development with modern forest development and management skills with a view to ensuring that forests are appropriately developed, conserved and utilized,
- k. Boost the knowledge base of the forest developer by preparing and disseminating forest technology packages that encompass indigenous as well as foreign know-how, traditions and technologies,
- l. Direct all efforts towards strengthening forest technology packages and extension services that are at the disposal of the farmer/ agro-pastoralist and private investor, as these contribute to boost income and ensure food security with in the short run,
- m. Coordinate and act in an integrated manner with pertinent bodies with a view to availing alternative energy sources to the communities, so as to lessen the deterioration of forests and thereby ensure their sustainable use for superior purposes,

3. Expanding Market Development for Forests

3.1 Farmers/ agro-pastoralists, investors, associations, government and non-government based enterprises and institutions are encouraged to place forest products, that are up to standards and competitive, to domestic and international markets.

Strategies

- a. Assist those engaged in nursery development and selling seedlings to the public,
- b. Avail forest products for the purpose of trade and industrial development according to forest management plans,
- c. Ensure that any permit to trade in forests and forest products is granted based on a management plan that takes into consideration the need to sustainably use the limited forest resources of the country and in a manner that does not destabilize the ecological balance,
- d. Establish a system that enhances products and production through conserving trees that have a high demand in the market,
- e. Train and educate, in a consecutive manner, sections of the community within agro-ecological zones suitable for forest development on issues of forest development, conservation and market system,
- f. Establish the platform for engaging investors in forest industry development through facilitating the availability of investment options and incentives.

3.2 Forests that are sources of products that have a high demand in domestic and international markets will be appropriately protected and conserved to ensure production in a qualitative and quantitative manner.

Strategies

- a. Designate and grant production sites by way of organizing, in associations or other groupings, those farmers/ agro-pastoralists living in and within the vicinity of the forest,

- b. Train and educate the communities about forest conservation and management as well as production techniques of forest and forest products through the preparation of implementation manuals,
- c. Support the production and placing on the market of high quality and standardized products,
- d. Encourage and professionally support private enterprises and investors engaged in manufacturing forest products in a qualitative and quantitative manner both for domestic and international markets through availing the requisite human resources alongside communities living in the vicinity of the forest area,
- e. Ensure that technical trainings are provided to farmers/ agro-pastoralists that produce and place to the market items produced from trees,

4. Administration and Management of State Forests

- 4.1 State forests and forest lands in the country will be administered based on a management plan to be drawn on a two-pronged approach of protected forest and productive forest management system.

Strategies

- a. Priority forest areas and state forests being administered by regional governments shall be designated under a protected forest and productive forest systems based on the criteria to be set with a view to ensuring their conservation and sustainable use (without their services being undermined),
 - b. Ensure efficient utilization of state forests for the desired purpose through the preparation of administrative and management plans,
- 4.2 The boundaries of protected forests and forest lands particularly those that are hotspots for indigenous tree species threatened with extinction will be delineated and administered, as necessary, by federal or regional governments for their sustainable use.

Strategies

- a. Prepare forest management plans on the basis of collected information on the area coverage, topography and species diversity of protected forests that also takes due consideration of participatory biodiversity conservation and utilization,
 - b. Design and implement participatory management strategy that can be utilized by the surrounding communities through designation of forests as protected areas, forests and forest lands, that have the potential to protect basin systems as well as conserve and rehabilitate areas and water bodies the soil cover of which has and will be washed away as a result of poor delineation and protection schemes,
 - c. Use plant species that have faster growing characteristics in order to demarcate the boundary of protected forests as well as to serve as a source of fuel wood and construction material for the surrounding communities,
 - d. Keep those trees, found within protected state forests and threatened with extinction, free from being used in any productive activities. However, cutting trees for use if it is ascertained that the prolonged stay of trees that are done with their normal span of life will be injurious to the other trees by being easily attacked with diseases,
 - e. Encourage farmers/ agro-pastoralists that live within, and around protected forest areas through the grant of permits and technical assistance enabling them to engage in the production of honey, spices, wild coffee and fodder by way of participatory forest development and management,
- 4.3 Through demarcating their boundaries and giving legal recognition, productive forests will be identified and administered by the pertinent governmental body, individual or organization

Strategies

- a. Prepare and implement participatory forest management plan based on an assessment on the amount of available timber, tree diversity, area of forest and self replenishment capacity, projected annual productivity and productive years through the conduct of studies about tree diversity, quantity and productivity in every productive state forest,
 - b. Ensure forest development to be implemented by, as the case may be, the government, the private sector, government-individual partnership/ concession or through non governmental organizations, based on a management plan that will be prepared to guide production of forest products sufficient enough both for domestic and international trade,
 - c. Hasten development of forests particularly tree species that are planted artificially; and have fast maturity period and clean bole, with a view to serve as fuel wood, construction material and use for industrial purposes,
- 4.4 Scattered natural forests and plantations that are not designated and demarcated as protected or productive forests shall be managed by Kebele administrations or individuals accorded with certificates of ownership rights and be made to use on the basis of a utilization plan to be drawn with a view to halting their arbitrary use as construction material, fuel wood and charcoal production.

Strategies

- a. Delineate those natural forests that are not yet designated/ demarcated, by the government, as protected and productive forests; and put them into utilization,
- b. Enable the nearby communities, individuals, associations or investors to conserve and make use of natural forests that are not designated/ demarcated as protected and productive forests, after the preparation of appropriate management plans drawn based on the directives to be issued,

- c. Expand forest development schemes on non-demarcated natural forests and forest lands on the basis of the land utilization plan.

5. *Protecting Forest Resources from Threats*

- 5.1 Remedial actions will be implemented to avert natural or anthropogenic threats on forests placed under any form of ownership to keep forests from devastation.

Strategies

- a. Guard priority state forests, through the participation of the community and assigned forest guards, with a view to preventing forest fire, illegal settlement, deforestation for various purposes and other similar activities,
- b. Ensure community participation in forest conservation activities, through education and institutional support, to avert deforestation and forest devastation and ensure as well that such participation is sustained in the future,
- c. Plant, through community participation, tree species that have the natural property of fire resilience, in double and triple rows, around state forests; and ensure that the community benefits from the tree products,
- d. Ensure that those that endanger forest resources through various threatening activities are apprehended and brought to justice,
- e. Implement multilateral environmental agreements (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the protection of wetlands) to which our country is a party,
- f. Put in place a system to prevent and control communicable diseases in state and private forests; and undertake the necessary follow up measures,

5.2 Preventive and regulatory measures will be taken on illegal movement of forest genetic resources that are threatened with extinction.

Strategies

- a. Issue laws and guidelines to regulate illegal movement of tree species threatened with extinction and see to the implementation of such,
- b. Protect forest resources by the competent authority through the establishment of a regulatory system in integration with pertinent agencies such as customs, heritage protection authority, police, kebele administrations and the community,
- c. Exercise *in situ* conservation and scientific breeding techniques (*ex-situ conservation*) to strengthen genetic resource protection in priority state forest areas; to protect threatened forest species from extinction,
- d. Ensure that the protection accorded to forest genetic resources threatened with extinction is compatible to the rules of World Trade Organization and that of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

5.3 An appropriate regulatory system that enables the control of illegal movement of forest products will be adopted.

Strategies

- a. Forest resource regulatory posts will be established within, on the entry and exit routes of state forests.
- b. Encourage pertinent agencies and institutions to give the requisite collaboration when regulatory actions are taken on the export and import of forests and forest products,
- c. Control that imported forest products are according to the required standard and free from communicable diseases; and to control also that the import is undertaken on legal grounds,
- d. Encourage that governmental and non-governmental organizations at all levels, public agencies, individuals and associations as well as

the communities undertake strict regulation on illegal movement of forest resources,

- e. Implement a law prepared on the basis of community participation that enables to sustainably halt illegal movement in forest and forest products,

6. Establishing Modern Information Systems on Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization

- 6.1 An appropriate system of data collection, analysis and distribution focusing on forest development, protection and utilization will be established for implementation and use at any level.

Strategies

- a. Ensure the collection of information pertaining to the size and status of utilization of forests under ownership of individuals, associations and private investors,
- b. Collect, organize and analyze information meant for the implementation of forest development, conservation and utilization strategies and periodically disseminate such to the public,
- c. Undertake studies on traditional and modern agro-forestry techniques and disseminate results to users as well as conduct evaluation and improvement on time.
- d. Identify forests and forest products that have higher demands both at local and international markets; collect and analyze market development studies and disseminate such information to users,
- e. Train practitioners through the preparation of short and long term trainings on the basis of identifying the required skills in the field of forest development, conservation and utilization, information gathering, forest management plan preparation and other relevant fields,

6.2 Information exchange and distribution on forest resource development, conservation and utilization will be integrated with national and international information networks.

Strategies

- a. Gather information on new technologies and best practices from various sources, as pertinent to forest development, conservation and utilization,
- b. Prepare and avail for use standardized formats of information exchange, as much as these are essential for sustaining information exchange and integration,
- c. Strengthen those that avail, analyze and distribute information pertaining to forest development, conservation and utilization in terms of both human resources as well as modern information technology and equipment,
- d. Educate the public, by using the media, on the need to maintain the natural ecological balance through protection of natural forests, in various agro-ecological zones, from inappropriate utilization.