

## CASE STUDY EE-3

### CAMPSITES AND STUDY TRAILS OF STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT CENTRE (SFMC)

#### BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- This case study assesses an initiative by the Estonian State Forest Management Centre (SFMC) to develop campsites, study trails and educational infrastructure on the forests it manages.
- The Estonia SFMC is a state-owned for-profit agency, under the umbrella of the Estonian Ministry of the Environment, which manages public forests to deliver the 'public function' of state forests in accordance with the Forest Act.
- Estonian state-owned forests cover an area of 941,000 ha. Recreational and educational facilities in those forests include 2,000 km of hiking/study trails, 309 campfire sites, 59 camping areas, 27 forest huts and 19 forest houses.
- The main environmental and social benefits studied include recreation, education, public health benefits, maintenance of forest landscape character and cultural heritage. Indirectly, the forest management benefits biodiversity and rural vitality.



#### KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

- In this case study, the initiative was launched in response to societal drivers and non-market factors, notably the need to improve public outdoor recreation and environmental & cultural heritage education possibilities as well as public health.
- There is a high appreciation by society of the public recreation and education opportunities provided.
- The continuation of this initiative is however highly dependent on public budget and therefore threatened by potential political changes or budget cut-offs. The economic situation of the forestry sector (e.g. price of timber) and the state of the economy as a whole also have an impact on the provision of benefits by this initiative as it may result in less budget for the development of 'public functions' of forests.

#### EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The SFMC initiative is a successful example of an action by a state-owned organisation which combines the sale of timber (from sustainable forestry) and the use public funding to deliver recreation and education benefits for the general public.
- It has been a clear decision by the state to direct some of the profits earned by the state-owned forest company to deliver the main societal benefits, i.e. public recreation, education, landscape and biodiversity.
- The initiative is highly appreciated by society: the public interest to use the facilities and educational opportunities offered is in constant increase and it is improving public health, well-being, environmental awareness and sense of closeness to nature.

