

**UNDP - GEF
GOVERNMENT OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN
BULGARIA**

ADVISORY BOARD FIRST MEETING

Minutes of meeting

Date: 10-01-2007	Focal Area: Advisory Board	Importance: 1
Participants: Steering Committee Member	Mr. Neil Buhne – UNDP Resident Representative Mrs. Lene Jespersen – UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Mr. Carsten Germer – UNDP Program Officer Mrs. Tatyana Dimitrova – National Project Director, Ministry of Environment and Water	
Other participants	Participants list enclosed	
Project staff	Mrs. Ivanka Todorova - Project Manager Mrs. Maria Sokolovska - Chief Technical Advisor Mrs. Leda Avramova - Project Administrator	
Purpose of the Meeting	To hold the first meeting of the Advisory Board as a platform for broad information outreach to all stakeholders – representatives of ministries, NGOs, science, business, land owners and users as well as to the members of the UNCCD National Coordination Committee.	
Topics discussed (key topics)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable land management (SLM) – adopted approach and principles 2. National action program for sustainable land management and combating desertification – instrument for implementation of SLM policy 3. SLM policy through municipalities perspective – how to ensure the implementation of SLM policy on local level 4. Educational modules and programs 5. Information packages and messages as means of achieving the agricultural producers 	
Notes/Comments	Welcome speech to the participants in the meeting was delivered by Mr. Neil Buhne, Resident Representative of UNDP for Bulgaria who emphasized the special importance placed by UNDP on the Advisory Board mechanism for the development of sustainable land management (SLM) process in Bulgaria. He stated that this is a forum at which all stakeholders opinions should be heard with regard to project work and if it responds to the conditions and needs for preservation of lands as country's natural resource. Mr. Buhne commented on the 3 important approaches to SLM related to capacity building, ensuring political and regulatory framework through supporting the elaboration of National Action Program for SLM and combating desertification and information dissemination and public	

	<p>campaigns organizing on SLM issues throughout the country.</p> <p>Mrs. Ivanka Todorova, SLM Project Manager, presented consecutively the topics of the agenda. Then the participants, after the presentation of each key topic, expressed their statements on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the approach successfully selected? • Was the approach appropriately followed? • Was enough attention paid to the important/key elements? • Were the national specifics taken into consideration?
<p>Statements</p>	<p>Mr. Alexander Atanasov, representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), emphasized the importance of the project results achieved so far for the work of MAF Agro-ecology and Undeveloped Regions Department. He commented in details on the support provided by the project in different periods of the past year and the very good joint work together with the project management.</p> <p>Prof. Mihnev, representative of the Association of the Bulgarian towns and regions, expressed his content of the well-done project work. He remarked that the approach selected by the project team is valid because the SLM in fact is a well-kept balance between ecology, economy and sociology. He made a suggestion for specific implementation of project activities with regard to: 1) criteria to be presented to users and applicant elaborating SLM and EU funds project proposals and 2) SLM activities evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Mrs. Asya Dobroudjalieva, representative of the Municipality of Kardjali, noted the necessity for integrating the achievements of the SLM project in the preparation of project proposals/applications which will be then submitted to apply for financial support to the EU funds by the municipalities and other stakeholders (including agricultural producers).</p> <p>Mrs. Nadya Boneva, representative of Consultancy Company Prime Consulting, confirmed the significance of SLM as main indicator also in other programs/projects related to EU funds, for example trans-border program Bulgaria-Turkey, etc.</p> <p>Prof. Jordanka Stancheva, representative of the University of Forestry, gave proof of the need for additional elaboration and analyses, using the ecosystem approach, regarding the other elements of the ecosystem, except soil. Non-sustainable management of technologies of different crops could be included here – crop raising, fertilizing, plant protection, etc.</p> <p>Mrs. Margarita Mondeshka, representative of the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, noted that the analyses made by the project of the land management in the country so far and its signs of non-sustainability are based on cross-sectoral approach to processes, mutual interrelation and dependency which appear between the separate sectors. This should lead to ensuring long-term productive potential of these resources and maintaining their physiological, ecological and cultural functions. It was also pointed out that the expected result is in</p>

harmonizing of often conflict objectives of production activities in their different variations, and environment protection.

Prof. Slaveiko Krastanov, representative of Institute of Soil Science “N. Pushkarov”, declared his strong opinion on the necessity of separate assessment of edaphic factors of biological specifics. He stated as appropriate problems to be investigated of the edaphic factors as the biological specifics have demands related to them. His suggestion is, a map to be produced, in GIS format if possible, of the edaphic factors throughout the country, in order to be combined for better visualization, with the degradation processes data. It was also noted that it would be good if the double role of the organic substance is reflected, for its influence over the degradation processes.

Prof. Ekaterina Pavlova, representative of the University of Forestry, expressed her content that for the first time in our country and also internationally, the ecosystem approach is being used in this manner in the elaboration of SLM main documents. In the process of these elaborations the issue rises if the ecosystems and their functions could be managed for separate areas and not for the country as a whole. She recommended closer interrelations to be sought between environmental and biological factors.

Ms. Nikoleta Efremova, representative of the Foundation for Local Governance Reform, spoke her support to the approach selected to work with local communities for integrating SLM policy and its implementation on municipal level. SLM was pointed out to be relatively unknown topic for the municipalities as a whole but problem areas in this field on municipal level are numerous. One of them and of particular importance is capacity building of municipal administration to work in the field of SLM. In this connection, the analyses made of SLM and combating desertification principles and the existing strategic and legislative framework in the country will support the transfer and effective implementation of SLM policies on municipal level. With this approach it is envisaged the current municipal development plans and strategic documents to serve as instruments for policy planning and initiatives realizing related to SLM, based on desire to work, change and revision of the municipal development plan with the participation of the municipal community in the entire process.

Prof. Slaveiko Krastanov, representative of Institute of Soil Science “N. Pushkarov”, made some additions and notes regarding the municipalities’ selection criteria. He suggested in the agricultural lands assessment, in the municipalities’ selection process, the bonitet scale for agricultural lands categorization to be utilized. For better precision of this selection, also the size of agricultural lands could be taken as a criteria as well as the availability of farming machinery. In elaborating project proposals for the demonstration projects he suggested ideas to be involved for different approaches for recycling plantation waste on spot.

Mr. Assen Lazarov, representative of Institute of Soil Science “N. Pushkarov”, presented shortly the activities of a working group related to similar demonstration project for applying water erosion measures in

agricultural lands in the Sakar mountain region. On this object less costly and absolutely feasible anti-erosion activities were planned to be performed compared to the ones envisaged in the SLM Project 10,000 USD, with good effectiveness regarding sustainable land management. In this respect the speaker recommended, in the future, trainings and capacity building among land users/producers to be carried out together with the realization of the nominated SLM demonstration projects.

Mrs. Ivanka Yanakieva, representative of the Institute for Agrarian Science, emphasized that it is especially important a right selection to be made of the participants in the implementation of the demonstration projects. She stated that large farms appear to be the most non-sustainable structures for now; so it would be better if smaller farms were chosen but also having in mind if they provide income to the local population. She also noted that it is not necessary single approach and criteria to be applied in all municipalities because the particular situation in the municipality should be considered.

Mr. Nikola Stoyanov, representative of the University of Forestry, approves training manner and methods planned and realized by the project. He proposed, together with the training of students from secondary professional schools, rising of teachers' qualifications to be considered, further to series of educational initiatives for experts organized by the MoEW and MAF. He noted also that there are not enough forestry experts working on SLM and this could be seen as grounds for opening an appropriate master program in forestry. He commented also on the fact that now in the University of Forestry courses are being carried out for qualifying experts for activities in forests and courses for training/consultations pf private forest owners.

Prof. Nikola Kolev, director of the Institute of Soil Science "N. Pushkarov", pointed out that the planned training modules will expand experts knowledge in the field of SLM. Larger parts of the teachers in the professional schools have already passed various steps of qualification, including in international courses, but integrated knowledge is still missing in the programs of these courses. He also noted that school subjects in this field are not available in the curriculums.

Mrs. Paunka Bozhinova, representative of the University of Forestry confirmed in his statement that the idea of educational programs and modules is very good but each change or revision in schools curriculum is long and difficult process. She stressed that teachers and headmasters show great interest in SLM topic and its multiplying these modules and introducing them into practice. For this purpose work could start initially with top professional secondary and high schools. With regard lowers classes students, 6-10 grades for example, it is recommended to work with the already established school centers in agriculture which train farmers, qualified to be directly involved into practice.

Mr. Tenio Meshinev, representative of the Institutes of botanic, emphasized that the idea for integrating SLM in school curriculums and practices is new but well reasoned idea and all stakeholders should support

and assist for their realization.

Mr. Vesselin Radev, representative of the National Agricultural Advisory Service, on the behalf of his colleagues, expressed their great satisfaction of join work with the project team. He remarked that the NAAS experts have been trained on many subjects related to SLM with the purpose of disseminating their knowledge among the agricultural producers. He also stated that farmers in Bulgaria are not prepared for EU funding absorption. He suggested farmers/land users to be involved in the preparation of project proposals for integrating SLM in agriculture.

Mrs. Nadya Boneva, representative of Consultancy Company Prime Consulting, made specific suggestion the consultancy service provided to municipalities to be prepared as information packages and serve as base in the campaigns to be held.

Mr. Peter Radev, representative of Borrowed Nature Association emphasized that the activity and interest in working on SLM problems are increasing. He stated that with the organizing and conducting an NGO meeting on UNCCD and SLM and with the brochure published for this purpose, a good beginning has been initiated among NGO for working on SLM. .