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Mid-term evaluation report

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Table of Contents

Acronyms ..... **v**
Executive Summary ..... **vi**
1 Introduction **1**
1.1 Evaluation background and purposes 1
1.2 Methodology of the evaluation 2
2 Context of the project **3**
2.1.1 Forest and people in Kosovo *3*
2.1.2 Forest policies in Kosovo *4*
3 Analysis of project concept and design **10**
4 Analysis of the implementation process **14**
4.1 Project management 14
4.2 Financial management 16
5 Analysis of results and contribution to stated objectives **20**
5.1 Achievements at output level 20
5.2 Achievements at outcome level 25
5.3 Gender equality 26
5.4 Capacity development 26
5.5 Human rights based approach 28
5.6 Partnerships and alliances 28
6 Analysis by evaluation criteria **31**
6.1 Relevance 31
6.1.1 Relevance to FAO and other international policies *31*
6.1.2 Relevance to national policies *31*
6.1.3 Relevance to donor's development policy *32*
6.1.4 Relevance to forest users' needs *33*
6.2 Efficiency 34
6.3 Effectiveness 34
6.4 Sustainability 35
6.5 Impact 35
7 Conclusions and recommendations **35**
7.1 Conclusions 35
7.2 Recommendations 37

Acronyms

AP	Action Plan for the Forestry Sector and Strategy Paper
ARDP	Agriculture and Rural Development Plan
DoF	Department of Forestry
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FOE	FAO Forest Economics and Policy and Products
FOM	FAO Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division
FMB	Kosovo Forestry Management Board
FMU	Forest Management Unit
FRI	Forest Research Institute
KCA	Kosovo Cadastral Agency
KAP	Kosovo Agency for Privatization
KFA	Kosovo Forest Agency
KFIS	Kosovo Forest Information System
LEGN	FAO Development Law Service
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
ME	Ministry of Economy
MF	Ministry of Finance
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NAPFO	National Association of Private Forest Owners
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OEKR	FAO Office for Extension, Knowledge and Research
PSP	Forestry Sector Policy and Strategy Paper
REU	FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SOE	Social Owned Enterprises
UNMIK	United Nations Mission to Kosovo

Executive Summary

Information about the evaluation

ES1. Project GCP/KOS/005/FIN "Support to Implementation of Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo" (hereinafter, "the project") was launched by FAO in February 2011 and is expected to come to an end in May 2014. The project is funded by the Government of Finland with a budget of USD 3,740,752. The project counterpart is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) of Kosovo.

ES2. The project hereby evaluated is de facto the continuation of project GCP/KOS/OO4/SWE, implemented in 2007-2010, with the aim of assisting the Government of Kosovo in designing a comprehensive reform of the forestry sector. According to its title, the mandate of the project is, thus, to assist Kosovo institutions involved in forestry issues in implementing the reform.

ES3. An Independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was envisaged in the ProDoc. The implementation of the exercise was requested by the Donor and supported by the Government of Kosovo at the Tripartite Review Meeting held in January 2013. The MTE was requested to:

- assess the project design and its relevance to international, donor and national policies as well as to the needs of the end-beneficiaries;
- review the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of the project implementation;
- analyse the effectiveness of implementation and partnership arrangements;
- identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions;
- analyse whether the project is on track with respect to achieving the expected results; and
- propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the work plan as necessary.

ES4. During its stay in Kosovo, the evaluation team worked in close collaboration with the project management and stakeholders. MTE findings are based on factual information (indicators of performance, statistics, observation), as well as on stakeholders' judgments and opinions about the project. Informants include: the Officers-in-Charge at FAO Regional Office for Europe (REU), Kosovo Forestry sector national-level managers, and Kosovo Forestry Agency (KFA) regional and municipal officers, representatives of ministries participating in the Forestry Management Board, project management and consultants, researchers of the Kosovo Forestry Institute (KFI), members of municipality councils, members of the National Association of Private Forest Owners and grassroots forest users (including women groups). Briefing and debriefing sessions took place with the Donor and the UNDP representatives.

Context of the Project

ES5. Forest is an essential resource for the Kosovo people's livelihoods and economy; forests provide fuelwood for house-heating in the very cold Kosovo winter, timber for construction, as well as valuable non-wood forest products such as wild mushrooms, berries,

fruits, nuts, chestnuts, honey, and game, which potentially can feed some value chains (marmalade, juices, jelly, cured meat). Besides, forests provide important environmental services (runoff regulation, prevention of erosion on steep land, maintenance of the quality of air and water, carbon sequestration). In addition, in some forest areas, there are possibilities (still to be developed) for hunting and eco-tourism[1]. Eventually taxation on fuelwood and timber extraction both from state and private forests are an important source of income for Kosovo public revenue.

ES6. Kosovo is now seeking to align to European policies and legislation. A general agreement exists that a new forestry law is needed, aligning Kosovo with European Union (EU) forestry sector policy framework. To be consistent with European policies, Kosovo legislation should focus on the multi-purpose use of forest capital, the enablement of private forest owners to exploit efficiently and sustainably their own stands, and a clearer articulation between fully protected forest areas (e.g. the National Parks) and sustainably exploitable state forest. Decentralization of forest management responsibility is an additional issue. In response to this challenge, in May 2008 the Government of Kosovo started formulating a National Forest Policy and Strategy Plan. The plan was meant to set the stage for all major decisions concerning the development of the forestry sector for the current decade, including issuing the new forestry law.

ES7. By 2010 a Policy and Strategy Paper (hereinafter, PSP) for the development of the forestry sector in Kosovo and a ten-year Action Plan for its implementation (hereinafter, AP) were developed by MAFRD (with international assistance). The PSP outlines the policy framework of the forestry sector in Kosovo. It states the overall objective of the new policy as follows: "to increase the contribution of the forestry sector to the national economy through sustainable use of the forest resources, taking into consideration as well the multi-functional role of forestry".

ES8. Implementation of the PSP/AP entails major challenges for the Kosovo Forestry sector, which call for further international assistance. Based on its long collaboration with Kosovo forestry sector, in 2010, FAO was requested by the Kosovo government to continue to support the process started by Project GCP/KOS/004/SWE. Upon a request from the Government of Kosovo, the Government of Finland accepted to support this additional multilateral initiative in support to the implementation of the PSP/AP.

Key findings and conclusions

ES9. Analysis of the project design suggested that the project was primarily conceived as a policy implementation intervention aimed at assisting the Kosovo Government in turning into practice and institutionalizing the PSP/AP. Its theory of change is straightforward: if quality assistance is delivered to Kosovo Forestry sector institutions, PSP/AP implementation will be smoother and more effective. Subsequently, the capability of the Kosovo forestry sector of implementing joint, integrated, multipurpose forest management according to European and international standards will improve.

[1] Over 119,000 hectares of Kosovo territory, predominantly forest-covered, are protected as national and regional parks, natural monuments and forest parks.

ES10. To achieve this change the Project will intervene on policy implementation capacity:

- at the central level (as per logframe outcomes 1.1, facilitation of the Forest Management Board; 1.2; updating of forest legislation and 3.1; mainstreaming climate change issues in Kosovo forestry policy);
- at the decentralized (regional/municipal) level (as per project outcome 1.4, support to the completion of the decentralization process, and output 2.1.6, standard approach for local agreement established); and
- at the grassroots forest users level (as per outputs 2.1.1 - 2.1.5, dealing with pilot field tests in selected locations).

ES11. Additional elements were included in the project design, including the updating of the forest plantations information system (outcome 2.2), and the improvement of the forest health situation (outcome 2.3). In the opinion of the evaluation team, these "technical" forestry outcomes (and related outputs and activities), although relevant to the AP, are not the core of the "big change" advocated by the PSP and are not as consistent with the primary mandate of the project and its theory of change as the above policy and socially-oriented outcomes are. They have thus overburdened an already very ambitious agenda, resulting in an over demanding workplan.

ES12. The project was relevant to the policies of all the major stakeholders involved in its implementation (the Government of Kosovo, the Government of Finland and FAO). However, field interviews highlighted that project design and implementation do not cater significantly for the primary needs of grassroots forest users and civil society. Pilot field/tests that started lately in February 2013 are supposed to facilitate a better understanding of how and to what extent these needs can be addressed in the framework of the project.

ES13. As far as organizational efficiency is concerned, the project is being led by a proactive management team and a committed Steering Committee. During the inception phase, the project management has significantly contributed to fine tune, adapt to the context of the Kosovo forestry sector and operationalize the project design. A sound project monitoring system was also developed, which proved to be instrumental to short-term planning, decision-making and reporting practice within and outside the Steering Committee.

ES14. During implementation, the project has benefited from the assistance of a pool of competent and motivated international and national consultants covering both policy and technical subject matters. The project has been steadily supported by the LTO, the Budget Holder, the Programme Officer-in-Charge, and, occasionally, by the Officer-in-Charge for Gender Issues at REU. It also received assistance from headquarters through the Forest Economics and Policy and Products Division (FOE), the Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division (FOM), the Development Law Service (LEGN) and the Office for Extension, Knowledge and Research (OEKR).

ES15. Project budget figures suggest: i) a high allocation to management function; ii) a prominent role attributed to technical assistance (and coaching) through the fielding of international and national consultants; iii) a low allocation for training activities, as well as for equipment and material resources (which so far has basically included fuel and vehicles, office equipment and materials and their maintenance); and a hard commitment for the procurement of equipment for a forestry lab (as per output 2.3.7). No budget revision has been undertaken so far.

ES16. On the whole, financial delivery at the second year of the project implementation is at about 50 percent, less than arithmetically expected. Delivery for technical assistance is at 67 percent, i.e. about two thirds of relevant ProDoc allocation. The evaluation team notes that "savings" made during the first two years by the project establish the basis for a zero-cost extension for at least six months after the project's official ending date.

ES17. The project has enjoyed the support of several partners and allies. Thanks also to the diplomatic assistance of the Finnish Embassy in Kosovo (where there is no FAO Representation), the project management was able to establish quickly collaborative relationships with representatives of the different institutions that constitute the Forestry Management Board and to be given formally the responsibility of facilitating the activity of this body. Collaboration with other UN agencies was rather limited. Government participation in project-promoted initiatives was steady but not particularly proactive.

ES18. The above suggests that the project implementation performance featured a high productivity at the activity level (well documented by the project progress reports). Nevertheless, its effectiveness (in terms of number of outputs released and outcomes achieved) and its efficiency (in terms of the ratio between implementation effort and results attained) are deceptive. According to the evaluation team analysis, by June 2013 (i.e. by two-thirds of project life), only five out of the twenty-nine outputs foreseen by the project logframe were "significantly" or "substantially" released and the only outcome likely to be partially achieved was 1.1. Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened to coordinate and implement the Action Plan as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010-2020, to which four of the aforementioned "significantly"/"substantially" released outputs are related.

ES19. Gender equality was not a major concern for this project. The Government unit in-charge for gender equality was not involved in the FMB. Women focussed activities have been started a few months ago in the framework of pilot field tests, but they are still incipient.

ES20. Capacity development activities were carried out, addressing primarily FMB members and forestry technical staff. No attention has been paid so far to promote a better understanding of the PSP/AP and the capacity to implement it by regional and municipal forestry officers.

ES21. The fact that one year before the official ending date of the project, progress towards twenty-four out of twenty-nine outputs has been found "negligible" or "incipient" suggests that it is unlikely that the gap between what was planned and what will be achieved could be entirely filled, even if a no-cost extension will be approved.

Recommendations

ES22. MTE recommendations focus on the identification of an exit strategy for the project for the rest of its official life and, possibly, beyond, following some analytical considerations based on evaluation findings.

ES23. As shown and discussed in the sections 5.1 and 5.2, in spite of the serious working commitment of the project staff and the quality of inputs delivered, it was not possible to implement the project as effectively and efficiently as desirable.

ES24. Several external constraints contribute to explain the above; nevertheless, in the opinion of the evaluation team, the major problem envisaged by the project during implementation is rooted in its overambitious design and in the barely feasible workplan. This has led to a dispersion of efforts and resources that has prevented significant progress towards the release of most of the planned outputs (and subsequently towards the achievement of relevant outcomes).

ES25. In the opinion of the evaluation team, in the present conditions, the project risks to end up with a number of scattered and heterogeneous activities that will not lead to the expected policy changes.

ES26. The Steering Committee and the Donor may wish to address the ProDoc as a set of working hypothesis that in some cases have not proved to be valid or viable in the real-life implementation context. The final part of the project should focus on the achievement of selected policy and social oriented outcomes plus the accomplishment of the "technical" work on-going in connection with the KFIS and the Forestry lab.

ES27. Additional time will be needed to reinforce the results already achieved, prioritise activities and achieve a critical mass of outputs that will lead to the expected policy changes. This leads to Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 1: To the Project Steering Committee, on project extension and priority setting

A budget-neutral extension should be granted to the project until December 2014. During the last year of implementation the project should focus on releasing those outputs that are likely to contribute directly to the implementation of the political and social change advocated in the PSP.

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ES28. Priority outputs should be selected by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) on a case by case basis according to i) the degree of relevance to the project core mandate and theory of change; ii) relevance to the donor's new development policy; iii) needs and requests expressed by different stakeholders; and iii) commitments already taken (e.g. procurement of equipment for the KFI lab.)

ES29. The list of outputs below should be considered as an example for the priority settings outlined under Recommendation 1.

- Output 1.1.1. The Forest Management Board (FMB) for supervising implementation of forest policies and strategies is fully functional, and all the main stakeholders are represented.
- Output 1.1.2. PSP implementation is facilitated, followed up and monitored by a Coordination Unit.
- Output 1.1.3. PSP Action Plan has gone through a prioritization process and has a work plan for implementation.
- Output 1.2.2. New and revised practices and procedures for information management are implemented at all levels of forestry administration, and the forest policy and legal documents are available to and used by all forestry staff at headquarters, and in the regions and municipalities.
- Output 1.4.1. On-going decentralization process is facilitated.

- Output 1.4.2. Personnel of the decentralized forestry offices are familiar with the forest policies and legislation and have been trained to carry out their tasks properly[2].
- Output 2.1.1. Implementation of pilot experience in joint integrated, multipurpose forest management (former "Improved capacity for applying integrated approaches in forest management"; see note 33 above).
- Output 2.1.5. Modalities for joint (public/private) forest management and use are defined and introduced.
- Output 2.3.7. Establishment of lab premises for applied research.
- Output 3.3.1. A strategy and action plan to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the forestry sector is prepared and mainstreamed at the central, regional and municipal level.

ES30. Since significant investment and progress was already made so far the ET also suggest further supporting the establishment of the KFIS.

ES31. Analysis at the output level (see section 5.1) has shown that the project's most significant results have been achieved in connection with the institutional development at the central level. The FMB has been strengthened by involving almost all government sectors and some representatives of the civil society and of the donor community. However, the lack of a spokesperson of the government institution in charge of gender equality is a major gap in the composition of the FMB.

ES32. Analysis at the output level (see section 5.1.) has shown important differences in progress towards the achievement of the expected outputs. Based on the above, the evaluation team also formulates Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: To the Project Steering Committee and the Forest Management Board, on mainstreaming gender issues in forestry decision making

The ET recommends the integration of the Agency of Gender Equality into the FMB.

ES33. In addition the ET notices that the FMB has given so far insufficient attention to climate change issues in forestry policy. As this topic is an important component of project design the ET formulates Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 3: To the Project Steering Committee and Project Management, on raising awareness of Kosovo policy makers on the role of forests in climate change mitigation.

[2] This should include the finalization of the Forestry Sector WEB portal, currently under output 1.3.3. which might provide a significant resource to decentralised forestry staff capacity development

The evaluation team recommends that stronger action should be taken by the project to mainstream climate change issues in Kosovo forestry policy-making. On-going discussion about amendments to be introduced in the PSP/AP might provide an appropriate forum for this activity.

ES34. Project progress towards the sensitisation and capacity development of decentralized forest staff has been assessed by this evaluation as "negligible". Indeed no action except for planning has been carried out in this connection. The evaluation team believes that a critical mass of forestry field workers, aware of the changes in the objectives and approach to forest management entailed in the PSP and competent in performing the tasks they are requested to accomplish in this scenario, is essential for the implementation of the new policy.

ES35. In addition, besides the development of the Forestry Sector website, almost nothing has been done so far to facilitate communication and understanding at the regional/municipal level of the new policy. Furthermore, no action has been undertaken to induce a change in behaviour and attitudes in forest users. Recommendation 4 addresses these issues.

Recommendation 4: To the Steering Committee and the Project Management Support on the decentralization of the forestry sector

The evaluation recommends starting as soon as possible an information/sensitisation and capacity building process campaign targeting regional/municipal forestry staff, aimed at raising awareness on benefits for forests and people coming from the implementation of the new approach to forest management.

ES36. This may include, among others:

- implementation of a number of regional workshops on PSP/AP addressing forestry sector decentralized staff. The workshops should adopt interactive and task-oriented methods and include a component on attitudinal change;
- the preparation of an attractive and reader-friendly booklet on joint, integrated, multipurpose forest management, illustrating experiences in other European countries, as well as summarizing the main principles and orientation of the PSP concerning, in particular, decentralization of forest management;
- the promotion of the active participation of local forestry officers in the pilot/field test combined with some training/coaching in participatory forestry extension training;
- field visits for forestry decentralized staff, to the SNV sites in the South Western Balkans where the Sida/SNV Project "Strengthening Sustainable Private and Decentralized Forestry" is being implemented.

ES37. Concerning the grassroots level, appreciation for the work recently started by the consortium ARNENI has been reiterated several times in this report, in particular in connection with gender and vulnerable groups/households issues. This work should be further supported, which leads to Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 5: To the Project Steering Committee and the Project Management on strengthening work with ARNENI

The Evaluation Team recommends strengthening the project's support and work with ARNENI, to respond to the forest users' needs.

ES38. In particular, the following is recommended:

- Extend, after a preliminary performance assessment, the ARNENI contract until the end of the project.
- Further develop the conceptual, methodological and organizational aspects of pilot field tests with the assistance of an expert in social/community forestry, in strict collaboration with ARNENI staff and the municipal councils.
- Ensure that implementation of the pilot field tests will be supported for at least 90 person/days by the same international consultant. This is needed to update ARNENI know-how, which is largely based on conventional sociological research and on some exposure to the PRA/PLA methods of the 1990s. New approaches like, in particular, livelihood analysis, gender analysis, Farmer (Forest users) Field Schools, Integrated Pest Management, action research and collaborative water management should be introduced.
- Strengthen already existing relationships with Sida/SNV project and initiatives carried out by the Albanian/Kosovar NGO "Connecting People with Nature" that has already undertaken similar participatory forestry experiences in Kosovo.
- Conduct an in-depth assessment of the needs, problems, obligations and aspirations of all the stakeholders involved in these field tests - forest users at large, forest private owners, women groups, vulnerable household, municipality councils and KFA municipal officers. Negotiation, consensus making, prioritisation and decision making workshops should then be carried out, following an action research process.
- Once needs are identified and actions to fulfil these needs are taken, small-scale demonstrative activities should be implemented to show participants the political willingness to move from discussion to action and assess the technical feasibility and cost/effectiveness of the suggested initiatives.

ES39. Lastly, the evaluation team also suggests that FAO pursues resource mobilization for the continuation of the project, to be funded either by the same or a different resource partner. The new phase should be formulated in the forthcoming months, with a view to consolidating project achievements and to addressing the needs of forest users.

1 Introduction

1.1 Evaluation background and purposes

1. Project GCP/KOS/005/FIN "Support to Implementation of Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo" (hereinafter, "the project ") was launched by FAO in February 2011 and is expected to come to an end in May 2014. The project is funded by the Government of Finland with a budget of USD 3 740 752. The project counterpart is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) of Kosovo.

2. The project hereby evaluated is de facto the continuation of Project GCP/KOS/OO4/SWE[3], implemented in 2007-2010, with the aim of assisting the Government of Kosovo in designing a comprehensive reform of the forestry sector. According to its title, the mandate of the project is, thus, to assist Kosovo institutions involved in forestry issues in implementing the agreed reform.

3. An independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is envisaged in the ProDoc. The implementation of the exercise was requested by the Donor and supported by the Government of Kosovo at the First Tripartite Review Meeting held in January 2013. The MTE was requested to:

- assess the project design and its relevance to international, donor and national policies as well as to the needs of the end-beneficiaries;
- review the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of the project implementation;
- analyse the effectiveness of implementation and partnership arrangements;
- identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions;
- analyse whether the project is on track with respect to achieving the expected results; and
- propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the work plan as necessary.

4. The Terms of Reference for this MTE (Annex 1 of the Evaluation report) were prepared in close consultation with the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) in accordance with the evaluation policies and procedures of FAO.

5. The evaluation was fielded in June 2013. It was carried out by a social scientist and a forestry expert, both with significant experience in evaluation. The first draft of the report was submitted to stakeholders in July. The current final draft was prepared after an inclusive review process and handed in October.

[3] See FAO 200. GCP/KOS/004/SWE Project "Support in implementing a forest sector development programme in Kosovo". Project Document. Rome; and FAO 2010. GCP/KOS/004/SWE Project "Support in implementing a forest sector development programme in Kosovo". Final Report. Rome

1.2 Methodology of the evaluation

6. During its stay in Kosovo, the evaluation team worked in close collaboration with the project management and stakeholders. The exercise was conceived as a formative evaluation, based on collaborative-interactive learning among the evaluation team and project stakeholders at all levels. The role of the evaluation team was to collect, systematize, analyze and provide feedback of this information to the project staff and stakeholders for discussion and decision making. The exercise aimed at reaching a common understanding of priority actions to be undertaken in the rest of the project life. This objective was only partially achieved, primarily because the planned half/day final debriefing workshop with FMB members and other stakeholders had to be cancelled.

7. MTE findings are based on factual information (e.g. indicators of performance and achievement, financial figures, field observation of physical works and forest health in treated and untreated areas, participant observation and interviews to forest users), as well as on stakeholders judgments and opinions about the project. Informants include: the project Leading Technical Officer (LTO), the Budget Holder and the Junior Technical Officer incharge of Gender Equity and Rural Employment at the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU); the Project Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), the National Team Leader (NTL) and the project consultants; the staff of the project contractor ARNENI, high-level officers of the Forestry Department, the management and staff of the Kosovo Forestry Agency (KFA), and the researchers of the Kosovo Forestry Institute (KFI). Representatives of ministries participating in the Forest Management Board (FMB) were also interviewed as well as the staff of sister projects, the coordinators of the National Association of Private Forest Owners (NAPFO), selected Municipality officers and grassroots forest users including forest owners, farmers and women associations and action groups. Briefing and debriefing sessions took place with the Donor representatives. A detailed list of persons met and interviewed is provided under Annex 4.

8. During the mission the following evaluation research activities[4] were carried out:

- briefings at REU with the LTO, the Programme Officer, the project Budget Holder, and the Junior Technical Officer-in-Charge of Gender Equity ;
- several meetings and informal discussions with project management in Pristina;
- a preliminary review of project documentation, including financial data;
- a review of basic Kosovo forestry and environmental management policy documents (namely key documents issued by the Kosovo Government, FAO and the European Union);
- several focus groups or individual interviews to the aforementioned project stakeholders[5];

[4] A detailed list of MTE activities and persons met is presented in Annex 4.

[5] Questions addressed to "institutional" stakeholders followed the SWOT sequence. ("What are in your opinion the strengths of the Project?", "What about the weaknesses?", "What can be improved in the near future?", "What cannot?"). As Project activities in the visited pilot testing sites had recently started, questions to local interviewees focused on the perception of forestry issues, felt needs and expectations towards the project assistance.

- several forest transect walks and on-site observations in Kacanic and Hani-I-Elezit project field sites[6] and in Rugova protected forest, allowing for a quick assessment of the status of private, state and protected forests;
- a half-day visit to a medium private farming/cattle rising/forestry family enterprise in the highlands of Kacanik;
- a visit to the KFI premises in Peja;
- the participation, as observers, in a FMB meeting.

9. All along the MTE process, the project management (i.e. the CTA and the NTL) and ARNENI contractor staff were involved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the above information.

10. A multi-stakeholder debriefing workshop (aimed at validating evaluation findings and negotiating priorities for the future development of the project) was envisaged by the initial study design of this evaluation. However, this could not be implemented and was therefore replaced by following activities:

- a short presentation of evaluation preliminary findings to FMB members;
- two short-debriefing presentations to the UNDP Coordinator (in her faculty of acting FAO-Rep in Kosovo) and to the Chargée d'Affaires of the Embassy of Finland in Kosovo; and
- two half-day in-depth debriefing discussions with project management and ARNENI staff.

11. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation (in English and Albanian) and an Aide-Memoire, summarizing initial evaluation findings, were prepared by the evaluation team. This report builds on and expands the content of these preliminary documents. It also benefits from stakeholders' comments to the first draft, issued in July.

2 Context of the project

2.1.1 Forest and people in Kosovo

12. Forests and woodland cover around 42 percent of the about 11 000 Km^2 of Kosovo territory. This is in line with the overall average estimate for EU countries (about 40 percent)[7]. Beech and oak forests cover 90 percent of the 460 800 ha of Kosovo forested area (being the remaining 10 percent covered by Pinus species). Total volume of wood is estimated at 53 million m^3. Total annual increment is estimated at 53 000 m^3, annual allowable cut at 90 000 m^3 (70 000 from high forest and 20 000 from low forest cutting). However, according to the 2003 forest inventory, about 25 percent of Kosovo forests are

[6] In order to get a deeper understanding of the local situation and to overcome time constraints, the project management and evaluation team agreed to concentrate field work in Kacanik and Hani-I-Elezi municipalities (where, according to management, Project field activities are more developed). The Podujevo site was not visited.

[7] See European Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development.2007.*The European Forest Action Plan: 2007 – 2011*.Bruxelles: European Union.

affected by illegal cutting (estimated at 200 000 m^3/year) and many new and middle-aged forest stands are not properly managed. Furthermore, in 2007, 6 682 ha of forest and graze land have been lost because of forest fires[8].

13. Forest is an essential resource for Kosovo people livelihoods and economy; forests provide fuel-wood for house-heating in the very cold Kosovo winter, timber for construction, as well as valuable non-wood forest products such as wild mushrooms, berries, fruits, nuts, chestnuts, honey, and game, which potentially can feed some food value chains (marmalade, juices, jelly, cured meat). Besides forests provide important environmental services (runoff regulation, prevention of erosion on steep land, maintenance of the quality of air and water, carbon sequestration). In addition, in some forest areas, there are possibilities (still to be developed) for hunting and eco-tourism[9]. Eventually taxation on fuelwood and timber extraction both from state and private forests are an important source of income for Kosovo public revenue.

2.1.2 Forest policies in Kosovo

14. The environmental, economic, and social functions of forests (as well as their aesthetic, recreational and symbolic value) are of outstanding importance to the sustainable development of Kosovo and to the livelihoods of rural and mountain people. Article 1.2. of the 2003 Forest Law states: "The forest of Kosovo is a national resource. It shall be managed in such a way as to provide a valuable yield and at the same time preserve biodiversity". The Law also endorses the Rio principles of precautionary, conservation of biological diversity, intergenerational equity and ecologically sustainable development. In addition, article 3.5. of the Law stresses that "The objectives of Forest Plans shall reflect: (a) Local needs for forest resources; (b) The needs of Kosovo generally; and (c) in the case of private forests and forestlands, the needs of the landowner.

15. Notwithstanding, the 2003 Forest Law was basically conceived as a forest protection dispositive aimed at preventing and repressing the uncontrolled and unsustainable exploitation of forest resource that took place during and in the aftermaths of the war. This law is now considered obsolete. Some amendments were introduced during the last ten years, but the need for a brand new law is felt by most forest stakeholders.

16. Kosovo is now seeking to align to European policies and legislation. A general agreement exists that the new forestry law should be in line with European Union (EU) forestry sector policy framework. To be consistent with European policies[10], Kosovo

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[8] See KFA. 2003. Forest stocktaking 2002 2003. Pristina.

[9] Over 119,000 hectares of Kosovo territory, predominantly forest-covered, are protected as national and regional parks, natural monuments and forest parks.

[10] See Commission of the European Communities. 2006. *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an EU Forest Action Plan*. EU: Bruxelles. According to this document: "Member States have developed a common vision of forestry and of the contribution which forests and forestry make to modern society. This is titled: "Forests for society: long-term multifunctional forestry fulfilling present and future societal needs and supporting forest-related livelihoods". Multifunctional forestry delivers economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits. It supplies renewable and environmentally friendly raw materials and plays an important role in the economic development, employment and prosperity of Europe, in particular of rural areas. Forests make a positive contribution to the quality of life, providing a pleasant living environment, opportunities for recreation and preventive

legislation should focus on the multi-purpose use of forest capital, the enablement of private forest owners to exploit efficiently and sustainably their own stands, and a clearer articulation between fully protected forest areas (e.g. the National Parks) and sustainably exploitable state forest. Decentralization of forest management responsibility is an additional issue. In response to this challenge, in May 2008 the Government of Kosovo started formulating a National Forest Policy and Strategy Plan. This process (which was supported by FAO through project GCP/KOS/004/SWE, as well as by other donors) was based on international and European forestry policies and assisted by international experts. Kosovo institutions, directly or indirectly associated to the forestry sector, were involved in this policy reform, including the National Association of Private Forest Owners, (NAPFO)[11]. The plan was meant to set the stage for all major decisions concerning the development of the forestry sector for the current decade, including issuing the new forestry law.

17. By 2010 a Policy and Strategy Paper (hereinafter, PSP) for the development of the forestry sector in Kosovo and a ten-year Action Plan for its implementation (hereinafter, AP) were developed by MAFRD (with international assistance). As per their title, the PSP and the AP are complementary documents. The PSP outlines the policy framework of the forestry sector in Kosovo. It states the overall objective of the new policy as follows: "to increase the contribution of the forest sector to the national economy through sustainable use of the forest resources, taking into consideration as well the multi-functional role of forestry". In particular, the Government of Kosovo:

- recognizes the importance of the forest resources as integral part of the society in economic, social and cultural aspects;
- recognizes the contribution of the forestry to the economy, creation of employment, culture and social issues, protection of the environment and the nature;
- emphasizes the importance of protection of the forests for the maintenance of stable and healthy ecosystem;
- acknowledges the dissatisfactory state of forests resources which is characterized by unsustainable use, low intensity in forest management, insufficient protection and suboptimal use of forest resources;
- acknowledges that the potential of the forest resources is not used to its full potential due to limited availability of appropriate technology and trained personnel, weaknesses in organizational structures and enforcement of legislation regulating the protection and management of forest resources;
- recognizes that the private forests sector is characterized by fragmentation resulting in low productivity and inefficient use of forestlands;
- will address the existing threats to sustainable forest management resulting from limited capacity to invest in forest management, unlawful harvesting, forest fires, threat to biodiversity in production forests;
- acknowledges that the old public forest enterprises are not functional and must be subjected to privatization;
- recognizes that wood-processing industry is unable to participate adequately in the development of the forestry sector;

healthcare, while maintaining and enhancing environmental amenities and ecological values. Forests are to maintain the spiritual and cultural heritage they contain."

[11] Nevertheless, NAPFO complains that all their suggestions were rejected by the government institutions and that in fact they were just consulted, without being substantially involved in decisions. The same opinion applies to NAPFO participation in the Forestry Management Board (see para).

- appreciates the importance of international cooperation in the development of the forestry sector;
- stresses the need to strengthen the policy dialogue between the forest sector and other parts of society;
- recalls that the forest policy as a sectorial policy is a component of the total state policy of sustainable development of Kosovo, which will provide the framework for a more detailed planning within the forestry sector.

18. Following the same document, implementation of this policy should be based on the following principles: (i) conformity and consistency with national development objectives, policies, strategies and legislation; (ii) participation of concerned stakeholders; (iii) socio-economic foundation of forestry; (iv) preservation of cultural and traditional heritages; v) consistency with international commitments on forestry; vi) inter-sectorial approaches to be applied; vii) increasing the public's awareness on the importance of forestry. A major role in this process should be played by the municipal governments[12], to which the responsibility of protecting forests on their territory should be transferred under the technical assistance of KFA[13].

19. In addition, the PSP stresses that: "The forest sector in Kosovo could contribute to social stability and improved security. The means would be to take advantage of the forests' capacity to deliver products of importance to reduce poverty and to develop the socio-economy. Forest activities may provide employment and increase the private sector's opportunities for the provision of services. Organizing forest owners, support to NGOs, increased awareness, enhance ethnic co-existence, etc., are activities that will strengthen the civil society and contribute to the democratization process"[14].

20. As per its title the AP deals with the implementation of the PSP. It translates the principles stated in the latter document into three operational pillars (i.e. components) as follows: 1) raise knowledge in under-developed competence areas; 2) support to operations performance and turnaround actions; and 3) support to institutions having the overall responsibility for implementing the projects and activities involved in the plan. The PSP includes eight major projects (forest management, capacity building, forest environmental protection, forest non wood products, private sector development, forestry planning,

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[12] Reiterated references to municipal governments in the PSP echo the strong call for decentralization included in the Ahtisaari Plan (see UNOSEC. 2007. *The Comprehensive proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement. Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's future status*. Vienna). This is the international, legally binding agreement that has set the basis of post-war Kosovo as a new multi-ethnic political entity. In this connection, a new legislation on decentralization of the public administration has already been promulgated (see Ministry of Local Government Administration. 2008. *Law on Local Self-Government.* Pristina), which assigns to the municipalities full competencies in all local issues, including local economic development and taxation policies and, hence, also competencies in forest utilisation (licensing) and forest management. However, the exact form in which forestry sector decentralization has to take place is not clear yet. This is indeed one of the crucial points in the discussion about the new Forestry Law.

[13] In each of the twenty-five Kosovo municipalities KFA has a forestry-unit, whose main task is to assist local governments (Municipality Councils).

[14] The above is a slightly edited recompilation of some main statements of MAFRD. 2009. *Forest Policy and Strategy Paper*. Pristina.

harvesting and transporting and support to institutions and organizations). A synoptic summary of the content of the AP is presented in the following tables[15].

Table 1. Action Plan for Component (pillar) 1, "Raise knowledge in under-developed competence areas"

Component ("project" in the AP)	Outputs ("activities" in the AP)	Outcomes[14] ("expected results" in the AP)	Institutions concerned
Forest Management	***Capacity development***	Improved competence in managing of forest has created more productive and valuable forests	KFA, KFI
	Plantation management	Increased wood production through plantation of bare land, or currently under-utilized forestlands	KFA, KFI
	Monitoring of forest health	Reduced risks for comprehensive outbreaks of pest and diseases	KFA, KFI
	Tending of young forest	Increased portion of high value forest	KFA, KFI
Capacity Building	***Forest vocational education***	One Forest Vocational Education School is in function	
	Forest vocational training	A Training Centre, organized to operate all over Kosovo, is increasing the skills of forest workers	MLSW, MAFRD
	Higher forest education	Education organized for students to either attain training in Kosovo or at foreign forest faculties	MEST, MAFRD
	Awareness rising	The public is aware of the role of forestry as an important element of the society and as a provider of a variety of benefits	MEST, MLSW, MAFRD
Forest Environmental Protection	***Capacity development***	Improved capacity to deal with environmental issues related to forestry, consensus regarding needs for protection/land use	MESP, MAFRD
	Biodiversity Action Plans	Kosovo Institutions have capacity to implement and monitor Bio Diversity Action Plans	MESP, MAFRD
	Establishment of protected zones	Protected zones are established and managed in compliance with national goals and international agreements	MESP, MAFRD
Forest non wood products	***Drafting of legislation***	A law has been drafted for the regulation of the collection and processing of medical and aromatic plants	MESP, MAFRD, MTI, law making unit
	Forest non-wood products	The potential for non-wood products, including eco-tourism, is analysed and provide a basis for further development	MESP, MAFRD, MTI, law making unit

[15] **Important terminological note**. In project documentation, the terms used to design different elements of the logframe result chain are highly heterogeneous. Mixing Finnish, MAFRD, Norwegian and FAO terminologies is confounding and complicates any comparison among the documents issued by the different agencies. For this reason, FAO terminology has been adopted as follows: *result* is a blanket term covering outputs, outcomes and impact; *outputs* describes "what the project will deliver in order to achieve the outcomes"; *outcomes* (called "results" in the AP) are defined as statements describing "the short and medium term positive effect of a project or a programme"; *components* are sets of outcomes referring to the same intervention area (e.g. policy support, technical assistance, private sector). When appropriate, the original terminology follows in brackets the above terms.

Component ("project" in the AP)	Outputs ("activities" in the AP)	Outcomes[14] ("expected results" in the AP)	Institutions concerned
Private sector development	***Privatization of SOEs***	The old SOE structure is replaced with new structures with the capability to accommodate to open market conditions	KAP, MAFRD
	Support to Forest Owners Associations	Private forest owners are represented in policy making; their productivity and income have improved	MAFRD, MEST,
	Training in entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurs are capable of conducting more efficient and environmentally friendly operations	MAFRD
	Wood processing	Industries for processing small-sized logs are established, and providing employment opportunities in rural areas	MTI, MEF
	Bio-energy production	Wood biomass for heating purposes are produced and utilized in a more efficient manner	
	Land consolidation	Larger private holdings, and with a configuration that enhance the value and facilitate the management created	MAFRD, KCA

Table 2. Action Plan for Component (pillar) 2 "Support to operations performance and turn-a-round actions"

Component ("project" in the AP)	Outputs ("activities" in the AP)	Outcomes ("expected results" in the AP)	Institutions concerned
Forestry Planning	***Forest inventories***	Strategic/policy decisions are based on accurate information	MAFRD, KFA
	Forest management planning	Selection and treatment of forest stands is based on relevant information	MAFRD, KFA
	Operational planning	Improved planning has reduced forest damages and contributed to a more stable and transparent wood market	MAFRD, KFA
Harvesting & Transport	***Reduced unlawful harvesting***	The extent of unlawful harvest has decreased, and incomes to the state fiscal budget increased	MAFRD, KFA
	Reduced needs for control	Agreements with Forest Owners Associations have resulted in decreased work for monitoring harvesting & transport	MAFRD, KFA
	Improved harvesting practices	Improved methods combined with proper planning have resulted in reduced damages on forest and forestlands	MAFRD

Table 3. Action Plan for Component (pillar) 3:"Support to institutions having the overall responsibility for implementing the Plan".

Component ("project" in the AP)	Outputs ("activities" in the AP)	Outcomes ("expected results" in the AP)	Institutions concerned
Support to Institutions and Organizations	***Implementation of the Action Plan***	The capacity of the Government to implement and monitor policies and strategies has improved	MAFRD, MESP, MEF and other stakeholders
	Institutional and technical support	The capability of institutions and organizations to solve technical and institutional	MAFRD, MESP, MEF

		shortcomings has improved	and other

21. These tables illustrate the comprehensiveness (and ambition) of the AP. Following the inspiration of the PSP, the AP presents itself as a tool to guide the shift from the old forest-capital conservation practice (prevailing during the former-Yugoslavia rule) to a new forest-capital investment practice (based on the European multi-functionality approach). In addition, the AP recognizes that this change cannot be undertaken alone by the forestry sector institutions, such as the Forestry Department of the MAFRD, the KFA, the FRI, and, henceforth, foresees partnerships with other government institutions, including the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP), the Ministry of Economy (ME), the Ministry of Finance (MF), the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), the Kosovo Agency for Privatisation (KAP) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). Implementation of the AP is conceived as an inter-sectorial endeavour to be discussed and negotiated within a Forestry Management Board in which all the above government institutions, the National Association of Private Forest Owners Association, and selected forestry sector donors are represented[16].

22. Implementation of the PSP/AP entails major challenges for the Kosovo Forestry sector, which call for further international assistance. Based on its long collaboration with Kosovo forestry sector, in 2010, FAO was requested by the Kosovo government to continue to support the process started by Project GCP/KOS/004/SWE. A draft proposal for a project aimed at facilitating the implementation was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (a donor strongly committed to support Kosovo in different sectors). The relevance of the FAO project proposal to the Finnish development policy was appraised by a national consultancy company[17]. The study concluded that the project was substantially in line with Finnish development priorities and approach (see para 74-75). Eventually, upon request from the Government of Kosovo, the Government of Finland accepted to support a new multilateral initiative aimed at providing support to the implementation of the PSP/AP.

23. The project was designed by focusing on those aspects of the PSP/AP that were not already covered by other bilateral and multilateral initiatives on going in the Kosovo forestry sector. These include:

- The “twinning” project “Further Support to Sustainable Forestry Management”, funded by the European Commission.
- SNV/Sida project “Strengthening Sustainable Private and Decentralized Forestry”, funded by the Dutch and Swedish governments.
- The “Forest Management Planning” project, financed by Norway.

[16] Still, it must be noticed that beyond some generic references to “other forest stakeholders”, the AP does not explicitly mention municipalities and grassroots forest users (i.e. family and people who live in forest areas and whose livelihoods depend, to a variable extent, from the exploitation of forest products), as fully entitled actors of the process at stance. Hence, it seems that decentralization and grassroots participation - two main features of the PSP - have partially lost importance at the moment of moving from policy design to planning policy implementation.

[17] See Finnish Consulting Group 2011. Desk Appraisal of the FAO Project Document ”Support to Implementation of the Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo. Helsinki: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- The "Kosovo Private Enterprise Program" sponsored by USAID[18].

3 Analysis of project concept and design

24. As per its title, the project mandate is to support the implementation of Kosovo new forestry policy as outlined in the PSP and operationalized by the AP.

25. Based on the above, the project theory of change is straightforward. Assuming that the policy presented in the PSP/AP is the most relevant and appropriate one to reform the Kosovo forestry sector according to European and international standards, it supposes that if quality assistance in selected areas will be delivered, PSP/AP implementation will be smoother and more efficient, and the capability of the Kosovo forestry sector of implementing joint, integrated, multipurpose forests will improve. This is expected to "increase the contribution of the forest sector to the national economy through sustainable use of forest resources, taking into account the multipurpose forestry approach including economic, social and environmental benefits as well as its contribution to climate change mitigation" (as per ProDoc impact statement). Assessing the validity of this theory of change requires reviewing the content and structure of the project logical framework (hereinafter, logframe).

26. Two versions exist of the project logframe: the first one is attached to the ProDoc; the second one was developed by project management during the inception phase[19]. As far as the result chain is considered, the two versions do not differ very much. On the contrary substantial changes in indicators, means of verification and assumptions were introduced, based on the suggestions of the project management. The improved inception report version (see Annex 5) was approved by the Donor and the Steering Committee, used to guide the project implementation and adopted for organizing progress reports. Henceforth, it will be used as the key project design reference also throughout this report.

27. The project chain of results is organized according to three components, each with its "component purpose", as follows:

- Coordination of the action plan as formulated in the Policy Strategy Paper (2010-2020)
- Improved forest management practices leading to increased yeld of forestland and enhanced employement opportunities for the rural population.
- Climate change mitigation

28. Each component includes several outcomes, each of which is broken down into a number of outputs. The overall progression and concatenation of project result chain is presented in the table below.

[18] Notwithstanding, during the project inception phase, some overlaps were found (in particular with the EU twinning project).These were taken in due consideration at the moment of developing the project workplan.

[19] See, respectively, Project GCP/KOS/005/FIN. 2010. *Project Document.* FAO: Rome; and Project GCP/KOS/005/FIN. 2011. *Inception Report.* FAO: Pristina. According to the National Team Leader (NTL) "the ProDoc logframe and strategy were not very clear and didn't give enough guidance for implementation".

Table 4. Project logframe result chain[20]

COMPONENT 1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST POLICY AND STRATEGY
Outcome 1: Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened, allowing it to better coordinate and implement the Action Plan (AP) as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010–2020.
1.1 The Forest Management Board (FMB) for supervising the implementation of forest policies and strategies is fully functional, and all the main stakeholders are represented.
1.2 PSP implementation is facilitated, followed up and monitored by a Coordination Unit (operational branch of the Board).
1.3 PSP Action Plan has gone through a prioritization process
Outcome 2: Basic forest legislation is updated and harmonized with new policy and strategy.
The following outputs are expected:
2.1. The validation of the New Forest Law supported by FAO and communicated to all stakeholders and the process of adoption by the parliament to be supported by the project
2.2 New and revised practices and procedures for information management are to be implemented at all levels of forestry administration, and the forest policy and legal documents will be available to be used by all forestry staff at both the headquarters, and in the regions and municipalities.
Outcome 3. An information strategy on the importance of the forestry sector is developed and implemented.by the establishment of KFIS (Kosovo Forest Information System)
3.1 The general public (especially young people) is aware of the importance of the forestry sector and are familiar with the main principles of the adopted forest policy.
3.2 Information material has been developed for and is used by the educational institutions.
3.3 The status of forestry institutions has been promoted in mass media through functional support and nationwide publicity events.
3.4 Forestry institutions are active in media, news, documentaries and other releases.
Outcome 4. Support the completion of the decentralization process in forestry.
4.1 Ongoing decentralization process is facilitated.
4.2 Personnel of the decentralized forestry offices are familiar with the forest policies and legislation and have been trained to carry out their tasks properly.
COMPONENT 2. INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICES
Outcome 1: Improved condition of low-growth forests through better forest management and silvicultural practices.
1.1 Test/pilot areas are selected, marked in the field and drawn on the map.
1.2 Arrangements are made with local stakeholders for carrying out management activities. Special attention is given to the involvement of women and representatives from vulnerable groups.
1.3 Improved capacity for applying integrated approaches in forest management.
1.4 Trainers/extensionists have received instructions to meet the needs in the pilot areas.
1.5 Modalities for joint (public/private) forest management and use are defined and introduced.
1.6 Standard approach for local agreements/contracts is established and is known at all levels.
Outcome 2. Updated information on the status of existing forest plantations.
2.1 A survey on the current situation of forest plantations has been carried out.
2.2 Permanent plantation information system has been designed, established and is in use.
2.3. An initial KFIS (Kosovo Forest Information System) will have been design and a system for regular update of web page will have been established
Outcome 3. Informative, diagnostic and prognostic capacities in Kosovo are enhanced
3.1 Forest officials, relevant stakeholders and forest owners are aware of the health hazards resulting from improper forest practices.
3.2 Information on how to mitigate pests and diseases has been disseminated to stakeholders.
3.3 Support provided for establishing a forest health monitoring system in Kosovo.

[20] Numeration of result chain elements below follows project practice: the first digit corresponds to components; the second one to outcomes; and the third one to outputs.

3.4 Options for establishing an organization for monitoring forest health have been identified.
3.5 Forest researchers in Kosovo have established contacts with their colleagues specialized in forest health issues.
3.6 Conditions to be created for exchange of research results and experiences in prevention and mitigation of pests and diseases.
3.7 Establishment of laboratory premises for applied research.
COMPONENT 3. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION
Outcome 1: Increased understanding of, and capacity to, combat climate change in the forestry sector. The following outputs are expected:
1.1 A strategy and action plan to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the forestry sector is prepared.
1.2 Arrangements to be made to have the strategy approved at the highest political level.

29. With regard to content, the above result chain suggests that, according to its theory of change, the project is primarily conceived as an initiative aimed at assisting Kosovo Government in turning into practice the PSP/AP at the institutional and social level (component 1). To this end the project will strengthen policy implementation capacity at the central level (as per project outcomes 1.1, Facilitation of the Forest Management Board; 1.2. Updating of forest legislation and 3.1. Mainstreaming climate change issues in Kosovo forestry policy); at the decentralized (regional/municipal) level (outcome 1.4. Support to the completion of the decentralization process); and at the grassroots forest users level (as per (outputs 2.1.1. - 2.1.5., dealing with pilot field tests in selected locations). As the PSP pay little attention to climate change issues, Component 3 might be considered cross-sectionally as part of the policy assistance endeavour.

30. The project designer added to this straightforward policy-oriented intervention logic a number of outcomes and outputs dealing with forestry sector technicalities, such as the updating of the forest plantations information (outcome 2.2), and the improvement of forest health situation (outcome 2.3). In the opinion of the evaluation team, these "technical" outcomes (and related outputs and activities), although instrumental to the implementation of the AP, are not strictly relevant to the project policy-assistance mandate and to its theory of change, and have contributed to overburden implementation.

31. Indeed with its three components, eight outcomes and twenty-nine outputs, the project result-chain looks, at first glance, a very ambitious initiative, with a structure better fitting a long term programme than a three-year project. This impression is boosted by the heterogeneity of the content of result chain elements. The project "master" work plan (see Annex 7) include more than fifty very different "policy making" and "technical" activities, which would be in most cases better defined as "activity-lines" to be implemented in a three-year time. Indeed, this plan has proved to be not realistic as initially expected.

32. From a formal point of view, several flaws can be detected in the result chain at stake. For instance:

- Some statements are redundant and not well positioned in the cause/effect (means/end) logframe concatenation. For example, Output 1.1.1. "*The Forest Management Board for supervising implementation of forest policies and strategies is fully functional, and all the main stakeholders are represented*", might well be considered as an activity contributing to Output 1.1.2. "*PSP implementation is facilitated, followed up and monitored by a Coordination Unit"* (or vice versa).

- Outputs 2.1.2. – 2.1.5[21] , referring to pilot/field tests, currently under Outcome 2.1 (which, content wise is improperly worded) "*Improved condition of low-growth forests through better forest management and silvicultural practices*" should have been clustered under a separate outcome: e.g. "improved joint, integrated forest management in selected areas". Moreover, other outputs should have been added to this outcome, such as "needs of forest users identified"; forest based income-generating activities identified and launched on a testing basis", "public/private tenure conflicts addressed", "fuel-wood extraction bureaucracy simplified"[22].
- Logically, Output 2.1.5. "Standard approach for local agreements is established and is known at all levels" (currently under the afore-mentioned Outcome 2.1 "Improved condition of low growth forest through better forest management and silvicultural practice") would be more coherently positioned under Outcome 1.4. (Accomplishment of the decentralization process).

33. On the other hand, as shown by the complete logframe tables presented in Annex 6, logframe monitoring elements (indicators, means of verification, assumptions) are, in general, well-conceived. Most of them are clear, relevant, valid and contextually sound. All indicators are qualitative, which is consistent with the way in which the corresponding outcomes and outputs are worded. Means of verification are reliable and simple to use. Assumptions are logical and comply with the real-life context in which the project works (see Annex 6).

34. The project inception report includes also an outline of the strategy to be pursued to achieve the expected results. The main elements of this strategy are as follows:

- The project implementation should find out a fair balance between pursuing the project expected results and the *flexibility and adaptability* needed to work in the very dynamic and complex environment of Kosovo forestry sector. Bilateral collaborative relationships are to be established with all the institutions represented in the board as well as with sister-agencies and projects working in the Kosovo forestry sector. In addition, solid linkages should be established with the National Association of Private Owners, with the major civil society organizations in the forestry sector and its participation in the FMB should be advocated.
- With the view of *using as much national expertise as possible*, stocktaking has to be carried out of forestry experts and other relevant human resources available in Kosovo who could contribute to the achievement of project results. The *capacity development* of these human resources (in particular in the area of integrated joint and forest management) is a key-element of this process of building on existing knowledge and skills. Special attention has to be paid to the clarification of concepts "imported" from other countries (such as the EU "forest multifunctional" approach), which are new for many Kosovo forestry professionals. Capacity development has to be carried out by a variety of active learning methods: coaching individuals who have the strongest professional background and motivation; organization of interactive thematic workshops; and study tours. Exchanges with foreign universities

[21] Output 2.1.2 Arrangements are made with local stakeholders for carrying out management activities. Special attention is given to the involvement of women and representatives from vulnerable groups; Output 2.1.3 - Improved capacity for applying integrated; Output 2.1.4 -Trainers/extensionists have received instructions to meet the needs pilot areas. forest management.; Output 2.1.5 -Modalities for joint (public/private) forest management and use are defined and introduced.

[22] These refer to the needs elicited by ARNENI staff and the evaluation team by interacting with grassroots forest users and private owners in Kacanik and Hani -I -Elezit municipalities.

have to be facilitated, as well as the participation of MAFRD Forestry Department in European forums such as Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe (INC-Forests).

- A *political/technical network* has also to be supported inside Kosovo to promote discussion on policy and technical issues based on scientific evidence. This should materialize in the development of a comprehensive Kosovo Forestry Information System (KFIS), a web platform from which different kinds of users can access existing database on forest management, forest health prognostic and diagnostic advice, human and material resources available to forestry institutions, legislation, relevant literature and information and diffusion materials. In addition, social communication campaigns on forest management are to be prepared addressing primarily the youth.
- According to the logframe, *pilot field-testing of multi-purpose joint forest management* has to be launched at the municipality level where a more substantial participation of local civil society, including women and marginal groups, is likely to take place. A selection of municipalities and forest areas should be negotiated with KFA, taking advantage of its knowledge of the terrain. However, implementation should be entrusted to an independent, non-governmental contractor owning a significant experience in participatory methods, women empowerment, social inclusion, conflict management and learning by doing which is missing in Kosovo forestry sector institutions.

35. In the opinion of the evaluation team, this strategy, combining institutional strengthening at the central level, capacity development at the decentralized level and pilot field test at the grassroots is well conceived and provides good guidance to manage the complexity of the project design as well as possible. It conceptually contributes to organize implementation of the ambitious and complex result chain. Nevertheless, for a number of reasons that will be discussed below (see paragraph 85 below) it was not possible to implement it as it was conceived.

4 Analysis of the implementation process

4.1 Project management

36. The project is managed by an international Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) – a forestry expert - and a National Team Leader (NTL), a sociologist. Both have a long experience in managing or collaborating with FAO technical cooperation project in the sub-region. The project office is staffed with an efficient general service team, which, on occasions, also provides support in translation from and to Albanian.[23]

37. As per their ToR, the main responsibilities of the CTA and NTL (hereinafter, the project management) include the implementation of most activities under Component 1 (Institutional support for the implementation of forest policy and strategy); and facilitation,

[23] The support given by this staff has been highly instrumental in conducting the evaluation mission successfully.

oversight and coordination of technical work foreseen by the other components of the project. Management is also in charge of selecting and providing guidance to the consultants required to assist particular aspects of project implementation. This includes drafting consultants' ToR, clearing their reports, and making sure that their recommendations are taken into consideration by the national implementing bodies.

38. The lists of the international and national short term experts fielded (or to be fielded) in support to the management team foreseen by the ProDoc is presented in Table 5 and 6 below.

Table 5. Short-term international expertise to be made available by the project according to the ProDoc.

Area of expertise	Duration (person/months) and number of missions
Institutional support and policy evaluation	2 months, 2 missions
Information and publicity specialist	1 month, 1 mission
Capacity building, training in facilitation	1 month, 1 mission
Legal specialist: tendering/concessions/privatization.	3 months, 2 missions
Legal specialist: forest law	2 months, 2 missions
Training needs assessment, extensions	3 month, 2 missions
Joint forest management/local people involvement	3 months, 2 missions
Integrated forest management	3 months, 2 missions
Forest plantation specialist: site-species matching	7 months, 4 missions
Forest pathology specialist	6 months, 3 missions
Climate change specialist	4 months. 3 missions
Unspecified	6 months, 4 missions
Total	**41 person/months, 28 missions**

Table 6. Short-term national expertise to be made available by the project according to the ProDoc.

Area of expertise	Duration (person/months)
Institutional support	4
Legal issues	3
Information systems	6
Integrated forest management	3
Training Needs Assessment	2
Extension/training	3
Plantation management expert/silviculturist	7
Unspecified	9
Total	**37person/months**

39. In addition, since February 2013, the project has relied on the contribution of ARNENI, the consortium to which the implementation of the pilot/tests under output 2.1.2 - 2.1.4 as well as the preparation of a handbook for Municipalities on Management of Forest is trusted. ARNENI is also bringing additional expertise in forest management, GIS/GPS, social work and gender issues.

40. All these things considered, the evaluators believe that the expertise foreseen and made available almost covers all expertise needed by the project components. This is confirmed by interviews, joint fieldwork and informal exchanges with several team members. According to the evaluation team, all staff and national consultants dealing with forestry technical matters met during the mission are highly qualified. Social expertise provided by ARNENI would benefit from some coaching to be provided by an international expert in social/community forestry.

41. Project operations are based on the general workplan (see annex 8) agreed upon at the end of the inception phase, and annually updated to adjust to contingencies. Workplan monitoring is supported by a very accurate document filing system (both in soft and hard copy), which allows tracing facilitating factors and causes of delay of virtually every aspect of the project implementation. Although timeliness is taken as the core indicator of performance, critical events in the project history are thoroughly documented and considered in assessing progress. In addition, implementation monitoring is well coordinated with financial monitoring, through a smart and skilled use of FAO administrative software (ORACLE), which allows to convert budget lines figures into activity cost figures.

42. The project monitoring system supports an excellent reporting practice. Indeed, P-project progress reports are very accurate and informative and have contributed to this evaluation more substantially than it usually happens in comparable circumstances. These reports document the major effort done by the project management to implement the project and its steady commitment towards the release of expected outputs and the achievement of relevant outcomes. The reader of this evaluation report interested in the day-by-day details of implementation is referred to those documents.

43. The above suggests a very good performance of the project management in terms of efficiency in operation management, effectiveness of human resource management, and the monitoring of progress implementation. The project management has also been proactive in strategic decision making and timely in implementation of a cluster of outputs conducive to Outcome 1.1. Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened to coordinate and implement the Action Plan as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010-2020, which (as it will be discussed in section 5.1.) are the most important results achieved by the project so far. Concerning other outputs, as it will be discussed in detail in the section 5.1, annual workplans have not always been as realistic as desirable, and timeliness has suffered from unpredictable constraints.

44. No exit strategy has been conceived by the project, so far. Indeed this Mid-Term Evaluation was requested by the project Steering Committee in order to collect empirical evidence and expert advice to develop a viable exit strategy.

4.2 Financial management

45. Table 7 shows the structure of project budget according to Oracle codes.

Table 7. Overall structure of project budget, according to the ProDoc

Budget line	Budget	% of total budget
5011 Salaries professionals	735,000	19.6
5012 Salaries general service	129,000	3.4
5013 Consultants	648,000	17.3
5014 Contracts	250,000	6.7
5020 Locally contracted labour	277,000	7.4
5021Travel	413,200	11.1
5023 Training	398,000	10.6
5024 Expendable procurement	31,000	0.8
5025 Non expendable procurement	244,000	6.6
5027 Technical support service	58,200	1.6
5028 General operating expenses	127,000	3.4
5029 Support costs	430,352	11.5
5040 General operating expenses	0	0
Total	**3,740,752**	**100**

46. To make sense of the actual budget allocation, Oracle lines have been consolidated in four major categories: general management and operations costs (501124, 5012, 5020, 5027, 5028 and 5029); technical assistance (5013, 5014, 5021); training (5023); equipment and material resources (5025 and 5027). The proportion of the total budget allocated for each of these categories is as follows:

- General management and operation costs: 37.1 percent
- Technical assistance: 44.9 percent
- Training: 10.6 percent
- Equipment and materials: 7.4 percent

47. These figures suggest: i) a high allocation to management function; ii) the prominent role attributed to technical assistance (and coaching), through the fielding of international and national consultants; iii) a low allocation for training activities, as well as for equipment and material resource (which so far has basically included vehicles, office equipment, fuel and office materials, and their maintenance). Indeed, except for the forestry laboratory (mentioned in output 2.3.7.) no major procurement was foreseen in the project design.

48. Table 8 shows project financial delivery as per June 2013. Delivery figures include actual expenses and hard commitments.

[24] This figure includes the 50 percent of the budget line 5011, Salaries Professionals, which roughly corresponds to the organisational, supervision and administrative activities included in the ToR of the CTA and the NTL. The remaining 50 percent, corresponding to CTA and NTL technical activities (namely in connection with Component 1 activities) is treated as part of "technical assistance".

Table 8. Budget delivery by June 2013 (as per the Financial Statement issued by the Budget Holder)

Budget line	Budget Estimates (2011-2014)	Actual expenses and hard commitments (2011-2013)	Delivery rate by June 2013 (%)[25]
5011 Salaries professionals	735,000	676,879	92.1
5012 Salaries general service	129,000	137,341	106.5
5013 Consultants	648,000	313,702	48.4
5014 Contracts	250,000	245,465	98.2
5020 Locally contracted labour	277,000	1,548	0.6
5021Travel	413,200	166,984	40.4
5023 Training	398,000	7,103	1.8
5024 Expendable procurement	31,000	4,176	13.5
5025 Non expendable procurement	244,000	78,308	32.1
5027 Technical support service	58,200	43,469	74.7
5028 General operating expenses	127,000	25,179	19.8
5029 Support costs	430,352	147,209	34.2
5040 General operating expenses	0	39	0
Total	**3,740,752**	**1,847,402**	**49.4**

49. Overall delivery at the second year of the project implementation is at about 50 percent. Following the same criteria adopted above to consolidate Oracle items into the above content-based categories, it is found that:

- Delivery for general management is at 50 percent.
- Delivery for technical assistance is at 67 percent, i.e. about two thirds of ProDoc allocation.
- Training is at 1.8 percent of the budget estimate, about one fifth of ProDoc allocation.
- Equipment and other material resources are at 30 percent of ProDoc allocation which leaves a substantial margin to invest in this area.

50. The evaluation team underlines that, as compared to the ProDoc expenditure forecasting, significant "savings" were made during the last two years by the project. This would allow the project to be extended at zero cost for at least six months after the official ending date.

51. No budget revision has been done so far. It is expected that a budget revision will be requested after the completion of this Mid-Term Evaluation.

52. Given the rather limited progress towards the release of its outputs (see section 5.1.), the evaluation team believes that an evaluation of project cost-effectiveness is premature.

[25] Delivery rate is calculated according to the following formula: actual expenses and hard commitments/ ProDoc budget estimate x 100, over a two-year period.

4.3. Efficiency and effectiveness of the institutional arrangements, including Government's participation

53. During the implementation the project has been steadily supported by the LTO, the Budget Holder and the Programme Officer-in-Charge, and the Officer-in-Charge for Gender Issues at REU. It also received the assistance from headquarters through the Forest Economics and Policy and Products (FOE), the Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division (FOM), the Development Law Service (LEGN) and the Office for Extension, Knowledge and Research (OEKR).

54. According to the project management, the administrative assistance received from REU, has been on several occasions sub-optimal, in particular in the area of procurement and outsourcing of activities. The following critical accident has been mentioned several times in this connection. The decision to outsource municipality/grassroots level activities (related to logframe outputs 2.1.1 - 2.1.5) to a national consultancy firm was taken in late 2011. After consultation, REU suggested to launch a formal tender. This resulted in a very heavy and time consuming procedure. A long time was needed to draft and redraft the substantial and formal terms of the contract. Then it was found that none of the four consultancy firms applying to the tender owned all the expertise required by the ToR. Hence, a consortium had to be created according to national by-laws. Additional time was needed to formalize the contract. According to the REU Programme Officer-in-Charge the long duration of the tendering procedure was due to the vacancy of a specialized Procurement Officer in the REU staff. In the opinion of the evaluation team other simpler and more straightforward procedures could have been followed to deal with this issue, such as establishing a Letter of Agreement with a national competent NGO (such as the SNV-trained Connecting People with Nature") or hiring national or international consultants in community/social forestry on an individual basis.

55. The project is overseen by a tripartite Steering Committee, which according to all the parties involved is working smoothly and efficiently. The main function of this Committee (that meets quarterly) is to take stock of the progress made in implementation and adjust workplans according to contingencies. It must be stressed that the project monitoring system data are highly instrumental to provide evidence to support the decisions to be made by the Steering Committee.

56. Thanks also to the diplomatic assistance of the Finnish Embassy in Kosovo (where there is no FAO Representation), the project management was able to establish quickly collaborative relationships with representatives of the different institutions that constitute the Forestry Management Board and to be given formally the responsibility of facilitating the activity of this body.The Kosovo Government has steadily participated in the activity of the project-promoted Forest Management Board. A strong collaborative relationship was established among the project members and representatives of governmental bodies participating in the FMB. Selected members of the government attended seminars, study tours and international policy making events. KFA facilitated research, training, planning of pilot field tests. Kosovo Government financial contribution to project implementation is limited to hosting the project office in MAFRD building. KFA has committed to make available the premises for the forestry lab, which will be installed in Peja, but according to project management and the evaluation team these do not meet the standard technical requirements.

5 Analysis of results and contribution to stated objectives

5.1 Achievements at output level

57. As most of the project outputs indicators are qualitative, the "rating by external judgment" method was adopted to assess the progress made by the project towards the release of each particular output. To this end the following procedure was adopted:

58. "Products" were taken as progress measuring units. A product is hereby defined as the tangible "object" (e.g. an agreement with an institution signed, a publication/report issued, a consultancy fielded, an equipment procured) of one or more activities aimed to release a given output.

59. The project management was asked to list the most important products delivered so far by the project in connection with each logframe output.

60. The assessment of the progress towards the release of a particular output was based on the best opinion of the evaluation team members about the strategic importance of the delivered product. The subjectivity entailed in this procedure is partially counterbalanced by the knowledge of the project that the evaluation team has gained in two months of intensive study and analysis (based on the methodology described in Section 1.2.). Hence, it is an informed and (given the composition of the evaluation team) interdisciplinary subjectivity.

61. Eventually, the progress towards the release of each output was rated according to the following scale: substantial, significant, incipient, and negligible[26]. A cut-off point between "major" and "minor" progress was fixed at the middle of the rating scale (i.e. between significant and incipient). The reasons for assigning a given "progress rate" have been made explicit in a summary statement (see tables 9-10). Hence, the subjectivity of this rating is transparent.

62. The findings of this qualitative analysis exercise are presented in tables 9 and table 10, below[27].

[26] Definitions of these adjectives, drawn from the Oxford dictionary, are as follows; *substantial:* "large and solid"; *significant*:" large enough to have an effect or to be somehow noticeable"; *incipient*: "just beginning"; *negligible*: "of very low importance or size and not worth considering".

[27] Wording of the outputs in the table (and in the text below) follow those adopted in the December 2012 Progress Report. These are slightly different from those presented in the inception report.

Table 9. Assessment of the project progress towards the release of (reformed) logframe outputs for component 1 - "Institutional support" (May 2011 – June 2013)

Outputs	Products delivered by June 2013	Assessment of progress towards the release of the corresponding output
Output 1.1.1. - The Forest Management Board (FMB) for supervising implementation of forest policies and strategies is fully functional, and all the main stakeholders are represented	A FMB, involving MAFRD, KFA, Forestry Department, the Ministries of Environment, Finance and Education, the Private Forest Owners Association and members of the EU Commission and USAID was established and endorsed by the Government.. Seven FMB meetings were held. A FMB's Coordination Unit (CU) was established. Integration of Kosovo as an observer in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe (ICN – Forests) was facilitated. The Annual Progress Report of the Forest Sector in Kosovo for 2012 was prepared and approved by FMB and the 2013 issue is in progress.	*Significant* (The FMB is not fully functional yet. Cooperative relationships among participating institutions are still to be strengthened).
Output 1.1.2. - PSP implementation is facilitated, followed up and monitored by a Coordination Unit	International expertise on M&E was made available. The M&E system for the PSP and project implementation was designed. The 2013 Annual Forest Sector Progress Report was prepared, based on M&E system findings.	*Substantial* (A planning and monitoring system has been established, for collecting and processing the data needed to follow-up PSP/AP implem. and prepare a comprehensive assessment of the forestry sector).
Output 1.1.3. - PSP Action Plan has gone through a prioritization process and has a work plan for implementation	Two project proposals (entrusted to national consultants) on establishment of vocational education and forest thinning were drafted and approved by the FMB. The PSP Project Planning Manual was finalised and approved by the FMB.	*Substantial* (A prioritization process has taken place, leading to the identification of two priority projects).
Output 1.2.1. - The law preparation process is well coordinated and all stakeholder groups, including women and vulnerable groups, have been fully involved and the text of the updated forestry law is ready for presentation to Parliament	The drafting of the law was closely followed by the project and necessary assistance was provided to MAFRD by FAO Forestry and Legal Departments. ToR for providing relevant legal expertise were drafted.	*Incipient* (Discussion on the content of the new forestry law is still ongoing. Civil society stakeholders are only marginally involved in the process, with very limited decision making power).

Outputs	Products delivered by June 2013	Assessment of progress towards the release of the corresponding output
Output 1.2.2. - New and revised practices and procedures for information management are implemented at all levels of forestry administration, and the forest policy and legal documents are available to and used by all forestry staff at headquarters, and in the regions and municipalities.	A workshop was held to review current KFA information system. A new, comprehensive Kosovo Forest Information System (KFIS) was developed and ToR for procurement of KFIS software finalised. Relevant tender documentation was prepared and sent to REU for processing.	*Significant* (The KFIS software is still to be developed).
Output 1.3.1. - The general public (especially young people) are aware of the importance of the forestry sector and are familiar with the main principles of the adopted forest policy.	ToR for International and National communication experts were prepared and approved by FMB and relevant tender issued.	*Incipient* (Social advertising campaign has not been launched yet).
Output 1.3.2. - Information material developed on forestry issues is used by the educational institutions	Release of this output depend on progress made in connection with the previous one.	*Negligible* (Development of educational materials has not been started yet).
Output 1.3.3. - The status of forestry institutions has been promoted in mass media through functional support and nationwide publicity events	A WEB portal, designed by a national expert and approved by the MAFRD is on line.	*Incipient* (The Web Portal is on line, but several modules and pages are still to be developed).
Output 1.3.4. - Forestry institutions are active in media, news, documentaries and other releases.	See outputs 1.3.1., 1.3.2 and 1.3.3.	*Negligible*
Output 1.4.1. - Ongoing decentralization process is facilitated.	A Request for Proposal was issued for standardised templates on tendering procedures for annual logging contracts.	*Negligible* (Activities still to be started).
Output 1.4.2. - Personnel of the decentralized forestry offices are familiar with the forest policies and legislation and have been trained to carry out their tasks properly	Preparation of a Handbook for Municipalities on the Management of Forest Resource sub-contracted and implemented.	*Negligible* (Preparation of the Handbook is foreseen by ARNENI contract, but this task should follow the testing of participatory, integrated forest management in pilot areas, which is still incipient; see Table 6).

Table 10. Assessment of project progress towards the release of (reformed) logframe outputs for component 2 "Integrated forest management" and 3 "Climate change mitigation" (May 2011 – June 2013)

Outputs	Products delivered by June 2013	Assessment of progress towards the release of the corresponding output
Output 2.1.1. - Test/pilot areas are selected, marked in the field and drawn on the map.	Two Forest Management Units, selected in consultation with KFA. A contractor was selected for the preparation of Joint Forest Management Plans in selected sites and relevant forestry and social activities started.	*Substantial* (The areas were identified and the contractor recruited).
Output 2.1.2. - Arrangements are made with local stakeholders for carrying out management activities. Special attention is given to the involvement of women and representatives from vulnerable groups	Consensus was reached with municipalities about the inclusion of private forest owners and grassroots groups in the negotiation of forest management plan.	*Incipient* (Progress were made in involving local stakeholders in selected municipalities, but the position of civil society forestry organizations in Municipality Councils is still very weak. ARNENI work in this area actually started in May 2013).
Output 2.1.3. - Improved capacity for applying integrated approaches in forest management.	Preliminary activities started a few months ago	*Incipient* (ARNENI staff in charge is working very hard to speed up the process).
Output 2.1.4. - Trainers/extensionists have received instructions to meet the needs in the pilot areas.	No substantial action was undertaken in this connection.	*Negligible*
Output 2.1.5. - Modalities for joint (public/private) forest management and use are defined and introduced	Preliminary activities started three months ago.	*Incipient* (Small scale testing is on-going in selected localities).
Output 2.1.6. - Standard approach for local agreements is established and is known at all levels.	Some discussion is going on, but identification and implementation of relevant activities largely depend on release of output 2.1.5.	*Negligible* (No action was taken in this connection).
Output 2.2.1. - A survey on the current situation of forest plantations has been carried out	National Afforestation and Reforestation programme planned Preparation of Plan for Development of Forestry Nurseries on Kosovo.	*Incipient* (Relevant activities are still at a planning stage).
Output 2.2.2. - Permanent plantation information system has been designed, established and is in use.	Relevant tender prepared for International Expertise (FAO, FOM) on Forestry Plantation and Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment made available Kosovo Forestry Information System outlined.	*Incipient* (as above).
Output 2.2.3. - A database is ready, and accessible for users	Forestry Plantation and Forest Inventory, included in KFIS.	*Incipient* (as above).

Outputs	Products delivered by June 2013	Assessment of progress towards the release of the corresponding output
Output 2.3.1. - Forest officials and relevant stakeholders are aware of the health hazards resulting for improper forest practices	Phytopatology and Entomology expertise made available.	*Incipient* (This expertise has not yet been transferred to regional/municipal forestry officers and stakeholders).
Output 2.3.2. - Information on how to mitigate pests and diseases has been disseminated to stakeholders	Field assessment of forest pest and disease conducted by international and national experts.	*Incipient* (Still at a planning stage).
Output 2.3.3. - Support provided for establishing a forest health monitoring system in Kosovo	Discussions initiated by experts.	*Incipient* (As above).
Output 2.3.4. - Options for establishing an organization for monitoring forest health have been identified	As above.	*Incipient* (As above).
Output 2.3.5. - Forest researchers in Kosovo have established contacts with their colleagues specialized in forest health issues	Contacts with Forest Faculty in Sarajevo established.	*Incipient* (Only one contact established).
Output 2.3.6. - Conditions created for exchange of research results and experiences in prevention and mitigation of pests and diseases.	Some discussion is ongoing, but identification and implementation of relevant activities largely depend on release of output 2.3.5.	*Negligible*
Output 2.3.7. - Establishment of lab premises for applied research	Two KFA lab technicians trained in Shopron (Hungary). Technical specification for lab equipment prepared.	*Incipient* After long discussions, decision was made to establish the forestry-lab at KFA premises in Peja. Attaching the Forestry lab to the already existing Agriculture Department lab was excluded. Selected premises need to be substantially refurbished to meet international technical standards.
Output 3.1.1 - A strategy and action plan to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the forestry sector is prepared	Initial international expertise delivered and relevant report delivered. Two options to address climate change submitted to authorities. ToR for an international wood energy expert and international WISDOM methodology expert were prepared.	*Incipient* (Self-explanatory).
Output 3.1.2 - Arrangement are made to have the strategy approved at the highest political level	This output and related activities awaits the outcomes from Output 3. 1.1.	*Negligible* (Self-explanatory).

63. Outstanding findings of this analysis can be summarized as follows:

- According to the best judgement of the evaluators, *substantial* or *significant* progress has been made only in connection with the release of five out of the twenty-nine outputs included in the project logframe for Component 1, 2 and 3 (being the progress of the other 24, either *incipient* or *negligible*).

- Among the five outputs whose progress has been rated *substantial* or *significant,* four outputs belong to Component 1 "Institutional support for the implementation of forestry policy and strategy"[28]. This confirms that institutional development activities have been *de facto* the top-priority in the project implementation.

- Progress made in connection with the release of outputs under Component 2, referring to "implementation of a pilot field testing", "training and capacity development", "forest health" and other heterogeneous outputs score *incipient* in twelve cases and *negligible* in three. The only output substantially accomplished is 2.1.1. "test pilot areas identified, selected and marked in the field and drawn on the map", which, however would be better addressed as a "step one activity" rather than as a fully-fledged "output".

- Concerning component 3, climate change mitigation, *incipient* progress was made in connection with output 3.1.1 (A strategy and action plan to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the forestry sector is prepared). As this output was not significantly released, output 3.1.2 (Arrangements are made to have the strategy approved at the highest political level) has not progressed.

64. On the whole, these findings indicate that as per June 2013 the release of expected outputs by the project has been much lower than expected after two years of implementation.

5.2 Achievements at outcome level

65. The limited number of released outputs prevents any sound judgement about the degree of achievement of the project outcomes.

66. As already mentioned, significant or substantial progress has been made in connection with four outputs (1.1.1. FMB functionality improved; 1.1.2. Coordination of PSP implementation; 1.1.3., prioritization of AP elements/projects; 1.2.2., Systematization and diffusion of policy information among government bodies), related to outcome 1.1. Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened to coordinate and implement the Action Plan (AP) as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010–2020. Nevertheless, the project contribution to institutional development has not been as comprehensive as planned. Key elements included in component 1 such as 1.2.1. (new forestry law)[29], 1.4.1. (decentralization) and 1.4.2. (diffusion of the knowledge of new policies at

[28] Namely outputs 1.1.1., FMB functionality improved; 1.1.2. Coordination of PSP implementation; 1.1.3. prioritization of AP elements/projects; 1.2.2., Systematization and diffusion of policy information).

[29] In a message received when this report was almost finalized, project management informed the evaluation team that intensive consultation on the new forestry law with the MAFRD re-started in July 2013.

district/municipality levels) rate negligible. "Social advertising" outputs 1.3.1, 1.3.2, and 1.3.3 score "incipient"[30].

67. Negligible or incipient accomplishment of the majority of outputs related to other outcomes suggests that the project is still far away from achieving most of the planned outcomes.

5.3 Gender equality

68. The ProDoc and the Inception Report contain several references to gender mainstreaming in the project activities. Yet, little action has been done in this connection. At the institutional level, no attempt has been made to involve in the FMB, the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), attached to the Prime Minister's office. This has contributed to the insufficient concern for gender issues in FMB discussions.[31]

69. On the contrary, women participation and empowerment have been taken as a priority in the framework of the field pilot tests, started in February/March 2013. This is largely the merit of the young women professionals (an ecologist, a social worker and a sociologist) who, since inception, have been promoting "women action groups" in Kacanik, Hani-I-Elezit and Podujevo municipalities, where pilot field sites are located. Led by educated women (e.g. teachers, nurses) these farmer women groups have started discussing issues related to the collection and commercialisation of non-wood forest products and bee-keeping (which in Kosovo rural family division of labour are women's activities), with a view to make their business more profitable and boost its contribution to household livelihoods. Also, preliminary talks are on-going with municipal KFA officers to set up women-managed nurseries to reproduce indigenous forest species. Also ideas about ecotourism are spreading. This promising work, however, is still at a very incipient state.

5.4 Capacity development

70. As already mentioned, the project capacity development strategy has focused on technical forestry matters. Insufficient attention has been paid so far to the clarification of new concepts and approaches included in the PSP/AP, in particular at the regional and municipality level.

71. This is confirmed by the following list of ten major national workshops, international events and study tours extracted from the four project progress reports (December 2011 to June 2013). Only five of these capacity development activities are likely to have some significance for policy implementation, while others focus on forestry technicalities. Lack of community/social forestry training (of which Kosovo foresters are badly in need) is noteworthy.

- Workshop "Enabling Sustainable Management of Non-wood Forest Products in South East Europe – Special Focus on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants". CTA and

[30] In the opinion of the evaluators, inclusion of these outputs under Component 1 is arguable. Most probably they would have been better placed under a special social communication outcome in Component 2.

[31] The only woman member of the FMB is the representative of the Ministry of Finance.

MTL participated in this workshop, organized by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation" in Vilm, Germany (September 2011)

- Training on Integrated Forest Fire Management and Forest Fire Control Techniques. Participation of the NTL. The aforementioned training was organized in Skopje, Macedonia, by the FAO TCP/MCD/3201/D (14 to17 November 2011).
- Study tour attended by the members of the Kosovo Forestry board to Finland. The visit was organised in close cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture. The objective of the study tour was to obtain information on the organization of the Finnish Forestry Sector (21 to 25 May 2012)
- Participation of Project CTA and NTL to a workshop on "Managing for Results" at FAO HQ. (20 to 21 of June 2012)
- Workshop - Review of Business Processes on Forestry Sector and Information Exchange relevant for development of Kosovo Forestry Information System (KFIS), attended by twenty participants of the FMB and facilitated by the CTA and the NTL (2 October 2012).
- Workshop - Finalization of definitions for the M&E Programme and Performance Indicators for implementation of Kosovo Policy and Strategy Paper 2010 – 2020, attended by FMB members and facilitated by an international consultant (October 11 2012)
- Study Tour to Estonia - This study tour was organized, in line with the recommendations of the International IT Consultant, with the aim of gaining 'first hand' insight into the processes related to the Estonian Forestry Information System. The training was attended by the project's National IT Consultant and the GIS expert from KFA, to gain 'first hand' insight into the processes related to the Estonian Forestry Information System (4 to 7 November 2012).
- Training on Field sampling methods for determination of major insects and species in Sopron, Sarvar- Hungary. The Planting Officer and Nursery Technician of Kosovo Forest Institute participated in this training, on identifying most major forest pathogens and how to collect samples. The training was organized by the University of West-Hungary, Institute of Silviculture and Forest Protection (5 to 12 May 2013)
- Regional workshop on "Implementing Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management" Zagreb, Croatia. This workshop was attended by the project CTA and FAO Forestry Officer with the objective of better understanding the implementing criteria for SFM. The workshop was organized by (FAO REU) in close collaboration with the Central-East and South-East European Regional Office of the European Forest Institute (EFICEEC-EFISEE), and the Faculty of Forestry of Zagreb.
- Regional workshop on Implementation of Phytosanitary Standards in Forestry, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The CTA and National Forest Health Expert attended the above mentioned workshop. With the objective of informing colleagues on the status of implementation of Forestry Phyto-sanitary Standards in Kosovo forestry. The workshop, organized by FAO REU) in close collaboration with the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), was an opportunity to exchange experiences with other Eastern Europe specialists. (15 to 18 April 2013).

It must be noted that all the above capacity development activities targeted high level politicians or experts. No capacity development activity was carried out addressing the centralized (regional and municipal) forestry staff.

5.5 Human rights based approach

72. Given the project subject and approach, human rights have not been dealt with as a major issue in its agenda. Reference to women and marginal group rights are scattered in design and planning, but since February 2013 no significant activity was carried out in this connection. ARNENI has recently started an interesting work with marginal people (namely, war widows and impaired persons), but this has still to be consolidated.

5.6 Partnerships and alliances

73. Partnerships and alliances established by the project, activities implemented in collaboration with these institutions and relevant achievements are presented in the table below.

Table 11. Partnership and alliances established during the project implementation and relevant achievements

Partner/allied institution	Focus and subject of the activities jointly carried out	Achievement
EU Twinning Project "Further support to sustainable forestry development"	Exchanges on forest roads network, illegal logging, forest nurseries, national parks and bio- diversity, forest fires, hunting and game management development of private forestry, bio energy, capacity building.	The exchanges avoided duplication of activities between the two projects and facilitated hand over of some activities to the project when the partner initiative finished.
German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC)	Participation in a workshop on "Enabling Sustainable Management of Non-wood Forest Products in South East Europe – Special Focus on Medical and Aromatic Plants" in Vilm, Germany (21 to 25 September 2011).	The workshop helped the project in paying more attention to the sustainable use of non-wood forest products and of medical and aromatic plants.
FAO project TCP/MCD/3201/D (Strengthening national forest fire preparedness in Macedonia)	Training on Integrated Forest Fire Management and Forest Fire Control Techniques for Kosovo forestry officers (14 to17 November 2011).	The collaboration allowed to incorporate into the project the principles of Integrated Fire Management as applied to forest management planning.
Sida	Participation in the working group for SWAP process (Sector Wide Approach for forest sector). (October 2011 – ongoing)	This partnership strengthened the overall forest sector. Coordination was instrumental in testing and starting up the Kosovo Forest Monitoring and Evaluation system in a real life scenario.
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland; Finnish Forest Research Institute - METLA; Natural Heritage Services, State Enterprise – Metsähallitus; Forestry Development Centre – TAPIO;	Study Tour for Forest Management Board members (21 to 25 May 2012).	The study tour contributed to the formation of a long term vision of Kosovo forestry sector among FMB members.
Italian State Forest Service, Spain, FAO/Silva Mediterranea and EFFIS/JRC	Participation in Training on "Causes of Forest Fires and Investigation Post Fire" in Circeo National Park – Sabaudia, Italy (22 to 26 October 2012).	The training contributed to a better understanding of European classification on Forest Fires' Causes.
Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-Forests)	Participation committee sessions in Antalya, Turkey form 28 January to 1 February 2013, from 3 to 5 April 2013 in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, and from 10 to 14 June 2013 in Warsaw, Poland.	During the events the status of INC-Forest Observer was granted to Kosovo.
Norwegian Forestry Group	Provision of data FISKOS (a forest management database designed by the Norwegian Forestry Group).	Baseline data for the Inventory of Forest Plantation were made available at no cost.

Partner/allied institution	Focus and subject of the activities jointly carried out	Achievement
Estonian Environnent Information Centre (EEIC)	Study visit. (4 to 7 November 2012)	Insight into the processes of Estonian Forestry Information System contributed to improve the design of the KFIS.
Company Arneni and the Municipalities of Hani i Elezit/ General Jankovic, Kacanik, and Podujevë/Podujevo,	Preparation of Forest Management Plans for Forest Management Units: "Bodoshnjak" "Murgull-Bellasice". (11 February 2013 – ongoing)	Identification of modalities for inclusion of various stakeholders in forest management and planning.
University of West-Hungary, Institute of Silviculture and Forest Protection	Training on field sampling methods of insect species was attended by future laboratory staff. (5 to 12 May 2013)	Knowledge and skills of Kosovo Forestry Institute participating staffs improved, which is instrumental to the establishment of the Forest Laboratory in the Institute.
European Forest Institute (EFICEEC-EFISEE), and the Faculty of Forestry of Zagreb	Participation at the workshop "Implementing Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management" (26-27 March 2013)	An opportunity for better understanding the formulation and use of forestry assessment criteria and indicators was given to participants.
European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) and Faculty of Forestry in Sarajevo	Participation in a Regional workshop on Implementation of Phytosanitary Standards in Forestry, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. (15-18 April 2013)	Kosovo approach to implement phytosanitary standards in the forest sector was outlined.
Twinning project "Support for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) in legislative and policy development and in implementing the Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (ARDP)"	Participation in the working group preparing the forestry measures. (July 2013 – ongoing)	Forestry measures under IPARD will contribute to the afforestation activities in private forests.

6 Analysis by evaluation criteria

6.1 Relevance

6.1.1 Relevance to FAO and other international policies

74. The project is meant to contribute to FAO organizational results E03 - Institutions governing forests are strengthened and decision-making improved, including involvement of forest stakeholders in the development of forest policies and legislation, thereby enhancing an enabling environment for investment in forestry and forest industries. Forestry is better integrated into national development plans and processes, considering interfaces between forests and other sectors. The project is also relevant to several objectives of FAO Strategic Framework for the forestry sector both within the forestry and the natural resource management sectors, as per the following list:

E01	Policy and practice affecting forests and forestry are based on timely and reliable information
E02	Policy and practice affecting forests and forestry are reinforced by international cooperation and debate
E03	Institutions governing forests are strengthened and decision-making improved, including involvement of forest stakeholders in the development of forest policies and legislation, thereby enhancing an enabling environment for investment in forestry and forest industries. Forestry is better integrated into national development plans and processes, considering interfaces between forests and other land uses
E04	Sustainable management of forests and trees is more broadly adopted, leading to reductions in deforestation and forest degradation and increased contributions of forests and trees to improve livelihoods and to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation
E05	Social and economic values and livelihood benefits of forests and trees are enhanced, and markets for forest products and services contribute to making forestry a more economically-viable land-use option
E06	Environmental values of forests, trees outside forests and forestry are better realized; strategies for conservation of forest biodiversity and genetic resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation, rehabilitation of degraded lands, and water and wildlife management are effectively implemented

75. The project is relevant to the REU regional priority area/result E03 - Strengthened forest governance institutions and decision making processes.

76. Because of its threefold focus on institutional support to strengthening forestry institutions, integrated (multifunctional) forest management and mitigation of climate change, the project is also in line with the European Commission forestry policies[32].

6.1.2 Relevance to national policies

[32] See Commission of the European Communities. 2006. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an EU Forest Action Plan. EU: Bruxelles

77. A comparison among AP expected results and project outputs (see Annex 8) suggests that although phrased in a different form and organized according to a different progression, all project outputs (and therefore their "umbrella" outcomes) are relevant contributions to the implementation of particular elements of the AP.

6.1.3 Relevance to donor's development policy

78. According to the initial desk appraisal commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland to the Finnish Consultancy Group[33]:

79. The proposed overall objective of the project ("to increase the contribution of the forest sector to the national economy through sustainable use of forest resources, taking into account the multipurpose forestry including the economic, social and environmental benefits as well as its contribution to climate change mitigation") is logical and in compliance with Finnish development objectives. According to the Finnish Government's Development Policy Program, Finland aims at eradicating poverty and promoting economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development in compliance with the UN Millennium Development Goals set in 2000. In the Western Balkans, the cooperation is built around the following themes: 1. Stability and security; 2. Aid for Trade; 3. Environment; and 4. Social sustainability. The country specific priority of Finnish cooperation in the Western Balkans is Kosovo". (…) "The project can be considered to contribute particularly to the above mentioned themes 3 and 4. The environmental sector (theme 3) is a priority of the Finnish regional cooperation in Western Balkans and the planned forestry project is aimed at enhancing the environment by strengthening the local capacities in forest policies & strategies, management practices, and addressing climate mitigation. Social sustainability (theme 4) comprises the promotion of good governance, the rule of law, democracy, civil society, equality, human rights and minority rights, and combating corruption and organized crime. The project is planned to contribute, at least, to the forestry law preparation process, in which the right of women promotion of minority/marginal groups are expected to be included".

80. Based on these and other findings of the afore-quoted desk review, the Government of Finland considered the project relevant to its policy and confirmed its willingness to finance it. Yet, in 2012, a new development policy document was issued by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs[34]. The evaluation team was requested to assess to what extent the project experience is relevant to the content of this new document. Findings of this assessment are briefly presented in the following paragraphs.

81. According to the Finnish Government's Development Policy Program, Finland aims to eradicate poverty and promote economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development in compliance with the UN Millennium Development Goals set in 2000. In particular, Finnish development policy focuses on three cross-cutting objectives (gender equality; reduction of social inequality; and climate sustainability) and five development priorities as follows:

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[33] See Finnish Consulting Group 2011. Desk Appraisal of the FAO Project Document "Support to Implementation of the Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo. Helsinki: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[34] Government of Finland.2012. Finland's *Development Policy Programme*. Government Decision-in-Principle, 16 Feb 2012.

(i) a democratic and accountable society that promotes human rights;
(ii) an inclusive green economy that promotes employment;
(iii) sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection;
(iv) human development; and
(v) humanitarian assistance.

82. The impact statement ("overall objective") of the project - "to increase the contribution of the forest sector to the national economy through sustainable use of forest resources, taking into account the multipurpose role of forestry including the economic, social and environmental benefits as well as its contribution to climate change mitigation" - is in compliance with the three cross- cutting objectives as well as with development priorities i) – iv) mentioned by the above policy document. Priority v) is not applicable to this particular case.

83. However, other logframe statements (component purposes, outcomes and outputs) do not fully capture the linkages among the different elements (cross-cutting objectives and priorities) highlighted by the new Finnish development document.

84. By focusing on the forestry sector, the project is primarily relevant to priority 3, "sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection". However, the project is not taking enough into consideration the pivotal role that forest resources play in the livelihoods of many disadvantaged rural people (including women and marginal people). Also, the importance of timber, fuelwood and non-wood forest products for developing a green economy and generating employment is not highlighted enough. Forest social externalities are also neglected. This conceptually prevents the project to crosscut sustainable management of natural resources with reduction of social inequalities and gender equality.

6.1.4 Relevance to forest users' needs

85. According to the ProDoc, the main stakeholders of the project are the MAFRD, the KFA, the MESP, the MEST and the municipalities. However, its main beneficiaries are supposed to be rural inhabitants of forest areas including small/medium forest users and entrepreneurs, local women associations, other civil society organizations and forest users' households (with a special attention to vulnerable groups like, households with no employed members, female-headed households, disabled persons and ethnic minority groups. This statement suggests a top-down lag among those who have the power to make and enforce decisions (the stakeholders) and those who get (or are supposed to get) the benefits of the projects. In the opinion of the evaluation team, forest users' participation in decision-making and empowerment are not given enough consideration, and have almost been neglected in the project implementation so far.

86. In this connection, field work in Kacanik and Hani-I-Elezit is showing that a potential for improvement in this connection exists. Since the contract with the consortium ARNENI (to which the implementation of field activities has been outsourced) has become operational in February 2013, some social work has been started to explore what the "beneficiaries" were expecting from the project. During the mission, the evaluation team spent almost one week working on this subject side-by-side with ARNENI colleagues. Through focus group interviews and participant observation, the following list of simple and concrete needs was collected:

- support in fixing tenure matters (due to cadastral problems that according to old ownership documents and customary rule are considered as private, but are now treated as public);
- simplifying logging permits bureaucracy, by decreasing expensive and time consuming KFA control on exploitation of private forests and transport and commercialisation of fuelwood and timber;
- recognition by technical experts of the competence and interest of private forest owners in exploiting sustainably management of their forests;
- multi-sectorial assistance technical in integrated agro/sylvo/pastoral land management;
- technical assistance and training in improving profitability of the fuelwood/timber industry (for instance by developing carpentry micro enterprises);
- development and equipment of value-chains in order to increase profitability of non-wood forest products trade (women and vulnerable groups);
- technical assistance and training in developing commercial nurseries for indigenous tree species (to be entrusted, primarily, to women and vulnerable groups).

6.2 Efficiency

87. Efficiency is hereby defined in economical term as the ratio between inputs (i.e. the work done) and output (i.e. the result achieved).

88. Interviews with project management and staff and a review of project six-month-term reports have shown the proactive and steady effort carried out by the project to implement workplan activities, in order to release expected outputs and henceforth achieve the expected outcomes. Unfortunately, according to evaluation team best judgement in most cases these efforts have not led to the expected results to a significant/substantial extent. All evidence for this finding is presented under sections 4 and 5 of this evaluation report. The negative balance between the delivery of inputs and the yield of outputs indicates that project implementation has not been as efficient as desirable.

89. The above should be understood in the framework of several constraints met by the evaluation team during implementation. These include:

- an over ambitious project design, leading to unrealistic workplans;
- the lack of a clear prioritization in short term-planning, leading to a dispersion of efforts and time;
- a sub-optimal administrative assistance from REU;
- a complex and difficult political environment.

6.3 Effectiveness

90. Effectiveness is hereby defined as the capacity of the project to trigger/generate changes, i.e. the degree of achievement of its outcomes, based on the number and quality of outputs released during its life-time.

91. The limited number of outputs substantially or significantly released (five out of twenty-nine) suggests that as per June 2013 (i.e. two thirds of project life), effectiveness has been rather limited. All details listed and evidence presented under section 5 of this

evaluation report. Recommendations will be presented in the relevant section of this report concerning corrective actions that, according to evaluation team best judgement, may contribute to enhance the project effectiveness during the last year of the project implementation.

6.4 Sustainability

92. Given the above considerations about effectiveness, as per June 2013, any judgement about the sustainability of the project results is meaningless, except for outcome 1.1. "Strengthened institutional capacity of the government for implementing forest policy and strategy", towards which significant/substantial progress was made.

93. Still, in the opinion of the evaluation team, the sustainability of the project achievements in the area of institutional strengthening should be appraised in the light of the Kosovo forestry sector political environment. Interviews to national stakeholders (at the central, regional and municipality levels) have shown that although there is a formal consensus on the content and approach of the PSP/AP, several divergences exist among and, sometimes, within, forestry and forest-related institutions, in interpreting the content of the document. While some institutions advocate multipurpose forestry others continue to believe in conservative management. Different views exist also with regard to other major issues addressed by the project such as support to decentralization. This, in general, could negatively affect the sustainability of the project's results.

6.5 Impact

94. Based on the above analysis of outputs and outcome, the evaluation team considers that the project contribution to project expected impact "Increased contribution of the forestry sector to national economy, through sustainable use of forest resources, taking into account multipurpose forestry, including the economics, social and environmental benefit as well as its contribution to climate change mitigation" is still very far away.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

95. Analysis of the project design suggested that the project was primarily conceived as a policy implementation intervention aimed at assisting Kosovo Government in turning into practice and institutionalizing the PSP/AP (see section 3). Its theory of change is straightforward: if quality assistance is delivered to Kosovo Forestry sector institutions, PSP/AP implementation will be smoother and more effective. Subsequently, the capability of the Kosovo forestry sector of implementing joint, integrated, multipurpose forest management according to European and international standards will improve.

96. To achieve this change the project will intervene on policy implementation capacity:

- at the central level (as per logframe outcomes 1.1, facilitation of the Forest Management Board; 1.2; updating of forest legislation and 3.1, mainstreaming climate change issues in Kosovo forestry policy);
- at the decentralized (regional/municipal) level (as per project outcome 1.4, support to the completion of the decentralization process, and output 2.1.6, standard approach for local agreement established); and
- at the grassroots forest users level (as per outputs 2.1.1 - 2.1.5, dealing with pilot field tests in selected locations).

97. Additional elements were included in the project design, including the updating of the forest plantations information (outcome 2.2), and the improvement of forest health situation (outcome 2.3). In the opinion of the evaluation team, these "technical" forestry outcomes (and related outputs and activities), although relevant to the AP, are not the core of the" big change" advocated by the PSP and are not as consistent with the primary mandate of the project and its theory of change as the above policy and socially-oriented outcomes are and have overburdened an already very ambitious agenda, resulting in an over demanding workplan (see Annex 7).

98. The project was assessed as relevant to the policies of all the major stakeholders involved in its implementation (the Government of Kosovo, the Government of Finland and FAO; see section 6.1). However, field interviews highlighted that project design and implementation do no cater significantly for the primary needs of grassroots forest users and civil society. Pilot field/tests that started lately in February 2013 are supposed to facilitate a better understanding of how and to what extent these needs can be addressed in the framework of the project.

99. As far as organizational efficiency is concerned the project is being led by a proactive management team and a committed Steering Committee. During the inception phase, the project management significantly contributed to fine tune, adapt to the context of the Kosovo forestry sector and operationalize the project design. A sound project monitoring system was also developed, which proved to be instrumental to short-term planning, decision-making and reporting practice within and outside the Steering Committee.

100. During implementation, the project has benefited from the assistance of a pool of competent and motivated international and national consultants covering both policy and technical subject matters. The project has been steadily supported by the LTO, the Budget Holder, the Programme Officer-in-Charge, and, occasionally, by the Junior Technical Officer in-charge for Gender Issues at REU. It also received assistance from headquarters through the Forest Economics and Policy and Products Division (FOE), the Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division (FOM), the Development Law Service (LEGN) and the Office for Extension, Knowledge and Research (OEKR).

101. Project budget figures suggest: i) a high allocation to management function; ii) a prominent role attributed to technical assistance (and coaching), through the fielding of international and national consultants; iii) a low allocation for training activities, as well as for equipment and material resources (which so far has basically included vehicles, office equipment, fuel and office materials, and their maintenance); and a hard commitment for the procurement of equipment for a forestry lab (as per output 2.3.7). No budget revision has been undertaken so far (see section 4.2).

102. On the whole, financial delivery at the second year of the project implementation is at about 50 percent, less than arithmetically expected. Delivery for technical assistance is at 67 percent, i.e. about two thirds of relevant ProDoc allocation. The evaluation team notes that "savings" made during the first two years by the project establish the basis for a zero-cost extension for at least six months after the project's official ending date.

103. The project has enjoyed the support of several partnerships and alliances (see para 69). Thanks also to the diplomatic assistance of the Finnish Embassy in Kosovo (where there is no FAO Representation), the project management was able to establish quickly collaborative relationships with representatives of the different institutions that constitute the Forestry Management Board and to be given formally the responsibility of facilitating the activity of this body (see section 4.3). Collaboration with other UN agencies was rather limited. Government participation in project-promoted initiatives was steady.

104. The above suggests that the project implementation performance featured a high productivity at the activity level (well documented by the project progress reports). Nevertheless, its effectiveness (in terms of number of outputs released and outcomes achieved) and its efficiency (in terms of the ratio between implementation effort and results attained) are deceptive. According to the evaluation team analysis (see section 5), by June 2013 (i.e. by two-thirds of the project life), only five out of the twenty-nine outputs foreseen by the project logframe were "significantly" or "substantially" released and the only outcome likely to be partially achieved was 1.1. Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened to coordinate and implement the Action Plan as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010-2020, to which four of the "significantly"/"substantially" released outputs are related (see section 5.2).

105. Gender equality was not a major concern for this project. The Government unit in-charge for gender equality was not involved in the FMB. Women focussed activities are still incipient (see section 5.3).

106. Capacity development activities were carried out, addressing primarily FMB members and forestry technical staff. No attention has been paid so far to promote a better understanding of the PSP/AP and the capacity to implement it by regional and municipal forestry officers (see section 5.4).

107. The fact that one year before the official ending date of the project, progress towards twenty-four out of twenty-nine outputs has been found "negligible" or "incipient" suggests that it is unlikely that the gap between what was planned and what will be achieved could be entirely filled, even if a no-cost extension will be approved.

7.2 Recommendations

108. MTE recommendations focus on the identification of an exit strategy for the project for the rest of its official life and, possibly, beyond, following some analytical considerations based on evaluation findings.

109. As shown and discussed in the sections 5.1 and 5.2, in spite of the serious working commitment of the project staff and the quality of inputs delivered, it was not possible to implement the project as effectively and efficiently as desirable.

110. Several external constraints contribute to explain the above; nevertheless, in the opinion of the evaluation team, the major problem envisaged by the project during implementation is rooted in its overambitious design and in the barely feasible workplan. This has led to a dispersion of efforts and resources that has prevented to progress significantly towards the release of most of the planned outputs (and subsequently towards the achievement of relevant outcomes).

111. In the opinion of the evaluation team, in the present conditions, the project risks to end up with a number of scattered and heterogeneous activities that will not lead to the expected policy changes.

112. The Steering Committee and the Donor may wish to address the ProDoc as a set of working hypothesis that in some cases have not proved to be valid or viable in the real-life implementation context. The final part of the project should focus on the achievement of selected policy and social oriented outcomes plus the accomplishment of the "technical" work on going in connection with the KFIS and the Forestry lab.

113. Additional time will be needed to reinforce the results already achieved, prioritise activities and achieve a critical mass of outputs that will lead to the expected policy changes. This leads to Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 1: To the Project Steering Committee, on project extension and priority setting

A budget-neutral extension should be granted to the project until December 2014. During the last year of implementation the project should focus on releasing those outputs that are likely to contribute directly to the implementation of the political and social change advocated in the PSP.

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114. Priority outputs should be selected by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) on a case by case basis according to i) degree of relevance to the project core mandate and theory of change; ii) relevance to the donor's new development policy; iii) needs and requests expressed by different stakeholders; and iii) commitments already taken (e.g. procurement of equipment for the KFI lab.)

115. The list of outputs below should be considered as an example for the priority settings outlined under Recommendation 1.

- Output 1.1.1. The Forest Management Board (FMB) for supervising implementation of forest policies and strategies is fully functional, and all the main stakeholders are represented
- Output 1.1.2. PSP implementation is facilitated, followed up and monitored by a Coordination Unit
- Output 1.1. 3 PSP Action Plan has gone through a prioritization process and has a work plan for implementation
- Output 1.2.2. New and revised practices and procedures for information management are implemented at all levels of forestry administration, and the forest policy and legal documents are available to and used by all forestry staff at headquarters, and in the regions and municipalities.
- Output 1.4.1. On-going decentralization process is facilitated.

- Output 1.4.2. Personnel of the decentralized forestry offices are familiar with the forest policies and legislation and have been trained to carry out their tasks properly[35]
- Output 2.1.1. Implementation of pilot experience in joint integrated, multipurpose forest management (former "Improved capacity for applying integrated approaches in forest management"; see note 33 above).
- Output 2.1.5. Modalities for joint (public/private) forest management and use are defined and introduced
- Output 2.3.7. Establishment of lab premises for applied research.
- Output 3.3.1. A strategy and action plan to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the forestry sector is prepared and mainstreamed at the central, regional and municipal level.

116. Since significant investment and progress was already made so far the ET also suggest further supporting the establishment of the KFIS.

117. Analysis at the output level (see section 5.1) has shown that the project's most significant results have been achieved in connection with the institutional development at the central level. The FMB has been strengthened by involving almost all government sectors and some representatives of the civil society and of the donor community. However, the lack of a spoke person of the government institution in charge of gender equality is a major gap in the composition of the FMB.

118. Analysis at the output level (see section 5.1.) has shown important differences in progress towards the achievement of the expected outputs. Based on the above, the evaluation team also formulates Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: To the Project Steering Committee and the Forest Management Board, on mainstreaming gender issues in forestry decision making

The ET recommends the integration of the Agency of Gender Equality into the FMB

119. In addition the ET notices that the FMB has given so far insufficient attention to climate change issues in forestry policy. As this topic is an important component of project design the ET formulates Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 3: To the Project Steering Committee and Project Management, on raising awareness of Kosovo policy makers on the role of forests in climate change mitigation.

The evaluation team recommends that stronger action should be taken by the project to mainstream climate change issues in Kosovo forestry policy-making. On-going discussion about amendments to be introduced in the PSP/AP might provide an appropriate forum for this activity.

[35] This should include the finalization of the Forestry Sector WEB portal, currently under output 1.3.3, which might provide a significant resource to decentralized forestry staff capacity development.

120. Project progress towards the sensitization and capacity development of decentralized forest staff has been assessed by this evaluation as "negligible". Indeed no action except for planning has been carried out in this connection. The evaluation team believes that a critical mass of forestry field workers, aware of the changes in the objectives and approach to forest management entailed in the PSP and competent in performing the tasks they are requested to accomplish in this scenario, is essential for the implementation of the new policy. In addition, besides the development of the Forestry Sector Web site, almost nothing has been done so far to facilitate communication and understanding at the regional/municipal level of the new policy. Furthermore, no action has been undertaken to induce a change in behaviour and attitudes in forest users. Recommendation 4 addresses these issues.

Recommendation 4: To the Steering Committee and the Project Management Support on the decentralization of the forestry sector

The evaluation recommends starting as soon as possible an information/sensitization and capacity building process campaign targeting regional/municipal forestry staff, aimed at raising awareness on benefits for forests and people coming from the implementation of the new approach to forest management.

121. This may include, among others:

- implementation of a number of regional workshops on PSP/AP addressing forestry sector decentralized staff. The workshops should adopt interactive and task-oriented methods and include a component on attitudinal change;
- the preparation of an attractive and reader-friendly booklet on joint, integrated, multipurpose forest management, illustrating experiences in other European countries, as well as summarizing the main principles and orientation of the PSP concerning, in particular decentralization of forest management;
- the promotion of the active participation of local forestry officers in the pilot/field test combined with some training/coaching in participatory forestry extension training;
- field visits to the SNV sites in the South Western Balkans where the Sida/SNV Project "Strengthening Sustainable Private and Decentralized Forestry" is being implemented.

122. Concerning the grassroots level, appreciation for the work recently started by the consortium ARNENI has been reiterated several times in this report, in particular in connection with gender and vulnerable groups/households issues. This work should be further supported, which leads to Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 5: To the Project Steering Committee and the Project Management on strengthening work with ARNENI

The Evaluation Team recommends strengthening project's support and work with ARNENI, to respond to the forest users' needs.

123. In particular the following is recommended:

- Extend, after a preliminary performance assessment, ARNENI contract until the end of the project.
- Further develop the conceptual, methodological and organizational aspects of pilot field tests with the assistance of an expert in social/community forestry, in strict collaboration with ARNENI staff and the municipal councils.

- Ensure that implementation of the pilot field tests will be supported for at least 90 person/days by the same international consultant. This is needed to update ARNENI know-how, which is largely based on conventional sociological research and on some exposure to the PRA/PLA methods of the 1990s. New approaches like, in particular, livelihood analysis, gender analysis, Farmer (Forest users) Field Schools, Integrated Pest Management, action research and collaborative water management should be introduced.
- Strengthen already existing relationships with Sida/SNV project and initiatives carried out by the Albanian/Kosovar NGO "Connecting People with Nature" that has already undertaken similar participatory forestry experiences in Kosovo.
- Conduct an in-depth assessment of the needs, problems, obligations and aspirations of all the stakeholders involved in these field tests - forest users at large, forest private owners, women groups, vulnerable household, municipality councils and KFA municipal officers. Negotiation, consensus making, prioritisation and decision making workshops should then be carried out, following an action research process.
- Once needs are identified and actions to fulfil these needs are taken, small-scale demonstrative activities should be implemented to show participants the political willingness to move from discussion to action and assess the technical feasibility and cost/effectiveness of the suggested initiatives.

124. Lastly, the evaluation team also suggests that FAO pursues resource mobilization for the continuation of the project, to be funded either by the same or a different resource partner. The new phase should be formulated in the forthcoming months, with a view to consolidating the project's achievements and to addressing the needs of forest users.