

CONSULTATIVE COORDINATING
COMMITTEE

PARTNERSHIPS
AND COLLABORATIONS
AT ALL LEVELS

CHANGES IN
POLICY
NEW NATIONAL
POLICY DOCUMENT
INCLUDES FOREST
COMMUNITY RIGHTS

UNITING FOR LAND RIGHTS IN

ALBANIA

INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING
INFLUENCE

STRONGER -
VOICE AND
POWER

CHANGES IN
PRACTICE IN
IMPLEMENTATION

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Albania's forests are an important national resource, but centralised control over many decades failed to protect them. Attempts to decentralise decision making and place a moratorium on forestry and hunting in 2016 shifted the burden of responsibility to local government without adequate support and did not recognise the needs of local forest users including farmers and women. Since 2013, NES partners, supported by the International Land Coalition, have played a key role in a national Forestry Reform Process, conducting local level consultations that in turn informed national dialogue and decision making. Key contributions have been the recognition of local forest users' and women's rights, dissemination of best practices and support for inclusive, local forest management plans.

The International Land Coalition, through its members in Albania's NES platform, has made a vital contribution to forest policy reform since 2014, culminating in the passing of the new Forestry Law in 2020.



ALBANIAN FARMERS ARE LOOKING AFTER THE FORESTS, SO WHO IS TAKING CARE OF THEM?

Meet Florin Torba, a farmer and forest user from Albania.

Together with his family, Florian lives in Shimcan village in the region of Peshkopi, a gloriously lush area of North-Eastern Albania that is known for its mountain tourism. Yet apart from tourism, economic opportunities are hard to come by. Florin is also an active member of the National Engagement Strategy of Albania (NES) and together they are working with local municipalities to allow farmers like Florian to sell the non-timber forest products.



INTERNATIONAL
LAND
COALITION

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RIGHTS





A HISTORY OF LAND REFORM IN ALBANIA

Albania is a small, mountainous country on the Adriatic Sea in south-eastern Europe. Around one third of its land is forest.

For forty years **until 1991**, Albania was under communist rule; all means of production including forests and pasturelands were under state control and decision making was centralised. The opening of the economy in **the 1990s** was accompanied by significant forest and wildlife losses.

The International Land Coalition, through its members in *Albania's National Engagement Strategy (NES)* platform, has made a vital contribution to forest policy reform **since 2014**, culminating in the passing of the **new Forestry Law in 2020**. NES has been officially recognised by government and provides important linkages between policy makers and grass roots communities, particularly in three key areas:



SECURE TENURE RIGHTS



EQUAL LAND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN



LOCALLY MANAGED ECOSYSTEMS

NES Albania is guided by a *Consultative and Coordinating Committee (CCC)* whose members include representatives of Albania's parliament, national and local government, the World Bank, SIDA, academia and civil society. 50 percent of the NES National CCC are women and 120 Forests and thanks to NES Albania's efforts, Pasture Users Associations (FPUA) have increased the participation of women on their boards.

Since 2013, NES Albania has been hosted and coordinated by the *National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania (NFCFPA)* while local activities are organised together with Regional Federations of Forests, CNVP Foundation, Transborder Wildlife Association and local municipalities.



THE CHANGE WE HAVE MADE

NES partners directly contributed to the new **National Forest Policy** in 2018, which included commitments to gender justice and inclusive decision making. NES Albania also carried out extensive analysis of existing forestry policy and laws as well as a national study of degraded and coppice forest. This knowledge continues to inform NES advocacy for improvements to forestry law and policy as well as forestry practices at local level.

Inclusive pilot forestry management plans in four municipalities facilitated by NES are now being extended across the country. These forestry pilots have also provided evidence of good practice and led to the production of a Sustainable Short Rotation Coppice Handbook.

A study by the National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania (NFCFPA) shows that **forest renewal is 2-3 times higher when the forest is administered by farmers and local forest users** rather than included in common areas or administered by local government.

An important milestone was the passing of a **new national Forest Law in 2020** after many years of work by the NES with parliamentarians and government ministries. The law is having a profound effect on farmers, women and all forest users, decentralising decision making powers over forest rights to local municipalities. Crucially, the law allows **legal use of forests by communities, permitting them to sell non-timber forest products**.

ALBANIA



LOOKING FORWARD

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