



How climate change has been addressed by forest policy in the WB region

Montenegro

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Has climate change been recognized as a problem for forestry?

What figures or studies project changes in key forest parameters like precipitation and temperature?



- In Montenegro it has been observed by forest inventories that forests have become more susceptible to climate change, air pollution and fires, as well as parasitic fungi, insects, and to a lesser extent rodents and parasitic flowering plants. The threats to forest ecosystems in Montenegro include: • Weakening of the immunity of certain tree species • Reduced productivity and bioecological stability • Intensive drying of forests, especially conifers: spruce and fir, but also relatively poor defoliation • Snowstorms, windbreaks and frost • The impact of air pollution
- Annual reports on health status on forests from forest protection service in last years observed: drying of forests, insect gradation, occurrence of plant diseases.
- Forest fires data figures that extreme wildfires, also known as sixth generations fires, are leading to a substantial degradation of Montenegrin forests and their associated natural, cultural, and economic values.
- All these phenomena are related to climate change, as they intensify after dry years.
- Figures from research and projects:
- Fire-prone weather conditions, exacerbated by climate change, combined with a noticeable trend of rural abandonment, leading to the accumulation of fuels at ground level and increased connectivity with fuels in the landscape, together make forests highly vulnerable to fires and lead to enormous damage to forest ecosystems.

Does a climate change action plan exist, and how is forestry addressed in it?



- As a signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Montenegro has been obliged to regularly report towards UNFCCC Secretariat on, among other information: GHG Inventory, mitigation and adaptation climate actions, tracking the implementation and achievement of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.
- The Government of Montenegro is in the process of preparing and submitting its **Fourth National Communication** and the **First biennial transparency report** for the implementation of its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and will update its GHG inventory by 2021, as well as mitigation and adaptation actions and will continue to report on its progress in implementing its commitments set out in its Nationally Determined Contributions.
- Third Biennial Climate Change Report made roadmap for improvement MRV system. Particularly for forestry, report have intention to prepare forestry sector for implementation of LULUCF regulation, establish forest reference levels to achieve long-term emission reduction targets.
- Also Third report appointed particular interest in forestry. In this regard, EU and UNFCCC negotiation processes related to adaptation policy and loss and damage. Support in engaging with GCF readiness activities. Design and tracking of the implementation of adaptation policies.

How is the role of forestry distinguished in other sectoral policies?

Can you provide examples?

The Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 recognizes the role of forestry through the preservation of natural resources by achieving the following strategic goals:

Stopping the degradation of the value of renewable natural resources: biodiversity, water, air, land is a strategic goal that will be achieved by implementing the following measures: enabling effective protection of protected areas of nature, ecologically valuable habitats, forest, water and coastal ecosystems, protected species of flora and fauna, air and soil (SDG 3, 6, 9, 11, 13 and 15), by improving the monitoring of the state of biodiversity, (SDG 2, 3, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15). By realizing this strategic goal and related measures, Montenegro will contribute to the achievement of the global goals of sustainable development (SDG 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14.) and especially goal SDG 15, which refers to forestry in the broadest context.

Effective management of renewable natural resources is a strategic goal that will be achieved by implementing the following measures: identifying and valuing ecologically valuable habitats and ecosystems and carrying out a review of the status of existing protected natural resources (SDG 12, 14, 15) by building capacities for integral management of protected natural resources, ecological valuable habitats and ecosystems (SDG 12, 14, 15, 17) by enabling resource-efficient rational use of forest resources (SDG 7, 13, 15,).

The Rural Development Strategy recognizes the importance of forestry through the restoration and protection of forests within agricultural holdings and defines support mechanisms for activities on the restoration and protection of forests in private ownership.



Is climate change recognized by forest policy, and if so, how?



- Two main forestry documents to mention climate change issues as a part of forest policy:
- Forest Law (2024)
- Article 29: The ecological functions of forests are, among others, mitigating macro climate change, regulating and improving the micro climate.
- Article 55: Forest monitoring is implemented for the purposes of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forest ecosystems and their services, with the aim of increasing forest resilience and enabling to safeguard the multifunctionality of forests, including in relation to, among others, the climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Forest Development Strategy (2025-2030)
- The strategy is generally in line with the EU Forest Strategy, which aims to ensure forest restoration and improved sustainable forest management in order to adapt to climate change and achieve forest resilience.
- Strategic goal 2: Preserving and strengthening the capacity of forests for adaptation and resilience to climate change, including fire prevention and other solutions

What measures does forest policy prescribe for climate change mitigation and adaptation? Can you give examples of financial, educational, or legislative instruments?

- Operational goal 2.1: Forest protection, preservation and improvement of health of forests
- Operational goal 2.2: Forest protection, preservation and improvement of their health
- Activities:
 - 2.2.1. Monitoring the adverse impact of climate change on forest ecosystems
 - 2.2.2. Development of a forest protection plan (against fire), preventive and repressive protection
 - 2.2.3. Protection from biotic and abiotic adverse impacts (risk factors)
 - 2.2.4. Adaptive forest planning and management
 - 2.2.5. Close-to-nature forest management
 - 2.2.6. Strengthening knowledge about forests and changes in forests
 - 2.2.7. National Forest Inventory (NFI) for Montenegro
- Example: Project Building fire - smart landscape in the Mediterranean region



**Are there secure monitoring and research instruments in place to track climate change?
If yes, can you provide examples?**

Legislative instruments: Articles 55-59 on new Forest Law regarding monitoring of forests (in accordance with EU Regulation Proposal on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests)

ICP Forests Program - strongly linked to observing the impact of climate change on forests through monitoring the vitality and health of forests at the pan-European level

Data collection, processing, archiving interpretation, and dissemination for GHG inventory through national communications and TNC submission to the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC.

What gaps exist in current forest policy regarding climate change challenges?



- In the area of climate change, Montenegro is working on the Law on Protection from the Negative Impacts of Climate Change, which is also in the form of a draft, which means that stable regulatory mechanisms have not yet been created for the mobilization of resources for sustainable forest management.
- Also, it is important for the implementation of the Strategic Plan by enabling countries to access existing and emerging financing mechanisms, including the Global Environmental Fund, the Green Climate Fund and others.
- In relation to the goal - Mitigating the impact of natural and anthropogenic hazards and strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerability and exposure to natural and anthropogenic hazards in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, forests are not included in addition to the undeniable negative impact of climate change on forest ecosystems and the risk associated with them and the statement in the state assessment that forests are very vulnerable ecosystems. That fact caused the absence of financial mechanisms to mitigate the negative impact of climate change on forest ecosystems.
- Montenegro has a shortage of specially qualified personnel in the forestry sector at all levels, and it is imperative to support a realistic approach to the principle of sustainability with empirical verification of the multifunctionality of forest ecosystems in severe risk conditions due to climate change.
- The level of scientific research into the impact of climate change on forest ecosystems is also quite low.

What objectives and measures would you recommend to address these gaps?

- It is necessary to strengthen the implementation and application of EU legal achievements relevant to forest management. Adopting legal regulations harmonized with the EU legislative framework is a prerequisite for inclusion in international financial flows and development policies.
- It is necessary to improve databases, inventories and the application of integrated forest monitoring systems at the national level, in order to raise the level of monitoring and to reach international standard.
- It is necessary to work on capacity development of institutions that create adaptation plans and mitigation measures, transfer of knowledge and exchange of experiences. The frequency of occurrence of risk factors at the regional and local level requires permanent monitoring on an annual level and realistic assessments of the impact of the aforementioned factors on the stability of forest ecosystems.
- It is very important to have a larger scope of applied research and to involve scientific research institutions in projects that address climate change. Cross-sectoral cooperation is very important given the need for a multidisciplinary approach.

Next steps

- Further construction of legislation harmonized with the EU legal framework
- Implementation of the new Forest Law towards achieving sustainable forest management
- Adoption and implementation of new Forest Development Strategy 2025-2030 towards strengthening the stability and resistance of forests to climate change

