



Public Briefing Paper for Forest Management Certification Assessment of Staro Oryahovo State Forestry Unit September 2007

Introduction - The SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance and NEPCon – SmartWood certification partner in Poland is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification assessments of the Staro Oryahovo State Forestry Unit in Bulgaria (further FMU). The assessment will be implemented in October 2007.

Scope of the Certification Assessment – The forest management certification assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forest plantations managed by the FMU, using the “*SmartWood Interim Standard for Bulgaria SW-STD-BUL-2007-05*”. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact SmartWood by telephone, FAX, email or website listed below. SmartWood is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

Assessment Team Composition – The assessment team will be led by Mr Tigran Martirosyan. The additional team members will be contracted.

Assessment Steps and Schedule – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ◆ Assessment organization – The SmartWood team will assemble and assign goals for responsible team members, will interview FMU employees and review of FMU documents.
- ◆ Field assessments – The team will visit sites managed by FMU.
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding FMU forest management in places surrounding the forest area. This will include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Public stakeholder meetings – A public stakeholder meeting will be held in a centrally located public meeting place for FMU. Date, time, and location will be announced soon.
- ◆ Final assessment briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with FMU managers and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ◆ Draft report production – The assessment team will produce a confidential draft report (in English and Bulgarian) that will be circulated for comments to FMU and a minimum of one independent peer reviewers. This should occur within 30 days after completion of the assessment.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from FMU forest managers and independent peer reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments through September 2007, SmartWood will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by November 2007.



Your Input Sought – As a part of the forest certification assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on FMU. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the assessment, during the assessment, or prior to 30 September August so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision by 30 November 2007. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows.

1. Meet with a SmartWood assessment team member during or shortly after the fieldwork.
2. Call and give comments to Dr. Andrzej Czech, the SmartWood staff person responsible for coordinating this certification assessment from NEPCon. If Dr. Andrzej Czech is not in the office, please give your comments to M.Sc. Kinga Sułkowska.
3. Submit written comments by mail, FAX or email to Dr. Andrzej Czech. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing the FMU.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access SmartWood's dispute resolution procedures at www.smartwood.org.

Contacting SmartWood

- ◆ Email: ac@nepcon.net for Dr. Andrzej Czech
- ◆ Worldwide Website – www.smartwood.org and www.nepcon.net
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