



EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE

Annual Report 2014





2014:

Putting science into action



Overview

The year 2014 was a year of transition in many ways for us. We took concrete steps towards organizational changes that will be fully realized in the coming years.

We are aiming to position EFI as an acknowledged Pan-European science-policy platform. By this, I mean a platform that builds and connects knowledge to increase the impact research has on society as it continues to develop. Challenges like climate change, food, water and energy security, rural decline and biodiversity loss are interconnected and related to today's major dilemma: decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. We have a significant role as a European forest research and policy support network in this context.

In this constantly changing setting it is clear that forests – the most important natural capital of our continent – and the forest-based sector – a key pillar of the bioeconomy – have the potential to be a catalyst that accelerates the transition towards green growth in Europe.

However, unlocking such potential, in my view, requires strategic developments such as an ambitious Pan-European forest-based research and innovation area. In 2014, we focused in building a Pan-European forest research area via the two existing ERA-Nets dealing with forestry research: FORESTERA (Enhancing forest research in the Mediterranean through improved coordination and integration) and SUMFOREST (Tackling the challenges in sustainable and multifunctional forestry through enhanced research coordination for policy decisions), which have started to yield impressive results through the networks involved.

Within our policy support, one of the most notable developments in 2014 was the start of negotiations towards establishing a Multi-Donor Trust Fund to finance EFI's policy support activities. The establishment of the Trust Fund represents an important strategic change in our approach to conduct and fund our policy support activities. The new Trust Fund will allow for a continuous and structured science-policy dialogue with our Member Countries and member organizations as well as for a consistent provision of policy support to meet the needs of the European policy makers. There clearly has been a need for our policy support. Last year, Think-Forest – a European high-level forum on the future of forests, ran successfully for its third year and was evaluated by the participants as extremely relevant.

In all of our activities we have aimed at serving our member organizations and Members. The Annual Conference of the Institute was held in Bilbao in September, where we held a large, open dialogue with our Associate and Affiliate Members. This approach creates trust and makes our network stronger as we grow in the constantly evolving operating environment.

The year saw the change of leadership as Risto Päivinen retired after 14 years of successfully building the Institute. I look forward to leading the Institute towards a strong catalyst of forest related knowledge and science for sound policy making. ■

Marc Palahí
Director

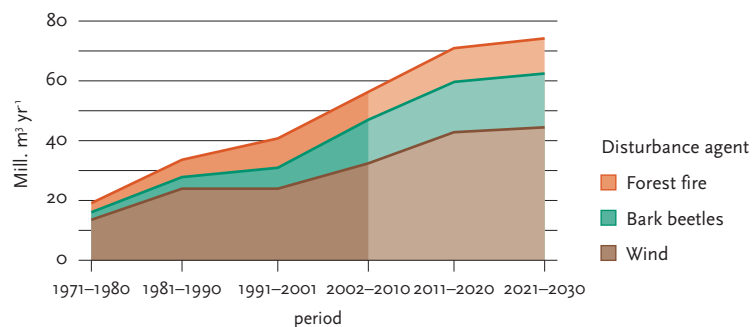


Research and

One of our main aims is to increase forest related research at the European and regional levels. During 2014, in order to position EFI as a more cross-sectorial research organization, we invested in analyzing and understanding the opportunities and possible challenges the new EU Research Funding Programme – Horizon 2020 – offers.

Among our research highlights was a study involving our Sustainability and Climate Change Programme that showed damage caused by wind, bark beetles and wildfires has increased continuously over the last 40 years throughout Europe. Climate change was identified as the main driver behind this increase. Damage from forest fires was particularly estimated to increase on the Iberian Peninsula, while bark beetle damage increased most strongly in the Alps. Wind damage would be seen to rise most notably in Central and Western Europe.

EFI coordinates the StarTree (Multi-purpose trees and non-wood forest products, a challenge and opportunity) project, which aims to provide better understanding, knowledge and tools for optimizing the management



Increasing forest disturbance damage in Europe (Seidl et al. 2014)

of multi-purpose trees and developing innovative approaches for increasing the marketability and profitability of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) for a more competitive rural economy. A report on the state of the non-wood forest products in Europe will be published in 2015, becoming the first report of this kind for Europe. The report provides information about the NWFP types, use, international trade, management, access and harvesting rights and innovation for 14 European regions.

The Forest Pests and Diseases database hosted by Atlantic European Regional

Office – EFIATLANTIC now covers the whole of Europe and provides information on the potential effects of climate change on the occurrence and impacts of hazards. The database includes information on the insect, fungi or nematode biology and their possible impacts on climate change.

EFI also continued its prominent role in building a European forest research area by contributing to the two ERA-Nets dealing with forest research: FORESTERRA and SUMFOREST. The aim of SUMFOREST is to reinforce scientific cooperation on European forests, including



Information

BEST LAND IN EUROPE

Optimal use of land is crucial to ensuring maximum production of food and other natural products. Land across the EU is matched to the most appropriate use.

REGIONAL CONNECTED

Society's needs are met regionally in a coherent relationship between people and their resources. In a non-globalised economy, there is a move away from regional specialization.

LOCAL MULTIFUNCTIONAL

Land functions are localised in small areas based on innovative approaches to living, working and recreation. There is high diversity in goods and services, land use and society.

Sustainability and Climate Change Programme and Central-East and South-East European Regional Office – EFICEEC-EFISEE took part in the development of a roadmap for a sustainable land resource management in Europe. As a contribution to the VOLANTE (Visions of Land Use Transitions in Europe) EU project, possible pathways towards three visions of stakeholders on how land use should look like in the year 2040 were explored.

EU neighborhood regions, to reduce fragmentation of research and maximize the impact of national research activities on sustainable forest management and multifunctional forestry. The Foresight and Policy Support programme was a major contributor by mapping Russian and Eastern Partnership Countries (EAP) forest research capacities and making a cross-sectorial review on European Forest Policies.

Mediterranean Regional Office – EFIMED is the scientific coordinator of the ERA-NET FORESTERRA, which aims to reinforce coordination and integration of Mediterranean forest research in the Pan-Mediterranean region as well as with countries from other Mediterranean Climate Areas such as Australia, South Africa, Chile and California. During 2014 the first project call was launched, under which two projects were grant-

ed: INFORMED (Integrated research on forest resilience and management in the Mediterranean) and MedWild-FireLab. INFORMED aims to produce global change scenarios dedicated to the Mediterranean forests. MedWild-FireLab enhances the cooperation and exchange of knowledge to ensure the transfer from basic to applied research and to develop a Euro-Mediterranean Research Area in the wildland fire domain. ■

Capacity building

A PhD course on “International Forestry and Global Issues” was organised by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), EFI’s Central European Regional Office – EFICENT and AgroParisTech . The course addressed a range of forest issues that rank high on the national/international forest and environmental research and policy agendas. The course offered PhD students and young scientists the opportunity to interact with internationally renowned experts from various fields of forest science and policy.



The Young Leadership Programme (YLP) on the Russian Forest Sector was organized for the first time in December, 2014 in Joensuu. The course is aimed at emerging leaders from the research and development, governance, administration or business side of the forest sector or a related area who are working in or with Russia.

Policy Support

One of the most strategic developments in the second half of 2014 was the start of the negotiations and planning of a new Multi-Donor Trust Fund to operationalize EFI's policy support activities.

During 2014, three ThinkForest seminars were held at the European Parliament: "Integrating biodiversity conservation in forest management", in which EFICIENT was instrumental, "Forest bioenergy in Europe: Towards sustainable options", which was organized with substantial involvement of North European Regional Office – EFINORD, and "Forests and the bioeconomy: future steps", which tackled opportunities for the forest sector in the transition to a bioeconomy, the challenges it faces and its essential contribution to combating climate change. The participants of the events included, among the total of around 250 attendees, ten Members of European Parliament and the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Norway.



The highlights of the EFI policy support in 2014 included three What Science Can Tell Us reports (on Bioenergy, Ecosystem Services and Future of European Forest Based Sector), and three ThinkForest Briefs (on Biodiversity, Bioenergy and the Future of the European Forest-Based Sector and Bioeconomy).



The start-up project for a European Forest Risk Facility (FRISK-GO), coordinated by EFICENT, aims at developing the concept of a European Forest Risk Facility and a corresponding operational business plan and structural framework by 2015. Thematic workshops were held in 2014 on four main disturbances: windstorm, pest and disease, wildfire, and wildlife. The outputs of the workshops are the basis for a set-up of a potential European Forest Risk Facility and what types of products and services are of relevance.



The ThinkForest forum activities were evaluated by carrying out a survey amongst nearly 500 ThinkForest participants. The results show ThinkForest as an important and needed science-policy forum and platform for enhancing dialogue between scientists, policy makers and forest sector stakeholders.

EFIMED organized a Barcelona Bio-Economy Forum, which is a policy-oriented but science-based solution-seeking platform, bringing together top-level company leaders with policy makers, scientists and other opinion leaders. EFICEEC-EFI-SEE was involved in the work for Forest Europe Goals and Targets 2020, as well as on the achievements of Forest Europe throughout the past 25 years.

The FLEGT and REDD Unit, which hosts the EU FLEGT and the EU REDD Facilities, continued during 2014 to work in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In 2014 the Facility implemented pilot actions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire.

In 2014 the European Commission (EC) finalized the evaluation of the EU FLEGT Facility covering the period 2007 to 2013. The evaluation concluded that the Facility, as a relevant and performing institution with substantial knowledge and experience regarding Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) and Forest Law

Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), should remain a priority partner of the EC for the implementation of the EU FLEGT Action Plan. As one of the few institutions supporting FLEGT in all VPA countries, the Facility plays a crucial role in building dialogue among countries and continents.

EFI POLICY FRAMEWORK

EFI Council, constituting of the representatives of Members, met in 2014 to formulate the Institute's future directions. The Council updated the Institute's Policy Framework:

EFI shall offer and develop a pan-European platform for its Members, Associate and Affiliate Members which:

- maximizes the impact of national research initiatives and supports the structuring of an effective European forest research area;

- upscales transdisciplinary scientific knowledge and added-value information to regional and European levels for better decision-taking and policy making on forest-relevant issues;
- enhances the science-policy-practice dialogue across all stages of policy processes in support of the European forest research community;
- provides support in policy development and implementation to the Members according to their needs.



The 2014 Annual Conference was held in Bilbao, Spain, on 10-12 September 2014. The event was a great success, and the new format of the event was especially complemented. The new format included a separate Members' dialogue session and a decision making session.

Networking

The EFI Liaison Office in Brussels was very active in networking with the Brussels based policy makers and stakeholders, and produced network news reports about the activities and opportunities for member organizations. EFI Brussels' office also organized a successful Forest Innovation Workshop and contributed to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament's hearing on the EU Forest Strategy.

Visibility for Members and member organizations was increased via news about activities where they have been involved, such as the What Science Can Tell Us publications. Annual meetings of the Regional Offices offered platforms for networking and promoting member organization's expertise. For example, EFIMED organized a high level Russia-EU workshop on Forest Fire Prevention, Management and Control 'Thinking out of the box: facing the impacts of wildfires and their consequences at multiple scales'.

The EFI Project Centre on "Forest policy and governance in Russia" (RUSFOR) started its activities under the coordination of the Saint-Petersburg State Forest Technical University. RUSFOR's focus is mainly on capacity building, while Project Centre "Preserving and enhancing the multifunctionality of mountain forests" (MOUNTFOR), provides scientific basis for sustainable management of mountain forests and initiates platforms of expertise for a wide array of stakeholders. ■



Outreach

EFI's visibility increased by 75% in social media outlets, which has led to new contacts in media, a younger generation of forest professionals and politicians.

EFI News was published with the themes 'What is the future of European forest governance?' and 'Creative destruction and bioeconomy'.



Finances in 2014

The financial year 2014 represents a turning point for EFI's financial management in many respects. In 2014, the total funding was a record 14.1 million €, from which the subsidies were 2 million €, funding for activities 11.9 million € and membership fees from the Associate and Affiliate Members 204 k €. The institute's financial year was closed with a surplus of 478 k€.

At the end of 2014 the number of personnel was 168 with 34 different nationalities (a total of 116.5 person-years). Of these the Regional Offices had a total number of 33 full person years. In 2013 the total person years was 115 including 35 person years at the Regional Offices.



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Additional details are available in
the EFI Annual Report 2014 supplement at www.efi.int

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