

CASE STUDY 16

STRENGTHENING PRIVATE FORESTRY IN MONTENEGRO

Author: Franc Ferlin and Mensura Nuhodzic
Country: Montenegro
Sector: Forestry

CONTEXT

One third of all Montenegrin forest and forest land – which covers 54% of the state territory - is privately owned. Because of strong human influence and non-sustainable use in the past, the private forests are now in worse condition than State forests. The coppice forests and other lower forest vegetation are now highly dominant (84%) with much lower production potential. It is estimated that there are approximately 50.000 private forest holdings in Montenegro. They are small and scattered throughout the country. In spite of this, private forests play an important role in the household economy of private forest owners (PFOs), in alleviation of rural poverty as well as contributing to the local and national economy. They play a crucial role in the conservation of the nature and protection of the environment.

Before 2007, when the new forest policy development process began, Forestry in Montenegro was characterised by a polarised relationship between private forest owners (PFOs) and the Forest Administration (FA), with lack of constructive communication between the two bodies. The FA's method of operation in carrying out the forestry administrative procedures and professional and-technical activities for PFOs was authoritative and not service oriented. PFOs had not been organised at this stage and no real forestry extension / education service existed.

In order to stimulate the communication and dialogue between PFOs and the FA, to enable the corresponding influence of PFOs in decision making in forestry and to establish the minimum institutional and human capacities of the weak private forest sector in Montenegro, SNV began technical support in 2006. The support initially focused on establishing the private forest owners associations (PFOAs) at municipal level. By the middle of 2008, 8 municipal PFOAs had been registered, representing the majority of private forests in Northern Montenegro. In addition, the National Private Forest Owners' Association (NPFOA), serving as umbrella organisation, was established with the support of SNV.

CLIENTS

The main clients of SNV's technical support were the NPFOA and the FA-Headquarters. These are also two main institutions for private and state forests and their owners. They play a crucial role in sustainable forest and forestry development.

The NPFOA is a national umbrella organisation of municipal PFOAs and PFOs. Its primary mission is to participate in the elaboration of policies, programs and plans related to forests and forestry with the aim of improving private forest conditions, protecting interests and increasing benefits for PFOs, while acknowledging the principles of sustainability and environment protection. The FA is a centralised state administrative organ, directly under the Government structure. It takes the form of an agency and is in charge of administrative and technical procedures for all forests. This includes the direct management and of state forests and directives for the management of private forests.

The main local partners as service providers were the Forestry Institute (FI) and the Forestry and Wood Processing Secondary School (FWPSS). The FI was engaged in the provision of private forest data and information and the FWPSS with forest promotion.

The main international partners were Lux-Development - through the FODEMO project - and the Slovenia Forest service (SFS). The mission of the FODEMO project - phase II (2007 - 2011) is "to improve the institutional and technical framework conditions for sustainable forest sector development in Montenegro". As SNV's mission is complementary, a joint planning, coordination and division of activities was undertaken. Cooperation with the SFS contributed to the development of the forestry extension and popular forestry education materials.

OUTCOME

SNV's support established and improved the basic functioning of the NPFOA, including internal administration, IT and action planning skills. The capacities for management, representation and communication with state forestry institutions were also improved. The necessary NPFOA professional advocacy and representation platforms were established as well.

Decisions for establishing of a new Forestry Extension Service unit at central (within the FA) and local levels were taken and the the interest for establishing of a new Forestry Training Centre (within NPFOA) was adopted. The capacities for forestry extension and communication of a significant number of foresters had improved and candidates for trainers (within the FA and the NPFOA) were identified. They will provide training to forest extension workers using contemporary public participation methods and adults' learning approaches.

Forest-related business and SME promotion capacities of trainers (within the FA and the NPFOA) were improved.

The professional exchange between national and foreign private forest institutions improved and the public awareness of private forestry was raised, particularly at local level.

In short SNV's advisory work influenced the creation of an enabling legal, organizational, functional, planning and business environment. It improved the capacities and performance of forestry institutions (the FA and the NPFOA) and increased knowledge of Private Forest owners about sustainable forest management.

IMPACT

SNV's advisory work and technical support has significantly contributed to higher, more qualitative and save forest production. There is an increased need for employment and higher forest-related income from private forests. The income increased applies for both private forest owners and other rural households, as they rely on the local forest production and supply for mitigation of poverty. Sustainability aspects and environment protection are also to the benefit of the braoder rural population and wider society.

LESSONS LEARNED

Taking into account that our objectives were almost fully realised, it shall be said that our approaches worked well.

The following lessons have been learnt:

- ✓ An encouraging forestry extension potential already exists (in the FA) and presents a real potential for establishment of a new forestry extension service unit and its future work;
- ✓ Team approach which combines an international forestry advisor/consultant and (best) selected national professionals is very efficient;
- ✓ There is a small/limited number of capable professionals available and different activities are often targeting the same of them;
- ✓ Employees of forestry institutions do not refresh their basic forestry knowledge, as internal education is not practiced. They are most receptive and thankful for capacity building and for education on new trends and developments in forestry; and
- ✓ Many forestry professionals already have a lot of knowledge and experience. They just need somebody to encourage and guide them in order to provide additional contributions.

The final impact of these interventions depend on the (level and quality of) implementation of the new forest legislation and the clients' capacities and performances. They are all mainly of medium or long-term nature. Only the impact of educated final beneficiaries, e.g. forestry professionals (who directly create the forest development) and forest owners / operators (who execute the forest operations) could be considered as immediate or short-term.

This case, which followed the national private forest sector development needs, has already its follow-up by providing useful backgrounds for other international actors, such as Lux-Development and EU. As such sustainability depends on the next steps of the other actors.

The main opportunity in terms of partnership is continuation of the cooperation with the Lux-Development which is also taken over the management of a new EU IPA Forestry capacity building project. The FODEMO project extension (until 2012) and the IPA project (2011-2013) are offering opportunities for further forestry investments in capacity building in the forestry sector.

With regard to the NPFOA's self-functioning and representation capacities, it could be stated that it is not yet sustainable without additional technical and financial support. The system of (self-) financing of the NPFOA/PFOAs is not yet assured. The follow-up projects should pay attention to this.

With regard to the Forest Administration, sustainability in terms of implementation of new forestry extension organisation model seems to be assured. Inclusion of specific forest business promotion activities within the forestry extension unit, or the FA in general, does not seem to have a promising future, as such activities are usually a domain of other agencies.

The forestry extension/advisory capacities of foresters, including some specific contemporary forestry knowledge, are well assured for the near future. However, further maintenance of the capacities and introduction of additional forestry knowledge seems not to be self-sustainable without external technical and financial support. The follow-up projects should pay attention to this.

Sustainability in international professional knowledge exchange between private forest-related institutions is also not assured yet without external technical assistance. Similar seems to be true also in terms of forestry public promotion. The follow-up projects should pay attention to this.

Standard data

Start and end date of the contracts:

- September 2008 – January 2011;

Composition of the team:

SNV-staff/LCBs and external consultants:

- Franc Ferlin, Mensura Nuhodzic and Aleksandra Redzic (SNV staff);
- Over 20 LCBs and 3 international consultants.

Number of PP-days invested per category:

- 270 days of SNV advisors;
- 220 days of LCBs; and
- 180 days from external consultants.

Relevant partnerships:

- non-formal partnership with Lux-Development FODEMO project and the Slovenia Forest Service.

The financial resources invested (programme costs only):

- €66.000

Clients satisfaction and enhanced capacity scores:

- output – 3.90;

- outcome 3.88.

Quotes and photos:

Mr. Miodrag Bakic, President of NPFOA:

"Thanks to SNV we obtained a most inclusive draft forest law which optimally expresses private forest owners' needs."

Mr. Joveta Terzic, Head of forest utilisation section of the FA:

"It is very much appreciated that we could work with SNV also in the very forest".

Mr. Vidan Jakic, Head of forest utilisation section of the FA:

"SNV is assisting us in not only how to develop the forest policy, but also to tend the forest itself".

Mr. Dragoljub Ivanovic, local forestry engineer in the FA:

"With its silvicultur assistance, SNV has returned us back to our forestry profession".



