

Best Practice cases in VET - Bulgaria (Partners: LUT)

Bulgarian – Swiss Collaboration in the field of close-to-nature, sustainable and multifunctional forest management

The Bulgarian – Swiss Forestry Programme has created and implemented as a joint initiative between the governments of the Republic of Bulgaria (represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, and the National Forestry Board) and the Swiss Confederation (represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – SDC).

The **main goal** of the Programme is “to support forestry stakeholders in Bulgaria in achieving a balance of ecological, economic and social functions through sustainable and close-to-nature forest management”. The Programme development is composed of three phases.

The main orientation of Phase I (1997-2000) is aimed at establishing the bases mainly through conducting surveys and research networks.

The foreseen and achieved contributions can be grouped into the following areas:

- Scientific cooperation and exchange of scientific and practical data took place among the ETH – Zurich and the University of Forestry in Sofia, the Forest Research Institute under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, research stations under the jurisdiction of the NFB and specialists from all levels of the forest practice.
- Transfer and adapting the Swiss experience/know-how to the Bulgarian conditions was made and the best production practices and scientific achievements were tested under Bulgarian conditions.
- The Programme provided an opportunity for the Bulgarian foresters to get familiar with the experience of a number of western European and Balkan countries (Germany, France, Austria, Romania, Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, Georgia, etc.), as well as to publish and distribute the results from the scientific surveys. InnovaWoodEDU – Bulgaria 27
- Networks for cooperation and exchange of data and experience have been established among the scientific units from Bulgaria and other countries.
- Significant elements in the application of foreign experience and the best production practices in Bulgaria occupied the translation and distribution of specialized literature from other countries, as well as the training through mutual exchange of Bulgarian and foreign specialists.
- Established bases for scientific and practical exchanges transferred into a series of experiments and surveys, which were documented and turn into a basis for conducting further training in the forest science and practice. Sample plots were established in 15 State Forest Enterprises and State Game Breeding Stations. Data from measurements, analyses and results were submitted to the NFB – RFB and SFE/SGBS using them for research and training. (Map of all target regions in Bulgaria)
- During this period BSFP was an initiator and organizer of a dozen Regional and National workshops on forest management, where the professional experience of the other countries was presented and ways were looked for integrating the forest practice of the country.
- The Programme provided an opportunity for presenting the work of scientific workers and lecturers, as well as of the specialists from the specific practices to present the scientific and practical contributions and achievements of activities funded by BSFP at national and international forums.

The second phase of the Programme (2001-2004) was oriented towards “Support to the forest sector in Bulgaria in order to achieve a balance among ecological, economic and social functions of forests through sustainable and close-to-nature forest management”. During the second phase starting from 2001, the main goal of the Programme remained the same and for the purpose of its implementation the latter was structured in four subprojects, whose concrete tasks were as follows:

1. Modern and close-to-nature forest management is introduced;
2. Forest planning and sustainable management are based on the principles of multifunctionality and involvement of various stakeholders



3. Contemporary methods for the use of forest resources and single trees outside forest areas have been developed and are applied with the broad participation of stakeholders;

4. The conditions of the legislative and political framework favour sustainable forest management.

The focus was changed from the foreign experience to Bulgarian experience enriched with international expertise.

During the third phase (2004-2007) BSFP faced some basic challenges. From an executor of certain activities or supporting their implementation the Programme gradually transferred to a facilitator. The efforts addressed support to democratization and decentralization of decision making processes and forest management at all levels of management in the forest sector. The whole potential of the Programme was used to make possible the active and effective participation of a bigger part of stakeholders in the multifunctional forest planning process