

CASE STUDIES BALKANS

CASE STUDY 13

INTRODUCING AGRO-FORESTRY TO MACEDONIA

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Sector: Forestry

CONTEXT

What is the result of combining a learning and development opportunity? – The introduction of agro-forestry to Macedonia.

In May 2009, SNV Macedonia Forestry Advisors attended a conference on 'Policy Options for Wood Energy' in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Here they were introduced to a new sub-species *Salix Alba*, a fast-growing **Express** variety of tree, used for plantation growing and the production of biomass energy in Hungary.

The concept of combining agriculture and forestry – agro-forestry – through the introduction of fast growing varieties of trees resonated with the advisors who knew well the economic and social conditions of rural regions in Macedonia. The use of trees and shrubs could add value – economic and other – to rural livelihoods. Trees and shrubs provide commercially valuable products, protection from wind and erosion, biomass for heating and places where livestock can take their rest and birds can nest. While agro-forestry is a practice dating back centuries it is relatively unknown and unused in Macedonia.

Following discussions with clients and beneficiaries it was agreed to develop a pilot project for the introduction of agro-forestry in select regions in the country. The pilot project was in line with farmers' ideas for the future of their land and corresponded to the 'Rural Development Strategy' of the European Union (EU). The EU perspective and opportunity to unlock future streams of funding, added value to the project concept.



The pilot project also provided a good opportunity for the National Association of Private Forest Owners (NAPFO), the client in this project, to deliver services of value to its members and to be a leader in applying for future funding streams available to rural development and forestry measures.

CLIENTS AND PARTNERS

The National Association of Private Forest Owners (NAPFO), as the peak body for forest owners in Macedonia, is the client in this project. NAPFO, with the support of SNV Macedonia forestry advisors, took the responsibility to assist private forest owners in the implementation of agro-forestry measures related to the preparation and afforestation of Salix cuttings in the field.

INTERVENTION LOGIC AND METHOD

The pilot project involved a process of site selection, preparation and planting with the aim of assessing the success of the introduction of agro-forestry in general and the *Salix* variety in particular.

Site selection was conducted by the Sv. Nikole branch office of NAPFO and SNV. It was based on site conditions required for *Salix* plantations and the willingness of the land owners to take part in the pilot project. Land owners together with NAPFO members and with logistical support from SNV advisors, prepared the sites for planting. Planting was completed in partnership with experts from the Faculty of Forestry in Skopje, Macedonia.

OUTCOME

This project has contributed to several outcomes as follows:

*** Improved sustainable forest management practices**

Through the site selection activities – contacting farmers and identifying site conditions suitable for planting of *Salix* - NAPFO members have gained knowledge and experience on the potential of agro-forestry as a means of income generation and diversification of rural economies. The association has also developed an understanding of how implementation of services such as the agro-forestry pilot project can have on development of the association.

*** Improved service delivery to private forest owners**

With this pilot project NAPFO has improved service delivery to their members. In 2010, twelve private forest owners received advice and assistance on implementing agro-forestry measures. Based on the success of the pilot, NAPFO has received requests from members elsewhere in Macedonia and is planning to introduce these measures in Berovo region in 2011.

*** Improved enabling environment**

The pilot project is a positive example of considering forestry as a mechanism that can contribute to rural development in Macedonia. The project is replicable with members of other branches of NAPFO and expectations are that positive examples such as this will increase demand in 2011. As a final goal it is expected that such examples will enable forestry measures to be considered for funding in the upcoming EU rural development programme in Macedonia.

*** Improved organizational structure of NAPFO**

With this activity NAPFO has fulfilled their representation role. They were the link between forest owners and SNV advisory services. NAPFO previously focused on advocacy, dealing with the needs of forest owners for support. They have proved that forest owners are dedicated to their own forest development. With the rural development measures introduced, NAPFO has become a more effective organization that is able to provide space for development for its membership.

IMPACT

This project has contributed to increased production and income as follows:

***Increased income from private forests**

The introduction of the fast growing *Salix* variety as an agro-forestry measure has increased the future economic value of the twelve selected sites combined with improvements in other factors that are more difficult to quantify. In addition to the increased income expected from the sale of wood when the plantations reach maturity, the plantations will help private owners to protect their land from erosion and degradation and will provide better conditions for grazing of their livestock. This wood mass resulting from the plantation can be used for personal needs (e.g. heating) or can be sold on local markets, providing supplementary income for farmers. As a plantation crop, *Salix* can be replanted providing ongoing income over a number of years. A key result of the project is the replicability of the pilot and opportunity to scale these tangible and intangible results to other regions in Macedonia and beyond.

***Improved products and services from private and decentralized forests**

This pilot project has contributed to an increased awareness of NAPFO members and rural communities of the potential of agro-forestry to enhance rural livelihoods and generate increased income from their properties. It has also demonstrated positive outcomes in enhancement of the soil fertility, erosion control, micro climate conditions and aesthetic beauty of selected areas.



LESSONS LEARNED

Agro-forestry is a new concept in Macedonia. The pilot project has begun to deliver a range of intangible outcomes as detailed above. Importantly the pilot projects has raised awareness of private forest owners, and their peak body association in Macedonia, of the potential to increase incomes and deliver rural development outcomes through plantation forestry. It continues to be important to deliver this message to the broader community with the aim of unlocking future rural development funding opportunities for the replication of this forestry-based success.

SUSTAINABILITY

Implementation of the project provides sustainability. Planting fast growing species on land that is flooded or on pieces that can not be properly maintained or simply as activity that provdes wood for farmers ensures that this practice will sustain. Salix species can be easy spread by the farmers from the cuttings that are easy to be produced from the present stands.



pilot sites selection



planting



monitoring



high trees growth

STANDARD DATA

Start and end date of contract within which the intervention occurred:
15.01.2010 – 31.12.2010

Composition of team:

SNV: Petrovski Saso, Kampen Petar, VoislavTodorov;

LCBs: none

External consultants: Dana Koleva, professor on Faculty of forestry in Skopje,

Number of PPDays already invested and planned to be invested per category of staff:

SNV: planned 37 days, invested 56 days;

LCBs

External consultants: planned 12, spent 6;

Relevant partnerships:

The financial resources invested: 2.060€

Client satisfaction and enhanced capacity scores: Regarding services delivered to the client and level of satisfaction (result measurement), the score is positive (19).