

IUFRO–Mondi Stakeholder Dialogue, Vienna, 9-10 June 2022

The future of Pan- European forests in a changing climate – How to balance wood, carbon, biodiversity and energy?

Summary by the moderator

Gerald Steindlegger²

27th of June 2022

As part of the IUFRO-Mondi Partnership the **1st Stakeholder Dialogue Meeting** was held from 9-10 June 2022, in Vienna, Austria, with 24 participants. The meeting was comprised of a **half-day workshop** followed by a **half-day fieldtrip to the forest**.¹

This document provides an overview of the topics presented and discussed at the meeting. The document is based on a compilation of the provided scientific background and notes taken during the meeting, covering the stakeholders' discussions.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE DIALOGUE

- Demands on forests have never been higher and more diverse. The discussion on how forest management can be adapted to meet these requirements in the future at times of climate change is essential.
- There is “no-one-size-fits-all” management strategy. There seems to be agreement that forest management should follow the principle of multifunctionality, to be achieved through site-specific forest stand management taking into account local circumstances and management objectives.
- Policies, incentives and regulations, particularly at the national and European levels, are major drivers of future forest management and significantly influence the provision of services from forests and trade-offs among them (wood production, carbon, biodiversity, energy).
- Reconciling the different perspectives and jointly defining future forest policy and management strategies are major challenges. Formats such as the IUFRO-Mondi Stakeholder Dialogue are valuable for sharing diverse perspectives, identifying common ground and making this information clearly visible. Science plays an important role in supporting a more rational dialogue by providing scientific evidence and presenting options for action.

¹ The **program and agenda** of the meeting can be found [here](#).

² Integrated Sustainability Solutions (ISS)

INTRODUCTION

Dirk Längin (Mondi) and **Alexander Buck** (IUFRO) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. They introduced the **partnerships goals, activities** and **principles** of collaboration. (Please see the [partnership web page](#) to read more about the partnership set-up and ambitions).



... the partnership is aiming to have a transparent and open dialogue on climate change and wood sourcing.
Dirk Längin, Mondi (left)

„... the partnership aims to serve as a catalyst for widespread partnerships in the future.“ Alexander Buck, IUFRO



...this meeting is not aiming for any consensus, it is more about sharing and learning from different perspectives. Gerald Steindlegger, ISS

Gerald Steindlegger (ISS), the moderator of the session introduced the **central guiding question of the dialogue**: “What should European forests look like in the future to balance wood production, carbon management, biodiversity conservation, energy demands and other eco-system services”?

THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR THE DISCUSSION

Daniel Boehnke (IUFRO-Mondi Partnership Manager) provided a summary of the 1st Think Tank meeting.

- 1) Climate Change is happening and rapidly so.
- 2) Silviculture can help, but diversity (of species and management interventions) is needed.
- 3) Diversity of genetic resources can also help, but funding to advance the existing knowledge on forest genetics is needed.
- 4) Innovation and technology for the optimal use of wood are crucial.
- 5) Science can support evidence-based policymaking.
- 6) New business models are needed to accommodate adaptation expenses and to provide institutional and technical capacities for forest owners.



... the first Think Tank meeting clearly outlined: climate change is happening fast; various response options exist but also many limitations and risks for the future. Daniel Boehnke, IUFRO-Mondi Partnership Manager

The **full summary document** of the 1st Think Tank meeting can be found [here](#).

Florian Kraxner (IIASA) presented **modelled future forest scenarios**. Projections indicate **increment losses** in the medium-to short-term future under the “business as usual” climate scenario. He reported that – according to the latest IPCC report - the forest sector can significantly contribute to reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement through **climate change mitigation** mainly from reforestation and avoided deforestation (REDD), complemented by negative emissions created from land-based **CDR** (carbon dioxide removal) technologies such as additional afforestation and BECCS – (bioenergy with carbon capture and storage).



Active forest management and increased harvesting do not necessarily decrease biomass growth and thus the carbon stocks of the living forest biomass.
Florian Kraxner, IIASA

He also highlighted the importance of **future tree species suitability for a climate-fit forestry**. Furthermore, he introduced results from the latest Insight Report by the International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA) on significantly increasing living biomass carbon stocks in intensively managed forests of the Nordic Countries.



Policies, laws and regulations and forest owners' objectives are the main drivers that are likely to exert a high influence on forest management in the future. Metodi Sotirov, University of Freiburg

Metodi Sotirov (University of Freiburg) presented key results of the FP-7 INTEGRAL and SUMFOREST EraNet POLYFORES project on future forest scenarios in the EU. He noted that the **most influential driver** of forest management is in the policy domain, mainly at the national level, with timber, biodiversity, water, and carbon likely to be **most relevant forest goods and services** in the future.

Trade-offs between forest goods and services are evident in the scenarios - such as growing

public interest in forests for nature conservation and recreation vs. increasing timber production and profit-making - with **different types of forest owners** reacting differently to future scenarios. [Link ppt/pdf](#)

SHARING AND DISCUSSING PERSPECTIVES

Five participants were invited to share their perspectives, max 5 minutes each, on the central guiding question on “**What should European forests look like in the future to balance wood production, carbon management, biodiversity conservation, energy demands and other eco-system services?**”.

Leonhard Nossol (Mercer) noted that the European demand on wood products needs to be balanced with the increasing focus on the provision of other ecosystem goods and services, such as carbon and biodiversity. He also pointed out that a **reduced timber supply** from European forests will lead to increased import rates from other regions. He proposed that **science should play an increasing role to inform society and policy** decision-making on the consequences of favouring different future forest management scenarios.



... the actual policy process puts the economic viability of the European forest products industry at risk. Leo Nossol, Mercer



There is a need for bio-products such as wood products, which can ensure the long-term storage of the carbon. Christian Holzleitner, EC, DG Climate Action

Christian Holzleitner (European Commission, DG Climate Action), joined the meeting virtually and presented the EU's "**Fit for 55**"-framework. This framework comprises a reward-system for land managers to increase **carbon sequestration, carbon capture** from air or waste and develop a **carbon removal certification scheme**. For the development of such a certification scheme a reliable definition of carbon removals, as well as science-based monitoring, reporting and verification are needed.

Carbon farming credits should become an additional "product" and source of income for land managers. He added that Bio-Energy Carbon Capture and Storage (**BECCS**) are seen as potential options to mitigate industrial emissions.

Kelsey Perlman (fern) said that globally only 40% of remaining forests have high **ecosystem integrity**, with Europe being one of the regions with lowest integrity. She quoted *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest* publishing (2021) that three quarters of the European forests are clearcut and between 22 and 30 per cent of European forests are managed through continuous cover forestry. She pointed out that the majority of **European forests** are in a **bad or inadequate conservation status**. She also brought in the socio-economic dimension: According to Forest Europe, the employment in the forestry sector (including silviculture, wood manufacturing, and paper industry) declined by about 33% between 2000 and 2015. She promoted "**close to nature forestry**" for better management of existing forests.



It is vital to get out of silos. Dialogues such as this one help to work and learn coherently. Kelsey Perlman, fern



The increase in European wood stock is not in spite of but rather caused by sustainable forest management. Peter Liptay, Austrian Biomass Association

Peter Liptay (Austrian Biomass Association) pointed out that biomass, including woody biomass, biofuels and biogas, is the **most important renewable energy** source within the EU with a share of almost 60 %. In the last 30 years **wood stock** in the European forests has **increased** by 8.2 billion m³. Droughts, pests and diseases increase the availability of wood for the energy market. To balance various expectations and demands on forests he suggested, among other, a

science-based discussion, relying on existing **forest certification schemes** and the promotion of **closer-to-nature-forest management** with a suitable diversity of tree species, genetics, structures and habitats.

Pekka Pesonen said that the forestry focus is more to the active carbon sequestration while in agriculture we emphasise the role of carbon savings while producing food. In Europe, **16 million people** own private forest land and use it for various purposes. He noted that forest owners always aim at **high-quality end products** while biomass for energy is considered a co-product, not a target in itself. He also is promoting **guidance for small forest owners** for their needs, for **forest policy coherence** and **coordination** among EU Member States.



We need to motivate the (small) forest owners to see the economic value of their forests and that they should manage their forests. Pekka Pesonen (COPA-COGECA)

SUMMARIZING THE DISCUSSION

Modelling future demand and supply of forest goods and services

- **Demands on forests have never been higher and more diverse.** The discussion on how forest management can be adapted to meet these requirements in the future at times of climate change is essential.
- For modelling future forest scenarios **smaller (local) units** would be very important, because this would **inform forest owners** on management options and other users and decision makers on the expected provision of goods and services.
- The scenarios should also work out the **different time horizons** (short, medium, long term) even more clearly, while keeping the big picture and framework in mind. In any case, the core messages of the scenarios should show **possible options** for forest owners as well as other users and decision-makers.
- Merging **biophysical and socio-economic models** seems necessary in order to be able to make meaningful statements on **future supply** of diverse goods and services, including wood, carbon and biodiversity. **More funding** (both private and public) is needed for research projects of this type.

Diverse forest management approaches are needed

- **There is “no-one-size-fits-all” management strategy.** There seems to be agreement that forest management should follow the **principle of multifunctionality**, to be achieved through site-specific forest stand management taking into account local circumstances and management objectives.
- From a **carbon perspective and biodiversity perspective**, further research is needed as to what type of forest management has the best carbon balance and can best contribute to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.
- There is agreement that forest management should aim for achieving the highest possible quality ranges, which can then also be used for **long-lasting products**.
- **Support for forest owners** of technical and financial nature is needed to support their efforts to promote the resilience and adaptive capacity of their forests. For example, many forest owners are not yet familiar with the management of deciduous forests or mixed forests, which is a possible adaptation strategy.
- Although society expects a wide range of **ecosystem services** (for example carbon sequestration, biodiversity and the provision of water), in many cases the services provided by forest owners are **not rewarded accordingly**.

Policy is a major driver of future forest management

- **Policies, incentives and regulations**, particularly at the national and European levels, are **major drivers of future forest management** and significantly influence the provision of services from forests and trade-offs among them (wood production, carbon, biodiversity, energy).
- **Forest policy** at the European level is considered to be increasingly **fragmented**, and there is a need to interlink different policy areas (e.g., biodiversity, energy, climate protection, etc.) more coherently.

- It was noted that European **forests and forest owner structures are very diverse** and different across regions and this diversity should also be reflected in the formulation of future policies.

Continued dialogue and increased engagement of science

- Reconciling the **different perspectives** and jointly defining future forest policy and management strategies is a major challenge. Formats such as the IUFRO-Mondi Stakeholder Dialogue are valuable for sharing diverse perspectives, identifying common ground and making this information clearly visible.
- Bringing together the perspectives of industry and NGOs is seen as a particular challenge. **Scientific foundation and respectful interaction** prove to be important aspects of the dialogue. Science plays an important role in supporting a more rational dialogue by providing **scientific evidence and presenting options for action**.
- In the future, the **social dimension** should be given more consideration in the dialogue.
- It was suggested that future iterations of this format should address even more focused (smaller) questions allowing a **more in-depth discussion**. There should also be **more time for discussion**.
- Participants encouraged the hosts of the meeting to **continue this type of dialogue**.

Day 2: The field trip

On day two, 10th June 2022, the majority of participants joined the excursion to the Wienerwald forest area “Forest of the Future”. The excursion was led by Dr. Alexandra Wieshaider, Österreichische Bundesforste (ÖBf) and Prof. Harald Vacik, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU). At four different sites participants discussed and shared perspectives on how to balance wood production, carbon management, biodiversity conservation, energy demands and other ecosystem services on site and practical/actual management options. More information about the fieldtrip can be found [here](#).



Biodiversity along the way attracted the attention of visitors. A fire salamander.



Natural regeneration of tree species well adapted to climate change. Silver fir and oak.



Excursion leader Dr. Alexandra Wieshaider (ÖBf) introducing the forest management practices.



Hosts of the IUFRO-Mondi Partnership saying THANK YOU to the excursion leaders Dr. Alexandra Wieshaider (ÖBf) and Prof. Dr. Harald Vacik (second from the left), University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU)

List of participants

Alexander Buck	IUFRO	Kelsey Perlman	FERN
Alexandra Wieshaider	ÖBf	Leo Nossol	Mercer
Andre Purret	IUFRO	Libor Jankovsky	Mendel University
Brigitte Burger	IUFRO	Magdalena Jovanovic	IFSA
Christian Holzleitner	European Commission	Metodi Sotirov	University of Freiburg
Daniel Boehnke	IUFRO	Michael Kleine	IUFRO
Dirk Längin	Mondi	Nelson Grima	IUFRO
Doris Unterrainer	Mondi	Pekka Pesonen	COPA COGECA
Florian Kraxner	IIASA	Peter Liptay	Austrian Biomass Ass.
Georg Rappold	BMLRT	Susan Brunner	Mondi
Gerald Steindlegger	ISS	Thomas Haussmann	Forest Europe
Herbert Pircher	Stora Enso	Thomas Ledermann	BFW
Ingrid Benčová	Rettenmeier Tatra Timber		

Participants of the IUFRO-Mondi Stakeholder Dialogue (non-exhaustive)

