

#### 4 Institutional barriers and bridges to Participatory Approaches

The principal and basic institutional barrier for public participation in forest management is the sharp top-down orientation of the administrative organs. Populations of logging villages can, in practice, participate in forest management only directly via *leskhoz*es and forest enterprises, but these bodies themselves are almost completely deprived of all management rights. These rights are not available on the *raion* level either. Previously, almost all of the rights were concentrated on the *krai* level, but these have been also decreased recently for the benefit of the federal center.

The other strong institutional barrier is absence of mechanisms, that would have either the public participate in forest use and preservation management on a compulsory basis or at least in a manner that would encourage their participation. This is specifically important in connection with the strong apathy of the population, especially in rural communities, regarding all kinds of public action. This is apparent in the information gathered from the Heads of rural and *raion* administrations, mentioned in chapter three of this report. This is also witnessed by growing passiveness of voters at election.

A significant institutional barrier was and remains isolation of forestry and the forest service not only from the population, but also even from the local administration. Here coordination is done to a great extent on the principles of arrangements. It is to some extent regulated by *krai* normative regulations, but is not regulated as compulsory from the side of federal authorities.

One more institutional barrier is the prolonged reorganization of forestry management structure, accompanied by multiple changes in personnel of forestry apparatus structure. The *leskhoz*es, which are the main institution practically involved in forest management, appear to be especially impacted. For two years already they have been in a "suspended" condition, as their status, further development and even their existence remain questionable.

Another institutional barrier, which is also important, is the fact that the system of forest industry management has not been adequately organized to adapt to a market economy. On the federal level, and even more so on the *krai* level, continuous reorganization is taking place. As a rule, old methods characteristic of the command management are being restored.

The situation of the management of small forest business remains in absolutely unsatisfactory condition. Except for the allocation of forest plots for harvesting and collection of taxes, these businesses remain out of the sphere of state management.

Most of the confusion with aboriginal forest use is linked with uncertainty and inaccuracy of normative deeds, specifically related to TTP status and also the rights of national communities relative to use of TTP.

One indisputable institutional barrier is the absence of financial means of the rural municipal formations. This greatly weakens or even ruins the real power of the Heads of rural administrations.

At last, liquidation of general federal service of ecological control in *raion* became a strong barrier. The Department of environment and natural resources protection that was established by the *raion* administration is not provided with the necessary powers for control and management.

#### Conclusion

The present report embraces research, which actually was conducted in a period of just over six months. During that time, the project was able to organize research organization for the required research, form the Steering Committee, select target communities, carry out two workshops, establish fruitful links with the Lazo *raion* administration and target RMFs, and implement a questionnaire of forest businessmen.

Public relations of the Project have started and information on the Project was two times put on the air by *krai* radio station.

During the coming year, attention should be focused on more detailed and profound examination of local forest businesses, especially small ones. In addition, it is also very important to understand what role forest use plays in the economy of local household and to what extent local people want and are ready and able to participate in forest sector management. The main method to collect such information should be polls and interviews.

In addition, it will be necessary to continue to examine the forest sector management system on the *krai* level because it is evident that the structure of both of federal and local systems of forest sector management will at last be developed in the current year.

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