

"VIRTUAL FORESTRY SCHOOL" IN THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION

GFA CONSULTING GROUP GMBH

“The lack of organised, systematic practical forestry training and post-graduate education and of training institutions was identified as the biggest obstacle to the development of sustainable forestry in the region that meets EU requirements and could cope with climate change”



► MAJOR CONCLUSIONS OF 1ST PHASE OF THE REAWG-SFM (ENDED IN DEC. 2023)

- Strengthening regional cooperation through joint training programs and sharing of best practices can accelerate progress towards sustainable forest management goals.
- A comprehensive curriculum addressing key forestry issues is essential
- Given the limited resources and logistical constraints, the establishment of a virtual forest school presents a viable solution to address training needs across the WB region



▶ MAJOR CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)

- ▶ This would facilitate training of trainers and provide access to practical demonstrations in various ecological contexts
- ▶ Collaborative initiatives could offer significant opportunities for capacity building and knowledge exchange among WB countries/territories
- ▶ With a Virtual Forestry School a number of technical/policy topics can be addressed
- ▶ So far only Serbia has a continues education programme run by the Serbian Chamber of Forest Engineers



Target groups

- **Direct target group(s):** Educators/trainers; academics from higher education working in the field of sustainable forest management and training.
- **Indirect target group(s):** Forest practitioners, forest managers, civil society actors from the public and private sector, including the forest industry, private companies and environmental NGOs.

Project region

- The project region comprises the countries of the Western Balkans. The training programmes take place - depending on the topic - in selected forest areas in all countries.

1. Establishment of a virtual forestry school with training areas in the participating countries while focusing on the creation of digital training materials
 - a. Political anchoring in the SWG-REAWG SFM working group?
 - b. Technical implementation, e.g. creation of curricula, digital training materials, training plans, etc. by an international consulting firm together with local partners

2. **Developing training materials** for the multipliers consisting of:
 - a. Technical Guidelines
 - b. Curriculum and training manual for the individual training modules
 - c. possibly also development of digital teaching materials and videos
3. Establishment of **demonstration and training areas**
4. Development of the **monitoring system and training concept**



5. **Review capacity of possible multipliers** and appropriate training, including pedagogical training,
6. **Joint training of multipliers** - selected personnel from state and private forestry companies
7. Monitoring of implementation

OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Focus on i) training for forestry workers or ii) technicians?
2. Which training institutions (facilities) would be suitable (one per country)?
3. Multiplier system - Where anchored, at which institutions?
4. Commitment of the forestry administration required to provide multipliers and keeping them
5. Determination of a benchmark – (e.g. the Hessian Forest silviculture guidebook “Waldbaufibel”), as a basis for analysing training needs (what was used for the previous Serbian Project?)

OPEN QUESTIONS

6. Which countries are interested and can maintain the system?
7. Partner contributions are required

