IUCN-FLEG II

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Regional

I. Local Forest Governance Study, Regional (RWP 20)

Summary: The Local Forest Governance Study is a regional study on the forest governance structures of each participating country in the ENPI FLEG Program. The study comprises 5 case studies from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Even though information was taken from 6 countries, the complex socio-political circumstances and armed conflict within parts of the region made it difficult to travel and access all areas needed for the study (particularly Russia and Ukraine). The study, conducted by IUCN consultant Stefan Michel, focused on describing and analyzing the governance structures of local forests. Local forests are those located near rural or urban areas that provide vital services to inhabitants of nearby communities. During Soviet time, these forests were administered by state and collective farms. After the end of the Soviet Union, each country in the region defined diverse administration and management schemes for their local forests.

"After the collapse of the Union, the governance of local forests developed autonomously in each country, and developed very diverse systems. In some cases, a stark contrast to the system from which they came was established. Some countries integrated all local forests into centrally governed state forests, some others established subnational management entities or handed them over to local municipalities". Stefan Michel – IUCN consultant and author of the study– News article: "Once upon a Time the Soviet Style Forest Management... and then?" 1

Based on the study, the common factors, challenges, and differences between local forest governance schemes were identified, and their relation to an efficient and sustainable forest governance understood. “This study represents an invaluable tool to assess the quality of governance of local forests in the FLEG II countries, and governance is a fundamental factor that determines whether forest resources are used efficiently, sustainably, and equitably. Its added value rests on the combination of a detailed overview of local forest governance in the region with illustrative cases, which show how and in what way concrete governance systems can influence natural resource management". Stefan Michel – IUCN consultant and author of the study– News article – “Local Forest Governance under the Loupe” 2

The study included interviews with stakeholders in each of the countries visited along with the review of relevant national documents such as policy documents, national, sub-national laws and bylaws. Secondary sources of information included reports prepared under the ENPI-FLEG framework and other projects. Interviews were performed in the ENPI-FLEG II countries (except Russia) primarily in English and Russian with the use of occasional translators. Interviewees included representatives of government agencies, forest inventory and management planning organizations, NGOs, local administrations, community representatives and local forestry enterprises.

In general, the definition for local forest within each country’s legislation varied greatly across the region. Variations were also found in terms of the communal and sub-national forms of forest management and allocation of management responsibilities and forest ownership. In the case of Belarus and Russia, rather than looking at local forest’s governance, the study analyzed forest governance from the perspectives of local people and administration’s involvement in forest management in relation to their interests and needs. The analysis of forest governance quality was performed following the IUCN’s set of principles of good
St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 2. Review and as needed update forest legislation and regulations, ensuring their coherence and harmonize these with legislation and policy in natural resource management and with relevant obligations under international agreements.

How it was addressed:

At the time of the study, few countries included terms such as “Forests of Local Importance”, communal forest management or ownership in their national forest legislation. However, in some cases, even state-owned forests that can be considered local forests are sometimes manages by several institutions at different levels of government simultaneously. The study provides detailed information on the structure of local forest governance schemes including, to name a few, information on: legal definition and standing of local forests, ownership and user right systems, legal and regulatory frameworks, mandates of forestry organizations, financial arrangements, economic instruments and benefits sharing, the planning and decision making processes, provisions for stakeholder participation, and funding for forestry agencies. The study provides key information for lawmakers and other stakeholders across the region.

“For the ENPI East FLEG region, this is the first time that a study has assessed and compared the legal, regulatory, and organizational frameworks of local forest governance in such a comprehensive and detailed manner. The identification of common trends and national differences, and the discussion of best practices as well as common obstacles and difficulties, contribute to defining the components of effective governance. I am sure that policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders will find this study extremely useful for their work”. Ekaterine Otarashvili, ENPI-FLEG II Project Officer for IUCN. – News article – “Local Forest Governance under the Loupe”

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

In general, “local communal authorities neither own forests nor possess management rights for them. At the same time many rural communities in the ENPI-FLEG II countries depend on their surrounding forests and the natural resources and on locally important ecosystem services they provide.” Michel (2016b)

By providing information on governance structure for local forests policy makers obtain information on how this structures relate to people’s ability to access forest resources, generate income from them as well as how issues of management, protection, jurisdiction, law enforcement and agency funding in these forests is determined.

Element 6. Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for
rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.

How it was addressed:

The study provides information on the governance structure which can later be used to identify points of contention with traditional uses of forests, customary laws and practices and current legislation. It also provides detailed information that can provide guidance for improving local population’s engagement in the governance of local forests.

**Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.**

How it was addressed:

The study performed interviews with a wide range of stakeholders involved in local forest management, including government officials, community representatives, NGOs and the private sector. Through these interviews, the study complemented the revision of official documents on forest governance to understand the true workings of local forest governance. Similarly, as the results of the study are published, the views and knowledge from this broad range of stakeholders can be included in the formulation of forest laws and policies at different levels of government across the region.

**II. Forest dependency of rural communities in ENPI East Countries and Russia, Regional (RWP 18)**

Summary: The forest dependency study is an IUCN FLEG activity that aimed to “measure the true value of a fully-functioning forest to rural communities and thereby generates quantitative results that can be used by policy makers to improve forest governance and develop appropriate forest policy that encompasses the priorities of local communities”⁶. The study incorporated elements of the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey and the CIFOR Poverty Environment Network into a regionally-adapted quantitative household survey for the ENPI region that would systematically account for household income and wealth for the preceding year as well as permit inter-country comparisons of environmental product use.

The study sought answers to the following research questions⁷:

- What value does the forest have to these communities?
- What forest-related products are significant?
- Who in particular is most dependent on the forest?
- How do these communities use the forest? For example, as a safety net? For current consumption?
- Why do they use the forest?
- What are the implications of their relationship with the forest?
- How does this relationship factor in or relate to national and regional forest policy? To climate resilient development?

A total of 1256 household surveys were performed across the region in rural communities.
located in heavily forested areas. In addition to household surveys, IUCN FLEG consultants performed a community questionnaire or village focus group. Between 150 and 200 surveys were performed in each country participating in the ENPI FLEG program. In Armenia, 196 household surveys were performed in the North, North East and South regions of the country. In Azerbaijan, 150 households from the Zakatalsky district in Northwest Azerbaijan were surveyed. Meanwhile, 200 households were surveyed in the Tianeti Municipality of Mtskhet-Mtianeti Region of Georgia. Another 200 households were surveyed in the mountainous Gomel Region of southeastern Belarus. In Moldova, 150 total surveys were taken from communities spread across North, Central and South Moldova and another 150 were surveyed in Western Ukraine. Finally, due to its geographic extension and contrasting natural conditions, 210 households were surveyed in three high forested regions of Russia: North-West Russia, Central Siberia and the Russian Far East.

In general, most of the surveyed communities had an ageing population that dedicates itself to subsistence livelihoods (agriculture, grazing, or forest-product collection for self-consumption) as most young people have migrated to urban areas in search of economic opportunities. There are however, some exceptions to this trend, like in Azerbaijan where improving economic conditions lead to an increase in population migrating back from urban areas putting additional pressure in forest resources, mainly fuelwood for heat and cooking.

The study provides detailed information on the specific forest products being used by communities and estimated their economic value (mainly derived using self-reported values). For example, the study revealed that almost 25% of forest products collected in these countries are wild fruits. In Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, berries consist of between 43% and 52% of the total value of forests extracted. Meanwhile mushrooms and nuts are of high importance in Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Azerbaijan. In Armenia and Georgia, there is a significant dependence on livestock given the predominance of pastures. Approximately 17% of relative forest income for households surveyed came from the harvesting and sale of different species of berries, mushrooms, and nuts.

The forest dependence study included an income based analysis. Sampled households for all countries were sorted according to income levels into quintiles. From this analysis, it was emphasized that community members in the lower income quintiles relied on the use of forest resource for subsistence in a greater proportion than those in the higher income quintiles. This result is consistent with literature on forest dependence across the world, and gives indication that the survey questionnaire is being able to capture forest use accurately.

The study also provided detailed information on the use of a key forest product: fuelwood. Across the entire region, fuelwood was found to be one of the primary forest products used for subsistence. According to the study, fuelwood comprises 17% of total forest value used by households. It is worth mentioning that reported firewood use by community members is underestimated given regulatory restrictions on firewood and fuelwood extraction in all seven countries, giving incentives to households to underreport their true fuelwood consumption. Regardless of this, the forest dependence study provides evidence that firewood resources required and consumed by forest-dependent communities is higher than that provided by forestry agencies in most of the ENPI ENA countries. This information, combined with the socio-economic analysis of forest dependence by income quintiles highlights the importance of addressing the issues of finding sustainable fuel provision strategies and livelihoods for the most vulnerable community members.

Surveyed households noted a declining availability of fuelwood, fodder, berries and
mushrooms due to illegal collection, overharvesting and climate change. In the case of berries, overharvesting using unsustainable techincs that increase yield but impair plant regeneration place additional stress on forests and impacts those extracting these products for self-consumption in a greater proportion than those that extract them for sale. Meanwhile, reduced rainfall and drought in the past few years have had a negative impact on total yields and availability of non-timber forest resources.

The forest dependence study is the first of its kind to have been performed in northern temperate and boreal forests and provides key insights into the relationship between forest communities in Eastern Europe and Russia. As Richard Aishton, FLEG II Program Coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said, “[p]eople in Eastern Europe have been living in and around forests for countless generations and have their own unique relationship with the forest. We hope this study will be valuable not only to the local and national officials as they set and enforce forest policy that directly impacts these people, but also to larger efforts to better understand the human dependency on nature, no matter where we live.” – News Article – “Assessing Forest Dependency in Easter Europe”

The study shed light on the main drivers and dynamics behind unsustainable forest use in the region and therefore provides knowledge of utmost importance in defining strategies to address forest issues. It also provides a credible methodology to track changes in forest dependence and monitor the impact of policies established to foster sustainable forest governance in the region. The results of the forest dependence study were used in another IUCN FLEG activity, the Forest Community Fingerprint, which is an example of the added value and flexibility with which the forest dependency study can be used. In some countries, such as Azerbaijan and Ukraine, a second phase of the forest dependence study is currently underway. The fact that a second phase of the study is being undertaken highlights the relevance of the information obtained during 2014 for stakeholders involved in fostering sustainable forest governance in the region. As Nariman Aghayev, head of the local NGO Center of Sustainable Development Research in Azerbaijan said relating to the second phase of the study noted, “[a]s in the first phase, we expect to collect and analyze useful and practical information on these communities’ social, economic, and educational conditions, and all stakeholders await our analysis with deep interest. I believe that this work will allow us to develop a set of helpful guidelines for forest authorities and public institutions” – News article – “Azerbaijani Rural Communities and Forests: A Profound Connection”.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda. (Particular relevance in Armenia and Moldova).**

How it was addressed:

The detailed information on forest use and main drivers for unsustainable forest product extraction in surveyed communities across the region provided evidence for policy makers to start taking measures to address these issues. For instance, in the case of Moldova, the study revealed communities’ fuelwood requirements and consumption that surpass the amount of firewood provided by the government. Therefore, the study found evidence of illegal logging to cover subsistence fuel needs in those communities in particular, but the
dynamic is representative for the entire country.

“The analysis revealed that fuelwood represents the largest share of forest related revenue for locals (31% in terms of total value and 23% in terms of frequency of total collection). By comparing these data to those provided by Agency Moldsilva, the central authority in charge of forestry administration, it emerged that local communities use larger volumes of fuelwood than forest administrators can officially supply.”

In this sense, the study has provided credible data that underlines the gravity of some of the forest issues faced by the region and provides government authorities with the information required to take adequate measure in addressing these issues.

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

The forest dependence study sheds light on the main drivers behind unsustainable use of forest resources, illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and unauthorized extraction of wood and other forest products for local consumption. It does so by providing answers to questions relating to the value of forest products for rural communities, the most important forest products for them and who is most dependent on the forest for survival and stratifying the forest dependence study by income quintiles. In this sense, the forest dependence study revealed that the use of fuelwood for heating and cooking needs is, arguable, the main driver behind local communities illegal extraction of wood from forests. It also revealed that the poorest community members relied on forest products for subsistence and were the most vulnerable to the reduction in forest product availability due to degrading forest conditions. The reduction in forest product yields is partly driven by their extraction for income generation purposes that use technologies that increase yield but reduce plant regeneration. This level of detail in the dynamic driving forest product extraction represents an invaluable tool for policy makers to design appropriate policies and strategies to address these issues.

Element 6. Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.

How it was addressed:

The study surveyed 1256 households in the ENPI FLEG participating countries. Along with household surveys, a community questionnaire or focus group was held with community leaders. In this sense, the study represents an unprecedented engagement of rural, forest-dependent communities in order to learn about their living conditions, their relationship to forests and the drivers behind degrading forest conditions that impact these communities’ survival and well-being. The study provided community members an opportunity to talk about their circumstances and the main issues they perceive are behind degrading forests.

Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities,
private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

IUCN FLEG consultants traveled to each community identified as representative of each country’s forest rural communities and surveyed household members and community leaders. In this sense, the forest dependence study provided a platform for members of remote rural communities to share their circumstances, most pressing issues and strategies for survival that relate to forest use. The results of the forest dependence study are being used by high government officials, NGOs and local governments across the region to design forest management strategies and programs to address unsustainable forest use.

As Richard Aishton, FLEG II Program Coordinator for IUCN, highlighted, “This study brings to light a significant reliance on forests that has gone unmeasured until now and which is at risk. It also highlights the importance of incorporating the needs of people most dependent on forests into the policies which govern natural resources.” – News article – “Forest Resources Vital to Many Rural Eastern European Households”

Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

How it was addressed:

The forest dependence studies have been widely distributed throughout the FLEG network in ENPI participating countries. The results of the study have been made available by the FLEG team to government officials and NGOs in each country. Similarly, news articles, executive summaries and the full reports are available in both English and the local language on the FLEG website. Forest dependence studies can be found on the following links: [Regional study, Armenian, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine](http://www.enpi-fleg.org/ge/documents/forestdependency-studies/), [Moldova](http://www.enpi-fleg.org/docs/forestdependence-based-on-surveys-conducted-in-three-villages-of-moldova/), and [Georgia](http://enpi-fleg.ge/geoforestportal/index.php/en/publications-iucn).

Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society. (Particular relevance in Belarus and Moldova).

How it was addressed:

In general, the information provided by the study has helped raise awareness of the extent of forest degradation and its impacts on the livelihoods of rural communities, along with the main community and market dynamics that determine unsustainable patterns of forest use. In the particular case of Belarus and Moldova, the forest dependence study has helped raise awareness to the highest level of government of the magnitude of illegal use of forest resources, particularly firewood.

Element 16. Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption. (Particular relevance in Belarus).
How it was addressed:

Performing the forest dependence study required the cooperation of IUCN consultants with local authorities, community leaders and, in some cases like in Belarus, the cooperation of different levels of government. In Belarus, a series of interviews between IUCN FLEG consultants and local officials took place in order to convince them that the activity was an official matter sponsored by international organizations but coordinated on a national level by the Belarusian Ministry of Forestry. After these interviews, IUCN FLEG consultants earned the trust of public officials and local community leaders permitting them to successfully perform the study’s 200 household surveys.

III. Forest Community Fingerprint and mapping of forest dependency, Regional (RWP 18)

Summary: The Forest Community Fingerprint (FCF) project takes advantage of the surveys performed as part of the forest dependence study to approximately 1250 households in 36 forest-dependent communities across the ENPI ENA region. The FCF bases itself on the principle that the socio-economic and environmental conditions of a community can be inferred based on the characteristics and changes through time of their surrounding environment. For instance, an area rich in non-timber forest resource (NTFR) that experiences poverty or economic crisis may expect to see degradation of nearby forests as crisis exacerbates and community members must resort to NTFR for survival or supplementing their income. “The aim of this study was to develop a framework explaining the social-economic aspects of the human-nature dependency structure in northern boreal forest ecosystems.”

The FCF combines specific human-nature dependency data for forest-dependent communities with geospatial information about their surrounding forests. Monitoring changes and comparing these data sets is what gives information for developing management and conservation strategies for communities already studied. At the same time, the FCF methodology has the ability to identify similar communities to intervene based solely on the geospatial data available. This methodology allows the design of science based interventions for sustainable forest management by improving the knowledge of rural communities, their livelihoods, circumstances and resilience to changes and crisis.

The FCF methodology synthesizes data from in-situ surveys and remote sensed data to analyze and depict forest dependent communities. Some of the variables explored by the FCF are the role of forest products in supporting forest-dependent community livelihoods, the relation between human dependency and income, and common drivers for human dependency on forests. It also takes into account the differences of human dependence on forests based on regional characteristics and stages of economic development. There are six main parameters of analysis for the FCF in terms of community level data: human resources, financial capital, market system, forest-based knowledge, forest ecosystem stability and infrastructure. Meanwhile, there are six parameters that focus on the physical characteristics of a community’s surrounding forests: landscape characteristics, village structure, infrastructure, agriculture, forest and hazard. The hazard parameter captures the risk of damage to the community or their resources from natural phenomena such as floods or landslides.

The analysis performed using the FCF methodology, on one hand, looks at the patterns of forest resource use by communities. On the other hand, it looks at the links between market
system, infrastructure and forest ecosystem stability. Comparability of FCF across communities is achieved by creating a relative ranking of each parameter's results: the upper limit is defined by the best functioning community while the lower limit is defined by the poorest functioning community. Given its integrative approach, the FCF methodology is highly flexible. The FCF's parameters are calculated based on weighted averages of each collected variable. This means that parameters can be adjusted to reflect local or regional conditions of the area of study and therefore obtain more accurate estimates of forest-human dependency and poverty-forest relations.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 4.** Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

The innovative FCF methodology provides a tool to evaluate a community's dependence on forests and relate it to the status of surrounding forests. The methodology permits a multivariate analysis that is useful to clearly identify the main drivers for forest degradation, the availability of forest resources, and therefore provides a way to define accurate science driven policy to foster sustainable forest development.

**Element 6.** Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.

How it was addressed:

The forest knowledge and human capital parameters of the FCF methodology focus on obtaining in-depth information about communities that include education, personal skills and experiences along with the traditional knowledge, beliefs and practices related to forests. This information is an integral part of the analysis that defines appropriate intervention measures to foster more sustainable use of forest resources.

**Element 9.** Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

How it was addressed:

The FCF constitutes an in-depth analysis of the human and natural circumstances of forest-dependent communities. The methodology is flexible and powerful enough to diagnose the circumstances of non-surveyed communities based on ecosystem satellite information and therefore permit interventions in non-surveyed areas that most require it. Similarly, this information can not only be used to plan policy interventions and programs by different levels of government and NGOs but is also available through reports to a broader audience.
Armenia

IV. Public Monitoring of Forests in Armenia (ADA CWP 5.4, EC CWP 3.1)

Summary: This IUCN activity facilitated the creation of a citizen monitoring system for illegal logging activities in Armenian forests. By providing trainings to volunteers and setting up a dedicated reporting website (http://www.afpm.am/en), IUCN helped combine citizens’ desire to actively participate in curtailing illegal forest activities with the generation of accurate data that could aid law-enforcement efforts combating these activities.

The activity began in 2014 and combines the use of satellite imagery of forest cover with community engagement to monitor and document illegal logging activity in Armenia. FLEG II experts and their consultants review satellite images of forest cover outside areas where legal harvesting is taking place. If a change of forest cover is detected, trained volunteers are deployed to document the loss of forest coverage. Volunteers gather evidence of potential illegal logging in the form of GPS coordinates, photos and video. This information is uploaded to the dedicated website www.afpm.am where it is reviewed by FLEG II experts to determine if there is, indeed, evidence of illegal logging and alert authorities. Volunteer trainings prepare citizens to adequately identify, locate and document such cases as well as the proper procedure to upload information to the website.

So far, the activity has resulted in an impressive amount of cases of illegal logging being detected. In 2015 alone, volunteers identified almost 1,500 illegally removed trees over an area of 190 ha, 8 forestry enterprises were inspected by Armenian authorities and 3 cases resulted in the successful prosecution of those responsible. Armenian forest authorities, namely Hayantar, supports citizen monitoring of forests as it provides them with accurate information about illegal logging activities that are difficult to detect and prosecute due to logistical and capacity limitations faced by the institution.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

This activity has empowered Armenian citizens to combat illegal logging in their local forests. Citizens can protect their forests by accurately detecting, locating, documenting cases of illegal logging and uploading them to an independent website overseen by FLEG II and their consultants.

The accuracy of the information provided by volunteer monitors is fostered by the trainings offered by FLEG II experts and the remote sensing technology and spatial analysis firm Geoinfo LLC. Volunteers were taught how to use GPS navigation tools, analyze suspicious situations, record the data gathered in the field and the proper procedure for uploading it to the website. Manuals detailing these procedures are also available on the website as a means to encourage citizens to self-report suspect situations.

“Thanks to Public Monitoring, I developed the skill set to make a precious contribution to fight illegal logging. Technical knowledge acquired from practical implementation of this activity gave volunteers like me real power” - Karine Panosvan, a volunteer forest monitor.
News article – “Knowledge is Power”15

In 2015, 85 volunteers, mostly women, were trained in Yerevan and Vandazor and are currently monitoring the Lori, Tavush, Syunik and Kotayk regions. Volunteers span a great range of backgrounds and interests. For instance, a volunteer commented during one of the trainings that “I have seen people from the environmental department of the mayor’s office of Kajaran town, members of Zangezur Biosphere Complex, activists, journalists and representatives of environmental NGOs. This wide range of interest shows how important our forests are to our community.” - Aram Sargsyan, member of the local forest monitoring group and veterinary scientist by training - News article – “Not in our Forest”16

It is important to note that the data generated by volunteers and uploaded to the dedicated website is reviewed and verified by FLEG II experts and their consultants prior to being reported to Armenian authorities. The independence of the website guarantees the transparency of the process and provides credibly, independent evidence for authorities to prosecute cases of illegal logging.

Element 8. Develop and implement anti-corruption tools dealing with corruption in and impacting on the forest sector in line with general anti-corruption efforts, including codes of conduct and best practices, and professional responsibility, and apply internationally recognized principles to combat organized crime

The citizen monitoring dedicated website is an independent platform where all Armenian citizens can upload evidence of suspected illegal logging activities. Manuals, instructions and tutorial videos for the adequate documentation and upload of evidence are available on the webpage in order to increase the availability of evidence of illegal activity that can be used by Armenian authorities to prosecute responsible parties. Each report submitted by volunteers is verified by FLEG II and Geoinfo LLC experts to make sure it does not correspond to state-authorized logging.

The citizen monitoring initiative has the support of forestry authorities in Armenia at the national level. Volunteer teams monitor local forests under the jurisdiction of Hayantar (Ministry of Agriculture) and the network of Protected Areas managed by the Ministry of Nature Protection and provide authorities with credible information on irregular activities. As Ruben Petrosyan, Chief Forester at Hayantar put it “[t]his[public forest monitoring] activity is the most transparent way for us to learn about what is happening in the forest and receive independent information from forest monitoring. Instead of relying only on monitoring that is administered by the government, we now have reports from a group of people that are really independent which includes local communities, active environmentalists and other citizens.”

Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

The website (http://www.afpm.am/en) is sponsored by FLEG II and is independent from any Armenian government agency. It allows for any citizen to upload evidence they collect of suspected illegal logging following the procedure established in the manuals and video tutorials available on the website. The information is available in both Armenian and English, though some features are exclusively in Armenian (like the video tutorials on how to collect data of suspected illegal logging activity).

Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and
their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.

This activity engages directly with Armenian citizens who are interested in finding ways to curtail illegal logging activities in Armenian forests and provides detailed information on how to assess and document cases of such activities. Participation by active, engaged citizens then contributes to improving understanding of the magnitude and location of illegal logging activities across Armenia when cases of illegal logging reported by citizens is combined with information already available to Hayantar. A more comprehensive understanding of illegal logging activities in Armenia is vital to addressing the issue. A wide range of stakeholders interested in the forestry sector can access the dedicated website http://www.afpm.am/en and see the areas of Armenia affected by illegal logging. Finally, in addition to the website being available to everyone, information about new training sessions for volunteers to participate in Armenia’s public monitoring of forests is widely distributed to the general public through FLEG channels.

Element 16. Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption

The fact that the citizen forest monitoring initiative has the support of Hayantar fosters an active collaboration between citizens and the Institution. Through the use of the http://www.afpm.am/en website, Hayantar and Armenian citizens have established a productive partnership where they combine their efforts to fight illegal logging by increasing the human capacity to monitor forests and provide accurate evidence to prosecute forest crimes. Most notably perhaps are the three cases where convictions where achieved due to the evidence found by citizen monitoring volunteers. Within these examples, it is quite remarkable that, in one occasion, a local forest guard in the region of Kapan was dismissed from his post and arrested for illegally cutting down 150 trees.

V. Empowering Forest-Dependent Communities Through Roadshows, Armenia (ADA CWP 6.3)

Summary: This IUCN FLEG II activity corresponds to the second phase of the Roadshows activity that took place during FLEG I in 2010. During the first phase of the activity, FLEG team experts and members of the NGO Armenian Forests and Ecolur visited rural communities in Armenia to collect their main concerns about the forest issues that directly affected their lives in order to convey them to Armenian authorities. During August and October 2015, the IUCN FLEG team, along with experts from the NGOs Ecolur and Armenian Forests, visited 20 villages in the Armenian marzes of Lori, Tavush, Vayots Dzor, and Syunik17 as part of the second phase of the Roadshows activity. The objective of the second phase of roadshows was to build upon the efforts of the first roadshows and collect new proposals and concerns that citizens wanted Armenian authorities to be aware of. It also aimed to follow-up on the implementation of suggestions derived from the first roadshows (specifically the allotment of eight cubic meters of deadwood per year free of charge), continue raising awareness of local citizens on forestry issues, and collect new information for a new series of media coverage on the status of illegal logging and community development in rural-dependent communities.

The team of experts that visited the villages used a wide range of strategies to engage with
local citizens in order to raise awareness of forest issues and gather their opinions, concerns and proposals for better forest management in their surrounding forests. An example of these strategies include holding discussions in village centers in order to make explicit to citizens that discussions were open to everyone to participate and that their input was not only welcomed, but valued. Similarly, Ecolur experts help presentations at local schools to engage younger generations. In all cases of engagement with citizens, FLEG and NGO experts avoided interactions that resembled lectures on forest issues and opted for an approach of holding casual conversations with citizens who showed interest in the roadshows. This approach helped citizens from these remote villages feel more at ease with visiting experts and (Almazán et.al. 2016)

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

**Element 2.** Review and as needed update forest legislation and regulations, ensuring their coherence and harmonize these with legislation and policy in natural resource management and with relevant obligations under international agreements.

How it was addressed:

As a result of the first phase of the Roadshows activity in 2010, Armenian authorities passed a decree that entitles residents of forest-dependent communities to receive eight cubic meters of deadwood per year free of charge to cover their heating and cooking needs. Other proposals that arose from conversations with communities during the first roadshows series were adopted during a high level round table that took place in Yerevan in July 2015. The second phase of Roadshows provided a follow-up on the implementation of the proposals accepted after the first roadshows including the one that entitled vulnerable citizens to deadwood provision, a service that had unfortunately been interrupted in at least one of the visited villages. In relation to this event, Nazeli Vardanyan, environmental attorney and Director of Armenian Forests NGO, noted that “[Martun] Matevosyan’s first reaction was of astonishment, as Hayantar had never given the instruction to interrupt the wood provision. After a quick investigation, it emerged that this decision was taken by the staff of the Regional Governor Office and the Head of the local forestry branch in Artavan” – News Article – “2015 FLEG Roadshow: The Hotline between Yerevan and Your Village”.

Mr. Matevosyan, Director of Hayantar SNCO and FLEG II Focal Point, assured FLEG and NGO experts that the situation would be corrected at once in order to ensure that local citizens of Artavan would have access to the much needed deadwood during the approaching winter months.

**Element 4.** Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

Casual conversations with citizens at the 20 villages visited during the second phase of roadshows highlight the relevance of ensuring access by local citizens to deadwood as a means of ensuring these people’s well-being and survival. Obtaining deadwood for heating is a burdensome task for villagers, especially for senior citizens or children, because forest degradation forces people to hike high up the hills and constantly further away in order to gather the precious resource. Most citizens are unable to access alternative sources of energy, such as gas, due to a lack of proper infrastructure or the economic means to afford
such fuel sources. In this way, the Roadshows activity provides invaluable information about the current situation experience on-the-ground by remote rural communities of Armenia and the drivers behind illegal extraction of forest resources.

**Element 6. Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.**

How it was addressed:

The personal, non-threatening approach of the Roadshows activity seeks to promote participation by all members of rural Armenian communities who are often distrusting of outsiders. As Nazeli Vardanyan, environmental attorney and Director of Armenian Forests NGO, recalls “They were looking at us suspiciously, until someone recognised [sic] me from an interview on TV and reassured the others that they could trust us.” – News Article - “2015 FLEG Roadshow: The Hotline between Yerevan and Your Village”

However, the public meetings held at village squares and presentations at schools eventually encourage citizens to engage with FLEG experts on conversations about forest topics and express their concerns and suggestions on how to improve forest management in their surrounding area. As Ms. Vardanyan noted, “[e]veryone was satisfied and grateful. Both citizens and local authorities understood that they could trust us. The crowd that gathered at the town hall would not disperse, as people wanted to ask for advice on several other issues, hoping we could help them. It was almost night time when we got into the car…” – News Article - “2015 FLEG Roadshow: The Hotline between Yerevan and Your Village”

**Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.**

How it was addressed:

The Roadshows organized by FLEG reach out to rural citizens in remote areas of Armenia and ensure that their input and concerns are conveyed to Armenian authorities at the highest level back in Yerevan. The community engagement process undertaken in this activity is an intense participatory process that includes meetings at village squares, conversations with FLEG and NGO experts visiting the communities and school presentations to engage younger generations in the community. In this way, the activity tries to maximize the sources of input for suggestions and concerns that will be later conveyed to the government and avoid collecting information from certain group members of each village.

**Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.**

How it was addressed:

Roadshows provide detailed information on the concerns and experiences of rural citizens in forest-dependent communities of Armenia. This concerns are then conveyed to a wider
audience by the news and journalistic coverage that results from the experiences of NGO experts that participate in the Roadshows (Almazán et.al. 2016) as well as by conveying the concerns and proposals of citizens to Armenian authorities through an official channel such as the high level round table held in Yerevan in July 2015 between FLEG experts and Hayantar and other government representatives.

Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.

How it was addressed:
During this Roadshows activity, not only did FLEG experts collect the concerns and experiences of Armenian citizens in rural villages but also engaged in conversations with them on forest issues that are of high importance to their livelihoods and well-being. In this way, a two-way communication avenue on forest topics is established with rural communities. On one hand, citizens have a way of expressing their needs and concerns to the Armenian government. On the other, citizens have an opportunity to learn of the negative impacts of illegal logging and other forest issues and can understand the link between said activities and their current circumstances and problems.

Element 16. Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.

How it was addressed:
The Roadshows activity helps promote cooperation between rural citizens and the Armenian government by providing a bridge through which rural citizens can express their most pressing issues and concerns. Armenian authorities in response, obtain detailed information about the on-the-ground situation for this communities and are able to design appropriate measures to combat illegal forest activities and, at the same time, improve the well-being of citizens in rural areas.
Azerbaijan

VI. Climate Change Adaptation, Azerbaijan

Summary: This activity refers to the study performed on the level of climate change vulnerability of Azerbaijani forests. It also performed an assessment of the level of awareness on the impacts of climate change and how prepared are national and local forest management officials to deal with its impacts. The study involved a desktop review of current research on impacts of climate change in forests and meetings with organizations with expertise and knowledge about the topic and such as the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, which was working on Azerbaijan’s Third National Communications to the UNFCCC, and the Asian Development Bank. The study also involved surveys and interviews in two pilot regions of Azerbaijan, the Shamakhi district with an arid climate and the semi-arid Lahij. The pilot surveys and interviews assessed the level of awareness and preparedness to deal with climate change by forest officials and communities in the area.

The study, available at http://www.enpi-fleg.az/post/final-assessment-report-of-the-national-consultant-on-technical-support-for-the-development-of-local-adaptation-to-climate/, showed that forests in Azerbaijan are very vulnerable to climate change. This is of particular concern as Azerbaijan’s watersheds depend greatly on their forests as do the livelihoods and well-being of the people living in rural forest-dependent communities. Another issue of great concern is that most forest management officials, especially at the local level, were unaware of the effects of climate change on forests or on the programs and strategies available in Azerbaijan to adapt to climate change. The study also highlighted that Azerbaijan’s forests are at risk of higher rates of forest fires, loss of biodiversity, drought, increased frequency of extreme weather events, increased risks of forest pest and disease outbreaks, and potential loss of livelihoods of forest dependent communities due to loss of forest resources (Mehdiyev 2015).

This study provided the Azerbaijani government with an invaluable source of information for planning adequate climate change adaptation strategies. It actively contributed to raising awareness on climate change and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies as an integral part of policy making in Azerbaijan. It also contributed to the tools and methodologies available to professionals in the forestry sector to be aware, understand and deal with the not yet fully understood effects of climate change in Azerbaijan (Almazán et.al. 2016). As Azer Garayev, FLEG II country officer for IUCN, pointed out “this report gives Azerbaijani officials a solid understanding of the challenges and importance of addressing climate change in Azerbaijan’s forest landscapes so they can make wise decisions when taking the necessary next steps.” – News Article – “FLEG II releases forest climate change readiness report in Azerbaijan”.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda.

How it was addressed:

This activity contributed to increasing awareness on the impacts of climate change on forests in Azerbaijan. At the same time, it provided Azerbaijani officials with an assessment of the level of preparedness the country had to deal with climate change at a national and
local level. The results of the study show that Azerbaijan has a lot of work to do in order to be adequately prepared to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Having a detailed assessments of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies known-to and available-for forest officials allows the Azerbaijani government to define adequate strategies to increase the country’s overall level of preparedness for climate change. In this sense, this activity helped raise climate change awareness and action to the highest level of policy making in Azerbaijan.

**Element 3. Strengthen, as needed, inter-agency cooperation as well as human and institutional capacity, particularly among law enforcement and judicial authorities to enforce forest-related legislation.**

How it was addressed:

The study involved meetings with stakeholders in Azerbaijan with expertise and knowledge on climate change issues that currently have active projects in the country. It also involved surveys and interviews with national and local forest officials in order to assess their knowledge of the risks and existing management programs related to climate change available in Azerbaijan. In this sense, the study identified key areas of opportunity that Azerbaijani officials need to address in order to improve the country’s level of preparedness to deal with the impacts of climate change. As Azerbaijani officials become aware of the areas where human capacity is lacking in order to address climate change issues or where forest officials are unaware of available tools implemented in the country for that purpose; they obtain information to structure government training programs and collaboration schemes that are targeted at improving climate change management and mitigation preparedness in Azerbaijan.

**Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.**

How it was addressed:

The study was performed in two pilot areas of Azerbaijan that were considered representative of the risks faced by Azerbaijan’s forests due to climate change. Surveys and interviews performed in the area provided insights on the level of awareness that officials and community members have of the effects of climate change and the strategies they have at their disposal to address the issue. Being aware of their level of preparedness empowers local officials and community members to take steps and learn about the tools and strategies available to them to cope with the effects of climate change in their lives. The study also helped forest professionals at the local level become more aware of the threat of climate change and the tools they could use to develop forest management strategies that take climate change into account.

**VII. Approaches to Sustainable methods for Tugay forest rehabilitation, Azerbaijan**

**Summary:** This activity performed an in-depth study of the current ecosystem conditions of four pilot areas along the Kura and Araz rivers that were once covered by Tugay forests. The
purpose of the study was to obtain a detailed diagnosis of these areas in order to develop an adequate strategy for Tugay forest rehabilitation. In this matter, the study aimed to contribute to the efforts to preserve Azerbaijan’s forest funds done by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and international organizations such as the EU, FAO, and WWF (to name a few).

The study analyzed available data, statistics, reports, management systems and methodologies relating to the Tugay forest ecosystem as well as conduct assessments of three selected areas for establishing potential rehabilitating programs. The area-specific assessments considered the economic interests of local communities in order to assess the potential benefits and costs of such a measure on their livelihoods and well-being. Additionally, the study sought to estimate the value of a fully functioning Tugay forests in order to more accurately estimate the ecosystem services provided by these forests to local communities and indirectly estimate the costs to said communities experienced by the loss of Tugay forests. The results of the study were distributed among forest specialists, forest communities and local authorities in the four pilot areas of the study in order to increase awareness among them of the economic and social issues relating to restoration of Tugay forests. The report is available at http://www.enpi-fleg.az/post/final-report-on-analyses-approaches-to-sustainable-methods-for-tugai-forest-rehabilitation-in-azerbaijan/

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 9.** Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

How it was addressed:

The study collected field data from areas along the Kura and Araz rivers in order to assess the ecological status of four pilot study subsections. The study also performed desktop research on the characteristics of Tugay forests and the value that this ecosystem can provide to local communities, provision of ecosystem services and the conservation of biodiversity. The study was published in the ENPI EAST FLEG II website where it is available to the general public as well as having been made available to forest specialists, local communities and local authorities in the area of study.

**Element 11.** Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.

How it was addressed:

The results of the study were made available to local communities, forest specialists and local authorities in the studied area in order to raise awareness among them of the economic and social issues relating to restoration of Tugay forests. In this way, these stakeholders can actively participate in the efforts to restore Tugay forests and actively engage in the process of determining the Tugay forest management strategies that can potentially evolve out of initial restoration efforts.

VIII. Save our Forests, Our Lungs, Our Treasure, Azerbaijan
Summary: As part of the FLEG II program, the IUCN helped produce a video portraying the negative impacts of deforestation in Azerbaijan. The video can be accessed at http://www.enpi-fleg.org/news/save-our-forests-our-lungs-our-treasure/. The video highlights the ecosystem services provided by forests, such as watershed replenishment and air purification while inviting the local population to not incur in illegal logging in order to continue enjoying from the valuable services that forests provide the Azerbaijani society.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society

How it was addressed:

The video helps raise awareness of the true costs of deforestation that go beyond the loss of trees in a visual and easily accessible way. For instance, "[f]orested watersheds are the only source of drinking water for the entire population living in mountain regions of Azerbaijan." Similarly, fuelwood is a main source of energy for rural communities in Azerbaijan. The short 3 minute video helps viewers glimpse the benefits they derive from forests and encourages them to take action and engage actively in the protection of Azerbaijan’s forest resources.

IX. Analytical Study on the use of energy efficient and energy consuming construction materials in the forest-dependent communities, Azerbaijan

Summary: The study conducted under this activity provides a detailed evaluation of two pilot communities in Azerbaijan, Nazırlı village in Barda district (an arid area) and Saritala village in Tovuz district (mountainous area). The study focuses on evaluating existing energy-efficient and energy-saving methods that are currently being used or could be used in rural civil construction (as well as assessing the main challenges that prevent the introduction of energy efficient practices). It also provides an evaluation on the main construction and insulation materials that are energy inefficient but have been historically and traditionally been used in surveyed villages. The study further provides an analysis of alternative methods through which wood consumption for heating and cooking could be reduced as well as clearly identify the economic or technological challenges that prevent this change. Finally, the study provides a quantitative estimation of the impacts that using inefficient energy systems and construction materials has had on the livelihoods of the forest dependent communities studied. Part of this assessment includes the estimation of fuelwood consumption, and therefore, provides an estimate of the volume of illegal logging that is required to provide for the fuelwood needs of forest dependent communities. Conducting the study involved cooperation with Azerbaijani authorities such as the Ministry of Industry and Economy and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (State Construction), the State Agency on Renewable and Alternative Energy Sources, as well as collaboration with district state forestry enterprises, local authorities and municipalities.

The study conducted interviews with civil works companies, local authorities and local administration in the two selected communities in order to assess the real use of fuelwood and construction materials in each community as well as any energy-saving methods used by civil construction businesses. For instance, the study surveyed the materials used in doors, windows, walls and ceilings and calculated average heat loss that buildings would experience based on the materials they were constructed with. This part of the study, along with information collected on the equipment used for heating, is a key element in estimating
real use of fuelwood in order to fulfill heating needs by local population. Finally, the study presents an estimation of the costs required to reconstruct and refurbish existing dwellings in order to increase energy efficiency.

In relation to the use of firewood for heating, the study found that firewood is the preferred source of energy due to constant power outages in surveyed areas occurring 10 to 15 years ago. Similarly, infrastructure for gas provision is not widely available in the area. In terms of renewable energy sources, the study identified insufficient financial resources, and technical and geographic obstacles to the establishment of small-scale hydropower stations in the mountainous village of Saritala. Another main problem identified in both locations is the generalized lack of knowledge and awareness of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency and saving practices.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.**

How it was addressed:

The study performs an in-depth analysis and quantification of the energy efficiency of constructed civil buildings based on construction materials historically and traditionally used in surveyed areas. It also provides detailed estimates of average heat loss and energy requirements (namely firewood) that are therefore required to meet people’s heating needs. By performing this analysis, the study provides insights into the drivers behind illegal logging in the areas based solely on the need to provide heating.

**Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.**

How it was addressed:

The study conducted interviews with civil works companies, local authorities and local administration in the two selected communities in order to assess the real use of fuelwood and construction materials in each community as well as any energy-saving methods used by civil construction businesses. Insights on current construction practices and the challenges for introducing renewable energy sources in surveyed areas will assist Azerbaijani authorities such as the Ministry of Industry and Economy and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (State Construction), the State Agency on Renewable and Alternative Energy Sources, state forestry enterprises, local authorities and municipalities in their efforts to foster energy efficient construction practices, substitution of fuelwood as a heating source and a more sustainable use of forest resources in general.

**Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.**

How it was addressed:

The study will be made available through the ENPI EAST FLEG II website making the
results from the study readily available to the general public. Similarly, results will be shared with Azerbaijani authorities to assist in their efforts to design policy that encourages a more sustainable use of forest resources (particularly firewood) through government programs that target energy efficiency in Azerbaijan’s rural communities.
Georgia

X. Pest and Disease study and management in Georgia (EC CWP 2.3, ADA CWP 5.3)

Summary: This activity enabled the study of the negative effects of invasive species and pests in Georgian forests, particularly the effect of the invasive insect, *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*, on *Buxus colchica* forests (commonly referred to as boxwood). Since 2009, boxwood forests had shown signs of degradation due to unsustainable use; a condition that worsened with the arrival of the *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*. The Agency of Protected Areas (APA) and other Georgian authorities were very concerned about the status of the boxwood: a tree species of religious significance in Georgia and part of IUCN's Red List. However, the Georgian government lacked the capacity (both expert scientists and laboratories) to adequately study the status of boxwood population.

“For this reason, [the authorities] turned to IUCN and we began a very fruitful collaboration to stem the spread of the disease, we were asked to intervene and devise a strategy to address this specific issue in protected areas. For this purpose, we decided to use our professional contacts and engage experts and research centres from around the world” - Marika Kvatariashvili, FLEG II Country Program Coordinator for IUCN in Georgia – News article: “New Moves to Combat Forest Pests and Diseases in Georgia” and “Moving on the International Chessboard to Save Boxwood”.

The study consisted of two phases. The first phase studied the status of forests under the jurisdiction of the APA in Mitrala National Park, Kintrishi Protected Areas and Ajameti Managed Reserve. Meanwhile, the second phase studied the status of forests in five areas of the country under the National Forestry Agency’s (NFA) jurisdiction. As a result of these studies, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MoENRP) has developed a national plan to address the pest problem in at-risk forest areas that require special treatments. Similarly, this activity has fostered an initiative to establish a MoENRP-owned laboratory.

The study was conducted by Ukrainian specialist Dr. Iryna Matsiakh, Assistant at the Forestry Department of the Ukrainian National Forestry University in Lviv, and involved considerable international collaboration: boxwood samples collected in 2014 and 2015 were analyzed in specialized laboratories in Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda**

How it was addressed:

The studies performed in collaboration with the APA and NFA resulted in two remarkable publications about the status of pests and diseases in forests in Georgia (the *Assessment of Forest Pests and Diseases in Protected Areas of Georgia* and the *Assessment of Forest Pests and Diseases in Native Boxwood Forests of Georgia*). With the information provided by these studies, the MoENRP established a national plan to address boxwood forests’ pests and diseases. The plan outlines actions to be taken during 2016 and 2017 and is expecting...
approval from the Georgian government.

“We were not fully aware of the gravity of the spread of pests and diseases in our forests. FLEG II made available to us a great amount of information which is indispensable to proceed with the next steps”. - Ms. Natia Iordanishvili, Head of the Forest Protection and Reforestation Department of NFA – News article: “New Moves to Combat Pest and Diseases in Georgia”.

Element 3. Strengthen, as needed, inter-agency cooperation as well as human and institutional capacity, particularly among law enforcement and judicial authorities to enforce forest-related legislation

How it was addressed:

FLEG II served as a source of knowledge to assess state of pests in Georgian forests under the jurisdiction of two different agencies, the APA and NFA, and design a plan that implies remedial actions to address effects of pest in forests at a national level. Similarly, the MoENRP plans to establish its own laboratory to be able to obtain accurate scientific knowledge to guide future actions to combat pests and diseases in Georgian forests.

During 2014, Dr. Matsiakh worked with Dr. Volodimir Kramarets, Associate Professor at the Ukrainian National Forestry University in Lviv and surveyed the status of boxwood in Mtskheta National Park, Kintrishi Protected Areas, and Ajameti Managed Reserve. Their findings were used by the Planning and Development Division of APA. As Khatuna Tsiklauri, the main specialist of Natural Resources at the Planning and Development Division of APA said, “[the] rigorous assessment and analysis carried out by FLEG in Georgian protected areas were fundamental to support my work at the Agency”. – News Article: “Moving on the International Chessboard to Save Boxwood”.

Similarly, in summer 2015, Dr. Matsiakh collaborated with Giorgi Mamadashvili, Senior Specialist at the Forest Maintenance and Reforestation Department of NFA when performing a 16 day field trip to five selected regions of Georgia to analyze the status of boxwood forests managed by the NFA. “It was a very useful field trip for me. My responsibility at the National Forestry Agency is to address the problem of forest infestations, and I learned a lot from FLEG. This activity proved invaluable to us, as we were able to share precious information with the international community of experts”. - Giorgi Mamadashvili, – News Article: “Moving on the International Chessboard to Save Boxwood”.

Element 5. Formulate, within a reasonable timeframe, concrete actions under clearly defined targets, including monitoring of progress in implementation, e.g. by taking into account the recommendations of this Ministerial Declaration and annexed indicative list of actions in the national forest programmes or equivalent frameworks

How it was addressed:

On one hand, the MoENRP has established a national plan to address boxwood forests’ pests and diseases. The plan outlines actions to be taken during 2016 and 2017 and is expecting approval from the Georgian government. In the meantime, the MoENRP has released a video campaign named “Save the Box Tree” targeting heavy harvesting of boxwood by the population during Easter. The boxwood tree has an important religious significance in Georgia, it is considered a sacred tree that is cut and placed in homes during the season, adding pressure on boxwood population and facilitating the spread of boxwood...
pests and diseases across Georgia.

**Element 19. Strengthen international cooperation to build and enhance national institutional and human capacity as well as to facilitate technology transfer and information sharing to combat illegal logging and to promote trade in legally harvested timber**

How it was addressed:

The study of pests and diseases affecting boxwood forests in Georgia implied a large amount of international cooperation. Soil samples for the 2014 and 2015 studies in APA and NFA managed forests were analyzed in laboratories of the Forest Protection Department of the National Forestry University of Ukraine, the Forest Research Institute in Warsaw, Poland and the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland. Meanwhile, samples of symptomatic forest plants (*Buxus colchica* and *Quercus imeretina*) were analyzed in the DIABF University of Tuscia in Viterbo, Italy.

The scientific publications derived from the studies have contributed to the pool of scientific knowledge concerning pests and boxwood. Results have been presented across the region and permitted a collaboration between Dr. Matsiakh and Süleyman Demirel University in Isparta, Turkey, were she participated in a short-term scientific mission. Knowledge generated from boxwood in Georgia holds the potential to contribute greatly to the control of these pests in Turkish forests located in the same eco-region.

"Turkey, whose north-eastern part belongs to the same eco-region as Georgia, is facing a similar problem with invasive species. Therefore, it is extremely useful to combine our knowledge and try to find new methods to control these infectious agents". - Dr. Iryna Matsiakh, Assistant at the Forestry Department of the Ukrainian National Forestry University in Lviv, - News article: "Moving on the International Chessboard to Save Boxwood".

**XI. Support in development of state program on firewood, Georgia (ADA CWP 4.7, 4.9, 6.1)**

Summary: One of the main uses of forest resources in Georgia is as fuelwood, however, forests are of vital importance for the well-being of Georgians in ways that go well beyond providing fuel for heating and cooking. Forests in Georgia "provide long-term economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits, and play a vital role in meeting the energy needs of local populations." Therefore, the IUCN FLEG team started collaborating with the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) to raise awareness on the true value of forests and contribute to the creation of a national strategy to foster sustainable use of forest resources. During 2015, the IUCN FLEG team and CENN presented their opinions and suggestions to Georgian policy makers as a way to assist the Georgian government in its efforts to reform the forestry sector. As a result, the IUCN FLEG team and CENN worked together with the National Working Group established by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MoENRP) in order to obtain and accurate assessment of fuelwood needs in Georgia. The study revealed the gravity of the fuelwood provision issue in Georgia. As Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG Program Coordinator for IUCN Georgia, stated "[a]ccording to our preliminary calculations, we need about 3,285,000 m3 of firewood per year to heat the houses of the almost 550,000 Georgian families in need of fuel. The annual amount of firewood currently available is of approximately 188,000 m3: The shocking truth is
that there is a massive deficit. If we thought of bridging this gap exclusively through firewood, all Georgian forests would disappear in a few years”. – News Article – “Forest is not Firewood”37

The information provided by the IUCN FLEG team proved to be of great assistance to the Georgian government. In addition to estimating fuelwood needs for the entire country, it explores the regional availability of alternative energy sources such as coal, briquettes, and nutshell. Tornike Gvazava, Head of the National Forestry Agency (NFA) and FLEG Focal Point, pointed out that “[t]he pioneering work done by FLEG and CENN is of major importance for us. For our Agency, the real challenge remains the allocation of firewood to local households, which still represents our primary activity. The fact of having reliable data and analysis at our disposal is crucial to improve our services”. – News Article – “Forest is not Firewood”38.

The IUCN FLEG team has not only focused on providing accurate and credible information to policy makers, but it has also emphasized the need to incorporate the efforts of different government institutions and the civil society in addressing the energy needs of Georgia. Marika Kavtarishvili emphasized that “the burning issue of heating resources cannot be addressed by the MoENRP alone, but the Ministries of Finance, of Energy and of Regional Development and Infrastructure must play a central role in the debate. The National Forestry Agency is currently employing most of its staff in social cutting, that is the cutting of trees for non-commercial purposes to meet the energy needs of local households and state institutions. We think that this burden shouldn’t be borne by the NFA. The Government itself should take responsibility for this, so that the NFA could focus on activities fostering the sustainable management of forests”. Ms. Kavtarishvili also participated in a radio interview alongside Rezo Getiaishvili from CENN where they both talked about the issue of heating and use of firewood in Georgia as a means to raise awareness among the general public on the importance of the issue.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda

How it was addressed:

This IUCN FLEG activity has provided the Georgian government with accurate and information about the status of forest use in Georgia, specifically in terms of firewood consumption and needs. The information provided by the FLEG program has proven of great value for Georgian policy makers in their efforts to address the energy provision and sustainable forest management issue in Georgia. As Karlo Amirgulashvili, Head of the Forest Policy Service of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, mentioned “[t]he data on firewood need provided by FLEG is crucial in the discussion on the urgency of reforms both at the local and national levels. The FLEG team is bringing an invaluable contribution to the debate. The activities realised [sic] within FLEG Program are a precious support for our Ministry in the development of sectoral policies”. In this way, the FLEG team has not only helped raise issues of forest governance in Georgia’s national agenda but is actively and closely collaborating with policy makers in strategies to improve forest governance.
Element 3. Strengthen, as needed, inter-agency cooperation as well as human and institutional capacity, particularly among law enforcement and judicial authorities to enforce forest-related legislation

How it was addressed:

This activity has emphasized the need to take a national, inter-agency approach to solving the energy provision and fuelwood issue in Georgia. As noted by Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG Program Coordinator for IUCN Georgia, efforts to secure energy provision for Georgian citizens that do not jeopardize the stability and existence of Georgian forests in the long term require the collaboration between Georgia’s MoENRP with the Ministry of Finance, Energy, and Regional Development and Infrastructure. Georgia’s deficit of energy resources is so large (approximately 94%) that the MoENRP is unable to solve the problem by itself. The establishment of a collaborative National Working Group by the Georgian government and the use of information and recommendations provided by the FLEG team and CENN are indications that inter-agency collaboration to address energy provision issues in Georgia could happen in the near future.

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity

How it was addressed: The IUCN FLEG team along with its partners from CENN performed a detailed estimation of fuelwood use and needs in Georgia. The study highlighted the significant energy provision issues faced by Georgia. As Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG Program Coordinator for IUCN Georgia, stated “[a]ccording to our preliminary calculations, we need about 3,285,000 m3 of firewood per year to heat the houses of the almost 550,000 Georgian families in need of fuel. The annual amount of firewood currently available is of approximately 188,000 m3: The shocking truth is that there is a massive deficit. If we thought of bridging this gap exclusively through firewood, all Georgian forests would disappear in a few years”. – News Article – “Forest is not Firewood”39

The direct collaboration with MoENRP and the National Working Group to address the issue of energy provision and forestry reform in Georgia is proving to be a successful approach for the FLEG program to contribute to Georgia’s efforts to curtail unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as avoid a potentially disastrous use of forests in Georgia in the following years.

Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public

How it was addressed:

The IUCN FLEG team performed a detail study on fuelwood consumption and requirement in Georgia during 2015. The study’s findings were made available to Georgian policy makers participating in the National Working Group established by the MoENRP; information that has already proven useful to them. As Karlo Amirgulashvili, Head of the Forest Policy Service of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, mentioned “[t]he data on firewood need provided by FLEG is crucial in the discussion on the urgency of reforms both at the local and national levels.”40 Similarly, IUCN FLEG Program Country Coordinator, Marika Kavtarishvili participated in a radio interview alongside Rezo
Getiashvili from CENN where they both talked about the issue of heating and use of firewood in Georgia as a means to raise awareness among the general public on the importance of the issue.

**Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society**

How it was addressed:

The FLEG team has been actively collaborating with the Georgian government and local NGOs (such as CENN) to generate accurate information about fuelwood use and requirements in Georgia. Through their work assisting the Georgian government in the forestry sector reform processes, the FLEG team has facilitated the collaboration between government agencies and NGOs interested in the topic that hold great human capacity and knowledge to actively contribute to the national debate on forest policy. The FLEG team has also helped raise awareness on the magnitude of forest issues in Georgia, particularly those surrounding use of fuelwood, by engaging concerned citizens directly. IUCN FLEG Program Country Coordinator, Marika Kavtarishvili participated in a radio interview alongside Rezo Getiashvili from CENN where they both talked about the issue of heating and use of firewood in Georgia as a means to raise awareness among the general public on the importance of the issue.

XII. Tusheti Protected Landscape Community Management, Georgia (EC CWP 2.7)

Summary: Through this activity, the FLEG program had the opportunity to contribute to a historic and pioneering form of forest management by local authorities in the world: the Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration (TPLA). As of 2015, the TPLA is the formal administrative body of the Tusheti Protected Landscape, a category V protected area by IUCN, located in Akhmeta, Kakheti, in north-eastern Georgia. The fact that the Tusheti Protected Landscape is a category V protected area means that this is an “area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value; and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.”

The Tusheti Protected Landscape, though only being covered by forests in 10% of its area, is the home of the Tushetian ethnic minority in Georgia (approximately 100,000 people live in three villages at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains), a culture with a deep rooted connection to the area and traditions of forest management and interactions that date back to hundreds of years. Together with the Tusheti Strict Nature Reserve and Tusheti National Park, the Tusheti Protected Landscape is part of the 31’518 hectare Tusheti Protected Area and represents one of Europe’s largest protected areas.

In 2014, the Georgian Government officially transferred forest management control of the Tusheti Protected Landscape to the Tushetian people by authorizing the local TPLA to manage the forests in the Protected Area. In order to do this, the Georgian government “amended two forest laws allowing the Tusheti Protected Landscape to remain within the government controlled forest system, called the State Forest Fund, but under the management of the Akhmeta municipality which uses the TPLA as the managing agency.”
The FLEG II program team collaborated to this process by providing a technical and legal analysis explaining the legal basis for the management of a Protected Area in a structure such as the TPLA. They also provided technical support for the definition of the TPLA’s methodology for forest management and served as facilitators between community members, local Tushetian authorities and the Georgian government in the negotiations to define the legal framework, organization and management responsibilities that the TPLA would have. Currently, the TPLA consists of nine members, 7 of which are Tushetians, who are responsible for the management decisions regarding the forests within the Tusheti Protected Landscape. Merab Matchavariani, the National Forestry Consultant for FLEG II program in Georgia, noted that “Local control in Tusheti forests is a way to give the people who have lived in the area for centuries the ability to sustainably manage the forest to meet local forest needs, preserve their cultural heritage, and provide employment for local people in forest management, tourism, and recreation. The local administration is working hard to undertake all the necessary measures to establish proper forest management so it will be able to meet the primary objectives of ensuring the integrity of forest ecosystems and their ecological stability over the long run.” – News Article – “Home at Last: Tusheti Protected Landscape Officially Under Local Control”

The efforts by all those involved in the almost 10 year process permitted the creation of “the first case of decentralizing forest management in Georgia and the first time forests in Tusheti have been under local control since before the Soviet period began in Georgia in 1921.” As Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG II country program coordinator for IUCN Georgia and a native of the Tusheti region said “Tusheti is both a beautiful place with tremendous natural value and a place where people depend on the land for their livelihoods. This transition to local control can help both the forest and the people living there, and a lot of work has gone into it from both the national and local levels to make sure it does.” – News Article – “Home at Last: Tusheti Protected Landscape Officially Under Local Control”

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

Element 2. Review and as needed update forest legislation and regulations, ensuring their coherence and harmonize these with legislation and policy in natural resource management and with relevant obligations under international agreements.

How it was addressed:

This activity included an analysis of the legal basis to uphold the validity of a local management structure of the Tusheti Protected Landscape in the form of the TLPA. IUCN FLEG Program Country Coordinator, Marika Kavtarishvili, performed said in-depth analysis and elaborated a report presented to the Georgian authorities (the study can be found on the GeoForest Portal in the following link http://enpi-fleg.ge/geoforestportal/index.php/en/publications-iucn). The IUCN FLEG II team and FLEG II consultants in Georgia collaborated with local Tusheti officials and the Georgian government in order to find the most adequate legal structure for the proposed local management authority that would manage the Tusheti Protected Landscape. In the end, the Georgian government amended two forest laws allowing the Tusheti Protected Landscape to remain within the government controlled forest system. The TPLA is constituted as a “non-commercial legal entity” which means that it can operate and raise money from outside the municipal government further ensuring its autonomy from the central Georgian government.
Element 3. Strengthen, as needed, inter-agency cooperation as well as human and institutional capacity, particularly among law enforcement and judicial authorities to enforce forest-related legislation

How it was addressed:

Establishing the TPLA was a long process that lasted almost a decade and involved the collaboration and negotiation between the Georgian government at the national level, the Agency of Protected Areas within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, local Tushetian authorities and the Tushetian people to establish the mechanisms through which the Tusheti Protected Landscape would be managed in a way that respected its Natural Protected Area status as well as the traditional relationship between Tushetians and their surrounding forests. The FLEG II program was a key facilitator of the process through which these agencies and stakeholders interacted and negotiated the details of what would become the TPLA. The FLEG II program also provided technical assistance for TPLA managers to develop their forest management methodology and facilitated the participation of TPLA rangers in a series of trainings on how to prosecute forest crimes (particularly those related to illegal extraction of fuelwood for household heating and cooking).

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

The FLEG II program served as a facilitator in a process that would empower Tushetians to manage the Tusheti Protected Landscape in a way that would foster the preservation of its status as a category V protected area: that is, in a manner that ensures environmental sustainability and the preservation of cultural, social and economic uses of the forests in the Tusheti Protected Landscape. This process is key in addressing the driving causes for illegal extraction of wood for local consumption by Tushetians. In this sense, Richard Aishton, IUCN FLEG Programme Coordinator, explained that “[s]ucceeding in our work in Georgia and other FLEG countries depends on us establishing a much better understanding of how the people who live in forest landscapes depend on healthy, functioning forests,” News Article – “Preparing the final mile in historic handover of Georgian forest protection to local control”

Element 6. Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.

How it was addressed:

The establishment of the TPLA required negotiations with the Tushetian people and the assurance that their traditional ways of living and interacting with the forests would be preserved under the new local management of the Tusheti Protected Landscape. In many ways, the efforts performed by the FLEG II team consisted of assisting local authorities and
the Georgian government clarify the rights of access and use of local forests by local citizens, and the responsibilities that a local management agency would have over protecting the forests and enforcing forest legislation in the area. Clarifying these aspects of the transition to a locally managed Protected Area was key to garnering the support of Tushetians for the project and facilitating the final steps of the process to take place.

**Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.**

How it was addressed:

The efforts of the IUCN FLEG team during FLEG II and the final process to devolve authority and management of the Tusheti Protected Landscape to the TPLA revolved around clarifying the legal bases for such authority transfer over a protected area and facilitating negotiations between all stakeholders involved in a way that the Georgian government would have certainty that the principles of sustainable management of forests would be applied and the rights of Tushetians to access the forests would be preserved. The process involved engaging and collaborating directly with government agencies, local authorities and Tushetians. In this sense, having a local Tushetian as part of the FLEG II team proved of vital importance for the process to succeed as Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG II country program coordinator for IUCN Georgia, represented a credible and trusted figure by both Georgian government officials and Tushetians alike.

**XIII. Forest Law enforcement work, Georgia (EC CWP 4.1, ADA CWP 5.1)**

Summary: This activity refers to the trainings with Protected Area rangers organized in July 2015 by the FLEG II program. In total, 40 rangers and other officials from the Agency of Protected Areas along with rangers from the Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration participated in the training sessions in Borjomi (Western Georgia) and Kvareli (Eastern Georgia). The workshop consisted of a five day, hands-on field practice followed by mock trails where actual judges presided over the proceedings. The objective of this activity was to provide rangers with the knowledge and practice to investigate, gather evidence, and follow the legal procedure required to prosecute forest violations effectively. Issues of illegal logging, particularly for the procurement of fuelwood for cooking and heating by households in rural communities is a matter of great concern in Georgia as illegal extraction of firewood increases pressure on forest resources and jeopardizes the long term sustainability of Georgian forests. During mock procedures, rangers had to collect and present evidence before judges to prosecute forest crimes. Mistakes, no matter how small, done by rangers sometimes resulted in the guilty party to go free. This gave a sense of realism to the trainings that helped rangers practice under circumstances that closely mimic those of an actual proceeding. As Mr. Vaja Cherkezishvili, the head of security division in Vashlovani Protected Areas and a participant in the trainings, noted “during my more than 20 years of working for the Protected Areas Administration, this is one of the best trainings I have ever attended. Even when we know the procedures, the mock trials really helped me see how one simple mistake in the real world can be enough to unravel all of our enforcement efforts.” – News article – “Role Playing Brings Real Solutions”

A remarkable aspect of the training was the fact that two active judges participated in the
trainings: one from Tbilisi Court of Appeals and one from Borjomi Magistrate Court (which has under its jurisdiction large parts of the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park in southern Georgia). In order to be able to participate, the High Council of Georgia had to grant permission to the judges to be hired as trainers by the Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPEL) Environmental Information and Education Center. The Government of Georgia issued a special resolution that allowed the judges to be hired by the Center. A considerable amount of inter-agency cooperation had to occur for these trainings to take place. It was the first time environmental protection agencies in Georgia collaborated directly with the Judiciary and it’s a testament of the Georgian government’s commitment, across different levels and jurisdictions, with improving forest governance in Georgia.

Referring to the trainings, Ms. Shorena Kavelashvili, the judge from the Tbilisi Court of Appeals, said “[t]he training is dealing with the issues which at the end will ensure that the process of revealing and addressing the violations and presenting the facts and evidences at the court is done in a proper manner. This in turn will guarantee that justice will be in place and none of the offenders stay without appropriate sanctions, which is also the best way of preventing illegal actions. The fact that the rangers and judges are sitting at one table and discussing all those legal aspects of the challenges and problems arising in daily work is very essential.” – News article – “Role Playing Brings Real Solutions”

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda.

How it was addressed:

In order for the trainings to take place, several levels of government had to collaborate with each other. In particular, the Government of Georgia had to issue a special resolution that allowed active judges to be hired by the LEPEL Environmental Information and Education Center (under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resource Protection). At the same time, the High Court of Georgia had to grant permission for these judges to attend the trainings and directly engaged the forest rangers being trained on topics of how to adequately prosecute forest crimes. Forest crimes, particularly those related to illegal logging and extraction of fuelwood, are of great significance in Georgia as most of illegal logging in the country is done to obtain firewood for household heating and cooking. “Large-scale illegal logging is not as rampant here as it is in some Eastern European countries, but evidence shows there is significant illegal harvest of fuelwood, like in the scenario used as an example in the Borjomi training, to be sold to or used by local communities for heating their homes. This illicit collection, and other illegal forest activities such as illegal grazing and overharvesting are all threatening the resources local communities depend on.”

Element 3. Strengthen, as needed, inter-agency cooperation as well as human and institutional capacity, particularly among law enforcement and judicial authorities to enforce forest-related legislation.

How it was addressed:

The trainings involved a lot of cooperation both from high-level Georgian government agencies and branches as from individual members of the Agency of Protected Areas and
the Judiciary. In terms of the support and cooperation from Georgia’s Agency of Protected Areas, not only were Protected Area rangers partaking in the trainings, but the hands-on field workshops took place in forests under the protection of the Agency. At some point of the training, active judges would engage with Protected Area rangers to explain the reasons behind specific aspects of a forest crime prosecution procedure in order for rangers to fully comprehend the rationale behind each step of legal proceedings. As Ms. Shorena Kavelashvili, the judge from the Tbilisi Court of Appeals participating in the trainings, highlighted “[t]he fact that the rangers and judges are sitting at one table and discussing all those legal aspects of the challenges and problems arising in daily work is very essential.” – News article – “Role Playing Brings Real Solutions”51

As a result of the trainings, Georgian Protected Areas rangers now have an increased human capacity to deal with forest crimes and be more effective at curtailing said activities. As Marika Kavtarishvili, FLEG II country program coordinator for IUCN Georgia, commented on the trainings “[t]he cooperation between FLEG II, the donors, the Agency of Protected Areas, the LEPL Environmental Information and Education Centre, the High Council of Justice and all of the others who made these trainings possible really paid off. The rangers and administrators managing our Protected Areas have new tools and new perspectives to help them enforce the laws in place to protect Georgia’s forests and ensure the resources communities need will be there for them now and into the future.” – News article – “Role Playing Brings Real Solutions”52

XIV. Information flow, public awareness and participation, Georgia (EC CWP 5.3, 5.4, ADA CWP 4.4, 4.5)

Summary: The IUCN FLEG Program performed a series of activities in Georgia aimed at increasing the availability and easy access of forest related information to the general public. The IUCN FLEG Program explored different avenues simultaneously to increase diffusion of accurate and credible information on Georgina forests. On one hand, they established an online portal containing the Forest Resource Center and the GeoForest Portal http://enpi-fleg.ge/geoforestportal/index.php/en/ (EC CWB 5.3, ADA CWP 4.4 and 4.5). On another hand, they engaged communities directly in order to raise awareness on sustainability and forest management issues (EC CWP 5.4).

The Forest Resource Center includes a wide array of forest related information in Georgia such as scientific publications, legislation, best practices, management practices, links to forestry sector public organizations, and Non-governmental and scientific institutions. The Forest Resource Center also aims to be a hub where knowledge transfer (both global-to-local as local-to-global) can occur. Meanwhile, the GeoForest Portal is a reservoir of forests maps and geospatial information that can be used to create thematic maps for forests, climate change, and population dissemination.53 The portal offers a wide range of information to forest sector stakeholders and the general public. For instance, maps showing and tracking changes in forest cover, fuelwood requirements or the area, presence of forest diseases and pests, or fire affected areas can be accessed by anyone on the website.

Community engagement efforts trained woodcarvers living adjacent to different protected areas across Georgia. Trainings reviewed aspects of forest management and governance, sustainable forest use, tourism, and marketing related to woodcarving. The main objective of this activity is to raise local communities’ awareness on sustainability and management issues at the same time they learn about the opportunities for revenues obtained legally and
sustainably.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 7.** Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

This activity created a platform through which interested parties, from high level officials to ordinary citizens, could easily become informed about the issues affecting Georgina forests and the policies, programs, best practices, and efforts being done to address them. GeoForest Portal is available both in Georgian and English and is administered by the ENPI FLEG program. An easily accessible, large reservoir of forest related information contributes to the efforts of the Georgian government and civil society to improve on their forest governance and sustainability. It helps raise awareness on the main issues being currently faced by Georgia as well as highlight the options, best practices and strategies available to different stakeholders to address these issues and perhaps also provides inspiration to come up with new policies and programs to continue striving for a more sustainable forestry sector in Georgia.

**Element 9.** Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

How it was addressed:

The GeoForest Portal serves as a hub where forest related information relevant to Georgia can be easily accessed. Visitors can explore different sections of the user friendly website (mostly available both in Georgian and English) based on their particular interests. For instance, users can learn about forest legislation, institutional arrangements and forest management. They can also access interactive maps of Georgia’s forest cover, deforestation, presence of pests and diseases, forest dependence and firewood resource availability. The website also lists forest related organizations both at a national and international level. It has links and information on education on forestry topics as well as direct links to publications and geospatial data on relevant forestry topics in Georgia.

**Element 11.** Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.

How it was addressed:

This activity engaged the public both directly and indirectly. The GeoForest Portal provides a platform for any interested member of the public to access forest related information online. Meanwhile, trainings for woodcarvers in local communities surrounding natural protected areas in Georgia represent a direct engagement with Georgian citizens to raise awareness on forest issues. In both cases, this activity contributes to empowering Georgian citizens with information about their forests and ways in which they can actively contribute to their sustainable use.
XV. Forest Functionality work, Georgia (EC CWP 2.2 ADA CWP 4.6)

Summary: Building upon the findings of the Forest Dependence study in Georgia, this activity worked in the communities of Tianeti, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, and Chokhatauri to obtain further information about the relationship between these communities and their natural resource base. Furthermore, the activity aims to provide examples of how carefully planned interventions using IUCN’s experience in Forest Landscape Restoration can improve the conditions of degraded forest areas. The activity refined the information obtained during the Forest Dependence study in order to provide policy makers with “concrete and measurable results that would assist them in dealing with the complexities in sustainable forest management that arise from the interactions of economics, a broad range of social issues and environmental management.” – Marika Kavtarishvili, FELG II Country Program Coordinator for IUCN in Georgia, personal communication August 15 2016. In sum, the activity provided quantifiable, credible information on how a fully-functioning forest can contribute to rural community development.

Based on this knowledge and insights the IUCN engaged a series of key partners and stakeholders at the community, local government and national environmental protection levels in order to implement pilot interventions of forest landscape restoration following IUCN’s Guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM). The objective of these pilot interventions is to create the basis for a wider application of the FLR initiative in Georgia in a manner that is both environmentally sound and contributes to rural development.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda.

How it was addressed:

This activity is aligned with forest policy in Georgia at a national level that establish the need to define the real value of forests for Georgian society. By obtaining in-depth information about the way in which economics, social issues and environmental management interact within rural communities provides key insights about how these communities relate to their surrounding forests. This information proves of great value for Georgian government officials as they define strategies to foster sustainable use of forests and economic development in rural communities. For this reason, IUCN FLEG team had the support from different levels of the Georgian government in order to be able to work with the communities of Tianeti, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Chokhatauri and establish pilot projects of Forest Landscape Restoration in them.

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

This activity builds upon the knowledge derived from the Forest Dependence study in Georgia that provided detailed information on the use of forest resources by rural communities. The activity obtained a deeper understanding of the interconnections between
economic, social and environmental factors that determine the use of forest resources in these communities. Therefore, this activity represents a step further than the Forest Dependence study in understanding the underlying dynamics that drive illegal extraction of forest resources as well as allowing them to identify key areas of opportunity to mitigate such practices using the Forest Landscape Restoration approach.

EC CWP 2.2 ADA CWP 4.6 Forest Functionality work: The need to define the real value of forests has been outlined in the forest policy documents in Georgia. Based on this, FLEG worked in selected communities to gather and refine the information that can be used to evaluate how to optimize the environmental, social and economic benefits of forests. Within this work selected 4 communities in Georgia – Tianeti, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Chokhatauri were analyzed to help quantify the relationship between rural communities and their natural resource base. The analyses provided concrete, measurable results to help decision-makers sort through the complexities created by the interaction of economics; broad ranges of social issues; and environmental management. The above work provided valuable and quantifiable information on forest dependency. Moreover, it also quantified how a fully-functioning forest contributes to rural community development. As a follow up, IUCN is working on transition from the FD study (an assessment) to testing an intervention opportunity by utilizing IUCN’s experience in Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) for the above mentioned target regions of country. The work will utilize the principles of IUCN’s Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

This activity aims to implement a pilot forest landscape restoration projects in studied communities that will follow the IUCN’s Guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM). The implementation of pilot activities involves the collaboration with key partners and stakeholders at the community, local government and national environmental protection levels to collectively identify degraded forest areas, buffers, and newly ‘in-grown’ abandoned agricultural fields that could be targeted for restoring functionality. Engaging these wide range of stakeholders empowers community members and local authorities in the protection of the forest resource base they depend upon. At the same time, it increases the likelihood that forest landscape restoration efforts will be successful as they will have the communities’ and authorities’ buy-in for project implementation.
Moldova

XVI. Forest Ecosystem Services Analysis, Moldova (CWP 3.)

Summary: The Forest Ecosystem Services (FES) study in Moldova identifies the main FES that benefit Moldovan society. The study draws on preexisting information on Moldova's economic sectors relevant to forests, meetings and discussions with representatives of Moldovan forestry institutions, background studies performed both during the ENPI FLEG program and other initiatives in Moldova to estimate the value of the most relevant ecosystem services for Moldovan society.

In order to perform this analysis, the study focused on studying rural communities, where around 50% of the population of Moldova lives, and it offers insights, facts and conclusions regarding the relationship between local communities and FES. The study supplemented information derived from surveys in rural communities with information from national statistics and research. Supplemental data served as the main source of information through which the economic, social and environmental benefits that forests provide to communities were identified.

One of the main objectives of the study was to provide credible, quantifiable information about FES and their relation to key Moldovan economic sectors. The study focused on analyzing FES for the agriculture, water management, tourism, fishing, natural disaster, and climate change mitigation sectors due to their cross-sectional linkages with forests. The information contained in the study hopes to become a valuable resource for policy makers in each sector. Some of the FES that were analyzed include provision of habitats for diversity, soil protection, water regulation and carbon sequestration. These FES were estimated in monetary terms, providing key data for policy analysis.

In addition to estimating the value for Moldova's most relevant FES, the study identifies key areas where forests ecosystem are being unsustainably managed and the associated economic long term costs that they pose for Moldova. It also describes the benefits of transitioning towards a sustainable ecosystem management approach (SEM), and outlines a series of recommendations to facilitate the design of policies and actions to increase sustainability of Moldova’s forest ecosystems.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda.

How it was addressed:

The FES study provides high quality, detailed information on the economic benefits that key sectors of the Moldovan economy obtain from forest ecosystems. The study estimates and compares the benefits and costs of maintaining business as usual scenarios (BAU) with those of establishing a sustainable ecosystem management approach in those Moldovan sectors. The value of total ecosystem services provided by Moldovan forests was estimated at around $68.9 million. This information, along with the detailed recommendations of the study, provides an extremely valuable resource for Moldovan politicians, policy makers and other interested parties when discussing, evaluating and deciding forest management programs in Moldova. As Petru Rotaru, FLEG Focal Point for Moldova and Chief of the
Department of Forestry, Hunting and Protected Areas at Moldsilva, said “Moldsilva is the main beneficiary of the results of FLEG, and data obtained from FLEG analyses have been taken into great consideration in designing policy and strategies for a sustainable development of Moldovan forest resources” – News article – “Forest Ecosystem Services Discussed with Local Stakeholders in Moldova”.

**Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.**

How it was addressed:

The FES study preformed surveys in rural communities in Moldova in order to adequately assess the benefits they derive from forest ecosystems. This study also contributed to understanding the dynamics and relation of communities with the forests they depend on. In this sense it is a study that complements the forest dependency of rural communities performed in Moldova in 2014. By providing accurate and detailed information on the value of FES, the study helps not only increase the understanding of forest-dependent communities and their needs, but also helps raise their main challenges and issues to the highest level of government planning. In this way, the study hopes to contribute to the design and implementation of policies for forest management that have a positive impact on the well-being of forest-dependent communities and their surrounding forests.

**Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.**

How it was addressed:

The FES study provides accurate information on the status of forests in Moldova and the key services they provide for the Moldovan people, their safety and economic prosperity. This information is being used in order to raise awareness on forest issues across all sectors of Moldovan society. An example is the presentation by IUCN FLEG Country Program Coordinator, Aurel Lozan, on Agro TV about the status of agroforestry in Moldova. A link to the presentation can be found on the news article – “Agroforestry in Moldova: Aurel Lozan, FLEG Country Program Coordinator, on Agro TV to discuss this topic”. The study itself, Evaluation of Forest Ecosystem Services (FES) in the Republic of Moldova, is available on the ENPI FLEG website.

XVII. Comparative Legal Analysis, Moldova (CWP.6)

Summary: During 2014 and 2015, IUCN FLEG II performed a comparative analysis of Moldova’s forest legal framework with international legislation (particularly that of the EU) and neighboring countries. The study analyzed the Forest Code adopted in 1996 that has been amended several times since its proclamation. It also held discussions with experts working in forestry and related sectors in Moldova, for instance, the environment, agricultural, and regional development sectors. It reviewed a wide range of policy and legal documents such as: international policy documents relating to forestry and biodiversity, independent reports on Moldova’s legal framework, forestry acts of EU members and other
ex-soviet societies (namely Romania and Ukraine), and Moldovan national policy documents as well as legal and regulatory acts. IUCN FLEG consultants also met with national and international experts, and participated in thematic events organized around forestry topics.

As a result of the extensive review of documents and exchanges with experts, the study identified several areas of forest resource management in Moldova that urgently require reform for sustainable management of forest resources. One key element identified is the need for separation of functions and attributions of forestry stakeholders. The objective of the study was to provide a comprehensive picture of Moldova's forestry sector legal framework and present an independent opinion on its effectiveness. The recommendations and opinions presented in the study aim to assist Moldovan authorities improve the legal framework to ensure sustainable management and conservation of the country's forest resources.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 2.** Review and as needed update forest legislation and regulations, ensuring their coherence and harmonize these with legislation and policy in natural resource management and with relevant obligations under international agreements.

*How it was addressed:*

This activity produced a comprehensive analysis of Moldovan forest legislation and compared it with those of the European Union, Ukraine and Romania in order to identify key areas of improvement in terms of fostering sustainable forest management and address the main issues of Moldovan forests. The report outlines a series of concrete recommendations to improve different areas of Moldovan forest legislation including use of forest ecosystem services as an alternative for unsustainable forest management practices, use of conservation principles in forest management, climate change issues and forestry sector financing. The report concludes that one of the main aspects that need to be addressed in forestry legislation is clarity and ease of interpretation of legislation. The authors of the report emphasize the creation of a legal framework understandable for everyone and that raises awareness on the goods and services forests provide to society. Some of the main challenges identified are corruption, a highly politicized forestry sector, and neglect of the experience and professionalism of those working in forest management agencies. The report produced represents a useful tool for Moldovan authorities and law makers in their efforts to improve Moldova's forest legal framework.

**Element 4.** Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

*How it was addressed:*

The comprehensive and in depth-analysis of Moldova’s forest legal framework identifies areas where legislation fosters unsustainable use of forest resources such as ambiguous or confusing laws and codes or ambiguity in the different mandates and responsibilities of forestry instructions. The report outlines specific recommendations to improve the legal framework and address the forestry sector’s main issues. Some of the recommendations include the creation of a legal framework that is understandable for everyone and that raises awareness on the goods and services forests provide to society. Some of the main
challenges that were identified are corruption, a highly politicized forestry sector, and neglect of the experience and professionalism of those working in forest management agencies.

**Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.**

How it was addressed:

The report has been made publicly available to both Moldovan government officials as well as environmental NGO’s and the general public. In this way, all interested stakeholders can access the comparative analysis performed by IUCN FLEG II Program and raise awareness on the status of Moldova’s forestry legal framework and some proposals for its improvement based on best practices in neighboring countries and the EU. The report included the review of international policy documents relating to forestry and biodiversity, independent reports on Moldova’s legal framework (performed by the World Bank, IUCN, WWF and Soros Moldova Foundation), review of forestry acts of EU members and other ex-soviet societies (such as Romania and Ukraine) and the review of Moldovan national policy documents national legal and regulatory acts.

**Element 11. Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.**

How it was addressed:

The report has been made available to the public through its publication in the ENPI FLEG II website and Moldsilva Agency’s website along with some direct distribution among Moldovan public officials and NGOs in the forestry sector.

**Element 21. Cooperate with civil society including the private sector to inform consumers of the problems caused by illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.**

How it was addressed:

The report has been made available to the public through its publication in the ENPI FLEG II website and Moldsilva Agency’s website along with some direct distribution among Moldovan public officials and NGOs in the forestry sector.

**XVIII. Public Involvement and Communication, Moldova (CWP. 8)**

Summary: This activity refers to the collaboration from the FLEG II program and media agency Antis-Media with the Moldovan Government forestry agency Moldsilva in the implementation of their “Forest Communication and Knowledge Plan”. Agency Moldsilva’s “Forest Communication and Knowledge Plan” comprises their strategy to increase the level of awareness on forestry issues in Moldova, address concerns about corruption and transparency within the agency by improving their communications outlet and increase the amount of information on forest use and forestry sector financing that is available to the public. The IUCN FLEG team and Antis-Media have assisted Agency Moldsilva in the redesign of their website www.moldsilva.gov.md and in the organization of workshops designed to raise awareness about forest functioning and issues with Moldovan youth called “Discover your Forests”.

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**EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD AND PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT EAST COUNTRIES FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE II PROGRAM**

The Program is funded by the European Union and implemented by the World Bank in partnership with WWF and IUCN.
In terms of the improvements to Agency Moldsilva’s website, it is worth highlighting that information on timber auctions, public procurements, new legislation and policies, job positions in the forest sector, and best practices are now available to the general public. Similarly, as a result of the IUCN FLEG’s team input, Agency Moldsilva created the Department of Information and Public Communication to handle the agency’s engagement with the public. The general structure of the website was also updated to increase its user-friendliness and make it more appealing for people to visit, learn about forest issues and obtain information on how forest products are allocated and used within the country. According to Viorica Caciuc, Moldsilva Press Officer, “[a]s a result of FLEG’s inputs, public awareness on these subjects has increased significantly. The new version of Moldsilva’s communications strategy represents a necessary step towards the improvement of our communication and transparency procedures, as this is the most important communication-related document of our Agency.” – News article – “Communication and Transparency: Building Bridges between Moldsilva and Moldovan Citizens”

Meanwhile, the IUCN-FLEG team and Antis-media assisted Agency Moldsilva organize workshops in Moldovan Nature Reserves with young students and children. During the workshops, children would get guided tours of forests, learn about forest functioning, major threats to forests and how sustainable ways of living can contribute to reducing stress on forest resources. Each workshop held includes a contest where the children can put their newly acquired knowledge to the test and earn prices. This part of Agency Moldsilva’s “Communication and Knowledge Plan” aims to foster young people’s interest in forest issues and engage the future generation of foresters and socially aware citizens. As Vlad Dilma, chairman of the NGO Defensiv Club who help organize a workshop in 2015 noted, “[e]verything is about our attitude towards nature and the forests in particular, and about how we protect forests and keep them safe from being polluted and destroyed. A healthy environment means a healthy society and vice-versa, so this event is just an excellent moment for the young generation to prove this right here at this beautiful Nature Reserve”. – News Article – “FLEG brings young generations to forests”

St. Petersburg Elements covered:
Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda.

How it was addressed:
The IUCN FLEG team has consistently worked to raise awareness on critical issues surrounding forest use in Moldova both within the government as among the general public. During this activity, the IUCN FLEG team collaborated with Agency Moldsilva to increase the amount of information available to the public and address society’s requests for greater transparency (Almazán et.al. 2016). This efforts represent considerable improvements in terms of transparency and its relevance to raise awareness of forest issues and the efforts being made to address them. As Viorica Caciuc, Moldsilva Press Officer said, “[d]uring the past few years, the activities undertaken by the ENPI FLEG Program, in collaboration with Moldsilva, have enriched and stimulated the debate about forest-related issues in Moldovan media. FLEG studies on topics such as wood consumption, illegal logging, and timber traceability, constitute the primary source of most journal articles in the sector”. - News Article – “Communication and Transparency: Building Bridges between Moldsilva and
Moldovan Citizens

**Element 4.** Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

This activity helps address issues of corruption associated to illegal logging activities by increasing transparency from Agency Moldsilva in the form of improving their website (their main outlet and communication avenue with the general public). A more engaged and informed civil society will have greater tools to monitor efforts done to curtail illegal logging and address issues of corruption and mismanagement within Agency Moldsilva. At the same time, engaging younger generations of Moldovans to raise awareness on forestry issues related to unsustainable use of forest resources helps foster change within Moldovan society towards a more sustainable management of forests in the long term.

**Element 7.** Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

This activity represents a collaboration between the IUCN FLEG team and Agency Moldsilva in their efforts to directly engage civil society and younger generations of Moldovans in order to increase transparency within the institution and foster sustainable use of forest resources. The activity itself represents the engagement between the government and members of the private sector (Antis-Media) and NGOs (Sportiv Club) in their efforts to foster greater transparency in Moldova and a more active civil society from a young age. Similarly, Agency Moldsilva has set up a “hot-line” that allows members of the general public to report forest crimes directly to the agency in an anonymous way (Almazán et.al. 2016).

**Element 9.** Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

How it was addressed:

This activity’s main contribution to disseminating transparent information lies on the improvements done to Agency Moldsilva’s website. The number of visitors to the website has greatly increased since its modification as it is now more appealing and easy to navigate. Similarly, new sections were added including those that provide information on timber auctions, public procurments, new legislation and polices, job positions in the forest sector, and best practices.

**Element 11.** Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society.

How it was addressed:

This activity raises awareness on forest issues and engages stakeholders in two different
On one hand, this activity helps increase the level of information on forest issues to the general public by assisting Agency Moldsilva improve their main communication avenue with the public (their website). On the other hand, this activity helps with the organization of workshops designed to raise awareness among Moldovan youth on the most pressing forest issues that the country faces and on ways they, as younger generations, can contribute to combat illegal logging and unsustainable use of forest resources.

**Element 14. Support cooperation to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife associated with illegal logging, including through cooperation with CITES.**

How it was addressed:

This activity supports cooperation to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife by improving the availability of related information through official government channels (Agency Moldsilva's website). Similarly, the agency’s “hot-line” to report forest crimes represents a tool for Moldovan citizens to contribute to the fight against poaching and illegal trade in wildlife by reporting any suspect activity they may witness in an anonymous way.

**XIX. Eco-forest journalist training, Moldova (CWP. 9)**

Summary: This activity consisted of a series of trainings for 15 journalists in how to report on forestry topics with an adequate level of understanding of forest terminology, forestry issues in Moldova and technical knowledge about forests. 15 journalists were selected through a national application process. Trainings occurred between May 2014 and June 2015, they were organized by the Moldovan Association of Environmental and Eco-tourism Journalists (AJMTEM) in close collaboration with IUCN FLEG and Agency Moldsilva experts. The trainings included an inception training at the Plaiul Fagului Nature Reserve and a site study and training at Codrii Nature Reserve. This trainings consisted of a theoretical and practical part where journalists were able to go into the field and learn about forests and forest issues directly. It also included two meetings with FLEG and Moldsilva experts on forest governance in Moldova and EU countries. A journalism contest on best materials relating FLEG and forestry topics was also organized. The contest was open to all journalists in Moldova as there was a public request for materials. Seven out of the 15 participants in the trainings earned a diploma and an economic prize as a result of their participation in the contest.

One of the main objectives of the trainings was to raise the quality of news stories and materials on forestry topics as well as increase journalists’ interest in them. A lot of emphasis was placed on the understanding and correct use of forest related terminology as well as an understanding of forests and its main issues in Moldova. After the success of the first contest, agency Moldsilva has stated that they will continue to hold such practice in the future to continue fostering journalists’ interest in forestry topics and their accurate reporting.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

**Element 14. Support cooperation to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife associated with illegal logging, including through cooperation with CITES.**

How it was addressed:

This activity contributes with the efforts from the Moldovan government, NGO’s, and international organizations to combat wildlife poaching and trade by increasing the capacity
and interest of journalist in Moldova to report accurately these issues. A higher awareness and accurate reporting on wildlife poaching and illegal trade helps increase the level of monitoring by civil society on the efforts being made to combat these activities along with potentially fostering conscious consumer decisions, thereby helping reduce demand of wildlife traded illegally.

Element 16. Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.

How it was addressed:
This activity contributes with the efforts from the Moldovan government, NGO's, and international organizations illegal logging and its associated trade and corruption by increasing the capacity and interest of journalist in Moldova to report accurately these issues.

As Cristina Chiron, a journalist participating in the trainings and winner of the contest held after them said, “Participation in this training program organized by AJMTEM supported by FLEG East ENI was interesting and useful for me. I learned things and new concepts that any environmental journalist has to know. Now not only I am careful when I write, but when I watch TV and I make remarks when the term "deforestation", eg., is used incorrectly.”

A higher awareness and accurate reporting on illegal logging issues and the measures being taken to combat them helps increase the level of monitoring by civil society and its active participation in these efforts. It also has the potential to increase transparency and reduce corruption related to illegal logging by increasing the number of independent sources of information that are available to Moldovan society. Finally, increased awareness of the impacts of illegal logging potentially fosters conscious consumer decisions.

Element 21. Cooperate with civil society including the private sector to inform consumers of the problems caused by illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.

How it was addressed:
Increasing the human capacity of journalists to report on forest issues increases the quality and quantity of independent information related to forestry issues available to Moldovan society. Increased awareness on these issues empowers consumers to make responsible decisions, demand accountability from the government and private stakeholders involved in the forestry sector. It also highlights efforts done to curtail illegal logging and showcases the most effective policies and programs from an independent perspective. Finally, increased awareness on forestry issues fosters more participation from civil society and private sector stakeholders and collaboration with government agencies, helping continue efforts in combating illegal logging.

As Lucia Taut, another journalist participating in the trainings and winner of the contest held after them, said “The trainings organized during the year helped us to better understand how to use correctly forestry terms, how forestry employees work, what are the problems from the field. It is very useful to interact with land specialists. The visits to Nature Reserves „Plaiul Fagului” and „Codrii” helped us to understand what means a good forest management, which are the products and benefits from the forestry sector.”
Similarly, Svetlana Tataru, another journalist participating in the trainings and winner of the contest held after them, noted “Environmental themes were an area completely new to me and very different. But even it was very different it captivated me a lot. Moldova faces many problems in this field. By participating in the program, I was motivated to research a topic totally new for me - carbon sales - and this paper have to be accepted at an international conference in Pakistan. The appreciation of the jury from the national competition on forest themed journalistic materials motivates me to write more in this area.”
Ukraine
XX. Open Letter on Forest Reform Legislation, Ukraine

Summary: This activity corresponds to the joint efforts performed by the IUCN, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to convey their concerns to the Ukrainian Parliament regarding proposed forest reforms in December 2014. Shortly after the Maidan Revolution, the newly elected Parliament presented a forestry sector reform with three main proposals:

1. Banning timber exports from the Ukraine
2. Allowing the privatization of forestry areas
3. Discontinuing the issuance of new timber harvesting licenses.

In the opinion of IUCN, WWF and FSC, proposed reforms had the potential of severely damaging the Ukrainian forestry sector. As Roman Volosyanchuk, FLEG II Country Program Coordinator for IUCN in Ukraine mentioned, "[t]he reform package was developed in a very chaotic period of time, right after the revolution. The new incoming parliamentary members wanted to take prompt actions against corruption, but they did not carefully weigh the negative consequences of the changes suggested." – News Article – “Our Voice Matters”

Each one of the proposed measures was a source of concern for FLEG experts. However, one of them was of particular concern. Banning timber exports from the Ukraine represented a violation of the free trade agreement signed between the Ukraine and the European Union. It also represented a violation of World Trade Organization rules and was in principle contradictory to the ideals of democracy and with an open economy. Additionally, if the measure were to be implemented, the forestry sector in the Ukraine would experience a drop in the domestic prices of timber, temporarily benefitting the timber processing sector, but in the long term would have a severe detrimental impact on timber companies and threaten the livelihood of those most vulnerable working in the sector. For instance, Pavlo Kravets, FSC National Representative in Ukraine, voiced “[t]he negative impacts of the reform would exert a particularly detrimental effect on rural communities whose economy is more directly dependent on a productive forest sector. Among the most vulnerable individuals are women working in forest nurseries, who would be the first to lose their employment. We also need to consider that economic difficulties could encourage illegal activities such as uncontrolled timber harvesting”. – News Article – “Our Voice Matters”

The IUCN, WWF and FSC collaborated to express their concerns and draft alternative proposals to present to the Ukrainian Parliament through a document denominated “Open Letter”. After its presentation, however, some environmental NGOs felt that these international organizations were defending Ukrainian foresters and the interests of international timber companies. The reforms were being presented during a time of high political uncertainty when Ukrainian citizens were demanding more transparency and tougher measures against corruption in the government. Therefore, in order to dispel any misconceptions about the intentions behind the “Open Letter”, the IUCN, WWF and FSC held a roundtable with NGOs to initiate a dialogue and discuss their concerns. The roundtable was held in March 2015 and resulted in very positive and interesting conversations between FLEG experts and members of the environmental NGOs. As Dmytro Karabchuk, FLEG II Activity Coordinator for WWF in Ukraine, mentioned “[w]e had a very open exchange of ideas and a constructive debate which resulted in a unified position. Together with our partners, we prepared a petition in support of the Open Letter, which
received around 800 signatures.” – News Article – “Our Voice Matters”

In April 2015, after the efforts of the FLEG program through the “Open Letter” and the hard work of a wide range of other sectors of the Ukrainian society (including the government foresters) the measures to privatize forest areas and deny issuance of new timber harvesting licenses were removed from the proposed reforms to the Ukrainian forestry sector. In spite of the ban on timber exports being approved at the end of 2015, a new draft law was registered at the Ukrainian Parliament Secretariat the aims to cancel the newly imposed ban on timber exports. In light of the positive impact that the work of the FLEG program had in these crucial moment for the Ukrainian forestry sector, Richard Aishton, FLEG II Coordinator for IUCN, highlighted that “[t]his success is the result of a working method that characterizes our FLEG II Program and can be summarized in two words: dialogue & transparency. FLEG II Country Program Coordinators have established a dense network of professional relations with both public and private stakeholders through open and constructive dialogue. Their positions reflect high-quality, quantifiable analysis and are discussed in an open and transparent manner. This approach makes our experts trustworthy partners who are able to tangibly influence the governance of forest resources in the FLEG countries.” – News Article – “Our Voice Matters”

St. Petersburg Elements covered:

Element 1. Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda.

How it was addressed:

The joint collaboration of IUCN, WWF and FSC experts working in the Ukraine represented a commitment of the highest order to contributing with the preservation of the principles of sustainable forest management that the FLEG program pursues and their establishment as areas of concern in Ukrainian national governance and development agenda. By presenting their concerns around proposed forestry reforms in a diplomatic and transparent way, the IUCN, WWF and FSC were able to positively contribute to the reform dialogue regarding the forestry sector that took place in the times of political turmoil the followed the Maidan Revolution. In the end, measure that would have had a severely detrimental effect on the forestry sector and on the livelihoods of many Ukrainian citizens in rural communities were avoided. However, as the reform process continues, Mr. Volosyanchuk, IUCN Country Program Coordinator in the Ukraine reiterated, “[w]e are following the development of the situation very carefully. We stay at policy-makers’ disposal to provide expert guidance and improve forest governance in Ukraine”. – News Article – “Our Voice Matters”

Element 2. Review and as needed update forest legislation and regulations, ensuring their coherence and harmonize these with legislation and policy in natural resource management and with relevant obligations under international agreements.

How it was addressed:

This collaborative activity took an in-depth look at proposed forestry reforms in 2015 and developed a coherent and credible set of opinions that clearly voiced their expert concern on the potential detrimental consequences of implementing reforms. In the form of an “Open Letter” addressed to the Ukrainian Parliament, IUCN, WWF and FSC experts voiced their concern on how proposed forestry reforms would violate the free trade agreement signed by
the Ukraine with the European Union and violate World Trade Organization rules (potentially subjecting the Ukraine to sanctions from these entities).

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

The review of proposed forestry reforms also reveal how they had the potential to increase illegal logging in the Ukraine by jeopardizing the employment and livelihoods of those working in the timber and forest management sector, particularly those most vulnerable living in rural communities. In their analysis, IUCN, WWF and FSC experts considered the impact that reforms would have on people’s incentives to sustainably manage forest resources. As Pavlo Kravets, FSC National Representative in Ukraine, mentioned “[w]e also need to consider that economic difficulties could encourage illegal activities such as uncontrolled timber harvesting.” – News Article – “Our Voice Matters”

Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

After facing an initial negative perception from Ukrainian environmental NGOs to the “Open Letter” presented by IUCN, WWF and FSC; these international organizations held a roundtable with environmental NGOs to clarify the rationale behind their concerns for the proposed forestry reforms. The roundtable permitted and open and dynamic dialogue with members of the Ukrainian civil society that greatly enriched both parties perspectives on proposed reforms. In the end, the “Open Letter” obtained 800 signatures from different participants at the roundtable endorsing and supporting its contents.
Summary: This IUCN activity focused on fostering the development of eco-tourism in the community of Tsevlo near Polistovsky Natural Reserve in Bezhanitsy, North-Western Russia as a way to help solve the conflict between citizens and the PNR resulting from restrictions on the use non-timber forest resource in the areas within and around the Reserve. The activity spanned both FLEG I and FLEG II (2009-2012). The eco-tourism development alliance established between Polistovsky Natural Reserve and Tsevlo community members is expected to continue after the end of the FLEG program.

St. Petersburg Elements covered:
Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:
During the initial phase of the project the IUCN-FLEG team engaged Polistovsky Natural Reserve staff, local government officials and key community members to facilitate the process through which all parties involved could start finding solutions to the conflict between Tsevlo citizens and the PNR. The process focused on finding a project that could address the issue of access to non-timber forest resources by Tsevlo citizens in the areas near PNR. Any feasible solution would have to provide access to non-timber forest resources without incurring and jeopardizing the Natural Reserve. As a result of this process, all parties agreed on pursuing an eco-tourism project combining visits to PNR and use of non-timber forest resources from the Reserve's buffer zones to cater to tourists, and the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance was created.

Once the project was decided upon, the IUCN-FLEG team focused on offering expert advice to Polistovsky Natural Reserve and Tsevlo community members in their efforts to obtain external funding to establish the eco-tourism development alliance and performed required investments. Later on they provided their expert advice to community members to create solid business plans for potential eco-tourism related activities. Several examples of the resulting business ideas include the creation of a local history museum, a tour of to the nearby peat bog using rehabilitated train tracks as well as handicrafts workshops called "Master Classes". All these activities surrounding the eco-tourism project are providing community members with new livelihoods that use non-timber forest resources in a sustainable manner.

Element 5. Formulate, within a reasonable timeframe, concrete actions under clearly defined targets, including monitoring of progress in implementation, e.g. by taking

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1 A buffer zone, is an area where you are allowed to make low profile agriculture, hunting and non-timber resource use activities. The general rule is that you can do whatever you want but either in a non-commercial way, that is, without the help of any kind of machinery or what is historically maintaining your livelihood. (Almazán et.al., 2016, p. 95).
into account the recommendations of this Ministerial Declaration and annexed indicative list of actions in the national forest programmes or equivalent frameworks.

How it was addressed:

During the first year of the project, the IUCN assisted the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance in the definition of the projects road map and identification of funding sources to kick-start the project and enhance its financial sustainability in the long term. Similarly, IUCN consultants remained available to Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance members to provide expert advice on new business ideas and ways to increase tourist visits to the Polistovsky Natural Reserve. This way, the IUCN was able not only to assist in the long-term viability of the project but also monitor its development and fulfillment of objectives.

Element 6. Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.

How it was addressed:

The Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance addressed the existing conflict between protected areas legislation in Russia, specifically the access to and use of non-timber forest resources from the Polistovsky Natural Reserve surrounding areas, with the historical use of forest resources by local citizens that occurred unimpeded throughout generations before the establishment of the Polistovsky Natural Reserve in 1994. The livelihoods associated with Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance have effectively transformed the conflict over local citizens’ use of non-timber forest resources in the so-called buffer zones around the PNR into sustainable and conservation driven uses. Eco-tourism related enterprises are transforming Tsevlo citizens' relationship with the forest, they are now more aware of how their livelihoods are dependent on the forest’s well-being and have larger incentives to protect it from illegal use and exploitation.

Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

The Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance is a highly participatory process that included local citizens from Tsevlo community from the early beginning. Therefore, the citizens of Tsevlo have been an integral part of the project to solve the existing conflict over non-timber forest resource use between the Polistovsky Natural Reserve and Tsevlo community that arose from existing forest legislation that precludes all human access from strict nature preserves in Russia. In this way, the development alliance has set a precedent of a participatory process that empowers local citizens to solve conflict arising from legislation designed to protect natural areas in a way that fosters sustainable livelihoods and conserves nature. The lessons learned from the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development
Element 12. Strengthen cooperation, using as much as possible existing structures, for forest law enforcement and governance and timely exchange of information and experience among countries, in particular, those involved in exports and imports of timber and timber products.

How it was addressed:

The Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance has been included as a case study in the ENPI-FLEG library of best practices for legal forest use by forest-dependent communities making the experience in the Bezhanitsy district available to others. The Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance lessons are already being used in other parts of Russia such as the Yugyd Va National Park. For instance, in the same way that Polistovsky Natural Reserve staff worked with local community members at Tsevlo, Yugyd Va National Park staff, together with FLEG II consultants, “monitored the existing infrastructure suitable for development of ecotourism and the experience of the National park in engaging local citizens and businessmen into joint environmentally-oriented and responsible projects. The approach helped to avoid destructive competition for the existing resources between the National Park, businesses and citizens”73.

Element 15. Integrate within existing mechanisms the systematic monitoring, assessment and reporting of progress on FLEG.

How it was addressed:

The Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance has been included in a best management practices library sponsored by the ENPI FLEG Programme in order to distribute the lessons learned from this experience as widely as possible. Similarly, IUCN and FLEG consultants that have been involved with the Polistovsky Natural Reserve and the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance have participated in a workshop with other forestry institutions in Russia.

Element 16. Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.

How it was addressed:

Entrepreneur activities generated by the Bezhanitsy Eco-tourism alliance constantly promote the cooperation between Polistovsky Natural Reserve staff and Tsevlo citizens to achieve a sustainable management of the forest resources in the area surrounding the reserve. A great example of these collaborations are the workshops called “Master Classes”. Each “Master Class” provides a way for community members to learn a craft so that they may start their own business catering for tourists visiting the Reserve. Similarly, the “Master Classes” themselves have become a tourist attraction, bringing additional visitors to Tsevlo and the Reserve thereby contributing to the financial sustainability of the Eco-tourism development alliance.

Element 17. Give priority to and strengthen transboundary cooperation between countries with border areas which require coordinated actions and effective control in order to combat illegal logging and associated trade.
How it was addressed:

In 2014, several citizens from Tsevlo visited the town of Lepel’, Belarus to learn and exchange ideas from projects being implemented in both countries. Tsevlo citizens greatly benefited from hearing about Belarusian farmers’ experiences and were impressed by their level of self-organization and their agro-tourism business model. Belarusian farmers were in turn impressed by the level of cooperation between Tsevlo citizens and Bezhanitsy local authorities, both at the PNR and the municipal government. After the visit, both communities obtained fresh ideas on how to improve their businesses and collaboration with local authorities to improve their livelihoods and, at the same time, address the underlying issues of illegal logging that had placed them on a path of unsustainable forest use.

**Element 19. Strengthen international cooperation to build and enhance national institutional and human capacity as well as to facilitate technology transfer and information sharing to combat illegal logging and to promote trade in legally harvested timber.**

How it was addressed:

In 2014, several citizens from Tsevlo visited the town of Lepel’, Belarus to learn and exchange ideas from projects being implemented in both countries. Tsevlo citizens greatly benefited from hearing about Belarusian farmers’ experiences and were impressed by their level of self-organization and their agro-tourism business model. Belarusian farmers were in turn impressed by the level of cooperation between Tsevlo citizens and Bezhanitsy local authorities, both at the PNR and the municipal government.

“**FLEG II is willing to support further cross-border cooperation between rural citizens of the two countries. We see a great potential in matching expertise and efforts of local people from two countries to use non-timber forest resources for a better and more sustainable life in their remote villages.”** Andrey Zaytsev, IUCN FLEG Program Coordinator in Russia – News article: “Don’t wait to innovate.”

Another type of collaboration that arose from the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance is a research project focusing on analyzing fungi biodiversity in the Reserve. Estonian mycologist Anna Baklan was invited by Ms. Svetlana Igonina, the Head of the Research Department at the Polistovsky Natural Reserve, to perform an in-depth inventory of fungi species in the Reserve and its surrounding areas during 2016. This scientific collaboration sprung up from when PNR scientists recognized Ms. Baklan’s expertise during a three day “Master Class” on how to produce paper and dyes from mushrooms that took place in Tsevlo in 2015.

“The initial objective of FLEG’s involvement in the region was to develop and implement sustainable forest use models. The presence of such a bright professional as Anna Baklan brought about an activity that will certainly benefit our reserve. The establishment of this international cooperation with Estonia, one of our European neighbors, will definitely contribute to shedding light on the biodiversity of the entire ecoregion”. Mikhail Yablokov, Director of Polistovsky Reserve – News article: “Transboundary research cooperation for better understanding Russian mushroom diversity”.

In terms of enhancing national institutional and human capacity, ENPI-FLEG members participated in the seminar “Forming Partnerships with Local Communities” held on May 12th to 14th 2016 in the Polistovsky Natural Reserve. During these days, ENPI-FLEG members,
Natalia Milavidova and Konstantin Gongalsky shared the experiences and lessons learned from the partnership established between the PNR and members of Tsevlo village. They presented the activities performed during FLEG I and FLEG II in the Bezhanitsy District that have fostered a mutually beneficial coexistence between PNR and its surrounding villages. Members of the Association of Protected Areas of the North-Western Region, and representatives of local communities surrounding the PNR attended the seminar.

“We wanted to demonstrate that protected areas represent a precious resource to help villages face ever growing socio-economic challenges”. Natalia Milavidova, FLEG II consultant for IUCN Russia – News article: “Protected Areas and Local Communities: A strong bond”

Element 21. Cooperate with civil society including the private sector to inform consumers of the problems caused by illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.

How it was addressed:

As the Bezhanitsy development alliance progressed and members of Tsevlo community started businesses related to the Polistovsky Natural Reserve they began understanding the direct impact that unsustainable forest use has on their well-being and livelihoods. As a result of the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance, Tsevlo community members have changed their attitude towards the forests surrounding their community and are actively assisting Polistovsky Natural Reserve rangers in its protection and stewardship (Almazán et.al. 2016).

Element 22. Work with other regions and with multilateral instruments and processes on FLEG related issues.

In 2014, several citizens from Tsevlo visited the town of Lepel’, Belarus to learn and exchange ideas from projects being implemented in both countries. Tsevlo citizens greatly benefited from hearing about Belarusian farmers’ experiences and were impressed by their level of self-organization and their agro-tourism business model. Belarusian farmers were in turn impressed by the level of cooperation between Tsevlo citizens and Bezhanitsy local authorities, both at the PNR and the municipal government.

XXII. Library of best practices of legal forest use, Russia 1.4. (FLEGGII)

Summary: The library of best practices of legal forest is a reservoir of knowledge on sustainable forest management practices by forest-dependent communities being applied in Russia. The library aims to provide a platform where this knowledge is readily accessible to practitioners, researchers, communities, government agencies and the general public both in Russia and other countries. Cases included in the website are selected from specialized Russian websites and international reports on forest management based on four criteria:

1. Project’s profitability: verifies the project is economically feasible in the long term considering the Russian context and that there are relevant markets for the products being produced by the project.
2. Legality: verifies that the best practice being considered can be replicated in Russia based on the current legal framework (both nationally and for a specific region). For instance, the project is screened...
for use of rare species, forbidden substances or ethical concerns.

3. Environmental friendliness: the case being reviewed should not cause an irreversible damage to the environment.

4. Environmental or geographic feasibility: based on the local environmental conditions of Russia, the project being considered must match the resources available at the different eco-regions in Russia.

The library contains the most relevant information (data, statistics, reports and publications) and examples of sustainable and legal forest use by forest-dependent communities in Russia. The library also contains a legal feasibility analysis of collected best practices and cases along with a geographic and environmental analysis of their applicability.

Sustainable forest practices held in the library can be accessed based by search of specific topic or keyword as well as one of the following categories:

- Type of practice
- Form of activity
- Location
- Resource base
- Investments
- Geographical applicability

At the moment, the library can be accessed remotely and most of the material is available exclusively in Russian on the beta version of the website (http://www.fleg-infobase.ru/index.php/en/). The website has not been widely distributed as its functionality is still being tested. Similarly, it should be noted that the final version of the website may differ in its content once it is released to the general public based on the feedback obtained on the beta version. The analysis presented here is based on the beta version of the library. At the moment the library is hosted and overseen by the FLEG program but will be transferred to their developers at the end of the Program. The IUCN will continue providing methodological support from that moment onwards.

**St. Petersburg Elements covered:**

Element 4. Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity.

How it was addressed:

The library compiles existing cases of sustainable and legal forest use by forest-dependent communities in Russia and makes it readily available for government officials, forest-dependent communities, and other stakeholders involved in forest management. The library thus becomes a platform through which best practices can be widely distributed and the lessons learned from experiences across Russia can be used to foster an expanding number of sustainable forest management cases both in Russia and abroad. Knowledge transfer efforts are facilitated by the legal feasibility, environmental, economic and sustainability analysis that is performed for each case of best practice uploaded to the library.

Element 5. Formulate, within a reasonable timeframe, concrete actions under clearly
defined targets, including monitoring of progress in implementation, e.g. by taking into account the recommendations of this Ministerial Declaration and annexed indicative list of actions in the national forest programmes or equivalent frameworks.

How it was addressed:

This activity created an online reservoir of best practices in sustainable and legal forest use by forest-dependent communities. The library has been active since the end of 2015 and is constantly being updated as new cases of sustainable forest use become available. The library is also developing “efficient algorithms based on the analysis of best practices which consist of federal and local law use of forest resources, including legal information, economic opportunities and technical reference, backed by the examples of best practices in accordance with the type of business and territorial location” to further facilitate knowledge transfer and application of best practices in sustainable forest management as recommended by the Ministerial Declaration.

Element 6. Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources.

How it was addressed:

The library contains successful examples of sustainable forest use by forest-dependent communities and makes them available to others so the lessons learned from previous experiences in Russia can be used to foster sustainable forest management in other parts of the country and the ENPI region. An example of this cases is the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance, a project that combined the efforts of officials at the Polistovsky Natural Reserve and community members of Tsevlo to solve conflict between the protected area and use of non-timber forest resources by community members. The lessons learned from this examples in terms of community engagement and development of sustainable forest product or eco-tourism start-ups are being used to establish similar development alliances in other parts of Russia, for instance in the Yugyd Va National Park in the Northern Ural mountains.

Element 7. Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups.

How it was addressed:

The library contains cases of sustainable forest practices by forest-dependent communities and makes the lessons learned from these experiences readily available to other stakeholders interested in forest management. Knowledge transfer from successful cases helps increase the engagement of indigenous people, local communities, NGOs and the private sector in the sustainable management of forests. For instance, the Bezhanitsy eco-tourism development alliance was a pioneer in terms of community engagement and entrepreneurship to transform conflict over the use of non-timber forest resources into
sustainable livelihoods that also protects the integrity of forest resources. Now, the lessons from the Bezhanitsy experience are being used in the Yugyd Va National Park development alliance in North Western Russia.

“Forming local, environmentally oriented development alliances between protected areas, local entrepreneurs and communities helps to reduce unemployment and provides legal business opportunities for citizens in the area. This in turn will help counteract illegal logging, uncontrolled non-timber forest resources collection and poaching.” Andrey Zaytsev, IUCN FLEG Program Coordinator in Russia – News article – “Russia’s Largest National Park Developing Ecotourism from the Remnants of Quartz Mines”

Element 9. Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public.

How it was addressed:

The library is continuously updated to incorporate new cases of best practices in sustainable and legal forest management of forests by forest-dependent communities. Each case included in the library includes comprehensive information about the example along with a legal, economic, and sustainability analysis. This means that the cases are not only examples of best practices whose lessons can be learned and transferred to other areas, but it is also a reservoir of accurate information on forest resources use by communities across Russia. This information is available online at http://www.fleg-infobase.ru/index.php/en/. The website is currently in its beta version and is available mainly in Russian and some parts are available both in Russian and English. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords, feature that allow interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to them and facilitates knowledge transfer.

Element 12. Strengthen cooperation, using as much as possible existing structures, for forest law enforcement and governance and timely exchange of information and experience among countries, in particular, those involved in exports and imports of timber and timber products.

How it was addressed:

The level of detail on each case included in the library provides a reservoir of knowledge on cases that have successfully addressed challenges experienced by government agencies and communities regarding illegal logging, illegal timber trade and forest governance in Russia. Each of this case studies provides insights as to how the dynamics of forest governance and forest use, both legal and illegal, work in Russia. This means that cases found in the library can be used by forest law enforcement agencies across the region to take advantage of best practices already in place in Russia and tailor interventions based on a greater understanding of how forest products are being extracted and prepared for trade in Russia to other regions. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords, feature that allow interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to them and facilitates knowledge transfer.

Element 14. Support cooperation to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife associated with illegal logging, including through cooperation with CITES
How it was addressed:

The level of detail on each case included in the library provides a reservoir of knowledge on cases that have successfully addressed challenges of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife in Russia. Each of this case studies provides insights as to how the dynamics of poaching and illegal trade work in certain parts of Russia. This means that cases found in the library can be used by forest law enforcement agencies across the region to take advantage of best practices already in place in Russia and tailor interventions based on a greater understanding of how wildlife is being poached and traded in Russia to other regions. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords, feature that allow interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to them and facilitates knowledge transfer.

Element 16. Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption.

How it was addressed:

Cases of best practices in sustainable and legal forest management by forest-dependent communities available at the library provide detailed examples of locations in Russia that have forged partnerships with the private sector and civil society to address issues of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, along with unsustainable forest use in general. The website is available in Russian and some parts are available both in Russian and English. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords. This, along with the legal, economic, and sustainability analysis performed by the website, allows interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to their interests or potential projects and facilitates knowledge transfer.

Element 17. Give priority to and strengthen transboundary cooperation between countries with border areas which require coordinated actions and effective control in order to combat illegal logging and associated trade

How it was addressed:

The library, once its final version is released to the general public, will constitute a readily available platform for stakeholders involved in sustainable forest governance and combating illegal logging in the ENPI-FLEG region to learn from the experiences of forest-dependent communities in Russia addressing these issues. At the moment, the beta version of the website, http://www.fleg-infobase.ru/index.php/en/, is mainly available in Russian with some parts available both in Russian and English. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords. This, along with the legal, economic, and sustainability analysis performed by the website, allows interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to their interests or potential projects and facilitates knowledge transfer. Though the library has not been widely distributed to the general public, lessons learned from the library are currently being used by the IUCN FLEG team at seminars and trainings, where they also sometimes find new cases of local best practices that are included in the website.

Element 19. Strengthen international cooperation to build and enhance national institutional and human capacity as well as to facilitate technology transfer and
information sharing to combat illegal logging and to promote trade in legally harvested timber.

How it was addressed:

The library, once its beta version is finalized and released to the general public, will be a readily available platform for stakeholders involved in sustainable forest governance and combating illegal logging in the ENPI-FLEG region to learn from the experiences of forest-dependent communities in Russia addressing these issues. The website, http://www.fleg-infobase.ru/index.php/en/, is mainly available in Russian with some parts available both in Russian and English. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords. This, along with the legal, economic, and sustainability analysis performed by the website, allows interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to their interests or potential projects and facilitates knowledge transfer. So far, the heads of municipalities in the Pskov Region in Western Russia have been introduced to the website as well as all six ENPI FLEG focal points during the last Steering Committee Meeting in Chisinau in 2015.

Element 21. Cooperate with civil society including the private sector to inform consumers of the problems caused by illegal logging, associated trade and corruption

How it was addressed:

Cases of best practices in sustainable and legal forest management by forest-dependent communities available at the library provide detailed examples of locations in Russia that have forged partnerships with the private sector and civil society to address issues of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, along with unsustainable forest use in general. They therefore consist of a reservoir of proven experience on how to raise awareness among forest-dependent communities on the impacts and problems caused by illegal logging, associated trade and corruption. The beta version of the website is available in Russian and some parts are available both in Russian and English. The online library platform permits searching for best practices based on a wide range of categories as well as based on specific topics or keywords. This, along with the legal, economic, and sustainability analysis performed by the website, allows interested parties to find cases that are most relevant to their interests or potential projects and facilitates knowledge transfer.
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<tr>
<th>Number id</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National, within ENA elements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mobilize high-level political commitment and establish Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) as an area of concern within the broader national governance and development agenda</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Review and as needed update forest legislation and regulations, ensuring their coherence and harmonize these with legislation and policy in natural resource management and with relevant obligations under international agreements</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Strengthen, as needed, inter-agency cooperation as well as human and institutional capacity, particularly among law enforcement and judicial authorities to enforce forest-related legislation</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Assess, identify and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, the unauthorized extraction of wood for local consumption as well as the unauthorized exploitation of protected forest areas, threatening biodiversity</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Formulate, within a reasonable timeframe, concrete actions under clearly defined targets, including monitoring of progress in implementation, e.g. by taking into account the recommendations of this Ministerial Declaration and annexed indicative list of actions in the national forest programmes or equivalent frameworks</td>
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<td>Recognize the rights of forest dependent communities by taking into consideration customary laws and practices, and the respect of their traditional knowledge, and encourage and promote the participation of indigenous people and the local population in the management of forests with the objective of providing for rural socio-economic and cultural development and the protection of their natural resources</td>
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<td>Engage stakeholders, including indigenous people, local communities, private forest owners, NGOs and the industry, in formulation of forest laws and policies and in their implementation through an open and participatory process, thereby promoting transparency, reducing corruption, facilitating equity and minimizing undue influence of privileged groups</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Develop and implement anti-corruption tools dealing with corruption in and impacting on the forest sector in line with general anti-corruption efforts, including codes of conduct and best practices, and professional responsibility, and apply internationally recognized principles to combat organized crime</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Collect and disseminate transparent information on forest resources, their allocation and exploitation, in a form readily accessible to the public</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Monitor and disclose data on domestic and international trade flows of timber and timber products and promote, as appropriate, the establishment of third party audited traceability systems</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Inform and engage all stakeholders to enhance public awareness on the scope, scale and significance of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption, and their negative impacts on the benefits forests provide to society</td>
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<td><strong>International elements</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Strengthen cooperation, using as much as possible existing structures, for forest law enforcement and governance and timely exchange of information and experience among countries, in particular, those involved in exports and imports of timber and timber products</td>
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<td>Encourage cooperation and strengthen national capacity in monitoring trade in timber and timber products</td>
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<td>Support cooperation to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife associated with illegal logging, including through cooperation with CITES</td>
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<td>Integrate within existing mechanisms the systematic monitoring, assessment and reporting of progress on FLEG</td>
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<td>Promote and develop cooperation and partnerships with and among the private sector and civil society in order to effectively combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption</td>
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<td>Give priority to and strengthen transboundary cooperation between countries with border areas which require coordinated actions and effective control in order to combat illegal logging and associated trade</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Enhance international capacity for monitoring, assessing and reporting on areas such as trade flows and customs data to increase transparency on trade activities and to promote trade in legally harvested timber</td>
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<td>Work with other regions and with multilateral instruments and processes on FLEG related issues</td>
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**European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument East Countries Forest Law Enforcement and Governance II Program**

The Program is funded by the European Union and implemented by the World Bank in partnership with WWF and IUCN.
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About FLEG II (ENPI East) Program

The Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) II European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Program supports participating countries' forest governance. At the regional level, the Program 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 Program 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 Program 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 Program is funded by the European Union. http://www.enpi-fleg.org

Project Partner

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