



Added Value of Networking

Success Story

Success Story title *Experience exchange visit "Forest owners co-operation in Scandinavia" for representatives of forest owners associations*

Theme *Knowledge exchange; Training; Cooperation*

NRN *Latvia* Coordinator *NSU*

Partners *Latvian Forest Owners Association*

Period *07.06.2010 – 11.06.2010* Resources *5.320 EUR*

Geo-location *Finland, Sweden*

Beneficiaries *Representatives of Forest Owners Association*

Background

Since 17 years it has been possible to obtain private ownership of a forest in Latvia. Currently the size of Latvian private forest is 7.5 hectares in average. The number of forest owners has reached 145 000 people. Private sector accounts for about 50% of all national forest areas. There have been several initiatives to develop the forest owners' cooperatives, but generally they have not improved the activity of private timber flow concentration, and concentration of forest management services, which require cooperation.

Scandinavian and other European countries forest management practices suggest that the forest owners' cooperation plays an important role in the total forestry sector. In order to support the establishment of forest owners' cooperative pioneers in Latvia, a study trip was organised to Finland and Sweden. The countries were chosen due to the existing similar forest conditions, management practices, as well as the fact that many Scandinavian companies are active in the Latvian forestry sector.

Main activities

During the study trip participants visited Finnish agricultural producers and forest owners' central association (MTK), Confederation of Cooperatives 'PELLERVO'. Colleagues from Finland informed Latvians about historical establishment of cooperatives, conditions, economic benefits and forestry sector in general. In Sweden there was a practical seminar held about forest cooperatives, as well as a meeting with members of such cooperatives, who gave practical information about benefits of working together.

Main results/benefits

After the study trip the first forest owners' cooperative in Latvia 'Mezsaimnieks' has been established. In 2011 the Latvian NRN carried out further activities under the 'Promotion of forest owners' cooperation':

- Establishing a working group with Forest owners association;
- Elaborating handbook 'Principles of private forest owners' cooperative
- Publishing brochure 'Latvian Forest Owners' Co-operation'





Contribution of the NSU

NSU together with the Latvian Forest Owners Association selected a group of participants and organised the study trip.

Contribution of the partners

Latvian Forest owners association together with the Scandinavian NSU colleagues prepared the study trip's program.

Success factors

- Accurate selection of the target group (beneficiaries of the activities were truly interested in establishing a cooperative)
- Accurate choice of the countries to visit (similar forestry conditions to those in Latvia)

