

CYPRUS

Subject area 1: Management

1. Silviculture

The current silvicultural system provides for tree removals based on the biological maturity of the forest trees encouraging the natural regeneration. Where natural regeneration fails, artificial regeneration is used giving emphasis in the methods having the least disturbance in the environment.

The present silvicultural system provides the maximum social benefits to the community through sustainable and multiple use, production, recreation and protection, maintaining at the same time the naturalness and improving the structure and productive potential of the forest.

Reforestation of burnt sites as well as afforestation of other state land is among the major activities of the Department of Forests. Artificial regeneration is used only in the cases where natural regeneration is insufficient. Reforestation failures are common especially in dry years. During the last two years the reforested area was 671 ha.

2. Multiple use forestry

It can be stated without any reservation that the principles of multiple-use and sustainability are fully respected at least for the state forest areas. Multiple-use refers to the utilization of forests for commercial, recreational and protective purposes. The concept of sustainability includes ecological, economic and social sustainability.

Particular attention is paid to indirect benefits including environmental protection, wildlife and natural conservation, water conservation and recreation.

The Department of Forests has prepared a National Forest Programme covering the period 2000-2009. The adopted strategy known as the Rural Betterment Strategy, seeks to protect and improve the natural environment of Cyprus, for the benefit of all citizens and visitors from abroad. The strategy is based on multiple uses of the forest resources. It is directed at improving the condition of the forests, conservation of soils and watersheds, protection of the flora, fauna, biodiversity and heritage sites, the promotion of ecotourism, and sustainable production of wood and non-wood products.

3. Ecological and economic issues

The present contribution of the forests, through their direct benefits, to the Gross Domestic Product is limited to 0,044%. However, if we consider the value of indirect benefits their contribution will be much higher than this figure.

The indirect benefits from forests such as environmental protection, nature and wildlife conservation, water conservation and recreation have been given a higher importance than that of direct benefits.

The Forestry Department has established a large number of picnic and camping sites and nature trails. At present there are 37 picnic sites of a capacity to accommodate 20 230 persons and 49 nature trails having a length of 118 km.

4. Marketing

During the period under review there have been no changes in the marketing of wood.

5. Information Systems

A number of different information systems is used intensively in a variety of forestry applications including digital cartography, forest fire statistics, etc.

Subject area 2: Technology

Due to the change of the forest strategy and the new approach in forestry, fellings in the State forests have been decreased drastically. However, the main target is the improvement of the stands rather than the removal of trees for timber. Since the annual cut is very limited the introduction of technology and innovations for wood harvesting is not economically sound.

Subject area 3: Training

1. Forest Training and Education

The professional foresters are all graduates from European Universities, with postgraduate training in various fields of forestry. Technical forestry training has been offered at the Cyprus Forestry College since 1951 to both Cypriot (464 graduates) and overseas students (309 graduates).

College trainees, as future field officers play a key role in ensuring the safety of workers during forest operations and therefore are comprehensively prepared theoretically and practically to work into the conditions they will have to work when enter the forest service. The College has introduced in its curriculum safety and health courses and the trainees learn how to perform the work in a best ergonomically way and how to avoid risks errors under the instruction of qualified, skilled and experienced instructors. The curricula offer detailed direction and technical guidance for safe and effective management in all forestry activities (forest harvesting, tree climbing, fire fighting, pruning, thinning, chainsaw operations, charcoal making with portable kilns, planting, logging, etc.). Trainers and trainees in all forest operations use and wear the appropriate personal safety equipment and protective clothing, when engaged in practical chainsaw, tree felling or other forest operations.

2. Safety, Health and Ergonomics

The Department of Forests not only has an obligation under the workplace health and safety Act. 1996 to ensure the health and safety of workers in the workplace, but has also very early recognised that forestry profession is a high-risk occupation and that safety regulations and health planning are critical elements in reducing the occurrence of accidents. It has also been convinced that worker training and ergonomic measures is indispensable as will improve efficiency, reduce costs, improved job satisfaction and maximize safety.

Therefore, written safety rules and regulations are designed to give general safety rules for the majority of operations undertaken by forestry personnel which all parties concerned must follow and which the Forestry Department is strongly willing to fully enforce. The Department is also making sure that the workers know the dangers and various hazards of the job exposed and that they have the skills to safely do the work assigned to them under the supervision of an experience person.

The Safety Board established in each Forest Division, is to ensure that workers are adequately trained in the safe use of equipment and other items and is also responsible for enforcing the safety rules for the prevention of health problems and accident risks which at present are at very low levels.

Today, a promising approach is that clear safety standards and protection regulations, help to direct operations and that no forest worker may carry out a job for which he has not been trained. It is compulsory that the workforce should use the available safety equipment in the workplace; otherwise his employment will be discontinued until he is complying with the instructions of the supervising officer (May 2001).

3. Forest Workers Training

In Cyprus there is no any vocational school offering formal worker training in forestry operations. However, a good number of skilled forest workers for a particular line of work have obtained vocational training through government agencies.

The training of the permanent skilled forest workers is composed of a series of introductory short courses ranging from few days to one week, offered by experienced foresters and then followed by on-the-job training with a competent skilled worker. The training of semi-skilled workers is largely practical receiving on the-job training and then work with an experienced skilled worker.

Every year short refresher courses are organized by the Forest Department. In 2001 a 3-day programme composed of a series of short courses in forestry operations and accidents was organized.

It is absolutely necessary that a permanent worker-training centre need to be established and equipped with suitable facilities. To satisfy the present

identified training needs of the Cyprus Forestry Department a programme of about 2-3 years duration will be required. Vocational training may be introduced and applied in the forest service for the young workers in association with forest technician training center.

4. In Service Training, Refreshers Courses and Seminars

Special in-service training courses are organised and conducted every year for the training of the Forest Department personnel, in order to make the code of conduct on forest work well known among the field staff of managerial and supervisory levels. Training courses are held for supervisors and Senior Officers for fire fighting, silviculture, logging, First Aid and accident prevention. Because fire-fighting training is very important in Cyprus conditions, annual training sessions are held each April, where safety is stressed in all training. Most of the forest personnel have also attended seminars abroad.