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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND
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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE



Better forestry,
for better forests,
for a better planet.

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HANS EM FACULTY OF FOREST SCIENCES, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
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Hans Em Faculty of Forest Sciences, Landscape Architecture and
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“Better Forestry, for Better Forests, for a Better Planet”

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

15 - 16th June 2022
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Cooperation and networking of non-wood forest products-based enterprises in the Topličko and Moravsko forest region

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Abstract:

Mutual cooperation and networking are crucial for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to achieve a competitive advantage in each economic sector. Cooperation is a particularly important for small and medium enterprises involved in non-wood forest products (NWFPs) business, due to its specifics (e.g. dependence on natural resources and weather conditions; perishable products, etc.). This research aims to investigate the respondents' attitudes towards the cooperation with NWFPs pickers, other enterprises and institutions, business networking, and benefits expected from membership in business associations. A study was conducted in the Topličko and Moravsko forest regions (both located in the region of Southern and Eastern Serbia). Data collection was conducted using face to face survey with representatives of 28 NWFPs-based enterprises in March 2022. The research results indicate that almost all enterprises (96.3%) have cooperation with the local community. Respondents are mostly satisfied with the cooperation with NWFPs pickers (92.8%) and local community (92.3%). All SMEs cooperate with other enterprises. The most common forms of cooperation with other enterprises are buying raw materials (57.1%) and selling products (92.9%). The majority of respondents (85.7%) stated that they cooperate with public institutions in charge of NWFPs in Serbia, mostly regarding permits for NWFPs collection and export. Around ½ of them (56.5%) rate this cooperation as "good" and "very good". Only 32.1% of analysed enterprises are a member of a business association. Still, 77.8% of those who are not a member, are interested in joining an association. Almost all respondents (96.4%) see the association as one of the opportunities to improve their business. They expect several benefits from membership in a business association and the most common benefits they expect are: "joint selling on domestic market", "joint export" and "NWFPs market information". All respondents believe that networking with other enterprises can bring financial benefits to their business.

Keywords: small and medium enterprises; non-wood forest products; cooperation; business networking



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