Expert input sheet

Conservation and management of Continental Woodland and forest in Bulgaria

Contributor
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Habitat(s):
91D0 - Bog woodland

Biogeographical region:
Continental

Member state:
Bulgaria

Region(s) (if applicable):
Bulgaria

Issues and pressures
B02.01.02 Forest replanting (non-native trees)
B02.02 Forestry clearance (clear cuts)
B02.04 Removal of dead and dying trees
B06 Grazing in forests/woodland
E01.03 Dispersed habitation
G02.02 Skiing complex
J01.01 Burning down
K02.01 Species composition change (succession)
J02.05 Modification of hydrographical functioning, general
L07 Storm, cyclone

Conservation requirements
Development and implementation of Natura 2000 management plans. Development and implementation of legislation (especially regarding management and land use restrictions). Formal education, awareness, and capacity-building/training. Research on: biology and ecology, habitat status, threats, conservation measures, trends (monitoring, especially of the stand dynamics and the favourable conservation status). Habitat and site based actions on maintenance/conservation, restoration, corridors, identification of new protected areas, establishment of protected areas, expansion of protected areas, community-based initiatives. Designation of territories for maintenance of old-growthness. Introduction and implementation of certain restrictions: (i) no harvest and no deadwood extraction; (ii) full restrictions of grazing (no grassing to be allowed).
**Conservation management**

The actual measures and practices (out of the abovementioned) include: (i) Few management plans of Natura 2000 zones have been developed but not yet implemented really efficiently; (ii) Some targeted measures for management of forests in Natura 2000 have been developed (by the State Forest Agency), but not yet been broadly implemented neither proven effective on practice; (iii) Some methodologies have been suggested for evaluation of the favourable conservation status of forest habitats, however due to data restrictions, those are mostly based on approximate data coming from forest management plans, often shown in relative terms (e.g. average age, average diameter) and not on real monitoring in permanent sample plots and targeted parameter values measured in absolute terms (e.g. cubic meters of volume, distribution of three by diameter of breast height, cubic meters of dead wood), as it should be; (iv) some restrictions in forest management in Natura 2000 have been elaborated by the research society and nature protection NGOs, however those have not been officially accepted and legalised in the current form yet (discussions are ongoing). Education and research on biology, ecology and forestry is going on up to university level but some programs need enhancement (they mostly suffer from being quite conceptual and theoretic); not really enough scientific papers, regarding state and dynamics of targeted forest habitats are published in internationally recognised journals (e.g. those referred on the web of science). Designation of territories for maintenance of old-growthness has not yet taken place and is (by now) most often impeded by the structures of the State Forest Agency.

**Species specific management:**

Yes

Species based actions are to be provided by the experts on the particular species.

A217 Glaucidium passerinum "(Linnaeus, 1758)"

A223 Aegolius funereus "(Linnaeus, 1758)"

A241 Picoides tridactylus "(Linnaeus, 1758)"

1409 Sphagnu spec.

**Barriers and bottlenecks**

Insufficient funds to elaborate management plans of Natura 2000 zones. Insufficient funds to compensate forest owners for foregone profits (e.g. by retaining biotope trees and dead wood, and designating areas of old-growthness). Policy framework (inappropriate/lack of policy).

**Solutions and opportunities**

More efficient collaboration between EU level structures and Bulgarian primary stakeholders in forestry.

**Cross cutting issues**

Integration of Natura 2000 into other sectorial priorities – e.g. more efficient use of Natura 2000 recommendations and restrictions in elaboration and implementation of Forest Management Plans in both state and private forests. Encourage discussion and prompt thinking (e.g. initiation of round tables at both state and regional scale) about the ways Natura 2000 can be integrated as part of cross-sectorial approaches, social and biodiversity priorities.
Lessons learned / best practice
With few exceptions, forest managers in Bulgaria avoid forest harvest in this particular habitat (mainly due to greater harvest costs). In accordance, forests belonging to habitat 91D0 provide a great source (real and potential) in maintaining old-growthness among managed stands, especially in the upper vegetation belt. As such no management is consider a valuable option from both ecological and economical perspective.

Opportunities for joint action
Exchange of knowledge and expertise between Member States and stakeholders within the Biogeographical region regarding methodologies and criteria used in determining the favourable conservation status of forest habitats will provide an opportunity of rese

References