

Institutional Aspects on National Forest Programmes in Portugal

I. Seita Coelho and P. Ochôa Carvalho

1. Relevant Institutions for the Forestry Sector

The Forestry Sector's political responsibility at State level in Portugal belongs mainly to the Ministry of Agriculture (*Ministério da Agricultura, do Desenvolvimento Rural e Pescas*). The Department of Rural Development (Secretaria de Estado do Desenvolvimento Rural) is responsible for the productive (or cultivated) forests, their role in the rural development, soil and water conservation, desertification problems.

The Ministry of Environment (*Ministério do Ambiente e do Ordenamento do Território*), is relevant for it oversees the natural parks and other protected areas (around 20% of the territory) and has jurisdiction concerning the forest domain, in environmental issues like biodiversity, natural resources conservation, and territorial management.

The General Directorate of Forestry (*Direcção-Geral de Florestas – D.G.F.*) is the National Forest Authority, responsible for “coordinating and supporting the implementation of the forest policy, through forest management and protection, production, conversion and marketing of forest products and other forest resources”.

The seven Regional Directorates of Agriculture (*Direcções Regionais de Agricultura*), through the respective forest divisions (*direcções de serviço das florestas*), are responsible for the implementation of forest policies at the regional level, “in agreement with functional instructions from the National Forest Authority and with the participation of representative organizations of rural people”, being therefore the regional operational component of the National Forest Policy. The Regional Directorates of Agriculture are also responsible for the management of public forests and for the elaboration of regional forest management plans (*Planos Regionais de Ordenamento Florestal – PROF*). Furthermore the Regional Directorates of Agriculture evaluate and approve investment projects, supported by public funding as well as control of other measures supporting forest production.

Other institutions

The public Institute IFADAP (*Instituto de Financiamento e Apoio ao Desenvolvimento da Agricultura e Pescas*) overseen by both the Ministries of Agriculture and Finances is in charge of the financing of the agricultural and forest development policies.

Forest Research Institutions is performed by public Universities (Ministry of Education) with undergraduate and graduate programmes in Forestry, private research institutes as well as the National Forest Research Station, being part of the public research institute of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Stakeholders and partners

Four Community Forests secretariats (*secretariados dos baldios*). The objectives of these organisms are the promotion, protection and development of community forest areas.

Federations, Associations and Cooperatives of forest owners. A considerable number of forest owner associations of all kinds at national, regional and local levels, covering all the territory. One forest contractors' association and several forest industries' associations, organized by type of industry (cork, wood and furniture, pulp and paper).

Hunter and Fishermen are organized in a Federation, representing 17 regional organizations.

Four environmentalist NGO's, ten professional associations and several local government (municipalities) associations

2. Co-operation on the State Level

Consultative institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture

The National Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (*Conselho Nacional da Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural*), " is a consultation institution for the Minister of Agriculture intended to implement dialogue and consultation with stakeholders and interested parties about agriculture, rural development, PECUÁRIA, forest, conversion and marketing of agricultural products, environment and consumer interests. It is composed of 34 members, in which representatives of the production sector and industry predominate.

Regarding the Forestry Sector only, the Interministerial Commission for Forestry Affairs (*Comissão Interministerial para os Assuntos da Floresta - CIAF*) is presided by the Minister of Agriculture and was created to make articulation of different sectorial policies possible as well as to evaluate the consequences of different policies on the forest sector. This commission whose commitments are intended to discuss and recommend political measures adequate to the integrated development of the Forest Sector with others. Its composition includes representatives of the following ministries: Finances; Internal Affairs; Equipment; Planning and Territorial Administration; Economy and Environment.

The Consultative Forest Council (*Conselho Consultivo Florestal*) is presided by the Minister of Agriculture and includes representatives from the forest interest groups. This council is a forum of discussion and monitoring of the forest policy whose role is to make recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture about new policies and the implementation of the current policies. Its composition includes: the Director general of forests, and representatives of the Public Administration (2), Municipalities (1), Community Forest administrations (2), Forest Cooperatives (2), Forest Owners' Associations (3), Forest Contractors' associations (2), Forest products marketing associations (2), Forest Industries' Associations (2), Professional organizations (2),

Working class organizations (2), environmental groups (2), Teaching and Research Institutes (2), and 3 individual personalities widely recognized in the field.

The National Council for Hunting and Fauna Conservation (*Conselho Nacional da Caça e da Conservação da Fauna - CNCCF*). This Council is a consultative organ for the Minister of Agriculture regarding the definition and implementation of the national hunting policy. Its composition includes: the Director general of forests, and representatives of Public Administration (3), Municipalities (1), Hunters national organizations (8), managers of touristic interest hunting zones (1), managers of municipal interest hunting zones (1), big game hunters (1), Traditional hunting associations (1), farmers confederations (3), Working class organizations (2), environmental groups (2), Hunting species breeders' associations (2), armourers' organizations (1) and 3 individual personalities widely recognized in the field.

The Commission to following of Forest Operations (*Comissão de Acompanhamento para as Operações Florestais - CAOF*) was created to analyse the investments involving afforestation, tending and forest harvesting operations, with special attention to efficiency parameters. This is a commission that coordinates the actions directed to build a database of standard working times for all forest operations. Its composition includes representatives from: the General Directorate of Forests; IFADAP (Financing Institute, see above); Forest Owners' Organizations; Forest Contractors' organizations, Institute of Hydraulics, Rural Engineering and environment (IHERA), that coordinates the Commission.

The National Specialized Commission for Forest Fires (*Comissão Nacional Especializada de Fogos Florestais - CNEFF*) is a consultation commission that supports the Ministry of Internal Affairs in coordinating prevention, detection, fighting of forest fires. Its composition includes one national coordinator, the Director general of forests, the President of the National Service of BOMBEIROS, the president of the Institute for Nature Conservation, the president of the Institute of Meteorology, the president of the Youth Institute; and representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Association of Municipalities.

3. Forest Certification

A Portuguese National Standard for Certification of Sustainable Forest Management ("Portuguese Standard for Sustainable Forest Management Systems. Application of the pan-european criteria for sustainable forest management") was developed with the participation of many forestry professionals and other interested parties, representing the main forestry stakeholders. The participation process consisted of: (1) establishment of a technical commission; (2) organisation of discussion meetings.

A technical commission (*CT145 - Gestão Florestal Sustentável*) was established under the Portuguese Institute for Quality (*IPQ – Instituto Português da Qualidade*) (Ministry of Economy), having been facilitated by the General Directorate on Environment (*DGA - Ministry of Environment and Land-Use Planning*). The organizations invited to

participate included Forest Owners' regional and national associations (13); Forest Industries' (3 associations and 5 companies); Public administration (3, Agriculture and Environment Ministries); Environmental NGO's (3); Research and Development (2); Certification and Consultant Organizations (5). A period of consultation and public discussion process was set up. After this period, the technical committees have analyzed all contributions received and submitted the final draft for approval.

The Portuguese Forestry Sector Council (Conselho da Fileira Florestal Portuguesa - CFFP) has been formed to promote forest management in Portugal and its control. Its members come from Forest Owners, Forest Industries, Consumers' and Environmental protection Organizations. This Council is also responsible for the submission of the Portuguese standard to the Pan-European Certification Council (PEFC).

4. Current state of the NFP

Basically the characteristics and relevant aspects of the Portuguese NFP referred by Mendes (1999) (EFI Proceedings, n°30) remain the same, especially regarding Legal and Policy framework;

Reform of the Forest Services (with a strong movement towards regionalization and integration with agricultural regional services;

An important development of Forest Owners' associations at local, regional and national levels;

Targets and strategies of the National Forest Plan;

Questions regarding innovation in funding forestry are still pending;

Pedro Ochôa Carvalho will present some other aspects of Intersectoral Coordination in Savonlinna.

Conclusions

Some traditional characteristics of Forest (or Rural) Policy remain namely, a strong centralization (top-down process) in policy definition and implementation. Participation of relevant stakeholders has always been weak, but in the last decade positive trends in stakeholder organization and participation have taken place. Forestry in Portugal has always been associated with forest and other industries. Only recently have the Forest owners' associations become stronger and an active part of the policy process. As is clear from the description made above, representation of interested parties in the institutions has been assured. However, the question remains about the effectiveness of this participation and conflict resolution approaches in NFP. The institutional diversity that exists in Portugal, may generate complex relationships in the political process with special emphasis on intersectoral coordination. Some examples of bottom-up approaches have been adopted, like in the certification process. However the insufficient public and political awareness of the problems related to the forest sector, may originate problems concerning the policy-making process.