

# The evolution of small-scale forestry in Norway and its changing impacts on ecosystem health and the economic viability and societal well-being.

## A focus on the Living Forests Process

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### ABSTRACT

Norway is a country of small-scale forestry, with most of the forest ownership attached to small farm-foresters. The forest owners are organised through a series of Forest Owners Associations, who play a key role in working with the government on forestry and related rural development policy and legislation. Norwegian forestry has traditionally played an important role in the economy and cultural context of the country. The law of virtual free access (Everyman's Right) to private land for recreation and activities such as walking, skiing, berry or mushroom gathering for private use, has supported the frequent use of the forests by many Norwegians. Forestry has always remained an important issue in terms of its environmental, economic and social impacts. Some of the factors that have influenced the evolution of small-scale forestry in Norway (Mitchell-Banks 2005) include, but are not limited to:

- Global forestry markets in which new cheaper suppliers of forestry products have entered the market and have captured previous markets from Norwegian forestry companies – examples are countries such as from the Baltic States, Poland, etc.
- Traditional forestry countries such as Finland and Sweden who have increased their forestry output and become more competitive
- Rural-urban migration and the increasing

absentee forest owners in Norway

- The change over the last four decades in the Norwegian economy driven by the discovery of vast exploitable oil and gas reserves off the coast and the economic implications of this dominant economic sector
- The impediment to forestry property sale and transfer through Allodial Law which significantly impedes the creation of larger small-scale forests.

The Living Forests Project was the first time forestry had been addressed in Norway on a participatory basis with broad representation of stakeholders. This process started in the 1990s and was equally funded by the Norwegian Government and the forest sector and Forest Owners Associations and involved representation from the Government, Forest Sector, Forest Owners Associations, and Non-Governmental Groups representing recreational, environmental, labour, women and other interested stakeholders. This paper will take a particular look at the role that the Living Forests Project has played in Norwegian Forestry and the influences it has had on Small-Scale Forestry's effects on the Environment, and Economy and Social-wellbeing of the rural communities of Norway.

Keywords: Small-Scale Forestry, Ecosystem Health, Economic Stability, Societal Well-being

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## THE LIVING FORESTS PROJECT – AN OVERVIEW

Forestry planning and management in Norway is done at the local and regional levels but this is coordinated at a more national level through the Forest Owners Associations, the forest industry and of course the Norwegian Government itself through their laws and policies. This is a process that involves public participation at all levels (Barstad and Mitchell-Banks 2005, Øistad, nd).

The Living Forests Project was established in 1995 and ran for three years. The project originated from a 1994 initiative of the Norwegian forest owners and Norwegian forest industries that financed the detailed planning of the project. The Living Forests Project followed a strategy of first defining how to manage Norwegian forests in a sustainable fashion and then addressing the documentation issues (Living Forests Website, nd). The development of the Living Forests Standards was based on a number of elements including: research projects, test area results from various parts of Norway, and specific research studies. The intent of these linked elements was to come up with an agreed to set of recommendations based on science and facts on how to manage Norwegian forests in a more sustainable manner. There was an explicit intent to distribute the information to a wide range of stakeholder organisations and others, with the two primary target audiences being the Norwegian Forest Owners and the Norwegian Forest Industry.

The Living Forests Project is one of the elements of the 'Shadow' Norwegian National Forest Program (NFP) – Norway has no formal National Forest Programme with an aggregate of forest policies and initiatives serving as a surrogate NFP. Both the Living Forests Project and the Government's involvement in forestry management involves a number of government ministries, agencies and policies, and these are all subjected to forces from the social, environmental and economic areas, and as such the approach to forestry management evolves over time (Barstad and Mitchell-Banks 2005). The Living Forests Project was a broadly based public participation initiative addressing sustainable forest management in Norway and was driven by a

perceived need to address growing international market concern over the environment and a need for more sustainable forestry and a desire for the Norwegian Forestry sector to be seen as carrying out forestry that was more sustainable in the longer term.

The main objectives of the Living Forests Project were: 1) to help create Norwegian and international confidence in the raw materials from the Norwegian forest industry being based on sustainable and environmentally friendly Norwegian forest management, and 2) to indicate the will and ability of Norwegian forestry in long-term resource management through R&D, competence building and information, making the raw material an asset and thereby develop and secure employment and added value in Norwegian forests and forest industries (Living Forests Process Website, nd).

The Living Forest Project had four distinct sub-projects, each having their individual boards, agendas and timelines. The four sub-projects were:

1. The international market
2. Criteria and documentation for sustainable forestry management
3. Competence Building
4. Building up an information base.

The Living Forests Project was substantive in that it achieved the following:

1. Involving the Norwegian Forest Owners, Norwegian Forest Industry, Norwegian Government and a number of NGOs in an extended cooperative project attempting to address achieving more sustainable forest management in Norway.
2. The Living Forests Project represented a paradigm shift in that it brought together a wide range of interests to address the potentially contentious issue of how to conduct more sustainable forestry and support the Norwegian forest sector.
3. The Living Forests Project is acknowledged (their direct funding of and referral to the initiative) by the Norwegian Government to be a key informative component in forest management and planning and a supporting element of government forestry policy.
4. Even though The Living Forests Project has

officially ended, certain initiatives that originated in that project continue on today, some of which are continuing to be examined and revised.

The development of a set of performance level standards was the main challenge for the Living Forests Project. On March 27, 1998 a consensus was reached among all 13 stakeholders of Working Group 2 on 23 performance level standards for Sustainable Forestry Management in Norway resulting in the Living Forests Standards (ibid).

While the initiative is officially over, there is still ongoing work being carried on, in particular with respect to: the Living Forest Standards and forest certification, information dissemination, and training related to sustainable forest management

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE LIVING FORESTS PROJECT.**

Public participation in the Living Forests Project occurred throughout the process, both in different ways for different segments but also in terms of the numbers of people that would be involved at various stages (ibid). Major participants are mentioned below:

- Norwegian NGOs: WWF Norway, Norges Naturvernforbund (Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature/Friends of the Earth Norway (FoEN)), Norwegian National Council of Open-Air Recreation, The Association of Intermunicipal Outdoor Recreation Boards, and Den Norsk Turistforening (The Norwegian Mountain Touring Association).
- Norwegian Forest Industry: The Norwegian Sawmill Industries' Association and The Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association.
- Forest Owners' Associations: The Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation (FSF) and the Norwegian Forestry Association (NORSKOG).
- Norwegian Research and Education Organizations: Norwegian Forest Research Institute (NISK), Norwegian Institute of Land and Inventory (NISOS), Agricultural University of Norway, Nord-Trøndelag College, and Gjøvik College.
- Assorted Organizations: The Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions, The

Norwegian Consumers Council (Environmental Labelling in Norway), Women in Forestry, The Forest Extension Service Institute, and The Norwegian Forest Society.

- Norwegian Government Organisations: The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture, The Norwegian Ministry of Environment, and Statskog SF (State-owned Land and Forest Company).

The project organisation of Living Forests included almost 90 people participating in the Steering Committee, working groups, Scientific Committee, Certification Committee, Market Forum, ad hoc committees and in the project's secretariat (ibid). Details on the committees are provided below:

- The Steering committee was chaired by Mr. Thor H. Lobben, representing the Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association. The responsibility of the steering committee was to focus on the structuring of the project and ensuring that it ran as smoothly as possible. The Steering committee included those members who had given the project financial support. As there were no NGO funders of the project, they were excluded from the main board – initially this was not an issue but in the later stages of the process, there were divergences in opinion that arose. Each organisation on the Steering Committee was represented by their managing directors: The Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation, The Norwegian Forestry Association, The Norwegian Sawmill Industries Association, The Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association, The State-owned Land and Forest Company, The Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions, The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture, and The Norwegian Ministry of Environment.
- In addition, the following organisations actively participated in the project's organisation: The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature, WWF Norway, The Norway National Council for Outdoor Recreation (FRIFO), the Association of Intermunicipal Outdoor Recreation Boards, the Norwegian Consumer Council, the Norwegian Forestry Society, the Forest Extension Service Institute and Women in Forestry.

- A Scientific Committee chaired by Mr Erik Framstad from the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, was appointed in the spring 1996, providing quality assurance to the documentation work of WG2. The committee included 10 leading researchers, with biology and ecology as specialities.
- In the summer of 1997, the Certification Committee was appointed by the Steering Committee of Living Forests in agreement with the Norwegian environmental and the outdoor recreational organisations. The committee was to propose practical models for certification of environmentally friendly forestry in Norway, which should be possible to use in connection with the ISO environmental management system as well as the FSC certification system. The committee was also asked to advise as to the feasibility of possible combinations of these systems.
- There was an Advisory Committee for the Living Forest Program with over 200 organisations invited to send representatives to biannual open meetings where they were kept informed about the progress of the project and asked to contribute with input to the process.

The review of the Living Forests Project (Arnesen et al., 2004) indicated the following weaknesses with the process:

- Some of the NGOs (though none of the major NGO partners) withdrew from the process while underway or in the period after the end of the official project (but with initiatives still ongoing and developing) due to divergent views or frustration over the process

- There were concerns with the apparent lack of coordination between the government ministries involved
- There were delays in information reaching all of the stakeholders, with the forestry interests (owners, industry, government) receiving information in a more timely fashion than the NGOs and other participants.

## LIVING FOREST PROCESS FOUR WORKING GROUPS

The Living Forests Project in many ways represented a paradigm shift in approach, as it was the first time in Norway such a diverse group of interests came together in a formal process to address a potentially highly contentious topic, with implications across Norwegian society and with significant international implications in terms of trade and treaties/obligations (ibid). The organisational structure for the Living Forests Project is shown below in Figure 1

Each of the four sub-projects had their own boards, agendas and timetables, with over 90 persons involved on the various boards and up to 12 people employed directly in the sub-project work. The consensus on the Living Forests Standards was based on a thorough and comprehensive development process. Throughout the process, there was an ongoing initiative to keep the Living Forests Project transparent for all participants and observers (ibid).



FIGURE 1. The Living Forests Project Organisational structure

## **The Market (Working Group 1)**

The Living Forests' work concerning the market was initially addressed by Working Group 1: Market demands on the forest industry and forestry (WG1). Later on, the working group was replaced by a Market Forum. However, the most essential work concerning the market was resolved by a research project and by an international project to give an overview of the competing materials and their actions.

An international forum of co-operation was initiated by Living Forests in 1996 to take a closer look at the plastics, steel, aluminium, concrete and gypsum industries and their market behaviour. One the aims was to get a better overview of the building products market and to show how some competing materials tried to give their products a positive environmental image in comparison to the forest industries' products. The Norwegian initiative was welcomed by the Joint FAO/ECE Team of Specialists of Public Relations in the Forests and the Forest Industries Sector. A working group, the Subgroup Substitution Project, was appointed, chaired by Ms Berit Sanness (Executive Project Manager of Living Forests Project), with members from Finland, Austria, the United States, Canada and the Nordic Timber Council. A number of other countries were involved in the preparations as well.

The research project "The Consumers Attitude to Forestry and the Forest Industries Products" was launched in 1997, on the initiative of Living Forests and partly financed by the Research Council of Norway. Surveys were carried out in Norway, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany and the data was collected as a Nordic co-operation effort. The National Institute for Consumer Research, the Market- and Media Institute (MMI) and the Norwegian Institute for Forestry Research all submitted studies on the commission of the project.

Several research reports and Report 13 from Living Forests present the results of the project (ibid), and an overview of the 1998 report entitled "The Competitive Climate for Wood Products and Paper Packaging; the Factors Causing Substitution with Emphasis on Environmental Promotions" (Burrows and Sanness eds., 1998) was distributed

to the Team of Specialists and the parent bodies, the UN-ECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission. Reports 3 and 6 from Living Forests deal with market issues (Living Forests Process Website, nd).

## **Criteria and Documentation Systems for Sustainable Forest Management (Working Group 2)**

Sustainable forestry - criteria and documentation (WG2) addressed the work on criteria, indicators and standards to achieve sustainable Norwegian forest management. This was the most extensive work within the Living Forests project accounting for approximately one third of the overall budget. WG2 prepared draft guidelines for forest management which were tried out in the Norwegian forestry test areas at Bærum, Brøttum, Lindås and Grane in 1996. Before the tests started, special environmental elements (key biotopes) were registered within the test areas. Later on, the key biotopes and the test operations were evaluated, and the results have been published in the Living Forests' Reports 5 and 7 (ibid).

A Scientific Committee (composed of 10 leading researchers with biology and ecology specialties) chaired by a representative from the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, was appointed in the spring 1996, and provided quality assurance to the documentation work of WG2.

The research projects "Key Biotopes in Norway", "The Connection between the Red List Species and Key Biotopes", and "Financial Consequences of Actions to Achieve Sustainable Forest Management" were all initiated and partly financed by Living Forests (ibid). The Research Council of Norway (under their Forestry Programme) supported the projects financially until they were finished in 1997. The results from the R&D projects supported the work to prepare a set of standards for sustainable forest management. In 1998, a number of reports were published with results from research projects already finished at the Norwegian Forest Research Institute, in co-operation with other institutions. Report 4 from Living Forests provides a summary of the meeting of the Advisory Committee concerning the key

biotope projects, while Report 10 summarises the results of the project dealing with the economical consequences (*ibid*).

In the summer of 1997, the Certification Committee was appointed by the Steering Committee of Living Forests in agreement with the Norwegian environmental and the outdoor recreational organisations. The committee's purpose was to propose practical models for certification of environmentally friendly forestry in Norway, which should be possible to use in connection with the ISO environmental management system as well as the FSC certification system. The committee was also asked to advise on the feasibility of possible combinations of these systems. The committee was initially chaired by a Senior Consultant, Leif Krosshaug and observers from the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture, and the Norwegian Ministry of Environment, were on the committee. From April 1, 1998 Jens Risvand (the Agricultural Director of the Chief Administrative Office of Vest-Agder County) chaired the committee. The Certification Committee included the following representation (*ibid*):

Economic interests: The Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation, Norwegian Forestry Association/The Norwegian Sawmill Industries' Association, and The Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association.

Ecological interests: The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature, WWF Norway, and SABIMA.

Social interests: The Norway National Council for outdoor Recreation (FRIFO)/The Association of Inter-municipal Outdoor Recreation Boards, The Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions, and The Norwegian Consumer Council (Environmental Labelling in Norway).

The following 13 stakeholders arrived at a consensus on the set of standards, criteria and indicators for Sustainable Norwegian Forest Management in the spring 1998:

1. The Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation: Mr Nils Bøhn (Chairman)
2. The Norwegian Forestry Association
3. The Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association
4. The Norwegian Sawmill Industries' Association

5. The State-owned Land and Forest Company
6. The Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions
7. The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture
8. The Norwegian Ministry of Environment
9. The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature
10. WWF Norway
11. The Norway National Council for Outdoor Recreation
12. The Association of Inter-municipal Outdoor Recreation Boards
13. The Norwegian Consumer Council (Environmental Labelling in Norway).

The final report from the Certification Committee gives an overview of alternative certification schemes. The committee mainly focused on how to organise group certification, due to the ownership structure of Norway, where approximately 80 percent of forested land is owned by family farmers and is virtually all small-scale. Norwegian forestry currently faces a number of challenges (Barstad and Mitchell-Banks, 2003) and it was important that the certification scheme was practical and useful in terms of assisting forestry rather than impeding it. The Certification Committee drew up several alternative schemes for how group certification could be organised, and described how the entire 23 Living Forests Standards could be used when certifying, independent of which schemes were chosen. The Certification Committee concluded that the main objectives of certification of forestry in Norway were to support the accomplishment of sustainable forest management, and to improve market access for products produced by the Norwegian forest industry. The following premises are the basis for the committee's recommendations: Sustainable forest management, equal nationwide evaluation, international acceptance, maximum participation, cost efficiency, and voluntary participation (*ibid*).

Certification is a market instrument. Therefore, the final report of the Certification Committee is meant to help provide the forest owners and forest owners' organisations, as well as industry, the basis for making decisions concerning certification. The report underlines the challenges that all players will have to face after Living Forests is concluded. At the turn of the year 1997/1998 the preliminary

comprehensive standard documents were finished (Report 8 a-d, approximately 500 pages). The preparation of the documents was led by Mr. Nils Bøhn at the Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation. The documents were considered preliminary, as the documents were to be discussed by the Advisory Committee at an open hearing, before the final standard documents were approved by WG2. Each standard document defined key elements for each standard area to be discussed, giving an updated summary on the knowledge on the topic, presents statistics, trends in development and relevant statutory laws and regulations. All alternative performance levels of a possible standard that was officially proposed by one or more members of the WG2, were presented in the document. Finally, the financial, ecological and social consequences of each alternative were investigated and presented in the document as well (ibid).

The discussion at the Advisory Committee meeting showed a constructive and serious approach to the preliminary standard documents. Based on advice provided by the Advisory Committee, Working Group 2 decided which changes should be made and the final standard documents were finished and approved by WG2. Afterwards, each WG2 member went to their organisation to obtain mandates for the negotiations. The negotiations to set the performance level of the forest management standards started 11 March and ended with a consensus on 27 March 1998.

WG2 agreed upon a set of 23 standards for sustainable Norwegian forest management. The standard areas are:

1. Protection of Genetic Material - Forest Trees
2. Fertilisation
3. Scarification
4. Old, Large Trees and Deadwood
5. Areas of Biological Importance - Key Biotopes
6. Forest Area Protection
7. Waste Management
8. Cultural Landscapes
9. Afforestation/Introduction of New Species in Afforestation Areas
10. Long-Term Wood Production
11. Landscape Ecology
12. Distribution of Species
13. Forest Affected by Fire
14. Outdoor Recreation
15. Bogs and Wetland Forest
16. Off-Road Transport
17. Forest Roads
18. Water Protection
19. Herbicide Spraying
20. Heritage Sites
21. Mountain Forests
22. Harvesting Methods
23. The Work Force and Skills

WG2 finished their work in the beginning of June 1998, and presented a consensus report of their work Report 11, Living Forests. In the report, WG2 makes a summary of the starting point and the objectives when setting the standards for a sustainable Norwegian forest management, and presents the 23 standards, 6 criteria as well as the 95 indicators agreed. The final standard documents are published as Report 9 a-d from Living Forests (ibid). The adopted criteria are:

1. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles
2. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality
3. Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forest (wood and non-wood)
4. Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems
5. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)
6. Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions.

This work went on for two and a half years, resulting in comprehensive standard documents for 25 standard areas, presenting alternative performance level standards for each standard area, and an analysis balancing economic, ecological and social consequences for each alternative performance level standard. The standard documents were openly distributed and discussed by the 160 members of the Living Forests Project Advisory Committee in January 1998. Constructive comments were given on the quality of the documents and based on this input, the documents were further elaborated. These comprehensive standard documents (560 pages)

formed the basis for the stakeholder negotiations on Norwegian performance level standards for SFM, which resulted in consensus 27 March 1998. The Living Forests Standards are based on the six 'Helsinki Criteria' (the Pan-European Criteria for Sustainable Forest Management), and the 'Helsinki Indicators' are included among the 95 Living Forests Indicators (ibid). The report draws up several group-certification schemes for small-scale family forestry in Norway, and describes how the Living Forests Standards can be followed, both in connection with the ISO and EMAS environmental management systems, as well as the FSC system (ibid).

### **Competence Building (Working Group 3)**

Running parallel to the work preparing the comprehensive standard documents that had been the basis for the negotiations on what performance levels were to be chosen, the project supported ongoing initiatives to share knowledge about biodiversity in the forests with forest owners and forest workers. Living Forests took the initiative and financed courses to update more than 500 forest officers about bio-diversity and multiple-use in the forests. The courses were run by the Forest Extension Service Institute. Living Forests also developed and ran courses for sales and marketing people within the forest industries. In 1996, an opinion poll among the forest owners was carried out by the Market and Media Institute (MMI) commissioned by Living Forests.

Competence building (WG3) was chaired by Mr Paul Gotaas, the Norwegian Forest Association. The Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation, the Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association, the Trade Unions, the Norwegian Ministry of Environment and the Forest Extension Service Institute were represented in WG3. In spring 1998, work started on preparing a new study programme to communicate the Living Forests Standards recommendations. Several ad hoc committees were appointed to help preparing material for the study circles, brochures, video and other materials, with the forest owners as the main target (ibid).

### **Information (Working Group 4)**

Information (WG4) was chaired by Mr Petter Haugan of the Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association. WG4 created a communication strategy and information material as well as co-ordinated participation at exhibitions and conferences in close co-operation with the project secretariat.

In addition to newsletters and reports, The Living Forests Project published a number of fact sheets in Norwegian, English and German. The project also produced several overhead series, published brochures, participated at exhibitions, provided an information service during customer visits to Norway and informed journalists and others about the work carried out by Living Forests. Living Forests has its own home page with newsletters and fact sheets in Norwegian, English and German <http://www.levendeskog.no>.

When possible, information activities abroad were carried out within a Nordic co-operation. An example of this was The Living Forests Project supporting the development of new study material appropriate for primary schools in Great Britain, as a part of the British "Forest Education Initiative". The project also involved Nordic TV projects in the Netherlands and Germany. In addition, the project was represented with speakers at a number of conferences, in Norway as well as abroad in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Portugal and Canada.

### **USE OF EXPERTISE IN THE POLICY PROCESS**

The Living Forests Project used a number of experts in carrying out specific research projects throughout the process. The multi-stakeholder participation in the process also enabled experts from the various groups and knowledge to which they would have had access to be incorporated into the project. Of particular note was the Scientific Committee chaired by Mr Erik Framstad, of the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research. The Scientific Committee was appointed in the spring 1996, to contribute quality assurance to the documentation work of WG2. The committee included 10 leading researchers, with expertise in

biology and ecology.

The research projects directly connected to WG2 work, and which were initiated and partly financed by Living Forests with further assistance from The Research Council of Norway were all completed in 1997 and include (ibid):

- Key Biotopes in Norway (Project Manager: Mr Jørund Rolstad)
- The Connection between the Red List Species and Key Biotopes (Project Manager: Mr Jørund Rolstad)
- Financial Consequences of Actions to Achieve Sustainable Forest Management (Project Manager: Mr Hans Fredrik Hoen)

There was an additional research project that supported the Market Work (Working Group 2) section of the Living Forests Project. In 1996, the Living Forests Project initiated and was deeply involved in an international study on the competitive climate for wood products and paper packaging, focusing on the promotion of the wise use of wood and other forest products. The study was performed by the Subgroup Substitution Project of the Joint FAO/ECE Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries sector with the overall objective to promote increased international co-operation within the sector. The study was chaired by Norway, and finalised in the autumn 1998 (ibid).

## **COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AFTER 1 JULY 1998**

To maintain momentum and exploit the accomplishments of The Living Forests Standards, extensive efforts have been made to provide information and competence building. Forest owners have been the main target groups, but also forest officers, forest workers and contractors are intended targets. The internal information to the forest owners has been mainly addressed by their organisations. Among other things, the follow up of the Living Forest process demanded more information about the Living Forests Standards for sustainable Norwegian forest management, about certification as a market instrument and about possible certification systems. A popularised pamphlet about certification and standards was

prepared. An appendix to the magazine 'The Forest Owner' (Skogeieren) was published in January 1998 to provide information about the ongoing work with standards and certification. In the spring 1998, Living Forests produced an introductory brochure and a video, which can be used to provide information about the Living Forests Standards. The brochure has been produced in four regionally-adapted brochures in addition to the national brochure. In June 1998, Living Forests arranged a two-day conference for representatives of the forest owners' district associations, the Norwegian Forest Association, the State-owned Land and Forest Company and the State Forestry Service at the county level. Key people were updated on the Living Forests Standards, the recommendations from the Certification Committee and the governmental processes, as preparation for further follow up courses and speeches at local levels (ibid).

Living Forests has material for study circles with forest owners as the main target group. The study circles are intended to be held as 3 joint study evenings with groups of 6-12 people. The study book and additional guidance and questions with forest owners as the main target group. Forest workers, contractors and other interested parties are also recommended to join the study circles.

Living Forests has published a number of reports, giving a more comprehensive description of the basis for the Living Forests Standards and the background of certification. The following reports are particularly relevant: Report 6 Market demands and governmental processes (in Norwegian), Report 9 a-d Standard documents from Living Forests (in Norwegian and English), Report 11 Final report from WG2 (in Norwegian and English) and Report 12 Final report from the Certification Committee (in Norwegian and English) (ibid).

Employers are responsible for offering additional training skills to forest workers, so that they can follow the Living Forests Standards in practical operations. This can be done most easily by the forest workers joining the study programme that goes through the Living Forests Standards, together with forest owners, contractors and other interested parties. The trades union will hopefully

motivate their members to actively get involved in the skills building process.

## THE CHALLENGES OF THE FOREST OWNERS' ORGANISATIONS

In February 1998, the Certification Committee asked three forest owners' district associations Glommen, Inn-Trøndelag and Drammensdistriktet, for advice on how to provide forest owners with information on certification. All the district associations were emphatic that the forest owners' organisations themselves had to do the main part of the communication with the individual forest owner, both concerning the Living Forests Standards and certification. The organisations are expected to ask their own operations and employed contractors to manage according to the framework of the environmental management system and the Living Forests Standards.

The opinion poll among forest owners in 1996 financed by Living Forests, stated that forest owners with updated knowledge and a high quality forest management plan, have a more positive approach to changes in forest management than others. The importance of knowledge, as stated in the survey, confirms that the Living Forests' strategy to base the recommendations for changes in forest management to be founded on science and fact. The result of the survey underlines the important role of forest organisations for further improvements and response to forest management plans, and this is not surprising given the important role of the Forest Owners Associations in Norway.

As a result of defined efforts with R&D and competence building over the past 10 years, the forest owners' organisations have contributed to increasing knowledge about forest ecology and multiple-use among forest owners. Approximately 15,000 forest owners, together with forest workers and contractors, have followed the study circle "A Richer Forest", while more than 6,000 have participated in the follow up study circle "Biodiversity in the Forest". Living Forests has supported the marketing of actions concerning skills building, which is founded as a basis to follow the recommended Living Forests Standards.

To obtain successful implementation of the Living Forests Standards, the competence (skills) building efforts have to continue. A vigorous effort is anticipated in the coming years to come to give the new study programme a maximum response, at the same time as forest owners who did not join the courses, "A Richer Forest" or "Biodiversity in the Forest" have been encouraged to go on them. The new programme presents the Living Forests Standards. In their final report, the Certification Committee stressed the fact that the forest owners' organisation should play the key role in this action (See report 12, Living Forests, *ibid*).

The step from following the recommended forest management standards to choosing certification is expected to be difficult for many forest owners. In general, the forest owners have probably received a very limited amount of information about certification and certification systems, according to the forest owners' district associations asked. Only a few forest owners probably have detailed knowledge about various certification schemes and their advantages and disadvantages. It is important to emphasise that certification is a market instrument, being an additional onus to the statutory Norwegian laws and regulations.

The three forest owners' district associations indicated that written information will most likely not fulfil forest owners' needs, to give them the necessary understanding of the issue of certification. Therefore, it could be a very good idea for forest owners' organisations to offer their members/local associations special certification study courses. Such courses should give neutral and complete guidance in the consequences of certification, what certification is not, and the economical and practical consequences of any choices. The course needs to be locally based (*ibid*).

The educational actions can also be organised by an introductory evening in each of the local forest owners' associations, followed by study circles. This method was used by the Forest Owners' District Association (DS) in Drammen when introducing ISO 9001. The study circles based their discussions on a paper produced by the forest owners' district associations. They experienced that

this sort of discussion paper should not exceed more than 15 pages. DS received short written reports from all the study circles. The reports included answers on some key issues and were used as guidance for the further certification process of the district association. Requirements for products and the environment to the suppliers of the forest owners' district association was put on the agenda at meetings for the chairmen of the local forest owners' associations, where both speeches and work shops were used. DS arranged a one day seminar for co-operating forest contractors and employed forest workers, focusing on requirements for operational service and reporting routines (ibid).

It is presupposed that individual organisations decide on whether the organisation wants to go for certification by a democratic process, and if so, which model or scheme and system is chosen (refer to chapter 4 in Report 12 from Living Forests, ibid). To obtain a satisfying basis for making a decision, the forest owners need increased knowledge about market conditions, especially concerning the situation in the European market when it is a matter of forest and the environment and the development of a demand for certified timber/products.

The Living Forests Standards are directed towards the individual forest owner, being the responsible decision-maker. Since its very beginning, the Living Forests project has believed in competence building as a key to successful implementation of the Living Forests Standards in Norwegian forest management. Living Forests has taken the initiative to establish study courses about bio-diversity and the multiple-use of forests. More than 500 forestry officers were updated on these issues.

## SUMMARY

The Living Forests Project has resembled a meeting place, where not only the project results, but the process itself has been a part of the challenge and target. The project brought together a broad spectrum of government, industry and non-governmental organisations with interests in the forest sector and came out with a number of

concrete deliverable and action items – some of which continue to this day. There is no doubt that the impacts of the Living Forest Process essentially still 'live' and have had a significant impact on the non-formal or 'Shadow' Norwegian National Forest Programme (Barstad and Mitchell-Banks 2005) as well as in the day-to-day operations of forestry and its impacts, both positive and negative, on the surrounding environment, society and economy. The main challenge ahead is implementing the Living Forests Standards in practical forest operations, to ensure that sustainable forest management is conducted in Norway.

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