

Summary of Round Table Discussions**Challenge 7: Improving Sustainable Forest Management Approaches and Tools****Short description of the Challenge**

Today, management of forests faces two important challenges: (1) changing natural production conditions due to climate change and increasingly diverse forest stand characteristics; (2) growing and changing profile of multiple, sometimes conflicting demands from owners, industry and society. Innovative management approaches and tools are needed to handle the growing diversity of ecosystem conditions and of socioeconomic requirements. In sustainable forest management, the integration of provision of various ecosystem services and secured qualitative and quantitative supply of raw material, as well as the solid assessment of trade-offs between various management goals have to be strengthened. For this, forest owners and managers need balanced spatial segregative and integrative strategies and improved decision-support tools.

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 8: How to reduce supplies' fragmentation and lack of coordination: management and marketing services to forest owners
- Action 3: Developing decision-support tools and management solutions for a balanced integration of the provision of ecosystem services
- Action 4: Up-to-date information on market development (biomass), logistic, impacts of policies
- Action 2: Integrating solutions for disturbances in forest management. Including the economic losses in forest models

Main statements during the Table Discussion

- The situation in the Regions is characterised by many similarities, but also great differences.
- Small, fragmented holdings are a challenge for forest management. In some regions there is only low interest to engage in forest owners associations.
- Lacking education, knowledge and training lead to lacking interest in management. Information sharing by forest owners would mitigate fragmentation. Better instruments and information to reach forest owners are needed.
- More complete and up-to-date information on markets is missing. Information from industry and forest clusters should be shared better.
- Decision support tools have to be designed according to the needs of forest owners that are different from the needs of governmental organizations. Methodologies should be shared between countries.
- The demographic development (aging forest owners) and urbanization (owners live far away from their forest) poses a growing problem.
- In some regions there are insufficiently marked borders of property and a lack of infrastructure to access forest areas.
- In some regions there is no demand for regional products or no competition. Owners could cooperate with industry to develop new models of contracts, because for example biomass markets can change really rapidly. Public-Private-Partnerships could be useful.
- In forest risk management there is technical expertise (biology, technology), but economical models on forest damages combine economic and social impacts are still missing. There is a need for integrated risk management tools which take into account several threats to forests (climate change, forest fires, pests etc.) also in economic views.

Activities in Regions/Member States

- In Veneto (Italy), the state is taking over management on abandoned land.
- In Finland, a "Common Forestry" approach is used. Private forest owners get together and form a voluntary cooperative jointly managing forest land.

Key messages for EU Policy Making

- Land consolidation would mitigate the negative impacts of fragmentation.
- Actions are needed to change the motivation and mind-set of those forest owners that currently are not engaging in active forest management. EU-wide information sharing to forest owners on best practices would help.
- Promotion and support of forest owners cooperation is important. Rural Development Programmes would offer effective support if forest measures are properly integrated.
- Together with actions to increase the use of wood, also promotion of the more supply of wood and biomass from the forests is required.
- Bioenergy policies have to be long term policies to avoid market disturbances.