Development of technical and professional training systems and methodology for vocational training within the forestry and environmental sector in Tajikistan

In many developing countries, forest and land use management, its education system and its training approaches have failed to respond to the exigencies of sustainable management and to adapt to the realities of rural societies. Curricula, teaching and training methods and tools often have been developed that are not relevant to the development objectives, to the needs of local managers, local users and to the labour market in general.

Forest resources in Tajikistan

Forests cover 3-3.5% of Tajikistan's area. The total area of the State Forest Fund is 1.8 million ha. The area covered by forests is about 410 thousand ha. All forests are State property.

Forest covered area

- **Juniper forests** consisting of various juniper-tree species. They occupy the biggest area comparing to other types of forests.
- **Xerophytic light forests** mainly consist of dry-resistant leaf-fall tree formations with predominance of pistachio *Pistacia vera*, almond *Amygdalus bucharica*, *Punica granatum* and other species. Main xerophytic light forests in Tajikistan are spread on the south.
- **Broad-leaf forests** are situated at the altitudes, consist in temperate and moisture-loving broad leaf trees with predominance of walnut *Juglans regia*.
- **Small-leaf forests** grow within Tajikistan's mountain rivers and consist of trees with predominance of white willow *Salix alba*, Tian-Shan birch *Betula tianschanica* and Tajik poplar *Populus tadschikistanica*, etc.

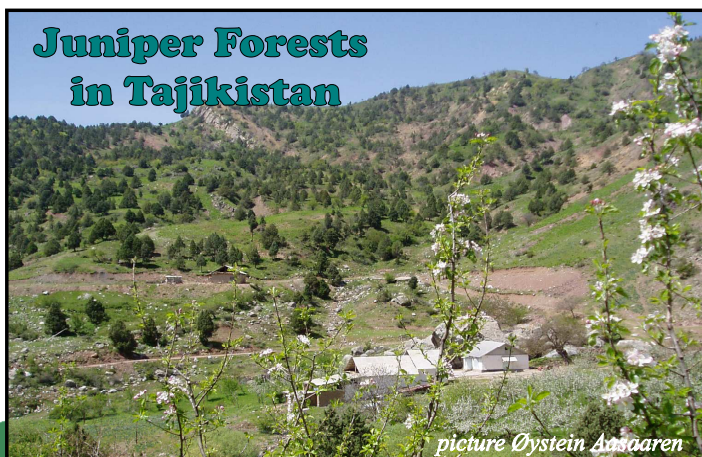*Juniper Forests in Tajikistan*

picture Øystein Aasaaren

Overall objective of NFG project

The overall objective of the **NFG** project in Tajikistan is to develop and implement a model for vocational training adapted to the forestry and Environmental sector in the country. The project activities will especially focus on Forest & land use management issues.
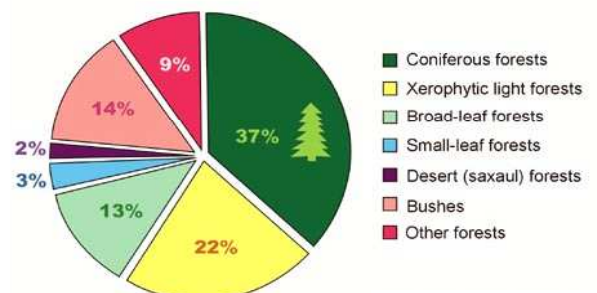
Tajikistan is a mountainous country in Central Asia (former USSR). The forests of Tajikistan, as it's the case in the majority of forests in this region, constitute a specific and fragile ecosystem, facing various constraints and difficulties due to a particularly hard ecological (high altitude, dryness,…) and socio-economic context (pressure from the local users for firewood collection and grazing).

To overcome these constraints and enhance sustainable forest and land use management, there is an urgent need for a special management techniques and procedures, which needs adequate technical and professional training, to be introduced step by step with the assistance of applied research, scientific and educational institutions.

This is just what the **NFG** project is aiming to implement by equipping people with the required professional skills and knowledge, through a partnership with various teams of professionals, managers, specialists and concerned local stakeholders.

Structure of Forest area

- Coniferous forests 37%
- Xerophytic light forests 22%
- Broad-leaf forests 13%
- Small-leaf forests 3%
- Desert (saxaul) forests 2%
- Bushes 14%
- Other forests 9%

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TREES FOR THE FUTURE

An Innovative Approach !

The forestry sector in Tajikistan has suffered great losses due to conflicts, isolation and lack of resources, both human and financial. The level of education and training has dropped dramatically and is still on a level far below what is necessary to meet the demand for upgraded skills to fulfil all requirements regarding sustainable forest and land use management.

Tajik Village in mountain zone

picture Øystein Aasaaren
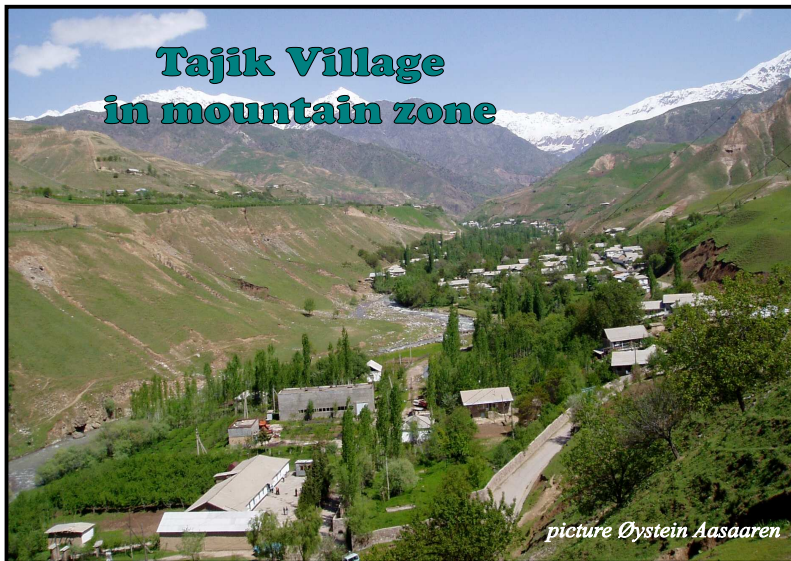
The central idea of the approach consists in an interactive process that forms a bridge between the learning/training process and professional activities in forest and land use sector (work-related or livelihood activities). Its means that various stakeholders (politics, scientists, managers, professionals, users,…) linked to forestry an land use sector in Tajikistan, will analyse the situation and develop **"needed themes/topics"** which are directly linked to field of their responsibility or specific tasks.

In this respect, **NFG** project will particularly focus on stakeholder involvement and participation in all steps and aspects of the training/educational process. **NFG** project will focus on several direct target groups and final beneficiaries :

- **The local stakeholders.** The involvement of users is a fundamental and necessary condition to improve forest and land use management. Sustainable Forest Management is to be based on a sincere and complete association of people to forestry interventions. It's fundamental that the managers (foresters) and the users (local population) realise that management needs the participation of everybody. This will be possible by transforming people's consuming mentality, by increasing their awareness, by improving and adapting profitable practices while protecting the environment.

- **The Tajik Forest Services.** As it is the case in many developing countries, the present management practices in Tajikistan are still too much top-down oriented so that there is a need for a change towards a new culture, based on communication and negotiation with all interested groups. In the framework of **NFG** project, the Tajik Forest Services will be equipped with educated/trained staff and technical (practical) tools for new style of forest and land use management aiming at sustainability with association of the directly concerned stakeholder : the local population.

- **The Technical, scientific and educational institutions.** Through the **NFG** project the concerned institutions will be involved in order to be in connection with the modern approaches for target-oriented applied research, education and training linked to the demands and needs expressed by local stakeholders.

In this respect, the main goal of **NFG** project is to contribute by equipping people with the required professional skills and knowledge.

In order to adapt to local context (Tajikistan) with its various aspects and its changing trends (in the sphere of work organisation, social values, market characteristics,…), the **NFG** approach to organise and implement the Vocational training in Tajikistan will be based on three fundamentals:
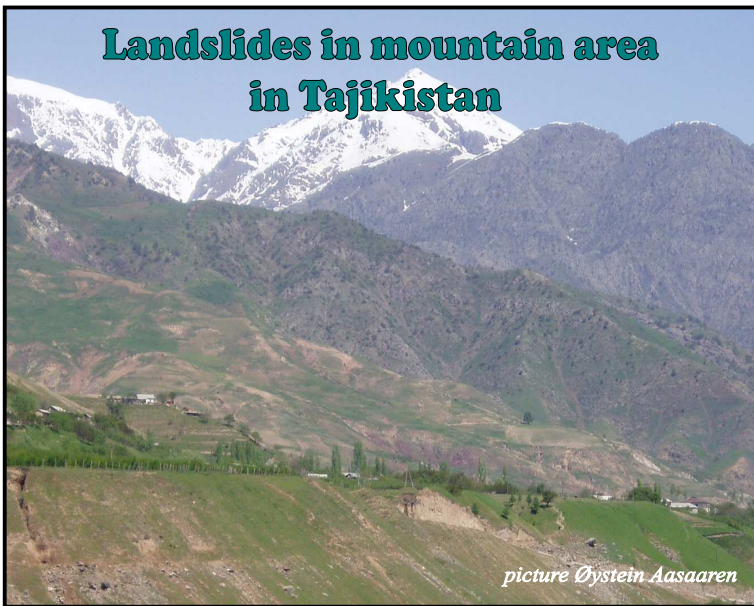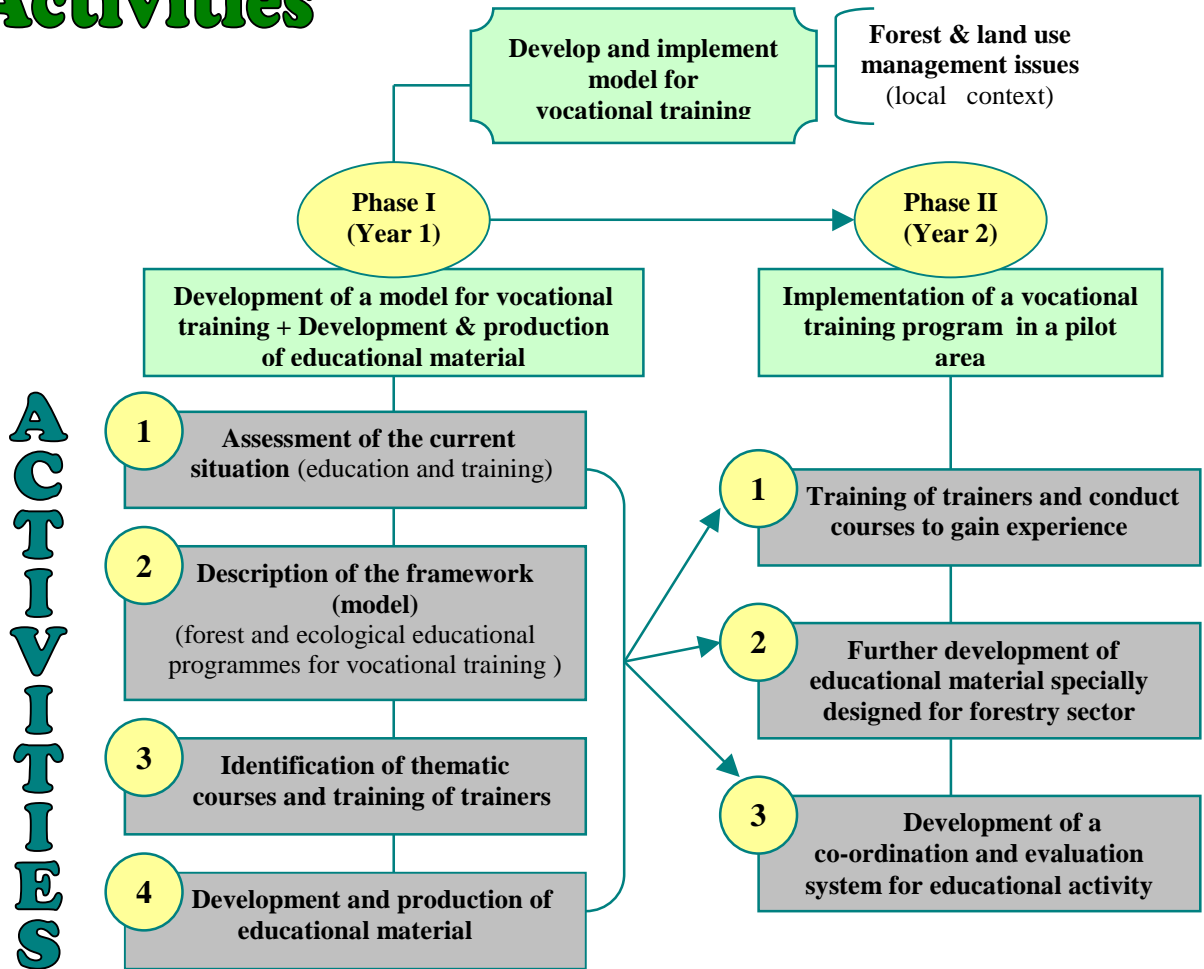
The Vocational Training should be/have:

1	**Multipurpose and multifunctional**
2	**More global and Integrated form**
3	**Flexible**

- Enable trainees to benefit from an interactive learning/training process.
- To introduce them more adequate knowledge
- To encourage them to think for themselves (select, prioritise, co-ordinate,…)

Norwegian and Tajik specialists at field level

picture Øystein Aasaaren

In addition to be a **participatory approach**, the **NFG** methodology is also :

- **Trainees based approach**: should be focused on the interests and needs of the trainees.
- **Self-organisation approach** based on the training: the defining of objectives, planning and implementation should be the responsibility of the trainees themselves.
- **Practical and action based approach**: trainees should carry out specific activities on both theoretical and practical levels.
- **Result based approach**: the results obtained should be relevant, useful and beneficial.

NFG project overall Activities

The **NFG** project in Tajikistan is planned in two phases. Both phases have a number of belonging activities. Phase one will start in May 2008, and it is expected to be followed by a phase two in the next year (2009). It is an important feature for the project that the first phase (year 1) is self sufficient: that means is not totally dependent on a second phase (year 2), but will as a project of its own contribute to value creation. Even tough the first phase can be carried out alone; the second phase would be important and give the total project a better value.

Develop and implement model for vocational training

Forest & land use management issues (local context)

Phase I (Year 1) → **Phase II (Year 2)**

Development of a model for vocational training + Development & production of educational material

Implementation of a vocational training program in a pilot area

ACTIVITIES

1 Assessment of the current situation (education and training)

2 Description of the framework (model) (forest and ecological educational programmes for vocational training)

3 Identification of thematic courses and training of trainers

4 Development and production of educational material

1 Training of trainers and conduct courses to gain experience

2 Further development of educational material specially designed for forestry sector

3 Development of a co-ordination and evaluation system for educational activity

## Landslides in mountain area in Tajikistan

picture Øystein Aasaaren

- The specific objective of the first year activities is to assess the current situation regarding education and training in the forestry and land use sector in Tajikistan, make a description of framework for a countrywide vocational training model, and identify thematic courses for training of trainers. A special focus will be directed to the courses and knowledge that meet the international, national and local demands.

- During the second phase (year 2), the main objective of the NFG project activities is to establish a co-ordination and evaluation system for vocational training, development and production of educational material specially designed for forestry/land use purposes, and of course the training of key personals and instructors/trainers.

The management of **NFG** project in Tajikistan will be organised with an overall co-ordinator from **NFG** who will be responsible for programme implementation. The majority of practical issues will be delegated to the national co-ordinator (s) in Tajikistan. At local level, it's a "team leader training programme" who will co-ordinate the project activities, local participants and involved stakeholders.

TREES FOR THE FUTURE

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The project "Pilot Area"

The **NFG** project focus on local, practical and result based approach. To consider these characteristics and insure multipurpose, integrated and targeted vocational training activities, the project will start to act in a defined zone. This would allow a better implementation of the activities and would serve as a model for more efficient actions in the other zones. The choice of this "pilot area" was done on the basis of the following criteria and components:

- Area which is located close to forests.
- Presence of settlements in the area (a real dependence of local population on forest and land use).
- Presence of Territorial Management Units (*leskhoze*) insuring protection, control and forest management at local level.
- For more efficiency, the area with easy accessibility should be preferred.
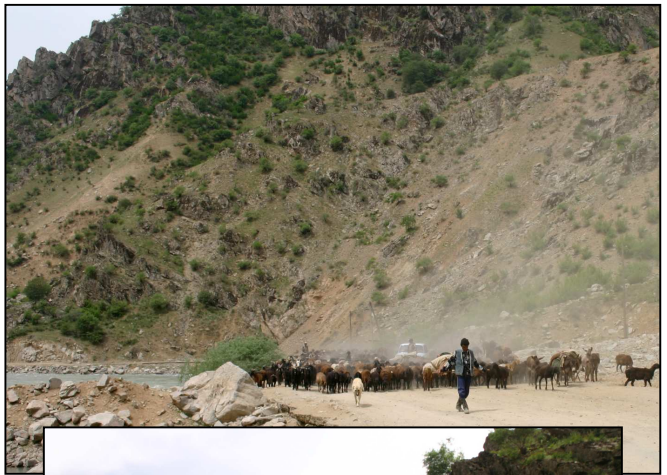
pictures Kamel Chorfi

These criteria were discussed in a joint manner with all the main partners. As a result, it was agreed that the "pilot area" including most of these criteria is **RAMITSKAYA USHELIA**. Within this locality (about 80 km from Dushanbe) we can locate: Forest Management Units, rural communities (settlements) close to the forest (in and around the State Forest Fund), a Forest Protected Area, and an experimental plot (for applied research activities) supervised by the Tajik Forest Institute.

The **NFG project** partners in 2008

Leading/implementing Agency:

- **Norwegian Forestry Group** (NFG), P.O. Box 123 Lilleaker, Lilleakerveien 31, N-0216 Oslo, Norway. Phone/fax: +47 22 51 89 80/+47 22 51 89 10.
  E-mail: nfg@norskog.no (contact person: **Mr. Øystein Aasaaren)**

Partners:

- **State Committee on Environment Conservation and Forestry of the Republic of Tajikistan**, 62 Drugba Narodov Str., Dushanbe 734025, Tajikistan. Phone/fax: +992.372.26.12.43/+992.372.26.24.21. (contact person: **Mr. Davlatov Hursant**)

- **Center of support and development of natural protected areas and forestry (IUCN) of the republic of tajikistan,** Office 2, 12 A.Donish str., Dushanbe 734003 Tajikistan. Tel/ Fax: ++992 37 2260569/++992 37 2260349.
  E-mail: eldar@tajik.net (contact person: **Mr. Kokul Kasirov**)

For further information, please contact NFG Managing Director, Mr. Øystein Aasaaren: oystein.aasaaren@norskog.no

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T R E E S   F O R   T H E   F U T U R E