



**Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro
Forestry Directorate of Montenegro
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Montenegro**

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Specialists from the Forestry Directorate of Montenegro successfully completed training for improving forestry management and ensuring environmental sustainability

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Montenegro through its Environmental Geographic Information System (EnvGIS) Project, and together with the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro and the Forestry Directorate of Montenegro marked successful completion of the capacity building training provided for the engineers and specialised staff of the Forestry Directorate.

Course Certificates and maps of current forest delineation status were handed over to thirty people from fifteen Local Forestry Units, who have successfully finished a four weeks long course on Information Technology and Geographical Information System. The course was aimed at strengthening capacities of Forestry Sector in order to improve forestry management and to ensure environmental sustainability.

This course will enable the trainees to reduce forestry depletion, prevent non-sustainable use of forestry resources and use gained knowledge and skills to increase and manage revenue from these resources and direct it to local development. It also provided them with experience in creating and using digital maps of forest management units, making clear delineation of forests, inventory planning, validation and visualisation, planning forest roads, storage and usage of existing data, and detecting changes through time.

UNDP EnvGIS Project is also planning to organize one course for representatives of wider environmental sector and in that way continue with its support to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and recently adopted National Forestry Policy.

On that occasion **Mr. Milutin Simović, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management** said: "In order to contribute to a faster economic growth of rural areas especially on the north, reduce poverty and regional differences and provide equality in access to services and resources, rural development targets will be integrated in forestry

management.” Minister Simović explained in details that this will be achieved through a set of approaches and instruments, such as:

- All the plans in the forestry sector will be integral in encompassing the state-owned and private forests, as well as the economic, social and ecological aspects;
- Inclusion and participation of local communities and citizens into the segments of forestry management;
- Establishing associations (private owners, gatherers of non-wood products, etc.);
- Accepting and supporting entrepreneurship in the forestry sector (wood processing, non-wood forest products, advancement of the level of finalization process, processing non-wood products);
- Joint planning and maintenance of the forestry and local roads with the local communities;
- Support of the Forestry Directorate and its advisory department in education, information and organization at the local level;
- Support in the organization of selling wood and non-wood products from the private forests, with an aim of optimising revenue for the state, as well as for the private owners;
- Distribution of the part of fees for using forests and forest ecosystems facilities to the local communities.

Explaining the importance of Geographic Information System for forestry sector, **Mr. Garret Tankosić Kelly, UNDP Resident Representative a.i./UN Interagency Focal Point in Montenegro** said: “When we started the work in the forestry sector three years ago, we worked towards reaching this moment today when we have a pool of trained GIS individuals who, instead of the manual drawing on scarce photocopied maps, are using the technology towards creative tasks in forest management such as delineation of forest management units’ borders and preparation of local and national forest inventories.”

Mr. Tankosić Kelly also spoke about the experiences of the trained GIS engineers who said the following:

- One of the biggest problems that we were facing were the obsolete paper maps of forest management units. Now we have them in electronic form, which largely simplifies our daily work.
- With electronic topomaps in scale 1:25.000 we can delineate areas under forest cover much easier.
- GIS helped us by making all the maps (management plans, forest management units, forest roads) easily accessible.

Mr. Mišo Anđelić, Deputy Minister for Forestry pointed out that Montenegro hasn’t had integrally established and defined forestry policy so far, but that the forestry policy was defined through legislation and certain strategic documents as a basis for sectoral development of forestry sector. “Global forestry policy has undergone significant conceptual changes, from solely economic orientation to a more and more important protective role in all the segments of forestry. In accordance with global and European forestry policy trends, the Montenegrin Forestry Policy needs to achieve balance in accomplishing all functions (economical, ecological, social and cultural),” Mr. Anđelić concluded.

Mr. Radoš Šučur, Director of the Forestry Directorate said: "Forestry Directorate, in cooperation with the UNDP trained in the period from February to May 2008, thirty employees from fifteen Local Forestry Units on how to use Geographical Information System for forestry planning. This training presents a significant contribution to the realization of the National Forestry Policy and establishment of the information system in the forestry.

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The National Forestry Policy, adopted in February 2008, acknowledges the fact that Forestry sector in Montenegro is facing the challenge of improving the forest administration practice in order to implement the vision of forestry, to improve the current condition of all forests as to ensure the balance of protection, environmental, social and economic functions and to ensure the sustainability. Having in mind that Montenegro belongs to the countries with the biggest forest cover in Europe, it is not necessary to stress the importance of dealing with the challenges that country is facing now. In addition to this, according to the value of forest areas, level of conservation, regulation, diversity, management and impact on environmental protection, our forests are among those of the best quality in Europe.

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Geographic Information System is a group of technologies, processes, human resources and data from different domains (meteorology, forestry, water management, environmental protection, etc.), which can be compared, verified and jointly used for different researches in order to manage natural resources in a sustainable way.

Introduction of GIS in Montenegro aims to create conditions for better monitoring, management and protection of forests, biodiversity and land as most significant sustainable development resources in Montenegro. Ensuring environmental and forestry sustainability is one of the Millennium Development Goals, and it is unimaginable without complete and precise data on the forest conditions and the control processes in the planned forestry works. By establishing data framework required by various EU conventions, the GIS in the Montenegrin environmental sector will also contribute to processes of accessing European Integration.

The process of project implementation entailed procurement of equipment and software, set up of pilot GIS system encompassing forestry and biodiversity data and basic training of Central Management Unit of the Montenegrin Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management as well as trainings in biodiversity sector.

All activities of EnvGIS are supported by the Government of Finland (\$600,000), the Government of Japan (\$200,000), the Government of Montenegro (\$100,000) and the UNDP (\$100,000).

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UNDP in Montenegro promotes sustainable development, which is economically viable, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly.