BRIEF REPORT

Development Program for Improving Wood Procurement in Northwest Russia Based on SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of wood procurement in Northwest Russia have been analysed from Finnish forest industry perspective and development program for further improvement has been provided. The SWOT analysis of a wood procurement system, where round-wood is conveyed from a stump to a customer mill gate by means of technical and commercial operations that include wood purchasing, logging, storing and logistics, is conducted in this study. The focus for this analysis is in the Northwest regions of the Russian Federation where the Finnish forest industry's purchasing operations and investments in wood processes are concentrated. This paper describes potential technological, economical, social and environmental impacts on future developments of wood procurement. Issues have been classified and those key issues related to wood supply planning, wood sources, wood markets, logistics, harvesting, environmental responsibility, human resources and social responsibility have been highlighted. Results of the analysis may be used in decision-making.

Key words: Russia, forest industry investments, trade of industrial round-wood, wood harvesting, environmental responsibility, social responsibility

Introduction

Northwest Russia, including regions of Karelia, Komi, Archangel, Vologda, Leningrad, Novgorod and Pskov, plays a key role in the Russian forest sector and has been well developed in comparison with the rest of Russia. Annually, the region produces 37% of the total industrial round wood of Russia, 63% of its pulp, paper and cardboard, 38% of its plywood, and 27% of its sawn timber (Gelvanovsky et al. 2007). For comparison Northwest Russia has only 10% of the forest land and 12% of growing stock of the whole of Russia. Nevertheless, the forest resource of the region not only supplies the domestic forest industry, but also the export market of industrial round-wood. In fact, Northwest Russia has been the most important industrial round-wood supplier to Europe, particularly the Nordic counties. Finland has been traditionally one of the key importers of Russian industrial round-wood mostly from Northwest Russia. Round-wood export to Finland has been increasing steadily during the past 10-15 years and was approximately 17 million m³ with bark per year in 2005. This was 31% of the round-wood export (Kareliastat 2006) and equalled 24% of the consumption of industrial round-wood in Finland (Finnish Forest Research Institute 2006).

Well-known global Finnish corporations, such as Stora Enso, UPM-Kymmene and Metsäliitto, are not only the biggest importers of round-wood from Northwest Russia to Finland (Stora Enso, UPM-Kymmene, and Metsäliitto), they are also growing investors in wood processing in Russia (Karvinen et al. 2006). Currently, 5 sawmills are owned by Stora Enso (Nebolchi, Impilahti), Metsäliitto (Padporozhye) and UPM-Kymmene (Chudovo-RWS, Pestovo), which collectively use approximately 1.8 million m³ of saw logs annually. Companies are also investigating possibilities for green-field pulp and paper mill investments. Also Swedish owned Swedwood-Kostamuksha and Swedwood-Tikhvin and Austrian owned Mayer-Melnhof-Holz- Efimovsky have invested into sawmilling in Northwest Russia.

Stagnation trends in Russian wood harvesting, the recovering forest industry of Russia, and increasing round-wood export (Gelvanovsky et al. 2007) demonstrate importance for wood flow security. Taking also into account low utilisation of allowable annual cut (currently 40%), low utilization of thinnings (15% of the harvested volume), and illegal wood harvesting activities (estimated to 20-25%), wood procurement operations could and should be further developed (Gerasimov and Karjalainen 2006).

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Recent development in Russia suggests, however, that export of industrial round-wood is not going to increase any more, on the contrary to decrease. This is due to increasing export duties for round-wood. The aim of Russian authorities is to decrease export of industrial round-wood and increase wood processing in Russia. Russia has also renewed forest legislation aiming at clarification of responsibilities and rights between state (forest owner) and private business (forest user), and also between the federation and regions (Forest Code 2006).

Wood procurement development in Russia, particularly for a foreign company, is characterized by a chain of ideas, plans, decisions and operations subject to constant uncertainty and lack of clear and reliable information. In such planning environment, analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) could be used to identify critical issues for wood procurement management in any situation and to organize them in a way that enables one to use sound strategic approach for decision making.

In this article we analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of wood procurement in Northwest Russia from the foreign, in particular large Finnish companies' points of view, which are working in Russia and planning to expand business there. Based on the results of the analysis, development program and some suggestions are proposed and outcomes are presented which may be utilized in decision-making.

Materials and methods

SWOT analysis was developed 40 years ago to help companies define their strategies in the context of fluctuating and competitive environments (Leraned et al. 1965). This decision-making tool owes its name to the fact that it examines the strengths and weaknesses within the company, as well as the opportunities and threats of the market. It is one of the classical tools of strategic analysis (Wilson 2001) which has been applied also in some forestry-related analysis for forest strategy (Rauch 2007, Suh and Emtage 2005), forest economics (Oswald et al. 2004), and forest management (Kurttila et al. 2000, Kangas et al. 2003, Pesonen et al. 2001). The SWOT analysis may also serve as a tool for management assessing the relevance of a strategy during the implementation stage. Taking into account the latest available data and ensuring the actions remain relevant (Anon 2003). Implementation of the SWOT analysis includes following steps:

1. Investigation of business environment enables detection of major trends and problems that could affect the future of the wood procurement area. Analysis should be made about wood resources, technological, economic, environmental, political, and sociodemographic indicators. Indicators of regional disparities and benchmarks are particularly useful for revealing opportunities and threats. This step should not be exhaustive since the aim is to obtain an overall picture and to illustrate the key issues.

2. External analysis of opportunities and threats consists of listing parameters of the environment which are not under the direct control but which are assumed to strongly influence the development.

3. Internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses involves an inventory of the factors which are at least partly under the direct control and which may either promote or hinder the development.

4. Mapping of internal factors and external parameters are usually illustrated in a quadrangle (Figure 1): internal feasibility regarding strengths and weaknesses, and external environment regarding opportunities and threats.

5. Preparation of an inventory of possible actions involves identification of possible actions, formulated in general terms in relation to the main problems identified.

6. Classification of possible actions is aimed at highlighting those actions which most probably reduce problems by focusing on strengths and reducing or even eliminating weaknesses, maximizing opportunities and minimizing threats.

7. Evaluation of development program contains a set of interventions some of which build on strengths and opportunities while others try to compensate weaknesses or to warn of threats (Figure 1).

We have analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources, including the State Statistical Committee of Russia, the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, forest industry companies, NGOs, mass-media and own experience. Data have been categorized according to key themes.

Results of the SWOT analysis and development program building

Returning now to the problem of development of wood procurement in NW Russia the SWOT analysis covers the following areas, each of which are sources of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats:

• general institutional factors: forestry policy and legislation; educational conditions and programs; health and safety; export operations; operational organization; infrastructure

• wood harvesting factors: allowable and actual forest resources; technology and machinery; productivity and utilization; compliance with legislation and norms; logistics

• industrial factors: demand and supply of round wood; international investments; sustainable manage-

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ment including economical, environmental and social issues.

Results of the SWOT analysis of the wood procurement conditions in Northwest Russia from the foreign companies' point of view are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mapping of internal feasibility and external environment of wood procurement conditions in Northwest Russia from a foreign or Finnish organization point of view

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Historical background in wood purchasing Financial capability All assortments buyer – also birch and aspen pulpwood which not common in Russia Reputation as a reliable partner Russian speaking management Experience in domestic logistics operations Experience in domestic logistics operations Experience in domestic harvesting operations Good knowledge about domestic wood market in border regions Investments into mechanical woodworking and harvesting in Russia	Weak synergy of wood supply planning with the allowable cut, logistics and logging operations, infrastructure conditions and market issue Poor knowledge about distant wood resources Economically and environmentally sound wood resources limited Poor knowledge about wood market in distant regions Seasonal fluctuation in wood delivery Small share of controlled wood resources Weak wood terminal network Poor partnership system Competition between and within other Finnish companies Wood exchange not common Size of assortment - hard to change, problem in the cross-cutting optimization Dependence of wood trade companies Stiff wood price system Extensive forest management based on traditional logging technology dominated. High wood procurement cost Incomplete system for tracing origin of wood Forest certification (FSC, PEFC) are not common Probability of illegal wood in the procurement chain Low productivity of labor. High risk of accidents Lack of qualified human resources in the countryside Lack of skilled harvester/forwarder operators Social oblications including unemployment
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Potential wood resources existing Few species, coniferous dominant Low utilisation level of allowable cut Low stumpage price and labour cost Possibility to acquire Russian logging companies New forest legislation aiming to long term leasing agreements GSM/GPS development Transfer of technology from Scandinavia Improvement of logistic operations in Russia Developing forest industry Growing Russian economy and consumption of wood products	Poor infrastructure, roads network and high costs of developing it. Lack of all year forest roads Strong competition, constantly growing wood prices Integration process in wood business inside of Russia: competition on regional and national levels Russian regional authorities influence on distribution of forest leases – lobby for the local companies Necessity to Invest into local wood processing Corruption Unsound business practices (cash payment, bribery, terminals along the border) Price speculation. Local and regional protectionism Shortage of wagons and vessels Customs and export regulations/duties Illegal and unreported logging. Poor reputation as a business. Lack of security of investments.

The preceding framework is provided as a starting point to assist in developing wood procurement in Northwest Russia from viewpoint of a Finnish wood procurement organization operating in Russia. As explained in the method chapter, weaknesses and threats should be minimized or avoided, while strengths and opportunities should be matched to develop wood procurement.

Because of the complexity of the task, the problems have been classified for building a development program (Figure 1). Key issues in the development program include wood supply planning, wood sources, wood markets, logistics, harvesting, environmental responsibility, human resources and social responsibility, which are presented and processed in following worksheets. Some weaknesses are not presented, however, the whole list of weaknesses should be proc-

essed in order to convert them into strengths; also threats should be converted into opportunities.

Potential Potential	Key issue: the s	set of highlighted problems	
internal strengths	internal weaknesses	Description of	Possible actions: set of interventions some of which
Potential external opportunities	Potential external threats	Description of interventions some of which the problem to build on strengths and be solved opportunities while others try to compensate for weaknesses or to warn of threats	
		Result: Des	cription of the change

Figure 1. The SWOT (left) and a development program (right) worksheet

Key wood source issues

The Russ m³ of of the econo view remo forest al. 2 beca profita road locate netwo maint the c autho road comp buildi about 23% Russi in Sit

Wood resources potential exists but economically and environmentally sound wood sources are limited in Northwest Russia. Poor kn es. Allowable cut located along the existing road ne ledge about distant wood reso degraded.

annual allowable cut in Northwest	Possible actions:
sia is 90 million m ³ including 53 million	Collection and analysis of forest inventory data (stock,
f coniferous (Roslesinforg 2005). Most	species, ages etc) related to growing stock and
ne resources cannot be utilized from	annual allowable and actual cut for regions and
omical and environmental points of	forestry units.
as the largest allowable cut located in	Collection and analysis of data related to wood
ote areas in Komi and Arkhangelsk,	harvesting restrictions (intact landscapes, official and
re the demand for protection of intact	planned conservation areas) by regions and forestry
t landscapes is increasing (Aksenov et	units.
2002). Logging often unprofitable	Collection and analysis of data about commercially
use of poor infrastructure: economic	unsound forest areas.
tability of logging strictly dependent on	Investigation of economically and environmentally
density and quality. The allowable cut	attractive areas for purchasing, harvesting and logistic
ed along the existing degrading road	developing.
ork, thus huge investments into tenance and new roads needed. As	Creation of an IT system for collecting and analysing
contribution of the federal and regional	data related to
orities is not adequate to develop the	 Road infrastructure
system in forest regions, logging	 Tenants of forest areas
panies should take care of new road	 Environmental restrictions in forest areas
ing. Business should have guarantee	for an operation area up to stand level.
it continuity. As a result, actual cut is	Plan and develop logistics and logging operations based on knowledge of economically and
of the annual allowable cut in whole	environmentally sound areas and existing
sia: 41% in Northwest Russia and 16%	infrastructure.
iberia and the Far East (Roslesinforg	Plan and develop intensive forest management.
5).	nan and develop intensive lotest management.

Result: Economically and environmentally sound wood sources are identified and taken into account. Clear picture about current and future allowable cut. Good basis for wood procurement

Key round wood market issues

The background for purchasing strong but the focus is on exports from border regions. The
competition in the round-wood market is strong, prices are rising. Low wood flow security.

During the USSR era, few state organizations were Possible actions: in charge of wood export. Nowadays, Finnish wood procurement organisations should make wood procurement contracts with very many suppliers. Big and medium size businesses are successfully involved in wood supply. Inexperienced wood suppliers (especially SMEs) in the distant Northwest regions meet export problems with Russian authorities and prefer to supply domestically. Government decisions to increase customs duties are influencing export of round wood. Additional requirements compared to domestic wood, i.e. phytosanitary check, sorting of wood and reduced number of customs declaration points cause additional work and expenses Round-wood export has been growing until now. Domestic consumption of wood products is increasing. This means that the competition for wood resources is increasing - the market prices of pulpwood and saw logs are rising. For wood flow security, the integration processes are observed -Russian pulp and paper mills try to manage with acquisition of logging companies. Bigger companies have a better possibility to invest in the development of harvesting infrastructure and technology. Russian regional authorities are influencing distribution of forest leases - lobby for local companies exists.

Map and monitor the round-wood balance based on export, interregional and domestic levels. Map and monitor location, capacity, prices and business behaviour of major mills. Create flexible wood price system based on local wood market situation Optimise logistic operations - minimise transport costs instead of wood price. Investigate distant regions and find promising areas from the purchasing point of view Create and support wood terminals for buying vood locally. Organise wood transport delivery from road side to wood terminal. Acquisition of Russian logging companies with forest resources. Long term leasing is possible as well. Use the knowledge about economically and environmentally sound forest areas and forest area tenants for planning procedure Wood procurement contracts directly with logging companies instead of intermediate trade firms Developing partnerships with local logging businesses Involve SMEs

Result: Better explanation and prediction of wood prices. Also more distant regions are involved in the business. SMEs are taken into account. Wood flow is better controlled

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Weak synergy of wood procuremen	t planning with other wood procurement activities.
The experience of wood	Possible actions:
procurement in Russia show weak	Investigate the influence of different wood procurement factors
synergy of wood procurement	on wood flow: mills demand, possibilities in wood supply and
planning with allowable cut,	logistics, prices, allowable cut, competitors, environmental and
logistics and harvesting operations,	social restrictions, infrastructural conditions etc.
infrastructure conditions, market	Development of decision support system - an interrelated set
situation and the behaviour of	of knowledge about significant wood procurement factors.
authorities. The problem is that	Synchronise wood procurement planning with
decisions and actions are made	customer/supplier scopes, allowable cut, logistic operations,
under constant uncertainty and lack of clear information from the	wood prices, infrastructure conditions and logging operations.
lack of clear information from the field.	Optimization of the wood flow
	e predictable, better controlled
Key logistic issues	
Substantial seasonal fluctuation in	wood supply.
The logging depends on the season	Possible actions:
because of poor/lack of road	Investments into short and long distance transpo
infrastructure (Gelvanovsky et al.	infrastructure including rolling-stock.
2007, Tatarinov 1989). Main wood	
resources are accessible when soil is	Ose wood terminals in order to involve owies in the dire
frozen. There is shortage of wagons	
and vessels during the peak season.	Use flexible price policy according to season.
Wood prices depend on the season.	
Result: Even and stable wood sup	ply whole year round.
Key environmental issues	
. , .	rigin of wood. Fear for illegal and unreported wood.
In accordance with the compan	
environment policy, the origin	of Create and support a mapping system for collecting and
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
carefully using certified tracing syste	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvartal
carefully using certified tracing syste Companies do not wish to procure wo	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvartal and lesnichestvo network) for checking cutting licence
carefully using certified tracing syste Companies do not wish to procure we from protected areas, or from any ot	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvartal od lesnichestvo network) for checking cutting licence her (Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2006, Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2007)
carefully using certified tracing syste Companies do not wish to procure wo from protected areas, or from any otl restricted areas identified by the for	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvartat leanichestvo network) for checking cutting licence- her (Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2006, Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2007) est official and planned conservation areas
carefully using certified tracing syste Companies do not wish to procure we from protected areas, or from any ot restricted areas identified by the for and environmental authoriti	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvartal lesnichestvo network) for checking cutting licence: (Gerasimov et al. 2006; Gerasimov et al. 2007) est o Official and planned conservation areas es. o Intact forest landscapes
Unfortunately, the chance to obt	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvartal lesnichestvo network) for checking cutting licence: (Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2006, Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2007) est o Official and planned conservation areas es. o Intact forest landscapes ain Providing support to the Russian partner on fores
carefully using certified tracing syste Companies do not wish to procure we from protected areas, or from any ot restricted areas identified by the for and environmental authoriti	ms Improve the mapping system (stand, kvarta lesnichestvo network) for checking cutting licence (Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2006, Gerasimov <i>et al.</i> 2007) est o Official and planned conservation areas es. o Intact forest landscapes ain Providing support to the Russian partner on fores to certification.

Key harvesting issues

the last decades have

(Roslesinforg 2005).

raises pressure to remaining commercially

wood resources, which also have

ecological values. Logging companies changing from tree

length to cut-to-length (CTL)

system (Gerasimov et al. 2005). Wood procurement system with

silviculturally, fits for thinning and

has less environmental impact without additional costs.

system performs better

Extensive forest management. Traditional tree-length logging technology dominating. Thinning Thinning seldom applied in Northwest Russia. Large-scale Possible Improve understanding on the principles and practices of concentrated clear cuttings during

Result: Complete and constantly up-dated system for tracing origin of wood

eaken

overcu

sound

Instantian forest management by producing research-based information of the ecological and socio-economic impacts of forest management norms and silvicultural practices on the structure and quality of forests This sustainable forestry in Northwest Russia the Assist the development of forest growing practices and forest availability of wood for forest industries, increases costs and management planning systems by producing further analysis

of the results of different forest regeneration and thinning regimes and growth trends of forests in NWR. Plan harvesting operations based on knowledge of intensive

forest management in unmanaged forests applying CTL system. Create a map system for harvesting operations displaying:

forest inventory data on stand level, protected areas, infrastructure (wood terminals, roads, railway roads, railway stations, electricity lines, open-cast mines etc), terrain and hydrographical conditions

Synchronise logging operations with the wood procurement plan, allowable cut, logistic operations and infrastructure conditions.

Result: Move to intensive forest management where more attention on all phases during the rotation period. Increase in annual increment and allowable cut. Better utilization of cut-to-length

system Key labor issues

CTL

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	e. Social obligations. High accident risks. Industrial and public safety.
Security.	
Strong urbanization process in Russia because of low standard of living and poor infrastructure in the countryside. Usually local population has no motivation for high labour productivity. Often logging companies have to search workers from abroad, e.g. Ukraine,	Possible actions: Collect and map data related to human resources of Northwest Russia. Take into account in wood procurement planning lack of qualified labor in the countryside. Try to organise the business in towns when possible. Organize training for wood procurement operations for highly motivated local people.
Byelorussia, Moldova. Usually logging companies should take care or contribute to	Use inter-changeable teams for remote forest work. Use more productive systems and machinery – less personnel will be needed (Gerasimov et al. 2005).
maintenance of the social infrastructure of villages including heating, housing, cultural services, public transport, medical care, schools <i>etc.</i>	Provide attractive salary and social support. Collect and map data related to social infrastructure in Northwest Russia. Prioritize social obligations. Take social obligations into account as overhead costs.
Due to old machinery, poor training and low productivity culture, accident risk is high: 1 death per 2000 workers (Ministry of Labour 2003) or 1.4 deaths per 1 mill. m ⁵ cut. Criminal and illegal activities common.	Improve work safety and training. Use security service. Co-operate with local and regional authorities. Improvement promotion campaign for work in forests; emphasise salary, conditions, and additional benefits.

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Result: More qualified staff is available. Social obligations are considered, costs are optimised, less accidents, safer and more secure busines

The relationship between selected weaknesses and key issues is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The relationship between selected key issues and weaknesses

KEY ISSUES	WEAKNESSES
Wood sources	Poor knowledge about distant wood resources Economically and environmentally sound wood resources limited
Wood markets	Poor knowledge about wood market in distant regions Dependence of wood trade companies Small share of controlled wood resources Competition between and within other Finnish companies Poor partnership system
Wood supply planning	Weak synergy of wood supply planning with the allowable cut, logistics and logging operations, infrastructure conditions and market issue Wood exchange not common
Logistic	Seasonal fluctuation in wood delivery Weak wood terminal network Stiff wood price system
Environmental responsibility	Forest certification (FSC, PEFC) are not common Incomplete system for tracing origin of wood Probability of illegal wood in the procurement chain
Harvesting	Extensive forest management High wood procurement cost Traditional logging technology dominated Low productivity of labour Size of assortment - hard to change, problem in the cross cutting optimization
Human resources and social responsibility	Lack of qualified human resources in the countryside Lack of skilled harvester/forwarder operators High risk of accidents Social obligations including unemployment

Conclusion

This paper concerns strategic planning process based on SWOT analysis for improving wood procurement in Northwest Russia. Results of the SWOT analysis, the development program and obtained recommendations can be useful to those who systematically and objectively analyze their business. Wood procurement managers should have a rough idea of the situation, i.e. how to utilize strengths and opportunities and how to convert weaknesses to strengths and threats to opportunities. However, at this stage, there are likely to be many potential directions for the management to pursue. Due to limited resources most companies have, it is impossible to accomplish everything at once. The management has to prioritize all procurement activities and to set specific goals and objectives in order to improve strategic and tactical planning of wood procurement in Russia.

The development program based on the SWOT analysis should be flexible and updated. This is true especially in Russia where decisions and actions are made under constant uncertainty and lack of profound information from the field. Therefore a system for processing information could help in strategic planning. Situations may change rapidly and updated analysis should be made accordingly. The SWOT is relatively easy to make and fast and is effective because of its simplicity. Creative use of the SWOT can pro-

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vide basis for useful development plans in wood procurement organizations.

This SWOT analysis and development program provides a broad overview of the wood procurement situation in Northwest Russia, in particular from Finnish forest industry prospective. Results of the analysis may be used in wood procurement organizations acting in Russia as the first step for identification of factors in their development process. Further studies and analysis are necessary. Russia is transforming and reorganizing herself from the old centrally planned system to a state with more market driven patterns. Thus, opportunities exist in the orientation towards western models and foreign investments, which bring wood business know-how into Northwest Russia and can help in the transformation process.

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ПРОГРАММА РАЗВИТИЯ И СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЯ ЛЕСОСНАБЖЕНИЯ НА СЕВЕРО-ЗАПАДЕ РОССИИ НА ОСНОВЕ SWOT АНАЛИЗА

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Резюме

В статье анализируются сильные и слабые стороны, возможности и угрозы в области лесоснабжения в России с точки зрения финского лесопромышленного комплекса. На основе SWOT анализа разработана программа дальнейшего развития системы лесоснабжения. В качестве системы лесоснабжения понимается весь комплекс технологических и коммерческих операций по заготовке и доставке круглых лесоматериалов от пня до двора потребителя, а именно, приобретение древесины, лесозаготовки, хранение и логистика. Исследование было сфокусировано на Северо-Западных регионах России, таких как Республики Карелия и Коми, Архангельская, Вологодская, Ленинградская и Псковская области, где финские лесопромышленные компании сконцентрированно осуществляют лесозакупочную деятельность и инвестируют в деревообрабатывающую промышленность. В статье характеризуются возможные технологические, экономические, социальные и экологические влияния на будущее развитие лесоснабжения. Проблемы классифицируются, и наиболее важным из них - планированию поставок, лесным ресурсам, рынку круглых лесоматериалов, логистике, лесозаготовкам, кадрам, социальной ответственности, экологической ответственности – уделяется особое внимание. Результаты анализа предназначены для поддержки принятия решений.

Ключевые слова: Россия, инвестиции в лесопромышленный комплекс, торговля круглыми лесоматериалами, лесозаготовки, экологическая ответственность, социальная ответственность