

FINAL REPORT ON COMMUNITY FOREST TRANSFER

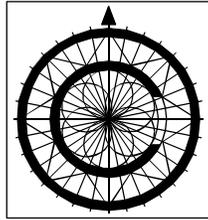
ALBANIA PRIVATE FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

USAID Contract No. EPE-C-00-95-5127-00

Prepared for:
United States Agency for International Development

Prepared by:
Chemonics International Inc.

March 1998



CHEMONICS

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Jeffrey D. Saussier
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the course of my short-term assignment, I was lead member of a team made up of Vezir Muharremi and Shpresa Ohri. Vezir had been working as a policy specialist and had assumed the position of community forestry transfer specialist only two weeks before my arrival. Shpresa was hired during my assignment and commenced work (officially) on February 2. While I was considered the lead team member, my relationship to them was also one of mentor, coach, trainer and colleague. I would like to thank them for all of their effort during this period. We had to bridge several cultural and experiential gaps when it came to the introduction of new concepts, both within the team and with villagers in Trashan. They were excellent in conducting all of the meetings, training and activities completed during the course of this important pilot, a new realm of activity for APFDP.

I also thank all of the staff of APFDP for their support and assistance. Finally, I thank the people of Trashan for their commitment to this “subtle” process.

JEFFREY D. SAUSIER

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ACRONYMS

AFP	Albania Forestry project (implemented by DGFP and funded by the Government of Italy and the World Bank)
APFDP	Albania Private Forestry Development Program
COP	Chief of party (program director)
DDFS	District Directorate Forest Service
DFS	District Forest Service
DGFP	Directorate General of Forests and Pastures
FTC	Field technical coordinator
HPI	Heifer Project International
IDT	Interdisciplinary team
IPM	Integrated pest management
MPPT	Management plan preparation team
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
STTA	Short-term technical assistance
TRD	Tropical Research and Development, Inc.

SPECIAL TERMS

<i>Council of Elders</i>	Village institution representing each “neighborhood” settlement. It is in charge of village administration and settlement of disputes.
<i>Kanon</i>	The traditional and customary law of northern Albanian, including the Lezha Mountains, codified in the Kanon of Leke Dukagjinit, a body of law over 500 years old.
<i>Kryeplak</i>	Head of the village, chair of the Council of Elders, and now an elected position.
<i>Kryetar</i>	Head of the komuna. This is an elected position with executive authority for a sub-district unit (made up of several villages).
<i>Komuna</i>	The lowest recognized unit of governance, a sub-district, made up of four to eight villages; sometimes referred to as “local government.”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Albania Private Forestry Development Program fielded a community organization specialist from January 23 through March 7, 1998¹ to assist in launching implementation of community forest transfer, in which forest estate management is decentralized from central state ministerial control to komunas and then on to villages.

Albania has little experience with community forestry, whose premise is forestry based on people rather than on trees. Community forestry transfer requires adding the dimension of community-based management of common property resources.

During this short-term assignment, the following was achieved:

- A management plan preparation team (MPPT) was assembled, trained and supported in the pilot village of Trashan (Blinisht Komuna, Lezha District).
- A set of participatory rural appraisal activities was developed and used in the collection and analysis of information, which was then used in developing a Village Forest Management Plan.
- A preliminary management plan was developed with the MPPT that delineates private and public ownership and defines particular “use” zones in the village for firewood collection, protection and grazing.
- A seminar was conducted in Lezha District for the District Forest Service and Local Government on the community forest transfer process.
- Preliminary work was done for a *Community Forest Transfer Manual*.
- Preliminary work was done on a longer-range plan for Trashan, based on the ongoing needs to develop an implementing institution from the Council of Elders, the need for extension and technical support, and to create synergy among the different project components.

A. Major Issues

The community forest transfer is actually a subtle process, since title and ownership are not transferred, and only “use” rights are transferred under agreements that span 10 years. The mechanism for transfer has two stages. In the first stage, the transfer is from the Directorate General of Forests and Pastures (DGFP) to the komuna, which at present seems to be a permanent transfer of limited authority as the DGFP retains some regulatory authority. In the second stage, the 10-year “use” contract with villages and/or individuals takes place. The 10-year

¹ This short-term assistance was originally scheduled for four weeks, but was extended to six weeks.

“use” contract probably can be renewed, unless another mechanism is legislated. Villages already use these areas without active government regulation. In reality it is not the forest, but the responsibility for forest management, that is transferred.

The regulation governing the transfer requires the komuna make a preliminary determination of how it will “divide” the forest. This requirement is far more complex than it seems, since it must account for a variety and overlay of “division” systems based on both “ownership” and use:

- Village versus state (taking some of the forest, leaving the rest).
- Private versus common use.
- Proprietary use zones divided by family, neighborhood or special user.
- Management use (protection, grazing, firewood, etc.).

The Village Management Plan developed follows the tenets of community forestry rather than technical forestry. This is a relatively new area for Albania, who is used to technical forest management primarily focused on protection (control) and afforestation (plantations). The management plan basically defines behaviors that the village will adhere to, allowing for continued utilization, and depending for the most part on striking a balance between extraction and natural regeneration.

The village forest management plan is not a village resource management plan. Because the land base is segmented into forestry and agriculture land, under separate real estate registers, it accounts for the land on the mountain. There are significant stands of trees and grazing areas in and around the agriculture land not covered in the management plan.

The transfer of forest is part of a larger system. That system will eventually have to cover, following this initial transfer of responsibility to komunas, transfer of title to individuals and recognition of the village as a body corporate to complete the decentralization of land management. The transfer will affect the basic system of natural resource regulations, fines, fees and permits. The establishment of a professional forester at the komuna level will affect the modes of delivery of extension and technical support, thus affecting the role of the District Forest Service and the DGFP.

B. Recommendations

The MPPT is a viable mechanism for plan development, though transfer of responsibilities for implementation to the Council of Elders and komunas is still untested. However, to avoid later conflict, the MPPT needs to encompass all of the special interests and “power centers.”

To be effectively manage the forest and serve as an agent of an increasingly empowering local civil society, the Council of Elders requires training and support in institutional development and community mobilization. The authority of the Elders has been dormant (with the exception of adjudicating disputes between families), and there is little experience of voluntary collective action. Such collective action is required for village activities to improve the natural resource base (an APFDP strategic interest) and begin to rebuild village services, infrastructure and institutions.

To assist the Council of Elders in institutional development and community mobilization, APFDP should consider finding a development partner (either an international NGO or the Church), or make

major commitments in the transformation of the District Forest Service. Such a partner can serve as an on-the-ground resource in Trashan for both natural resource and wider social programming.

APFDP should advocate for a consolidated cadastre so that the entire land base can be brought under a village-level (and eventually komuna-level) natural resources management plan. The narrow forest estate management plan does not account for significant forest-type resources or the movement of animals between areas. Following a whole-village scenario, APFDP could look next to the micro-watershed level.

APFDP should continue to promote a community forestry approach and community-based management. This methodology has a greater chance of success than the alternate methodology of komuna-level forest management. It puts management at the lowest and best level for actual implementation, costs less, can better tap voluntary collective action and resources, and is more consistent with the traditional systems of “ownership” and management that are re-emerging in rural Albania.

APFDP needs to define its level of involvement in the short and medium term for this activity, as well as develop long-term objectives and strategies for each village and komuna that it engages. For the pilot village/komuna, APFDP must state clearly for how long and with how much it will support a village forest guard and komuna forester. It should maintain its stand against hiring by fiat by the head of komuna and promote a professional set of standards for employment in local government. It should continue a “tough love” approach to community activities, while the community must make significant contributions of its time, labor and materials, to be matched by APFDP.

In defining its medium- and long-term commitments to forest transfer, APFDP needs to focus on how other project components integrate or support this activity. Better alignment of project components promotes a unified program identity and provides “incentives” to the village. However, in some APFDP locations, integration of forest transfer may not be appropriate.

Work on the *Community Forest Manual*, slated for May-June, should be moved up and sections of it should be pre-tested in Kallmet, the other pilot village.

SECTION I

Introduction

From January 26 through March 7, 1998,¹ the community organization specialist was on-site to assist the Albania Private Forestry Development Program in implementing the transfer of state forest to a pilot village in Lezha District. In this activity, APFDP, which to date had largely focused on private forestry, was entering the program's relatively new area of community forestry on non-private lands. In the mid-term evaluation of APFDP conducted in late 1997, the evaluators had recommended, among other things, that the program:

- Establish and implement a community-based transfer methodology.
- Facilitate the formation of village forest and pastures commissions in these villages and use them as a focal point for the entire transfer process.
- Develop and present training courses on community forestry.

Community forest transfer is the government's attempt to decentralize management of forest resources from the state (technical ministries) to local entities (local government). It is a step toward eventual private ownership of the forests by individuals and of common property by villages.² Enabled through enactment of Regulation 308 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1996), community forest transfer focuses on the common property resource. Since private title to forest has yet to be sorted out, for now all forest estate is considered common property.

Community forest transfer requires that local government entities create two levels of commissions (village and komuna) and prepare management plans to secure the transfer. (Note that the actual transfer is from the Directorate General of Forests and Pastures (DGFP) to the komuna, and further transfer to villages and villagers is "in use"). Once approved, the DGFP signs a transfer agreement with the local government, and local government then signs "contracts" with "user associations."

The Albania Forestry project. The Italy/World Bank/DGFP Albania Forestry project (AFP) has implemented this system, dealing with the komuna as the basic unit of engagement. However, they have contracted professional forestry personnel to write technical management plans and fund village initiatives, concentrated on severely degraded land, and funded and supervised afforestation and even thinning and clear-cutting of some areas..

APFDP's community-based methodology. APFDP will try to implement the transfer using a community-based methodology. First, rather than attempt to work at the komuna level at the start, APFDP will work with individual villages and use that experience to build up to the komuna level. Second, rather than artificial village commissions and user associations, APFDP will work with the traditional institution of the village, the Council of Elders. Third, APFDP will observe the principles of community forestry. APFDP is attempting to go further than the AFP by empowering the village to develop its own management plan (in partnership with other levels) and implement the plan under its

¹ The original assignment of four weeks was extended to six weeks.

² Those that are not presently recognized by law as a "body corporate."

own control. This is consistent with traditional land tenure, ownership and common property administration—an important step toward privatization of the forest by individuals and decentralization of tenure rights to the village.

In Lezha District, the pilot villages of Trashan (Blinisht Komuna) and Kallmet I Vogle (Kallmet Komuna) were selected for community forest transfer. APFDP had conducted participatory rural appraisals in these villages in 1996, and both are involved with HPI livestock activities.

Structure of this report. The reader will find that the structure of this report is nontraditional for a final report. It presents not only accomplishments but also explores some of the issues facing APFDP in implementing community forest transfer. It is hoped that this report will serve as a reference in analyzing and designing the longer term plan for this and other APFDP activities.

SECTION II

Purpose of the Community Forest Transfer Assistance

The objectives set forth in the original terms of reference (reproduced in Annex A) were to:

- Ensure that sufficient information is obtained on traditional management and “ownership” of the forest areas.
- Support the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) effort in obtaining necessary information for development of forest management plans and village structures needed for their implementation.
- Ensure participation of women and minority groups in the transfer process.
- Assist in the development of functional groups capable of undertaking forest management.
- Develop the skills of APFDP and DDFS staff on negotiation and conflict resolution.

However, it soon became evident that the work would involve the entire process of the transfer: helping to form and train a management plan preparation team (MPPT); developing and delivering PRA techniques for collection and analysis of information needed to prepare a management plan; monitoring, supervising and supporting other work undertaken in plan preparation; negotiating and formulating a plan format; assisting the team in developing a management plan; getting agreement on the plan; and ensuring that all of the levels involved were prepared for both existing and new roles, responsibilities and relationships.

Thus, the community forest transfer specialist was given wide latitude in interpreting the actual work to be undertaken, guided by the general parameters of getting the pilot village of Trashan through the complexities of doing a community forest transfer.

In the course of the assignment, two needs arose that were not directly related to the terms of reference, but had longer term systems relevance to community forest transfer. First, there was a need to work on a long-term plan for Trashan to help APFDP define the parameters and limitations on the intervention, as well as the linkages of other project components. Second, there was a need for a Community Forest Transfer Manual. The manual is to be based on the experiences in Trashan and Kallmet and is in the work schedule for May-June 1998. However, because some of the concepts to be included within it are new, it was deemed appropriate to work a bit on the preliminary document.

Therefore, the assignment took both operational and advisory tracks. In the operational mode, the assignment was to assist in the processes of implementing forest transfer. In the advisory mode, the assignment was to provide insight into new concepts and analysis of issues that will affect implementation.

The schedule of activities carried out on a day-by-day basis is presented in Annex B, and the actual “deliverables” produced are listed in Annex C.

SECTION III

Front Line Issues

By engaging in the process of transferring state forest to the pilot village(s), APFDP is opening new ground in forestry and community development in Albania, as well as in the way the program itself is implemented. This section highlights some of the issues that the community transfer brings to the fore.

A. Forest Transfer Is a Subtle Process

Under Regulation 308, the actual forest is not transferred and title does not change hands from the state to individuals or villages. Instead the village is granted “use” rights over the forest for 10 years (but can be renewed). In short, the state is granting the village the right to use what they already have and use. The transfer is a subtle process.

Since the forest is not transferred in title, what is being transferred is the *responsibility* of managing the forest. It must be remembered that the massive deforestation was a combination of both state enterprise and village activity. It is assumed that the transfer will change the village’s attitude about their responsibility to manage the forest area.

While one would think that the initial program of government would be restitution of title to private owners of forest land, instead it has launched transfer of common property resources. Since common property legislation is not yet enacted and the government does not recognize the village as a body corporate, it is transferring the land to the komuna, which will then make a local agreement with the village.

With the exception of the transfer of land “in use” to the village via the komuna, there is no other transfer of resources. The village is not being contracted by government to manage the forest area in exchange for a cash payment. Realistically, improvements to the forest area will have to be funded by the village or outside entities, since neither the DFS or local government has resources to bring to bear.

B. To Divide or Not Divide?

One of the first decisions that a village is supposed to make is whether to divide the forest or not. However, what does that mean? Possibly, one division could be between private forest and public (common property) forest, while another could be among families or neighborhoods. From a review of both the regulations and the AFP documents, one may assume that another division could be for the village to take just a portion of the forest estate and leave the rest under state control. Another possibility may be that a group of individuals (or a single individual) petition for a section of the forest for a particular enterprise (such as a woodlot, plantation or apiary) and assume some type of leasehold/rental arrangement.

In Trashan we found that private ownership and common property were one division of the forest estate (in addition there are squatters who have fenced off sections of the forest). The rest of the forest estate, held as common property, was then divided by “use” (a firewood collection zone, a

protected zone and a grazing zone). Private forest land is under the management control of the ex-owner and is not bound by the zone in which that land is located. In other words, different types of division are overlaid one on another.

Again, no separate accommodation is being made to adjudicate title for the private forest lots claimed by the descendants of ex-owners. Finally, the underlying traditions of the Kanon on land ownership and common property require updated interpretation by a generation with no experience in the interpretation and enforcement of traditional law in these issues.

C. Basing Forest Management on Where the Trees Are

Village land is basically categorized into two types: agriculture/arable land and forest land.¹ Under communist rule, each was in a separate real estate registry (cadastre). After the fall of communism, the arable land was privatized; however, forest land was not privatized in a systematic way. There are pre-communist titles to both agriculture and forestry land. During the 1960s, when the fruit tree terraces were made, a large portion of the forest estate was moved to the agriculture registry.

In short, portions of the pre-communist forest estate are under the agriculture registry. Fruit trees, including olive and grapes, are considered agriculture, not forestry.

Within the agriculture-registered lands, there are a lot of trees. Trashan, for example, has significant stands of coppice oak on “refused” or undivided lands of the agriculture registry. Trees in areas other than the forest estate are not considered part of the forest inventory of a village; hence, the management plan does not cover these significant resources. In addition, grazing is done on forestry, agriculture and “unproductive” (not considered part of either cadastre) land, but not in a regular or systematic way.

D. Introduction of Community Forestry

In the past, forest management planning in Albania focused on increasing biomass, massive plantings, protection from access and use, and centrally determined use for the needs of a state enterprise. A plan was therefore a set of activities in artificial generation to achieve these goals.

APFDP found early on that the concepts of forestry extension were not well developed in Albania. Foresters were actually commissioned as police. Now we find that the concepts of community forestry are also not well understood and certainly there is no recent history of it.

A community forestry approach is dictated by the current circumstances in Albania. The state has neither the resources nor the inclination to try to manage a resource it really cannot control. Decentralization requires moving authorities and responsibilities as far from the center as possible, in some cases even more than is prudent as a reaction to the totalitarian past (with a continued remnant of pressure to maintain some centralized status quo). Finally, the pre-communist history of Albania had a body of traditional law to account for common property and a strong village structure to manage it. Much has been made toward a certain amount of return to traditional systems.

For our purposes, community, or social, forestry can be described as follows:

¹ There is a third type, pastures, but there is no “official” pasture in Trashan.

Forestry focused on people rather than on trees with its rational use determined locally rather than by external control over access. Forestry based on a relationship with the forest, rather than a set of activities done to the forest.

This is a difficult concept to introduce. It is a virtual reversal of all the tenets in place during the communist era. It means that a “plan” is not so much a set of goals, objectives and activities to increase production, but rather a set of behaviors that a community agrees to that will reduce further degradation. It means that regeneration of the natural resource will probably take a longer time, but will not require massive expenditure of resources on artificial regeneration and control over access and use. External controls always produce the impetus to try to “cheat” the controlling entity. If the community is the controlling entity itself, it has a better chance of enforcing whatever rules it makes. This will require significant investment in time and effort in building community consensus, awareness and management skills, processes that have not received a lot of attention in Albania to date.

It is also a reversal in the perception of who “owns” the forest and what ownership means. Under collectivization, the state assumed direct ownership over the natural resource base, both private and common property. To cloud the issue, it did so in the name of the people. In pre-communist times, there were a lot more trees and a lot less people. There were rules to ensure that people did not break long-standing social traditions of common ownership.

The fall of collectivization has brought on a great interest in private ownership. It has been the major driving force in government policy, from the creation of small business to the privatization of agriculture. However, less emphasis has been put on the other dimension of ownership, common property, and the concept of “subsidiarity.”²

E. The Village as Civil Society

During communism, community mobilization was done under command and control. People were forced into cooperatives. Churches, one of the fundamental building blocks of civil society, were banned. Organizations were organelles of the state. Collective action was done on Marxist principles, to further state-defined interests.

With the change, political parties bloomed and the Church returned. Some state associations have experimented changing their role to that of a nongovernmental organization. However, there is a natural aversion to collective action, and pyramid schemes, a form of collective investment, “soured the well.” The rebuilding of Albania will require significant voluntary collective action to tap human and financial resources. Perhaps the biggest test will come when the irrigation systems are rebuilt and Albania must learn to accept both private agriculture and collective action oriented irrigation scheduling.

² “Subsidiarity” is a western European term that means, in effect, that all processes begin at the lowest levels and loss of authority is granted by the bottom to the top. The equivalent in American experience is the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The village is not recognized by government as a body corporate. The Council of Elders, one of the oldest institutions in Albania, is just re-learning its role as a function of civil society. The community transfer of forests depends on building the village as a collective action unit, an institution, and an expression of shared goals and aspirations.

This will not be an easy task, especially in adopting the view that common property ownership is equivalent to a shareholder of an asset. Now the primary driving force is private ownership (with title and without tax), while common property is seen as a right to use, not as an obligation to be a mutual stakeholder. Because the transferred forest land is still “owned” by the state, it is difficult to build voluntary collective action.

F. Community Forest Transfer Is Part of a Larger System

If the transfer was a simple dissolution of state assets to private individuals or a recognized village unit (as body corporate), the task would be relatively easy. However, the transfer must be seen in light of the other system components and actors. We can put the system components in levels:

- Village
- Council of Elders
- Komuna (local government)
- DFS
- District and prefecture governments (though the prefecture does not seem to play any role)
- The central ministerial complex (of which DGFP is a part)
- National government as a unit

For the purposes of the transfer, APFDP’s direct levels of engagement have been the village and elders, the komuna and the DFS, with indirect relationships with the district government and DGFP. All these levels have a part to play in the transfer, some by law. Regulation 308 makes the komuna directly accountable for extension, management plan supervision and creation of a “re-investment fund” with very unclear parameters. DFS is responsible for plan monitoring and evaluation, provision of funding (that it does not have) and enforcement of forest laws.

The transfer will directly impact on the roles, responsibilities and relationships of all system players, especially up through the district level. That opens up opportunities for APFDP to improve the system by assisting in work such as creating a public extension model based on servicing the village and its management plan; building the capacity of local government to issue and regulate permits, fees and fines (to generate funds for natural resource management and salaries); and developing a new relationship between public and private sectors.

SECTION IV

Accomplishments

This section summarizes work done and presents recommendations for next steps. It is divided by major areas of work: the MPPT, the PRA techniques developed and used, the Trashan Community Forest Management Plan, related areas of the komuna forester, Kallmet, a long-term plan for Trashan and the Community Forest Transfer Manual.

A. Management Plan Preparation Team

A1. Initial Status

Before this short-term technical assignment, the MPPT for Trashan had not been officially formed. However, there had been discussion on the composition of the team. This composition included personnel from DFS, APFDP and two or three people from the village.

A2. Work Accomplished

One of our first activities was to analyze the composition of the MPPT and determine whether all of the ‘power centers’ were included. We added the komuna agronomist and a lay person from the Catholic Church (as an ex officio attendee), and the former veterinarian of the komuna (also a member of the livestock group).

This issue of “power centers” is an important issue in conflict resolution. In the spirit of the Mediterranean proverb: “keep your friends close but your enemies closer.” By ensuring the inclusion of stakeholders representing different points of view, one can hopefully avoid later conflict.

We did get mixed messages concerning the lay person from the Church. He had presented himself as sort of a church manager and was very helpful in supplying the MPPT meeting place. However, the Italian nun in residence told us he was just a watchman. When we approached the non-resident Polish priest, he confirmed that this person was considered of some importance and we were informed that he would be our “liaison” to the Church.

The Kryetar was insisting that the former veterinarian be appointed as komuna forester. Although we did not approve of the Kryetar’s selection method we did include him in the MPPT as he had a technical expertise as a veterinarian and was a resident of Trashan. Most important, it helped keep peace with the Kryetar.

We did find several points of conflict in Trashan. First, there are about 10 squatters who have fenced off some of the common property, since it was considered state property. The village has done nothing about it, even though this is in violation of the Kanon. The major “power center” against these squatters are the ex-owners who seem to feel that only their claims should be recognized. Second, the former Kryeplak favored a division by neighborhood; the present Kryeplak has proposed and gained general acceptance for division by “use zones,” notwithstanding private holdings. Third, two of the three neighborhoods in the forest area herd goats (and between them account for 600 of the total of 700 goats in the village). Since goats are perceived to be the major culprit in land degradation, there is conflict brewing between goat herders and non-herders.

By the last meeting held of the MPPT during the short-term technical assignment, the MPPT had gained some reputation in the community and several other villagers were in attendance, including the former Kryeplak.

A3. Present Status

The MPPT has been trained and has almost completed its work in Trashan. The next meeting is on March 10, 1998, when it is expected that:

- The village will have discussed the overall plan, fines and penalties, and the issue of squatters.
- DFS will have completed two surveys, one on the costs of afforestation of five hectares on the protected land, and another on the costs of rehabilitating four check dams on the streams bordering the protected zone.
- APFDP will investigate the possibility of establishing a demonstration plot in the protected zone to do species trials and demonstrate what a well-managed forest can accomplish.

The work of the MPPT is almost completed and it will soon be time to transfer authority and responsibilities to the Council of Elders, the institution charged with implementing the plan. The DFS, APFDP, and komuna members of the MPPT can be used again in the next village in Blinisht Komuna. The DFS members can be used in Kallmet.

A4. Next Steps and Recommendations

Before establishing an MPPT in either Fishta or Kallmet, APFDP staff should investigate what “power centers” are present in the village. This is most easily done by finding out what the major concerns and sources of conflict within the village. Areas to concentrate on include:

- Conflicts between neighborhoods in the uplands and lowlands, for example, regarding goats.
- Conflicts between ex-owners and non-owners over priorities of transfer.
- Major source of influence, such as the Church, political operatives, etc.
- Existence of squatters who have taken forest land for their own use.
- Intrusion on village forest from other villages.
- Major philosophical poles on the meaning of public and private property.

APFDP staff must remember that when entering a new village with the other members of the MPPT, the village and komuna members will not have been through the Trashan experience. They will need to undergo the same orientation and training as was done in Trashan. The completion of the manual can speed up this process.

The issues of formation of the MPPT based on incorporating different views and concerns in the village should be incorporated into the proposed community forest transfer manual.

The Trashan Council of Elders will require orientation and training on the management plan and their role in that plan. APFDP must decide to what extent it will engage its resources in building the capacity of the Elders to work as an organization (monitoring plan, adjudicating contravention and levying fines, proposing activities, community mobilization, etc.).

Here APFDP faces a set of strategic choices. APFDP can see the transfer as an intermediate end-point and allow the village to implement the plan in its own way. However, should the plan create more tension or cannot be implemented because of lack of institutional capacity, then the “pilot as model” for replication is useless. At the very minimum, APFDP should:

- Conduct a training of the Elders on the plan and their role as managers.
- Assist the Elders in defining and disseminating the rules and penalties.
- Ensure that they are supervising the guard, keeping records, etc.
- Assist with the first annual evaluation of the plan.
- Assist with the submission of an amended plan accounting for changes in the operating environment or new opportunities.

Now there are few external inputs going into Trashan for activities, with the exception of the proposed APFDP money for payment of guard salary and some potential inputs for check dam rehabilitation. The Church’s olive press is an opportunity for nursery establishment, plantation development and business assistance. The livestock component should consider a conversion of goat herding to pig husbandry (which will reduce tension, be less stress on restricted grazing range, and raise incomes).

Well into the project extension period and beyond, there are many natural resource, economic and social priorities in Trashan that need to be addressed. Because the transfer is actually a subtle process (it does not actually transfer forest, it transfers responsibility for the forest), the linkage of other project components does add some incentive for plan implementation. Trashan is an economically depressed area with a lack of services and a thoroughly degraded infrastructure.

Looking at these problems, the need for the organizational and institutional development of the Council of Elders, the need for the creation of community organization and mobilization in Trashan (almost non-existent), a viable option would be to find an international NGO partner that would be willing to secure funds and implement a broad-based program in Trashan (most probably an NGO would look at the whole komuna as a target area). APFDP could provide services in the project design stage, serve as liaison to USAID, and provide ongoing technical support to NGO operations.

An NGO partner relationship could follow one of two tracks. In one track, the NGO has a broad-based agenda that includes forestry. NGOs such as Save the Children and ACTIONAID generally follow that route. In the other track, the NGOs focus on one sector at a time. CARE and CRS are examples. The former will be difficult to attract because of the difficulty in raising private funds for Albania, while the latter may be difficult to attract because of the limited size of the area and the lack of Food for Peace opportunities (and the use of Food for Peace is certainly not indicated). We know of virtually no local NGOs that are up to the task.

The other option is to open up a partner relationship with the Catholic Church that can draw upon its development arm, CARITAS, for support. The Church is a respected institution in Trashan and can wield great influence in community organization and mobilization. However, the Church presently has a lack of capacity, may have a conflicting long-term agenda (as is always the case between the secular and divine), and has a potential conflict of interest since it is a major land owner. (The Church has already made suggestions that the check dams on its property are in need of APFDP support for rehabilitation.)

B. Information Collection/Analysis Technique for Management Plan Development

B1. Initial Status

APFDP had done a PRA exercise in Trashan in 1996 as part of the training the interdisciplinary team received. That focused on general knowledge about the village. In 1997 APFDP facilitated an exercise to establish and map out the boundaries of the village, per Regulation 308. APFDP has implemented an HPI Livestock Group in Trashan.

B2. Work Accomplished

From the onset of the short-term technical assignment, it was envisaged that a similar methodology as that carried out for the Refused Land Study would be the most effective means of collecting and analyzing information necessary for the development of a forest management plan. Since the issues of private versus public ownership, location of trees and other natural resources, and the identification of problems and opportunities all fit within a “spatial” context, a mapping exercise seemed the best medium.

In formulating the plan, a mapping activity was considered. A set of mapping guidelines and materials was developed similar to the Refused Land Survey. This included a 1:10000 map with plastic overlays and a question set that included: Where are the trees? Where are animals grazed? What areas are severely degraded? etc. This set of guidelines is a singular work and can be used in other villages if necessary.

However, the development of the plan in Trashan took a different route. The Kryeplak reported that he was having trouble in gaining consensus on certain issues, so he was going to propose a management plan (at least a framework) and seek agreement to it. He did get general agreement with the tenets of the plan (establishment of “use zones”). Therefore, the PRA mapping activity was modified to move this preliminary plan forward.

Using the same map and plastic overlay, the question set was changed to determine the boundaries of the “use zones,” find issues of special concern, and facilitate the establishment of “rules” for each zone.

This modified activity was carried out in Trashan on February 18, 1998. Beginning at the Church, the MPPT charted out the boundaries of the different use zones (protected forest, firewood collection area, grazing areas). We moved up onto a hill to provide a better view and were joined by several other villagers. It was from this activity that the plan finally came together.

B3. Present Status

Since the two APFDP staff members (Vezir Muharremi and Shpresa Ohri) and the two DFS staff members (Gjon Fierza and Pjeter Deda) have done the exercise, there is sufficient capacity to use this technique in other villages. The original mapping guidelines have been translated and the map of Trashan has been scanned onto disk (as an .mpx file, directly usable in word processing).

The DFS cartographer has prepared a map showing where the private forest areas are. However, he has not yet determined whether these are the claimed areas, the fenced areas or the areas that are covered by documents. He is to complete that by March 10, 1998.

There are 10 squatters who have fenced off about 30 hectares (4 percent total area) of the forest estate. The

village feared that mapping this area, either on the PRA or DFS map, would legitimize the squatters' claims, so there is no record of the location or size of the individual parcels.

B4. Next Steps and Recommendations

As the first methodology is based on the Refused Land Survey, it can be assumed that it works—when circumstances dictate its use, namely, when a village is still considering how to “divide” the forest or how to manage it. If a village, or its leader, already has an idea of what it wants to do, the second technique, the modified PRA mapping activity, is indicated. In actuality the two sets of guidelines are not that different, so it should not be confusing to staff.

These techniques should be incorporated into the community forest transfer manual.

While the management plan covers only that area considered forest estate in the cadastre records, there are several stands of trees in marginal areas. These have been informally divided by families. Much of the grazing occurs on areas defined as crop land. It would seem prudent for APFDP to advocate a consolidated cadastre and a management plan (through the amendment process) to cover actual (versus communist state defined) forest and grazing areas. Then the PRA exercise and the management plan would truly cover the villages' entire natural resources base and their scheme of designation and use. This could begin with an official redefinition of olive trees and vineyards as forestry activities and a redefinition of terraced land back into the forestry estate, thus removing the old “mindset.”

C. Trashan Forest Management Plan

C1. Initial Status

In the recent past, forest management planning in Albania has generally focused on projects activities aimed at achieving higher biomass, conversion of forest area to plantation and protection against use— all geared toward exploitation by a state enterprise.

Based on the Italy/World Bank AFP example, APFDP staff had prepared a set of guidelines on a forest management plan in two components: social and technical. Working with the field technical coordinator, a much briefer and less technical set of plan guidelines was developed.

C2. Work Accomplished

Both sets of guidelines dealt with technical description and scientific management of the natural resource base. Both are grounded on professional forestry tenets and were in technical compliance with Regulation 308. Such a planning system, however, usually sees the primary focus of the plan as the trees and requires plans and budgets for protection, reforestation, rehabilitation, etc., with a secondary focus of restricting access to the forest to ensure the plan is achieved.

Perhaps it is true that “you should not send a plumber to fix a roof” because he will just make the leaks flow faster. However, it became obvious that the normal sort of forest management plan was inconsistent with the operating environment. The staff agreed. Key factors we need to consider included:

- The management plan would have to be implemented by the community and managed by its institution, the Council of Elders, which is not comprised of technical foresters.
- Support from the DFS and komuna would be minimal because of resource constraints.
- Because the transfer is a subtle process, the management plan had to be internally developed so that there would be a better chance of village “ownership” of the plan.
- The information collection and analysis for a technical management plan would require a much longer time, producing information of great use to foresters but of little real value to the common villager.
- There would be minimal resources available for afforestation, reforestation, infrastructure rehabilitation, range management and all other activities normally contained in a technical plan.

It was therefore decided to try to produce a plan under the tenets of community forestry, with the following principles:

- Forestry focused on people rather than on trees.
- Forestry based on a relationship with the forest, rather than a set of activities done to the forest.
- Forestry that promotes community management.
- Forestry that allows for a rational use of the forest resource (that may not produce dramatic results in a short span of time).
- Forestry where the information is imprecise and restricted to the minimal necessary for community management.

With this in mind, we set out to let the village develop their management plan with our facilitation. We knew that the best we could get would be a set of “rules” for forest use that would slow down or stop present rates of degradation, would rely mainly on natural regeneration rather than artificial enhancement, and would try to ensure that everyone could still use common forest lands for grazing and other uses.

Working with the MPPT and the Kryeplak, after the PRA mapping activity, the first version of the Trashan Management Plan was presented on February 19, 1998, at the District Seminar held in Lezha. It was presented by the Kryeplak by using the map. It showed that, for common forest areas, Trashan would be divided into “use zones”: a traditional firewood collection area (200 hectares), a protected zone (170 hectares), a grazing area of 250 hectares, an area for kindling collection from shrubs (100 hectares) and the terraces of 30 hectares, the last three zones usable for animal grazing.

We wrote down the preliminary plan (both English and Albanian) and presented it to the MPPT on February 25, 1998. We included issues that were still outstanding, such as fines and penalties, special management issues (such as the springs in the protected zone that would attract animals during the dry season), and how the village planned to pay for its guard.

The biggest issue was that of the squatters. Under the original plan, they would be allowed to stay on their

areas but would eventually pay the village rent for their proprietary use. This was questioned by some of the villagers present and it was finally decided to remove all language about them from the management plan.

This means the issue is still not resolved and that probably the squatters will be allowed to stay under the principle of “out of document, out of mind.” In effect the squatters are protecting the forest area and have not taken much (4 percent of the forest estate total area). An MPPT Elder is one of the squatters.

The MPPT adopted some additional rules about the forest. First, the boundaries of the protected zone will be adjusted so that the springs are 10 meters outside. Second, regarding the traditional firewood zone, people will not be allowed to pull up oak roots, so that these can re-sprout.

The village was questioned on what activities they would like to do to improve their forest. Their main concern was whether they would get paid for working. When that was rejected they re-stressed their intention to rely on natural regeneration for reforestation. The village has also said that the komuna will pay their 50 percent salary for the village forest guard, matching the 50 percent contribution of APFDP.

The DFS will produce estimates for afforestation of 5 hectares and check dam rehabilitation. The cartographer will complete the mapping of the private holdings. APFDP will produce the amended plan and a brochure, and will investigate a demonstration plot.

We have prepared a second draft management plan. It will probably require a third amendment, including the DFS estimates as potential activities and the result of the village discussions. We have also prepared a draft brochure that summarizes the rules and regulations of the management plan for wide distribution throughout the village.

C3. Next Steps and Recommendations

The second draft management plan and second draft brochure will be issued at the MPPT meeting on March 10, 1998. At that meeting it is expected that the village will have met on the squatters and the regulations and be prepared with their final decisions. The DFS should have prepared their estimates and the cartographer should have prepared the map of private holdings.

The first issue that arises is the place of afforestation and dam rehabilitation in the plan. If these activities are incorporated into the plan that is submitted, it pre-supposes that there is a means of accomplishing them. APFDP should be able to give a firm commitment on what kind and how much support it will give to these activities. If that commitment cannot be made, then it should be questioned whether they should be included in the submission.

This brings up the issue of voluntary community contribution to activities. Since they are unwilling, at this point, to commit to a partnership arrangement where the community organizes itself and mobilizes labor and local materials, it is again questioned whether the activities should be included in the submission.

The issue of a lack of community organization and sense of ownership over the forest refers to the recommendations above concerning a need to find an ongoing community development partner.

The second issue that arises is whether the private holdings should be included in the submission of the plan. If possible, private holdings should be excluded for several reasons. First, including them would produce a scenario where the DFS or komuna might insist on signing separate contracts with the private holders, the Church (as a private holder), and the village for the common land (opening up the possibility of

a separate contract for each “use zone,” in strict interpretation of Regulation 308). Second, this will certainly bring up the long-standing issue of restituting title to private holders, a matter that neither the government or APFDP is able to deal with now. Third, the village must feel empowered enough to be able to take a stand on recognition, either the claimed area or the area for which there are documents.

At some point, the squatter issue will have to be addressed. APFDP must be able to provide some measure of advice on the subject. It is recommended that APFDP take a philosophical stand on squatters that matches that of the Kryeplak:

- The squatters do not own the land, and it must be made clear that they do not. (This can be used to introduce the concept of leasehold.)
- The squatters are providing a useful service by protecting some of the forest. (This opens up the idea of community responsibility.)
- The squatters will be able to harvest trees and other products from their areas. (The Kanon allows planting of trees on common land with rights to cut conferred onto the planter; it also opens up rental of forest land for small business.)
- The squatters should pay a rental fee for their proprietary use, with the money being used to pay for the guard or other forest-related activities (opening up the issue of generating local resources).

That is not to say we try to impose this on the village, but they do look to APFDP as a neutral arbiter and as a professional resource.

D. Komuna Forester and Village Forest Guard

D1. Initial Status

Regulation 308 requires the appointment of a komuna forester and allows for the appointment of a village forest guard. However, there is no provision for the salary of these personnel. The APFDP chief of party has been in discussion with the DGFP and local government on the mechanism.

D2. Work Accomplished

At the end of the short-term technical assignment, there is still no komuna forester or forest guard in place. While this was not an expected outcome, it is an outstanding issue of great importance to the future relationship and work of APFDP in the area. It is reported here because of its relevance to the completion of the transfer in Trashan.

The Kryetar of Blinisht, Rrok Marku, has insisted that his MPPT candidate, the former veterinarian, be appointed komuna forester, in spite of Regulation 308’s criteria stating that a *forest specialist* should be appointed as komuna forester for the technical and extension service. The Kryetar has threatened to prevent the transfer from going forward unless he has his way. Meanwhile, APFDP has not worked out the details with central government on the arrangement of how to pay for 50 percent of this position.

The village of Trashan has insisted that local government (the komuna) will pay half the salary of the forest guard, to match the 50 percent APFDP contribution, an offer made by the chief of party during his trip to

Lezha on February 18-19, 1998.

During the seminar on February 19, the community organization specialist gave a presentation on the potential roles, relationships and responsibilities of all the actors in the community forest management system: the guard, the Elders, the komuna forester, the komuna (local government) and the DFS. While the relationships have not been finalized, at least the ideas have been introduced.

D3. Present Status

The situations remain unresolved and await the return of the chief of party.

D4. Next Steps and Recommendations

As soon as possible, APFDP should get the following final decisions and mechanisms in place. This includes:

- A mechanism of transfer of monies from APFDP to government and then on to the komuna, especially for a position not in the regular staffing pattern of local government.
- A decision on whether local government or the village will have responsibility for paying the village guard.
- A systematic system for appointment of positions that meets the standards of Regulation 308 and the professional characteristics of transparency and accountability.
- A resolution on the options of transferring DFS personnel to the komuna forester position or hiring private individuals, since this will certainly influence relationships and modes of funding transfer.

It is in the strategic interest of APFDP to engage in the selection process of the komuna forester and in the development of the roles, relationships and responsibilities of each actor in the system. Many of the system actors will have a role in extension, raising public awareness and mobilizing villagers on forestry issues, all of which are directly related to the results framework for the project. Second, the system actors will play a direct role in the regulation of activity of the private sector—in this case, the village. Finally, the long-term success of community forestry transfer is directly linked to the technical support and regulatory systems in place.

While not directly related to APFDP objectives, it should be a matter of concern that the present system could allow the appointment of a public sector (komuna) official (for whom the project pays 50 percent) without application and vetting of qualifications, interviewing and testing, objective selection, and ensuring that there is no conflict of interest.

Once resolved and selected, the training of the komuna forester is of strategic interest to APFDP. As Albania has had little to no experience in community forestry, extension or community development, APFDP has a responsibility to ensure that its model can be implemented and replicated, as well as be viable at the systems level. There are also potentials for making the village guard more than just a guard: he or she will be in position to increase public awareness, do some limited extension and organize people.

The Blinisht/Trashan situation may not necessarily be repeated in Kallmet. In Kallmet there is a DFS forester in place that could be seconded to the komuna forester position, until the amount of forest transfer

necessitates permanent transfer. But still the training needs remain.

APFDP needs to make decisions and make them known about: how long will APFDP pay the 50 percent (realizing that this depends on the extension of the project); whether the 50 percent remains static or works on a sliding scale (it has been floated internally to pay 50 percent the first year, 25 percent the second year, etc.); and exactly what conditions APFDP is placing on the release of the money.

Regarding the village forest guard, it is doubtful that local government will actually pay for this position. Thus, the village will have to provide the funds or go without. A “tough love” approach was recommended (in all dealings with Trashan), whereby the 50 percent APFDP contribution is not released until the village actually has collected its 50 percent contribution. Trashan has a history of failure in this area. It could not get half of the families to meet their commitment for the payment of someone to clean its cemetery.

E. Kallmet

E1. Initial Status

Kallmet I Vogle was the second village selected for community forest transfer. A PRA was done in 1996 and there is an active livestock group in the village.

E2. Work Accomplished

The work in Trashan consumed the team for the entire period so we did not accomplish much in Kallmet I Vogle.

We did, however, have a meeting with the Kryetar on setting up an initial village meeting on the transfer process. Vezir attended that meeting on February 2, while the community organization specialist oriented the new interdisciplinary team member for association development, Shpresa Ohri.

The Kryetar was included in the district seminar. We have checked in periodically as we traveled to Trashan.

E3. Present Status

Kallmet is experiencing some of the problems that affected Trashan in terms of making decisions. We have not formed an MPPT or begun the information collection and analysis work.

E4. Next Steps and Recommendations

While Kallmet is a priority, it is recommended not to begin intense work there until after the Trashan plan is closer to submission and approval. To engage Kallmet with the same tenacity and level of effort would only overburden the staff and the DFS personnel.

We have learned a lot in Trashan and that learning is transferable to Kallmet. As described previously, APFDP needs to identify earlier in the process the sources of conflict and disagreement among the villagers. This will influence who is selected on the MPPT. It will also help APFDP determine whether to engage in original information collection and analysis leading to the formulation of a plan or to use PRA to confirm a preliminary plan.

Kallmet has two resources, which we did not have in Trashan, that should be tapped. First, there is a DFS forester resident in the area who seems interested and seems to have the respect of the Kryetar. Second, the komuna veterinarian (who has been working with the livestock group) is also interested. Both of these people would be assets to the MPPT.

F. Site Plan for Trashan

F1. Initial Status

Several events have changed the direction of the APFDP. These include: the mid-term evaluation that recommended more effort on implementing field activities; the evacuation in 1997; and a change in government and policies. The third-year work plan, that was being developed during this short-term technical assignment, has tried to bridge the conflicting issues of the project results framework with the results of the mid-term evaluation, the new realities in Albania, and the new lessons learned.

F2. Work Accomplished

Early on, it was evident that there was no structured long-term plan for Trashan as a project management "unit," integrating the community transfer process with other project components. There had not yet been time to deal with it. The chief of party and field technical coordinator were working hard on coordination of the different activities to find points of integration and synergy as the program enters its third year.

The present funding cycle for the program comes to a close during 1998, with an option for an extension up to two years. There is a realization within the project, and was also suggested by the mid-term evaluation, to propose an extension and to consider the development of a longer-term program building on the successes that APFDP has already achieved.

However, with a renewed emphasis on field activities and with a rather large menu of activities that can be done in the field, it seems important that the next level of planning target the actual sites where all of these activities take place (and where results will be achieved). While it is not recommended that APFDP re-try the district coordinator system (that did not work at the time and that is the job of the field technical coordinator), there needs to be a formal village/komuna/district coordination plan with which to set aligned, synergistic and complementary objectives.

At a staff meeting we discussed the idea of having site plans for the villages, komunas and districts where APFDP is presently working: Lezha and Pogradec. The need for this within the community forestry transfer component is critical. First, the transfer is a subtle process and does not carry a separate set of incentives. It

needs to draw on other project components for this, such as demonstration plots, small business assistance and livestock. Second, because the community forest transfer is a newly initiated component, we need guidance on particular policies and strategies (what are the actual indicators of success); what commitments the team can make in communities (in terms of time, technical assistance and resources); how the transfer “fits” with other components; and how far into community forestry and community development APFDP is prepared to go.

The community organization specialist prepared a brief set of ideas for a longer range “vision” for Trashan and presented them at a staff meeting. These were discussed and other ideas, constraints and opportunities emerged. The chief of party asked the field technical coordinator and the community organization specialist to work up some formats and issues for discussion.

F3. Present Status

The community organization specialist wrote a preliminary set of longer range objectives and indicators for Trashan, Blinisht Komuna and Lezha District. These have been submitted to the field technical coordinator and discussed briefly.

The basis of the Trashan site plan is to make the transfer the “lead activity.” All other project components will gear their activities to support the management plan. For example, the livestock component should investigate conversion of goat herders to pig farmers. The private forestry component should establish a demonstration plot on the protected land. The small business component should investigate support for expanding the growing and pressing of olives, in cooperation with the Church and/or look at opportunities that regenerating forest can provide (such as beekeeping or herb production). All these issues are related to the management plan.

The komuna level focuses on training the komuna forester and building the capacity of local staff and council to deal with plan approval, monitoring, and development of the “re-investment fund” through local resource generation (fees, permits and fines). The district level focuses on building the community forestry and extension capacity of the DFS to help redefine its roles.

F4. Next Steps and Recommendations

The need to consolidate project component activities in separate villages under a single plan is critical. Without one, APFDP risks the loss of a singular program identity in the village. There is also the risk that one component may compete with another. Also, all of the components should be able to build upon one another to some extent.

Again, it cannot be over-emphasized that APFDP needs to establish some very precise strategies and guidelines on the community forest transfer. The question used during the staff debriefing (held on March 2) was: “how deep into the ocean do we dive?”

Without these guidelines there is a good chance that APFDP can “dive too deep” into assistance in implementing the management plan, organizing people for activities and providing training and support to all of the system actors. Meanwhile, the project would be adding more and more villages, hence more and more work, until this activity could consume the human, time and financial resources of APFDP. On the other hand, if APFDP does not “dive deep enough” the underlying tensions in the village, brought to the fore by the transfer process, runs the risk of allowing conflict in the village to jeopardize other project

components.

It is recommended that the development of site plans (or “vision” statements) be a top priority for APFDP. It will not only better define the work and expected results of staff, but could serve as a good preparatory exercise for the extension proposal.

G. Community Forest Transfer Manual

G1. Initial Status

This had been projected in the third-year work plan. The manual could be distributed for independent or assisted replication in other villages. It is the alternative methodology to the Italy/World Bank AFP “top-down” komuna approach to the transfer.

G2. Work Accomplished

While the transfer manual was not an objective or deliverable of the assignment, it seemed that the experience in Trashan could be captured better if the community organization specialist worked on some of the sections, especially those sections involving new concepts. He developed the following draft entries:

- A table of contents, based on the steps we have taken and the February 19 seminar.
- An introduction outlining what the transfer process is.
- The common forest: a village asset.
- Interpreting the legal provisions (basis for village-level transfer rather than start at the komuna level).
- Modernizing the Kanon (how circumstances are different today).
- Getting started—the first meetings.
- Forming an MPPT.
- To divide or not divide (the matrix of options that face the village).
- The forest management plan (introducing community forestry concepts).

In addition, the community organization specialist briefly charted out what should go into other sections of the manual. This has been submitted to Vezir Muharremi (both hard copy and diskette), who has assumed responsibility for this project component. It has been shared with other staff for comment. The manual will probably be 25 to 40 pages.

G3. Next Steps and Recommendations

The current work plan projects a seminar on lessons learned in forest transfer for May/June and production of the manual for June/July. However, a preliminary manual could be produced earlier for testing in Kallmet. This would give APFDP some indication of what “gaps” still exist and what concepts remain unclear. Such testing would help in the final production.

One might think it better to put this off until APFDP sees whether the community forestry-oriented Trashan plan is approved. However, we know that approval in Blinisht is tied more to the hiring of a komuna forester than to the quality of the plan.

APFDP needs to look at the intended audience for the manual. A manual that supplements APFDP and trained DFS personnel is a different thing than a manual for wide distribution that can be used

independently of the project.

The field technical coordinator, Erling Nielsen, has floated an idea that the DGFP could form a “rapid response team” that, following training from APFDP, could be tapped by villages and komunas in other parts of the country that wish to start the transfer process. This idea has merit and should be explored. However, it might be wise to test the concept by empowering the DFS personnel in Lezha District to be able to do this on a district basis first. That may avert the eventual clash of philosophies with the AFP when and if APFDP would become involved in areas that overlap AFP target areas.

ANNEX A

Terms of Reference

STTA: Community Organization Specialist

A. Background

Part of the Government of Albania's decentralization effort is the transfer of management rights to the villagers of adjacent forest areas. Whereas the state owned all forested areas in the past, and the district forest directorates controlled forestry operations, government is now providing for increased initiatives by private and local authorities. Regulation No. 308 defines procedures for "giving in use" state forests, following up on the general provision in Law No. 7623 of October 13, 1992, article number 4.

APFDP technical staff have now become closely involved in the transfer of state-owned forest areas to two komunas in Lezha District, working together with komuna and district officials, as well as decision-makers at national level. At the same time, staff on the policy side have been researching issues regarding community management of forests. The next phase of support to the transfer process involves preparing a team that can help establish a village-based organization for forest management, work with villagers in preparing the management plan and facilitate the necessary agreements with the komuna and the Forest Service. The team will conduct a PRA focused on the socio-economic and technical issues of village forest management.

Therefore, APFDP has concluded that the services of a community organization specialist would be useful in supporting teams for survey work, and synthesizing information about communities' traditions and priorities in the transfer of forests.

B. Objectives

The major objectives of the consultancy are to:

- Ensure that sufficient information is obtained on traditional management and "ownership" of forest areas
- Support the PRA effort in obtaining necessary information for development of forest management plans and village structures needed for their implementation
- Ensure participation of women and minority groups in the transfer process
- Assist with development of village groups capable of undertaking forest management
- Develop the skills of APFDP and DFS staff on negotiation and conflict resolution

C. Scope of Work

The consultant will work under the general supervision of the chief of party (COP), and in direct collaboration with the field technical coordinator (FTC). The activities undertaken by the community organization specialist are expected to include—but not necessarily be limited to—the following:

- Based on the PRA training, given by APFDP staff, the consultant will work with the management plan preparation team (MPPT) on the PRA. Particular emphasis will be on information relating to “ownership” and traditional management systems
- Assist the villagers and MPPT in identifying or developing appropriate village groups for the management of village forest
- Provide training and guidance to the MPPT on gender and minority issues
- Provide training to the MPPT and APFDP staff on negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- Prior to departure debrief APFDP, MOAF/DGFP, World Bank, USAID and other key institutions on results, and recommendations for next steps
- Submit a copy of the draft report before departing Albania

D. Timing and Level of Effort

The level of effort is estimated at a total of 31 person days, based on a six-day work week, including four travel days and three days in the United States to prepare the final report. Arrival in Tirana is expected on or around January 25, 1998. A major part of the consulting time will be spent in Lezha working with APFDP, DFS and local government staff.

ANNEX B

Schedule of Activities

Day	Date	Location	Activity
Friday	1/23	United States	Travel to Albania
Saturday	1/24	Tirana	Arrival in Albania via Munich
Monday	1/26	Tirana	Briefing with COP and FTC Review of laws and documents Establish schedule for next two weeks Brief Shpresa Ohri (who will start on 2/2)
Tuesday	1/27		Review of Documentation Center and systems Reproduction of relevant documents Review of APFDP draft "steps" and guidelines (Note: 75th Anniversary of Forest Service)
Wednesday	1/28		Work with staff on third year plan Preparation for trip to Lezha
Thursday	1/29	Lezha	Travel to Lezha Travel to Trashan, set up venue for meeting Meet with Cartographer, Komuna Agronomist (Note: Public Holiday)
Friday	1/30		Meeting with DFS staff Meeting with Kryetar, Kallmet on initial village meetings Return to Tirana
Saturday	1/31	Tirana	Report Writing and Training Preparation
Monday	2/2		Debriefing with Vezir Debriefing with FTC Orientation of new Association Specialist Prepare for MPPT Training
Tuesday	2/3	Lezha/ Trashan	Meeting at DFS Meeting with Kryetar, Blinisht Set up room at Church, Trashan
Wednesday	2/4	Trashan	MPPT Training
Thursday	2/5	Trashan	MPPT Training Return to Tirana
Friday	2/6	Tirana	Debriefing of Team Debriefing with General Staff Report Writing
Saturday	2/7	Tirana	Report Writing Meeting with IPM Team (Pitts and Luther) at the request of USAID/Tirana
Monday	2/9	Tirana	Continued Debriefing (after some analysis) Preparation of Travel plan for next two weeks Preparation of extension request Staff Meeting on Village Selection
Tuesday	2/10		Prepare for travel (COP to accompany) Staff Meeting on Work Plan Coordination Prepare PRA Mapping Guidelines

Day	Date	Location	Activity
Wednesday	2/11	Lezha/ Kallmet/ Trashan	Travel to Lezha Meeting with DFS on Seminar Meeting with Priest and Sister
Thursday	2/12	Blinisht	Meeting with Kryetar, Blinisht Aborted meeting in Kallmet (Kryetar didn't show) Meeting with Kryeplak, Trashan Return to Tirana
Friday	2/13	Tirana	Debriefing with FTC Debriefing with Team Staff Meeting Prepare for Seminar (objectives, agenda)
Saturday	2/14		Continued work on seminar with team Prepare modified PRA Mapping Guidelines Report Writing
Monday	2/16		Preparation of modules for Seminar Briefing with COP on Seminar
Tue	2/17		Prepare map for PRA activity (mount, plastic, etc) Train staff on Modified Mapping Activity Review/Edit/Modify TOR for Small Business STTA Prepare for Travel (PRA and Seminar)
Wednesday	2/18	Trashan	Travel to Lezha (early morning) Conduct PRA Mapping in Trashan
Thursday	2/19	Lezha	District Seminar on Forest Transfer Return to Tirana
Friday	2/20	Tirana	Team Debriefing on PRA and Seminar Prepare example Community Forestry Mgt. Plan
Saturday	2/21	Tirana	Report Writing
Monday	2/23	Tirana	Staff Meeting on Seminar and PRA Develop TOC for Forest Transfer Manual Prepare for Travel (MPPT Meeting) (Note: day after Shkodra incident)
Tuesday	2/24	Tirana/Lezha	Staff Meeting/Presentation on Site/Vision Plans Travel to Lezha
Wednesday	2/25	Trashan	MPPT Meeting on Draft Management Plan FTC in Attendance Return to Tirana
Thursday	2/26	Tirana	Debriefing with Team Rewrite/Modify Trashan Management Plan Produce Brochure on rules & regs (Note: COP departs on emergency leave)
Friday	2/27		Meeting with Valbonna and Shpresa on Associations/Group formation and Development Continued work on plan and brochure Prepare Site plan for Trashan and Blinisht Komuna
Saturday	2/28		Report Writing and Prepare for Presentation
Monday	3/2		Presentation on Community Forestry Transfer to APFDP Drafting of Manual

Day	Date	Location	Activity
Tuesday	3/3		Continue Drafting of Manual
Wednesday	3/4		Final Report Writing
Thursday	3/5		Meeting with Kerns (SARA) Final Report Writing
Friday	3/6		Meeting on Site Plan/Vision Methodology Prepare presentation for USAID Debriefing and Presentation to USAID Submission of Final Report
Saturday	3/7		Departure from Tirana
Sunday	3/8		Return to United States via Munich

ANNEX C

Schedule of Deliverables

While the terms of reference did not specify deliverables, the following were the major activities completed during the course of the STTA.

A. Creation and Capacity Building of the MPPT

It was envisaged that a management plan preparation team be established, composed of three villagers (the Kryeplak and two Elders), DFS and APFDP personnel (total of seven). However, it was soon evident that this assemblage was insufficient to cover all of the diverse interests and issues facing Trashan. The MPPT was expanded to include a representative of the komuna (the agronomist, since there is not yet in place a komuna forester), a former komuna veterinarian who is also a member of the HPI livestock group, and a lay member from the Catholic Church (since it is a driving force in the village and has a claim for 21 hectares of the forest).

An initial two-day training was held for the MPPT, followed up with two formal meetings and the PRA activity. We used these fora for the MPPT, and especially the villagers, to flush out for themselves the issues for the Trashan Forest Management Plan. Unlike the World Bank project that has contracted private professionals to construct management plans at the komuna level, we felt that a social forestry approach was indicated, whereby the community itself had to define its own management plan.

The MPPT for Trashan is in place. It will have another meeting the week after the STTA has left, to finalize more of their own management plan. Most of this team will be used in replicates in other Blinisht villages and Kallmet I Vogle (in Kallmet Komuna).

B. PRA Mapping Activity for Collecting and Analyzing Information and for Establishing Utilization Zones of the Common Forest

Based on the successful technique of using plastic covered maps for collecting community information (see mid-term evaluation), an activity was designed to conduct a similar activity for collecting and analyzing information on forests, asking questions such as: Where are the trees? What uses do different parts of the forest provide? This is on file at APFDP.

However, once it was found that the village had come up with a preliminary plan, the PRA activity was amended to be used for them to delineate their utilization zones (protected forest, grazing zone and firewood collection areas). This activity was formally designed and documented; it is also on file at APFDP. It was the methodology used in the formulation of the Trashan Management Plan.

C. Preliminary Management Plan and Explanatory Brochure

The preliminary management plan has undergone two rounds of draft. The first, developed after the PRA activity, was written based on the meetings of the MPPT and other village discussions; it was translated into Albanian and used at a subsequent meeting of the MPPT. It underwent amendment. The amended document has been produced and will be used at the March 10 MPPT meeting.

As has been noted, the Trashan Management Plan is a bit different than the formats used by the World Bank project or the initial formats proposed within APFDP. The document is not a “plan” per se, with

work plans, budgets, schedules for reforestation and increase in biomass. Rather, it is a piece of community forestry—it deals with people rather than trees. Rather than specify what will happen to the forest, it establishes the relationship between the people of Trashan and their forest—what they can and cannot do, the rules and regulations, and their broad goals of reforestation through controlled utilization and natural regeneration. While this was the intent of APFDP, we were able to develop a format that better reflects the community forestry approach.

In addition, a brief brochure has been produced (in English and Albanian) for use in the village. It outlines the utilization zones and the rules and regulations that will go into effect once the village agrees to them. So it will be used as a basis for “voting” and for regulation.

D. Lezha District Seminar on Community Forest Transfer

A one-day seminar was designed and delivered for 39 participants, from the DFS, the komunas of Blinisht and Kallmet and the village MPPT members. The seminar provided orientation, information and discussion on: a) legal provisions of forest transfer; b) pilot project steps taken in implementing transfer; c) the preliminary Trashan management plan; and d) the changing roles, relationships and responsibilities among the DFS, komuna and village as a result of the transfer. Evaluation of the seminar were overwhelmingly favorable.

While a similar activity was conducted in late 1996, it dealt mainly with district level actors. Since the unrest and elections, almost all of these actors have changed. The seminar conducted this time concentrated on the new active players in the transfer, and included the entire staff complement of the DFS.

E. Preliminary Vision for Trashan—Projection Out through Later 2000

One early recommendation of this STTA was the need for plans for the villages, komunas and districts where APFDP is directing its field activities. The purpose of such a “site plan” or “vision” (the term used by the chief of party) is: a) to better design work plans; b) to better integrate activities and find areas of synergy; and c) to serve as a basis for an extension proposal.

A meeting was held on the subject and some ideas of what such plans would contain was presented. This was then turned into a document to serve as an example for future work. Meetings were then held to start to flush out additional issues and start to look at the sites in Pogradec, to be followed by Fier and Tirana.

F. Staff Seminar on Community Forest Transfer

A morning seminar was conducted with the attendance of the entire technical staff. It traced the steps taken so far and proposed next steps. Other important issues included: a) the basis of the Trashan Management Plan as Community/Social Forestry rather than Technical Forestry, and what that means; b) the ongoing work options and commitments in Trashan in terms of community organization, mobilization and commitment in a transfer that is subtle at best; c) alternate options of management plans (zonation, division by leasehold, division by family and/or neighborhood); d) compartmentalized versus holistic views on land utilization; and e) a recount of activities, findings and recommendations.

G. Community Forest Transfer Manual

This will be a major output from APFDP and will consume time and resources over the next few months. It must be based on the experiences in Trashan but also give guidance on other options for management. It must deal with the issues of common property and common responsibility, community mobilization and commitment, as well as how to form an MPPT and write a management plan.

I have drafted out a preliminary table of contents and drafted out (very roughly) some of the entries that deal with social forestry and community development, areas where APFDP does not have that much experience.

H. Staff Training

Training of two staff, Vezir Muharremi (community forest transfer specialist) and Shpresa Ohri (association development specialist), was accomplished through structured sessions (usually as briefings and de-briefings), on-the-job coaching and through provision of materials.

The areas of training upon which I concentrated were:

- Introduction of community forestry concepts and principles.
- Adaptation of PRA Refused Land Survey methodology to the transfer/plan process.
- Organizational development of local institutions in plan implementation.
- Adaptation to changing conditions, including negotiation, participation and conflict resolution.

The terms of reference specified a task in training on minority and gender sensitivity. Unfortunately, the context of the work did not allow for special treatment of these issues. First, the transfer process is under the auspices of the Council of Elders, defined by traditional law as males only. Second, minority issues are non-existent in Trashan, as far as we can tell. Third, the most important issues of empowerment dealt with the squatters and the landless. On this we spent a lot of time discussing the positions that APFDP should take and how we can facilitate a more equitable understanding in the village about these people.

I. Reports

A weekly report was issued for the first five of six weeks. These reports recounted activities undertaken and provided analysis of significant issues. They were used for reporting, information sharing, targeting and discussion.

This document constitutes the final report, as per the TOR.

In addition, a debriefing and presentation was made to USAID/Tirana on the last weekday of the STTA.

ANNEX D

Team, Contacts and Meetings

Major People Dealt With During the STTA

Name of Person	Position	Comments
<i>Supervisory Personnel:</i>		
James Seyler	COP, APFDP (Chemonics)	
Erling Nielsen	FTC, APFDP (Chemonics)	
<i>My Team:</i>		
Vezir Muharremi	Community Forest Transfer Specialist, APFDP (TRD)	recently transferred from policy duties
Shpresa Ohri	Association Development Specialist, APFDP	recently hired
<i>District/Komuna Level Officials:</i>		
Patrit Gjoni	District Forest Officer, Lezha District	
Rrok Marku	Kryetar, Blinisht Komuna	
Llesh Hila	Kryetar, Kallmet Komuna	
<i>The MPPT for Trashan:</i>		
Ndue Zefi	Kryplak, Trashan	
Ndrac Zefi	Elder, Trashan	
Zef Toku	Church Manager	attended the MPPT
Dede Zeka	former komuna vet	added to MPPT
Gjon Fierza	Head of Section, DFS	DFS rep to MPPT
Mark Hilla	Forest Engineer, DFS	DFS rep to MPPT
Pjeter Deda	Cartographer, DFS	added to MPPT
Ndue Koleci	Komuna Agronomist	added to MPPT
<i>Other Persons:</i>		
Gjok Filipi	Kryeplak, Kallmet I Vogle	
Ndue Lleshi	Forest Technician	assigned jurisdiction includes Trashan, being transferred to Lezha

Other Meetings

Name of Person	Position/Affiliation	Date of Meeting	Purpose of Meeting
Charlie Pitts	Penn State	2/7/98	IPM Team
Greg Luther	Virginia Tech	2/7/98	IPM Team
Waldon Kerns	Virginia Polytech	3/5/98	SARA
Diane Blane	USAID	3/6/98	Debriefing
Michael Radman	USAID	3/6/98	Debriefing
Kristaq Jorgi	USAID	3/6/98	Debriefing
Lambertus Vogelzang	Stoas		PRA Methods

ANNEX E

STTA Extension Justification

A. Original Scope of Work

The original terms of reference specified objectives of: ensuring sufficient information is obtained on traditional forest management systems; supporting staff effort in collecting information for development of village forest management plans; ensuring wide participation; assistance in the establishment of village groups to undertake forest management, and; provide staff guidance and skills on conflict resolution and negotiation.

Deliverables of the STTA included: support and training to a management plan preparation team (MPPT) resulting in a management plan format and draft; investigation and identification of village groups to manage forest land, resulting in the targeting of a local institution with which to work through the transfer process and implementation of the plan; training of villages and staff in equity (gender and minority), negotiation and conflict resolution, resulting in increased local capacity and; debrief major players and partners, resulting in key recommendations for next steps.

B. Major Constraints to Meeting Time Schedule

1. The twin issues of private ownership and collective management of common property is new to the Albanian rural villager. Since the transfer is actually “in use” rather than title, there is little incentive to move quickly. Government personnel fear that a successful transfer may result in job losses. There is conflict between levels (komuna and village) over who is in actual authority. Competition among “power centers” has required more time spent in negotiation.
2. Over the last seven years of transitionary confusion, several issues have cropped up in villages that hinder systematic transfer: squatters on common land; lack of boundary identification of private land; confusion on the basic concepts of ownership and freedom to act; massive environmental degradation; lack of official acknowledgment of village authorities, and; confusion over levels of jurisdiction in decentralization. The original composition of the MPPT has had to be expanded to ensure wider participation and inclusion of many more players.
3. During the course of the STTA to date, progress has been made in meeting the Scope of Work. An MPPT has been established, information collection methods have been developed and carried out, training has been provided and constant monitoring and follow-up on actions have been carried out. However, due to the relative isolation of the pilot village at this time of the year (lack of telecommunications and public transport, rains that have led to flooding of some areas, and work schedules of villagers), a recently concluded set of conflicts between village and komuna, as well as travel restrictions, the management plan and training of the village institution will not be completed by the STTA departure date of February 21.

C. Request for Extension

It is proposed to extend the STTA for two weeks (12 working days) in order to more thoroughly complete ongoing steps, so that a natural conclusion is reached in this phase of the pilot. Resultant total level of effort: 43 days, including travel.

D. Work to Be Completed in Extension Period

By the end of the four week period (the original schedule), the management plan will not have been completed. Information will have been collected using participatory techniques, but the opportunity for village analysis (and sensitization on equity issues) and determination of final plan components will not have been concluded. No comparative activity will be able to be conducted in the second village.

By the end of the four week period a seminar will have been conducted for major players in the pilot area (Lezha District), but there will be insufficient time to follow up on actions agreed. The STTA can serve as a facilitator in these agreements.

During the two week extension period, the STTA will have completed the following:

- Forest management plan will have been completed to submission stage (to komuna and DFS authorities), including gaining consensus approval by the village, that meets both village needs and legal provisions
- Replicate activities (PRA activities and management plan parameters) will have been started in a second village (as a comparison for staff and players on the uniqueness of each circumstance and plan)
- Sections of a *Transfer Manual* (for distribution throughout Albania) will be drafted based on an analysis of work to date, and to serve as a guide for staff writing the final manual (this activity is scheduled for completion later in the year), and;

A staff seminar on preliminary analysis of Regulation 308 (the legal provision for forest transfer), the theory versus reality and recommendations for improvement, will be conducted.