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BiH Joint Forestry Conference – October 26, 2006

Improved Communication and Transparency in the Forest Sector

**World Bank
Forestry Development and Conservation Project (FDCP)**

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Competitiveness Activity





Improved Communication

- World Bank FDCP – purpose is to assist with implementation of legislated reforms in forest organization and management

Goal: Institutionalization of forestry communication (long term management changes)

- USAID CCA – purpose is to improve the legal and regulatory environment for doing business in BiH

Goal: Increase public awareness of forestry reforms (short term effort to inform public and business of forestry reforms)



Communication Issues

- Lack of knowledge among the public and other stakeholders about progress in institutional reform, financial management, and ecological management
- Lack of transparent, readily accessible data about expenditures and wood sales
- Lack of transparency and poor communication channels which also contribute to mistrust among agencies
- Lack of knowledge about the investment opportunities and risks in the forest sector
- Lack of knowledge about continuing challenges associated with reform



Surveys to Test Assumption of Poor Communication June 2006

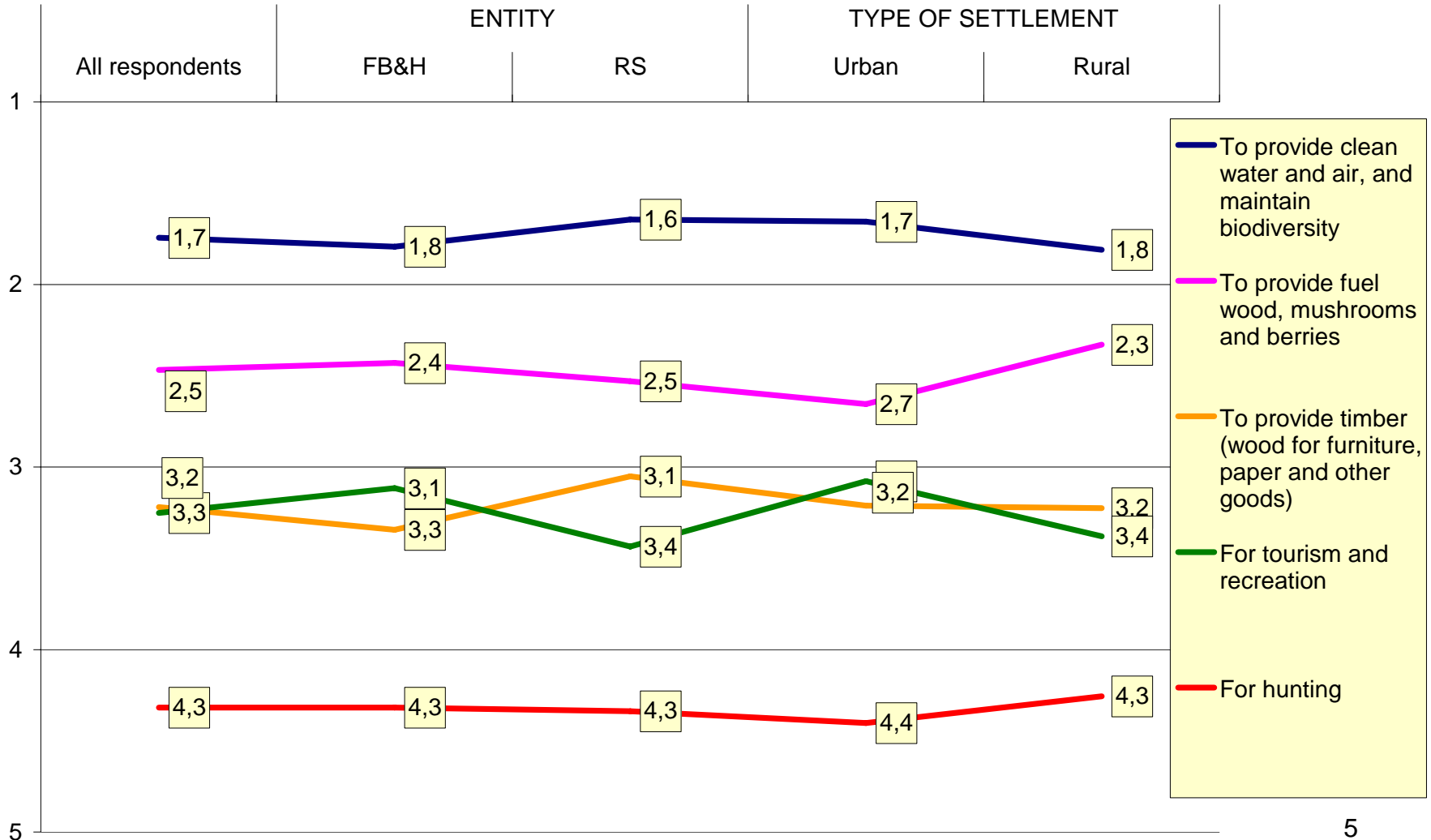
- Quantitative survey of public opinion: Representative, stratified random sampling to select 1521 individuals for face-to-face interviews (conducted by Prism Research)
- Qualitative survey of forestry stakeholder opinion: 63 interviews with (conducted by Coillte Consult)



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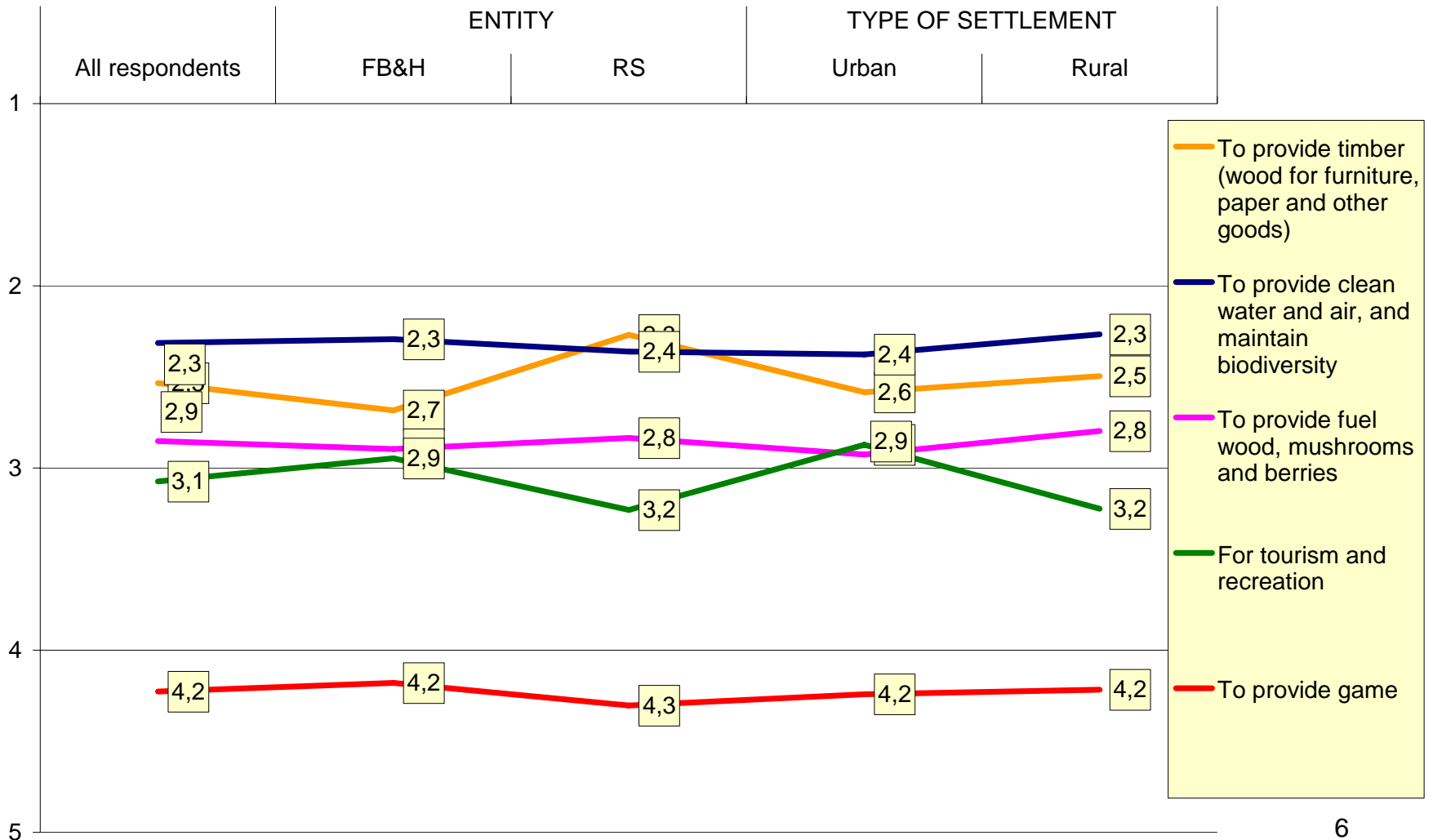
WHY ARE FORESTS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Average rank of the following items from 1-most important to 5-least important





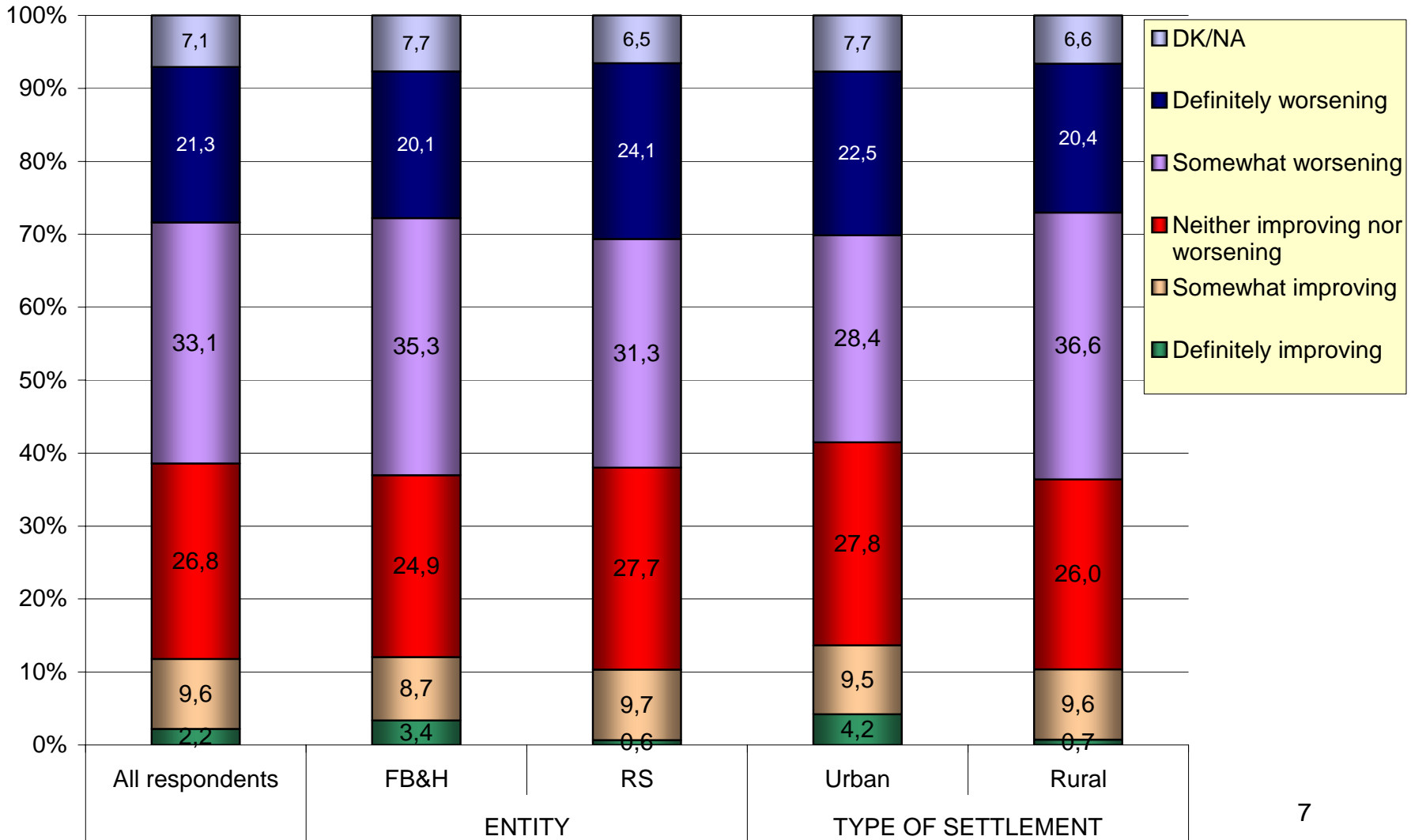
WHY ARE FORESTS IMPORTANT TO THE BIH ECONOMY?





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DO YOU THINK THE CONDITION OF B&H FORESTS IS IMPROVING OR GETTING WORSE?



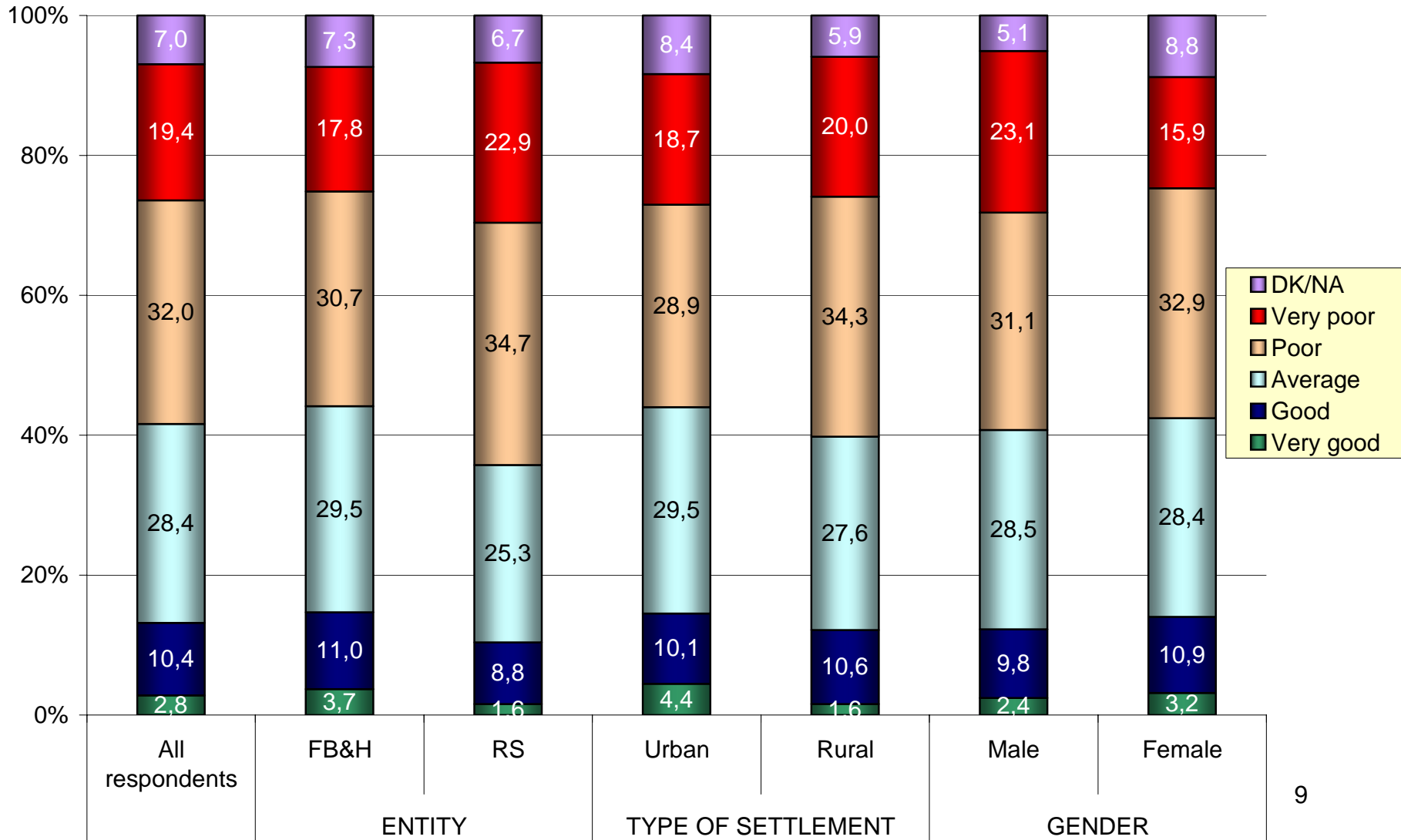


- An overwhelming 54% believe the condition of forests is worsening (21% believe that they are definitely worsening)
- Only 12% of respondents think forests are improving (a mere 2% believe they are definitely improving)
- A significantly higher percentage of rural respondents (37%) than urban respondents (29%) think the condition of B&H forests is somewhat worsening



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HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS MANAGEMENT OF B&H FORESTS?





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- Only a small percentage (13%) of respondents think favorably of forest management; 32% give management an average rating
- Approximately half think negatively of forest management

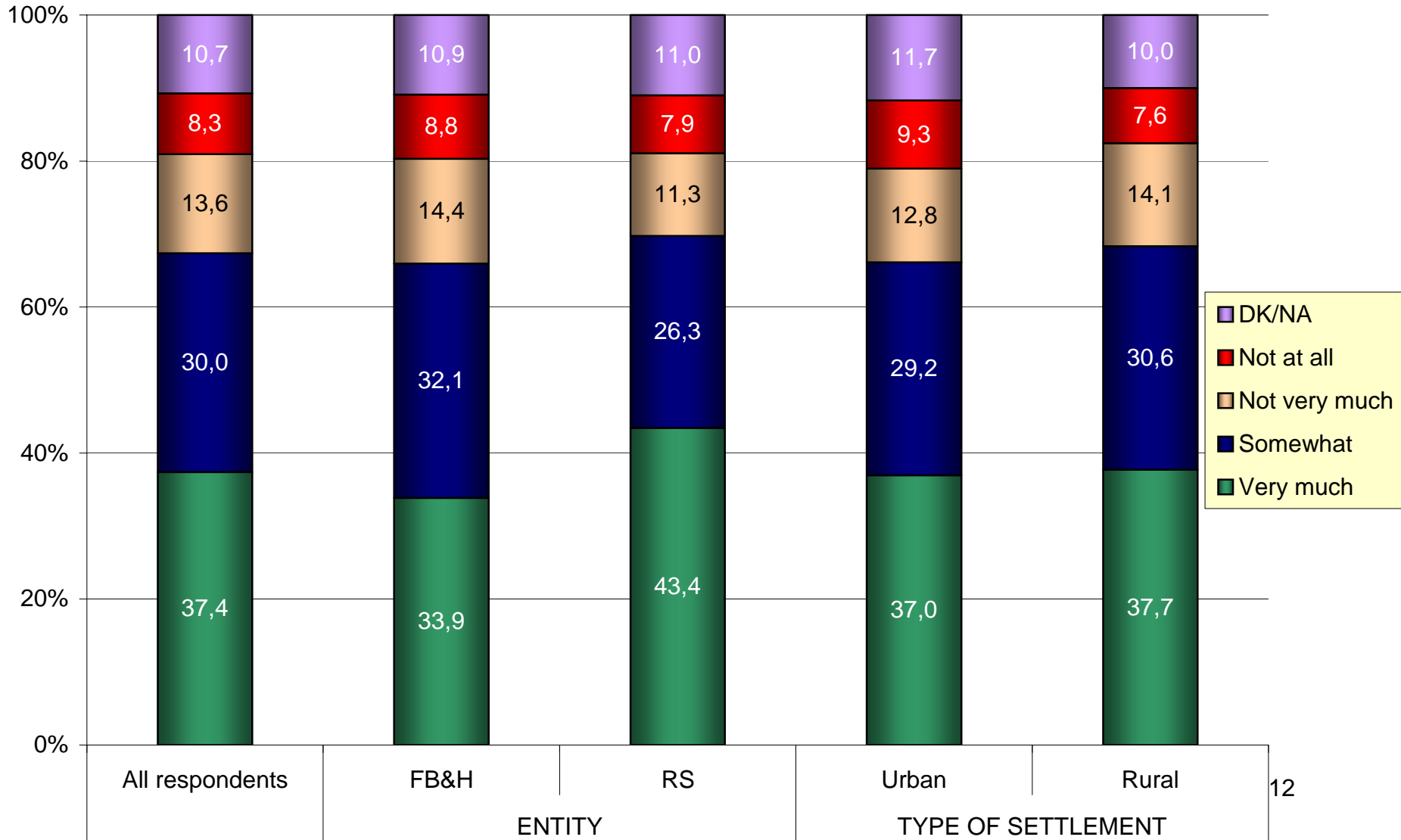


- 47% negative in maintaining the forests
- 52% negative in guarding the forests
- 53% negative in ensuring that new trees are planted to replace cut trees
- 50% negative in ensuring that timber sales are based on open and transparent competition (without favoritism to selected buyers)
- 63% negative in controlling illegal logging



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TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THE GOVERNMENT HAS EARNED MORE MONEY FROM THE FORESTS THAN IT HAS SPENT ON FORESTS?





- Respondents believe that in past 5 years government has:
 - earned more money from forests than it has invested in the forests (67%)
 - Not invested enough in forests (70%)
 - Not maintained the total size of forests (67%)



Conclusion of Survey Findings

- Verifies poor communication both internally and externally in the forest sector. The large discrepancy between the public perception of the forestry sector and stakeholder perception indicates a significant communication gap
- Public has a positive view of forests but not of forestry management
- Public has almost no knowledge of reforms



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- Demonstrates the need for a systematic, institutional communication program, supported by a public awareness campaign to convince the public that the government cares about the forests as much as they do



Communication Strategy

- Based on survey results, Coillte Consult report has compiled current positions and identified communication needs for five groups: the public, forestry management, industry groups, the government and interest groups
- For each communication need, activities have been defined to create a strategic action plan
- Initial activity: training on public and media relations for top management to integrate communication into forest management



Initial Project

Goal: Integrate communications into forestry management

- World Bank project will provide training in public and media relations for top management in forestry
- Participants will review and implement communication strategy



Participants

- FED BIH 15 attendees in total
 - Cantonal forest management companies
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry
 - Selected cantonal ministries, forestry institutions and forestry inspection
- RS 10 attendees in total
 - JPŠ „Šume Republike Srpske“
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
 - Forestry inspection



Summary of Communication Needs By Audience

- Public: Positive attitude about the value of forests, but great dissatisfaction with forest management
- Industry group: Non transparency in sale and supply hinders development of free market
- State: Insufficient information on forest funds; not clearly informed on role of foresters
- Forestry Group: Dissatisfaction with scope and quality of current available information and with lack of strategy
- Interest groups: Insufficient information on scientific research; lack of communication channels with NGOs



Identification of Public Communication Needs

- Role of foresters: Very poor; respect for foresters is very rapidly declining
- Information on forest resources: Practically no public information
- Information on forest policy and strategy: No written and published forest policy and strategy
- Information on forest management, structure, responsibility and costs: Non-transparent situation
- Information on forest management quality: Only sensational stories on forestry are seen by the public (harvesting, trucks transporting timber)



- Information on forest recreational centers: There are some improvements but information remains insufficient
- Information on where to get access to non timber products: Only informal
- Responsibility of the public towards forest: No public discussion
- General information on forestry and nature (Public education on forestry and nature): No planned and regularly issued information



Next Steps

- Compile information
 - What are the facts and where can the information be found?
- Define and implement communication strategy
 - Provide specific information to target audiences
- Develop and implement public awareness campaign
 - Combat misunderstanding with factual information