

Support for Recovery of Forestry Sector in Ukraine International Donor and Stakeholders Conference Czech Republic, Prague 26-27 March 2024

Background

According to the recently finalized Ukraine-Third Rapid Disaster Needs Assessment¹ conducted by the United Nations, European Union and World Bank (RDNA3), the forestry sector has experienced the aggregated damages of USD 3.3 billion as of end of 2023 due to the ongoing war. Destruction of forests due to fire-damages in war-affected areas has grown by 28 393 hectares only in 2023, reaching now 211 574 hectares. Extensive areas of forests were engulfed by fires caused by war-related events, rendering thousands of local communities affected, being Khersonska oblast the most affected region in 2023. Likewise, additional damages of about US 1.1 billion were calculated due to increased Greenhouse Gasses (GHG) emissions.

The Forestry Sector was also inflicted by severe losses which are just surfacing now, including air pollution, reduced carbon sequestration and ecosystem services disrupted due to the Kakhovka Dam breach in June 2023. As per the RDNA3 results, the losses reported for the sector are estimated at USD 26.5 billion, an immense increase when compared with the assessment conducted a year ago (USD 523 million). The consequences of the damages and losses accounted and the impact upon communities and the Ukrainian population is worrisome, particularly in regard to jobs loss, accelerated erosion rates, reduced water retention, letting alone all non-market related services provided by the forests affected such as biodiversity, cultural and recreational and seasonal use of non-timber forest products. In total 750 000 hectares of forests and natural landscapes were burned during the ongoing war in Ukraine. Moreover, preliminary estimations indicate that near 2.8 million hectares of forests are affected by mines and Unexploded Ordnances (UXO).

Recovery interventions are urgently required, and urgent needs were estimated at USD 681 million for the period of 2024-2028 and for the USD 2.3 billion for the next decade. Among the main priorities for action, the Government of Ukraine through its Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (MEPNR) and the State Forestry Resource Authority (SFRAU) as well as relevant stakeholders of the sector are prioritizing investments in reforestation of forests damaged by the war (49 percent); harvesting equipment and working equipment (12 percent); nurseries (4 percent); capacity building and information systems (7 percent), among others. For 2024, the sector requires urgent support with USD 34 million to meet the immediate needs.

As a UN organization, the FAO's main role in the forestry sector is to support the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine and other institutions and organizations involved in strengthening the forestry sector, and thereby create the framework for medium

¹ World Bank.
Ukraine - Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3) February 2022 – December 2023 (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099021324115085807/P1801741bea12c012189ca16d95d8c2556a>

and long-term interventions. This includes aligning the key goals set out in the Ukrainian Forest Management Strategy for 2035 with the New EU Forestry Strategy for 2030, with the aim of:

- Supporting the socio-economic functions of forests to improve rural livelihoods and promote forest bio-economies.
- Protecting, restoring and expanding forests to mitigate the impact of the war and climate change, restoring biodiversity loss, and ensuring resilient and multifunctional forest ecosystems.
- Ensuring strategic forest monitoring, reporting and data collection, as well as forest management planning.
- Enhancing the capacity of technical research and innovation institutions to gain a better understanding of forestry and the related sectors.

The Government of Ukraine and FAO have joined forces since early 2023 in order to establish a strategy that support rapid recovery of essential areas of intervention for the sector, which is seeking to mobilize up to USD 40 million for the period of 2024-2027, as detailed in the Forest Support Strategy for Ukraine prepared by FAO and endorsed by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine.

By request of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine (MENPR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in close collaboration with Forest Europe have joined forces to mobilize international community and interested partners to support the recovery of the Forestry Sector in Ukraine, which has been largely affected by the ongoing war.

Objective

The main purpose of the International Conference is to raise awareness and mobilize the international community through partners and stakeholders interested to support urgent needs and recovery of the Forestry Sector in Ukraine. In this framework, an overview of the identified priority needs will be shared by the Government of Ukraine, and discussions will be held to identify concrete actions and investments that can be mobilized during the coming year, as well as potential vehicles for scaling up investments and provision of support to the sector stakeholders and concerned actors.

The Conference is expected to take advantage of opportunities to support the implementation of recovery actions and mobilization of technical, operational and financial resources toward immediate and mid- term relevant actions in support of the Forestry sector stakeholders in Ukraine. Likewise, effort will be made to build partnerships and share information among countries and participants.

The objective of the first half-day will be to provide an overview of identified priority needs requiring urgent action due to the impact of war and climate change and potential proposed solutions as well as to explain the mechanisms put in place by FAO to mobilise economic resources.

The objective of the second half-day will be to address urgent needs with concrete actions, discussing with engaged parties the possibilities of implementing activities to respond to the identified emergencies: supporting the Forest Management Plan Institute, triggering the use of sustainable wood for green reconstruction, addressing the demining emergency in support of rural livelihoods and supporting the strengthening of monitoring bodies, and identifying partner institutions for GEF.

Conference venue, date and format: the Conference will be hosted by the Czech University of Life Sciences, at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences (<https://www.fld.czu.cz/en>), in venue: Kamýcká 129 165 00 Prague-Suchdol, between 26 – 27 March 2024.

The overall format of the Conference is offline with the possibility, only on the first day, of virtual format to allow a broader audience to elaborate on the conclusions of the first conference hosted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine and FAO last December 2023.

Expected target audience:

Representatives of interested partners, development partners, funding agencies, international organizations, academia, civil society are welcome to join including representatives of the European Forest Institute (EFI), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), IIASA, the European Investment Bank (EIB), Forest Europe, together with representatives of potential donor countries.

We will be grateful if you could confirm your attendance by registering through the following link before 15 March 2024. <https://forms.gle/wWXTKF4ENeuqgbkc7>

Conference organizers:

- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine
- Czech Ministry of Agriculture
- State Forest Resource Agency of Ukraine
- Czech University, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Contacts:

- Alberto Del Lungo, Senior International Forestry Expert, e-mail: alberto.dellungo@fao.org, Mob/WhatsApp: +39 348 870 2398
- Vasyl Masyuk, National Forest Programme Specialist, e-mail: vasyl.masyuk@fao.org, Mob/WhatsApp: +380 93 323 9000

Date and time: 26- 27 March 2024

- *CET 26 March 14.00 – 18.00 in-person and online*
- *EET 26 March, 15:00 – 19:00 online*
- *CET 27 March 09.00 – 13.00 in-person*

Format: **26 March**, in-person and online participation
 27 March, in-person

Link to the Conference meeting (**26 March only**):

<https://fao.zoom.us/j/99948849099/>, passcode: FAOUKRAINE passcode: FAOUKRAINE

Conference language: English

Moderators: Officials of Ukraine and of the Czech Republic

Preliminary agenda

26 March 2024 (Moderator?)

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| 14:30 – 15:00 | Registration and welcome coffee for participants attending in-person | |
| Welcome speeches | | |
| 15:00 – 15:40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honourable Minister Czech Republic Mr. Yevhenii Fedorenko, Deputy Minister of MEPNR (tbc) CZU University FAO | Opening speeches |
| Session 1: Overview of identified priority needs to be addressed urgently and potential proposed solutions | | |
| 15:40 – 16:55 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Alberto Del Lungo FAO Senior Forster, International Expert | Conclusions and recommendations of the 14 th of December 23, Donor Conference |
| 15:55 – 16:10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Victor Smal, Head of SFRAU | |
| 16:10 – 16:25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Igor Budzinskyi, Head of the Department of Forestry and Forest Reforestation SFRAU | |
| 16:25 - 16:40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Viktor Melnychenko, Director, UkrDerzhLisProekt | Ukrainian State Forest Management Planning Association |
| 16:40 - 16:55 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Vasyl Masyuk, National Forestry Programme Specialist FAO Project Office Ukraine | Engagement with national forestry stakeholders and international partners |
| 16:55 – 17:10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Aleksander Buck, Executive Director, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) | Conclusions and main finding of Forum on Ukraine Forest Science and Education |
| 17:10 – 17:25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO UKR | Addressing priority needs for urgent action in Ukrainian forestry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support demining and provision of fuelwood Supporting green reconstruction of Ukraine with sustainable wood Forest restoration of degraded lands (GEF) Strengthening the FMPI |
| 17:25 – 17:40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO UKR | FAO mechanisms for funds mobilization, the MUL Trust Fund |

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| 17:40 – 18:30 | Q&A Panel discussion with speakers, moderated by Mr. Tomáš Krejzar, Director, Department of Forest Policy and Economics, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic |
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27 March 2024 (Moderator?)

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| Session 2: Address urgent needs with concrete actions. Donor country support to strengthening the Ukrainian forestry sector | | |
| 09:30 – 09:45 | • FAO UKR | Recap of the previous session |
| 09:45 – 11:00 | Facilitated dialogue with potential donor countries | Partner countries pledge in supporting Ukrainian forestry |
| 11:00 – 11:20 | Coffee break | |
| 11:20 – 12:10 | Facilitated dialogue with potential donor countries | Technical and economic support to the forestry sector in Ukraine |
| 12:10 – 12:40 | Conclusion and wrap up, moderated by Radek Rinn, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences, Czech University of Life sciences Prague | |
| 12:45 – 14:00 | Lunch | |