

*Exposure visit / travelling workshop on
governance and management of natural resources
in the Swedish Bergslagen-Mälardalen region*

“Compass and gyroscope for sustainable landscapes”



22 – 26 May 2017

Introduction

SWG in cooperation with GIZ organized a travelling workshop/exposure visit for young researchers and junior level representatives of relevant public authorities in natural resources management (NRM). The visit took place in Sweden, in the region Bergslagen-Mälardalen in the period 22 – 26 May 2017. The objective of the visit was transfer of Swedish experience regarding management of forest, water and soil, and more specifically gaining knowledge about certain aspects of NRM in Sweden, such as:

- Institutional setup;
- Coordination among relevant authorities;
- Link between research and policy making;
- Innovation.

The group consisted of one young researcher and one junior level representative of a relevant public authority from each country/territory of the Western Balkans¹. They were accompanied by one representative of each, GIZ and SWG. The host in Sweden who organized the exposure visit was Dr. Per Angelstam, professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The full list of participants can be found in Annex 1.

Program

The program included visits and meetings with relevant stakeholders covering the following topics:

- Forest landscape management and protected areas in Laxå municipality;
- Green infrastructure: draining and restoration of grasslands, urban green space for people;
- The role of culture for sustainable landscapes;
- Partnership for sustainable landscapes (EU LEADER);
- A catchment perspective of ecosystem services from streams and lakes: drinking water, electricity, sport fishing, biodiversity, cultural heritage;
- The State Forest Company Sveaskog's Ekopark approach (Färna) to sustained yield wood production and landscape restoration for biodiversity conservation;
- Reading the landscape; the village as a source of social capital.

The full program is given in Annex 2.

¹ The Ministry of Agriculture of Serbia did not nominate a representative to participate in the activity.

Summary of conclusions

The visit ended with a workshop for summary of experiences and evaluation of the achievement of the objectives, as follows:

- **Institutional setup** - The participants got the general picture about the three levels of the institutional set-up in Sweden (municipal, regional, national). They understood that the advantage of Sweden is the long-term stability of its institutions. One of the examples of the long existence of stable institutions are the maps from 1781 with detailed land parcel cadastre (Annex 3), which in some countries of the region cannot be found even today. Some of the identified problems for the unstable institutions in the Balkan region are: lack of competencies, lack of public debate, non-applicable directly translated EU legislation, and last, but not least - corruption.
- **Coordination among relevant authorities** – Even though there are efforts to coordinate, there is still a long way to go in order to practice holistic view in managing the natural resources in Sweden. One of the reasons is that different parties have different definitions about forestry, depending on their focus. The participants could compare that with the situation in their region where coordination problems exist, projects and activities overlap among ministries. In addition, the participants were able to learn about cases where there was a lack of cooperation between local population and the forestry company in Sweden. However, the difference is that in Sweden public debate exists, so that all of the involved parties could participate with their views, while in the Balkan the public debate is almost non-existent.
- **Link between research and policy making** – The participants were introduced with cases of good cooperation between research institutions and municipal authorities, as well as private sector, for the benefit of all. That cooperation is missing in the Balkan region and some of the identified reasons for that are: lack of strategic planning, lack of enthusiasm, lack of funds, corruption, lack of competence in the governmental institutions, lack of pro-activeness of the academics.
- **Innovation** – Participants were introduced with the concept of the eco parks, which they thought would be an innovation for the Balkan region. Also, the involvement of the community in solving common issues could be an innovative approach in the Balkan region.

Additional objective that was fulfilled was the creation of a network among young researchers and public sector representatives from the Balkans, with the intention of establishing their future cooperation.

Regarding the weaknesses of the exposure trip, the participants felt that it was too much focused on forestry and not enough on water and soil management.