

Summary of Round Table Discussions

Challenge 1: Managing Impacts related to Climate Change

Short description of the Challenge

Climate change will alter, with regional differences, the growing conditions of forests in Europe. Consequently, forest management has to adapt to these changes to sustain the productive capacities of forests as well as the generation of other ecosystem services, including contributions to climate change mitigation. Harnessing in the best way the potential benefits of climate change impacts, and minimizing the risks related to them, will need innovation in management approaches, silvicultural concepts and decision-support tools, specifically supporting forest owners and managers.

From the actions to manage this innovation challenge presented in Session 3, the following 4 were selected by the workshop participants for the Table Discussion:

- Action 5: Transfer and innovation
- Action 4: Towards new silvicultural techniques
- Action 1: Following up the impacts
- Action 2: Diagnosis of forests

Main statements during the Table Discussion

- There still is a lack of knowledge and data on the climate change impacts on forest supply chains at European level. There are severe concerns in some regions about water scarcity and desertification, and effective management approaches to sustain or improve the role of forests as carbon sink.
- The development of common indicators on climate change effects is of strategic importance. A network of observatories on impacts of climate change and on health problems is needed to improve the understanding of forest ecosystems and to develop effective indicators.
- An analysis is needed on which kind of forest we want in the future to enable a common understanding on tree species to be maintained or replaced. Adaptive and close to nature forest management methods to maintain forest coverage under changing climate conditions have to be developed, also using experimental plots covering different forest types and silvicultural techniques.
- Transfer of research results into practice is a main problem. One reason is the difficulty to approach the very diverse group of forest owners, to get them involved and to improve cooperation among them. An exchange platform/thematic network would help in disseminating research results and in collecting information and examples from practice. This should be a permanent network that is not terminated after the project for its establishment has ended.
- Collaboration and share of data between regions and countries are needed to find adequate silvicultural techniques to improve resilience of forests to climate change impact. Analysis of scenario-specie-risk relations in each region would lead to advice on adaptation in forest management and would create specialized itineraries to prevent fire risks in the Mediterranean regions.

Activities in Regions/Member States

- In France and Germany, mobile applications and web tools are developed to support diagnosing of climate change impacts in the field for a concrete forest stand.
- A training programme in Switzerland and the Aforce network in France foster transfer of good practices and innovative tools for adapting forest management to climate change impacts.
- A voluntary carbon market scheme in Veneto (Italy) supports activities of forest owners for climate change mitigation.

Key messages for EU Policy Making

- Despite the specificities of each region and country, there are common challenges and needs to handle climate change impact on forests. More effective collaboration and exchange of information between the different forest related stakeholders at European level is needed.
- A shared platform for tools, vulnerability maps, integrating different data sources (incl. remote sensing) and historical series, and a better coordination of research agendas at European level would facilitate better diagnosing of the climate change effects on forests.
- Listen to those who are working in the forests (forest owners) as they understand what is happening in their woods.