

INTRODUCING AGRO-FORESTRY IN MACEDONIA PRIVATE FORESTRY

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Challenge

During past several years, Macedonian forestry is facing with new development possibilities as rural development policy. Forestry measures as agro forestry or biomass use initiated development of new initiatives in the Private forest owner association. NAPFO and SNV have developed a pilot project for introduction of agro-forestry in Macedonia.

The initial idea came from a conference on 'Policy options for wood energy' in Dubrovnik, Croatia. We were introduced with a new sub-species of Salix Alba, a fast-growing **variety Express**, used for plantation growing and biomass energy production in Hungary.



Since the agro-forestry concept is new in Macedonia, we planned to combine the fast growing species forestation on agriculture plots with the wind and erosion protection, production of biomass for heating, place where livestock can take their rest and birds can nest. All of this was in line with the farmer's idea about the future of their land and the **'Rural development strategy' of EU**. This EU aspect was the added value to the project.

It was a good opportunity for NAPFO to come closer to its members and to be leader in applying for the rural development measures. This would be as well opportunity for PF to test the availability of rural development funds related to forestry in the future.

Clients

In cooperation with SNV, National Association of Private Forest Owners (NAPFO) took the responsibility to assist forest owners in the implementation of agro-forestry measures, more concrete in preparation and forestation of Salix cuttings in the field.

Method

Sv. Nikole branch office of NAPFO and SNV visited villages in rural areas in order to find proper sites for Salix plantations. Selection was made according to site conditions required and willingness of the land owners to take part in the project. Land owners together with NAPFO members and logistic support of SNV advisors prepared the sites for planting. Planting was done with partnership and according to instructions of expert from Faculty of Forestry – Skopje, Macedonia.

Outcome

This activity contributed to several outcomes:

* Improved Sustainable Forest Management practices

Through the activities on the field, contacting farmers and finding proper site conditions for planting of Salix, NAPFO members gained knowledge and experience on possibilities to implement agro-forestry measures and positive effects that these measures can have on development of the association and providing opportunities of its members for income generation.

*** Improved service delivery to PFO**

With this activity NAPFO has improved the service delivery to their members. 12 forest owners got advice and assistance how to implement agro-forestry measures. As a result of this success, more members of NAPFO declared request for involvement in this project and for the next year 2011 NAPFO is planning to introduce these measures also in Berovo region.

*** Improved enabling environment**

These measures enable initiation among NAPFO members to include implementation of forestry rural development activities in all branches of NAPFO. It was a positive example that gain trust and encourage other private forest owners to join the initiative. NAPFO through this also indicated a new perspective in use of rural development funds in Macedonia. Expectations are that these positive examples will go up in year 2011, and as a final goal that forestry measures will be included in rural development programme in Macedonia.

*** Improved organizational structure of NAPFO**

With this activity NAPFO has fulfilled the representation role. NAPFO focused on advocacy a lot in the past, 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 became effective organization that is able to provide space for development for its membership.

Impact

With this activity provided, impact can be foreseen on:

*** Increased income from private forests**

As above was introduced, the agro-forestry measures introduced at 12 private owners sites has very positive impact. It will help private owners to protect their land from erosion and degradation, will provide better conditions for grazing of their livestock, and also in addition will provide an income through the wood that they can obtain from the planted sites in a few years and also can be used constantly in the future. This wood mass can be used for their personal needs or can be sold on the local markets, providing extra income for the farmers.

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

This project contributes in raising awareness of NAPFO members and rural people in general about the possibilities that agro-forestry is providing, in order to enhance their rural life and to generate more income from their properties. It also contributes in enhancement of the soil fertility, erosion control, micro climate conditions and aesthetic beauty of selected areas.



Lessons learned

Assisting private forest owners in implementation of agro-forestry measures, it becomes clear that positive examples are bringing more confidence and encourage forest owners to apply rural development measures on their properties. Using such positive examples it is easier to build up future practice and procedures. It brings positive spirit among forest owners.