

EFORWOOD
Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment

Industrial feedback for EFORWOOD

CEPI, Belgium and KCPK, the Netherlands



EFI Technical Report 83, 2011

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Publisher: European Forest Institute
Torikatu 34, FI-80100 Joensuu, Finland
Email: publications@efi.int
<http://www.efi.int>

Editor-in-Chief: Risto Päivinen

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Preface

This report is a deliverable from the EU FP6 Integrated Project EFORWOOD – Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Forestry-Wood Chain. The main objective of EFORWOOD was to develop a tool for Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of Forestry-Wood Chains (FWC) at various scales of geographic area and time perspective. A FWC is determined by economic, ecological, technical, political and social factors, and consists of a number of interconnected processes, from forest regeneration to the end-of-life scenarios of wood-based products. EFORWOOD produced, as an output, a tool, which allows for analysis of sustainability impacts of existing and future FWCs.

The European Forest Institute (EFI) kindly offered the EFORWOOD project consortium to publish relevant deliverables from the project in EFI Technical Reports. The reports published here are project deliverables/results produced over time during the fifty-two months (2005–2010) project period. The reports have not always been subject to a thorough review process and many of them are in the process of, or will be reworked into journal articles, etc. for publication elsewhere. Some of them are just published as a “front-page”, the reason being that they might contain restricted information. In case you are interested in one of these reports you may contact the corresponding organisation highlighted on the cover page.

Uppsala in November 2010

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EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



Project no. 518128

EFORWOOD

Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment

Instrument: IP

Thematic Priority: 6.3 Global Change and Ecosystems

Deliverable PD4.4.2
Industrial feedback for EFORWOOD

Due date of deliverable: Month 36

Actual submission date: Month 52

Start date of project: 011105

Duration: 4 years

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: CEPI, Belgium eller KCPK, the Netherlands

Final version

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)		
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Paper industry review of the EFORWOOD project

Introduction

As a partner of the EFORWOOD project, CEPI has been involved from the very beginning in some of the work packages and modules of the project. CEPI's participation in the project was based on the felt need for a tool for sustainability impact assessment that could be used to assess the impact of policy developments on the sector. With the completion of the project, CEPI makes the following evaluation of the entire EFORWOOD project and its outcome.

1° As to the process

By gathering in the project consortium a very large number of relevant parties, from different categories, EFORWOOD has created a unique networking opportunity allowing the participants to improve the knowledge and relationships among the forest research community itself and with forest-related stakeholders (e.g. forest owners, forest industries, policy makers, etc.). Nevertheless, this large number of partners has been as well experiences as a constraint and adding to the difficulty to fulfil the tasks. Among the reasons for this situation, the difficulty and very long time to speak the same language and agree on some uniform semantics. Whilst the dialogue among research organisations seemed to be pretty smooth, the same is not valid for the communication with other stakeholders, in particular the industry partners. For the economic partners, the timing, the priorities, the culture never really matched the ones of the research community, hence leading to some misunderstanding and communication problems. The feeling of the industry of being disconnected from the process increased over time, notably because of the absence of intermediate results (the reason for this situation being that the different packages and modules were working in parallel rather than in sequence), not allowing the industry – as a potential use of TOSIA - to feed-back and propose possible corrective actions or shifts. The first results were – still very limited – were only available at a very late stage.

EFORWOOD managed organising a very robust system for the gathering of data, with substantive documentation. But, by its own nature, such a project cannot gather figures and data that reflect the forest sector dynamics, the complexity of the trade-offs, the differences and specificities of the plants and mills. Neither are the market realities really built in the system.

2° As to the outcome

TOSIA is a very ambitious and complex product. Key elements have been developed or adapted for EFORWOOD and TOSIA: among them, the Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) has proved to be a very valuable tool. Next to TOSIA itself, EFORWOOD has delivered a range of side-benefits. During the process, EFORWOOD has given a chance to young researchers to be involved, notably via the EFORWOOD weeks. During the second half of the project, substantial communication efforts have been made to inform the partners (roadshows) but “marketing” vis-à-vis the potential users has been lacking. Material and information were also



made available all along the project on the Homepage of EFORWOOD, as well as via a “Members only” section, which was appreciated.

Still some uncertainties remain with respect to the final deliverable, notably with respect to the data accuracy, the conversion factors used, unclear boundary conditions and assumptions made for the models, compliance with the conditions applicable to Life Cycle Analysis.

Finally, when developing such a complex tool, the balance between user-friendliness and robustness is difficult to find. Either the risk is to have over simplified data that might be misused or misleading, in particular if it is to be used to take policy or investment decisions. Or, the user is unable to use a complex tool that requires training and assistance, in order to make sure that it is used in an appropriate manner. The question is then whether, the “open source” approach adopted by the project promoters is compatible with such risks?