

FOREST REHABILITATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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ANNOTATION

Develop measures to reforestation and rehabilitation and consider their beneficial aspects.

Key words: Forest, rehabilitation, summary, relief, climate

SUMMARY

The Republic of Uzbekistan is a Central Asian country that borders Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. The total area is 447,400 km². Approximately, four-fifth of the territory of Uzbekistan is occupied by desert plains; eastern and southeastern areas of the country include mountains and foothills of the Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai mountains. The climate is characterized by continental and subtropical conditions. The population of the Republic of Uzbekistan amounts to around 28 million people (data of end of 2009) with an annual increase of 483,100 people or 1.8%. As of January 1, 2008, the State Forest Fund of the Republic of Uzbekistan has comprised 8.66 million ha of which 3.24 million ha are covered by forests including 594,883 ha of artificial forest plantations. The percentage of forest land, i.e. ratio of the area covered by forests to the total territory, is 7.3%.

All forests in Uzbekistan, both existing and newly established ones, have protective and land reclamation values. This means that the better forests fulfil or will fulfil their forest reclamation functions, according to their value orientation. Therefore, the objectives of reforestation and afforestation for different climatic zones of the country have their own characteristics, though all are aimed at strengthening the reclamation functions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Republic of Uzbekistan is located in Central Asia. It borders Kyrgyzstan (in the northeast and east), Kazakhstan (in the north and northwest), Turkmenistan (in the southwest), Afghanistan (in the south), and Tajikistan (in the southeast). The territory of Uzbekistan stretches from southeast to northwest. The northernmost point is located at the northeast side of the country at the Ustyurt Plateau (45°36' northern latitude) whereas the southernmost point is located at Termez City (37°11' northern longitude), and the westernmost point at the Ustyurt Plateau (56 northern longitude), and the easternmost point, southeast of Fergana Valley (37°10' northern longitude). The distance between extreme northern and southern points is 925 km, and 1,400 km - between western and eastern points (Anonymous, 1).

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (ANONYMOUS, 2)

Relief: Based on the topography, the territory of the country is divided into plains, submountain and mountain areas. The plains cover the Ustyurt Plateau, the alluvial-deltoid plain of Amudarya and Kyzylkum. • Ustyurt is a wavy plateau with prevailing hills of 200 – 250 m asl; it is delimited by ledges from adjoining plains • The alluvial-deltoid plain of Amudarya sits at lower elevations. The relief is flat (height up to 100 m asl) with not many hills • Kyzylkum is an upland plain with hills ranging from 100 m in the northwest to 200 – 300 m in the southeast. There are several mountain formations with elevations of up to 1,000 m. They have rocky slopes sharply cut by dry erosive valleys. Mountains are separated from each other by sandy massifs with distinct forms of aeolian relief. There are closed caves and hollows, some of them below sea level (up to 12 m). 255 The

sub-mountain and mountain part includes mountain ridges of the Tien Shan and GissarAlay mountains, and intermountain depressions separating them. The elevation of ridges is up to 4,000 m and higher (reaching 4,643 m at Gissar mountain ridge). There are ridges of the Western Tien Shan located in the extreme northeast: Karjantau, Ugam, Pskem, Chatkal and Kuramin. The Fergana Valley and Tashkent-Mirzachul sub-mountain plains separate the Turkestan ridge (Gissar-Alay) and its western branch (Malguzar and Nuratau) from this group of ridges. Towards the south, there is the Sanzar-Nuratau Valley while in the extreme south of the country there are the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Valleys separated by the Gissar mountain ridge.

Climate: The climate of Uzbekistan is continental subtropical with a long and dry hot summer, a cool damp autumn and a mild winter with little snow. The winter period in the plains and lower foothill areas lasts from one and a half months up to two months in the extreme south and up to five months in the extreme north (at Ustyurt). The average temperature in January is about -8°C (at Ustyurt), in the extreme south in Sherabad it is 3.6°C . An absolute minimum in the country is -37°C . The average temperature in July in the northern areas is up to 26°C , and over 30°C in the south. At an elevation of 3,000 m, the temperature is about 10°C . The absolute maximum temperature measured in the lowlands and foothill areas is about 42°C . In summer time, during the afternoon, the temperature on the land surface can reach 60°C , and even 70°C in sandy deserts.

Forest Rehabilitation

As already noted, there is no officially accepted glossary or standard on forest terms in the country. Presently, forest terms which have been accepted during the Soviet time are used. There are differences in the understanding of equally sounding terms in Russian language [forestry related] literature and in internationally accepted interpretation. Moreover, there are terms and concepts, which have not been previously used in forestry of Uzbekistan. Therefore, in this section, the terms will be used in their international interpretation (FAO, 2002). Forest rehabilitation is the process of restoring the capacity of a forest to provide goods and services again, where the state of the rehabilitated forest is not identical to its state before degradation. In Uzbekistan, it means reforestation and afforestation. However, afforestation refers not only to forest plantings within the forest lands of the State Forest Fund, but also outside the Fund area, e.g. on irrigated agricultural lands, called field-protective afforestations. As a rule, afforestation is carried out on non-forest land, e.g. on the dried bottom of the Aral Sea while reforestation is carried out on forest lands not covered with forests. Forest restoration is the process of restoring a forest to its original state before degradation (i.e. same functions, structure and composition). Practically all forests of the country are exposed to degradation to a different degree. Due to significant variability of habitat 275 conditions, a number of forest types close to natural composition have been delineated, though there are no reference sites where the original state of each type of forest could be preserved. Therefore, it is practically impossible to carry out forest restoration under the conditions reigning in Uzbekistan.

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