



DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

**FRAMEWORK FOR THE
NATIONAL FORESTRY PROGRAMME (NFP) IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

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FORESTRY**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The White Paper on Sustainable Forestry Development in South Africa (1996) provided a new vision for forestry. The White Paper made a commitment to turn policy into action through a strategic plan, namely, the National Forestry Action Programme (NFAP). The NFAP was a three-year programme that came to an end in December 1999. It had many positive outcomes, but an important shortcoming has been the fact that it was too ambitious in terms of its scope and objectives. As a result, the implementation of the twenty-three NFAP strategies has been partial. This points to the need to clearly prioritise strategies and tackle them within the framework of available resources.
- 1.2 Due to the same problem as outlined above there has, internationally, been a move away from the NFAC as a tool for nationally coordinated participatory forestry policy and strategy development process. Since the mid-nineties and following the intergovernmental negotiations leading to the creation of United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), countries made the commitment to pursue NFPs as a national forest policy and planning framework. The NFP offers a more flexible framework, but adherence to certain key principles for countries to develop their forestry policies and plans.
- 1.3 The NFP framework presented herein has been designed to meet South Africa's requirements for a coherent and participative programme on forestry that clearly prioritise policies and strategies and tackle them within the framework of available resources. It avoids creating an organisational bureaucracy for NFP management and support and is designed to make maximum use of structures and processes already available. Through the adherence to key principles it ensure that South Africa meets its international obligations on forestry management and development.

What is a national forest programme?

A national forest programme (NFP) is a globally adopted framework for national forest policy development, planning and implementation, which is applicable to all countries and all types of forest. It constitutes an integral part of a country's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). The NFP framework is based on the understanding that there are common elements, which should be part of any national programme that aims to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of forests. However, a NFP is not just a programme in the sense of focusing only on planning. In NFP development, considerable emphasis is placed on implementation, with well-defined action plans and investment programmes. The involvement of a wide range of forest users at local, national and global levels is encouraged to help the development of partnerships between all stakeholders.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Internationally the NFP is guided by a set of principles designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of national, and sub-national, planning and the implementation of forestry activities. The adoption of principles, which are listed below, will ensure that the NFP for South Africa will make a significant contribution to the achievement of sustainable forestry development in the South Africa, Africa and internationally.

- 2.1 Sustainability: Policies, programmes and reforms developed and implemented during the process must be sustainable. This means that all such plans must be based on a realistic assessment of financial and institutional constraints and economic realities.

- 2.2 National sovereignty and country leadership: States have the sovereign right to use their forest resources in accordance with their own environmental policies and development needs. The preparation of a national forest programme is a national initiative for which each country must assume full leadership and responsibility.
- 2.3 Partnership: Each country has to find its own balance between public and private sector participation, central and decentralized participation, and national and international inputs.
- 2.4 Participation: It is only through genuine participation that divergent views and conflicts of interest between various stakeholders can be openly recognised and, where possible, resolved or at least accommodated within a broad consensus.
- 2.5 Adopting a holistic approach: Forests are diverse ecosystems that are valued broadly across society. Providing linkages to other sectors of the economy is therefore a vital component of NFP development. This involves consideration of the mutual impact of policies and practices (e.g. water and forests).
- 2.6 A long-term, iterative process: The NFP is a long-term, on-going process. It does not end with the preparation of a programme or plan. Rather, these are benchmarks in a strategic cycle comprising planning as well as implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities.
- 2.7 Capacity building: Capacity building is one of the essential elements of a NFP. Throughout the process, actions need to be taken to develop the planning and implementation capacity of national institutions and other key stakeholders.
- 2.8 Policy and institutional reforms: One of the priorities of a NFP is to ensure that the policy and institutional framework promotes sustainable forest development, not only in the forest sector itself but also in other sectors of the economy.
- 2.9 Consistency with national planning frameworks and global initiatives: NFPs need to link with national development plans, as well as with regional and local strategies. They should also help implement UNCED's Agenda 21 and related multilateral conventions and initiatives.
- 2.10 Raising awareness: The NFP needs to raise the visibility of the forest sector and its priority in national agendas. The full value of forests and trees has to be demonstrated as well as their contribution to social, economic and environmental issues.
- 2.11 National policy commitment: The NFP must be backed by the long-term commitment of all national stakeholders, particularly at political and decision-making levels.
- 2.12 International commitment: The long-term commitment of the international community and its institutions is essential. These should respect the policies, strategies and programmes approved by countries, adapting their own priorities to country priorities.

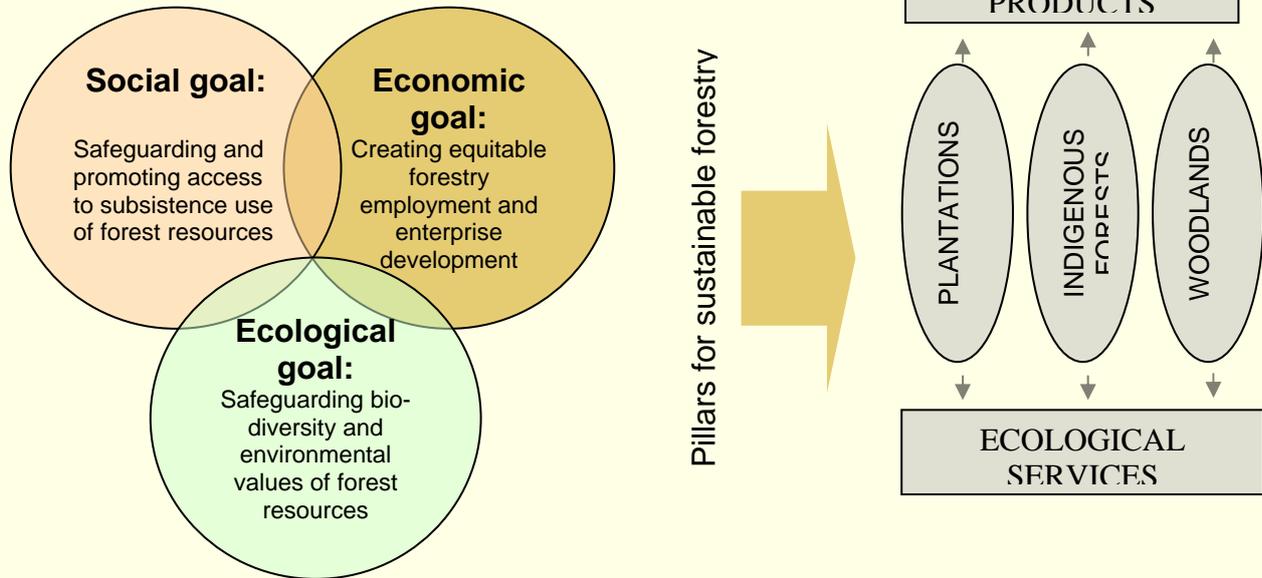
3. VISION AND GOALS

The NFP is guided by a Vision for Forestry and a set of Goals for Sustainable Forestry Development for South Africa.

NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME (NFP)

FORESTRY VISION

Forests are managed for people and we need to create an enabling environment for social and economic development through sustainable forestry, especially at the local levels



4. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 The NFP is seen as a coherent and overarching framework, within which specific forestry policies, strategies and sub-programmes will be developed, based on national priorities and available resources. It needs to ensure that specific policies, strategies and sub-programmes are developed in an integrated, co-ordinated and participatory manner relevant to the needs of South Africa, whilst at the same time ensuring that the country adheres to international processes and conventions to which it is a signatory.

4.2 The proposed approach for the NFP is not to embark on a new all encompassing participatory process, but to coordinate and integrate existing policy/strategy development initiatives within a single programme. In South Africa the key elements of the NFP framework have already been laid down in the National Forests Act, 1998:

- Section 3 of the Act sets out the principles that need to be pursued when developing and implementing Government policies on forestry. Some of these are given more content in the Act (e.g. community forestry), while others need to be developed through further policies and strategies (e.g. Forestry Enterprise Development and BEE).
- Section 4 of the Act requires the Minister to develop criteria, indicators and standards to measure and monitor progress towards the achievement of the above principles. These have subsequently been developed.
- Section 6 places a statutory requirement on the Minister to monitor forests in the above regard and to report progress to Parliament at least every three years - The State of Forestry Report.
- Section 46 requires the Minister to develop and implement policy for forests and their management.

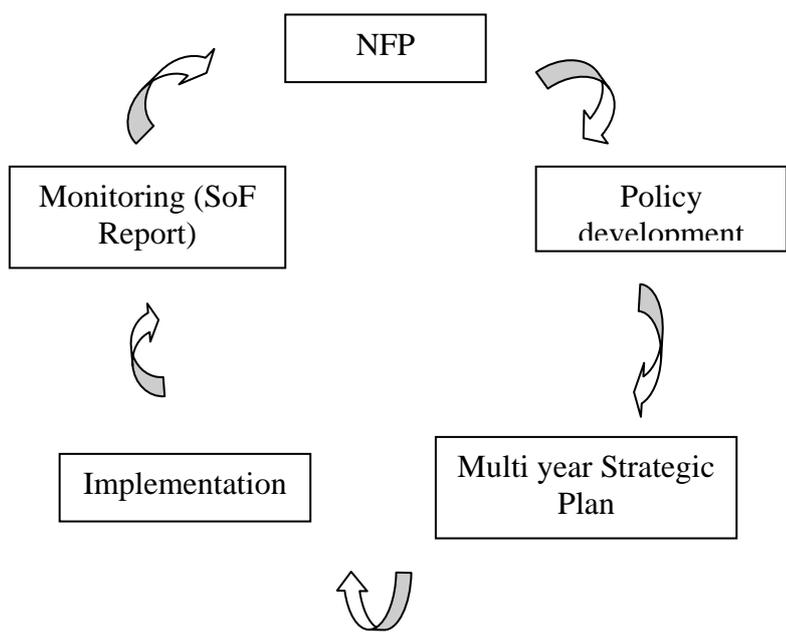
- Section 5 requires the Minister to carry out or commission research to promote the objectives of forestry policy.
- Section 33 provides for the establishment of the National Forestry Advisory Council, with representation from various interest groups to advise the Minister on matters affecting forestry.

4.3 Based on the aforementioned, the NFP is viewed as an integrated programme cycle that links monitoring, planning, budgeting and implementation into a three-year rolling programme that pursues the forestry principles outlined in the NFA. The monitoring results are captured in the State of Forestry Report. This report then informs NFP planning and implementation priorities for the next three years. This, in turn, feeds into the Multi-year Strategic Plan for the Department. The inclusion of the monitoring component and a direct link with the multi-year budgetary process will address an important shortcoming of the NFAP.

4.4 The implementation of the NFP should avoid creating new consultative and organisational structures and should aim at using structures and processes already available. The consultation mechanism required for developing priority actions will depend on the particular requirements of each of these initiatives, as each have their own set of stakeholder and circumstances to contend with. In fact many of these initiatives are already underway and have their own process and consultative structures. The National Forestry Advisory Council (NFAC) would take on the role of a core stakeholder advisory group that reviews progress and gives strategic direction to the NFP process. This will give added purpose and strategic direction to the NFAC's advisory role.

Key Features of the NFP:

- Overarching framework for forestry policies and strategies
- A rolling 5-year programme that feed into DWAF's Multi-year Strategic Plan
- Priority policies and strategies for each NFP-cycle to be identified and developed through stakeholder participation based on national priorities and available resources
- CI&S to be used to monitor progress and report thereon through the 3-yearly State of Forestry Report



4.5 The Chief Directorate: Forestry (Policy and Regulations) will be responsible for the following:

- Day-to-day management of the NFP process, i.e. the policy and strategy development initiatives that are implemented through the NFP framework.
- Logistical support to the NFAC.
- Monitoring the implementation and impact of forestry policies and strategies and feeding this into the State of Forestry Report.
- Monitoring changes and trends in the forestry sector and feeding this into the State of Forestry Report, as well as feeding this into Key Issues Papers that would require further attention through the NFP.
- The management of the forestry research programme to service the information needs of the NFP.

5. PRIORITY FORESTRY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

5.1 The initial focus of the NFP should be on translating existing forestry policies and strategies into practice and on closing key policy and implementation gaps.

5.2 The following priorities are identified for inclusion into the first NFP-cycle. Most of the priority initiatives envisaged under the NFP are already underway, such as the Eastern Cape afforestation strategy in support of Forestry Enterprise Development and the transfer of state forests to communities.

FORESTRY POLICIES & STRATEGIES	FOCUS AREAS (GOALS)		
	Social	Economic	Ecological
State Forest Transfers & Forestry related Land Reform	X	X	
Community Forest Management (woodlands, small indigenous forests and woodlots)	X	X	X
Participatory Forest Management (public and private forests)	X	X	X
Forestry Enterprise Development (FED) – detailed in table below	X	X	
Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment in the Forestry Sector	X	X	
Forest Products Innovation	X	X	X
HIV/AIDS in the Forestry Sector	X	X	
Fuelwood Energy (carbon-neutral energy production)	X		X
Management of Ecological Services (climate change, soil & water conservation)		X	X
Forest Protected Area System Planning (integrated conservation planning and forestry bio-diversity hotspots)			X

KEY FED SUB-STRATEGIES
FED Organisation for Bargaining Power
FED Awareness & Access to Information
FED Inclusion in Integrated Provincial and Municipal Planning
Afforestation Initiative for Eastern Cape & KwaZulu-Natal
Streamlining Afforestation Licensing Process
Establishing Certification Systems for Small Grower
Delivering Training and Extension Services
Delivering Financial and Business Services
State Forest Transfers & Forestry Related Land Reform
Including FED in a Broad-based BEE Charter for the Forestry Sector

INSTRUMENTS FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Criteria, Indicators and Standards for Monitoring
- Forestry Research, Technology and Innovation
- Information Systems
- Regulatory Framework
- Human Resources Financial Resources