Regional Newsletter
FALL WINTER 2016–2017

FLEG Completion: What’s Next?
pp. 2, 4, 11

Do You Know What a Local Forest is?
p. 6

Captivating Videos Tell Stories of 7 Forest Heroes
p. 15

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The content, findings, interpretations, and conclusions of this publication are the sole responsibility of the FLEG II (ENPI East) Programme Team (www.enpi-fleg.org) and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Implementing Organizations.
Forests have a pivotal role in the resilience of our societies and economies. Unfortunately, in the absence of a strong rule of law, the “cut and run” behavior very often brings short-term revenue. Furthermore, in poor, forest-dependent communities the choice between revenue and sustainability is not so easy to make although the latter remains fundamental for people’s well-being. But these two important goals — living better and living greener — should not be contradictory. They can go hand-in-hand.

Innovation (in technology but also in behaviour) brings effective solutions. For example, due to help offered by the European Union, rural communities in Armenia could test a new approach: briquetting and energy-efficient stoves. Within a pilot project, 15 rural households in three target communities of Armenia’s Tavush region received free of charge energy-efficient stoves and wood briquettes for heating. The briquettes are produced from wood and agricultural residuals in a community briquette production unit. This activity, carried out as part of the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Programme’s phase two, helps to demonstrate multiple benefits of environmentally-friendly livelihoods. The target communities are highly dependent on forests: although they have gas supply, up to 90% of households use fuelwood for heating and cooking because of affordability concerns. There is an upward trend of wood use for heating that the Programme counts to substantially reduce. Besides, briquetting will offer new employment opportunities and additional sources of income.

This is just one example with many other ones being available in Azerbaijan and Georgia, and in other Eastern Neighbourhood countries. They show that sustainable energy, waste management, and forest protection can go hand-in-hand and be of human scale, helping communities to improve their wellbeing in a climate-smart way.

The benefits of sustainable forest management are rooted in efficient policies and effective administration. This is what was intended to achieve with the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) I and FLEG II programmes. They have helped to improve national forest laws, facilitate stakeholder dialogue, increase the level of forest managers’ professionalism, as well as complete analytical studies and pilot projects. This has also led to a higher level of public awareness.
To the extent possible, FLEG has enabled the beneficiary countries to act but there is still a long way ahead. The growing pressures on the environment mean that the quest for sustainably must be pursued.

Supporting better forest management is one of EU’s global priorities and the EU is willing to offer further expertise and collaboration on forest law enforcement and governance to the partner countries. More generally, the EU is committed to further develop and strengthen its cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries, in all areas of mutual interest. The EU’s Global Strategy and the Revised European Neighbourhood Policy both call on the need to focus on increasing the resilience of EU’s neighbours.

Together, we aim at bringing tangible benefits to citizens. The recent Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change reinforced the need for such an approach. At this meeting, held on 17-18 October 2016, a clear vision for joint action was agreed. Ministers adopted the Declaration on Cooperation on Environment and Climate Change in the Eastern Partnership. It calls for joint action enabling a new model of growth that is based on energy and resource efficiency, business opportunities and jobs stemming from green economy, and climate neutrality. The Declaration underlines the role of good governance, with a special focus on evidence-based policy-making and law enforcement. It calls to integrate environment and climate-related goals into all policy areas and sectoral programmes. Ministers tasked the Panel on Environment and Climate Change to develop an Action Plan that would translate the Declaration into specific targets and goals. No doubt, protecting forest should be part of this plan.

At the same time, protecting forests should be part of our individual "action plans", be it in remote forest-dependent communities or in capital cities. This is part of the Commission’s plans, and hopefully of all partner countries’ plans too.
The final Steering Committee meeting was held in Brussels, Belgium on December 12-13, 2016.

In his opening remarks, Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit, European Commission, emphasized that “the European Union is committed to developing and strengthening relations with the Eastern Neighborhood countries. Illegal logging and associated trade are causing significant losses, including negative effects on health and economy, and are also causing a loss of biodiversity. The EU has supported FLEG over several years due to the Program’s benefits for citizens, especially in local communities.”

VOICES

Valerie Hickey  
Practice Manager, the World Bank

“This has been our keystonework related to natural resources and their governance. The World Bank has been committed to ending poverty. And in a region that holds over 20% of the world’s forests, we certainly cannot think about the well-being and resilience of the bottom 40% of the population without thinking about how we can make better use of the natural capital of the forest”.

VOICES

Shamil Huseynov  
Representative of the National Parliament of Azerbaijan and chair of FLEG II National Program Advisory Committee in Azerbaijan

“All countries created national advisory committees. This committee has become the most successful forestry structure in Azerbaijan, which brings together government, NGOs, donors, international organizations, and other stakeholders”.

During the meeting, Tuukka Castrén, Team Leader of the Program from the World Bank, presented some key elements of the work done in 2016. Among other achievements, the Program...

- made inputs to country forestry sector programs: e.g. key FSC principles were reflected in the new draft Forest Code of Georgia;
- facilitated study tours to the EU Member States and bilateral dialogue: Belarus learned best practices from Finland and Germany, Ukraine from Poland, and Azerbaijan from Russia;
- helped the young generation to better understand the forests and built community awareness;
- promoted the establishment of new protected areas and forest biodiversity conservation.

Since the Program was launched in 2012, FLEG II has published over 100 research papers, reports and textbooks on its website www.enpi-fleg.org, which were downloaded over 10,000 times and thousands of copies were also distributed in print. The website with all the materials will continue to be available for 10 years after the Program is over.
The participants discussed the Program’s key long-term achievements that will continue to benefit the region after its completion. The following are the six key ideas highlighted by most speakers:

1. The structures that FLEG has created — such as the National Program Advisory Committees (NPACs) — helped the institutional reform process, and provided independent and valuable data at the right moment to the right people.

2. FLEG has contributed to making forest management and governance more transparent.

3. FLEG has fostered collaboration between local communities and the forestry sector and has facilitated community participation in the sector for sustainable forest management.

4. FLEG has boosted intersectoral collaboration and partnership of national governments with international organizations such as the EU and the World Bank.

5. Finally, FLEG has increased collaboration between neighboring countries on forest management.

6. All countries provided their sustainability plans and exit strategies, which ensure the long-lasting impact of FLEG achievements beyond 2016. Due to the constant paradigm shift in the sector and the scale and growth of the challenges that forests in the region are facing, the work started by FLEG — despite considerable results already achieved — is only half ready and needs to go on.

**VOICES**

Angela Bularga
FLEG II Program Manager from the European Commission

“Economic pressures, needs to diversify, and pressures from climate change are growing. For making development resilient, it is important to make a stronger case for environmentally sustainable, lawful opportunities of forests’ economic use. The idea that the sector would benefit, if non-compliance was unprofitable, needs to be at the core of forest policies and management. We need to make happen an economy of compliance, an economy of sustainable forestry”.

Yuri Marchuk
National FLEG Focal Point for Ukraine; Chair, Department for Dendrology and Forest Selection, National University for Bio Resources and Natural Resource Management

“The most important thing is to form an environment where society is ready to take the correct decision. FLEG has prepared the “fertile soil” for taking these correct decisions in Ukraine”.

**LEARN MORE:**

**CONTACT:**
Ms. Vladislava Nemova [World Bank]
vnemova@worldbank.org
The application of the term and concept of local forests is very diverse in the region,” says Stefan Michel, IUCN-FLEG Regional Consultant who authored the report on Governance of Local Forest in the ENPI East Countries and Russia. “However, a common finding is that the absence of a clear definition can hinder the effective management of the forests, which represent an important economic resource to local communities.”

In the Soviet times, most forests were administrated by centrally-ruled state enterprises. The Soviet system also identified some forests of local importance, which were administrated by agricultural cooperatives and state farms, called kolkhoz and sovkhoz. Usually, those forests were located close to settlements and all products and profits obtained from them belonged to the collective farms.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, countries went through a phase of reorganization. Most of the countries do not mention local forests in their legislations, with the exception of Georgia, where the new Forest Concept acknowledges the existence of forests of local importance and of local forest managers, but falls short in clarifying the role of local communities in the administration.

In spite of the absence of a definition, local entities, such as villages and households, are still partially involved in some aspects of forest management, especially in areas where Soviet agricultural units previously existed.

In Ukraine, for example, some of the former Soviet kolkhoz and sovkhoz areas are managed by “communal” forestry enterprises, which, however, are actually administered at district region level, and the local communities do not have a stake in their governance. Community forestry programs are officially included in the Armenian policy, but Hayantar, the state forestry agency, does not encourage further development of community forest management.

FLEG II encourages the adoption of a definition of local forests in each country and the development of specific governance systems of these forests.

**Do You Know What a Local Forest is?**

FLEG II study investigates the definition of “Local Forest.”

**Quick Fact**

In this study, local forests were defined as forests located in close distance to rural and urban settlements and of special importance for the wellbeing of the respective local people in terms of provision of forest resources and ecosystem services.
LEG II created the Forest Information Database, which consists of two complementary parts: the Forest Resource Center — a unified system for forest-related information including publications and legal documents; and the Geo Forest Portal — an online platform with interactive maps dedicated to different topics concerning the Georgian forest sector.

The portal allows public officials, businesses, NGOs, researchers, and the general public to find accurate, comprehensive, and well-organized information about the Georgian forestry sector.

“We reorganized the data to produce different thematic maps, which we always keep up-to-date,” said Levan Natsvlishvili, IT specialist who collaborates with the FLEG team in carrying out this activity. “For example, we created maps about the degree of deforestation, the availability of firewood resources, and the spread of forest pests and diseases. Each map is an interactive display with Google base maps and several zoom levels, and it is very intuitive to use.”

The project goes beyond the creation of thematic maps. The added value of the portal is reflected in its useful information on the forest sector, including job opportunities, contacts of organizations and donors, relevant national and international legislation, publications, manuals, guidelines, best practices, and much more.

“The portal is constantly updated and the information flow enables the transfer of knowledge from the national — even international — level to the local one, and vice versa,” said Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG II Program Coordinator for IUCN in Georgia. “This tool and the know-how needed to develop it are extremely useful for policy-makers who use the portal’s information to help make more informed decisions and then monitor the implementation of these decisions.”

In the months of June and July 2016, FLEG II held a series of training events for officials from the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, National Forest Agency, and Agency of Protected Areas with the aim to introduce them to the systems of WebGIS (Geographic Information System Resource) and SDI (Spatial Data Infrastructure).

“Thanks to the training, I feel much more comfortable with using WebGIS,” said Zura Shoshiashvili from the department of Forest maintenance and reforestation, NFA. “I learned how to process data and interpret these data. The GeoPortal will enhance the work of my forest management unit significantly.”

**LEARN MORE:**

**Forest Information Database:**

**CONTACT:**
Ms. Sandra Caya [IUCN]
sandra.caya@iucn.org
Improving Communal Forest Management in Ukraine

FLEG II facilitates the dialogue between communal forestry enterprises and local authorities

Between May and July 2016, a series of training events was held in the Ukrainian districts of Mykolaiv (Lviv region), Monastyryska (Ternopil region), and Malyn (Zhytomyr region) by FLEG II on the crucial issue of communal forest management.

In Ukraine, after the fall of the Soviet Union, entities called communal forest enterprises were created to manage the forests previously managed by agricultural cooperatives and state farms, called kolkhoz and sovkhoz. However, part of the former Soviet forests of local importance fell under the administration of state forest enterprises or of local councils. In some cases, these forests were even left without any management. This varied system of forest management lacks clarity and generates confusion among the administrators.

“Over the years, we have observed how public officials often clash with the enterprises over the management of the forests located in their territories, sometimes even by accusing them of carrying out unauthorized logging activities,” said Roman Volosyanchuk, FLEG II Program Coordinator for IUCN in Ukraine. “The lack of knowledge on the legislation and the legal loopholes make difficult to define the respective responsibilities of the stakeholders and represent real obstacles to effective governance. Therefore, we felt the urgency to address this long-standing problem by organizing training events.”

During the seminars, FLEG experts Alla Oborska and Andriy Zhyla illustrated the legislative acts that regulate the relations between the different stakeholders of the sector and explained how to enforce the local communities’ rights of forest management.

As a result of this series of training events, the FLEG team has prepared an information guidebook.

“The guidebook gives a historical overview of the entity of communal forests and the laws that regulate them,” said Zhyla. “This tool also goes into the details of relevant matters such as the control over logging activities and the taxation of communal forestry enterprises. We also enriched the guidebook with the outputs produced by the participants during the seminars. The aim is to facilitate the understanding of this complicated topic to the public authorities.”

FLEG Helps Assess Forest Management in Ukraine

A new study can help the government develop state policies and identify priority goals

An “Overall assessment of the forest management in Ukraine”, experts analyzed the condition and dynamics of the system of executive agencies responsible for forest management. This analysis shows that the forest sector reform requires first of all a functional review of the State Agency of Forest Resources of Ukraine. Despite the consistent lowering of the status of this central forest authority, it is still responsible for the management of 12% of all state land and over 400 state enterprises.

Even though the problems faced by the State Agency of Forest Resources are the most urgent to solve, FLEG’s assessment of forest management on the basis of the World Bank criteria also revealed operational challenges and problems among all other participants of the forestry sector.
FLEG II Publishes a New Educational Manual for Teachers

The publication helps improve the quality of forest activities at Russian schools

LEG in Russia decided to produce an educational manual for school teachers who are leading forest-related activities to increase professional awareness of young people who are considering working in forestry and going to forestry colleges and universities. Teachers of technical colleges and universities also showed an interest in the new publication.

The teaching manual consists of eight modules: “Forest and people”; “Trees are the foundation of the forest”; “The flora and fauna of forests”; “Ecological and social services provided by forests”; “Forest restoration”; “Protection of forests from fires”; “Forest protection and sanitary safety”; “Participation in the Podrost All-Russia Youth Contest”.

All modules have the same structure. In the first part, teachers are presented with the information that they need to give the required amount of knowledge on the topic to the students. In the second part, the teachers are provided with instructions on how to conduct practical lessons on the topic on forest sites.

LEARN MORE:
The full material (in Russian and a summary in English):
http://www.enpi-fleg.org/docs/forest-and-forestry-school-teachers-manual/

VOICES

Anatoly Petrov
Professor, Doctor of Economy, President of the Russian Institute of Continuous Education in Forestry

“I have learned from my work that efficient higher and professional education doesn’t depend only on the quality of the educational establishment. A lot depends on how conscious is the choice that the students make when they decide to study forestry. School forest activities, which this manual aims to improve, help students make informed choices about their future profession.”

CONTACT:
Ms.Marina Smetanina [World Bank]
msmetanina@worldbank.org

New Forestry Study Programs Launched in Regional Colleges

Students of Touz and Shamakha district technical colleges in Azerbaijan will learn to sustainably manage forests

The methodological councils of both colleges approved the use of two module programs, Forestry Studies and Forest Inventory and Forest Planning, in the Forest and Forest Park Management discipline.

The programs developed with the support of FLEG II and the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan focus on the sustainable forest management, preservation of biodiversity, negative anthropogenic impact and public participation in sustainable forest use.

Thanks to the new study programs, the current and prospective students will learn how to improve and restore forest parks; carry out forest fund inventory; develop the required documentation, and control the use of forest sites.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms.Oluna Hajiyeva [World Bank]
hajiyeva@worldbank.org

http://www.enpi-fleg.org/docs/forest-and-forestry-school-teachers-manual/
Belarusian Foresters Visit Germany to Explore Practices of Sustainable Forest Management

Eight forestry experts explored German forest management to integrate best practices in Belarus.

First deputy Minister of Forestry of Belarus Alexander Kulik, shares his impressions from the trip: 'There are some common issues, such as forest diseases and certification. And I want to note that half of the forests in Germany are private, but any citizen has the right to visit them.”

Interaction with local communities is one of the most complicated forest management issues. In Germany, the forest is the people's heritage, and the local communities are monitoring what is happening in forest areas. The local population is informed about each forest management event at least three times: before beginning, in the process and upon the completion of work. The public is mainly informed through articles in local newspapers or through tours to the forest.

“I hope we have managed to convey the main idea: certification, naturally, plays a significant role. However, it does not give us more forests or better forests.

In this regard, it is now important to adapt to climate change, and to enable the possibility to use wood as a sustainable product,” said Sabine Schreiner, Forest Experts Program coordinator.

At the workshop, special attention was paid to firefighting. Head of the Department of Forestry of the Nordsachsen District Administration said that forest fires are video surveyed 8-10 hours a day in the fire season. Upon the detection of a fire, a firefighting team goes to the location. However, there are no professional firefighters there, as teams are formed from trained volunteers.

During the five days, the participants were able to see the full range of forestry activities, from logging and reforestation to the construction of infrastructure and protection of forests from fires and pests. At the end of the trip, the Memorandum on further cooperation between the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus and Forest Experts Program was signed.
The Georgian team has released a report “Assessment of Forest Landscape Restoration Perspectives in Georgia”.

“The report is intended to be the follow-up action to the Forest Dependency Studies that were carried out in 4 selected regions in Georgia during 2014-2015,” said Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG II Program Coordinator for IUCN in Georgia. “Fully-functioning forest ecosystems contribute to the economic and social development of rural communities, as demonstrated by the Forest Dependency Studies. For this reason, we now want to take a step forward and work towards the application of the concept of Forest Landscape Restoration in selected areas of the country.”

“Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) is not about just ‘planting trees’, but it entails different processes such as agroforestry, wildlife reserves protection, and riverside plantings, which must be planned and conducted in close collaboration with local stakeholders,” said Richard Aishton, FLEG II Program Coordinator for IUCN. “Because of the relations we have built with all the actors of the forest sector throughout the FLEG Program, from top-level officials to heads of small villages and simple citizens, and because of the experience we have developed, we believe that we could conduct the transition from forest dependency analysis to a more comprehensive approach like FLR.”

The first step was to assess FLR perspectives, which required the collection of a variety of data, such as geospatial information, digital cadastral data, and maps of land use and forest stands. Secondly, degraded areas were identified and a proposed restoration plan was drawn up.

“This preliminary analysis was followed by the most crucial part of the activity: the engagement of key stakeholders, especially local authorities and local representatives of the national forestry agency,” explained Kavtarishvili. “We held a series of workshops in the four municipalities we selected, which are Tianeti, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, and Chokhatauri, with the aim to illustrate the concept of FLR and discuss the village problems related to landscape degradation. We found the participants very willing to collaborate.”

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Sandra Caya [IUCN]
sandra.caya@iucn.org
Optimization and efficiency. These are the keywords of the new system of valuation of forest resources devised by FLEG II for the Ministry of Forestry (MoF) of Belarus. This tool not only will allow to assess the value of forest resources more accurately, but will also unveil the socio-economic functions of these resources in rural settings.

The collaboration between FLEG II and the MoF began with the analysis of the two state systems of evaluation already in place, the State Forest Cadastre and the State Assessment of Condition of Forests.

"After many years of coexistence, the two parallel systems, based on different evaluation approaches, have turned out to be outdated and inefficient: they partly overlap and lead to confusion in the interpretation of the data," said Valiantsin Krasouski, engineer and FLEG II consultant who conducted the analysis. "In addition, neither of the systems complies with the requirements of the new Forest Code, which will enter into force in 2017."

The comprehensive assessment carried out by FLEG II triggered the decision to create a brand-new system that would replace the existing ones. This unified system would bring considerable benefits to the MoF, such as cutting the management costs and improving the data quality.

“Our work consisted in combining the old systems to obtain a more efficient one that is based on international standard approaches,” said Krasouski. “We also optimized the procedures to fill in the inventory with the aim to get more relevant and reliable data.”

Another important aspect of the system set up by the FLEG II team consists in a more accurate assessment of the value of non-timber resources. The new tool will include provisions for valuing the phenomena of climate change mitigation, recreation, energy, water catchment, biodiversity conservation, and rural livelihood development potential.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Sandra Caya (IUCN) sandra.caya@iucn.org
Ukrainian Timber Export Ban: To Be or Not to Be?

On January 1, 2017, the ban came into force for pine exports, and back in 2015 for other species.

The proposal of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the Ukraine-EU summit in Brussels in November 2016 sparked a massive discussion in the Ukrainian society. He suggested that Ukraine lifted the 10-year ban on the export of unprocessed timber in exchange for getting an EU tranche of 600 million euros. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko promised to lift the ban.

The ban was adopted to decrease logging, stimulate the economy (by redirecting previously exported unprocessed timber to local timber processing companies) and therefore create new jobs for Ukrainians. Has it succeeded?

FLEG experts produced an 80-page analytical report, which analyzes the history of introducing similar bans in other countries, assesses the influence of the ban on solving modern forestry problems of Ukraine and predicts its consequences for different economy sectors.

The report concludes that even though short-term, the ban helps the wood processing industry and small and medium business, long-term the ban negatively affects forestry.

However, FLEG report suggests lifting the ban only after introducing alternative measures. Mikhail Popkov, the author of the report, proposes specific steps aimed at making the trade more transparent and regulated, such as registering timber exporters in the Chamber of Commerce and confirming the availability of processing capacity and jobs and the payment of taxes (please see the report for the full list of short-term and long-term measures).

After the ban was introduced, a significant increase in the production volume (22%) happened only for sawmill products. Production of plywood, particle board and joinery fell by 4-8% (see the Chart). There has also been a sharp increase in illegal logging, as evidenced by the fact that timber exports significantly exceed the official production volumes. In the first quarter of 2016, over 320 thousand cubic meters of wood were logged illegally, which is comparable with the volume of the official production.

The report has been used in multiple roundtables and high-level meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) and timber processing associations.

LEARN MORE:

The report (in Russian):
http://www.fleg.org.ua/docs/1648

CONTACT:
Mr. Oleg Lystopad [World Bank]
oleg.lystopad@enpi-fleg.org

The chart shows the production volumes of sawmill products, plywood, particle board, and joinery in cubic meters for the periods January–April 2015 and January–April 2016.
Identify 7 Forest Animals and Their Tracks

On the World Animal Day, FLEG II launched a new quiz

The World Animal Day is an international day of action for animal rights and welfare celebrated annually on October 4, the feast day of Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

Animals and forests have a mutually beneficial relationship. Forests provide habitat, food and shelter to a vast array of animals. 80% of the world’s terrestrial biodiversity is located in forests. Animals also help the forest: they pollinate the plants, disperse the seeds, fertilize the soil, and serve multiple other functions.

To celebrate the World Animal Day, FLEG II launched a new quiz, where you can try to identify 7 forest animals and their tracks.

1. Which track belongs to a bear?

2. Which one is a dormouse?

3. Which one is a lynx?

Learn More:
Do the full quiz at http://animals.enpi-fleg.org/

Contact:
Ms. Masha Vinokurova [World Bank]
vimaria@yandex.ru
Forest Heroes series is dedicated to people who take care of the forest and save it for future generations. All Forest Heroes have something else in common: they have all worked in partnership with FLEG II. The Program, funded by the European Union, is completing its work this year. The Forest Heroes series is one of the ways to talk about the work done over the 5 years since the launch of FLEG II.

"With this series of short videos we wanted to show the harmony between human and nature, highlight once again the role of forest in the lives of many of us and last but not least we wanted to recognize those heroes who support sustainable development. We tried to show the breathtaking beauty of FLEG II countries’ forests, which are really unique, most of local communities are dependent on it in one way or another and they represent more than 20% of world’s forest. We hope you will enjoy watching our videos," says Costel Bucur, FLEG II Program Manager from WWF.

Ayla Alieva

Ayla leads a school forestry in the Azerbaijani town of Gakh. In the video, she is talking about how she found her path and how she is making the world a better place.

Initiated and promoted by FLEG, the young forester school groups (including the one that Ayla leads) have been successfully restored in Azerbaijan and help hundreds of kids understand how forests work and get inspired to pursue a career in sustainable forestry.

Sergey Slastnikov

Sergey leads a small business in Russia — a timber production company. In the video he is talking about how he manages to combine a profitable business with sustainable forest use.

The FLEG II publications and consultations of experts have helped him to better understand the requirements of the European Timber Regulation when exporting his company’s timber products to the European market.
Angela Timoshenko

Angela Timoshenko is the head of the executive committee of her village and, in her daily work, deals with the management of forest resources. She knows what forest means to her community in Belarus. Forest is life. Human life. Rural communities often need forest products to survive. The Forest Dependency Study released by FLEG II — a research that attempts to quantify human dependency on forests — helps people like Angela to better understand the issues at stake and make wiser decisions.

Ivane Kupradze

Ivane from Borjomi, Georgia, had the dream of becoming a ranger since childhood. In the video, Ivane talks about training events organized by FLEG that helped him learn to enforce and prosecute forest violations more effectively. The sessions were the first time Georgian natural resource law enforcement officials received legal and practical training directly from active judges, one from the Borjomi Magistrate Court, whose jurisdiction includes a significant part of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park in southern Georgia.

Learn about his life story: how hiking trips with his grandfather inspired him to dedicate his whole life to protecting nature and how every day he solves difficult cases such as poaching and illegal logging.

Yury Lyahovyi

Yury from Chernihiv, Ukraine works in the Association of Wood Producing and Timber Processing Enterprises and defends the interests of forest business. He believes that only sustainable and legal forest management can bring long-term profit to business. Yury wants Ukraine to be a prospering forest country and leave healthy forest to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. FLEG publications helped him analyze the forest legislation and propose ways for its improvement.
Karine Panosyan

Karine is a young Armenian woman in love with nature, whose dedication is helping to save the Armenian forests from illegal cutting. Karine couldn’t sit and watch forests being destroyed any longer. This is the reason why she decided to join the volunteers of the Public Monitoring of Forests team. With the guidance of FLEG II experts, they learned how to spot illegally cut trees and how to collect the data to record and prove the crimes.

Valeriu Caisin

“If you stop tending to a garden, it will vanish. But if you leave the forest in peace, it will benefit your life,” believes Valeriu. He is a Moldovan researcher who together with his colleagues developed a program based on the available non-electronic data, which helped Moldova combat illegal logging.

Later, to continue Valeriu’s efforts, FLEG created a wood traceability system (software application). It provides real-time, verifiable information on harvested timber by tracking it through the entire production process. The system aims at improving wood traceability from the standing timber to the end user and supporting law enforcement agencies to eliminate most of illegal activities. The system was recognized by the Moldovan authorities, and was successfully tested in a pilot area with Valeriu’s help. Moldova plans to introduce it on the national level.
U.S. Forest Service experts, who helped FLEG II organize the workshop, introduced modern investigation tools and methods of combating forest crimes to forest practitioners from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. These included identification of crime, DNA evidence to species and location identification, technical investigative equipment, and cooperation with the general public.

“In our work we attest various incidents, from small-scale illegal logging driven by livelihood needs or manipulation with wood volumes in record papers by forestry staff to abusive infringements of the law such as poaching by high-level officials,” said Vadim Stingaci, deputy chief of the State Ecological Inspectorate of Moldova. “The workshop helped us get a lot of insights into detecting and investigating these crimes. Forest crimes are a worldwide problem and to reduce or eliminate it we need to be methodologically and technically well prepared.”

Anna Orlova and Ayla Aliyeva from Ismayilli and Gakh districts of Azerbaijan returned home from Peterhof, Russia, with diplomas and medals, determined to stay connected with like-minded peers from all over the world.

Together with her friends from the young forester group, Xth grade student of Ivanovka village school Anna Orlova analyzed meteorological and video surveillance data to assess the degree of influence of climate change on forest ecosystems.

Ayla Aliyeva, leader of the “Friends of the Forests” group in the Gakh secondary school #3, evaluated the living behavior of the undergrowth of various forest species: “Our primary idea was to understand why and under which circumstances the undergrowth dies and how we can stop it.” The schoolchildren shared the results of the year-long study with the Gakh district municipality, state tourism and sport authorities and media.

LEARN MORE:
http://www.enpi-fleg.org/news/when-forest-experts-become-detectives/

CONTACT:
Ms. Vladislava Nemova [World Bank]
vnemova@worldbank.org

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Gulana Hajiyeva [World Bank]
ghajiyeva@worldbank.org
How to Increase the Efficiency of Forest Management in Russia?

Participants of a round table in Krasnoyarsk (Russia) suggested a number of comprehensive measures.

Efficiency measures are especially relevant for Russian forest regions that have a substantial budget deficit.

The roundtable was part of the Krasnoyarsk Forest Industry Forum that took place at the Expodrev-2016 exhibition, which gathered industry representatives from all over Russia.

As a result of the meeting, the participants agreed on a resolution, where they supported a number of key FLEG ideas, for example, the approach proposed by FLEG aimed at improving the efficiency of wildfire management on the basis of forest fire zoning and determining the annual burning norms.

Contact:
Ms. Marina Smetanina [World Bank]
msmetanina@worldbank.org

LEARN MORE:

Textbooks to Supply Students in the Khabarovsk Region of Russia with Applied Forestry Knowledge

FLEG II held a seminar for the teaching staff of a leading forestry college of the region.

The Komsomolsk-on-Amur Forest Industry College is the only vocational school in Khabarovsk Region that trains skilled workers and mid-level specialists for the forest sector. Graduates from this program are in great demand among timber production businesses.

However, a critical issue for both college graduates and program trainers is the low level of applied knowledge. Available training guidelines, manuals and textbooks have become outdated and fail to reflect the current needs and standards of forest logging and management practices.

The seminar was aimed to fill the gap by presenting new textbooks by FLEG II that give up-to-date information on forest management: Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the Russian Federation (2015) and Law Enforcement and Governance in Forest Use, Protection and Renewal (2015).

The teaching staff was particularly impressed with the tests in the textbooks as well as the scenarios for forest-related business games.

Contact:
Ms. Marina Smetanina [World Bank]
msmetanina@worldbank.org

LEARN MORE:

Improving the Investment Appeal of the Forest Sector for Small Business

“For fair and efficient economy” workgroup proposed answers to this question at a meeting in Khabarovsk, Russia.

The participants discussed how to increase the investment appeal of the forest complex for small and medium businesses in Khabarovsk Krai, Russia.

FLEG presented an analysis about “bottlenecks” in the Russian forest legislation that have no ecological or forestry value but create hurdles for business and increase production costs.

Proposals by FLEG and other participants aimed at improving the investment climate in the forest sector were reflected in the resolution of the meeting. It contains a list of activities suggested for implementation by the workgroup under the Governor of the Khabarovsk Region.

Contact:
Ms. Marina Smetanina [World Bank]
msmetanina@worldbank.org

LEARN MORE:
The awarding ceremony was celebrated in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The goal of the competition for journalists was to increase the understanding of FLEG II objectives, forestry practices used in Azerbaijan, sustainable and innovative forest management and the role of the community in it.

Winners of the contest are: Rauf Nasirov as the author of the best article; Khanim Muxtarova, Gulara Seyidova, Zarifa Feyzullayeva and Ulviyya Israfilova for their creative teamwork, a video called “I Want to Know Everything”; and Gulqiz Suleymanova as author of a story, “The Life of Paper”.

Accurate and reliable media reports on forest issues are an important part of improving protection and management of our forests. This requires an understanding by journalists of the legal, economic, social and policy aspects of forest management. The objective of the ADA-supported master class and media trip was to enhance skills of selected journalists to provide accurate, reliable, captivating articles on environmental issues with the emphasis on forestry aspects.

After a series of lectures, the journalists visited forests and forest adjacent communities located on the border of Armenia and Georgia.

Participants from both countries indicated that the media tour was unique because they studied forest management in both their home and the neighboring country, and could compare them. Many journalists confessed they had never had a chance before to travel to a remote forest, and be able to see and assess facts on the spot.
How Can Ukraine’s Forest Sector Overcome Crisis?

Over 100 forest experts suggested solutions to the lack of state support in forest industry.

The scarce government support of forestry has led to a catastrophic deterioration of economic indicators in the forestry enterprises in southern and eastern Ukraine. Participants of a roundtable, organized by the Education and Research Institute of Forestry and Park Gardening of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine and FLEG II, recommended the Ministry of Agrarian Policy to develop and submit draft amendments to the Tax and Budget Codes, in order to create a State Forest Management Trust Fund and to send to that Fund 5% of the funds received from the sale of products by resource forests (Carpathians and Polesie) and a portion of contributions from the forest rent.

One of the solutions is Forest Management Planning, which helps to unlock the full potential of forests and benefits local communities. It has been implemented in 17% (about 22 thousand ha) of Moldova’s forests, of which 7,665 ha managed by 23 communities has been done with the support of FLEG II.

Building Synergy for Unlocking Forest Research Potential in Moldova

Academy of Sciences of Moldova in partnership with FLEG II organized an international conference.

The participants of the Conference on “Sustainable use, protection of animal world and forest management in the context of climate change” agreed that Moldova is still facing challenges from unsustainable practices and difficult economic condition of the population, as is confirmed by several assessments done in 2009-2016 with the assistance of FLEG.

“Moldova’s forests are overexploited and revenue loss from unsustainable forest use — even considering only illegal logging and poaching — is huge,” said Olga Kazantseva from Ecological Society Bioteica. “Every m³ of wood, if legally harvested, could bring to the national or local budget around 111,9 Moldovan lei [$6]. According to our estimations, about 415 thousand m³ are consumed illegally, which is an enormous revenue loss.”

One of the solutions is Forest Management Planning, which helps to unlock the

QUICK FACTS

- 14% of Moldova, 130 thousand ha of forest and 330 thousand ha of pastures, is managed by local public authorities.
- These two main land resources are realizing only 10-20% of their true potential.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Mr. Oleg Lystopad [World Bank]
oleg.lystopad@enpi-fleg.org
Ivan Sovetnikov (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia) focused on fundamental changes that had occurred in the forest legislation such as new mechanisms to prevent unjustified sanitary measures. These measures are sometimes used as a disguise for commercial forest logging. "The public has received access to the information about the condition of forests and can control sanitary activities," said Sovetnikov. "If they are assigned incorrectly, the Federal Forestry Agency now has the right to stop them."

The roundtable participants raised many forestry problems, such as the "bottlenecks" in the legislation (which are not justified from forestry or ecological perspectives but increase the production costs), unsatisfactory condition of forests (pollution and wildfires), low accountability related to the compensation for forest damage, unclear pricing rules for wood damaged by fires and pests, and acute shortage of highly qualified forestry professionals. The experts drafted a resolution with recommendations to the State Duma and the Russian Government.

"I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the organizers of this event for giving us this opportunity to discuss the burning issues of forest governance and law enforcement in the framework of the 8th international forum," said Yuri Shuvaev, deputy chairman of the Committee on Nature Use and Ecology of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation.

The Forum brought together business and government agencies from around the world to discuss development in the forest sector.

Marina Smetanina, FLEG II coordinator in Russia from the World Bank, noted the key role of the FLEG process in improving the situation in the forestry sector of Russia: "Such ministerial initiatives generate a political space at the level of entire regions, which allows starting an open dialogue about difficult issues — i.e. illegal logging — with the active participation of the public, NGOs, and business."

According to Elena Kulikova, senior expert of the European Forest Institute, after the completion of FLEG II, Russia continues to be relevant to the FLEG process. "The level of illegal logging has dropped, but the issue of the effectiveness and sustainability of forest management remains highly relevant," said Kulikova. "Russia continues to export significant volumes of wood products — legal and illegal — to EU. " According to Elena Kulikova, we need to strengthen the interaction between EU FLEGT Action plan, which aims to reduce illegal logging by strengthening sustainable and legal forest management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber, and the FLEG Program."
In Baku, the National Program Advisory Committee (NPAC) members shared thoughts on the sustainability of FLEG results. “The inclusion of FLEG II-inspired proposals into the National Forest Program till 2020 is an evidence of a longer impact of FLEG II on the country’s forestry sector,” concluded Rahim Ibrahimov from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan.

In a more informal setting in Qusar city, direct beneficiaries, state forestry enterprises, NPAC members, local municipalities, NGOs, academia, media, and staff of FLEG II talked about the major points of the Program’s 6-year journey in Azerbaijan.

“When we look back to 2010 and compare the situation back then with the current level of environmental education and degree of knowledge on vital forest functions in forest-dependent communities, we can’t help but see a world of positive developments, which will define the future of the Azerbaijani forestry sector in the years to come,” said Shamil Huseynov, senior representative of the National Parliament of Azerbaijan, chair of FLEG II National Program Advisory Committee.

“During the past 6 years, we have been used to the fact that FLEG II experts are by our side to assist us in a wide range of activities aimed at bringing more sustainability and sense to our everyday work,” said Fakhraddin Mammadaliyev, head of the Yalama district Forest Rehabilitation and Guarding Enterprise.

The 7th AIEECE was held on November 16-18 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan Huseyn Baghirov and head of the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan Malena Mard visited the FLEG II stand.

“FLEG II has taken the development of forestry education and public perception of forestry issues to a new level,” said Mr. Baghirov. “We see the FLEG II Team in Azerbaijan as a vital partner in the promotion of sustainable forest practices, raising public awareness, and supporting important legislative reforms. FLEG II has become an integral part of forestry activities in our country.”

“FLEG Experts Have Always Been by Our Side to Help us Out”

FLEG participants in Azerbaijan gathered for two final meetings in Baku and Qusar.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Gulana Hajiyeva [World Bank]
ghajiyeva@worldbank.org

Minister Baghirov Endorses Continuation of FLEG II Activities in Azerbaijan

FLEG II made its final appearance at the Azerbaijan International Environmental Exhibition Caspian Ecology.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Gulana Hajiyeva [World Bank]
ghajiyeva@worldbank.org

© World Bank
About ENPI FLEG Program

The Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) II European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Programme supports participating countries’ forest governance. At the regional level, the Programme aims to implement the 2005 St. Petersburg FLEG Ministerial Declaration and support countries to commit to a time-bound action plan; at the national level the Programme will review or revise forest sector policies and legal and administrative structures; and improve knowledge of and support for sustainable forest management and good forest governance in the participating countries, and at the sub-national (local) level the Programme will test and demonstrate best practices for sustainable forest management and the feasibility of improved forest governance practices at the field-level on a pilot basis. Participating countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. The Programme is funded by the European Union. http://www.enpi-fleg.org

Project Partners

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
The European Union is the world’s largest donor of official development assistance. The European Commission’s Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) manages the bulk of the Union’s financial and technical assistance to the neighbourhood and enlargement countries. By implementing assistance actions in Europe’s eastern and southern neighbourhood, DG NEAR supports reform and democratic consolidation, and strengthens the prosperity, stability and security around Europe. DG NEAR helps to promote EU values, policies and interests in this region, and to contribute to developing the special relationship of the EU with its neighbouring countries. http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

WORLD BANK
The World Bank Group is one of the world’s largest sources of knowledge and funding for its 188 member-countries. The organizations that make up the World Bank Group are owned by the governments of member nations, which have the ultimate decision-making power within the organizations on all matters, including policy, financial or membership issues. The World Bank Group comprises five closely associated institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA), which together form the World Bank; the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Each institution plays a distinct role in the World Bank Group’s mission to end extreme poverty by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than $1.25 a day to no more than 3 percent, and promote shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40 percent for every country. For additional information please visit: http://www.worldbank.org, http://www.ifc.org, http://www.miga.org

IUCN
IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN’s work focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world’s oldest and largest global environmental organisation, with more than 1,200 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN’s work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. www.iucn.org

WWF
WWF is one of the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org