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**Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in
the Caucasus and Central Asia**

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**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations****Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry****Food and Agriculture Organization
European Forestry Commission****Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in
the Caucasus and Central Asia****1. Project description and main achievements 2013-2015**

1. The UNECE/FAO UNDA (United Nations Development Account) project “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia” was inspired by the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy. The project was implemented by the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section during 2013-2015 in seven countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

2. During the UNDA project, a training package was developed with modules on green economy, forest-policy formulation, forest data collection and management, and wood energy. The package is available in English and in Russian, and it was used altogether in 46 capacity-building workshops held under the project. Two regional, seven national, 28 local capacity-building workshops, and nine coaching workshops were organized in 2014-2015. The training package includes participatory exercises to enhance stakeholder participation, methods that can be utilized in training, policy preparation or review (not limited to the forest sector). A facilitator’s guide was developed to explain the purpose of the participatory approach and to support the workshop facilitation at national level.

3. The project workshops provided training to professionals from forest agencies, related ministries (agriculture, forestry, environment, economy), academia and non-governmental organizations. Based on the workshop evaluations, 91% of the participants acknowledged increased knowledge on policy formulation, bioenergy generation and data collection related to sustainable forest management and green economy.

4. Three pilot countries, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan made a progress towards inclusion of green economy principles into the national forestry sector’s strategies and programmes. With the support of the UNDA project, Georgia developed a national action plan for the forest sector in a green economy based on the input received from four local workshops (almost 100 participants).

5. The head of the forest policy service in the Ministry of natural resources protection of Georgia was involved in the project since the beginning, and recommended integration of the action plan to various on-going forestry processes in Georgia (national forest programme development including national criteria and indicators development). The action plan was acknowledged by the head of forest policy service in Georgia in the final coaching workshop in February 2015. Georgia had taken first steps towards stakeholder participation in policy processes 2013, and this UNDA project had a significant impact on enhancing the participatory approach.
6. The government of Kazakhstan officially agreed to review the draft national forest programme in order to include green economy principles developed during this project. As a result, private sector participation widened the scope of the programme, originally focused on conservation. The draft national forest programme was scheduled to be reviewed by the relevant ministries, and to be approved by the prime minister and the president by the end of 2014, according to the final report received from the national consultant. The forestry officials trained within the framework of the project acknowledged the need for further work in particular, to address the perspective of forestry in the long-term planning (20-50 years).
7. In Tajikistan, the project supported the development of a new forest strategy implemented jointly by FAO and GIZ (German development cooperation). The local workshops were coordinated with the national forest agency, and included private sector development in Tajikistan. The workshops produced recommendations for the forest strategy. The strategy has been finalized and is ready for the approval by the government. Overall, the UNDA project increased knowledge and skills and stakeholders' involvement in policy processes, although further strengthening is needed. Both project partners, FAO and GIZ, will continue supporting the country by keeping the project results visible in future work and continuing the coordination of project work with UNECE.
8. The non-pilot beneficiary countries Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan produced gap analyses on the needs of forest sector development towards a green economy. Armenia and Uzbekistan have formally expressed their interest in similar project pilot support for the development of their forest sector in the future, and their willingness to continue capacity-building work with UNECE.
9. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section will invite the countries to participate in workshops and other meetings organized as a part of the regular integrated programme of work in the future. Furthermore, the project countries have requested to produce the training material in printed form. Thus, the project results will be developed into a publication (in English and in Russian), which will include the training package (to be published in 2016 or 2017).
10. The project outcomes in Tajikistan have been shared with FAO Tajikistan and GIZ, who continue to work on them in the country. As requested in the project evaluation, full project documentation with national consultant reports and other material has been added to the project website, which has been actively used. The project countries will be invited to provide translations of training material into national languages along with other relevant material to be shared in the project website and to benefit others working in the region.
11. An evaluation of the UNDA project identified useful recommendations that will be employed at the implementation of a next UNECE/FAO UNDA project in the region. In addition, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section will continue to work with all project countries and will continue building their capacities in the area of Sustainable Forest Management. The new UNECE/FAO UNDA project on "Accountability systems for Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia" will focus on forest monitoring and national criteria and indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (2016-

2019). This project will focus on Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

2. Additional information

12. The full training package developed during the UNDA project, including Trainer's manual (in English), presentation and exercise material to conduct a three day workshop (in English and in Russian), as well as other project related documents, including reports from the project national consultants, and the action plan for the forest sector in a green economy in Georgia, are available at the project website: <http://www.unece.org/forests/capacitybuilding.html>

13. The project's final regional workshop was organized in Tbilisi, Georgia, jointly with the RERAM-project from 21-24 April 2015. The presentations and the report from the workshop summarizing the project achievements are available at the meeting website: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37795#/>

14. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section was invited to present the project in the EU-Central Asia STI Policy Stakeholders' Conference on Climate Change in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 23-24 September 2014: <http://www.inco-ca.net/en/261.php>

15. Photographs from the UNDA project's national workshops and from the final regional workshop is available at the UNECE/FAO Flickr account: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/121632478@N08/sets/>
