

Evaluation

Finnish Support to Forestry and Biological Resources

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Part 7. Western Balkans



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(7. Western Balkans)

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Kaisu Tuominen
Robert Murtland

Evaluation report 2010:5/II (7. Western Balkans)

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

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ACRONYMS

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CMMU	Central Monitoring and Management Unit
ECNC	European Centre for Nature Conservation
EFI	European Forestry Institute
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FODEMO	Forestry Development in Montenegro Project
FOPER	Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHL	Game and Hunting Law
GIS	Geographic Information System
ha	Hectares
HIV / AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
LUX-DEV	Luxemburg Agency for Development Cooperation
MAFWM	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEPPP	Ministry of Environment Protection and Physical Planning
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MON	Montenegro
NFAP	National Forest Action Programme
NFP	National Forest Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PMT	Project Management Team
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SC	Supervisory Committee
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TCP	Technical Cooperation Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
USA	United States of America

SUMMARY

This report is a synthesis of the findings of a desk study of interventions in the Western Balkans that took place between April and June 2010, and included interviews with staff of MFA Headquarters and other key stakeholders in Finland. The interventions assessed were: Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research, FOPER, Environmental Geographic Information System (GIS) for Montenegro, Phase I and Forest Sector Development in Serbia. The main findings were that:

- ❖ All interventions are based on Western Balkans' governments' general recovery efforts in the transition to an open market economy and for democratisation process and have taken into account the EU integration process and the legislative and policy changes EU requires.
- ❖ Coordination in the Montenegro GIS was found to be good between the project, the Luxemburg Agency for Development Cooperation (LUX-DEV) and the Japanese.
- ❖ There are opportunities for Finnish added value in forest harvesting and utilisation and rural montane housing.
- ❖ A good baseline foundation has been provided by Montenegro GIS project. It delivered consistent systems for creating and sharing basic data in key sectors for conservation and planning. The project was strategic and timely for Montenegro catalysing change throughout and the benefits have been ably demonstrated and taken on board by the Government, the private sector and civil society. Sustainability should therefore follow since the project outputs will be integrated into the school curriculum.
- ❖ The interventions have enhanced the national and regional capacity in sustainable forest management as well as promoted commercial investment and forestry business in the region.
- ❖ There is no evidence yet of poverty reduction and there is no monitoring information on poverty indicators as expressed in the project documents.
- ❖ Due to participation by stakeholders their inclusion in key decision making organs in the forestry sector is evident e.g. FOPER.
- ❖ All interventions have contributed to improved accountability and transparency that improve governance.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Western Balkans is the term used by the European Union for the sub-region comprising Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. With the exception of Albania, the countries of the Western Balkans were formerly constituent republics of the old Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

These are the poorest countries in Europe and all entitled to Official Development Assistance (ODA). Currently the societies are undergoing strong changes characterised by a shift towards market economy and integration into Europe and the European Union (Ruotsalainen 2010).

1.1 Regional Development Needs and Priorities

The 1990s were a turbulent decade in the Western Balkans, as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke-up and new countries were created. Ethnic and civil wars affected all the countries of the region, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The war ended in 1995, delayed the process of reform and transition from command to market economies which other former Communist states in central and Eastern Europe underwent during that decade. Owing to the wars and conflicts, the region regressed socially and economically and clearly lagged behind the development in other parts of Europe, including integration with the European Union. The disintegration wars and conflicts have thus left their mark on the countries' mutual relationships, economies and societies

The Western Balkans today face unresolved conflict issues, serious post-conflict problems such as the prevalence of organised crime, and the challenge of constructing societies based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. Perhaps the greatest long-term threat to stability is posed by economic underdevelopment, with persistently low levels of foreign investment and persistently high rates of unemployment. The Western Balkan economies are small. Enhancement of employment and education is a central development policy objective in all of the countries in the area. Table 8 summarises development indicators for the countries in the region (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009).

All Western Balkan countries thus have European Union (EU) membership as their objective. Montenegro submitted its application for EU membership in December 2008 and Albania in April 2009. The others are expected to follow suit.

Table 9 Development indicators for Western Balkans countries.

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	Croatia	Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Established	28 Nov. 1912	1 March 1992	17 Feb. 2008	25 June 1991	8 Sept. 1991	3 June 2006	5 June 2006
Population (million)	3.64	4.61	1.8	4.49	2.07	0.67	7.38
Area (sq. km)	28,748	51,197	10,887	56,594	25,713	13,812	77,474
Life expectancy	77.96	78.5	...	75.35	74.68	...	73.9
Urban population	47%	47%	...	57 %	67 %	60 %	52 %
Unemployment	12.5%	29%	40%	14.8%	34.5%	14.7%	18.8%
People living under the poverty line	25%	25%	37%	11%	29,8%	7%	6.5%
GNP (billion dollars)	13.52	19.36	5	63.95	18.52	6.6	80.74
GNP growth %	6.1	5.6	5.1	4.8	4.6	6.5	5.6
GNP per capita (dollars)	6,000	6,500	2,300	18,300	9,100	10,100	10,800

Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009.

1.2 Overview of Forestry Sector in the Western Balkans

The Western Balkans region is rich in forest resources and has a long tradition of both forestry and forestry education. All countries in the region are undergoing several important forest policy processes, including establishment of national forest programmes, revision of legislation, certification, national action plans for curbing illegal logging and so forth. In addition, with the support of the European Union and the World Bank, inventories and other nature protection functions have been performed with regard to biodiversity in all countries. Box 1 provides a summary of the main forest sector frameworks in each of the Western Balkan countries.

Among the challenges to ecological sustainability, the cross-border challenges that affect the state of the environment include for example protection and use of water bodies, conservation of biodiversity, and illegal logging of forests.

In Montenegro in particular the forestry sector is facing the challenge of improving forestry practice, administration and management in order to implement the ecological vision and to improve the current condition of all forests so as to ensure a balance of protection, environmental, social and economic functions and sustainability. Over a longer period, the sector has undergone various institutional and organisational changes, depending on the social and political regime, and economic and development needs. The most significant changes occurred in the last decade with the assistance of several donors including Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, USA, Norway and the World Bank. In 2000, there was adoption of the Law on Forests currently under revision and associated institutional reform. In addition the collection of relevant data in order to provide reliable and timely information to plan long-term management and utilization of the forest resources was also conducted with donor assistance as the country severely lacked financial resources and skills to do so.

Box 1 Forest sector framework in Western Balkan countries.

Montenegro

Montenegro is one of the most forested countries in Europe, with high values and enormous potential for sustainable tourism. The Government of Montenegro adopted a new National Forest Policy in April 2008. The policy is rather comprehensive, modern and progressive, and puts the development of the forest sector into the context of National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Revision of the forest law is one of the first tasks defined by the policy for the development of the sector.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management has the leading role in forest resource management.

Montenegro is categorized by Conservation International as a biodiversity hot spot in the Mediterranean basin, but uncontrolled clear cutting, extensive annual wildfires and environmental degeneration endangers the level of biodiversity.

National Forest Programme Homepage

<http://www.nsp-cg.com/?jezik=e&meniId=12>

Serbia

The Forestry Development Strategy was adopted in 1996. Finland supports the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO project) for Institutional capacity building for the development of the national forest programme of Serbia. A new forest law has been in debate and undergone several revisions. The law on privatization of state forests (restitution) was adopted in 2007.

Albania

A working group of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Management is preparing a proposal for the establishment of a forest extension service. The most pressing policy issue at this moment is obviously the capacities of the local governments to take care of the forest property as during a six month period in 2007-08 some 70% of the former state forests have been handed over to local authorities (municipalities or communes).

A project operating on credit funding from the World Bank and a grant from Sweden is currently working on the issue. A process for preparing a national action plan against illegal logging has also recently commenced with support from the World Bank.

Croatia

The National Forest policy and Strategy of Croatia was approved by the Government in 2003. Croatia also has a relatively new forest law, with the latest revision being approved by parliament in 2005. In 2006 the process for preparing a national forest programme was started.

Private forest ownership in Croatia is characterised by a huge number of owners (about 600 000) with small sizes of forest estate (< 1 ha). Currently more than 20 organisations of private forest owners have formed the National organisation of private forest owners. Some 22% of forest area is owned by private owners.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The state consists of two entities; Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska. Both entities have their own administrative structures, including parliament and ministries. There is no legal framework or state institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina dealing with the forest sector.

A new forest law was passed in Republic of Srpska in 2008. The current forest law of the Federation dates to 2002. In both entities there are on-going processes for the preparation of a national forest programme and forest policy document. During 2006 illegal logging became an issue. Both entities have prepared an action plan to combat illegal logging, following the initiative of the World Bank. A process for creation of standards for forest certification has also been on-going.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Forest strategy and action plan was adopted in 2006. The revision of the forest law and its harmonization is currently an ongoing process.

Recently an initiative for developing a methodology for a national forest inventory has been discussed with FAO, which earlier assisted in the development of the forest strategy and action plan. In addition a project for forest fire prevention has been approved and will be implemented with support from FAO.

Source: FOPER 2008.

1.3 Overview of the History of Finnish Support in the Region

Finland has supported the Western Balkans' regional stability and security and EU integration comprehensively by means of foreign and security policy measures, including military and civilian crisis management, economic and commercial activities, and development cooperation. (Ministry for foreign Affairs of Finland 2010)

The Guidelines for future cooperation are expressed in Finland's Western Balkans Development Policy Framework Programme for the years 2009–2013. Within the Framework Programme around 38 million Euros is planned to be used for the Finnish development cooperation in the region in 2009–2013. The implementation of the Programme is guided by the principles of coherence, complementarity and effectiveness. Based on Finland's Development Policy Programme, the challenges in the West-

ern Balkans and the added value offered by Finland, the Framework Programme is built around the following, interlinked themes: 1) Stability and security, 2) Aid for Trade, 3) Environment, including forestry and 4) Social sustainability. The country-specific priority of Finnish cooperation in the Western Balkans is Kosovo. The focus in the forestry sector will be on forest policy, economics, education and research. (MFA 2009; Ruotsalainen 2010).

2 INTERVENTIONS IN THE FORESTRY AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES SECTOR

Finland's forestry interventions in the Western Balkans during the 21st century have been implemented in Serbia and Montenegro under a regional forest policy and economics education and research project in the Western Balkans. Table 10 lists Forestry sector interventions.

Table 10 Forestry interventions supported by Finland in the Western Balkans region 2000–2010.

Title	Countries	MFA Code	Duration	Main theme / implementation instruments	Disbursements EUR	
					Actual – 2008	Plan 2009–2013
Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research (FOPER)	Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania	86205801	2004–	Development of university-level forestry education (emphasis on modern forest policy and economics) / Project funding	3,043,000	3,145, 000
Environmental Geographic Information System (GIS) for Montenegro, Phase I	Montenegro	86206101	2005–2007	Improved management of natural resources through GIS and informed decision-making / Funding for a project implemented by UNDP	MFA EUR 410,000 Total budget: EUR 467, 314	

Forest Sector Development in Serbia	Serbia	86205701	2005–2010	Institutional capacity building for the development of the national forest programme of Serbia and sustainable development of forest based enterprises / Funding for a project implemented by FAO	1,180,000	85,000
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Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009; Ruotsalainen 2010.

Table 11 lists projects which have supported the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Table 11 Projects supporting the implementation of the biodiversity convention (CBD) 2004–2008 in the Western Balkans.

Project	MFA Code	Type of intervention	Funding					
			2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Plan 2009–
Western Balkan/ Biodiversity and ecosystem services	88900501	Regional biodiversity conservation project implemented by European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC)					291,042	1,069,000
Western Balkan/ Sustainable development in the protected border regions	88900601	IUCN project 2009–2011 Duration 2009–2011						1,640,000
Yugoslavia/ Development of environmental legislation	86204801		201,467	206,918				

Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2010.

3 ASSESSMENT OF INTERVENTIONS AGAINST THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The interventions that were assessed were:

- i) Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research (FOPER)
- ii) Environmental Geographic Information System (GIS) for Montenegro, Phase I
- iii) Forest Sector Development in Serbia

Evaluation Question 1

Did the respective budgetary appropriations, overall policy measures, sector policies and their implementation plans adequately reflect the development commitments of the partner countries, and those of Finland, as well as the global development agenda in general, and in particular the major goal of poverty reduction?

All interventions are based on Western Balkans' governments' general recovery efforts in the transition to an open market economy and for democratisation process. In the forestry sector these challenges include: the restitution of state forests back to private owners and privatisation of the sector; developments in organisation of private forest owners and the need to adapt the forest sector to a market economy. All interventions have also taken into account the EU integration process and the legislative and policy changes EU requires.

The FOPER project design has taken into account the National Environmental Action Plans but does not discuss the national poverty reduction strategies.

The Serbian Forest Sector Development Project Document (FAO 2005a) does not explicitly mention the PRS aims, but the project is in line with the three main strategic points of the Serbian Poverty Reduction Strategy: 1) Dynamic development and economic growth, 2) Prevention of new poverty as a consequence of economic restructuring and 3) Efficient implementation of existing programmes and creation of new programmes, measures and activities directly targeting the poorest and socially most vulnerable groups. The project is also in line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) vision on reducing rural poverty and promoting environmental sustainability (Government of Serbia 2008).

In the case of GIS Montenegro, the Montenegro Poverty Reduction Strategy recognizes the creation of the GIS as one of the priority activities in the forest sector related to sustainable use of natural resources and measures associated with sustainable forestry. (UNDP 2007). It is in line with the National Strategy of Sustainable Development adopted by the Government of Montenegro in April 2007 as well as with the Montenegrin National Forest and Forest Land Administration Policy Document, adopted by the Government in 2008. The development of GIS is mentioned as one of the priority policy tasks in the Forest Policy document. The budget for GIS was

also found to be adequate and the remainder reflected the development aspirations of the key players but did not lead to the direct reduction of poverty.

With respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), MDG targets are not discussed in the Montenegro GIS Project document or in the MFA contracted assessment of the funding proposal. There is no follow-up information on contribution to MDG's. In the case of FOPER, the compatibility with MDGs is taken into account and assessed in the project documents. The Serbian Forestry Development Project Document states that the project contributes to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) number 1, 3, and 7 (FAO 2005a).

All interventions are also in line with the Finnish development policies: 2004 and 2007. The FOPER project design also notes that the project follows the Finnish development policy principle of providing value added to the partners through collaboration in an area where Finland has a specific strength.

International forest and biodiversity regimes

All interventions rely heavily on international forest and biodiversity regimes in the project design and implementation. The Serbia Forestry Sector Development support is directly linked with and is a key tool for the National Forest Programme process by aiming to support the Serbian government in policies, legal instruments, programme documents, actions and agreements leading towards the sustainable use and conservation of the forest resources. By supporting the development of the National Forest Programme of Serbia, the project contributes to the country implementation of the recommendations of the international forest policy debate promoted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) from 1995 to 1997, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) from 1997 to 2000, and thereafter the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) process. The project document specifies that the project follows the IPF/IFF/UNFF key elements for national forest plan (NFP) development.

The FOPER project aims to build the capacity in forest policy and economics in order to enable the participation of countries in Western Balkans in the processes set by international forest regimes (e.g. NFPs).

Evaluation Question 2

Are the interventions responding to the priorities and strategic objectives of the cooperating party, are they additional or complementary to those done by others, or are they completely detached and stand-alone – in other words, what is the particular Finnish value-added in terms of quality and quantity or presence or absence of benefits, and in terms of sustainability of the benefits and in terms of filling a gap in the development endeavour of the partner country?

Finnish Added Value

For all assessed interventions, Finland is the only international donor. Counterpart organisations and partner country governments have contributed financial allocations to some extent, but Finnish financial allocations form the major part of the budget (Table 10).

FOPER was one of the first regional projects in the Western Balkans and it has increased regional and international networking in forest sector. (Indufor 2009). In Serbia there were only two international cooperation initiatives in the forestry sector when the Forest Sector Development project was planned, the FAO Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) project on Institutional Development and Capacity Building for the National Forest Programme (FAO 2004a; b) initiated in early 2003, and the Norwegian project on Programme for Forestry Sector in Serbia, launched in mid 2003.

Within the regional context there should be current opportunities for Finnish added value, however with regard to Montenegro some ground has been lost with the withdrawal from the GIS project and the limited extent of FOPER. However, given Finland's forestry knowledge and culture the following are potential opportunities to explore.

Forest harvesting and utilization: LUX DEV assisted the rehabilitation and repair of several sawmills and logging units and their privatisation some 5 years ago. It is likely that the equipment and infrastructure would benefit from a review and modernisation. This would also improve the recovery of sawn wood and add more value to it.

Rural Housing (Montane): The mountainous regions are snowbound for several months each year and the climate overall can be cold and wet. In 2005 an Austrian company investigated the possibility of community heating for Kolasin. Whilst the technology for heating was feasible the poor insulation standards of the homes made it impossible. The Finnish knowledge for well insulated wooden homes may have potential in this region. Both opportunities would stimulate the rural economy and alleviate poverty especially when local resources are used. This would conserve woodland and reduce the use of poor quality coal that is also sourced in Montenegro.

Coordination

For the Serbian project, potential overlapping and duplication was analysed in detail during the inception phase and necessary changes made to project outputs and activities. At the local level coordination has improved between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Central Monitoring and Management Unit (MAFWM-CMMU), LUX DEV and Finland, the tourist sector, other Ministries and donors. With UNDP as the implementer, international exposure/coordination has been ensured. The project may be considered to be jointly owned between Finland, Japan and the Government of Montenegro and the information is now on various web sites. Project information has also been available to other national and international organisations working in Montenegro through the project office especially when a print out of a large map is required.

Harmonisation

GIS worked closely and cooperated with LUX DEV, as the same team of Montenegrin foresters who composed the CMMU were the first to be taught GIS and were also instructed in improved forest management, inventory techniques and silviculture. The LUX DEV consultants responsible for this have been the same since

2004 originating from Freiburg University in Germany thus there has been continuity, good leadership, team spirit and continuous professional improvement with the latest knowledge available for the CMMU. This has had a domino effect on the rest of the sector e.g. Forest Practice Study tour to Germany in 2005 and others since. Furthermore the CMMU did not have their own offices so when not in the field they shared office space with UNDP GIS.

The GIS UNDP office was also close to that of LUX DEV so exchanges and meetings were easy to arrange. LUX DEV also provided the inventory/survey equipment, transport, running costs and per diems throughout the project. This facilitated regional staff who travelled to the capital for training and vice versa.

With the development of software pertaining to forest inventory and management, the LUX DEV project purchased what was known as “The Belgrade Software” from the Department of Forestry University of Serbia, had the instructions translated into English and modified it to fit into the GIS set up. This is now being used for the National Forest Inventory, improved management plans and mapping the numerous small privately owned forests that are being returned to their original owners.

The UNDP Capacity Development Unit took the lead in coordinating GIS related components in other projects related to forestry and protected areas in order to achieve synergetic effect. (UNDP 2007). It thus played a major role in the achievements of improved forest management in first phase. The project has continued with Japanese assistance until the present with a total budget of USD 1.1 million.

Since Finland no longer funds the Montenegrin GIS there is little opportunity for synergy. However, regionally there are greater opportunities for synergy in both forestry, e.g. dealing with illegal timber movements, cross border nature conservation and environmental issues.

No harmonisation was evident for the Serbia Forestry and FOPER.

Finnish Technical Assistance

During the FOPER Phase I, Project Management Team (PMT) was based at European Forestry Institute (EFI) and all team members were Finnish. The role of the PMT was to coordinate the project. The Mid-Term Review of Phase I concluded that the contractor and main service provider, EFI, had performed well (Indufor Oy 2009).

For the Serbia Forest Sector Development, a Tripartite Meeting (TPM) formed by the Government of Finland, the Government of Serbia and FAO is the highest decision making body of the project and makes the final decision on the approvals of the work plans, budgets and annual reports. In addition MFA has an observer status in the Steering Committee meetings. There was no TA in the implementation except for a short-term forest accounting and financing consultant.

For GIS Montenegro a Donor/Finnish Government representative was part of the Project Board and provided strategic direction and reviewed progress. The Phase I was evaluated by MFA Forestry Advisor Mr. Jussi Viitanen together with Mr. Timo Tokola from the University of Joensuu. According to the draft evaluation report (Tokola & Viitanen 2007) UNDP appraised the technical expertise of the MFA.

Evaluation Question 3

How have the three dimensions of sustainability been addressed in the intervention documents, and were the aid modalities and instruments conducive to optimal materialisation of the objectives of the aid intervention?

The Montenegro GIS project was a technical project with emphasis on economic and ecological sustainability.

The FOPER project, as indicated in the project document, is based on the assumption that economic development is not sustainable if social and ecological factors are not considered (FAO 2005a).

The design of the Serbian Forest Sector Development project is based on Sustainable Forest Management approach which takes into account all three dimensions of sustainability. It also clearly spells out the principle of environmental sustainability as the basis of the work. The project contains the following clear indications for this:

- ❖ Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management and for forest products certification;
- ❖ Promotion of sustainable forest management among state and private forest owners;
- ❖ Ecotourism and non-timber forest products as potential products on which forest based small and medium enterprises would be built.

However, the three dimensions of sustainability are less visible in follow up documents.

The assessed interventions have promoted a wider concept of forestry. It is stated in the project documents that the common understanding of the sector has a narrow emphasis on timber production and economic value of forests (e.g. Sustainable Forest Management approach and conservation value of forests). Thus all assessed interventions have aimed to build national capacity in environmental regimes.

Aid Modalities

There was no evidence of analysis of rationale for selection of instruments and modalities at regional level, considering the Finnish Forestry sector portfolio in the region and how it linked to the global portfolio and initiatives in related sectors (e.g. environment). However, the modalities of individual interventions are justified in project design documents. For example, the Serbian Forestry Project justifies the selection of the FAO as the executing agency of the project and the Forest Policy Planning Unit as the local counterpart.

Evaluation Question 4

What are the major discernible changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect) and are these changes likely to be sustainable, and to what extent these sustainable changes may be attributed to the Finnish aid interventions or to interventions in which Finnish aid have been a significant contributing factor?

Baselines

There are no records of baseline studies conducted. In the case of the Serbian Forestry Sector Development, an extensive number of reports on legal and policy framework; production capacity and institutional landscape of the Serbian forestry sector as well as on participatory forestry were produced during the previous phase of the FAO Technical Cooperation Project (Hilmi 2004; Konjevic & Tomic 2003; Tomovic 2004). The outcomes of these reports are incorporated into the Project Document.

The Montenegro GIS project design has used the National Strategy of Sustainable Development for project design. The project solved many problems and disseminated concrete results to users and stakeholders, again the forestry sector being a major beneficiary. The recently privatised Forestry Institute, the LUX–DEV project and the GIS project due to close personal contact to obtained data sets, converted them to digital form, cooperated with end users and developed further activities. For example the forest information software package procured by the Implementation of the Forestry Development in Montenegro Project (FODEMO) from the University of Serbia and tailored to fit the GIS set up. The cost effective build up and capacity enhancement was a foundation for the future.

The GIS project delivered consistent systems for creating and sharing basic data in key sectors for conservation and planning. After establishment the unit performed quickly to digitise available information, provide in service training to their own personnel and later to others mainly from forestry. This was essential to the pursuit of sustainable forest management (SFM) and the objectives of the LUX DEV project and the wider needs of the Government of Montenegro and other donors with regard to environmental protection and planning.

The project delivered several concrete results in a relatively short time scale making digital map sets available nationwide at a single location and system. The project created awareness and capacity in the country (60 Trained) and there is growing use of GIS throughout society including the private sector that, now offer their services (e.g. GFK Geo Marketing and EVC) on line.

The Project has had an immense impact on the Forestry sector for management planning and the control of harvesting. It has been the most positive agent for change in the provision of information to all in a transparent manner that should lead to improved governance and a reduction in poverty. The FOPER Project Document refers to FAO statistics.

Evaluation Question 5

Have the financial and human resources, as well as the modalities of management and administration of aid been enabling or hindering the achievement of the set objectives in the form of outputs, outcomes, results or effects?

FOPER

- ❖ FOPER is an untypical MFA project as the project proponent has been directly contracted for the Phase I and the Phase II without the tendering process. No justification of the decision was available for the evaluation team. According to the external Mid-Term Review the direct contracting of EFI has not increased the costs (Indufor 2009).
- ❖ The use of foreign expert teachers and lecturers increased the costs but no local expertise was available. It is assumed that during Phase II more local teachers can be used.
- ❖ The project has used a significant amount of resources by carrying out stakeholder consultations, needs assessment and feasibility studies to choose the right modalities and instruments. The Phase I mid-term review (Indufor 2009) acknowledges that the approach has been correct though efficiency has suffered to some extent.

Serbia Forestry Project

- ❖ After privatisation of the Forestry Institute in July 2003, the Ministry of Forestry created the CMMU consisting of five forestry engineers with the aim of improving the planning processes in forestry for better impact. This unit has been targeted as a driving force in changing methodology for forest inventory by FODEMO and it has been responsible for the implementation of the GIS project jointly with UNDP Capacity Development Unit.
- ❖ The parallel implementation of other international forestry projects in Serbia has caused overload due to limited availability of key local counterparts, including the NPC, for the project implementation (FAO 2005b). There are no records to show that alternative set ups were considered.

GIS Montenegro

- ❖ The project design was modified from the original strategy of contracting consultants. The development of the GIS system was mostly done in-house by the project unit formed by UNDP Project Office and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management. The justification for the change is not documented.

There are no records of the problems created by insufficient or delayed funds. All assessed interventions were extended with no-cost.

For FOPER, the disbursement rate of the grant during project lifetime was 95%. According to the Mid-Term Review, the performance and cost-efficiency has been at least satisfactory (FAO 2009; Indufor 2009).

In the Serbian Forest Development Project, the lower level of budget utilisation compared to project time spent was due to overload of key officials at Forest Policy Planning Unit.

The final expenditure of the Montenegro GIS project was 98 % of the total budget. The evaluation of Phase I concluded that the implementation of the project was very cost effective and it was also found to be highly efficient in the translation of inputs to results (Tokola & Viitanen 2007).

Evaluation Question 6

What are the discernible factors, such as exit strategies, local budgetary appropriations, capacity development of local counterpart organisations or personnel, which can be considered necessary for the sustainability of results and continuance of benefits after the closure of a development intervention?

The interventions have built national and regional capacity in sustainable forest management as well as in promoting commercial investment and forestry business in the region.

FOPER: The institutional capacity of the regional project partners was strengthened during the Phase II. EFI plans to strengthen its presence in the region by establishing a Regional Office in Croatia (EFISEE). The regional office will take the lead of Phase II. In addition FOPER;

- ❖ Enhanced regional and international networking in the forest sector;
- ❖ Established an international MSc. Programme and 24 students trained to MSc. Level;
- ❖ 10 university teachers and 15 researchers were trained; and
- ❖ About 170 professionals were trained in forest policy and economics.

Serbia Forest Sector Development Project: The project has produced a comprehensive framework for sustainable forest sector reforms. The support has enabled the sector to improve its performance. The full and efficient implementation of the National Forestry Action Programme still requires considerable future support and commitments from the Government, donors and stakeholders concerned (FAO 2008a). As of December 2008 the adoption of Law on Forestry was still in process.

Montenegro GIS: The CMMU, consisting of five forest engineers, of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management were trained in preparations for using GIS in forestry inventory as well as digitizing existing forestry plans. In other sectors (spatial planning, energy, nature protection) basic awareness of GIS benefits achieved and communication and cooperation between environmental sectors institutions have been facilitated (UNDP Montenegro 2007).

The project continues with Japanese assistance and throughout has promoted the use of GIS in various spatial planning and monitoring processes. It has greatly reduced the manpower requirement in forest management for example in processing field data

thus making it indispensable. The government realises this and plans to establish a new centre (MON GIS) within its structure. To quote UNDP Montenegro: *“Introduction of GIS in Montenegro aims to create conditions for better monitoring, management and protection of forests, biodiversity and land as the most sustainable resources in Montenegro. Ensuring Environmental sustainability is one of the Millennium Development Goals, and is unimaginable without complete and precise data on forest conditions and control processes in planned forest works. By establishing the data framework required by various EU conventions, the GIS in Montenegrin environmental sector will also contribute to the European Integration Process”* (Government of Montenegro and UNDP 2004)

The CMMU has been institutionalized and the need for GIS is recognized in the national forestry law and forestry policy. The aim of the Phase II of the project is to institutionalise the Environmental GIS for Montenegro, MON-GIS, and seek the funding from both public and private sources. Sustainability of the achievement depends to a great extent on the continuation of the project by the planned phases II and III. There is no documentation on whether Finland has continued to fund the project or what the possible reasons for withdrawing were.

Counterpart funding

The Government of Montenegro covered EUR 10,000 (2 %) of the total budget of the Phase I. For FOPER, international partners (EFI project centre INNOFORCE, UN University, University of Joensuu) gave cash contributions. Regional partners provided in-kind contributions during the Phase I and are willing to continue their in-kind contributions, but no significant increase has been experienced nor is foreseen. Some minor funding for the scholarships of MDP students may be forthcoming from the State Forest Enterprises of the region. For the Serbia Forestry Project, no data is available on the level and changes of allocation of state budget for the National Forest Action.

The Government of Montenegro is providing the necessary budgetary support for the development of the “MONTE GIS”, its institutionalization throughout society and through profitable outlets available to the private sector.

Evaluation Question 7

What has been the role of considering the cross-cutting issues of Finnish development policy in terms of contributing to the sustainability of development results and poverty reduction; has there been any particular value-added in the promotion of environmentally sustainable development?

Equal access to project activities was considered in the project design of the FOPER and the Serbia Forest Sector Development projects. For GIS Montenegro gender issues were targeted through the UNDP internal process of gender streamlining (including education and internal guidelines). In FOPER female students constituted about 33% of the total participants of the Master’s Degree Programme and 35% of the teachers involved were female. These figures are considered high compared to the rate of women’s participation in other sectors of economy, particularly in the forestry sector, in the Southeast Europe region (Indufor 2009).

There was no documentation on changes relating to women and girls for GIS Montenegro and Serbian Forestry Development.

There are no records of participation or changes relating to minority groups in the interventions.

There was no evidence of consideration of HIV/AIDS in intervention or programmes design or and changes relating to HIV/AIDS affected people.

Evaluation Question 8

Are there any concrete identifiable examples of interventions, which may be classified to be environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, which have led to poverty reduction or alleviation of consequences of poverty?

All interventions have expressed a contribution to poverty reduction in project documents. For the FOPER and Serbian Forestry project, relevant indicators of success on the contribution to poverty reduction are defined in project documents (Box 2). However no monitoring information is available on indicators. There is no quantitative or qualitative evidence of ecological, social and economic gains in national level MDGs or specific poverty reduction goals defined by the interventions. Despite this there are some examples of which may lead to poverty reduction in various ways: They are as follows:

Serbian Forestry Development results

(FAO 2008b; www.fao.org/forestry/enterprises/38736/en/ consulted 19.4.2010)

- ❖ Draft Law on Forest (version 5.0) based on international and national forest policy requirements and state forest company general legal solutions incorporated;
- ❖ Forestry Development Strategy (adopted by the Serbian Government 2006) and National Forest Action Programme (NFAP) for the implementation of the Strategy;
- ❖ Financial analyses on how to finance the investments required in both public and private forests;
- ❖ Technical support for the development of the Game and Hunting Law (GHL) achieved a final draft; and
- ❖ Key expert proposals for the development of public forestry administration and service organisation and functioning identified.

Establishment of nine private forest owners associations established with a primary forestry objective and additional four associations for development of countryside tourism.

GIS Montenegro results (Tokola & Viitanen 2007)

- ❖ Nation-wide digital map-sets (topography, terrain model, soil maps, hydrology maps, mosaics of satellite images) available and at the first time this information is available in one place and system;

- ❖ Use of system initiated in two pilot organisations (MAFWM and National Parks);
- ❖ Potential application of GIS as a cross-sectoral planning tool;
- ❖ According to the UNDP web site the GIS project has trained more than 60 people from over 20 environmental institutions and municipalities but many are unable to utilize their skills. However with regard to forestry the use of reliable, timely accurate information has brought order to the sector as it assists decision making in forest management that ultimately ensures the sustainability of the forests and the livelihood of the dependent users and small private owners. The contribution of forests to GDP in this instance is probably much greater due to internal use of forest products and the grey trade economy in them;
- ❖ The Project also promoted the use of information to strengthen the sustainability of various economic activities on competing land uses in the natural resource sector allowing better planning and conflict resolution thus contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

All interventions have also increased the national and regional capacity for sustainable management of forest and other natural resources. Sustainable management of natural resources is seen as the key to reduce poverty, especially rural poverty.

Box 2 FOPER indicators of success.

FOPER indicators of success for the overall objective:

- ❖ Contribution of forest sector in GDP and in export earnings
- ❖ Rate of poverty, particularly rural poverty
- ❖ Rate of rural to urban migration
- ❖ Number of men and women employed in the forest sector at different levels
- ❖ Serbian Forestry Project indicators of success for the development objective:
- ❖ Forestry sector contribution to GDP increased to at least 1%
- ❖ At least 20% of private forests under management, contributing to the livelihoods of the rural Families

Source: FAO 2006a.

Evaluation Question 9

Have interventions which support economic development or private sector, been able to contribute towards sustainable economic results, let alone, raising people from poverty?

The Serbia Forest Sector Development project aims to support the sustainable development of forest based enterprises. The private sector involvement has focused on small holder and small business development by supporting the creation of small-holder associations and providing capacity building. The State Forest Company has been engaged in developing the State Forest Company legislation. Nine private forest owners associations were established in Serbia under a primary forestry objective and an additional four associations for development of countryside tourism.

FOPER has educated 24 persons through a Master's Degree programme who are potential forces of change in forestry business (understand general and forest economics and master international marketing). However no information was found on the % of professional training participants from private sector. The Mid-term review states that there is high demand in the state forest enterprises for professional training (Indufor Oy 2009).

In the case of GIS Montenegro, the private sector has perceived GIS as a marketable technology and is promoting, developing and selling relevant products. The Forestry Institute is a private organisation and is now using GIS when carrying out Forest Inventories for the Government of Montenegro and will have the potential to pursue this with private forest owners.

Evaluation Question 10

How is the society touched upon by the development interventions taken into account in the strategic and project/programme plans, and what have been the major modalities for the society to influence and affect the development interventions and the decision-making on them?

The interventions have engaged a wide range stakeholders, mostly academic and government institutions. The FOPER Project organisation consists of the Coordinator, the European Forest Institute, and four other international education and research oriented partners: United Nations University; University of Joensuu; Silva network and EFI Project Centre INNOFORCE (hosted at the University of Natural Resource and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU). The regional partners are six forestry faculties (Zagreb, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Belgrade, Skopje and Tirana), as well as three forest research institutes (Jastrebarsko, Belgrade, Tirana). The project set up is based on intensive participation and ownership of all partners throughout the project (FOPER Webpage, consulted 13.04.2010).

The key institutional affiliations of the Serbian project are the Directorates at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, the Belgrade Forestry Faculty, the Forestry Research Institutes, the Srbjasume and the Vojvodinasume state forestry enterprises. The Steering Committee was planned to consist of Ministry representatives, Public Enterprises, Research Institutions, Private Forestry Associations and other representative bodies of forestry and forest related stakeholders. However there were strong professional and political conflicts and consequent non-collaborative atmosphere between the Forest and Nature Protection Directorates. The protection of forests was seen as contradictory with the use and management of forests (Franc & Jovic 2005a; b).

The GIS Montenegro project engaged the governmental bodies of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Ministry of Environment Protection and Physical Planning (MEPPP) and National Parks. However MEPPP which also had a representative at the project board was not involved in project activities or in utilizing the project's outputs (Tokola & Viitanen 2007).

Changes due to participation

In FOPER, each partner has one representative in the Supervisory Committee (SC) which is the highest decision making structure in the project. The SC makes decisions on possible changes in intervention, design and implementation. Ministries of Forestry in the SEE region and MFA Finland also have representation at the SC. National working groups were formed in each project country with representatives of different organisations from the forest sector, both public and private. There were also stakeholder consultations and needs assessments and the use of a website.

In the Serbian Forestry Project, there is evidence in the Inception Report (Franc & Jovic 2005a) and Progress Reports that changes have been made to project design and implementation to suit the current needs better. Stakeholder consultations and field visits, workshops, conferences and use of a website were some of the mechanisms used for participation. Establishment of a Forest Forum as a platform for dialogue amongst stakeholders and representatives of the sectors interested in forest uses and conservation was planned in the Project Document however no data was available on its implementation.

For the GIS Montenegro project a phased approach was chosen in the forestry sector as requested by the Partner Country Representative. There was sharing of information and technical support with various international aid agencies; national and international research organisations as well as NGOs.

Decentralisation, Accountability and Transparency

All interventions have contributed to improved accountability and transparency that improve governance.

The development of environmental GIS in Montenegro has increased transparent delivery of environmental information in Montenegro. Serbian National Forest Programme has involved a wide range of stakeholders in the forestry sector. The project has used participatory tools and methods for training of national staff in promoting the involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation of the new forest policy and legal framework. FOPER has introduced international forestry regime to academics, practitioners and forestry students in the whole region.

Household income

There was no direct contribution in FOPER and Montenegro GIS towards increased household incomes. For Serbia, there was no data available on possible increases in the levels of household income.

Wider Sectoral changes

In Serbia the Draft Law on Forest is still in process. The EU pre-accession process requires the adoption of new and modern legislation and the NFAP is an important tool for the Government in directing potential investments and development programmes.

In Montenegro the Comprehensive and progressive National Forest Policy was adopted in April 2008 and the development of the forest sector was integrated into the context of National Strategy for Sustainable Development. In the case of GIS, the wider society will benefit considerably from this technology especially in the control and regulation of housing and infrastructure development. Society has had little opportunity to influence the interventions but again indirectly forest concessionaires, private owners and stakeholders in the tourism industry will benefit from the technology.

In Albania a major part of former state forests have been handed over to local authorities, in Croatia, the NFP is in process, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there is an ongoing process of creation of standards for forest certification and in Macedonia the revision of the forest law and its harmonization on-going.

4 CONCLUSIONS

For the projects in Montenegro the budgetary appropriations have been modest and perhaps just sufficient in the case of GIS. Too much would also have overloaded the absorption capacity of a small country. However they are not directly linked to poverty reduction although the linkage can be established through the improved and sustainable management and development of the natural resources in Montenegro or any other West Balkan State.

The GIS input has been strategic and timely for Montenegro catalysing change throughout and the benefits have been ably demonstrated and taken on board by the Government, the private sector and civil society. Sustainability should therefore follow especially as it will become a subject in the curriculum of schools.

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