

WORKSHOP REPORT

Workshop on supporting non-state forestry in South East Europe

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 12 – 14 November 2012



[Regional Centre for Forestry and Rural
Development](#)



[FAO Regional Office
for Europe and Central Asia](#)



[Confederation of European Forest Owners](#)

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1. Background and rationale

The regional workshop on “Supporting non-state forestry in South East Europe” was held in Skopje, FYR Macedonia from 12 to 14 November 2012. The three-day workshop was a follow-up activity to two previous subregional conferences held in 2008 in FYR Macedonia (“The status of non-state forestry management in South East Europe”) and 2009 in Serbia (“Policy options for non-state forestry in South East Europe”). It was organized by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) in close collaboration with the Regional Centre for Forestry and Rural Development (REFORD) with support from the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF). (For the workshop agenda, please see Annex I.)

2. Objectives of the workshop

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

1. present recent reports and studies related to forest owner organizations and non-state forestry relevant for the region and discuss selected success cases;
2. assess the current status of forest farmer organizations and related national policies in SEE as follow-up activity to the 2008-2009 sub-regional conferences;
3. identify the main factors and challenges for further development of forest owner organizations and related initiatives or policies (incl. the European dimension).
4. determine areas and countries that FAO can provide assistance to.

3. Participants

A total number of twenty-five participants from eleven countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Romania and Lithuania) and representatives of regional organizations (REFORD, CEPF, EFI CEEC, National Forest Centre, Slovakia, Connecting Natural Values & People (CNVP)) took part in the workshop. From each target country (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo) three stakeholders were invited: 1. private forest owners, 2. state forest authorities, and 3. state rural development authorities.

Representatives of state authorities participated from Albania, Bulgaria, and FYR Macedonia, the representatives from private forest owners’ organizations participated from all the target countries, Bulgaria and Romania. (For the list of participants, please see Annex II.)

4. Results of plenary and group works

First day of the workshop, 12 November 2012

Ms Anela Stavrevska – Panajotova, REFORD opened the workshop by welcoming the participants and highlighting the importance of private forestry issues in the Balkan region.

Mr Norbert Winkler-Ráthonyi, FAO REU welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO and underlined that this workshop is a follow-up activity to two previously organized subregional conferences on private forestry in SEE region, and jointly organized by FAO and CEPF.

Ms Qiang Ma, FAO Headquarters, *Mr Bernhard Wolfslehner*, EFICEEC-EFISEE and *Ms Zuzana Sarvasova*, National Forest Centre, Zvolen gave a joint presentation on the forest owners’ organizations in the selected Eastern European countries. The presentation covered

the results from two, recently published FAO studies. The first study on “Review of forest owners’ organizations in selected Eastern European countries” aimed to improve the understanding of the origins, evolution and current situation of private forest owners’ associations and forest owners’ cooperatives, and assess their effectiveness. The second study on “Success stories and good practices in forest owners’ organizations in selected Eastern European countries” aimed to identify success cases and good practices and to analyse common factors for success. The speakers provided a general introduction on the background and objective, an overview and methodology and the main findings of these studies.

Mr Daniel Paul Dima, PROFOREST Romania, provided a presentation on behalf of CEPF. He provided the basic information about CEPF, its objectives, long term goals, tasks and activities, and explained the value of being a member to CEPF. He also gave a short overview on the challenges in the Balkans from forest owner’s point of view and what CEPF can offer to the forest owners in the regions. The speaker explained that CEPF focuses on sustainable forestry that is applicable to any size of forest and CEPF collects opinions from the members and balances the different interests.

Mr Daniel Paul Dima also gave a presentation on PROFOREST Association of Private Forest Land Owners from Romania. He summarized the historical background of private forests, the process of developing private forestry in Romania, and also the critical current problems of the forestry sector (lack of national forest strategy, poor forest infrastructure, unskilled labour force, illegal logging, problems of Natura 2000 network). He gave a short overview about the main objectives and areas of action of Proforest, such as active participation in the work of the working groups on the new National Forest Strategy 2013-2020, and the National Rural Development Plan 2014-2020.

Mr Norbert Winkler-Ráthonyi, FAO REU Forestry officer gave a presentation on the study by *Mr Attila Lengyel*, with the title “The Status of Non-State Forestry in the SEE (2012)”. The aim of the study is to provide an overview on the current status of non-state forestry in the Balkans and relevant forest regulations and to discuss possible future scenarios for non-state forestry in the region, and how to improve its contribution to rural livelihoods. *Mr Winkler-Ráthonyi* explained that for example in Serbia, with a help of a biomass-focused project, data was gathered on the importance of the private forests, thus a voice of the private forest owners was made more relevant on political level. He also explained that the total share of private forest land in the SEE countries varies but some typical problems remain the same: a high fragmentation (in the countries of the study the average size of private forest properties ranges between below one and around 7 ha), limited forest management knowledge and willingness among the new forest owners, a strong domination of forest management regulation by state authorities, and a poor institutional support of private forest owners or their organizations in general. There is a gradual progress in the private forest sector and it is gaining greater importance in the forest sector as a whole however non-state forestry issues need further attention.

Ms Anelija Počekanska, president of the National Association of Owners of Private Forests “Gorovladelets”, with the assistance of *Mr Stanislav Lazarov*, presented the private forest issues in Bulgaria. The association represents 89 000 forest owners, out of 600 000 forest owners in the country. Its main goal is to secure sustainable forest management, lobby the Government and protect the private forest owners’ interests, support economically viable private forestry, and facilitate transfer of technologies. So far it has been achieved that: forest guarding is done by the forest owners, cooperatives issue harvesting and transport documents

on their own, each cooperative has equal right as the state forestry units. However, there are still existing challenges such as cost optimization, improving cooperation between cooperatives, effective use of forest resources, of increasing the participation of its members in the development of the association, as well as the participation of the association in policy processes, preparation of national forest strategy.

Ms Anela Stavrevska-Panajotova, REFORD president, gave a presentation on the Regional Centre for Forestry and Development organisation and activities. REFORD has been created by the national private forest owners' organizations of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Bulgaria. Its key role is networking and representation, but it also provides services to member associations. REFORD links national associations with CEPF, and other international organizations. As a result of this presentation, a discussion was developed on the issue of private forestry funding, especially in relation to rural development. Prior to this workshop, REFORD members prepared a statement for each country. Based on these statements a review was compiled for the region. The important conclusions of this review were: (i) the financial background for private and communal forestry needs to be improved (green tax, subsidies and investments in private forests); (ii) forestry knowledge and education should be strengthened and awareness raising is needed on governmental and non-government level; (iii) property issues of private forests should be properly addressed; (iv) forestry should be recognized/incorporated into the rural development; (v) private and communal forestry issues need to be incorporated properly into the legislation and regulations.

Mr Peter Kampen, executive director of CNVP, provided a presentation on the state of the communal and private forestry and gave a short summary of the main features of small-scale forestry in the region. He finished with the review and current trends of small-scale forestry (service delivery started by associations and some by private sector (e.g. licensed engineers in Macedonia), authorities slowly addressing their role on service provision and information, very limited investment in small scale forestry, however increasing discussion of inclusion of forestry in rural development, legislation reform process ongoing and gradually incorporating family forestry needs).

The presentations were followed by group work. Three groups were asked to present two concrete actions, either on national or regional level that would improve the situation of private forest owners in the SEE. The groups identified the following priority actions; (i) lobbying activities in order to that ecosystem services from private forests are recognized, and developing the financial mechanism for ecosystem services, (ii) finding options for financing the private forest sector priority areas (activities) from rural development programme funds, (iii) breaking the monopoly of the state forest enterprises on providing the extension services for private forest owners, and developing training sessions for non-state entities on providing proper extension services, (iv) participating in policy formulation processes and revising all laws and strategic documents regarding the forest and related sectors.

During the second part of the group work, the participants were asked to work on three questions; (i) what activity is needed to achieve economical self-sufficiency of the private forest owners' associations? (ii) what is needed to achieve membership growth? (iii) what activities are needed to achieve more influence of the organization? The participants highlighted that the associations should provide adequate services (information, training, marketing, biomass, supply, etc.) which meet the requirements of their members in order to reach membership growth and gain influence.

Second day of the workshop, 13 November 2012

During the second day's field trip to Debarca and Vevcani (South East part of the country) participants were informed about the main features of Macedonian forestry, with special focus on private forestry issues. In Godivje, Ohrid a private forest owners' service provider (employed by the Public Enterprise "Macedonian Forests") and a licensed engineer who provides services for private forest owners informed the participants about the recent developments in private forest management and all the administrative procedures which are obligatory to all private forest owners.

The representatives of the municipality of Vevcani gave a presentation on the history and status of the protected area of the Vevcani Springs before the field trip.

Third day of the workshop, 14 November 2012

Mr Norbert Winkler-Ráthonyi gave a presentation on and explained in more detail the way technical support is provided to member countries by FAO through regular and extra budgetary programme activities. The technical cooperation programmes (TCP) address technical problems, and aim to fill critical technical gaps by providing technical inputs that are not available locally. He informed the participants that the official country request(s) for assistance can only be submitted by the government(s). The maximum budget for a TCP project is USD 500,000, with a maximum duration of two years.

After the presentation, the participants discussed and summarized the main issues of the first and second day of the workshop.

On the first day, during the afternoon session, the participants agreed that the most important issue was the improvement and increment of services provided by the private forest owners' national associations to their members.

The participants shared their experiences regarding the situation of service provision. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the national association provides trainings on safety, provides some equipment and certificate of participation and also afforestation services. Due to the limited budget, other services are currently not available, but would be needed.

In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the national association provides several types of services to members, such as various trainings, representing the private forest owners' interests to the government, preparation of programmes. The association has been establishing an expert advisory board that will give advice and represent the association in front of various institutions.

In Croatia, the association used to provide services when the forestry extension service worked, however, now they do not have projects to finance this activity.

During the discussions participants highlighted that the national associations should provide the extension services, which can lead to improved, higher quality service delivery. The relevant ministries do not have the capacity to implement forest extension services, thus national associations would easily be able to take over this role from the Government. The current situation varies by country, for instance in Bulgaria there are private consultants providing forestry extension services; in Serbia, in the FYR of Macedonia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are no extension services; in Albania there is a newly established extension service, but the private forest owners' association was not involved in the establishment process.

The main points of discussion on the second day were: (i) the need for simplifying the administrative procedures for activities in private forests; (ii) the need for monitoring the activities in the private forests; (iii) and a need for establishing monitoring system on regional level;

Main factors and challenges for further development

Main issues and areas needing development in private and communal forestry in the region are:

1. To improve financial support for private and communal forestry from green tax, subsidies and investments;
2. To improve forestry knowledge, education, and awareness-raising at the governmental and non-governmental level;
3. To address property issues;
4. To recognize forestry as a part of rural development;
5. To prepare/develop proper legislative background for private and communal forestry;

Potential areas for FAO assistance

1. Monitoring and database-creation for private forests

The first issue is the lack of a monitoring system for private forests, which has been linked to the need of simplifying the administration procedures of private forest management. The establishment of a central database would result in increased control of private forests, which will also simplify the administration of activities. However, it was also stressed that many countries have already gained experience in this field, and they are ready to share them. Therefore FAO technical assistance on the regional level would be the most appropriate.

2. Service provision

The national associations should provide improved and wider range of services to the private forest owners. According to the participants, this would be the most important activity on national level for the private forest owners.

3. Enabling environment and policy reforms

Representation is one of the key functions of the associations and REFORD as a network. The role of this organization is to represent ideas, attitudes and needs of private and communal forest owner organizations from the region/country in front of other relevant organizations, institutions and development agencies. Associations on the national level and REFORD on the regional level will cooperate with local government units, NGOs and national institutions. They are lobbying and advocating at the relevant government institutions in order to strengthen the position and visibility of private and communal forestry and their associations in the region.

Associations and REFORD are networking in the field of forestry and rural development in Europe as partners of dialogue with governments.

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The main objectives of the Workshop are to:

1. Present recent reports and studies related to forest owner organizations and non-state forestry relevant for the region and discuss selected success cases.
2. Assess the current status of forest farmer organizations and related national policies in SEE as follow-up activity to the 2008-2009 sub-regional conferences in Skopje (FYRM) and Fruska Gora (SRB).
3. Identify the main factors and challenges for further development of forest owner organizations and related initiatives or policies (incl. the European dimension).
4. Determine areas and countries that FAO can provide assistance to.

Agenda

Sunday, 11 November

Arrival of the participants to Skopje
Registration of participants
Dinner in the Hotel

Monday, 12 November

09:00 – 09:15 Opening and welcome
Introduction, workshop objectives

09:15 – 10:00 presentations/brief discussion
Recent studies on non-state forestry with relevance for the Region
("Review of forest owners' organizations in selected Eastern European Countries";
"Private forest owners in the Western Balkans")
(**Qiang Ma**, FAO Headquarters; **Bernhard Wolfslehner**, EFICEEC-EFISEE; **Zuzana Sarvasova**, National Forest Centre – Slovakia)

10:00 – 10:30 presentation/brief discussion
The need of forest owners organizations for sustainable forest management and wood mobilization - Key messages from a European perspective
(**Daniel Paul Dima**, on behalf of Confederation of European Forest Owners, General Secretary of Proforest, Romania)

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 11:30 presentation/brief discussion
The status of non-state forestry in the Balkans – challenges and opportunities
(**Norbert Winkler-Ráthonyi**, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia)

11:30 – 12:00 presentation/brief discussion
Positive experiences from Bulgaria - lessons learnt, shortcomings and challenges of forest cooperatives
(**Stanislav Lazarov**, National Association of owners of private forests
“Gorovladelets”, Chairperson)

12:00 – 12:30 presentation/brief discussion
Networking and regional cooperation of private and communal forestry associations in the Balkan
(**Anela Stavrevska-Panajotova**, Regional Centre for Forestry and Rural Development, Chairperson)

12:30 – 13.30 Questions, clarifications, discussions

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 15:00 presentation/brief discussion
Private and communal forest development in the region based on the capacity building expertise in Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo
(**Peter Kampen**, Connecting Natural Values & People Foundation, Executive Director)

15:00 – 17:30
Analysis and discussions on challenges for further development of non-state forestry and possible follow-up activities at local or regional level
(**Bojan Rantasha**, facilitator)

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

19:00 Joint dinner for participants

Tuesday, 13 November

Field trip to Vevcani/ Facilitation Saso Petrovski – Forestry and Rural Development Expert

8:00 Departure for field visit of West part of Macedonia

9:30 - 10:00 Coffee break/ snacks

10:00 – 11: 00 Travel to Debarca

11:00 – 12:30 Presentation and Discussion
Private forest management, services provided by the State Forest Company and private companies to private forest owners

12:30- 13:30 travel to Vevcani

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 15:15 Visit Municipal springs (small nature preservation area)

15:15 – 16:30 Presentation and discussion about management of small protected area/
aspects of private forest management

16:30 – 19:00 Travel back to Skopje

20:00 Dinner in the Hotel

Wednesday, 14 November

09:00 – 12:00

Wrap-up and possibly decision on follow-up activities
(**Bojan Rantasa**, facilitator)

10:15 – 10:45 Coffee break

12:00 Closure of the workshop and departure of participants

Speakers:

Mr Norbert Winkler-Ráthonyi, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Ms Qiang Ma, FAO Headquarters

Ms Zuzana Sarvasova, National Forest Centre – Slovakia

Mr Bernhard Wolfslehner, European Forest Institute EFICEEC-EFISEE

Mr Daniel Paul Dima on behalf of Confederation of European Forest Owners,
Proforest, Romania

Mr Stanislav Lazarov, National Association of owners of private forests
“Gorovladelets”, Bulgaria

Ms Anela Stavrevska-Panajotova, Regional Centre for Forestry and Rural
Development

Mr Peter Kampen, Connecting Natural Values & People Foundation

Language of the event: The official language of the workshop is English (with limited possibility of interpretation).

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Annex II: List of Participants

Country	Organisation/Institution	Name	Position	Contact phone	e-mail
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	PFOO	Darko Skenderski	National Coordinator of the Association	00389 70 381 549	macprifor@yahoo.com
	ministry - forestry department	Ms Jana Jovanovska	Forestry Officer	00389 70 608 446	jana.jovanovska@gmail.com
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