

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN SERBIA WITH REGIONAL COUNTRIES

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Abstract

There is variability in the organizational forms of the forest management, which is caused by a variety of geographic position, natural and socio-economic characteristics and interests of individual countries. Regardless of the institutional reforms of the forestry sector there is no guaranteed "success model" of public forest administration. Aim of research is comparative analysis of state forest administration in Serbia with countries in region: Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Purpose of researching is identification of similarities and differences between different organizational forms based on benchmark analysis in accordance with supervisory, regulatory and advisory function of state forest administration. In the article are applied classical methods of researching: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction and comparison. The organization of state forest administration depends on the history of forest utilization and sector policies, traditions, stakeholders, institutional framework, economic conditions, and changes of ownership models, state forest fund as well as political will.

Key words: *forestry, institutions, public administration, organization, Serbia*

Introduction

State forest administration is part of public sector and represents main authority of forest policy. Implementation of forest policy is based on efficiency of forest institutions. Directorate of Forests in Republic of Serbia represents the main forest authority with the aim of formulating forest policy and supervision of forest legislation. Comparative analysis of state forest organization in Serbia and region countries is based on three main functions of state forest administration: regulatory, supervisory and advisory function.

Reform of state forest administration is possible after defining role and aims of forest authorities. Successful implementation requires precisely formulated forest policy and represents main aim of state forest administration. Recognizing and defining issues with proposed solutions are the most important for successful forest policy. Implementation of forest policy is based on political program with defined aims through forest legislation but also through professional, technical, informational and financial support to forest users.

In South East Europe countries state forest administration has been developed through development of public administration and forest economy. Though history, forestry represents one of the most important areas of economy, and with country development forestry became more important. With historic review of state forest administration in Serbia and previous countries on Balkan region, forestry had the important role in public administration.

Aim of research is comparative analysis of state forest administration in Serbia with countries in region: Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Purpose of research is identification of similarities and differences between different organizational forms based on benchmark analysis in accordance with supervisory, regulatory and advisory function of state forest administration.

Materials and Methods

Research is based on secondary data analysis by collecting and processing data that are already used in some previous researches or studies. Professional and scientific literature is used as well as legislative, available internal documentation, reports and studies. Data analyses include domestic sources as well as foreign sources of literature.

Scientific methods mostly used in organization of state forest administration are general system theory, analysis and synthesis, historical method, normative and comparative method. System analysis describes organizational issues and their causes, finding the basic necessities in the organization and defining the issues based on existing legislation and stakeholder's interests.

Method of analysis and synthesis was used to analyze the legislation of the forestry sector and define conclusions based on collecting, processing and literature review related to the organization of the forestry sector and the functions of the state forest administration. Historical method was applied to analyze development of forest administration, and normative method considered legal frameworks in terms of institutional capacity, economic policy and resources needed for the implementation of forest policy. The comparative method is applied for benchmark analysis of state forest administration in Serbia with selected countries in South East Europe: Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska/Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Montenegro, based on main functions of state forest administration. The countries were selected in accordance with size of the forestry sector, dynamic of reform process, type of forest management and the EU accession process.

Results and Discussion

Serbia – By Law on Ministries from 2004, Directorate of Forests was organizational unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management until April 2014, when the adoption of the new Law on Ministries prescribe competencies of agriculture, forestry, water management, environmental protection and natural resources under the newly formed Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection. Directorate of Forests is responsible for professional activities including forest policy, forest preservation, promotion and use of forests and wildlife, the implementation of measures to protect forests and wildlife, control of seeds and seedlings in forestry, inspection supervision in the field of forestry and hunting performed in accordance with the law and other statutory duties. Forest and hunting inspection as part of Directorate of Forests have supervision over the implementation of forestry and hunting legislative.

Slovenia – On the beginning of 1990s reorganization of forestry sector started with Act on Forests from 1993 and continues with new one adopted in 2002. With reorganization of forestry sector, the public forest services were excluded from the former forest management entities. At the level of state forests activities of the public forest service, activity of forest management and forest authorities were separated. Forestry sector today is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. Main documents of forest management in Slovenia are Law on Forest of the Republic of Slovenia and the National Forest Programme, which defines the national forest policy. The Slovenia Forest Service is a public institution, established by the Republic of Slovenia (The Act on Forests, 1993), which performs public forestry service in all Slovenian forests, irrespective of ownership.

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is responsible for forests and forestry sector at the entity level. Ministry is also responsible for providing guidance to cantonal administrations for forestry and forest companies and supervise the work of the Federal Forest Administration, which delivers strategies, programs and plans and provides technical support, collection and processing of forestry information (including information

provided by the cantons) and a variety of projects in the field of forestry in the Ministry. The cantonal government (Department of Forestry) is responsible for monitoring, reporting and organization of protection of forest fires and disease control, as well as for the development and approval of forest management plans for all forests in their canton.

Republic of Srpska - Supervision in forestry at the entity level is done by Inspection of the Republic of Srpska (aside from the Ministry of 2005), which include 12 inspectorate and within it forest and hunting inspection. This inspection has 6 territorial parts with a total of 17 inspectors. It performs inspections of state (24 forest entities based on 10-year and annual plans for forest management) and private forests (based on municipal forest management plans). Work is based on a sophisticated electronic system that includes the planning of inspection, description of duties and tasks of each inspector, checklists and forms, inspection reports, registry violations, etc. All inspectors have appropriate professional training. On this way supervisory function in Republic of Srpska is standardized in accordance with rules and procedures, with a clear legal basis for the work and achievement quality performance.

Montenegro – Directorate of Forests is the state authority responsible for forest management based in Pljevlja and includes 15 regional units. Boundaries of units correspond to municipal boundaries. Directorate include sector for forest management units for the cultivation and protection of forest use and forest concessions and unprotected plant species, department of economic affairs, department for the construction of forest infrastructure and administration department, which deals with legal issues, accounting, procurement, personnel records, disciplinary actions, etc.

Table 1 shows types of organizations of state forest administration in selected SEE countries: Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska) and Montenegro. The table highlights the relevant ministries of forestry, as well as relevant state bodies performing regulatory, supervisory and advisory functions in the forestry sector.

Table 1. Organization of state forest administration in SEE countries

State	The competent Ministry	Regulatory function	Supervisory function	Advisory function
Serbia	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	Directorate for Forests	Forestry-hunting inspection	Not established
Slovenia	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Sector for Forestry	Inspection	Local entities
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	Federal Directorate of forests	Forest Inspection	Not established
Republic of Srpska	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	Agency for Forests	Inspection	Not established
Montenegro	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Sector for Forestry	Inspection-Department for forestry, hunting and plants	Not established

Source: original

Forestry sector in South East European countries is under supervision of Ministry of Agriculture, as well as regulatory function of state forest administration which are in the form of directorate, department or agency. The supervisory functions of state forest administration are defined in form of inspection and also belong to the relevant ministries. Slovenia as EU member has clearly defined advisory function for forest users, while this is not the case in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Forestry sector has very important role in the economic development of analyzed countries, especially in the improvement of sustainable rural development. In Serbia, like other countries, functions of forest authority and forest management are separate while advisory function still not organized on efficient way. Employment is not uniform, taking on mind that number of employees in state administration is high, while the number in public sector is significantly higher, and on that way is satisfied social function of sustainable forest management.

Analysis of the regulatory functions of the state forest administration showed that in terms of formal structures based on laws, rules, regulations and norms of hierarchical structure. Employment limitation in state administration is main issue for engagement of educational staff and system of professional improvement does not exist. Political influence on employment, small salaries in state administration and organizational culture make state forest administration passive.

Supervisory function of state forest administration is based on existence of inspection within the regulatory function as the case in Serbia or within the inspection on state level as the case in Slovenia. Inspection is established in every analyzed country but there are differences on organizing way and equipment. In Slovenia situation is a little better, until other countries in region are limited in improvements with limited budget funds. It is extremely important on which way inspection will be organized within the regularly function of state forest administration.

Advisory function is equally important as previous two described functions of state forest administration. In accordance with EU legislative, in Slovenia forest entities has that role. Other countries are faced with lack of precisely defined aims of advisory service, but that does not mean that current units in state forest administration are not available for any kind of advice for forest users, in accordance with procedures. Through research, studies and papers importance of advisory service establishment is extremely emphasized but until now nothing has been done. Advisory service is primarily based on help and support to private forest owners, small and medium enterprises in forestry and non-governmental sector.

Needs of state forest administration of analyzed countries are:

Recruitment of high quality and well-educated staff that will be able to contribute to the improvement of state forest administration;

Training of existing forest and hunting inspectors and better coordination of inspections;

Organizational changes that would clearly define activities and competences of state forest administration and contribute to more efficient work;

Clearly define the criteria for budget fund allocation;

Development (improving) of the information system and

Development of advisory services for support to private forest owners and small and medium enterprises in forestry.

Conclusion

State forest administration is under dynamic changes in terms of public informing, employment policy and requirements for training and development of employees. Work of the competent authorities of the public forest administration was observed in the overall organizational structure that relies on laws, rules, standards, regulations, and hierarchical

structures. System of training for professional is not established and on that way employees have lack of motivation for improvement because of the political influence in employment is very strong.

Improvement and development of forest sector require political will, leadership and commitment of the most important stakeholders in the sector. Primarily is important to resolve organizational issues and main causes of the problems in the sector, what will lead to real changes that should result in efficiency of sector, motivated staff, and increase transparency in business, sustainable organizational change as well as increasing employment in the process of European integration and better understanding of forestry sector in public.

It should be noted that regardless of the institutional reform of the forestry sector there is no guaranteed "success model" of public forestry sector, what depends on many factors: history and use of forest sector policy, tradition, stakeholders pressure, institutional framework, economic conditions and changes, the model of ownership, forest growing stock as well as political will.

To improve efficiency of state forest administration it is required to:

- motivate employees in state administration;
- achieve higher transparency in the implementation of policies and procedures;
- find the most efficient organizational solutions;
- increase the ability to use financial resources from EU funds;
- contribute to a better public understanding of forestry.

Main issues of state forest administration are reflected in inefficient work, political influence, and high number of employees in public administration, non-appropriate internal organization and inadequate control of public enterprises in forestry. Reform of state forest administration is definitely needed and necessary for the development and improvement of the forestry sector.

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