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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Evaluation of Support to Private and Decentralised Forestry in Kosovo, 2009-2013

Final Report

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**Final Report
December 2013**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CNVP Project

The Project “Support to private and decentralised forestry in Kosovo, 2009-2013” was formulated by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation in 2007-2008 at the request of Sida. It then contained components of support to private and decentralized forestry in Kosovo, a regional component on knowledge exchange, and a sub-component forestry education.

Implementation started in 2009 with a planned duration of 4 years. In 2010 an additional component on sustainable alpine development implemented by ERA was added at the request of Sida. In 2012 it was agreed to extend the Project by one year at no extra cost.

Following a legal demerger, implementation responsibility was taken over by a new organisation, “Connecting Natural Values and People” (CNVP).

The Project thus operates in the five main areas of private forestry, decentralised forestry, regional cooperation, forestry education and sustainable alpine development, through the following three components:

Component 1: Kosovo private & decentralised forestry strengthening

Specific Objective 1.1: An effective and organisational framework is built up and supports private and decentralised forestry

Specific Objective 1.2: Proper sustainable forest management practices are available and services provided to private and decentralised forestry

Specific Objective 1.3: Increased capacity of forestry engineers in Kosovo through university education

Component 2: Regional private & decentralised forestry strengthening

Specific Objective 2.1: Regional Private and decentralised forestry networks exist that effectively exchange and cooperate on joint learning and development of forestry practices and methods and jointly address and advocate relevant private and decentralised forestry issues

Specific Objective 2.2: Regional forestry networks address concrete common issues in finding solutions and support implementation

Component 3: Sustainable Alpine Development

Specific Objective 3.1: Education for Sustainable Development for local schools (especially with out-door activities and focused on sustainable forestry, climate change, personal sustainable lifestyle changes), along with raising public awareness and the provision of a physical focal point for sustainable alpine development is successfully implemented by the Sustainable Mountains Education Centre located in Peja.

Specific Objective 3.2: Increased capacity through increased quantity, quality and networking, of NGOs working for the sustainable development of the Accursed Mountains region, plus the results of the Sustainable Alpine Development Initiatives.

Specific Objective 3.3: Sustainable Forest Management at Municipality level with involvement of local communities resulting in increased income and economic growth opportunities while contributing to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity.

The Evaluation

The main purpose of the current evaluation has been *“to evaluate the project’s extent of achievements in relation to expected results, and to provide recommendations for the design of possible continued support”*.

The evaluation has been carried out by a team of one International and one Regional Consultant. The Team has based its findings on triangulation of information from Project reports, presentations made by project implementers, stakeholder and boundary partner interviews, and field observations.

Main findings and conclusions

The Project has produced a large number of valuable outputs under each of its components and sub-components. It has also achieved a number of notable outcomes, for instance in influencing policy decisions by strengthening the capacity of private forestry owners associations and municipalities, providing forest management models that get incorporated in regular forestry activities, and providing learning and sharing of experiences that has enhanced the incorporation of forestry into rural development practices at regional level. It is assessed that the Project effectiveness is satisfactory.

It needs to be considered that a project of this nature is not a push-button project – it deals with and is dependent on many complex, interwoven and long-term processes, many of which are not under the Project’s control. The Project has been in operation only for a few years, and it is therefore not surprising that it has not been possible to detect any definite impacts. However, it is probable that some impact on the forest production may be discernible already this year, from work on forestry management models carried out by the Project.

The Project is as relevant today as it was when it started. It is relevant to its main stakeholders, namely the private forest owners and the municipalities in Kosovo, and forest owners and users in the region, represented by their associations in the regional component of the Project. It is also relevant in relation to policy and actual developments in the forestry sector, in Kosovo and regionally. Finally, the Project is relevant from the perspective of the general goals and orientation of Swedish development cooperation.

Most of the Project activities and results are dependant on Sida funding and are as such not sustainable. However, the main implementing actors in the Project, notably CNVP, the local forest owners and users associations, ERA and their supporting organisations, and the municipalities are considered stable organisations that would be able to continue at least some of the work done and sustain some of the results produced under the Project even if this funding would not be there.

The total budget of the Project is 42 million SEK and it is assessed that these funds will be spent within the five-year period. Although the Project has been in operation only for just over 4 years, it has produced a substantial amount of relevant and valuable results. It is also a general assessment by the Team that the Project has been well organised and that the management is efficient. Even if there would be no continuation of the Project it is assessed that it has been efficient considering the outputs in relation to costs

Main recommendations

It is recommended that a new Project be prepared and that the following general points be considered when preparing the new project:

- Continue doing what is done today. It is clear that the Project has been able to produce meaningful outputs and that effects should be forthcoming that will enhance the effectiveness of the Project.
- Expand to new and larger geographical areas. It will be possible to cover larger areas where replication of activities piloted successfully in the current Project can be facilitated at larger scale. This should not limit the explorative activities of a new Project, there are still areas for innovation and the Project should continue to work with that.
- Develop coherent and focused components. A project on forestry should deal mainly with forestry, and CNVP should focus on what they are good at – which is forestry. Environmental objectives can also be supported, but such activities should then be clearly forestry-oriented and designed in a fully participatory manner so as to support and add value to the main forestry-oriented core objectives of the Project.

It is further recommended that Sida, depending on the mode of support and procurement, support both the preparations for, and the implementation of a follow-up project to the current one.

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, a number of additional specific recommendations relating to each of the output areas have been provided for the consideration of the Project Implementers.

ACRONYMS

APFO	Association of Private Forest Owners
CEPF	Confederation of European Forest Owners
CNVP	Connecting Natural Values and People
DoF	Department of Forestry
ERA	Environmentally Responsible Action group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAP	Global Action Plan
ILC	International Land Coalition
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
KFA	Kosovo Forest Agency
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
NAPFO	National Association of Private Forest Owners
NFCFP	National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Produce
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PREPARE	Partnership for Rural Europe
REFORD	Regional Centre for Forestry and Rural Development
SEK	Swedish Kronor
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the draft report of an evaluation of “Support to Private and Decentralised Forestry in Kosovo, 2009-2013”, a project implemented by the NGO Connecting Natural Values and People (CNVP) with co-financing from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The project has been implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD), Department of Forestry (DoF), Kosovo Forest Agency (KFA), Environmentally Responsible Action (ERA) group with its sub-consultants TreeVelop Projects and Processes and Global Action Plan (GAP), forestry training institutes, municipalities, private forest owners associations and communities.

The evaluation was commissioned by the Swedish Embassy in Kosovo, with the objective of evaluating “the project’s extent of achievements in relation to expected results, and to provide recommendations for the design of possible continued support”. Thus, the evaluation has two main elements: it is a formal evaluation in accordance with OECD principles and criteria and at the same time it has a forward-looking element with recommendations to the Client.

The evaluation Team consisted of:

- Åke Nilsson (Team Leader), specialist on natural resources management and the environment.
- Valbona Ylli, specialist on socio-economic and extension aspects of forestry and agriculture, including gender.

Quality assurance has been provided by Henrik Brade Johansen, COWI.

2 THE EVALUATED INTERVENTION

Around 40% of the forests in Kosovo are private forests; the remaining 60% is managed either by Kosovo Forest Agency (KFA) or by municipalities, the latter having been given such responsibilities only recently. The dependency of rural household livelihoods on forests is large and the importance of forests also from a macro-economic perspective is accentuated by the Government. The capacity to manage forests is limited both as among private forest owners and within the municipalities. Illegal logging is one of the main current challenges, limitations in policy and legal framework another. There are also opportunities, one being the availability of large areas of currently degraded forests which under efficient management can produce a much higher yield of timber, fuel wood and wood biomass.

The situation is much the same in other countries in the region. Decentralisation processes have taken place, and user rights are being transferred to local communities. The opportunities are good for regional cooperation that could increase the flow of benefits from the forests.

The Project under evaluation was formulated by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation in 2007-2008 at the request of Sida. It then contained components of support to private and

decentralized forestry in Kosovo and a regional component. A sub-component that has covered support to the conclusion of a forestry education programme that had been implemented with Sida support during 2004-2008 was also included.

Implementation started in 2009 with a planned duration of 4 years. In 2010 an additional component on sustainable alpine development implemented by ERA was added at the request of Sida. In 2012 it was agreed to extend the Project by one year at no extra cost.

Following the closing of SNV engagements in the forestry sector in the Balkans, a legal demerger was effected in 2012 through which CNVP was created, and CNVP took over the responsibility of implementing the Project through an agreement with Sida.

The Project thus operates in five main areas: private forestry, decentralised forestry, regional cooperation, forestry education and sustainable alpine development.

The development objective of the Project is:

"Sustainably managed private forest and decentralised forest provide proper products and services to citizens and society and thus improve the socio-economic wellbeing of Kosovo."

The Project has three components with the following specific objectives:

Component 1: Kosovo private & decentralised forestry strengthening

Specific Objective 1.1: An effective and organisational framework is built up and supports private and decentralised forestry

Specific Objective 1.2: Proper sustainable forest management practices are available and services provided to private and decentralised forestry

Specific Objective 1.3: Increased capacity of forestry engineers in Kosovo through university education

Component 2: Regional private & decentralised forestry strengthening

Specific Objective 2.1: Regional Private and decentralised forestry networks exist that effectively exchange and cooperate on joint learning and development of forestry practices and methods and jointly address and advocate relevant private and decentralised forestry issues

Specific Objective 2.2: Regional forestry networks address concrete common issues in finding solutions and support implementation

Component 3: Sustainable Alpine Development

Specific Objective 3.1: Education for Sustainable Development for local schools (especially with out-door activities and focused on sustainable forestry, climate change, personal sustainable lifestyle changes), along with raising public awareness and the provision of a physical focal point for sustainable alpine development is successfully implemented by the Sustainable Mountains Education Centre located in Peja

Specific Objective 3.2: Increased capacity through increased quantity, quality and networking, of NGOs working for the sustainable development of the Accursed Mountains region, plus the results of the Sustainable Alpine Development Initiatives

Specific Objective 3.3: Sustainable Forest Management at Municipality level with involvement of local communities resulting in increased income and economic growth opportunities while contributing to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity

The geographical focus of implementation of Component 1 is mainly in the Western parts of Kosovo. Component 2 is implemented in the Western Balkan region with a focus so far on Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania, but with participation also of Montenegro and Bulgaria and spreading out to include soon Bosnia and Croatia. Component 3 is implemented entirely in the mountain region of Western Kosovo.

3 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has been carried out in three phases: an introductory desk-study and preparation phase of reviewing documentation received from the Project and Sida; a 9-day mission to Kosovo including field visits, meetings and interviews with Project implementers and other stakeholders, beneficiaries and boundary partners; and a phase of analysis and report writing.

Most of the evaluative conclusions made in this report are based on triangulation of information from Project reports, stakeholder and boundary partner interviews, and field observations.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION AND SOURCES

The evaluation is based on data and information collected from the following sources:

- Study of documentation, including
 - Project documents and reports.
 - Sida documentation.
 - Documentation of projects financed by other donors.
 - Official government documents, including strategies and laws.
 - Documentation on forestry activities in other countries in the region.
- Meetings with, and presentations made by implementing partners.
- Interviews with stakeholders at national, municipal and community levels in Kosovo and in the region.
- Interviews with representatives of Sida and other donors.
- Interviews with project beneficiaries.
- Field observations.

A list of documentation used in the evaluation is provided in Annex 1, and a list of persons met in Annex 2.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

The time available to the Team has not allowed for in-depth interviews with larger numbers of all concerned beneficiaries and stakeholders. This limits to a certain extent the triangulation opportunities, particularly with regard to the results of the Sustainable Alpine Development component.

4 FINDINGS

The evaluation findings presented in the following are an account of both the actual results and the relevant issues identified under each project component and each particular output area. Since this is a process-oriented project that has been implemented only for a few years, it would be expected that most results are found at the output level, some at the outcome level, and few at the impact level. This is the reason the presentation is structured by output areas rather than outcome areas. Outcome results, to the extent they have occurred, are presented in the running text along with the output results under each output area. It needs to be observed that while the objectives, expected results and indicators are described in quite a detail in the Project documents, there are generally no targets specified for each indicator.

4.1 EFFECTIVENESS

4.1.1 Component 1: Kosovo private & decentralised forestry strengthening

4.1.1.1 *Output area 1.a: Private forestry is well organised and institutionalised and represents the needs of private forest owners (men and women)*

Indicators:

- *Private forest owners associations of Kosovo are established representing private forest owners (men and women).*
- *Number and type of service provision for private forestry by government and association structures.*

When the project started in 2009, only one association of private forest owners existed. This had been set up as a local association in the Western part of Kosovo and was transformed into a national association, the National Association of Private Forest Owners (NAPFO). Although this association had less than 50 members, it was acknowledged by the Government and was represented in the reform process in the sector. NAPFO is currently represented both in the National Forest Management Board and in the working group for new legislation.

During the course of the project, NAPFO was re-structured to accommodate additional local associations. There are now 16 such associations established at municipal level, with an additional two in the process of being established, including one in Mitrovica aiming at developing private forestry in mixed Serb/Albanian communities. All persons interviewed on the topic attribute this development to the support provided by the Project.

The total membership is estimated at 3,200¹ with an increase of 700 members from 2011 to 2012. However, although associations are established in almost half of the municipalities in Kosovo, this membership still represents less than 3% of the approximately 133,000 private forest owners in the country. Even in other European countries where forest owners

¹ Forest Sector Annual Progress Report 2012

associations have a very long history, the corresponding figure is never higher than 35 % and with an average of 15% so it cannot be expected that the figure for Kosovo should be radically higher. However, it would be particularly important for the Kosovo national and local associations at this initial point where they could provide important inputs to changing policies, to show that they do represent as many forest owners as possible, and also since they need to establish a sufficient level of institutional stability as soon as possible.

Generic business plans exist for the associations, as do ideas among the local associations of how the membership could be increased to more appropriately represent the total number of private owners. However, for the sake of institutional sustainability there is probably need for a concerted strategic thinking on the important issue of expanding and engaging the membership further.

Other notable outputs in this area include participation in the preparation of both private and municipal forest management plans, and other types of local consultations.

The member database is still in the process of being collated by the associations and there is no exact information on how many of the members are women, but judging from responses during interviews by the Team it is unlikely that this would exceed 5%. Women members in the associations participated in preparing a special “women’s issue” of the monthly newspaper *Green Crown*, which is issued jointly by the Kosovo and Albania national associations.

At the outcome level, the strengthening of APFOs has led to enhanced opportunities to influence policy change through their participation in forestry law working group. For instance, the Project and NAPFO have been instrumental in influencing government to increase production targets for firewood.

4.1.1.2 *Output area 1.b: Proper and effective service provision to private forest owners and representation at all levels to achieve sustainable forest management*

Indicators:

- *Diversified modules are developed addressing specific needs of private owners and communities (men and women).*
- *Number and type of service provision for private forestry by government and association structures.*

Modules have been prepared on 13 topics: GPS, fire protection, forest thinning, awareness, lobbying, participatory firewood needs assessment, motor chainsaw safety, private forest inventory, preparation of management plans, tree growth analysis, felling techniques and safety rules, and organizational assessment tool for PFO associations.

The modules have been typically used for training of private forest owners and municipalities by the forestry advisors and by selected representative of NAPFO and local associations who had received basic training as trainers. Some sample modules have been studied by the Team and are found to be of high quality, both technically and pedagogically.

For Kosovo alone, capacity building has been provided to 3,744 persons through participation in 367 seminars, workshops, study visits, studies, meetings, and training and coaching events.

In addition to training, service provision has been achieved in terms of, i.a., website development for NAPFO; management planning through the preparation of 50 management plans; information through *Green Crown*; and through providing technical services to a project in northern Kosovo aiming at developing private forestry in Mitrovica.

A number of outputs related to value-chain development for wood biomass production and utilization for renewable energy, have also been provided, in the form of studies, training and piloting. This has included support to development of agroforestry.

4.1.1.3 *Output area 1.c: Decentralised forestry piloted*

Indicator:

- *In selected area decentralised forms are experimented*

Transfer of state forest land for management by the municipalities has been effectuated without ascertaining that the necessary capacity in terms of staff and professional competence in forestry management is available at the decentralised level. The Project has attempted to address this through a combination of experimenting, piloting and demonstration of decentralised forms of forest management.

Five pilot projects on preparation of 10-year forest management plans have been finalized and implementation has commenced. Participatory planning and rehabilitation of coppice forests has been included in this work, which has provided valuable examples for how the huge areas of degraded forest land in Kosovo could be regenerated.

The problem of lack of forestry staff in the municipalities remains, however, and there are other hurdles that limit the ability for the municipalities to carry out their new responsibilities. The fact that the municipalities do not control the cash flow resulting from harvesting is an important administrative obstacle. Proceeds from harvesting have to go to the central Government, which then in turn shall return 30 percent of the proceeds to the municipality. Even if this happens, at least in most cases and after some time, it is being questioned why the share given to the municipalities should be limited to that extent or why it should be shared with the government at all.

There has been a call for retraction of the forestry decentralization process, partly based on the argument that the capacity constraints at the municipality level are a threat to sustainable forestry management. In the opinion of persons interviewed, however, it is unlikely that this could happen considering the political implications of such a decision.

An important outcome of the Project has been that the strengthening of private and decentralized forestry through capacity building of PFOs and piloting and model development in the municipalities, have created a counterweight against any such retraction.

Experience in the region, particularly from Albania, shows that an increased involvement in forestry management and benefit sharing by local communities will have an effect on the protection of forest lands and on decreasing illegal logging.

Piloting and model development has also informed the regional component of the Project, which means that there will be effects in other countries in the region.

4.1.1.4 *Output area 1.d: Decentralised forestry modality defined providing income opportunities for local communities (men and women) and addressing their forest products and service needs*

Indicator:

- *New decentralised forest management model incorporated in forestry structures*

The project has implemented decentralisation pilot models in 7 villages in 3 pilot municipalities. This has included the introduction of new planning approaches through which six participatory management plans in cadastral zones in the pilot municipalities have been prepared. The models have covered a variety of planning and management tools and operations including training, inventories, coppice regeneration, cleaning, thinning and biomass production. A large number of training activities and workshops at all levels have accompanied the piloting and model development activities.

There are some areas of concern in relation to the decentralisation process that would hamper the implementation of the models. One example is the existing legal obstacles to efficient management that would improve the productivity of the forests, for instance a ban on clear felling. Although clear felling could be potentially risky from environmental points of view, if managed in a controlled way and if precautions are taken to reduce the risk of soil erosion it increases the yield for instance in coppice forest. This would create employment opportunities and contribute to the livelihoods of rural people, at the same time as it would reduce pressure on other forest areas. The project currently circumvents potential legal problems by leaving some lines of trees in the harvested area. Another is the distribution of benefits mentioned earlier, which may seem unfair to the communities and the municipalities.

At the outcome level, the development of the models and being able to show that they work and that they provide a variety of benefits and advantages, has led to an increased incorporation of such models in regular forestry planning in the country.

4.1.1.5 *Output area 1.e: Graduated forestry engineers are started working in Kosovo forestry sector*

Indicators:

- *Number of graduated forestry engineers (men and women).*
- *Number of graduated forestry engineers employed in forestry sector (men and women.)*

The Project accommodated the conclusion of a Sida-supported programme covering forestry education at BSc and MSc level and for Forestry Engineers as one of its sub-components.

The outputs in terms of the actual education programmes during the Project period have been as follows:

- 3 BSc students (2 women and 1 man) have graduated in Zagreb, 2 have continued and are expected for MSc graduation in 2013.

- 1 B.Sc. student (man) out of an original 7 has graduated in Vienna, 3 are still continuing studies by their own effort, and the one who graduated as BSc continues for MSc by his own effort.
- 15 part-time students have graduated from Tirana University.

The outputs in terms of the extent to which individuals trained are now working in the forest sector are as follows:

- 1 BSc (woman) is working in KFA.
- 15 graduated technicians (1 woman and 14 men) are working as forestry engineers in the forest sector (MAFRD, KFA and municipalities).
- 1 MSc student is now doing PhD in USA after having worked in the forestry sector in Kosovo.
- 3 BSc students continue their MSc studies (2 in Zagreb and 1 in Vienna).

4.1.2 Component 2: Regional private & decentralised forestry strengthening

4.1.2.1 Output area 2.a: Functional network of private and decentralised forestry in the region (focus on Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia)

Indicator:

- *Regional private and decentralised network set up.*

Cooperation among forest users and owners associations in the region has moved from some initial contacts and collaboration between users and owners associations in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia to the establishment of a Regional Centre for Forestry and Rural Development (REFORD) as a direct output of the Project in 2011. REFORD has been registered as an association in Macedonia and is managed through a secretariat in Skopje. It currently has 5 member associations: NAPFO/Kosovo, NAPFO/Macedonia, NAPFO/Bulgaria, NAPFO/Montenegro the National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania (NFCFP) Albania. Associations of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia are expected to become members in 2013 and there is interest also from Serbia to join.

REFORD is a networking organisation with activities mainly oriented towards information exchange and training on technical and economic forestry issues. REFORD has initially focused on technical forestry issues, which is logical considering its membership. Widening the focus more to the rural development part of its agenda should be a natural orientation.

Despite efforts made to that effect, REFORD has not acquired any substantive support from policy and decision makers in the respective member countries. This is partly because there is little experience in the region regarding networking among countries and partly due to limited strategic efforts made by REFORD itself in withdrawing sufficient attention from the high-level policy and decision makers. REFORD is oriented to users of forests through their associations, rather than to government actors. However, engaging the latter actors is important in order to increase their attention to regional aspects and to REFORD itself for sustainability purposes.

The sustainability of REFORD depends on the participation and sustainability of its member organisations and on the availability of future project support. At this stage there are no financial contributions to the running of REFORD from its members.

It is observed that the visibility of REFORD and its website is quite limited on the Internet ².

4.1.2.2 *Output area 2.b: Linkages within wider region (Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia) and with EU countries*

Indicator:

- *Linkage of network in the region and with other networks in EU.*

REFORD has expanded its network in the wider region as reflected in its current and expected membership. In addition, it has made some strategic linkages with other similar networks and organizations in the forestry and rural development sectors in Europe with the purpose of exchanging knowledge and experiences. Contacts and cooperation have been initiated with the following organizations with examples of the type of cooperation:

- Partnership for Rural Europe (PREPARE) - rural development.
- Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) - participation in regional events.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - cooperation on non-state forestry seminar.
- Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) – initial contacts on forest certification in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia.
- International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) - joint conference in Tirana in May 2013.
- International Land Coalition (ILC) – lobbying.
- United Nations (UN) - program on the year of the forest.

4.1.2.3 *Output area 2.c: Joint learning and development of forestry practices*

Indicator:

- *Cases of innovative forest practices shared and further development support at regional level.*

At the beginning of the project no sharing of forest practices at regional level took place. As the network was initialised, initial models were established in the "first line" countries of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. With the network expansion and formalization of cooperation, exchange of best practices among members has been enhanced. Some base models have been established in each country available for a joint learning, such as the case of farmers forestry and its management, fast growing species, safety issues through awareness and training, economics of small family forest, forest decentralization and management through participatory approaches and women inclusion, production of wood chips as energy source, activity of private licensed forestry engineers.

In addition, the "Green Crown" magazine is used to share knowledge, opinions and information and to advocate proposals of stakeholders to policy and decision makers.

² For instance, a Google search made in May 2013 on the keywords regional + forest + management + balkan found the REFORD website only at 35th place.

A vocational training centre has been established in Diber Region, Albania. Such centres are not yet established in the other countries.

An outcome within this result area has been an increased interest for cross-country learning and sharing of experiences. The experts of the core team of CNVP have been able to create a good reputation for REFORD and the subject areas in which experience have been shared have been interesting for the stakeholders at regional level.

4.1.2.4 Output area 2.d: Joint advocating and representing private and decentralised forestry issues

Indicator:

- *Advocating of private and decentralised issues at regional level (incorporation in legislation, policy, land issues).*

As a new organization, REFORD has made considerable progress in some areas, but it still remains relatively weak on advocacy at the regional level. However, signs of lobbying are visible in each individual country, especially on the issue of inclusion of forestry in rural development. Kosovo forest owners organized in associations have shown strong signs on lobbying for the recognition of private forest; the forest federation in Albania has a strong agenda on further decentralization of forest towards commune level and its users aiming eventually to privatisation; and in Macedonia the national association has succeeded to support its members on forestry subsidy schemes. Even so, it is clear that the incomplete legislation reform in the forestry sector (including with regard to both timber and non timber forest products) is a limiting factor when it comes to addressing forestry activities as part of rural development. Examples of such limitations include limited forest and pasture property rights in Albania, bureaucratic restrictions in Macedonia limiting free initiatives, and complicated permission procedures in relation to forestry management in Kosovo. Although efforts are made to address some common issues in the region like land tenure, and the recognition of forest and pasture land user rights, progress is considered limited.

Another critical issue in terms of regional advocacy is that advocacy for political reasons remains as an effort mostly at the national level.

It is considered an important outcome of the Project that due to lobbying and practical action efforts on the part of REFORD, the incorporation of forestry into rural development practices has been facilitated and enhanced.

4.1.2.5 Output area 2.e: Common issues are selected and jointly addressed in finding solutions

Indicator:

- *Number of common issues selected and supported at regional level (biofuels, vocation training, REDD).*

With the establishment of REFORD, activities were started on identification of common issues, development of training modules and practices in response to such issues, and sharing of knowledge and practices. Common issues include property recognition and registration, private and common management of forests, and technical ones such as safety at work, forest

fire management and thinning operations. According to the Team's assessment, the training modules are professionally developed and training events are thoroughly reported.

The first vocational training centre was established in Albania. In cooperation with associations the centre has started providing training courses, although the number of training courses has still been limited and so far focused on use of chainsaw and safety measures. Topics covered include economic service provision, and value chain development of wood biomass as an employment and income opportunity.

At the regional level, topics covering economic service provision and value chain development of wood biomass as an employment and income opportunity have also been developed.

4.1.2.6 Output area 2.f: Implementation of solutions for common issues are actively supported

Indicator:

- *Strategies, work plans for support of implementation of new practices.*

Member organizations have built some good experience on service provision for members. REFORD aims to make these experiences available in the region through sharing of information and expertise. Common issues identified and shared include service towards forest owners and users for sustainable forest management practices and the economic development of private and communal forest, implementation of agroforestry initiatives including fast growing species, and efficient use of forest biomass. Though the goal of REFORD is to provide services on information, training, technical forest management and economics, the organization seems to be more active in information sharing and training services, and less active in economics and business services provision.

REFORD members have prepared plans on economic service provision for private forest owners, including provision of seedlings, support for subsidy schemes application, and development of small-scale forest management plans, as well as association business plans.

REFORD has constructed its web page³ that is used to share information between member Associations.

The exchange of experiences and implementation of solutions for common issues, depends to a considerable extent on the funding sources available and/or generated by REFORD.

³ www.refordcentre.org

4.1.3 Component 3: Sustainable alpine development

4.1.3.1 Output area 3.a: The Sustainable Mountains Education Centre operated by the local NGO ERA in Peja is firmly rooted in the community and thus successfully offers on-going educational programmes for schools in and around the Accursed Mountain region, along with public awareness campaigns, study tours, youth summer camps and rural village projects

Indicators:

- *Procurement of necessary furniture and recruitment process for staff closed by hiring the best candidates.*
- *Environmental analysis of the building housing the Sustainable Mountains Education Center, and environmentally-friendly investments made to the Centre.*
- *The Sustainable Mountains Education Centre successfully introduced to the relevant stakeholders, partners and the citizens of Peja municipality and beyond.*
- *Sustainable Mountains Education Package successfully developed, including especially developed out-door environmental education material, all out-of-school educational activities of the Centre properly planned.*
- *Two 4-day Green Team trainings successfully implemented for 10-12 youth volunteers of the Centre.*
- *Number and quality of pupils, adults, visitors, local stakeholders participating in the out-of-school activities of the Sustainable Mountains Education Centre during regular environmental education activities.*
- *Successful organisation, planning, announcement and implementation of 2 times 3 summer camps for a minimum of 90 pupils divided over the age groups (8-10, 11-13, 14-16), 1 week per camp.*
- *Quality of the two 1-week Study Tours to the Netherlands and to Sweden in terms of satisfaction of the participants (lessons-learned) and opening up twinning opportunities.*

Establishment and introduction of the Centre

A five-year contractual relation is established between ERA and Peja Municipality on the use of the well-known local building site *Mulliri i Haxhi Zekes* (Haxhi Zeka's Mill), and the Sustainable Mountains Education Centre has been established there as an educational and attraction centre, particularly for the youth. The building that now houses the Centre has been renovated in an environment-friendly way, and furnished for office and Project activity purposes. Staff has been recruited, and volunteers, mostly young people from the area, have been engaged.

The Centre's running costs are covered through projects funded by donors, of which Sida is currently the most important. A critical issue observed by the Team relates to the sustainability of investments made and to be made in the centre as well as the sustainability of the Centre itself. The main concern is what will happen beyond the contracting period with the municipality and beyond current funding. The question is whether the Centre will keep the same function after the contracting period, and whether financial sources for maintenance and operational costs will be available.

It is planned to install a central floor-heating system based on the use of wood biomass use. Although the preparation works have started in 2011, the heating system is not yet in place, and the procurement process is still going on. It is the assessment of the Team, that one reason for this could be a lack of coordination at the sub-component level. Another reason

seems to be an actual hesitation to go through with this technical solution. It has been reported that ERA does not feel fully confident in making this major investment without having proper assurance for the supply of wood chips.

The suggested heating system is an innovative idea that has the potential, if successfully implemented, to provide both an example and valuable experience for other parts of the country. However, if it fails, the effect will be equally negative.

The Centre was officially opened in 2011. According to reports by ERA the number of visitors has increased from more than 2,000 visitors during 2011 to 2948 during 2012. The Centre has received quite some attention in media. However, ERA's website has a weak presentation on the CNVP Project in which it participates⁴.

Education, training and awareness

Several packages were developed under guidance of ERA and in cooperation with other experts covering outdoor environmental educational materials, cultural education materials dealing with waste educational package, Waterfall Trail education, outdoor kits etc.

A workshop on "Responsible Living Promoted through Comics" in Rugova with youth from Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo has been another output under this subcomponent.

In cooperation with GAP, literature was prepared for training and instruction, including the manual for ERA Green Team, Animal Track Colouring Sheet, and Summer Camp Handbook.

Training of Green Team members (youth volunteers) has exceeded targets. Training topics have served to strengthen the role of Green Team members as trainers on environmental issues, communication, responsibilities, empowerment, sustainable lifestyle, behaviour change and mountain outdoor skills & leadership etc. Use of social media for increasing the interest and approaching youth has been effective, as has the ToT approach, which may result in future multiplying skills outcomes.

More than 600 students of 11-15 years age have participated in out-of-school activities organized by the Centre. The out-of-school activities have varied from field visits to study sustainable forestry and tree planting, or using the Centre as a place for gathering and sharing ideas. These activities have apparently changed the behaviour of the participating students in an environmental-friendly direction.

Organization of summer camps seems to be a strong point of the component. 115 girls and boys of different age groups have participated in 8 summer camps over the course of two years, responding to the demand from children, and exceeding the target of 90 participants in 6 camps.

⁴ Citation from www.eradirect.org, May 2013: "We are pleased to announce the official launch of a new ERA project to establish a Sustainable Mountains Education Centre in Peja! Our project is funded through Sida-SNV forestry project. Details coming soon!!!"

Two study tours have been organized, one to the Netherlands and one to Sweden with participation of Green Team member and ERA staff. Visits to nature/environment/outdoor education centres and ecology excursions were included. A school class in Sweden for which the visitors held a lecture will pay a reciprocal visit to Kosovo as an outcome of the ERA visit.

4.1.3.2 Output area 3.b: The (environmental) civil society organisations located in and around the Accursed Mountains region have increased capacities, act more professionally, develop true leadership and have an increased impact – not least in using their democratic rights and opportunities and mobilizing and empowering inhabitants

Indicators:

- *Successful implementation of three 3-day workshop for local (environmental) NGOs active in the Accursed Mountains region in terms of quality of the training program and quantity and quality of the participants.*
- *Quantity and quality of the four Sustainable Development Events in the rural communities of the Accursed Mountains region.*
- *Guidelines, application forms, selection procedures and criteria for the Sustainable Alpine Development Initiatives are developed and distributed to all communities and (environmental) NGOs in the Accursed Mountains region, after which a minimum of 12 eligible proposals are received to allow for selection of the best 8-10 Initiatives aiming at Sustainable Alpine Development with a sustainable forestry focus in the project region.*
- *Local media coverage on successfully implemented Sustainable Alpine Development Initiatives; a success-stories booklet (A5, Albanian/Kosovar language with English summaries) written, printed and distributed to NGOs, community leaders, donor agencies, local authorities etc in the Accursed Mountains region, as well as to (potential) twinning partners in the Netherlands.*

ERA, with the assistance of TreeVelop and GAP, has implemented an activity aimed at increasing the capacity of local NGOs to handle projects at all stages. A training program and training materials were developed and coaching and two training courses were organized. NGOs were invited to apply for grant schemes for small projects and 11 grants were awarded, including on forestry development, eco tourism and wildlife development. The agreements were to finalize the projects within 2012, but only 1 was fully completed while 3 were reportedly close to completion. According to reporting up to April 2013, the remaining 10 are still to be completed. In spite of limited staff, it seems that ERA has devoted substantial time to support the implementation of the projects.

The results of this have been mixed. ERA has reported many difficulties related to communication, procurement and reporting, but it is also reported that at least some grantees have indeed developed intended skills.

Three minor “Sustainable Development Events” have been organised.

One expected output of the ERA component was local media coverage and the production of a success-stories booklet.

It is the understanding of the Team that there has not been adequate media coverage that would provide information to the public on successfully implemented initiatives; broadcast has

taken place only on grant signing ceremonies, and on two grant implementation activities, one on animal protection and one on afforestation.

The subcomponent on Sustainable Alpine Development Initiatives is delayed, hence the successes-stories booklet is currently only at a draft stage. Two international experts have been visiting during 2012 to collect stories, photos, and lessons learned as part of the booklet. Surprisingly it is reported by ERA that during this process “it has been challenging to collect information and stories from grantees, as they are hesitant to provide information”. The conclusion can be drawn that either the selection process was not adequate, or ERA needs to have stronger capacities for coaching, monitoring and evaluating local NGOs while implementing such initiatives.

4.1.3.3 Output area 3.c: The forests at the municipal level in the selected municipality are fulfilling the needs of local communities with safeguarding the natural resources and biodiversity

Indicators:

- *Municipality selected for local/decentralised level forest management based on clearly defined and described criteria.*
- *Forest management plan set up for selected municipality through implementation of a participatory approach. The forest management plan identifies users and areas. It describes needs and (economic) potential of forest products and services at the selected municipality, with defined sustainable forest management practices and related activities.*
- *Engaging local communities to implement the forest management plan and execute selected forest management activities described in the plan to increase local capacities for sustainable forest management.*
- *Value chain for fire wood analysis made resulting in recommendations for improvement in terms of energy efficiency, sustainable production and supply. Link established between forest owners and users.*

Junik Municipality was selected as a case for local/decentralised level forests management. Based on a participatory approach, management planning focussing on biomass production was carried out. Available biomass sources from forest, agroforestry, and industry were inventoried. The assessment comprised both technical and social-economical parts, analysing the potential of biomass production in a sustainable way, opportunities for increased employment and generation of incomes, livelihood improvements and reduction of illegal logging. Women and other vulnerable groups were included in consultations.

In the framework of exchange of experiences, the Albanian National Federation and the private owners of the area shared their experience on treatment of infected chestnut forests. In this case Kosovo forest owners were taught by the Albanian NCFPP to cut the infected branches and trees and burn them inside the forest, while the forest owners took it a step forward and proposed to produce charcoal inside the forest, profiting from the cut-infected branches/trees.

Value chain analysis related to wood biomass production for heating system use was done, which showed that there is such potential, which could decrease illegal logging, and increase employment opportunities and generation of incomes. It has been recommended by CNVP to implement this practically at Sustainable Mountains Education Centre, making use of

experience available from Macedonia (the Berovo school heating system). However, it seems that ERA has serious hesitation towards implementing this activity.

4.2 IMPACT

In the Forest Sector Annual Progress Report for 2012, both Sida and CNVP (or SNV) are identified as important collaborating partners, and the activities of the Project are well captured.

The Project has been in operation for just four years and large effects at the impact level cannot be expected. However, it is probable that some of the Project outputs, e.g. the various models developed by the Project for increased production of small-diameter trees from harvesting through coppice rehabilitation and pre-commercial thinning will have had a substantial impact on production levels already in 2013.

In the case of the regional component, no impact has been identified. However, it is assessed that the potential for achieving various impacts on forest management and production in the region through the regional knowledge sharing is quite high and it might occur rather soon if there is a new project that continues with the same activities as the current ones. At the current stage of development due to its short life span it is hard to mention any sustainable impact of REFORD.

No impacts of the Sustainable Alpine Development component have been reported.

5 MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

5.1 STAFF AND ORGANISATION

The CNVP part of the Project organization corresponds to the two main components. One part of the team is based in Kosovo with a main office in Prishtina and an additional smaller office in Peja, around where much of the Project activities are located. This is complemented with a regional set-up with staff in Macedonia (Skopje) and Albania (Tirana and Diber/Kukes). In all, 14 technical and 3 administrative staff are engaged in the Project, with total time input corresponding to around 10 full-time professional staff. Two staff members are senior coordinators (one for the Kosovo component and one for the regional component) and 8 are forestry advisors.

The professional profile of the staff is strongly oriented towards forestry; 10 out of the 14 staff members have a forestry background. The remaining 4 staff members represent additional specific competence in rural/economic/community development, the environment, institutional and organizational development, and advocacy.

Component 3 has a separate organisation and can be considered organisationally a sub-project to the main Project. It receives its funding from CNVP, reports to CNVP and is monitored by CNVP. Seven staff members are engaged in the Project, with different levels of time input. A number of Green Team volunteers are also engaged.

5.2 PROJECT STEERING AND MONITORING

A Project Steering Committee was established with appropriate government participation. There have been regular progress review meetings between Sida and CNVP.

5.3 MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The activity reporting made available to the Team by CNVP is exceptionally detailed, clear and well prepared. The result reporting is also of high quality.

It is observed that although the overall monitoring framework is well defined in terms of objectives and result indicators, very few quantitative targets have been specified.

The SMARTness⁵ of some of the objectives of Component 3 is not satisfactory. For instance, the objective “The (environmental) civil society organisations located in and around the Accursed Mountains region have increased capacities, act more professionally, develop true leadership and have an increased impact – not least in using their democratic rights and opportunities and mobilizing and empowering inhabitants” is too wide and cannot be expected to be achievable with the limited support provided through the Project to some of the CSOs. Nor is it specific, measurable or time bound.

5.4 REPORTS AND MANUALS

The Team has studied some reports and manuals that were provided by the Project. The conclusion is that they are useful and of high quality .

5.5 GENDER

In the three countries, women face difficulties in getting access to forest resources and capital that together with their weak economic power and commonly lack of proper education place them in a disadvantaged position to express their opinions and suggestions on forest management, to taking decisions and to having property rights.

Concerns include a lack of property rights, weak representation, difference between legal framework and customary/tradition situation, lack of awareness and knowledge among women on legal framework on property rights.

Women employment in a management positions in the public forestry sector is at a very low level. The same is true in the association structures, as there is a male dominance in the forest owner’s membership and leading structures. At the household level as well women hardly participate in any decision regarding forest management neither at family nor commune level.

The low participation of women in the forestry sector is not only related to the stereotype “forestry is a man related sector”, but as well reflects their educational preferences, lack of

⁵ SMART : Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound

employment opportunities, lack of know-how and qualifications, and difficulties to get access to the forest due to forest areas being located in remote areas. However, in the region there is a great potential for women involvement and active participation starting with the non-timber forest product activities, as is evident from the case of Albania.

Due to project efforts and increase of awareness, there is a growing tendency to include women in the process of participatory discussions on forest management plan preparation.

A special section of women in the association of Private Forest Owners in Istog, Kosovo has been established. This is due to the project's efforts in Kosovo to increase awareness of women on their role and it succeeded to involve them in management and decision made on forest in the area.

Women awareness and education should be key for their qualification and empowerment, such qualifications need to include their rights, access to capital, access to resources, technical and economical elements of the whole value chain for certain products like NTFP, chestnuts etc.

5.6 FINANCIAL REPORTING

The financial reporting is exceptionally specific, transparent and clear. The Team has received audit reports for 2009, 2010 and 2011. All these audit reports give an unqualified opinion on the financial statements.

It is observed that Sida has not made use of the provision in the agreement to carry out procurement audits, as a check on procurements.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 EFFECTIVENESS

In general, the project has achieved, or is well on its way to achieve, its objectives. It needs to be considered that a project of this nature is not a push-button project – it deals with and is dependent on many quite complex and interwoven processes, many of which are not under the Project's control. Seen in that context, it is assessed that the Project effectiveness is satisfactory.

6.2 IMPACTS

No impacts are reported or observed at this stage. However, as noted earlier, it is probable that some impact on the forest production may result from work on forestry management models carried out by the Project already later this year.

6.3 RELEVANCE

The Project is considered at least as relevant today as it was when it started. It is relevant to its main stakeholders, namely the private forest owners and the municipalities in Kosovo, and forest owners and users in the region, represented by their associations in the regional component of the Project. It is also relevant in relation to policy and actual developments in the forestry sector, in Kosovo and regionally. Finally, the Project is relevant from the perspective of the general goals and orientation of Swedish development cooperation, and judging from what can be expected to come out of the current development of a new strategy for Sida in the region it is most probably relevant also in that regard.

6.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Most of the Project activities and results are dependant on Sida funding and are as such not sustainable. However, the main implementing actors in the Project, notably CNVP, the local forest owners and users associations, ERA and their supporting organisations, and the municipalities are considered stable organisations that would be able to continue at least some of the work done and sustain some of the results produced under the Project even if this funding would not be there. For instance, a further development of the FOAs membership and capacity would lead to a better service provision, which in turn would further enhance the institutional base for the FOAs.

The fact that the Project Steering Committee has been established, and that the government considers the committee appropriate and useful means that there is a certain level of government ownership of the Project.

The Team is not convinced that the planned investment in the heating system at the Sustainable Mountains Education Centre will be sustainable.

6.5 EFFICIENCY

The total budget of the Project is 42 million SEK and it is assessed that these funds will be spent within the five-year period. Although the Project has been in operation only for just over 4 years, it has produced a substantial amount of relevant and valuable results. It is also a general assessment by the Team that the Project has been well organised and that the management is efficient. Even if there would be no continuation of the Project it is assessed that it has been worthwhile considering the outputs in relation to costs. If there will be a new project building on the current one, this assessment would be even more positive.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be mentioned that the Project is already working along the lines of many of the recommendations made by the Team below. In the case of such overlap, the recommendations should be seen as an accentuation of the importance of these activities.

7.1 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW PROJECT

It is recommended that a new Project be prepared and that the following general points be considered when preparing the new project:

- Continue doing what is done today. It is clear from the above sections in this report that the Project has been able to produce meaningful outputs and that effects should be forthcoming that will enhance the effectiveness of the Project.
- Expand to new and larger geographical areas. It will be possible to cover larger areas where replication of activities piloted successfully in the current Project can be facilitated at larger scale. This should not limit the explorative activities of a new Project, there are still areas for innovation and the Project should continue to work with that.
- Develop coherent and focused components. A project on forestry should deal mainly with forestry, and CNVP should focus on what they are good at – which is forestry. Environmental objectives can also be supported, but such activities should then be clearly forestry-oriented and designed in a fully participatory manner so as to support and add value to the main forestry-oriented core objectives of the Project.

7.2 DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

Sida may consider:

- Depending on the mode of support and procurement, to support both the preparations for, and the implementation of a follow-up project to the current one.
- Although the Team has found no reason to question any of the procurements that have been done during the Project, it is important from several aspects that the option to carry out external procurement audits allowed for in the Project agreement be used. A detailed procurement audit carried out by a competent external auditor commissioned by Sida would, in addition to being able to detect any act of corruption, serve as a precautionary measure against corruption and could also dispel any unfounded sweeping corruption allegations.

CNVP may consider:

In relation to local and national forest owners and users associations:

- Strengthen the Private Forest Owners Association at all levels. Train and increase the capacity of the PFOA. Support the facilities of the NAPFO (data base system, computers, office supplies).

- Facilitate the expansion and active engagement of the memberships of the associations.
- Promote the introduction of membership fees.
- Facilitate the access to subsidy schemes.
- Enhance project preparation capacity.
- Support the preparation of comprehensive strategic studies for enhancing the institutional sustainability of associations. The strategic studies should be preceded by a survey directed to all association members, which would serve to get an idea of the awareness and opinions of the members.
- Continue cooperation with the Swisspeace project in Northern Kosovo.

In relation to supporting decentralised forestry:

- Strengthen decentralization process and improve local capacities. Prepare manuals to develop the capacities within municipalities.
- Lobby for making benefits of forest management more directly available to municipalities and communities.
- Increase level of difficulty when piloting decentralised forestry.
- Utilise lessons learned and continue to lobby strongly for changes in policy and legal frameworks.
- Economic development. Support to implementation of the management plans considering forest, charcoal, bioenergy, NTFP opportunities to increase employment. The project should consider even more NTFP activities and tree species that are considered as fruit trees but are forest i.e. chestnuts, hazelnuts. Focus on the support for establishment and/or strengthening of Small and Medium Enterprises of Forestry and NTFP. Prepare and support the strategy for cultivation/collection, processing, marketing and trade of the NTFP. Study on value chains of NTFP.

In relation to regional activities:

- Extend and Strengthen REFORD.
- Introduce annual membership fees for REFORD members.
- Study administrative possibilities for introducing a rotational system for the REFORD secretariat, e.g. management by national associations.
- Keep REFORD strictly as a light secretariat.
- Enhance visibility and vitality of the REFORD website in order to attract visitors and increase communication and exchange, through e.g. discussion forums, search-engine optimization, and more active up-dates of documentation and information.
- REFORD's web page can also be more dynamic and enriched through introduction of the concept of a "*virtual fair*" where every organization should list services and products offered and services and products in need. As an example REFORD members can start a cooperation based on NTFP market search, marketing strategies and Business to Business (B2B) approach among member countries, that will lead to the development of a regional market.
- Involve a wider spectrum of organisations, not only forestry ones but also environmental, rural development ones in mountain and/or marginal areas.
- Develop a structured strategy to attract the attention of policy and decision makers in each respective country based on the progressive cases generated, through involvement of the local and central government bodies in exchange of experiences, public hearings,

conferences on common regional issues and best practices applied in the region and beyond.

- Based on key concerns and proposals for solutions, REFORD should come up with resolutions addressed to each country's respective government.
- Enhance business orientation of associations.
- An exchange of experiences among women in the region should be a future effort of REFORD. Albania is ahead on gender issues and its progressive examples can easily be shared in Kosovo. As well, cooperation among women groups and producer's groups like "nut clubs" that are present in Albania can be established and they can work together in terms of technical aspects, market search, trade, processing of products, etc.
- Extension of the network within the countries including other relevant organizations. A stronger cooperation is needed with local government units, NGOs, and national institutions; forestry issues need to be linked with a wider range of natural resources, with rural development and livelihood improvement for rural communities.
- REFORD should conduct a thorough analysis on knowledge and availability of various experts in forestry, natural resources, rural development, and gender issues; assess their capacity and through official certification establish a core team of experts that can provide "on-duty call" quality services.
- Establishment of other training centres in the region is recommended as well, where their location, facilities, specialized subjects (training themes) will be based on specifics of each country. These centres is recommended to follow already existing cases of such type in Europe and have exchange programs with them in terms of organization, management, methodology of training preparation and delivery, etc.
- A search engine for project funding could be established, information on results to be made available for all members, and capacity to be built on project proposal writing.
- Each of the member countries should continue to establish and exchange more models suitable for replication. Such models could be effectively used in the training centres for a wide spread experience in other countries.
- The vocational training centres are recommended to become a learning environment not only for foresters, they need to broaden the target audience with youth, women, students, school children and not just foresters.
- Modules to be generated in each country and topics to be covered in the vocational training centres should include forestry, natural resources, nature conservation, tourism, biomass production and efficient use, Non Timber Forest Products (knowledge and demonstration on their values and use), agroforestry practices, value chain and economic analysis, organization of marketing and trade of products, etc.
- Efforts should be made so that advocacy would become a regional and more powerful mechanism for inclusion of forestry in the rural development dimension; increase of the role and rights of farmer's organizations in forest management; to deal with and resolve property issues in forest and pasture areas, as well as resolve land fragmentation issues that are a limiting factor for effective and efficient use of forest and pasture areas.
- One of the considerations regarding the joint solution of common issues is the need for generalization of such issues, bringing them into the regional focus without neglecting individualities of each of the participating countries considering environmental, geographical, soil conditions, as well as social aspects, presence of ethnic groups, etc.
- One of the key recommendations in regard to REFORD service provision in support to solving common issues relates to the shift of the organization's strategy more toward a business oriented support. Each individual organization itself (member of REFORD) should

be more business oriented providing paid services for their members or offering inputs/services where contribution will be embedded into the input/service price.

- REFORD could play a great role in lobbying on sensitive issues that are conditional to further progress like property transfer, cadastral registration, need for land consolidation, involvement of forestry measures into rural development programs, renewable energy as an alternative source.

ERA may consider:

In relation to a new project

- If there is an agreement to continue cooperation in a new project, develop the proposal in close coordination with CNVP.
- To align the result chain with core project results (private/decentralized forestry and regional knowledge sharing) and to explore how value can be added to these.
- More focussed activities, with a clear emphasis on forestry.

In relation to its current project activities:

- In order to sustain investments, it is recommended that the Municipality commitment (to continue keep the same perspective on the use of the centre) first should be guaranteed before further investments are made.
- ERA should attract a larger number of school students in the centre, both volunteers and participants in the education process and activities.
- In its own strategy on its future sustainability, ERA should introduce the system of small admission fees for visitors and set activities that will generate incomes to be able to cover its running and maintenance costs.
- There is need to speed up operations and have a better coordination between actors. A better coordination at this stage will increase trust on future coordination and cooperation between ERA, Municipality and private forest owners association as biomass suppliers.
- It is strongly recommended that the association of private forest owners and Municipality should undertake, by contract, all measures to permanently guarantee biomass supply according to needs, otherwise the whole activity will be at risk and should not be implemented. The success of this first case is very important, as later on it could become an example for other public buildings as well as private ones to replicate the model and a great opportunity for the association itself to generate incomes from forest “wastes”. On the other side failure will have a negative impact on the whole chain (individuals, association, technology - use of biomass).
- All actors need to be engaged and fully committed to implement the whole chain from production of biomass to its use for heating of the centre. If this is not the case, the activity should be dropped in order to avoid wastage of funds.
- In addition to efforts made so far the centre should be more present in the electronic information sites. It can be more vital and attractive for instance if it is linked with the REFORD web page and become part of the virtual fair to be constructed as per recommendation on REFORD (component 2).
- ERA is encouraged to continue tackle their target group (school students and youth), and use attractive methods, however more literature is recommended to be published for a

wider spectre of youth education on natural resources, nature beauty and its sustainable preservation and use, where forest should be the main focus.

- In cognation with the project scope, it is recommended that ERA should try to approach more of the young generation coming from forest families, as this will serve more to strengthen the ties with the project, with the forestry sector and environmental aspects.
- The centre is recommended to attract more people; especially parents, community leaders, teachers, and that way establish a mutual understanding among generations regarding the importance of such out-of-school activities.
- ERA is recommended to search funding sources for such activities and one of the ways is including small charges for participants.
- It is recommended an improvement on the communication between donor and grantee with clear roles and responsibilities and strictly following guidelines and respecting reporting and payment schedule.
- There is need for further training/coaching the NGOs in order to enable them to handle the projects properly.
- ERA's capacity needs to be further developed to enable ERA handle a close monitoring on progress during project implementation.
- A wider inclusion of community is required in such activities, including families (man and women, elderly, etc.) as the events should be oriented towards the entire community.
- More efforts to be addresses toward capacity building of the local NGOs enabling them to properly implement projects.
- ERA to draw lessons from this first experience with grantees in terms of project management; analysis of the entire process would help identify the weak points.
- Increase the awareness of the local government/local communities on the importance of decentralization process.
- Increase awareness of municipalities to realise the real value of forest under their jurisdiction. Experience gained/success stories from pilot communes to be shared with other municipalities at a national level workshop, where policy and decision makers should participate.
- As there is a legal ban on some forest interventions, it is recommended to:
 - draw lessons learned and lobby to high-level decision makers to reflect changes in the law.
 - need to have piloting municipalities in more difficult cases using the experience gained and lessons learned from Junik.
- The forestry management plan model should clearly define the boundaries of forest for use, conservation, and protection.

Additional general recommendations

- Support to be provided for the initiation and extension of the government incentive/subsidy schemes in support to forestry sector, and abandoned lands prone to erosion.
- Lobby and take action in favour to change forest law articles related to tax and tariffs collection and distribution/re-investment to the sector.
- Support the resolving of recognition of the property right issues

- Forestry and Rural Development. Support to be provided on the Preparation of the Municipality Development Plans focusing on forest, employment opportunities and community livelihood improvements. This needs to consider biomass production, tourism development, environmental impact, water supply, etc. Use of the biomass as a source of energy.
- Increase the capacity of extension service to enable this service provide assistance for farmers: i.e. technical assistance; social and economic analysis; prepare applications for donor projects, government subsidy schemes, EU funded schemes. Public extension through civil servants and private extension through association advisors.
- Support to marginalized groups, remote rural areas, ethnic minorities, women, youth. Further strengthen gender component and gender issue in the forestry should be part of the experience exchange and cooperation at the regional level.
- Establish training and education centre for farmers (infrastructure, human capacities). Provide further expertise and knowledge to change the mentality and practices.
- Establish Forestry cadastre as in the case of agriculture land and vineyards. This will help the registration of forest family farms. The register can be linked as well with the advisory services.

ANNEX 1 MAIN REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Project Proposal for Strengthening Sustainable Private and Decentralised Forestry, Kosovo and its Region, 2008-2012.

Sustainable Alpine Development, Kosovo SNV-Sida Proposal

Annual Project reports for CNVP Project for 2009 to 2012

Sida SNV Kosovo and Regional Forestry Project, Baseline and results up to April 2013

Annual Project reports for Sustainable Alpine Development Project for 2011 and 2012

Forest Sector Annual Progress Report 2012

Strategy for Forestry in Kosovo 2010 -2020

ANNEX 2 LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

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Evaluation of Support to Private and Decentralised Forestry in Kosovo, 2009-2013

Close to 46% of Kosovo is covered by forest, and forestry constitutes a financial basis for many families. Sweden has supported the forestry sector in Kosovo since 2004. The Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) and its' Kosovo Forest Agency (KFA) were supported in the process of drafting a Forest Sector Development Strategy 2010-2020. A project supporting the development of private and decentralised forestry in Kosovo was initiated in 2008. In 2013 an evaluation to assess the results of the project was conducted. The conclusions of the evaluation were very positive and Sida was recommended to continue the support.

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