

EFI Trust Fund for Policy Support: Annual Report 2025

17.02.2026



Photo: Marharyta/ AdobeStock

Executive Summary

What is this document?

This document is the Annual Report of the **European Forest Institute (EFI) Policy Support Facility Trust Fund** (hereafter **Trust Fund**) for 2025. It presents the activities, outputs, impacts and budget of the Trust Fund for 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025. The past year was the final year of the five-year cycle of Trust Fund (2021-2025). The Annual Report aims to provide transparent information, which can also be used to assess and evaluate the performance and impact of the Trust Fund work.

Facility management

Helga Pülzl, EFI Assistant Director coordinates the Trust Fund project activities, supported by Communications Officer Shanqing Gao, Head of Communications Rach Colling, Administrative Officer Jarkko Haltia, Brussels Liaison Officer Harald Mauser, Junior Researcher Aino Huiskonen, Trainee Alessandro Matrone and Trainee Raghav Sharma. In addition, other EFI staff resources and outside subcontracting have been used to carry out the activities during 2025.

Facility funding and costs in 2025

In 2025, the Trust Fund consisted of the following 10 Trust Fund countries: *Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia and Spain*. The total financial contribution from the countries to the Trust Fund by the end of 2025 was **398,023** Euros. The total amount of expenses in 2025 is estimated to have been **378,645** Euros. It should be noted that when writing this on 02 February 2026, the EFI accounts for 2025 had not yet been finalized.

Summary of activities

The highlights of activities and outputs from 2025 include high-level ThinkForest events, both online and in person, as well as the dissemination of publications and their wide use.

ThinkForest events remain the flagship event series organized by the Trust Fund. One high-level ThinkForest events was organized on 10th December in Brussels, titled [‘Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives’](#). In addition, back-to-back with the Steering Committee meeting of the Trust Fund for Policy Support on 16 September 2025, a closed ThinkForest event entitled *‘The European Deforestation-Free Products Regulation: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead’* was organised. The event was held by invitation only for representatives of EFI Trust Fund member countries and the EFI Secretariat. In addition two webinars were organised that focused on key forest-related policy topics. The first webinar, [‘Ask a Scientist: Carbon Farming in European Forests’](#), held on 7 April 2025, explored the role of forest-based carbon farming in climate mitigation and EU policy discussions. The second, [‘From nature restoration to national restoration plans – What support can the latest science offer?’](#), held on 4 November 2025, addressed the scientific basis and policy implications of nature restoration efforts.

Through a Policy Support initiative, EFI launched in 2022 a new **Policy Brief series**. By the end of 2025, a total of 18 Policy Briefs have been published, including seven new briefs this year (PB 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18), focusing on the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy, forest resilience and biodiversity, sustainable forest-based value chains, and the role of forests in climate, water, and the new EU soil law. Together, these briefs provide evidence-based recommendations to support decision-making and implementation and strengthen ecosystem integrity, and advance resilient forest management across the EU.

Summary of impacts

Publications were widely promoted and distributed in digital forms in 2025, and the electronic copies of both newly published and back catalogue publications again proved popular. Think Forest events and webinars served among others as official launching or promoting dates for the publications, generating more visibility for them. In 2025, the highest number of direct downloads from the EFI website was reached with From Science to Policy series on [“Carbon farming in the European forestry sector”](#) (FSTP17). Since its publication it has been downloaded 1256 times.

ThinkForest event participation: The ThinkForest in-person events and webinars were generating high interest. The online format of the webinar allowed for a high number of participants from many different countries. Diverse topics attracted various stakeholder groups. Feedback surveys conducted after the events have shown **very high satisfaction** (4.8/5) and **insightful content** for participants' work (4.3/5). The diversity of scientist-specific topics, the engaging presentations and panel discussions, as well as the overall organization, were highly appreciated by the participants. The webinars were promoted and, in the aftermath, made available on different social media channels after events had happened. In 2025, 102 people took part in the ThinkForest webinar, [‘Ask a Scientist: Carbon Farming in European Forests’](#), published on April 8, 2025, and 304 people viewed the recording so far. The ThinkForest Ask a Scientist webinar, [‘From nature restoration to national restoration plans – What support can the latest science offer?’](#), was published on November 5, 2025, with more than 157 participants participating in the online event, and its recording has been watched 245 times. Additionally, 52 participants attended the in-person ThinkForest event, [‘Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives’](#). The recording of this event was published on December 19, 2025, and has been viewed 70 times in 2025. In addition, on 16 September 2015, we organised a closed invitation only ThinkForest event entitled *“The European Deforestation-free Products Regulation – Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead”*. The event was held back-to-back with the Steering Committee Meeting of the Trust Fund for Policy Support in Prague. In total, in the year 2025, 321 participants attended the ThinkForest webinars and in-person event organized, and the recordings of these events have been watched 619 times until December 31, 2025.

Media impact: The work of the Trust Fund was actively promoted, in particular to highlight new publications and advertise ThinkForest events, as well as to promote ongoing work such as the Forest Questions. In addition to direct communication with journalists, social media channels such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube were frequently used to promote the Trust Fund policy work. In 2025, considerable audience growth and engagement again took place on LinkedIn, with growth of around 6,000 followers. 9 press releases/news items were published on the EFI website on timely, relevant topics, with those relating to carbon farming receiving the most coverage in the media.

Expert presentations, hearings and statements: The authors of the Policy Briefs were invited to online and in-person meetings to present their study and to provide expert statements at various occasions, including several high-level events.

Feedback from the network: Overall, the events and outputs have been considered to be timely and of high relevance as they were tackling topical issues high on the political agenda. In particular, participants have appreciated the variety and selection of speakers, representing different regions and institutions, and additional science-based information has been provided by the publications and ThinkForest webinars. In addition, the ThinkForest online events have been highly valued by meeting participants.

Content

<i>Executive Summary</i>	2
1. Introduction and background	5
1.1 <i>EFI Policy Support Facility Trust Fund</i>	5
1.2 <i>Trust Fund funding and management</i>	6
2. Activities and outputs	8
2.1 <i>Publications</i>	8
2.2 <i>ThinkForest events</i>	12
2.3 <i>Other outputs</i>	19
3. Impacts	25
3.1 <i>Downloads</i>	25
3.2 <i>Impact and feedback from stakeholders and network</i>	26
3.3 <i>Expert presentations, statements and hearings in 2025</i>	28
3.4 <i>Media impacts</i>	29
4. Achievements in period 2021 – 2025	30
5. Reporting of expenses	34
5.1 <i>Background</i>	34
5.2 <i>Expenditures by cost category</i>	34
6. Conclusions	36
Annexes	37
Table 2: <i>Online statistics</i>	37
Table 3: <i>Number of ThinkForest participants according to background</i>	37
Table 4: <i>Stakeholder follow-up articles related to events and publications</i>	37
Table 5: <i>Media coverage</i>	37
Table 6: <i>Publication citations</i>	37

1. Introduction and background

1.1 EFI Policy Support Facility Trust Fund

The objective of the EFI Policy Support Facility Trust Fund (Trust Fund) is to support the operationalization of the activities of the EFI Policy Support Facility. The Trust Fund has started its 5-year-period at the beginning of 2021, so 2025 marks the final year of this 5-year period.

The Steering Committee is the highest decision-making body of Trust Fund. The Steering Committee approves the Trust Fund work programme and related budget. The main aims and responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to provide *strategic guidance* on the activities of the Facility funded by the Trust Fund. It receives information from the EFI secretariat and gives feedback regarding the outputs, outcomes and impacts resulting from the activities of the Facility. The Steering Committee does not take part in the operation and management of the Trust Fund policy support work, science-policy studies, or the selection of the scientists conducting the studies. This is in line with the principle of safeguarding the scientific integrity of the actual science-policy work. However, the Steering Committee members can *comment* the science-policy study manuscripts, but they *do not review* them. That is, the decision how to incorporate, or not to incorporate, the possible Steering Committee comments to the studies, rests on the scientists.

The Steering Committee consists of a representative of each Member state and the Director of EFI or his authorized representative. The Chairs of the EFI Board and EFI Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), or a designated Board/SAB member, take part in the meetings as an observer. The membership of a Trust Fund member ends 12 months following the last contribution of the donor. The Steering Committee meets at least once a year, and maintains an active interaction through correspondence, and can meet informally in connection with other international meetings.

In 2025, the Trust Fund Steering Committee members were:

1. Harald Aalde, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Norway
2. Viktor Harvio, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland
3. Tomas Krejzar, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic
4. Robert Mavsar, EFI
5. Aurimas Saladžius, Ministry of Environment, Lithuania
6. Fergus Moore, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland
7. Simon Poljansek, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia
8. Enrico Pompei, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests, Italy
9. Marta Álvarez Moreno, Ministry of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Spain
10. Benjamin Stadler, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism, Austria
11. Vera Steinberg, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany

The Trust Fund policy support work is managed and administrated by the EFI Policy Support Facility.

The actual implementation of the science-policy studies is based on the work by EFI staff, its Associate Members, and the science community in general.

The aim of the work is to:

- respond in a timely manner to policy makers' information needs with scientific-based analysis and information in an easily understandable and policy-relevant format and scale;
- support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable policies and strategies relevant for the European forest-based sector;
- communicate effectively and consequently build a better understanding of forest-related issues, proactively involving policy makers, scientists and stakeholders.

The above objectives are carried out in particular through EFI Trust Fund science-policy publications (*From Science to Policy* reports and *What Science Can Tell Us* reports) and ThinkForest forum high-level science-policy seminars and online events.

Janez Potočnik, the former EU Commissioner for both Science and Research, and Environment, served as the ThinkForest President from July 2019 to 2023. So far the Trust Fund Steering Committee decided not to appoint a new ThinkForest President.

1.2 Trust Fund funding and management

Funding: The members of the TF in 2025 were 10 countries: ***Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia and Spain.*** The total contribution of donors in 2025 was **398,023** euros. The expenses of Trust Fund activities during 1 January to 31 December 2024 is estimated to have been **378,645** euros (*including 13% overheads; the exact amount will be known when the EFI accounts for 2025 are finalized in 2026*).

According to the Trust Fund Guidelines, funding can be used to finance the following categories of expenditure:

- Policy Support Facility staff costs and travel expenses;
- EFI staff costs, consultant and expert fees and related expenses (including but not limited to travels) to coordinate and conduct studies and implement products and services;
- Costs for contracting EFI Associate and Affiliate Members and other relevant organizations for carrying out scientific assessments, policy studies, etc.;
- EFI staff costs and travel expenses related to the negotiations of the Trust Fund, its establishment and enlargement;
- Communication and media expenses, including publications (e.g. *From Science to Policy*, *What Science Can Tell Us* studies, policy briefs, EFI policy support newsletter, etc.), translations, and video and electronic media, media conferences, etc.;
- Workshop, conference, webinar and meeting expenses, including costs associated with presenters, publicity, translation and reporting; exchange of experts, training and demonstration events, etc.;
- Equipment;
- Office running costs;
- Costs for auditing of the Trust Fund and external evaluation of the Facility;
- Costs related to the Facility or the Trust Fund, not included above, that have the approval of the Trust Fund Steering Committee.

Management: The Trust Fund policy support work is managed and administrated by the *EFI Policy Support Facility*. It initiates, coordinates, carries out and disseminates science-based analysis and synthesis assessments for policymakers, stakeholders, media and the public at large. It supports science-policy dialogue and functions as a go-between scientists and policymakers. One of the main activities is also the managing and operation of Think Forest Forum, the high-level science-policy information, discussion and information-sharing forum.

Based on feedback from the Steering Committee members, EFI prepares an annual work plan and an associated budget which is approved by the Steering Committee. The team responsible for managing and administrating the Trust Fund policy support work in 2025 was:

Helga Pülzl, Assistant Director, EFI

Rach Colling, Head of Communications, EFI

Shanqing Gao, Communications Officer, EFI

Jarkko Haltia, Administrative Officer, EFI

Harald Mauser, Brussels Liaison Officer, EFI

Aino Huiskonen, Junior Researcher

Alessandro Matrone, Trainee

Raghav Sharma, Trainee

2. Activities and outputs

The activities under the Trust Fund for Policy Support were of many different types during 2025. The flagship activities remain the ThinkForest events and science-policy publications. In addition, a number of related and supporting activities were carried out, such as what is series, regular updates on the policy support webpage, social media activities, expert statements and presentations in policy forums/webinars, and efforts to get new countries to join the Trust Fund. This chapter gives more detailed information about these activities.

2.1 Publications

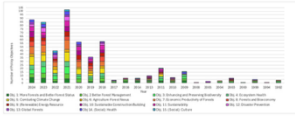
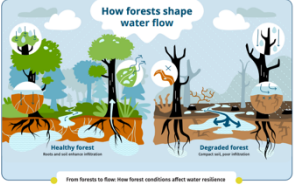
2.1.1. Science-policy studies

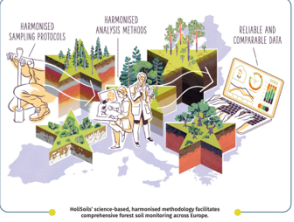
PSF publications build on existing EFI series, with the aim of creating a cascade of products, targeted at different audiences and purposes. Their main objective is to synthesise existing science analysis and results, and draw policy implications based on these, to inform policy making and stakeholders' work. The text is accordingly written in a format that is easily accessible to these target groups. To help wider distribution and impact, the studies or their Executive Summaries are also translated to other languages, when needed. So far, the translations include Chinese, Czech, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish editions.

To ensure maximum impact and findability, from 2019 onwards all EFI publications have been given Digital Object Identifier or **DOI references**. This is a string of numbers, letters and symbols used to identify an article or document and link it to the web. A DOI helps a reader easily locate a document and makes the publications more citable.

EFI series	No of pages	Purpose
<i>What Science Can Tell Us</i> (WSCTU)	80-100	Synthesis of large scope studies. Main target groups: civil servants, policy makers' assistants, stakeholders, experts, researchers
<i>From Science to Policy</i> (FSTP)	28-50	Synthesis of a specific topic, carried out within a short timeframe (typically in 4-8 months). Main target groups: civil servants, policy makers' assistants, stakeholders, experts, researchers
<i>Knowledge to Action</i> (K2A)	12-60	Presents the results of research (or topic synthesis), an initiative or project in an attractive format. Main target groups: society, stakeholders, policy-makers, media.
<i>Policy Briefs</i> (PB)	2	Brings together a summary of scientific knowledge on a policy-relevant topic.

In 2025, seven Policy Briefs publications were published.

Policy briefs 2025	
European Forest Institute - Policy Brief Series - No 18 - November 2025  Mapping the EU's forest policy objectives: From multifunctionality to forests in a circular bioeconomy EU forest governance is dispersed across numerous legal and non-legal instruments, with objectives formulated in different sections and driven by different European Commission Directorates-General. Understanding how these objectives have evolved and how they relate to one another is essential to designing policies that are both effective and forward-looking.  EU forest objectives are shifting (1992-2024) 1. Rapidly expanding and more ambitious agenda, including combating climate change Forest-related objectives grew 3.5 times in 2019-2024 compared to 1992-2018, driven by the Green Deal and a growing acknowledgment of forest multifunctionality—from carbon storage and biodiversity to renewable materials, energy, risk reduction, health, and rural development. Combating climate change is fully mainstreamed across instruments. 2. Growing convergence of climate, biodiversity, and productivity goals While generally conflicting, these goals are increasingly framed as compatible. Policies promote forest conservation, causing use of biomass, and climate-smart forestry as new "three pillars" solutions linking environmental priorities with innovation, income, and wider societal benefits. 3. Economic productivity remains central Policies often present environmental ambition as hindering competitiveness, efficiency, and new revenue tied to forest ecosystem services—showing a long-running integration of ecological and economic aims, with shifting emphasis across political cycles.	Mapping the EU's forest policy objectives: From multifunctionality to forests in a circular bioeconomy. EFI Policy Brief 18, 2025. Wydra, D., Pülzl, H., Matrone, A. https://doi.org/10.36333/pb18
European Forest Institute - Policy Brief Series - No 17 - November 2025  3 x 3 x 2030: Nine priorities for implementing the EU's Forest Strategy In 2021, the European Union adopted the Forest Strategy for 2030 (FS), its third renewed commitment to forest policymaking across Europe. The strategy is largely based on the European Green Deal, which envisions forests playing a crucial role in a decarbonised society. The strategy's key focuses include carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and forest restoration. Its goal is to enhance both the quality and quantity of EU forests, boost their multifunctionality, and tackle challenges arising from intensified human activities, natural processes and climate change impacts. Currently, the strategy's implementation is being reviewed and here key findings are summarised from an extensive report on the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy based on data from 15 countries in and outside the EU (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK) (Pecurul-Botines et al. 2023) https://doi.org/10.36333/pb17. Key findings from 15 countries on implementation Diverse national priorities: Northern and Central European countries with large forest sectors prioritise economic competitiveness and climate goals, showing partial resistance to FS measures emphasising conservation and restoration. Rebalancing goals: Central and Eastern European countries increasingly link biodiversity and resilience with bioeconomy goals, aligning more closely with FS ambitions. Adaptation through rural development: Southern and Western European countries integrate FS goals through rural and climate policies, often focusing on afforestation, fire prevention, and local development rather than industrial forestry. Conflicts and different priorities: Tensions arise between wood production and biodiversity protection, forest use and recreation, carbon storage in forests versus wood products, and expanding forest cover versus competing land uses. Similarities in goal prioritisation at national levels are: Shared goals included developing the bioeconomy further, as well as achieving sustainable forest management and multifunctionality of forests. The interpretation of the latter two as how to do this differed across countries. In addition, increasing the resilience of forests and their adaptation to climate change was found salient everywhere, but restoration was not found to be a universally pre-defined concept. Increasing the engagement of stakeholders and collaborative policymaking approaches was found to be a lower priority area. Barriers for policy uptake are: (I) economic forest policy developments; (II) uneven distribution between ministries, preexisting administrative structures and policy fragmentation; (III) lack of human resources and scarcity of public funding and finally (IV) public opinion, citizens values and the role of media.	3x 3 x 2030: Nine priorities for implementing the EU's Forest Strategy. EFI Policy Brief 17, 2025 Giurca, A., Pülzl, H., Pecurul-Botines, M., Winkel, G. https://doi.org/10.36333/pb17
European Forest Institute - Policy Brief Series - No 16 - November 2025  Healthy forests drive water resilience Europe is entering a new era of water-related risks. Rising water scarcity and pollution, alongside increasingly severe floods, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires, are threatening ecosystems, agriculture, human health, and economic stability. Challenges once largely confined to Southern Europe are now spreading to Central and Northern regions, placing unprecedented pressure on water resources and governance systems. Forests, covering about 30% of Europe, are vital to sustaining water quantity and quality and must be central to future resilience strategies. EU policy-making is beginning to reflect these realities. The Forest Strategy for 2030, Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, and Nature Restoration Law (EU 2024/1965) all promote integrated land and water governance. Reorganising forests on active water managers is essential for safeguarding ecosystem services and building climate resilience. Forests and water are deeply interconnected. Healthy forests act as natural sponges, capturing, storing, and gradually releasing water through their canopy, soils, and roots. These processes sustain streams, replenish groundwater, and moderate flood-drought extremes. Water retention increases with forest cover: catchments with over 70% cover can retain up to 30% more water than sparsely forested areas, while increasing cover from 10% to 30% can boost retention by 25%. Beyond regulating flow, forests filter water, reducing treatment costs. Forests also rely on water for survival and growth: through transpiration, they return about 30% of rainfall to the atmosphere, regulating local and regional climate and maintaining the hydrological cycle that sustains them. How forests shape water flow  From forests to flow: How forest conditions affect water resilience	Healthy forests drive water resilience. EFI Policy Brief 16, 2025. Marchionni, V., Borelli, S. https://doi.org/10.36333/pb16

European Forest Institute - Policy Brief Series - No 15 - October 2025 How does women's economic empowerment strengthen sustainable and inclusive forest value chains? Why women's empowerment matters Across the world, women play vital roles in micro and small forest enterprises (MSFEs), particularly in wood processing and informal forest product value chains. Forests and forest-based economies are more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable when women are empowered, yet their contributions often go unrecognized and under-supported. Empowering women in forest MSFEs is not only fair, it is strategic. When women access decent work, training, and decision-making roles, enterprises and communities are more likely to invest in long-term forest sustainability, efficient use of resources, and improved social well-being. Yet systemic barriers (from legal restrictions to gender norms) continue to limit women's access to land, finance, training, and leadership roles. These obstacles are especially acute in rural areas and small enterprises. Removing them is essential to ensure forest-based value chains contribute to both sustainability and equity. Evidence from Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa shows that women's economic empowerment (WEEM) contributes to stronger household incomes, better health and education outcomes, and more inclusive forest governance. 	How does women's economic empowerment strengthen sustainable and inclusive forest value chains?. EFI Policy Brief 15, 2025. <i>Colonna, T., Arpornsilp, R., Leal Riesco, I.</i> https://doi.org/10.36333/pb15
European Forest Institute - Policy Brief Series - No 14 - July 2025 How to advance the implementation of the EU Soil Monitoring Law? The EU Soil Monitoring Law obliges Member States to take action to protect, maintain, and enhance soil health across all soils - from urban to agricultural and forests. Its implementation will help safeguard natural ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, water regulation, and mitigation of climate change by soil carbon sequestration. For the EU law to achieve its intended impact, Member States need to adopt effective sampling and analysis methods that provide accurate information on the status of and trends in soil carbon stocks, nutrient levels, and biodiversity. Currently, such empirical soil information is either not available at all, or does not capture the full range of forest soils across the EU. There is also a lack of rigorous soil sampling practice and sampling protocols that account for the biologically active layer of forest soils. Furthermore, the Member States apply the efficient data-based methods that are now available to assess soil biodiversity in large-scale soil surveys. This results in a lack of comprehensiveness, coherence, and reliability of soil information. A methodology that accounts for the specificities of forest soils, as well as variation in forest soil types across the EU, has been created under the auspices of the Horizon 2020-funded SoilData project. 	How to advance the implementation of the EU Soil Monitoring Law?. EFI Policy Brief 14, 2025. <i>Mäkipää, R., Ackermann, A., Adams, S., Bozzolan, N., Curiel, J., Guenet, B., Lehtonen, A., Santonja, M., Verkerk, P.J.</i> https://doi.org/10.36333/pb14
European Forest Institute - Policy Brief Series - No 12 - July 2025 Forest resilience and disturbance: What role does biodiversity play? Biodiversity is affected in opposing ways by increased disturbances due to climate change: natural disturbances like insect outbreaks and fires are increasing, making forests younger and more open. This benefits species that need light to grow, but harms those that depend on old and dense forests. Natural disturbances can also enhance biodiversity by creating changes to stressed (intense) climate-adapted tree species. Biodiversity matters, because - It is key to cope with disturbances: Forests with higher species and functional diversity are less likely to experience large-scale die-offs, as tree species respond differently to stress and disturbances. - Now → also offers a larger pool of different species, such as slow- and fast-growing ones - It can stabilize productivity: Higher tree diversity can increase the safety and stability of forest production, making it a strategic asset for forest management for timber production. - Now → productivity may decrease with more slow-growing species - It is more replaceable: Forest biodiversity is one of the hardest ecosystem services to substitute. - It provides holistic values: Biodiversity is highly valued and supports the adaptive capacity of forests, to ensure resilience for ecosystems and society. What can policymakers and forest managers do to enhance biodiversity? National and regional policymakers (1) Enhancing tree diversity: - Promote tree species mixtures with different functional traits to improve disturbance recovery and climate change adaptation. For example, combine broadleaved and coniferous species with different drought tolerance and disturbance susceptibility. - Intensify the management of browsing by ungulates with the increase of tree diversity. (2) Promote ecological and socio-economic resilience simultaneously: - Diversify tree species composition to reduce the risk of large-scale losses during extreme weather events. - Create forests with a mix of tree types and structures that support different species to sustain both biodiversity and timber production. - Integrate business objectives to mitigate risks. Forest owners and managers	Forest resilience and disturbance: What role does biodiversity play?. EFI Policy Brief 12, 2025. <i>Lindner M., Kunstler, G., Seidl, R., Bredahl Jacobsen, J., Cantarello, E., Hlásny, T., Lloret, F., Patacca, M., Willig, J., Schifferdecker, G.</i> https://doi.org/10.36333/pb12

2.1.2 Policy support mailings

The *Policy Support Highlights* mailing list sends information to subscribers about ThinkForest events and TF-funded studies, in addition to more general news items on current TF themes. Subscription was actively promoted during the year (e.g. during registration for events), and by the end of 2025, the list totalled some c.1200 subscribers. Information about events was also cross-posted to the general EFI Highlights mailing list. More detailed information is available in the Annex, under Online Statistics.

2.2. ThinkForest events

Event 1: Ask a Scientist Webinar: Carbon Farming in European Forests, 7th April

Online Webinar

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izlUdqVPG1I>

<https://efi.int/news/carbon-farming-scientists-hot-seat-2025-04-09>

Our ThinkForest Ask a Scientist webinar on 7 April allowed around 90 participants to explore research and policy questions on the topic of carbon farming. In the hot seat were the authors of EFI's recent From Science to Policy study on Carbon farming in the European forestry sector.

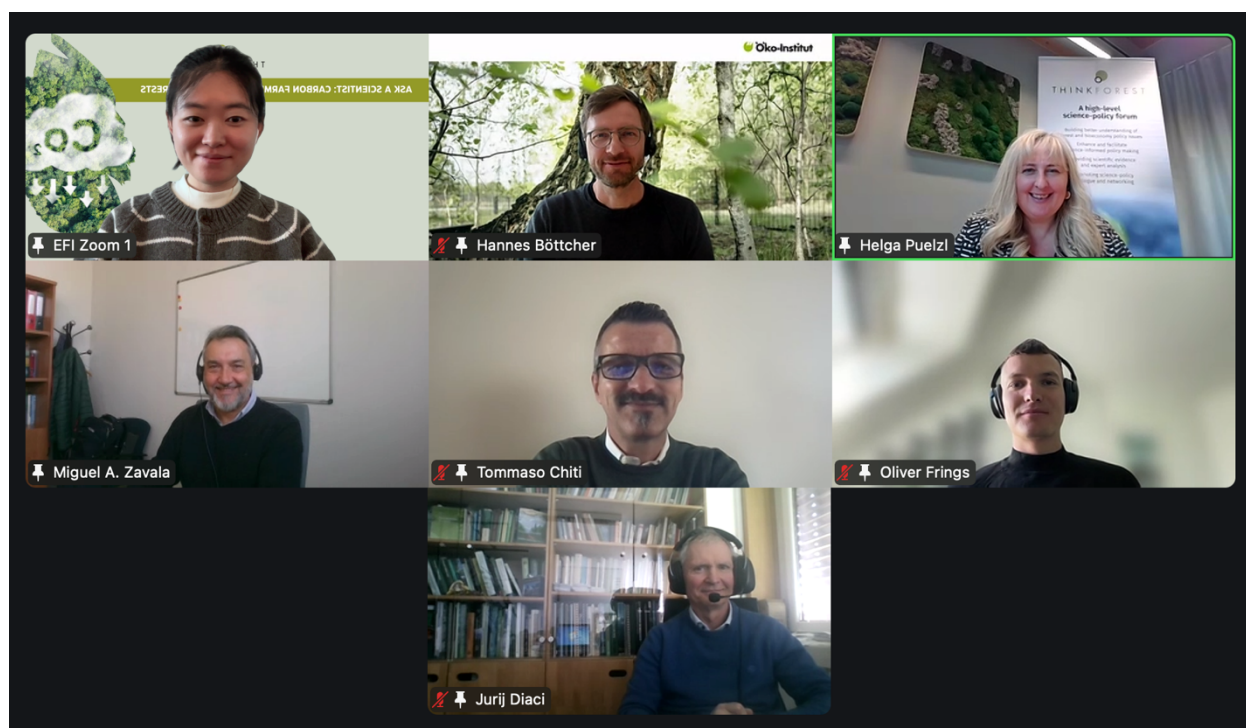
Tommaso Chiti, University of Tuscia gave an introduction to carbon farming in forestry, with some highlights from the study. Carbon farming aims to enhance carbon sequestration and storage in forests and soils, while maintaining ecosystem health and biodiversity. It includes practices such as afforestation, improved forest management, extending rotation periods, diversifying forest structure, and peatland restoration. Afforestation, agroforestry and peatland restoration have the potential for the most impact – but challenges include the long and variable timescales involved in forestry compared to EU climate targets, the non-permanence of forest carbon storage (and risks from disturbances), and the complicated nature of monitoring and setting baselines.

Hannes Böttcher, Oeko-Institut, set carbon farming in the context of the EU policy landscape, where it needs to support multiple policy objectives. Policy aspects of carbon farming include its potential use as a tool to achieve national targets in greenhouse gas inventories, its competitiveness in carbon dioxide removal markets (where it is likely to be cheaper than permanent options, also offering more co-benefits), and the need to clearly define what credits can be used for.

Jurij Diaci, University of Ljubljana, explored silvicultural practices, and the possible solutions and dilemmas of balancing forest management and carbon sequestration. Many approaches can enhance carbon sequestration – but there is of course a huge variation in forests (and their ownership) across Europe, which affects the methods chosen. Site conditions, stand characteristics and all the functions that forests provide (not just carbon storage), must be carefully considered. It is often a balancing act – for example reducing harvest intensity or prolonging rotations can increase carbon stocks, but older larger trees are more vulnerable to disturbances risking carbon losses, and lower harvesting in one area may cause deforestation elsewhere (leakage).

Oliver Frings, AgroParisTech, focused on some of the risks surrounding carbon farming. These include uncertainty around real emission reductions (e.g. lacking additionality) due to inflated baselines and overcrediting, the vulnerability of carbon stored in forests (non-permanence) due to disturbances, and emissions shifting elsewhere (market leakage). Practical solutions can reduce these risks but policymakers face the dilemma of accessibility versus rigidity. Rigid standards ensure credibility and real impact but can raise costs and limit participation. Given mounting criticism based on ex-post evaluations, he called for firmer safeguards, cautioning that without clearer rules and stricter oversight, the voluntary carbon market may not endure.

Finally, Miguel A. Zavala, University of Alcalá, explored the complicated question of how we can measure and quantify carbon in the forest. There is no magic single measurement, but a lot of information at different scales, that can be combined to give an estimate of carbon stocks. Sources can include remote sensing, tree ring data, National Forest Inventories, soil data, eddy-flux data and forest management data. Likewise, estimating carbon sequestration is also complicated, as most processes (e.g. losses through harvesting, disturbances etc) are dynamic. Different models can be used to try and quantify how carbon stocks evolve over time, but we also need to consider interactions and trade-offs (e.g. between carbon farming and biodiversity) to avoid carbon tunnel vision. Here a regional and landscape perspective is very important.



Ask a Scientist Webinar: Carbon Farming in European Forests.

Event 2: The European Deforestation-free products Regulation – lessons learned and challenges ahead,
 16th September
 Closed invitation event

On 16 September 2015, we organised a closed, in-person ThinkForest event entitled “*The European Deforestation-free Products Regulation – Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead*”, held back-to-back with the Steering Committee Meeting of the Trust Fund for Policy Support in Prague. The event brought together Steering Committee members and national representatives for an in-depth exchange on the upcoming entry into force of the European Deforestation-free Products Regulation (EUDR), with a particular focus on implementation challenges and lessons learned.

The discussion was opened by Helga Pülzl, Assistant Director for Policy Support at the European Forest Institute. An update on preparations for the EUDR in Global South countries was presented by Valiere Merckx, Head of the International Partnerships Facility at EFI, followed by a structured exchange of country experiences related to EUDR readiness and implementation.

The closed invitation-only format enabled an open and targeted dialogue among participants on key regulatory, technical, and capacity-related challenges ahead.



Closed invitation-only ThinkForest event: The European Deforestation-free products Regulation – lessons learned and challenges ahead. Photo: Shanqing Gao/ EFI.

Event 3: ThinkForest Webinar- From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans, 4th November
Online Webinar

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwVk649BPD0&https://efi.int/news/nature-restoration-national-restoration-plans-2025-11-05>

Our ThinkForest webinar on 4 November took an in-depth look at the topic of nature restoration with a focus on forests, asking what support can the latest science offer?

www.efi.int/policy-support

Elisabeth Schatzdorfer, Principal Scientist at EFI presented some of the lessons learned from the SUPERB Horizon 2020 project, building on its multidisciplinary scientific and practical findings, including those from 12 large-scale demonstration sites across Europe.

There are many objectives for forest restoration – including restoring or improving biodiversity, resilience, forest products and services. Research shows a majority of the European public supports forest restoration; however, it is important to note that restoration can't fulfil every objective at the same time. There are always trade-offs and space must be left for compromises.

Guided by the idea of transformative change rather than disruption and immediate change, SUPERB used a toolbox of restoration measures in its diverse demo areas in cooperation with stakeholders to test and showcase how restoration can be done to the benefit of nature and people. To be effective and sustainable, measures need to be adapted to the local context and synergies and trade-offs need to also be considered. Elisabeth emphasised that there is no silver bullet for optimising restoration – we need to be careful with the idea that if we restore biodiversity all other problems are automatically solved too. In addition, there is not a universally agreed endpoint for restoration – we need to take a holistic, forward-looking and adaptive approach, fully involving stakeholders.

A thoughtful panel discussion highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities for integrating the latest science into the design of National Restoration Plans (NRPs). These must be submitted by each EU Member State by 1 September 2026, under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

Łukasz Rejt from the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment emphasised the importance of transmitting scientific knowledge from projects to policymakers and government experts. The project findings and proposed measures should be understandable for policymakers and accessible in local languages, to enable the knowledge to make its way into the NRP.

Jenni Roche from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Ireland, pointed out that this communication should be two-way. Individual Member States have their own very specific needs and diverse contexts – so it is important for researchers and projects to be clear about the applicability of their findings.

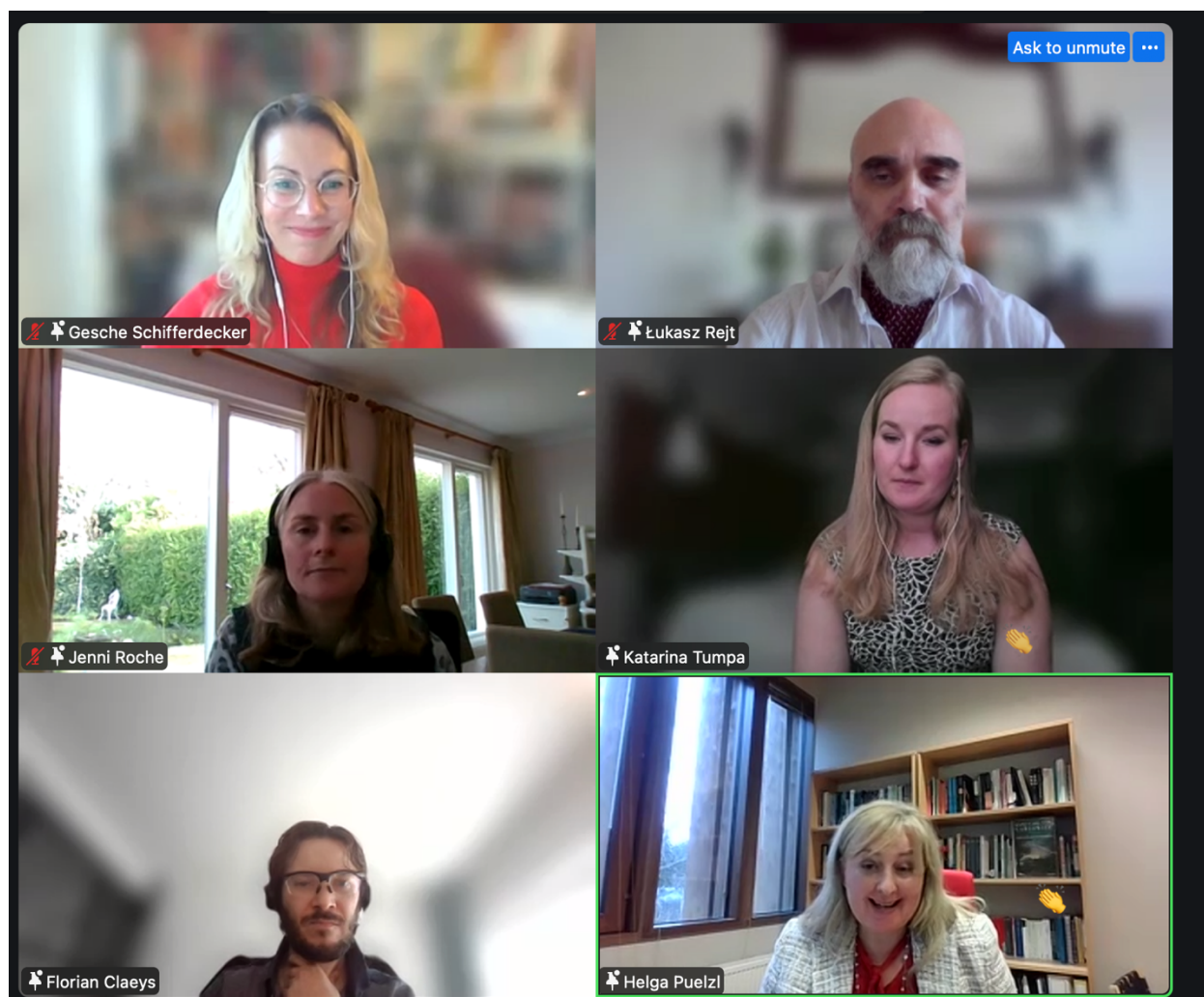
Florian Claeys from DG Environment also highlighted that there is not a single blueprint for restoration – it is dynamic, evolving continuously through experience. The latest science should be at the core of this evolution. Research would also be extremely important on monitoring methods.

The panel also focused on engagement, and the participation of local communities in the process, which was seen as one of the keys to success.

Katarina Tumpa from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Croatia highlighted the need for education – to encourage people from all areas of the country (not just big cities) to participate, and to help them develop an understanding of the trade-offs. Education can help to show that different local communities can see the forest from very different points of view, and encourage people to accept different perspectives. The panel also highlighted the importance of engaging widely, for example via online questionnaires, conferences and public hearings.

Summing up, the panel recommended:

- Sharing knowledge and dialogue, to bring the best solutions
- Thinking big – aiming for large scale and looking for multiple benefits across measures and policies
- When working on national restoration plans also thinking regionally – your forest is your neighbour's forest
- Not being afraid of the Nature Restoration Regulation – it provides a chance to reinvent our relationship with nature



The moderator and panellists during the panel discussion at ThinkForest Webinar- From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans

Event 4: Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives, 10th December
Thon Hotel EU, Brussels (in-person event)

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obxhclceDMs>

www.efi.int/policy-support

<https://efi.int/news/navigating-eu-forest-objectives-thinkforest-event-explores-how-turn-complexity-coherence-2025>

Forests lie at the heart of many of the European Union's strategic ambitions, such as achieving climate neutrality, safeguarding biodiversity, strengthening rural economies, and supporting the bioeconomy. Yet as expectations for forests multiply, so does the complexity of governing them.

This was the key message emerging from the European Forest Institute's latest ThinkForest event, "Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives", held on 10 December 2025 in Brussels. The event brought together 54 policymakers, researchers, national representatives, and stakeholders to discuss new evidence on forest-related objectives in EU policy.

Doris Wydra, lead author of EFI's study (forthcoming) and related policy brief Mapping the EU's forest policy objectives: From multifunctionality to forests in a circular bioeconomy, presented the study's results which was based on the analysis of 90 documents and policy instruments from 1992 to 2024. The analysis identified 567 forest-related objectives which cluster into 15 overarching policy objectives with those on climate adaptation and economic profitability outstanding.

According to Wydra, ambitions increased sharply with the arrival of the European Green Deal, which reflects forests' expanding role as "multifunctional allies" in tackling climate, biodiversity and economic challenges. "When reading EU documents, it can appear as though everything is harmonious," says Wydra, "but objectives do not automatically create synergies, and some may pull in different directions." Many objectives remain non-binding, she pointed out, and enforceability requires clarity, which is something often lacking in the accumulation of policy statements. The analysis also highlights that environmental ambition is increasingly framed as a driver of economic productivity, with climate, ecological, and economic goals often developing in parallel rather than in conflict.

During the panel discussion session, moderated by Sarah Adams from EFI, panelists agreed that while the EU has become more ambitious, translating objectives into practice remains challenging. Implementation must account for highly diverse national contexts, from ownership structures to forest types and management traditions.

Christian Holzleitner, DG Clima, emphasised the potential of the bioeconomy value chain, carbon certification, and incentives to address trade-offs and support climate goals.

Marta Gaworska, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the European Union, stressed the need for realistic, implementable objectives. She also advised that rising expectations must be grounded in what Member States can deliver.

Gerfried Gruber, Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management, Austria, highlighted the importance of a continuous dialogue with different stakeholders, as well as aligning EU-level initiatives with on-the-ground realities. Gruber shared Austria's experience in aligning national strategies with EU-level initiatives while respecting local contexts.

The discussion further explored opportunities for strengthening policy coordination without expanding EU competences. Suggestions included better use of shared monitoring systems, more transparent communication of trade-offs, and cross-sector collaboration, particularly between climate, agriculture,

and environment portfolios for more holistic approaches. “There's no one-size-fits-all solution,” Gruber noted, “but collaboration between Member States at the EU level can help us learn from each other.”



The panellists during the panel discussion. Photo: Raghav Sharma/ EFI.

In her closing words, Helga Pülzl, Assistant Director of EFI for policy support, summarised the evening’s insights:

- Togetherness: working collectively across governance levels, sectors, and actors; the results of the EFI study have the potential to create transparent oversight and unlock coordination.
- Coherency and incentivisation: aligning forest-related objectives to reduce fragmentation, as well as aiming to engage forest owners / managers through creating the right incentives. In this way they can remain central in the transition.
- Simplicity: striving to make complexity manageable and forest objectives accessible including in implementation. Simplifying complexity should, however, not lose sight of who benefits and of what citizens in Europe want.

The event closed with a very engaged networking session where discussions continued. This reflected a shared recognition that achieving the EU’s forest ambitions will require cooperation, clarity, and continued dialogue.

At the initiative of the EFI Director a new event series – **Helsinki Forest Talks** with ambassadors as well as permanent representatives to the European Union was launched in 2024. This new closed event series exclusively designed for Helsinki diplomats, carefully selected scientists and government representatives. It serves as a platform for a constructive dialogue between diplomats and scientists, focusing on important forest-related issues. It not only aims to build interaction between scientists and diplomats but also to create a network within the diplomatic community of those working on forest-related topics. Always two ambassadors together with EFI organise the meeting and invite the diplomatic community. Opening words of the hosting ambassador are followed a quick keynote and a panel discussion with open dialogue session to exchange ideas and perspectives. Networking coffee offered by the host provides an informal setting to continue discussions and exchanges.

In 2025 three Helsinki Forest Talks were organised and attended by around 25-30 persons each: Helsinki Forest Talk (4) with the Dutch and the Belgian ambassadors on the topic of **“Forests in Europe: what are the hot issues?”**; Helsinki Forest Talk (5) with the Chilean and the Brazilian ambassadors on the topic of **“Beyond Planting Trees: Restoring Forests for Climate, Nature and People**; Helsinki Forest Talk (6) with the Canadian and the Swedish ambassadors on the topic of **“Boreal Forests – Treasures of the North”**. Given the success of this talk series, it will be continued throughout 2026.

These events were also used to introduce ambassadors and high-level representatives to the Trust Fund work and engage them in dialogue at the science-policy interface.

2.3. Other outputs

2.3.1. Online activities

The EFI website is an important tool in policy support communication activities, as it acts as a central, easily accessible and durable source of information about activities. Whether arriving via Google search or via social media channels, users can easily find more information, e.g. via the:

- Policy Support Facility page (www.efi.int/policysupport)
- ThinkForest events page (www.efi.int/policysupport/thinkforest)
- Dedicated subpage for each new ThinkForest event including mini-biographies of key speakers, programme, background information etc (this is updated after each event to include relevant news releases, photos, presentations and videos).
- All publications are deposited in the site-wide Publications Bank (www.efi.int/publications-bank).

Forest Questions

As reported previously, in 2021 a sub-site (www.efi.int/forestquestions) was set up for materials from the Key questions on forests in the EU report (K2A04), providing an extended answer for each question, with detailed referencing. This has since been extended with new questions, many based on policy brief materials.

Visitor traffic to this section of the website continued to be extremely high in 2025, with particular interest in questions on [forests and the water cycle](#), [forest resources](#), [forest ownership and management](#), and [how EU decision-making works](#).

In 2025, 9 new forest questions were added, primarily on the topic of monitoring, but not only:

- [Forest Monitoring: How do we know what is happening in Europe's forests?](#)
- [What are the key steps for planning biodiversity monitoring in forest restoration?](#)
- [How to monitor carbon in forests?](#)
- [How are forest soils monitored and what are the challenges?](#)
- [What is genetic monitoring and is it important for forest\(ry\)?](#)
- [Who holds the power in EU \(forest\) decision-making?](#)
- [How do windstorms affect forests in Europe?](#)
- [What do people think about forest restoration in Europe?](#)
- [How is forest biodiversity funded, now and in the future?](#)

Together with the 'What is' series (see below), the Forest Questions will form the backbone of the topic-oriented redevelopment of the EFI website in 2026.

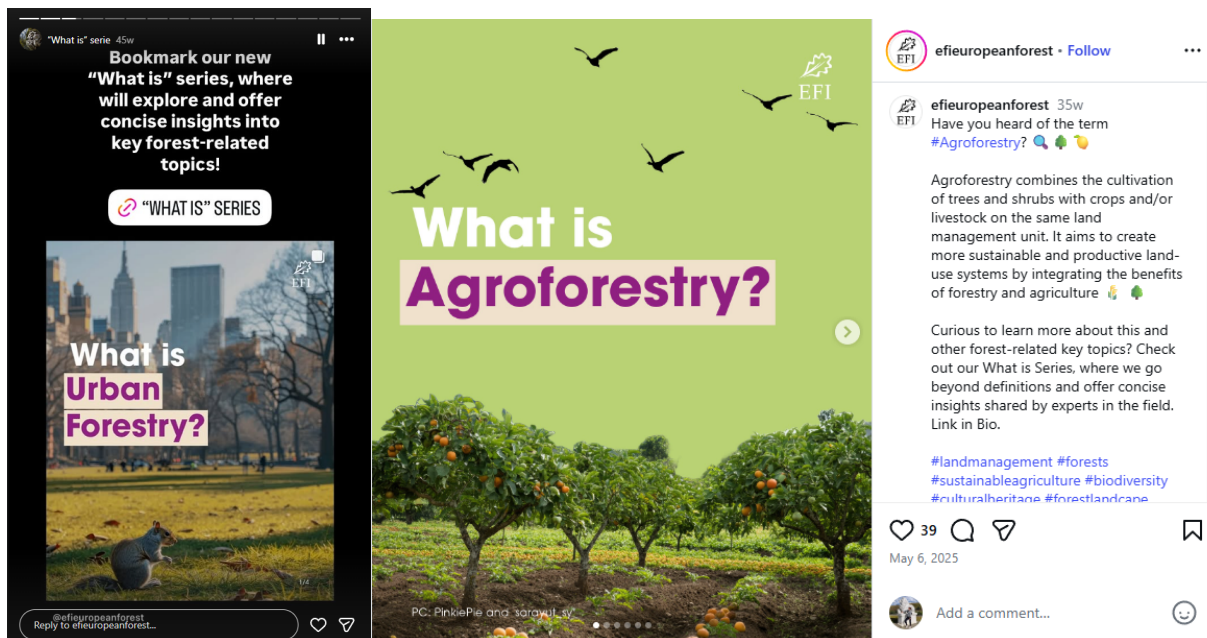
Web pages	Page views 2025	Page views 2024	Page views 2023	Page views 2022
Forest questions (/forest questions) plus subpages	24,636	24,854	23,075	19,978
What is (https://efi.int/what-is)	1,046			

What is series

The [What is series](#) was launched in 2025, and offers insights into important forest-related topics. Each one-pager provides an easy-to-read introduction to the topic to support the interested reader in understanding the essence of these complex subjects. The series, grounded in both scientific research and expert insights, briefly addresses also the status of knowledge and sometimes provides in-depth insights into what is not yet known. Renowned scientists and experts often accompanied by a communication expert have written those texts. All texts are accompanied by visuals.

15 topics were launched in 2025, with good visitor traffic on the EFI website (see above). There was particular interest in: [What is closer-to-nature forestry?](#) [What is urban forestry?](#) [What are ecosystem services?](#) [What is agroforestry?](#)

Together with the Forest Questions, the What is? series will form the backbone of the topic-oriented redevelopment of the EFI website in 2026. What is? topics have also been instrumental in the policy support-related content produced for Instagram in 2025 to engage younger, non-scientific audiences.



Website

Access to the policy support and ThinkForest pages on the website remains high. Visitors arrive at the website from social media, with particularly high interest in ThinkForest events and activities.

Web pages	Page views 2024	Page views 2025
Policy support main landing page (policysupport/)	1,269	1,285
Our work (policysupport/ourwork)	215	233
ThinkForest: (policysupport/thinkforest/) plus subpages eg for events	4,399	3,693

Videos

In 2025, the recording of three ThinkForest events, including two webinars and one in-person event in Brussels, were published via the EFI YouTube channel, giving a lasting record of ThinkForest discussions.

Video	Published	Recording views 2025
ThinkForest Webinar - Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives	19.12.2025	43

ThinkForest Webinar - From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans	04.11.2025	235
ThinkForest Ask a Scientist - Carbon Farming in European Forests	07.04.2025	304

More details are available in the Annex, in the Online Statistics section (Table 2).

Videos published before 2025 continue to be watched and produce ongoing impact. In our media/social media communications we also promote these older videos and publications as well.

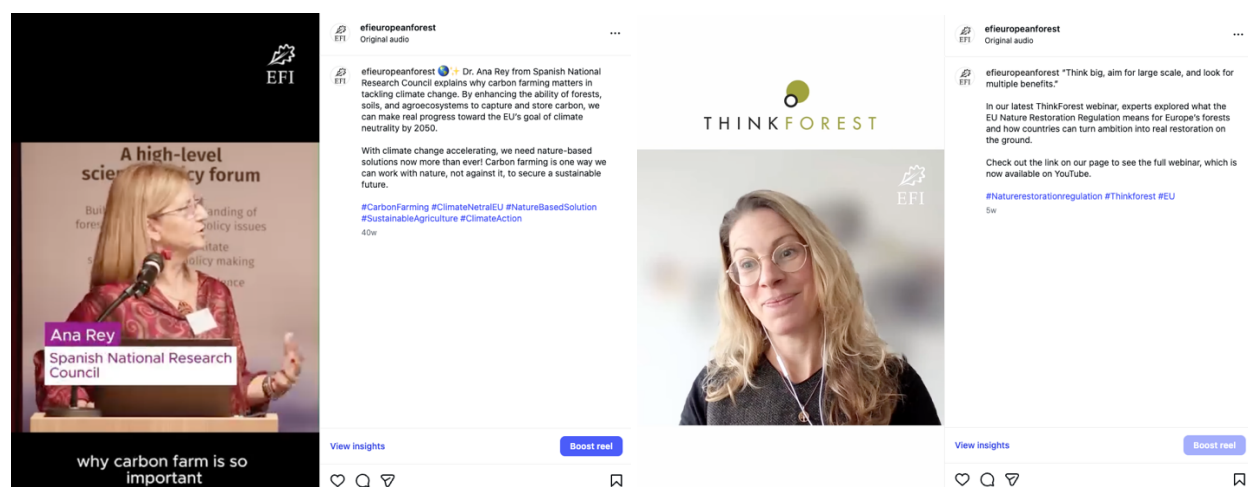
Social media

During 2025, TF-funded policy support work was promoted via EFI's social media channels, to reach a geographically widespread and diverse set of audiences. X (formerly known as Twitter) saw an enormous decline in engagement, coupled with controversy and politicisation. The decision was therefore taken to archive the EFI account.

Considerable audience growth and engagement again took place on LinkedIn in 2025, reaching almost 40k followers. This platform has now become the channel of choice for engagement on professional topics. In 2025, EFI experimented with long-form content, for example an [explainer on Carbon farming](#), which built upon the success of the From Science to Policy publication and associated forest question.

EFI's newest channel, Instagram, saw consistent growth in audience, reaching towards a younger demographic. Communication focused on explainer-style content based on policy briefs, forest questions, and the *What Is* series, while testing new formats such as visual storytelling content.

In addition, short video formats (30 seconds to 1 minute 30 seconds) were tested to promote ThinkForest events. These videos were disseminated across multiple platforms, including Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube Shorts, with the aim to allow policy-related event content to reach broader and more diverse audiences through platform-specific formats. For example, explainer short video on "what is carbon farming" has reached 1562 views across [Instagram](#) and Youtube shorts ([Link 1](#) and [Link 2](#)).



Example posts in format of short video

Social media channel	Number of followers (31 Dec 2025)	Number of followers (31 Dec 2024)	Number of followers (31 Dec 2023)	Number of followers (31 Dec 2022)
X (formerly Twitter), main EFI account	n/a	14,796	14,773	13,759
Facebook	12,268	11,093	10,620	10,000
LinkedIn	39,976	32,778	26,637	20,691
YouTube	3,050	2,758	2,230	1,870
Instagram	1,325	n/a	n/a	n/a

2.3.2. Reaching out to Practitioners

To support outreach to forestry practitioners, an article entitled “Carbon Farming in the European Forestry Sector” based on [From Science to Policy 17](#) was prepared for publication in Forestry & Energy Review, a practitioner-oriented journal in Ireland, aiming to translate the work of the trust fund into accessible insights for practitioners. This article was published in the 2025 December issue.

A French version of this article is also prepared and will be pitched to French practitioner’s journals in 2026.

Carbon Farming in the European Forestry Sector

Written by Louisa Bourri-Sauter, Journalist and trainee in Science Communication at the European Forest Institute.



Afforestation, continuous cover forestry, and peatland management are examples of sustainable forest management practices. They support biodiversity, climate adaptation, and water protection while increasingly contributing to Europe's growing priority of carbon sequestration, also known as "carbon farming".

Our EU land is covered by about 179 million hectares of forest, representing almost 60% of its total area. It is therefore no surprise that the EU is relying on its forests to help reduce emissions through carbon sequestration and achieve its commitment to become climate neutral by 2050.

Carbon farming, defined as a set of practices that help capture and store carbon in soils and vegetation while maintaining other ecosystem services such as biodiversity, has now been formally recognized within an EU framework. The new regulation establishes the first EU-wide voluntary system for certifying carbon removals, and carbon storage in products.

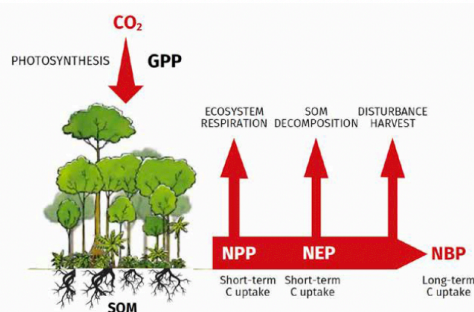
This article, based on the European Forest Institute's report Carbon Farming in the European Forestry Sector, explores both the potential of different forest management practices that can contribute to carbon

farming across Europe's forests, and the role of temporary carbon credits in incentivizing landowners to adopt long-term practices with lasting effects.

WHICH FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES CAN IMPROVE CARBON SEQUESTRATION IN FOREST ECOSYSTEMS?

The way we manage our forests today will determine how much carbon they can lock away tomorrow, both in tree biomass and soils. Targeted forest management practices can help reverse the trend of declining forest capacity to act as carbon sinks. This trend has been observed in European forests over the last decades as a result of forest aging and climate change which is causing forest dieback worldwide.

Carbon storage in forests starts with the process of photosynthesis, a biochemical reaction by which plants use solar energy to store it in chemical energy (in organic compounds) used to live and grow. As a result, plants remove atmospheric carbon dioxide. In a typical year, forests absorb roughly 18% of the carbon dioxide that humans emit from burning fossil fuels. However, the long-term capacity of forest ecosystems to sequester carbon depends on their productivity, age,



Forest carbon balance showing main entrance of carbon through photosynthesis (gross primary productivity) and losses determining the long-term carbon uptake. Gross primary production (GPP) is the amount of carbon captured by plants through photosynthesis over a given period (Pan et al. 2011). GPP minus plant respiration is net primary productivity (NPP). NPP minus soil heterotrophic respiration (primarily resulting from the decomposition of soil organic matter by soil biota) determines net ecosystem productivity (NEP). Moreover, the net carbon sink strength of a forest depends on the occurrence of natural disturbances and tree mortality. This carbon balance is defined as net biome productivity (NBP). NBP also includes loss of carbon through harvest and management activities, when carbon stored in living biomass is transferred to deadwood or harvested wood products.

Source: Adapted from IPCC 2000.

resilience, and health. It is also influenced by the occurrence of natural disturbances and the impact of forest management practices.

Soils are equally important in climate discussions because they store huge amounts of carbon – in fact, they're the largest land-based carbon reservoir. However, over 60-70% of Europe's soils are degraded from poor management, making it essential to place soils at the heart of any carbon farming strategy.

Afforestation

Replanting and regenerating forests is the most effective method to store more carbon on a long-term basis across all geographic regions. According to the EFI study results, afforestation strategies should prioritize native tree species that are adapted not only to today's climate but also to projected future conditions. In some cases, introducing non-native but non-invasive species may be appropriate if they are better suited to future climate scenarios. Seed4forest, for example, is a new innovative decision-support tool that helps forest professionals to choose the most appropriate tree species, species mixtures, and provenances that are anticipated to be better aligned with the environmental conditions expected in the future.

It is also interesting that slow growing species such as deciduous trees may have higher wood densities and therefore, they might offer as much carbon sequestration potential as faster growing species.

In temperate regions, like in Ireland, afforestation on agricultural land induces carbon sequestration mainly in new tree biomass.

Although soil carbon losses are rarely observed, changes in soil carbon sequestration are less evident to observe than in other regions and vary depending on previous land use.

Even so, while afforestation is an efficient climate change mitigation

strategy with long-term carbon sequestration as well as other environmental potential benefits, it is necessary to carefully identify both suitable areas and tree species to avoid potential trade-offs. In some cases, afforestation can indeed reduce biodiversity, for example, when species-rich grasslands are replaced, or increase the risk of disturbances such as forest fires, particularly in Southern Europe.

Silvicultural strategies

A range of silvicultural practices can be implemented to enhance carbon storage in managed forests. These practices should of course vary across countries to ensure they are not maximized to the detriment of other forest functions such as socio-economic benefits or biodiversity conservation.

Changing species composition can particularly boost carbon storage in degraded forests. To begin with, mixed species stands show greater stability and resilience to climate change events, according to the EFI report. Droughts, diseases, storms and fires, all of these disturbances cause forests to release significant amounts of CO₂. By adapting forests to climate change, trees species selection can have a positive long-term impact on carbon sequestration. However, it is important to note that changing species dominance may result in initial carbon losses.

Extending rotation periods (the number of years between complete harvest cycles) and reducing harvesting are also effective strategies. As the proportion of older, larger trees increases, forest biomass carbon stocks also grow over time. In even-aged forest management, harvesting can be reduced during stand thinning and at final harvest. Lowering harvest intensity in both even-aged and uneven-aged forests can help increase carbon storage. However, long-term carbon sequestration still depends on disturbance patterns, species adaptability, and overall forest

Article "Carbon Farming in the European forestry sector" published in Forestry & Energy Review, practitioner's journal in Ireland

Enlarging the Trust Fund

The Trust Fund started in January 2015 with 8 countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway and Sweden. In 2016 Spain joined, in 2017 the Czech Republic and in 2018 Lithuania. However, at the end of 2018, France stepped down from the TF, and at the end of 2024, Sweden discontinued financial contributions and left the TF.

Currently Central-, Northern-, Southern and Eastern Europe are all represented in the TF. During 2020-21, active efforts to engage more European countries in TF were taken by the EFI Director and Assistant Director, and in 2021 Slovenia joined. Poland albeit being interested in joining the TF for a considerable time informed EFI that they were no longer able to become a member. Discussions with three European countries in and outside the European Union are held to encourage them to join the TF. More countries are to be approached during 2026.

3. Impacts

The EFI Trust Fund for Policy Support work has continued to receive a lot of very positive feedback during 2025 as it has reached a wide audience through its various activities, both online and on-site. The impact indicators given in this Report show a robust continuation of Trust activities impact (see Appendix). More direct positive feedback on the activities in the ThinkForest networking events as well as in larger face-to-face meetings with policy-makers and stakeholders, etc, was received during 2025, which is hoped to be continued in 2026.

The feedback given during and after webinars and as well as in person during ThinkForest meetings and other events was very positive. Especially the webinars provided a platform that allowed the participants to interact, raise questions and proceed in high-level discussions. The online format permitted bigger audiences, hence more visibility for the publications including the reach-out to new persons that have never participated before. However, in-person events also showed to be particularly important as meeting places to exchange on forest-related topics between policy-makers, stakeholders and scientists are not manifold enough in Europe.

An increased number of downloads of the publications is a very positive sign and underlines the continuous interest in the selected topics both from policy-makers and the scientific community. Given that policy-makers and policy advisors have less time available, the new EFI Policy Brief series, successfully launched in 2022, aims at meeting those target groups also with shorter texts and graphics. Again, download rates of the 7 policy briefs published in 2025 indicate the need to have those shorter reading formats. We have also started to produce our policy brief series into easy-to-digest infographics, starting from PB1 in 2024. With the updated forest questions and translating them to different languages a new audience can be reached. Starting from 2024 and throughout 2025, even shorter texts with visuals were developed and included in a new series (What is....?) that was launched in 2025. These very short texts are meant to provide even easier access to forest-related topics than the forest questions. Some of them have continue to be distributed also on paper to policy advisors and diplomats and very positive feedback was received.

During multiple personal meetings and discussions that EFI's Director, Assistant Director and Brussel's Liaison Officer had during 2025 with European Parliament MEPs, European Commission staff, national ministries and stakeholders, very positive feedback was given for the Trust Fund policy support work. Overall, these impacts show that this form of policy support provides not only a unique, but needed platform for pan-European forest-based sector science-policy work.

3.1 Downloads

The electronic copies of these studies again proved very popular. A detailed overview of the downloads of all major Trust Fund publications produced to date (2015 onwards) can be found in the Annex, p. 37. In 2025, seven **policy briefs** were published in English.

** This is of course a snapshot of one segment of usage, as the publications are also available in e.g., ResearchGate, authors' institutional repositories, organisations' own libraries etc.*

Title	Publication date	No of electronic copies downloaded 2025*	DOI resolutions 2025**
PB18 (Forest policy)	Dec 2025	53	n/a
PB17 (EU Forest Strategy)	Dec 2025	109	n/a
PB16 (Water)	Nov 2025	251	n/a
PB15 (Women)	Oct 2025	73	n/a
PB14 (Soil monitoring law)	Jul 2025	263	903
PB13 (Biodiversity credits)	Aug 2025	309	577
PB12 (Forest resilience)	Jul 2025	177	567

*** DOI resolutions: shows the number of people who have clicked on the DOI address for a publication (please note that some of the numbers were not available yet)*

3.2. Impact and feedback from stakeholders and network

Amidst the ongoing reliance on virtual platforms, the Trust Fund maintained a continuous online presence, engaging with representatives from member states, European Commission services, international forest stakeholders, members of parliament, non-governmental organizations, and research. The dissemination and discussion of Trust Fund publications during these virtual exchanges were well-received. Several face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders involved in Trust Fund activities were held also. These meetings were also organised back-to-back to other meetings in order to save time and money. We can also report proudly in 2025 that publications that were supported by the TrustFund were uptaken and well cited in EU Commission documents and used as reference manuscripts including in international meetings.

The EFI Director continues the exchange with high-ranking decision-makers in the European Union. In summary, both the direct and indirect impacts of the Trust Fund work carried out in past years and in 2025 have had an impact at a high level of policy.

ThinkForest webinars & recordings of ThinkForest events

The events in 2025 have been widely regarded as timely and highly relevant, addressing pressing issues at the forefront of the political agenda. Participants particularly appreciated the diversity of speakers, who represented various regions and institutions, enriching the discussions with a range of perspectives. Furthermore, the publications and ThinkForest webinars provided valuable science-based insights, further enhancing the impact and credibility of the events.

a. ThinkForest Ask a Scientist Webinar - Carbon Farming in European Forests

By 19 January, a recording of the event had been watched 308 times.

Feedback (examples) from participants

What did you like most about this webinar?

- *“I appreciate how clearly and critically the material breaks down carbon farming’s complexities—exposing risks, market flaws, and justice gaps while inviting deeper reflection on real climate solutions. Insightful and well-structured!”*
- *“The wide range of articles on the one topic. the adherence to the time, short and to the point the possibility to ask questions in the tablet [Padlet board for questions].”*

The feedback survey shows a very high level of satisfaction with the webinar’s organisation, with an average rating of 4.8/5. Participants particularly appreciated the smooth moderation, clear communication, and interactive format, which supported active engagement throughout the event.

The majority of respondents also found the content relevant and applicable to their work (4.1/5). Open-ended feedback highlights the quality and diversity of speakers, the clarity of the presentations, and the depth and critical perspective of the discussions, underlining the webinar’s value for a broad professional audience.

b. ThinkForest Webinar - From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans

By 19 January, a recording of the event had been watched 259 times.

Feedback (examples) from participants

What did you like most about this webinar?

- *“Inputs from different people with different backgrounds and with experiences and knowledge of different European countries. Sharpness and directness of information and answers.”*
- *“I think it was a superb and important webinar, which echoed some important and to some extent also maybe quite inconvenient facts. I think that these facts are missing in the forest debates in many EU countries.”*
- *“Cross country dialogue that recognises the need to share and cooperate while adapting to local variations. Also, the open-minded approach to restoration and the recognition of the limits of natura 2000 network”*

The feedback survey shows a very high level of satisfaction with the webinar’s organisation, with an average rating of 4.8/5. Participants valued the clear communication, effective moderation, and well-structured format, which supported focused and constructive discussions.

The relevance of the content was also rated highly, with an average score of **4.3/5** for applicability to participants’ own work. Responses indicate that the webinar successfully connected scientific insights with policy processes, particularly in the context of national restoration planning, reinforcing its value for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners alike.

c. ThinkForest event: Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives

By 19 January, a recording of the event had been watched 109 times.

As the event finished late in the evening, only limited feedback was collected through the survey. However, during the networking session and in conversations following the event, participants shared very positive impressions.

They highlighted the clear overview of EU forest-related objectives, the relevance of the discussions, and the value of exchanging views with other experts and stakeholders. This feedback suggests that the event created a welcoming space for dialogue and helped participants better understand current EU policy developments.

3.3. Expert presentations, statements and hearings in 2025

In 2025, authors of the From Science To Policy Series and the EFI Policy Briefs presented the publications in various occasions and in different formats. The following table provides an overview of these presentations. They include both scientific and technical presentations and were targeted at different audiences, including policy-makers, stakeholders and scientists.

Publications	Presenter / event
“Carbon farming in the European forestry sector” From Science to Policy 17 (<i>Published in October 2024</i>)	1. Rey, A. Forests at the centre of European policy. The National Museum of Natural Sciences. 9 December, Madrid.
“Meeting the European Union’s Forest Strategy goals: A comparative European assessment” From Science to Policy 16 <i>(Published in September 2023)</i>	1. Pecurul-Botines, M. The Forested Regions and Bioeconomy & Resilience Working Groups Session, ERIAFF 2025, 9 April 2025, Catalonia & Online.

Presentations based on several TF studies were also provided. This included the following ones:

1. Mauser, H. Insights on EU Policy Making on Forest-related Topics, EFI webinar “EU policy support in a nutshell - forest and wood governance”, 21 May (invited presentation, online) 2. Mauser, H. Comments on the Assessment of the Conservation Status of (Forest) Habitats in the EU, Web meeting with ministries from Estonia and Latvia, 17 June (invited presentation online) 3. Mauser, H. EU Policy Making on Forest-related Topics, EUSTAFOR Strategy Workshop, 3 July (invited presentation) 4. Pülzl, H. Three challenges - EU forest Governance, Workshop at ETH Zürich, 31 January 2025. 5. Pülzl, H. Policy support at EFI, IFSA Dialogue: Bridging Science-to-Policy Transfer in Forestry Sector, 21st March, 2025 (online) 6. Pülzl, H. EU Wood policy governance, Swedish Royal Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA), lunch seminar, 24 March 2025 (online) 7. Pülzl, H. and Rogelja, T. European Forest policy-making European and national regulations for FRM, EFIs Young Leadership Programme, Jastrebarsko, Croatia, 8 May 2025 8. Pülzl, H. and Martinez de Arano, I. EFI, policy support and innovation. Visit of the minister of Northern Westfalia, EFI HQ Joensuu, 14 May 2025 9. Pülzl, H. Policy Support at the European Forest Institute for the EFI Council, 8 June 2025 10. Pülzl, H. <i>EU</i>ropean Forest Governance. Greenpole, Conference on Nordic Forest Policies, Lund, 1 Oct. 2025 (invited keynote)
--

11. Pülzl, H. and Wydra, D. EU Forest policy objectives mapping. Standing Forestry Committee, 2 October 2025 (online)
12. Pülzl, H. Is there a wood policy in the European Union? European Social Dialogue – Furniture and Wood Joint meeting (EFBWW, EFIC, UEA, CEI-BOIS), Brussels, 22 October 2025
13. Pülzl, H. *The Bigger Picture: EUropean Forest Governance*, EUSTAFOR, strategic meeting, Brussels, Forestry House, 11 DEC. 2025

Please note that many of the other studies supported by the Policy Support TrustFund are continuously presented and used including in policy discussions. These presentations were not included here to keep this list size readable.

3.4. Media impacts

There was active contact with the media during 2025. 10 press releases/news items were published on the EFI website on timely, relevant topics.

- 18.02.2025 ["What is" series goes beyond a definition](#)
- 01.04.2025 [The Commission starts public consultation on EU Bioeconomy Strategy](#)
- 02.04.2025 [New EFI publication takes a bird's eye view of EU wood-based policy](#)
- 09.04.2025 [Carbon farming scientists in the hot seat](#)
- 25.06.2025 [Seeing the bigger picture: who benefits from data?](#)
- 11.08.2025 [Forest soil monitoring in focus as EU Soil Monitoring Law advances](#)
- 14.08.2025 [New policy brief addresses the integrity and impact of biodiversity credits](#)
- 5.11.2025 [From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans](#)
- 20.11.2025 [Every scientist should communicate](#)
- 15.12.2025 [Navigating EU Forest Objectives: ThinkForest event explores how to turn complexity into coherence](#)

Our reports and studies were also featured via other platforms (see Annex Table 4), in particular Policy Brief 13 on biodiversity credits.

4. Achievements in period 2021 – 2025

As the current Trust Fund period comes to an end, it's time to like to look back and summarise the main achievements over the past 5 years.

The 2021-2025 cycle occurred in a dynamic environment, including both the Covid and post-Covid periods. External circumstances shaped the impact of policy support work and how activities had to adjust across the 5-year period. Navigating the dynamic environment to better understand how to maintain and improve impact, led to adaptations in the knowledge produced and the ways to distribute it. Overall, this cycle has been successful, bringing a wide range of knowledge products to a continuously broadening audience in policymaking, academia and stakeholder networks, and in 2025 also younger non-scientific audiences. A variety of indicators and their trends show which aspects of policy support work have been most impactful and following upward curves, and which areas can require attention in the next Trust Fund cycle.

Across the 5-year period (see Figure 4.1.), **six major in-depth studies** were published with a wide range of topics covered, always with a European focus: Closer-to-Nature Forest Management, forest biodiversity, forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation, meeting the EUs Forest Strategy goals, sustainable finance and forest biodiversity criteria, and carbon farming in the forest sector. Their results found uptake in different ways in the policymaking process as well as in academia at broad.

Figure 4.1. Policy Support 2021-2025 in numbers

6	17	18	3,800	10,588
In-depth studies published	ThinkForest events hosted	Policy briefs published	participants in ThinkForest events*	Audience reached with ThinkForest recordings

*The trend in annual ThinkForest event participation is skewed by 2022, when the Sibiu ThinkForest opening speech was given by King Charles III, formerly The Prince of Wales. Average participant for the remaining years stands at ~584.

Seventeen high-level ThinkForest events (both online and in person) were organised. They continued to attract significant in-person and online audiences during the 2021-2025 cycle. The audience peak of 8,224 reached in 2022 coincided with the opening speech given by King Charles III, formerly The Prince of Wales, for the 'What science can tell us about Forest Biodiversity in Europe' event in Sibiu Romania. This unusually high attendance in 2022 was not matched in other years but based on the average live in-person and online participant count across the other years, we expect events to continue attracting over 500 participants annually, where online events typically reach higher number of participants than in-person ones. Such an average attendance level alone, speaks to the continuous high level of attention and interest the ThinkForest event series has established in comparison to other event series and considerably contributed to creating a strong brand image.

Post-event feedback has continued to stand out as overwhelmingly positive, highlighting exceeded expectations for such science-policy events. Such audience satisfaction provides validation for the extensive preparation for the events. This preparation has allowed for diverse, demographically and regionally balanced panellists, including European and national policymakers. It is both a challenge and

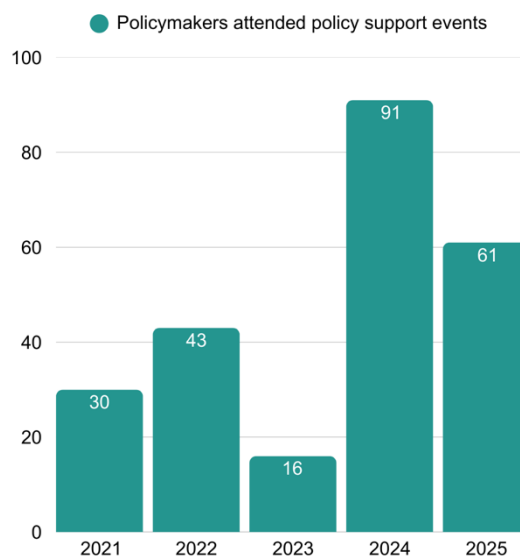
reward to maintain this level of audience satisfaction, but this is achievable with continued innovation of this event series in the coming five years.

In 2022, a new policy brief series was launched and by the end of 2025, 18 Policy Briefs have been published. They cover a large number of policy relevant topics: forest biodiversity, EU climate goals, governing forest ecosystem services, forest disturbances since 1950s, impact of wood-based textile fibres, impact of modern wooden buildings, forest soils and climate change mitigation, payment for ecosystem services, urban forests and health, carbon farming in forests, forest resilience and disturbance, biodiversity credits, EU soil monitoring law, women economic empowerment, forests and water, EU forest strategy uptake, and EU's forest policy objectives (1992-2024). These policy briefs were complemented in 2025 by a new “what is” series, providing concise explanations in 150 words on central forest-related concepts and topics of high relevance. Already in its first year, it has received over 1000 views highlighting promising interest as well as the need for such science-based information.

A total of 241 policymakers attended ThinkForest flagship events during the five-year period. The number of policymakers attending ThinkForest events is an important indicator of the impact of the policy support activities. The dialogue and interactions during in-person and online events mark direct connections between scientists and policymakers. These facilitate instances of not only one-way dissemination of scientific publications but more importantly, two-way dialogue with policymakers, scientists and other stakeholders. Much of the work to understand where demand for scientific knowledge lies, how this is best communicated with stakeholders, and how knowledge is transformed into evidence-based policymaking occurs during the dialogue enabled by policy support events. As such, holding and deepening of these events, with considerable effort put into maintaining the attention of policymakers, remains a prime focus for the next cycle.

Figure 4.2. Number of policymakers that attended policy support events during 2021-2025

241 Policymakers attended policy support events during 2021-2025



To further complement flagship ThinkForest event audiences, the Helsinki Forest Talks was launched in 2024. Since its first edition at the German embassy with the German and French ambassadors, a total of six events were held by the end of 2025. By bringing current forest policy topics to ambassadors and

high-level representatives, the new event format has extended the audience of EFI policy support work, further diversifying the dialogue at the science-policy interface.

Alongside the event audience reached, the digital performance of publications and number of citations, the increase in social media followers, and the continued demand for expert statements shows a growing demand and impact for policy support activities (Table 4.3) on scientific knowledge dissemination. Some older publications (e.g. FSTP 8 on bark beetles, FSTP7 substitution effects of wood-based products) continue to attract significant attention and are downloaded to this date.

The **number of publication downloads** recovered after its post-Covid decline, reaching an all-time high of 4,368 in 2025 compared to 3,887 in 2021 and 1972 in 2023. Similarly, DOI visits have remained steady throughout the cycle, reaching their peak in 2025. The growing number of scientific citations shows the continued demand for science-policy publications and their contributions to academic and political discourse. Maintaining and further strengthening EFI's policy support role in this arena remains an important priority. Translating the findings into more accessible formats that could feed into the number of stakeholder and policy document citations, which experienced a decline since 2021, is an important task to further pursue increased impact. *[Please note that only formal references were included in the analysis as documents that were distributed for instance at Forest Directors meetings are not necessarily available online.]*

Table 4.3. Policy Support impact 2021-2025

Impact for the 5-years Trust Fund period (2021-2025)	Value		
Publications: downloads and DOI visits		Total	2021-2025
	Downloads	24484	+10%
	DOI visits	60432	+247%
Website views	139,261 total views		
Citations in publications (scientific and policy)	1,432 scientific citations 127 stakeholder and policy document citations		
Expert statements and presentations	76		
Social media following (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)		Total 2025	2021-2025
	Social Media Followers	56,619*	+49%

*Please note that in 2024, the X (formally Twitter) account was discontinued, and an Instagram account was established.

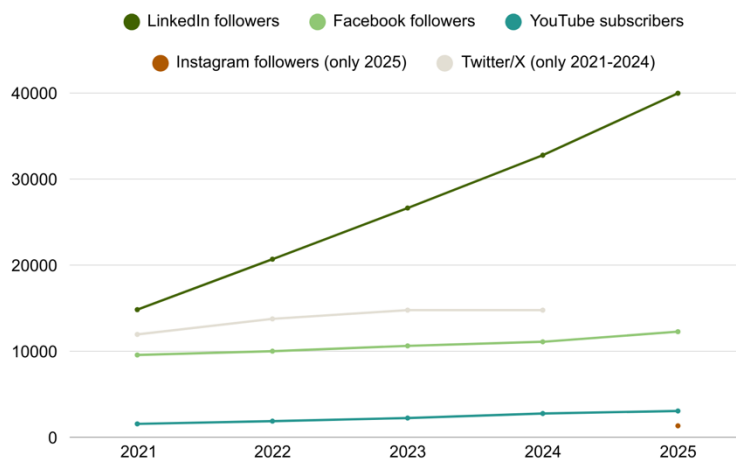
The **policy support websites** have attracted an exceptional number of views, with a total of 139,261 over five years. The steep positive trend is thanks to the '**Key questions on forests**' webpage. As the best performing page, it had a 135 percent increase in views between 2021 and 2025. This showcases how a scientific publication (K2A 4) can turn into a product with an afterlife that is consistently referred to in both policymaking processes and scientific publications. For instance, a publication led by authors from

the Joint Research Centre in Nature ¹ on the importance of securing the EU's forest carbon sink published in 2025 referred to the publication in its first sentence. This is an example of its relevance for and reference in the best scientific journals, which read by leading scientists that aim to disseminate knowledge and create impact at the highest political levels. National policymakers and their advisors, as well as media outlets aim to get access to trusted and scientifically sound knowledge. Nevertheless, journal articles typically use more complex scientific language which is time-consuming to understand and are often not accessible free of charge. The forest questions webpage aims to provide intermediary form of knowledge access. This may also become more important as AI large language models, nourished from publicly available knowledge, are being used by policy advisors, decisionmakers and citizens alike. Updating forest questions and including new ones relevant to political processes and addressing emerging topics, will remain an important task for policy support in the next 5-year cycle.

Dedicated policy support webpages show the opposite trend as compared to the key questions on forests webpage, with viewership falling by 33 percent throughout the cycle. This declining website audience together with the growing social media following, shows how audience is shifting from web-based information to social media platforms. The general trend is for people to first engage with EFI social media or an event registration page instead of directly visiting the EFI website. Disseminating knowledge across social media in innovative engaging formats thus remains a top priority to continue reaching diverse audiences online, including younger citizens.

Social media following has grown greatly across all channels (see Figure 4.3); LinkedIn is showing fastest growth and best performance to reach an all-time high of nearly 40,000 followers in 2025. With the termination of the X (formerly Twitter), the loss of followers from X has been supplemented with the 1,325 followers on the newly established Instagram account.

Figure 4.3 Social media follower trends by platform (2021-2025)



¹¹ Migliavacca, M., Grassi, G., Bastos, A. *et al.* Securing the forest carbon sink for the European Union's climate ambition. *Nature* 643, 1203–1213 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-08967-3>

These channels prove increasingly important for communication and dissemination of science-policy work to an extended audience – as seen from the reach of the new ‘What is series’. Additionally, recorded ThinkForest events are made available on EFIs YouTube channel, alongside shorter versions (i.e., YouTube shorts) being experimented with to match the growing demand for shorter content and highlights for specific insights into topics instead of watching the full event (which will continue being published as well). The continued diversely formatted and audience engaging dissemination on social media to keep audiences informed remains a priority for policy support.

Overall, policy support work has been impactful during the five-year cycle, with audience engagement indicating where demand for dialogue and scientific inputs lie. The different event formats including established and newer ones (e.g., ThinkForest Ask Scientist) and products financially supported by the Policy Support Trust Fund have been well-received, attracting high viewer and engagement rates. This speaks to the sustained demand for Policy Support work by EFI. Maintaining the high digital performance of scientific publications and continuing the publication and dissemination of new research in a variety of formats to a range of policy audiences, is key for the next cycle. This goes together with improving participant rates of flagship events, facilitating continuous science-policy dialogue with policymakers, experts and other stakeholders, and continuing to grow the digital and social media presence.

5. Reporting of expenses

5.1 Background

The general background principle for reporting of the funding and budgeting of the Trust Fund for 2025 is given here. Due to the time lag between the closing of the accounts, as of 12 January 2025 (time of writing this) the financial accounts for EFI 2025 have not yet been fully closed.

According to the Trust Fund rules however money can only be spent upon receipt. So, if contributions are received in November or December, they can in most cases only be spent the following year.

5.2 Expenditures by cost category

In 2025 the Trust Fund funded partial salaries of the Assistant Director for Policy Support managing the TF, the Communication Officer responsible for the administration and event organisation, the Administrative Officer responsible for administrative procedures (e.g. contracting) of Trust Fund SC, Head of Communications responsible for the Trust Fund communication, and Brussels Liaison Officer supporting the dissemination and increasing the impact of the Trust Fund work and networking in Brussels (all positions partly funded by Trust Fund). These salary costs were linked to the general management, planning, administration, communication, networking, and coordination of the Trust Fund work. All the other salaries paid from Trust Fund to EFI staff were related directly to specific policy support activities and Work Packages.

Besides the salaries, expenses related to the expenditure categories listed under the Trust Fund Guidelines (shown also in Chapter 1.2) were covered by the Trust Fund funding.

According to Trust Fund Guidelines, 13% is allocated to overheads (indirect costs). Compared to common practices, this is a low share. For example, in European Commission Horizon 2020 overheads is 25% for research and innovation projects. Indeed, in the Trust Fund case, the 13% overheads can be viewed to

cover the usage of EFI brand, some of the EFI staff costs (e.g., Director's work input, ad hoc and small administration work input), maintenance of administration software (e.g. budgeting software), office rent and office maintenance costs, etc. The staff costs related to the Trust Fund activities (e.g., coordination, management, administration, EFI lawyer costs related to subcontracting and country agreements, working for the publications and ThinkForest webinars) are reported under Trust Fund salaries, not overheads.

The expenses for 2025 are reported in the Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Expenses funded by MDTF, 1 January–31 December 2025*

Expenses	2025
Salaries & Social Security	260.431
Other Personnel Expenses	31.500
Rents & Leasing	-
Travel Expenses	17.256
Consumables	176
External Services and Subcontracts	10.169
Events & Meetings & PR	9.567
Other Expenses	323
Equipment and Software	-
Direct Expenses Total	329.421
Overheads (13%)	49.224
Expenses Total	378.645

**Provisional! EFI accounts for December 2025 have not been finalized by 12 January 2026.*

6. Conclusions

The year 2025 marked the fifth year of operation of the Trust Fund for the policy support cycle (2021–2025). Looking back, a successful five-year term came to an end, during which an impressive number of policy-relevant studies were produced, numerous ThinkForest events were organised, and high participation was achieved over the years, including strong engagement from policymakers. The work also resulted in citations in academic literature and policy documents, as well as increased attention on social media.

Alongside the ongoing rise in streams and downloads, the consistently high audience satisfaction with ThinkForest events and the frequent citations of policy-relevant studies in both academic and policy contexts clearly demonstrate the enduring relevance of, and interest in, interdisciplinary forest-related science that meets policy-makers' needs. They also reaffirm the importance of maintaining a strong European-level platform that fosters meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange between scientists and decision-makers, going beyond mere knowledge dissemination.

In 2025, new communication formats were introduced to strengthen interactions at the science–policy interface. These include innovative products designed both to reach wider audiences and to provide more targeted support for policy-makers and researchers, such as the *What Is* series. Continued efforts were also made to expand the *Key Questions on Forests* series to make knowledge easily accessible on a trusted webpage.

Furthermore, engagement with Trust Fund member countries was intensified during 2025. Through both bilateral consultations and joint meetings, these discussions helped to clarify national priorities and ensure that future activities continue to align with the needs and expectations of participating countries. Efforts to broaden the participation of additional countries progressed steadily throughout 2025 and will remain a central objective in 2026.

Annexes

Table 2: Online statistics

Table 3: Number of ThinkForest participants according to background

Table 4: Stakeholder follow-up articles related to events and publications

Table 5: Media coverage

Table 6: Publication citations

Table 2: Online statistics

Publication statistics

The electronic copies of these studies again proved very popular. Included in the table below are details of downloads of all major Trust Fund publications produced to date (2015 onwards) from the EFI website. This is of course a snapshot of one segment of usage, as the publications are also available in e.g., ResearchGate, authors' institutional repositories, organisations' own libraries etc.

Limited copies of policy briefs were printed in 2025 for use at events in Brussels.

*Electronic copies downloaded: Google analytics tracks the numbers of visitors who go to a page on the EFI website, and then download the publication. These numbers do not include direct downloads from the EFI website server, downloads from ResearchGate, authors' institutional repositories, organisations' own libraries etc.

DOI resolutions: shows the number of people who have clicked on the DOI address for a publication, such as <https://doi.org/10.36333/fs11>

Title	Publication date	No of electronic copies downloaded 2025*	DOI resolutions 2025	Lifetime copies downloaded
PB18 (Forest policy)	Dec 2025	53	n/a	53
PB17 (EU Forest Strategy)	Dec 2025	109	n/a	109
PB16 (Water)	Nov 2025	251	n/a	251
PB15 (Women)	Oct 2025	73	n/a	73
PB14 (Soil monitoring law)	Jul 2025	263	903	263
PB13 (Biodiversity credits)	Aug 2025	309	577	309
PB12 (Forest resilience)	Jul 2025	177	567	177
FSTP17 (Carbon farming)	Oct 2024	432	1738	1256
FSTP16 (Sustainable finance)	May 2024	93	349	967
PB11 (Prestoration)	Dec 2024	278	751	474
PB10 (Carbon farming) (EN, IT)	Nov 2024	93	564	176
PB9 (Health & urban forests) (EN, IT)	Jul 2024	113	314	414
PB8 (Ecosystem services)	May 2024	143	363	556

FSTP15 (EU forest strategy goals)	Sept 2023	152	512	855
PB7 (Soils)	May 2023	102	243	586
PB6 (Wood buildings)	Apr 2023	6	32	204
PB5 (Wood-based textiles)	Apr 2023	12	45	124
PB4 (Forest disturbances)	Mar 2023	65	321	374
K2A06 (Wood-based textiles & modern wood buildings)	Jan 2023	53	328	710
PB3 (Forest ecosystem services)	Jan 2023	41	147	452
PB2 (Forests and wood use to reach climate goals), (EN, ES, DE, FR, IT)	Sept 2022	29	105	890
FSTP14 (Climate change mitigation potential)	Sept 2022	205	922	2024
PB1 (Forest biodiversity in Europe) (EN, ES, DE, FR, IT)	Aug 2022	43	261	894
FSTP13 (Forest biodiversity in Europe)	May 2022	217	901	2689
K2A04 (Forest questions)	Mar 2021	141	310	3071
FSTP11 (China-Europe bioeconomy)	Dec 2020	12	181	436
K2A03 (Public perception)	Oct 2020	80	422	937
FSTP10 (Forest governance)	April 2020	51	526	1,063
FSTP9 (Plantation forests)	Dec 2019	39	575	955
FSTP8 (Bark beetles) (EN, CZ)	Apr 2019	119	698	5,902
FSTP7 (Substitution effects of wood-based products)	Nov 2018	160	1011	5,716
FSTP6 (Climate-Smart Forestry)	Mar 2018	124	344	4,367
WSCTU8 (Forest-based bioeconomy), plus Summary	Dec 2017	44	n/a	8,853
FSTP5 (Circular bioeconomy) (EN, CN, RU)	Oct 2017	24	406	7,612

FSTP5 Summaries (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, CN, RU)	Nov 2017- Apr 18	3	n/a	4,070
WSCTU7 (Natura 2000) plus Summary	Sept 2017	41	n/a	4,441
FSTP 4 (Forest bioeconomy indicators)	Nov 2016	25	228	8,491
FSTP 3 (Forest biomass, carbon neutrality)	Oct 2016	36	396	17,640
FSTP 2 (A new role for forests)	Dec 2015	35	229	11,972
FSTP 1 (EUTR-FLEGT)	Apr 2015	22	87	8,914

Policy support mailings and event invitations

Two policy support-related mailings were sent in 2025, relating to events.

Mailings	Number of subscribers	% open	Click on links in message
EFI Policy Support Highlights: Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives, 10.12.2025	1,182	31.3%	6.1%
EFI Policy Support Highlights: Upcoming webinar on nature restoration, 04.11.2025	1,208	34.3%	7.3%

Social media channels

In early 2025, due to the decline in engagement and increasing instability and politicisation of the platform, the decision was taken to archive the EFI X (formerly Twitter account).

Increasing use was made of the EFI Linked In channel (39,975 followers) which has seen an enormous increase in engagement as X has declined, and Instagram channel (1,324 followers).

Videos

Three policy support videos were published on the EFI YouTube channel in 2025:

Video	Published	Recording views 2025
ThinkForest Webinar - Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives	19.12.2025	43
ThinkForest Webinar - From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans	04.11.2025	235

ThinkForest Ask a Scientist - Carbon Farming in European Forests	07.04.2025	304
--	------------	-----

Website

Web pages	Page views 2024	Page views 2025	Unique visitors 2024	Unique visitors 2025
Policy support main landing page (policysupport/)	1,269	1,285	911	842
Our work (policysupport/ourwork)	215	233	136	141
ThinkForest (policysupport/thinkforest/) plus subpages	4,399	3,693	2,917	2,121

Both page views and unique visitor numbers for the general policy support and ThinkForest pages tend to depend on activities during the year (ie showing peaks when publications are published, or in the run-up to events). The general trend is still for people to first engage on social media or the event registration page, rather than on the EFI website.

In 2021, a dedicated sub-site was made available on the EFI website for materials from the *Key questions on forests in the EU* report. This has been further expanded with additional questions from 2022 onwards.

In 2025, a dedicated page was created on the EFI website for the What is? Series. 15 ‘What is’ topics were published in 2025.

Web pages	Page views 2025	Page views 2024	Page views 2023	Page views 2022
Forest questions (/forest questions) plus subpages	24,636	24,854	23,075	19,978
What is (https://efi.int/what-is)	1,046			

Table 3 Number of ThinkForest and other participants according to background

Table 3.1 Ask a Scientist Webinar: Carbon Farming in European Forests

Participant background (registered participants*)	Ask a Scientist Webinar: Carbon Farming in European Forests
European Parliament	2
European Commission	2
Council of the EU	-
Ministry/ embassy	10
Forest industry	24
Forest owner	14
NGO	32
Research/ university	102
Other (<i>e.g. international org. incl. EFI</i>)	EFI 4 Other 50
Media	2
TOTAL	242*

*242 participants registered to the webinar.

Table 3.2 ThinkForest Webinar - From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans

Participant background (registered participants*)	ThinkForest Webinar - From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans
European Parliament	-
European Commission	14
Council of the EU	-
Embassy or Permanent Representation	1
Ministries	18
Forest industry	25
Forest owner	18

NGO	58
Research/ University	164
Other (<i>e.g. international org. incl. EFI</i>)	EFI 4 Other 103
Media	7
TOTAL	412*

*412 participants registered to the webinar.

Table 3.3 ThinkForest event - Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives

Participant background (signed up participants*)	ThinkForest event - Navigating through the EU forest-related objectives
European Parliament	-
European Commission	4
Council of the EU	-
Embassy or Permanent Representation	3
Ministries	7
Forest industry	5
Forest owner	10
NGO	6
Research/ University	11
Other (<i>e.g. international org. incl. EFI</i>)	EFI 3 Other 16
Media	1
TOTAL	66*

*66 participants who registered the in-person event.

Table 4: Follow-up articles by stakeholders related to events and publications

Webinar: Ask a Scientist: Carbon Farming in European Forests		
Publisher / Stakeholder	Specified, article name	Link
CarbonLocked Technologies Inc	LinkedIn post	https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7322219301728403456/
Oeko Institute	Oeko News, April 2025	https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ki-biomasse-und-suffizienz-oeko-institut-e-v-xulaf/

Webinar: From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans		
Publisher / Stakeholder	Specified, article name	Link
Superb project	From Nature Restoration to National Restoration Plans	https://forest-restoration.eu/from-nature-restoration-to-national-restoration-plans/

Policy brief 13: Biodiversity credits		
Publisher / Stakeholder	Specified, article name	Link
We mean Business Coalition	Biodiversity credits: How to ensure their integrity and impact?	https://www.wemeanbusinesscoalition.org/blog/resource-hub/biodiversity-credits-how-to-ensure-their-integrity-and-impact/
The Nature Fund	LinkedIn post	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/the-nature-fund_new-policy-brief-addresses-the-integrity-activity-7362028907044270080-Omg-/

Table 5: Media coverage related to events and publications

Biodiversity credits policy brief		
Article	Publication	Link
Carbon Pulse	Nature & Biodiversity Pulse Newsletter: Tuesday August 12, 2025	https://carbon-pulse.com/424708/
AgroEmpresario	European Landowners Keen on Carbon Credits, But Upfront Costs Remain a Major Barrier	https://agroempresario.com/publicacion/106558/european-landowners-keen-on-carbon-credits-but-upfront-costs-remain-a-major-barrier/?cat=10006515
Carbon Farming FSTP		
AFN	Planting more forests comes with 'high upfront costs' many landowners can't afford: report, 8.04.2025	https://agfundernews.com/planting-more-forests-comes-with-high-upfront-costs-many-landowners-cant-afford-report
Forest questions		
Article	Publication	Link
Naturschutz und Landschaftsplanung	Forests caught between climate protection and resource provision, 29.04.2025	https://www.nul-online.de/themen/landschafts-und-umweltplanung/article-8146179-201982/forests-caught-between-climate-protection-and-resource-provision-.html

Table 6 Publication citations

Table 6

Publication citations

From Science to Policy 1: Assessment of the EU Timber Regulation and FLEGT Action Plan Published 21 April 2015 https://doi.org/10.36333/fs01		
Citations 2025 3 citations in academic journals in 2025, in Forest Policy and Economics, and Food Security Full citation list: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&cites=9273104922775484429&scipsc=		
Policymakers since publication		
European Parliament. Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies. November 2021	Internal and external dimension of illegal logging: legal issues and solutions	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/700009/IPOL_STUD(2021)700009_EN.pdf
European Environment Agency Report No 5/2016 (Published 29.04.2016)	European forest ecosystems - State and trends	http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-forest-ecosystems
UNECE (Published 10.11.2015)	Forest Products Annual Market Review 2014-2015	https://issuu.com/unpublications/docs/9789210575607/41

From Science to Policy 2: A new role for forests and the forest sector in the EU post-2020 climate targets

Published 1 December 2015

<https://doi.org/10.36333/fs02>

Citations 2025

10 citations in academic journals in 2025. Journals included Forests, Land and Journal of Environmental Management.

Full citation list:
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&cites=6450676439301988647&scipsc=

Polymakers since publication

Weber-Blaschke G., et al (2025). Stellungnahme des Wissenschaftlichen Beirates für Waldpolitik (Hrsg.), Berlin	Die Ermittlung der Klimaschutzleistung von Wald und Holznutzung: Orientierungshilfe in einer kontroversen Debatte	https://www.nw-fva.de/fileadmin/nw-fva/publikationen/pdf/weber-blaschke_2025_die_ermittlung_der_klimaschutzleistung_von_wald_und.pdf
Grafton, R., et al. (2021). OECD Environment Working Papers, No. 185, OECD Publishing, Paris	A global analysis of the cost-efficiency of forest carbon sequestration	https://doi.org/10.1787/e4d45973-en
European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) policy report 32, April 2017	Multi-functionality and sustainability in the European Union's forests	http://www.easac.eu/fileadmin/PDF_s/reports/statements/Forests/EASAC_Forests_web_complete.pdf
Gert-Jan Nabuurs, Alterra "Contribution of Forests to Climate Change Mitigation", EUSTAFOR/EP Intergroup seminar, European Parliament 24.01.2017	"Forests & Climate: The impact of forests and forestry on the EU Climate and Energy policy"	http://ebcd.org/event/forests-climate-impact-forests-forestry-eu-climate-energy-policy
Staatsbosbeheer, Netherlands (Published 10.2016)	Actieplan bos en hout	https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/~media/09-nieuws/actieplan_bos_en_hout.pdf?la=nl-nl
Marcus Lindner, EFI "Landwirtschaft und Umwelt": Wege für mehr Klimaschutz, BMEL, Berlin. 13.12.2016		http://www.bmel.de/DE/Landwirtschaft/Nachhaltige-Landnutzung/Klimawandel/Texte/FachtagungKlimaschutzgutachten.html
Paul Brannen, MEP	Submission to the 2016 House of Commons Inquiry	http://www.northeastlabour.eu/sites/default/files/attach

UK Parliament (17.10.2016)	“Forestry in England”	hments/Forestry%20in%20England%20-%20inquiry%20submission%20Paul%20Branen%20MEP.docx
Rupert Oliver, Forest Industries Intelligence 74th session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, Geneva 18-.10.2016	Cited in: Overview of European wood market	https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/meetings/20161018/coffi74-item3a1-01-oliver.pdf
Gert-Jan Nabuurs, Alterra UNECE, Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, Geneva 24.03.2016	Post Paris: the role of Research	http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41852#/

From Science to Policy 10: European forest governance post-2020 Published 29 April 2020		
Citations 2025 16 citations in academic journals and books in 2025, including Land Use Policy, and Sustainability Science.		
Full citation list: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&cites=10880911266287005965&scipsc=		
Policymakers since publication		
Jonsson, Ragnar; Robert, Nicolas; Grassi, Giacomo et al. Joint Research Centre (European Commission).	The use of woody biomass for energy production in the EU	https://doi.org/10.2760/831621

From Science to Policy 14: Forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation in Europe Published 20 September 2022		
Citations 2025 30 citations in academic journals and reports in 2025, including Nature.		
Full citation list: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cites=6681286588585431114&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&hl=en		

Policymakers since publication		
Bauhus J., et al. Stellungnahme des Wissenschaftlichen Beirates für Waldpolitik (Hrsg.).	Einordnung wichtiger Ergebnisse der Bundeswaldinventur 2022 in Bezug auf waldpolitische Handlungsfelder.	https://buel.bmel.de/index.php/buel/article/view/540/764
Commission de l'économie du développement durable (CEDD)	Rapport particulier sur l'adaptation au changement climatique Février 2024	https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/CEDD_Rapport_adaptation.pdf
„Capacity building courses for climate change adaptation of the forestry sector in the Republic of Moldova”	Contract 68/23PRR/11.09.2023 implementat de ONF International, în cadrul Proiectului de Reziliență Rurală (IFAD VII), implementat de Unitatea Consolidată pentru Implementarea Programelor IFAD (UCIP IFAD)	https://www.ucipifad.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Manual-pentru-personalul-silvic.pdf

What Science Can Tell Us 7: Natura 2000 and forests: Assessing the state of implementation and effectiveness Published 27 September 2017		
Citations 2025 6 citations in academic journals and reports in 2025, including Land Use Policy.		
Full citation list: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&cites=12747159662510476992&scipsc=		
Policymakers since publication		
European Commission, 2021	Science for Environment Policy Future Brief 25: European Forests for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation	https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/issue-25-2021-11-european-forests-for-biodiversity-climate-change-mitigation-and-adaptation.pdf

What Science Can Tell Us 8: Towards a sustainable European forest-based bioeconomy – assessment and the way forward

Published 20 December 2017

Citations 2025

9 citations in academic journals and reports in 2025, including Futures & Foresight.

Full citation list:
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?oi=bibs&hl=en&cites=9816515102311536785&as_sdt=5

Polymakers since publication

FAO and UNECE. ECE/TIM/SP/49 Forestry and Timber Section, Geneva, Switzerland	Circularity concepts in forest-based industries. GENEVA TIMBER AND FOREST STUDY PAPER 49	https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Circularity%20concepts%20in%20forest-based%20industries%20ECE_TIM_SP_49.pdf
European Commission, 2021	Science for Environment Policy Future Brief 25: European Forests for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation	https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/issue-25-2021-11-european-forests-for-biodiversity-climate-change-mitigation-and-adaptation.pdf
International Labour Organization	Promoting decent work and safety and health in forestry. Report for discussion at the Sectoral Meeting on Promoting Decent Work and Safety and Health in Forestry (Geneva, 6–10 May 2019)	https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/meeting_document/wcms_679806.pdf
European Commission, October 2018	A sustainable bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment. Updated Bioeconomy Strategy.	https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec_bioeconomy_strategy_2018.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none

Knowledge to Action 03: Public perceptions of forestry and the forest-based bioeconomy in the European Union

Published 27 October 2020

Citations 2025

7 citations in academic journals and reports in 2025, including Nature and Forest Policy and Economics.

Full	citation	list:
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&cites=1381477372690753881&scipsc=		
Policymakers since publication		
Giuseppe Cardellini (VITO), Joren Mijnenonckx (VITO). ETC CM Report 2022/01, EEA	Synergies, energy efficiency and circularity in the renovation wave Bio-based products for the renovation wave	https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6530825

Knowledge to Action 04: Key questions on forests in the EU Published March 2021		
Citations 2025 4 citations in academic journals and reports in 2025, including Nature.		
Full	citation	list:
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cites=7736902567898264786&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&hl=en		
Policymakers since publication		
IPCC (Bednar-Friedl, B., R. Biesbroek, D.N. Schmidt et al.)	Europe. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter13.pdf
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland	Working Towards Ireland's Shared Vision for Forestry and a New Forest Strategy, Supporting Document	https://assets.gov.ie/219112/f734d9b3-9521-4608-9b34-f69846f14244.pdf
Swiss Federal Council / Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft	Adaptation de la forêt aux changements climatiques Rapport du Conseil fédéral donnant suite à la motion 19.4177 Engler (Hêche) du 25 septembre 2019 et au postulat 20.3750 Vara du 18 juin 2020	https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/74213.pdf
Swiss Federal Council / Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft	Anpassung des Waldes an den Klimawandel. Bericht des Bundesrats in Erfüllung der Motion 19.4177 Engler (Hêche) vom 25.09.2019 und des	https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/74194.pdf

	Postulates 20.3750 Vara vom 18.06.2020	
Estonian Ministry of the Environment, 2021	Metsanduse arengukava 2030 Metsakasutuse kujunemine	https://envir.ee/media/4901/download
OSKA Coordination Council, Tallinn, 2021	OSKA TRENDIKAARDID: TÖÖJÕU- JA OSKUSTE VAJADUST MÕJUTAVAD TULEVIKUTRENDID 2030 LÜHIÜLEVAADE (Trend Maps: Future trends affecting labor and skill needs 2030)	https://oska.kutsekoda.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/OSKA-trendikaardid_Lyhiulevaade.pdf
Grassi, G., Fiorese, G., Pilli, R., et al. European Commission, 2021, JRC124374. Sanchez Lopez, J., Jasinevičius, G. and Avraamides, M. editor(s)	Brief on the role of the forest- based bioeconomy in mitigating climate change through carbon storage and material substitution	https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC124374/brief_on_role_of_forest-based_bioeconomy_in_mitigating_cc_online.pdf
Anke Herold, Hannes Böttcher, Sabine Gores, et al. Öko-Institut	2030 Climate Target: Review of LULUCF Regulation Background paper for the workshop of the ENVI Committee on 25/05/2021	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/233827/Background_paper_LULUCF_Regulation_2030_Climate_target.pdf
Petajoule podcast, 21.05.2021 Austrian Energy Agency	S03E05 Energie aus dem Wald: Auslaufmodell oder wichtiger Baustein der Klimaneutralität?	https://petajoule.podigee.io/32-energie-aus-dem-wald
EIP Agri Newsletter	Edition 96 November 2021	https://mailchi.mp/eip-agri/newsletter-on-agriculture-innovation-edition-96-nov2021?e=bfec7bb85a
Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia, Pesca i Alimentació, Generalitat de Catalunya	Newsletter, ND0259/2021 Abril 2021	http://agricultura.gencat.cat/ca/departament/estadistiques/publicacions/butlletins/novetats-documentals/nd-0259-2021/

Knowledge to Action 06: Wood-based textiles & modern wood buildings

Published 31 January 2023

Citations 2025

No citations in 2025.

Full citation list: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%22Wood-based+textiles+%26+modern+wood+buildings%22&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5



This Report has been compiled by Helga Pülzl (Assistant Director), Rach Colling (Head of Communications), Aino Huiskonen (Junior Researcher) and Shanqing Gao (Communications Officer), EFI