Future prospects

In just a couple of years, the ENPI FLEG Program has established a strong network in the ENPI East countries and the Russian Federation thanks to the close cooperation of its three implementing organizations (World Bank, WWF, and IUCN) and the European Commission. Actively supported by national and local governments, the Program has generated unprecedented government cooperation and a significant number of actions aimed at increasing the sustainable use of forest resources in the seven participating countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine). The Program has been instrumental to advancing the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) process in the region and has supported communities with local economic development and sustainable livelihoods.

The current phase of the Program has served to highlight the need for increased action on sustainable forest management in each of the partner countries, and also in neighbouring countries not part of the ENPI FLEG Program. Newly formed, and previously established, forest networks have accumulated valuable new information throughout the region by implementing studies and surveys. The results of these activities represent a valuable source of information to use for future action.

The formation of Advisory Committees (NPACs) provides an important link to government ministries and is one of the major reasons for the impressive degree of successful activities carried out in the participating countries. The implementers of ENPI FLEG have successfully blended government cooperation and expert implementation of activities designed to move towards improving long-term sustainable forest management.

With the backing and shared commitment of cooperating countries, ENPI FLEG is now poised to further its positive impact on forest resources and on the people who depend on these resources. The goal is to strengthen and deepen ENPI FLEG impacts in order to ensure the best use of the Program’s resources.

The new goals will ensure a continuation of the actions started with the current phase of the Program and will lead to their enhancement. Current results could be replicated in other communities across the whole ENPI region and Central Asia.

Partnerships and Opportunities

The second phase of the ENPI FLEG Program would offer great opportunities for strengthening sustainable forest management in the existing network of countries and beyond. Collaboration with ENPI FLEG for improving forest law enforcement ensures better consideration of national forestry sector needs and the sustainable use of forest resources. Here we provide some concrete suggestions for the follow-up to the current phase in participating countries.

For more information, contact info@enpi-fleg.org.
Regional focus areas

- Development of sustainable economic alternatives, considering the pressures on the resilience of rural communities;
- Increased utilisation of wood biomass residues for renewable energy production for rural communities and exploration of the potential for export to Europe to respond to the EU renewable energy target;
- Effective timber tracking system to establish a chain of custody, strengthen the legal framework and enforcement;
- Expand local processing capacity to export finished products instead of illegally harvested raw timber;
- Continue sharing and promoting best practices for sustainable forest management.

Country priorities

Armenia
Increase private sector participation in the FLEG process, strengthen sustainable forest utilization practices, increase law enforcement for preventing illegal harvesting, introduce advanced technologies for monitoring and information management (State Forest Monitoring Centre), and expand alternative livelihood related to sustainable use of forest resources (e.g. eco-tourism).

Azerbaijan
Strengthen the sharing of best practices for sustainable forest use, establish alternative sources of income for local communities not based on illegal forest use, and strengthen forest law enforcement.

Belarus
Improve local livelihoods and sustainable forest management, strengthen and increase law enforcement, further develop and implement forest certification systems, and assist NGOs’ involvement in decision-making to sustain the FLEG process.

Georgia
Strengthen local capacity for improving sustainable livelihood development, improve standards for sustainable forest management practices according to international levels, improve FLEG planning and monitoring, increase regional sharing of knowledge on forest practices, and improve the national wood tracking system.

Moldova
Develop forest certification regulations, strengthen the development of forest management plans and implementation, continue with forest governance reforms, develop mitigation strategies to reduce illegal harvesting, strengthen the sharing of sustainable forest management practices, and finalise the development of a new version of the FLEG National Action Plan.

Russia
Increase measures for forest law enforcement, strengthen the development of legal alternative sources of forest income, and support the rural forest-based economic development activities and incentives.

Ukraine
Increase national ownership and capacity to develop a FLEG National Action Plan and compliance of forest legislation with the EU legal framework, improve the wood-tracking system, strengthen sustainable forest management, increase forestry and wood-processing activities for improving employment and income, increase inter-sectoral cooperation and investment in the forest sector.