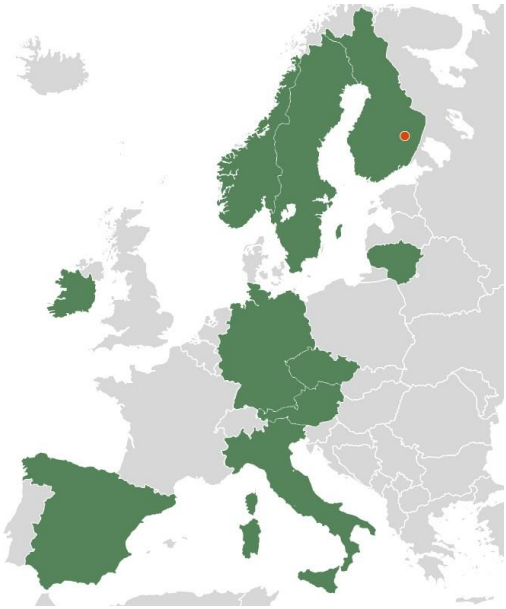
EFI Multi Donor Trust Fund for Policy Support: Annual Report 2019

20 January 2020



EFI MDTF for Policy Support countries marked by green color. These countries (excl. Norway) represent 72% of the EU forest area, and 60 % of the European forest area (excl. Russia)

EFI ThinkForest seminar, Prague, 4 April 2019 (Photo: Ondrej Hajek)

EFI

Executive Summary

What is this document?

This document is the Annual Report of the **EFI Multi Donor Trust Fund for Policy Support Facility** (hereafter MDTF) for 2019. It presents the activities, outputs, impacts and budget of the MDTF for 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. Year 2019 was the second year of the new 3-year cycle of MDTF (2018-2020). The Annual Report aims to provide transparent information, which can also be used to assess and evaluate the performance and impact of the MDTF work.

Facility management

EFI Assistant Director Lauri Hetemäki coordinated MDTF project activities in 2019, with important support from Communications Officer Ulla Vänttinen, Head of Communications Rach Colling, Administrative Officer Jarkko Haltia and Brussels Liaison Officer Harald Mauser. The ThinkForest Forum has been chaired by its President, Göran Persson, until June 2019 and from there onwards by the new President Janez Potočnik. In addition, other EFI staff resources and outside subcontracting have been used to carry out the activities during 2019.

Facility funding and costs in 2019

In 2019, the MDTF consisted of the following 10 Donor countries: *Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and Sweden*. The total financial contribution from the countries to the MDTF by the end of 2019 was **703 315** euros. The total amount of expenses in 2019 is estimated to have been **595 000 euros**. *It should be noted that when writing this on 20 January, the EFI accounts for 2019 had not yet been finalized.*

Summary of activities

The highlights of activities and outputs from 2019 include:

In 2019, two *From Science to Policy* (FSTP) studies were published: "Living with bark beetles: impacts, outlook and management options" and "Plantation forests in Europe: challenges and opportunities". In addition, the previously published FSTP 5 "Leading the way to a European circular bioeconomy strategy" was published in Chinese and Russian (print and online). Four online newsletters, *Science Supporting Policy-making* were distributed to the EFI network (approx. 945 recipients by the end of 2019).

ThinkForest events are the flagship science-policy events organized by MDTF, and there were two such events in 2019: 1. *"How to respond to forest disturbances in Europe",* held in *Prague*, 4 April 2019; and

2. “The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe”, held at the International Press Center, Brussels, 17 December 2019. In addition, MDTF organised a seminar on “China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy” together with the Embassy of Finland in Beijing on 14 November 2019.

Summary of impacts

Publications were widely distributed both in printed and digital forms. 600 copies of each *From Science to Policy study* were printed, and these were distributed at ThinkForest events, to policy makers and stakeholders in Brussels via EFI’s Brussels Liaison Office, and sent to EFI’s network. The electronic copies of both newly published and back catalogue publications again proved popular.

MDTF-funded publications have become increasingly cited in both academic journals and by policy makers (see Appendix). Publications about the bioeconomy (for example FSTP5 Leading the way to a European circular bioeconomy strategy and *What Science Can Tell Us 8* Towards a sustainable European forest-based bioeconomy – assessment and the way forward) were strongly cited in 2019, with 24 and 19 academic citations respectively. Policy citations included UNECE and the International Labour Organization.

To ensure maximum impact and findability, in 2019 all *From Science to Policy* studies were 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 will help a reader easily locate a document.

ThinkForest event participation: In total, 201 people took part in ThinkForest events in Prague in April and Brussels in December in 2019 (132 and 69 participants, respectively). In addition, the two ThinkForest seminars were watched by video/web streaming by 1 655 persons by the end of 2019 (1 388 and 267, respectively). The web streaming/video has turned out to be a necessary channel to reach a wider audience, although it may at the same time reduce the number of participants physically present in the seminar. In terms of background, four major participant groups were: the research community, national government (ministries), forest industry and other stakeholder groups.

MDTF also organised a seminar on “China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy” together with the Embassy of Finland in Beijing on 14 November 2019. The event was well received, and was attended by 49. Participants included Peng Youdong, Vice-Minister of the National Forestry and Grasslands Administration and the Ambassadors from Finland and Germany, and Deputy Ambassador from Slovenia.

Media impact: MDTF Policy Support work was again actively promoted in “traditional” and social media in 2019. Media published 21 articles related to ThinkForest seminars, 5 related to publications, and 3 relating to the China-Europe event. The different stakeholder groups published in total 13 follow-up articles in their forums relating to events.

In 2019, MDTF supported EFI’s Lookout Station to organise a Sound Reporting Co-Lab, a 6-month media support programme for journalists. This included a successful media bootcamp in the Bialowieza Forest in Poland in July 2019, which focused on the issue of bark beetles. The journalists’ outputs are expected during 2020.

During 2019, MDTF-funded policy support work was promoted via social media, taking advantage of EFI's existing channels to reach a geographically widespread audience. Effort focused on Twitter, which is used professionally by the policy maker audience. For example, Twitter was used at each of the ThinkForest events, to encourage interaction and dialogue with participants, both those in the room and those watching via the livestream. During 2019, there were 1,629 tweets from the main EFI Twitter account, which gained over 1,420 new followers. The messages were also amplified by EFI's other Twitter accounts (eg @efiresilience, @efimed, @efiplant).

Expert presentations, hearings and statements: Many requests for presentations or expert statements in policy or science-policy forums based on the publications and ThinkForest events indicated the usefulness of the MDTF events and publications. Based on the *From the Science to Policy* –series studies, the authors of the studies and Chief-Editor provided 32 presentations and expert statements in 2019 at various science-policy and at other forums.

Feedback from the network: The publications and ThinkForest events have been tackling topical policy issues and have been considered timely. In particular, participants have appreciated that issues high on the political agenda have been brought to the discussion, and needed science-based information has been provided by the studies and ThinkForest seminars. ThinkForest events have been highly valued by various Commission officials (e.g. Commissioners, senior EC officials, Joint Research Centre officials), national government civil servants, EFI Associate Member representatives, and forest-based sector stakeholders. A half-day 'China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy' event was also well-reserved by national government civil servants, industry and other stakeholder groups.

Contents

Annex: Tables

1. Introduction and background

1.1 EFI Multi Donor Trust Fund for Policy Support

The objective of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) is to support the operationalization of the activities of the EFI Policy Support Facility. The Trust Fund completed its first 3-year period at the end of 2017, and started a new 3-year period on 1 January 2018.

The Steering Committee is the highest decision-making body of MDTF. The Steering Committee approves the MDTF work programme and related budget. The main aims and responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to provide *strategic guidance and advice* on the operations of FPS. It receives information from the EFI secretariat and gives feedback regarding the outputs, outcomes and impacts resulting from the activities of MDTF policy support work. The Steering Committee does not take part in the operation and management of the MDTF 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 donor and the Director of EFI or his authorized representative. The Chair of the EFI Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), or a designated SAB member, took part in the meetings as an observer. The membership of a donor 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 2019, the MDTF Steering Committee members were:

1. Harald Aalde, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Norway (Silje Trollstøl in spring 2019)
2. Zbignev Glazko, Ministry of Environment, Lithuania
3. Thomas Haußmann, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany
4. José Manuel Jaquotot, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment, Spain
5. Tomas Krejzar, Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic
6. Fergus Moore, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland (Noel O'Connor in spring 2019)
7. Marc Palahí, EFI
8. Enrico Pompei, Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali, Italy
9. Georg Rappold, Federal Ministry on Sustainability and Tourism, Austria
10. Jan Svensson, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Sweden (Ingeborg Bromée in spring 2019)
11. Tatu Torniainen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland

The MDTF 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 MDTF science-policy publications (*From Science to Policy* reports and *What Science Can Tell Us* reports) and ThinkForest forum high-level science-policy seminars. The ThinkForest forum events are usually chaired by its President. During January 2015 to June 2019, the President was Göran Persson (Prime Minister of Sweden 1996-2006); and from July 2019 onwards Janez Potočnik, the former EU Commissioner for both Science and Research, and Environment. The President's role has also been important in representing ThinkForest and EFI policy support work in different platforms (e.g., international conferences, videos), providing important networks and access to high-level policy makers, inviting speakers to the ThinkForest seminars, and providing strategic advice for EFI management in science-policy support work.

ThinkForest President Janez Potočnik chairing the seminar on the Future of Plantation Forests in Europe, 17 December, Brussels (Photo: Simon Pugh)

1.2 MDTF funding and management

Funding: The members of the MDTF in 2019 were 10 countries: ***Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and Sweden.*** The total contribution of donors in 2019 was **703 315 euros.** The expenses of MDTF activities during 1 January to 31 December 2019 is estimated to have been **595 000 euros** *(the exact amount will be known when the EFI accounts for 2019 are finalized in 2020).*

According to the MDTF 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 (travels, etc.) to coordinate and conduct Policy Support Facility studies and activities;
- Costs for contracting EFI member organizations 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* and *What Science Can Tell Us* studies)
- Briefs, EFI News, etc., translations, and video and electronic media;
- Workshop, conference and meeting expenses, including costs associated with presenters, publicity, translation and reporting;
- Equipment related to supporting the activities of FPS;
- Office running costs (not covered by the agreed overheads);
- Costs related to activities, not included above, that have the approval of the Steering Committee;
- Auditing and final external evaluation costs.

Management: The MDTF 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 policy makers, stakeholders, media and the public at large. It supports science-policy dialogue and functions as a go-between scientists and policy makers. One of the main activities is also the managing and operation of ThinkForest 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. Studies may be planned to be conducted within a period of up to three years subject to the availability of sufficient funding.

The team responsible for managing and administrating the MDTF policy support work in 2019 was:

Lauri Hetemäki, Assistant Director, EFI
Rach Colling, Head of Communications, EFI
Jarkko Haltia, Administrative Officer, EFI
Harald Mauser, Brussels Liaison Officer, EFI
Ulla Vänttinen, Communications Officer, EFI

2. Activities and outputs

The activities under MDTF for Policy Support were of many different types during 2019. The flagship activities are the ThinkForest events and science-policy publications. In addition, a number of related and supporting activities were carried out, such as the policy support newsletter, webstreaming, videos, policy support webpage, posters, social media activities, expert statements and presentations in policy forums, and efforts to get new countries to join the MDTF. This chapter gives more detailed information about these activities.

2.1 Publications

2.1.1. Science-policy studies

MDTF 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, in order to inform policy making and stakeholders work. The text is accordingly written in a format that is easily accessible to these target groups. In order 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.

EFI series	No of pages	Purpose
What Science Can Tell Us (WSCTU)	80-100	Synthesis of large scope studies. Main target groups: civil servants, policy makers' assistants, stakeholders, experts, researchers
From Science to Policy (FSTP)	28-32	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
Executive Summary *(formerly ThinkForest Brief)*	c.8	Executive Summary from either WSCTU or FSTP, summarizing their policy implications. Main target groups: policy makers, policy makers' assistants, media, stakeholders, experts

Detailed science-policy analysis from a *What Science Can Tell Us* or *From Science to Policy* study is summarised in an *Executive Summary*. Both are made available at ThinkForest events.

In 2019, two new *From Science to Policy* studies were published. In addition, *From Science to Policy 5*: *Leading the way to a European circular bioeconomy strategy* was translated into Chinese and Russian, and was made available online and in print.

To ensure maximum impact and findability, in 2019 all From Science to Policy studies were 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 will help a reader easily locate a document.

From Science to Policy 8: Living with bark beetles: impacts, outlook and management options
https://doi.org/10.36333/fs08

The study was coordinated by Dr Tomáš Hlásny, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. It had 11 authors from 9 institutions and 7 countries**.**

From Science to Policy 9: Plantation forests in Europe: challenges and opportunities
https://doi.org/10.36333/fs09

The study was coordinated by Peter Freer-Smith, University of California Davis (USA) & Forest Research (UK). It had 10 authors from 9 institutions and 7 countries.

Author affiliations	**Countries represented**
AgroParisTech* Bavarian Forest National Park CNRS Czech University of Life Sciences Prague*	Austria Belgium Czech Republic France Finland

EFI Forest Research* Ilia State University INRA* James Hutton Institute* Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg KU Leuven* Natural Resources Institute* Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research* Teagasc Université de Lorraine Université de Strasbourg University of California Davis University of Helsinki* University of Missouri-Columbia University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna* University of Turin University of Wisconsin – Madison Wageningen University and Research*	Georgia Germany Ireland Italy Netherlands Norway UK USA

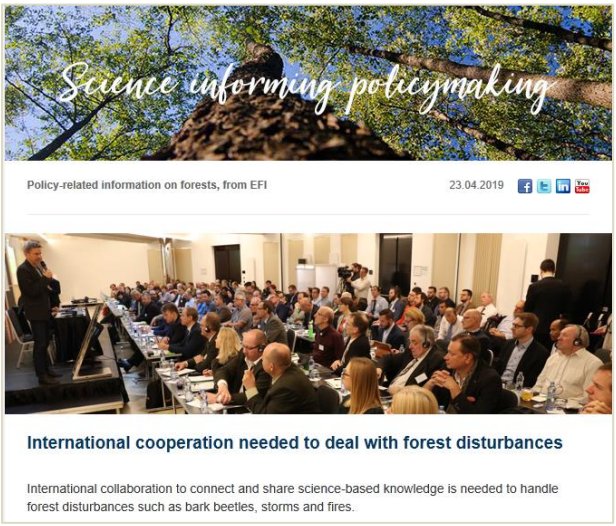
**EFI Associate or Affiliate Member organization*

2.1.2 Policy support brochure

A new policy support brochure (*Science informing policymaking*) was produced in 2019 to promote the work of the MDTF. The brochure promotes EFI's core values in science-policy work, and its role in providing unbiased science-based knowledge, and promoting science-policy dialogue and networking via ThinkForest.

http://www.efi.int/sites/default/files/files/publication-bank/2019/EFI_brochure_policymaking.pdf

2.1.3 Policy support newsletter



The Science Informing Policy-making online newsletter reports on and promotes ThinkForest events and MDTF-funded studies, in addition to more general news items on current MDTF themes (for example bioeconomy, forest fires). The newsletter is sent by email to EFI's policy support mailing list, using the Apsis newsletter system, and is promoted to EFI's wider network via social media.

During 2019, the design of the newsletter header was refreshed, to reflect the branding of the new policy support brochure.

Subscription was actively promoted during the year (e.g. during registration for events), and by the end of 2019, the policy support newsletter mailing list totalled some c.750 subscribers, and the events mailing list c.740 subscribers.

https://www.efi.int/explore/newsletter

Three editions of the newsletter were published in 2019, and one in very early January 2020, reporting on the December 2019 event.

Newsletter issue	Contents
1-2020 (08.01.2020)	• Green Deal needs plantation forests • A new equilibrium for plantation forests
3-2019 (13.09.2019)	• Save the date - The future of plantation forests in Europe • Connecting science, sound and storytelling • Resilient landscapes to face catastrophic forest fires • Synergies and trade-offs in sustainable forest bioeconomy • Key bioeconomy requirements
2-2019 (05.06.2019)	• Göran Persson steps down as ThinkForest president • New ThinkForest president announced • Białowieża Science Initiative • Telling stories about climate change through natural sound • The role of science in forest policy

1-2019 (23.04.2019)	• International cooperation needed to deal with forest disturbances • Living with bark beetles: New perspectives on an alarming problem • Presenting the Białowieża Science Initiative • EFI building bridges to China

2.2. ThinkForest and Other Seminars

ThinkForest events are mainly organized in Brussels, but occasionally they are also held in MDTF member countries. There were two ThinkForest events in 2019: 1. "How to respond to forest disturbances in Europe, held in Prague, 4 April 2019; and 2. "The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe", held at the International Press Center, Brussels, 17 December 2019. The Prague event was the first ThinkForest event ever organized jointly with another organization, namely Forest Europe. The venue was fully-booked since the topic was locally high on agenda at the time. In addition, the webstreaming and video recording made available in the web after the event, allowed for easy following outside the Czech Republic.

The ThinkForest events have benefited significantly from the Presidency of Göran Persson. His PR value, networks, advice, and professional and insightful chairing of the events have greatly helped to raise the profile of the events. In addition, Mr. Persson has helped to promote the ThinkForest, EFI policy support work, and European forest sector in general. The Prague event was the last event held under the Presidency of Mr. Persson since the new President, Janez Potočnik started as a President in July 2019.

How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe (4 April)

International collaboration to connect and share science-based knowledge is needed to handle forest disturbances such as bark beetles, storms and fires. This was the main message of the ThinkForest event held in Prague on 4 April. Forest disturbances transcend national boundaries and strategies in response should too transcend them.

Natural disturbances have increased in Europe in the last 40 years, amplified by climate change and the changes humans have made in forest structure and composition over time. Participants heard about the future climate trends at a global level, and how climate change is expected to contribute to a further increase in forest disturbances in future.

Prof. Tomáš Hlásny, Czech University of Life Sciences, shared the conclusions of the new EFI From Science to Policy study, *Living with bark beetles: impacts, outlooks and management options*. He emphasised the need for international cooperation, data sharing and monitoring, as well as taking a holistic approach to disturbance management at a landscape scale.

Lively panel discussions and questions from the audience emphasised that a holistic, joint approach was needed. There's a need to include the social dimension in the process, and maintain continuous dialogue with the public and stakeholders. However, to do so a narrative is needed. Panel chair Fiona Harvey, Environment Correspondent from The Guardian pointed out that media ignore forests most

of the time, so when a disturbance happens, journalists are rather unprepared. As forest disturbances become more frequent, we need to educate the public and educate the media too.

Prof. Tomáš Hlásny presenting the conclusions of the EFI From Science to Policy study, *Living with bark beetles: impacts, outlooks and management options* (at left). Panel discussion on How to respond to forest disturbances chaired by Fiona Harvey (at right). Photos: Ondrej Hajek

The afternoon session shifted perspective, to highlight practical discussions of what has and hasn't worked when dealing with disturbances in different regions of Europe. Speakers again emphasised the benefits they had experienced from transnational exchange of knowledge and sharing of previous experiences.

The seminar was attended by 132 participants. Out of all participants, 27 were country representatives (ministries). Other main participant groups were researchers (55), forest owners and forest industry (14), NGOs (7), other stakeholder groups (7) and international organisations (16, incl. participants from EFI). The event was followed by live web-streaming or via video recording **by 1,388 people** by the end of 2019. To conclude the seminar, a networking event was organised in the conference venue, Hotel Grandium, Prague.

The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe (17 December)

The ThinkForest event held 17 December in Brussels focused on the future of plantation forests in Europe. The European Commission's new Green Deal brings a new context, a new approach and importantly a new political narrative. The momentum has come and now there's a need to make use of it, and show also how plantation forests can play important role in Green Deal's implementation.

Participants heard about the importance of forests for sustainability and EU climate priorities, and how they are essential for the achievement of the main EU objectives in the Green Deal. Peter Freer-Smith, University of California Davis, shared the conclusions of the new EFI From Science to Policy study, *Plantation forests in Europe: challenges and opportunities*. He emphasised that plantation forests can play a key role in meeting the current demands on forests. In Europe, the area of plantation forestry is increasing, together with the proportion of roundwood and other ecosystem services provided. There is new science evidence that the sustainable management of plantations has strong potential to deliver against Europe's emerging policy priorities.

However, when it comes to policies, there is no *one-size-fits all* solution, as the differences in European countries in circumstances are huge. This has implications for the design of new instruments, for

example those implementing the new Green Deal. ThinkForest President Janez Potočnik also highlighted that the success of initiatives like the Green Deal very much depended on how well the social story is integrated and how much ownership it is able to create among the stakeholders.

Andrew Doyle TD, Minister of State for Food, Forestry and Horticulture, Ireland, opening the ThinkForest event in Brussels on 17 December 2019. Photo: Simon Pugh

There were also lively discussions on the priority actions for moving to sustainable plantations in future - including the usefulness of social learning and the challenges of working with small forest owners in areas where forestry is not profitable. Integrating other ecosystem services at a forest stand level on top of wood production is a challenge, but are much easier to incorporate at a landscape level.

The event took place at the International Press Centre, Brussels, and had 69 participants. The participants represented forest industry and forest owners (15), other stakeholders/ NGOs (24), research organizations (13), European Commission (4), countries (5) and international organizations (6, incl. participants from EFI). The morning session was concluded with the networking event. The event was followed via live web-streaming or via video recording by 267 people by the end of 2019.

Margarida Tomé, University of Lisbon, and Jo O'Hara, Scottish Forestry, participating in the panel discussion on the Future of Plantation Forests in Europe, 17 December, Brussels. Photo: Simon Pugh

EFI event on China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy (14 November, Beijing)

MDTF and the Embassy of Finland hosted a seminar in Beijing on 14 November, focusing on forest bioeconomy. The seminar helped the preparation of European Forest Institute China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy ThinkForest event, which is planned to be held in Beijing in December 2020.

The seminar, held at the Embassy of Finland, gathered together 49 policy makers, industry and science representatives to assess current China-Europe forest bioeconomy issues and discuss future prospects for circular bioeconomy cooperation. It was chaired by Esko Aho, former Prime Minister of Finland and EFI special adviser. Speakers included Peng Youdong, Vice-Minister of the National Forestry and Grasslands Administration. Out of all participants, 12 were country representatives (ministries, embassies), including the Ambassadors from Finland and Germany, and Deputy Ambassador from Slovenia. Other main participant groups were forest industry representatives (7), NGOs (5), research (4), European Commission officials (3), other stakeholder groups (7) and international organisations (7, incl. participants from EFI).

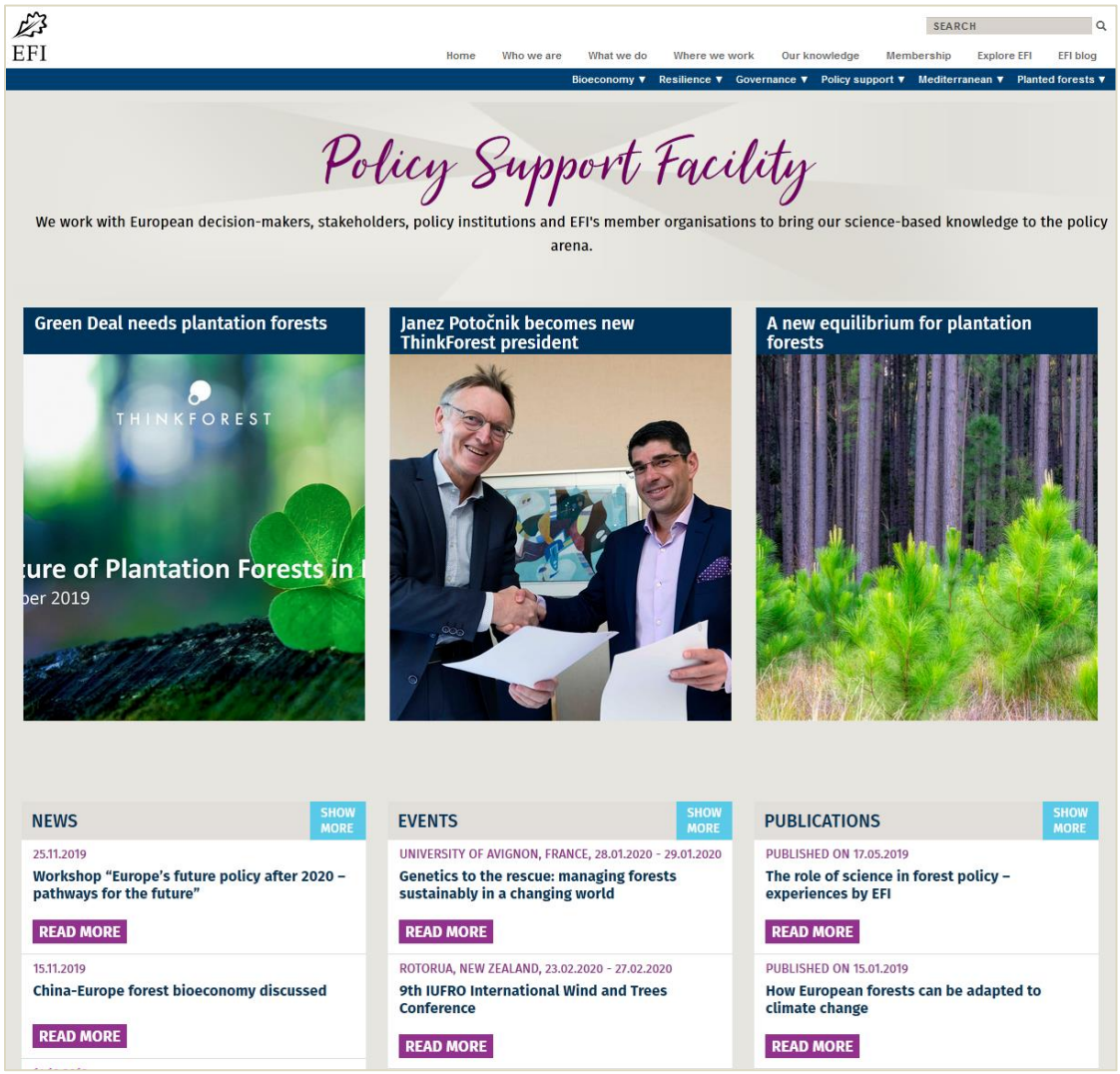
2.3. Other outputs

2.3.1. Online activities

The EFI website is an important tool in MDTF communication activities, as it acts as a central, easily accessible source of information about policy support activities. The website aggregates content from and signposts users to all other channels, but is also the place where a lasting and easily accessible 'footprint' of MDTF-supported outputs is created, making it available to policy makers for future reference.

Policy support/ThinkForest webpages

Policy support material is showcased in the picture boxes on the EFI homepage (www.efi.int) and a dedicated Policy Support Facility section (www.efi.int/policysupport) promotes the latest information and ThinkForest (www.efi.int/policysupport/thinkforest) activities, as well as news, events and publications.



Each new ThinkForest event has its own dedicated webpage, 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 MDTF publications are promoted on a single page (www.efi.int/policysupport/publications) and reports are deposited in the site-wide Publications Bank (www.efi.int/publications-bank).

Videos

Video continued to be used during 2019, with the aim of making ThinkForest events accessible to as wide an audience as possible. Two ThinkForest events (Prague, April; Brussels, December) were successfully webstreamed live via the EFI YouTube channel. The full event recordings were made available afterwards, giving a lasting record of ThinkForest discussions.

Event	Livestream viewers	Average time watched	Top countries	TOTAL views 2019
ThinkForest: The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe 17.12.2019, Brussels	107	35 minutes	IT	267
ThinkForest: How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe 04.04.2019, Prague	234	47 minutes	FI, CZ, DE, FR, SL, IT	1,388

More details are available in the Annex, in the Online Statistics section.

Social media

During 2019, MDTF-funded policy support work was promoted via EFI's social media channels, to reach a geographically widespread audience.

Social media channel	Number of followers *(31 Dec 2019)*	Number of followers *(31 Dec 2018)*
Twitter (main EFI account)	8,853	7,431
Facebook	7,812	6,515
LinkedIn	8,349	5,529
YouTube	911	731 subscribers

Effort again focused on Twitter, which is used professionally by the policy maker audience. Tweets were broadcast from each of the 2019 ThinkForest events, which again saw good social media conversations by participants. During 2019, there were 1,629 tweets from the main EFI Twitter account, which gained over 1,420 new followers. The messages were also amplified by EFI's other Twitter accounts (eg @efiresilience, @efimed, @efiplant).

EFI's audience is also increasing rapidly on other social media channels, for example LinkedIn and YouTube.

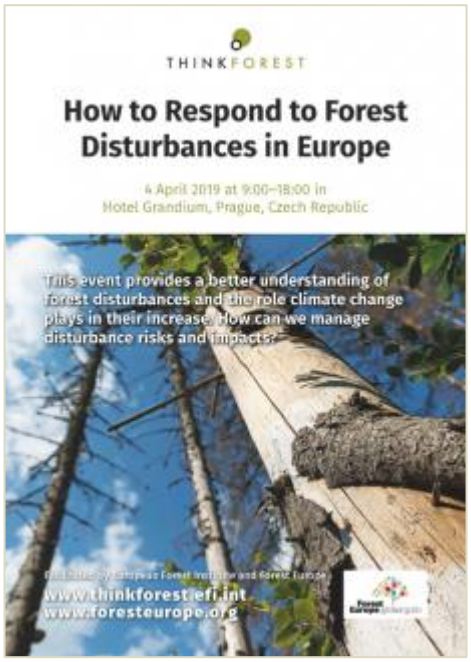
Electronic messaging

The capacity to send messages and invitations via the Apsis software system was again used in 2019. A total of 4 messages relating to ThinkForest events were sent by email to the new policy support mailing

list and events list. These included ‘save the date’ messages, event invitations and reminders, as well as notifications of webstreaming. More details are available in the Annex in the Online Statistics section.

Posters

Two A4 posters were produced to advertise ThinkForest events in 2019. These were made available in PDF (for example for use on the web) and printed formats, for ease of distribution. Printed posters were used at events, and distributed in Brussels (for example at the European Parliament).



There was active contact with the media during 2019, with news items/press releases and invitations to ThinkForest events.

A distribution list of relevant journalists was created for each event, and extensive use was also made of ‘multipliers’, i.e. news distribution channels such as AlphaGalileo, ScienceDaily, UNECE/FAO Forest Information Billboard, FAO Infosylva.

A dissemination plan was made for each ThinkForest event, and the results from dissemination activities were monitored and logged, using an off-the-shelf system (Meltwater) (see Table 5, Post-event media coverage).

11 press releases/news items were published in 2019:

18.12.2019 Green deal needs plantation forests
10.12.2019 A new equilibrium for plantation forests
25.11.2019 Workshop “Europe’s future policy after 2020 – pathways for the future”
15.11.2019 China-Europe forest bioeconomy discussed

11.10.2019 Ministers call for increased international cooperation on forest resilience
27.08.2019 Connecting science, sound and storytelling
05.06.2019 Janez Potočnik becomes new ThinkForest president
14.05.2019 Göran Persson awarded EFI Fellowship
11.04.2019 EFI building bridges to China
08.04.2019 International cooperation needed to deal with forest disturbances
04.04.2019 Living with bark beetles: New perspectives on an alarming problem

Selected press releases were sent to a distribution list of approx. 200-300 journalists, depending on the topic (see section 3.4 Media impacts).

Enlarging the MDTF

The MDTF 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 MDTF.

Currently Central-, Northern-, Southern and Eastern Europe are all represented in the MDTF. During 2019, active efforts to engage more European countries to MDTF were taken by the EFI Director and Assistant Director, in particular, Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia.

3. Impacts

In general, the EFI MDTF Policy Support work has during 2019 received very positive feedback and it has reached a wide audience. The impact indicators given in this Report show a robust continuation of MDTF activities impact (see Appendix). In addition, the direct responses received from the network (see below), from the discussions EFI staff have had with policy makers, stakeholders and research institutes during 2019, as well as the numerous requests for expert presentations or statements based on the MDTF work support this conclusion. Besides the information reported below, during meetings and discussions that EFI's Director and Assistant Director had during 2019 with European Parliament MEPs, European Commission staff, national ministries and stakeholders, very positive feedback was given for the MDTF policy support work. These included several meetings of EFI Director with His Royal Highness Prince of Wales, and discussion with European Commission officials (e.g., John Bell, Director Healthy Planet, DG Research & Innovation), national government Ministers and civil servants (e.g. Minister Ibrahim Baylan, Sweden; Minister Andrew Doyle, Ireland; Minister Jari Leppä, Finland; Minister Krista Mikkonen, Finland; Minister Luis Planas, Spain), EFI Associate Member representatives, etc. In summary, the work has been very well received and pointed that it is a unique and needed platform for pan-European forest-based sector science-policy work.

3.1 Downloads

All MDTF publications are available in printed and online formats. Print copies were distributed at ThinkForest events, to policy makers in Brussels via EFI's Brussels Liaison Office, and were also sent to EFI's network of member organisations.

The electronic copies of these studies again proved extremely popular. Included in the table below are details of all major *MDTF* publications produced to date (2015 onwards).

Title	Publication date	No of copies printed and distributed in 2019	No of electronic copies downloaded 2019	Lifetime copies downloaded
FSTP9 (Plantation forests)	Dec 2019	600	105	105
FSTP8 (Bark beetles)	Apr 2019	600	4,504	4,504
FSTP 7 (Substitution effects of wood-based products)	Nov 2018	n/a	2,679	4,345
FSTP 6 (Climate-Smart Forestry)	Mar 2018	n/a	1,699	3,214
WSCTU 8 (Forest-based bioeconomy), plus Summary	Dec 2017	n/a	2,595	8,175
FSTP 5 (Circular bioeconomy) (EN, CN, RU)	Oct 2017	600 (CN and RU)	2,122	7,069
FSTP 5 Summaries (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, CN, RU)	Nov 2017-Apr 18	n/a	1,867	3,928
WSCTU 7 (Natura 2000) plus Summary	Sept 2017	n/a	497	4,076
FSTP 4 (Forest bioeconomy indicators)	Nov 2016	n/a	2,596	8,278
FSTP 3 (Forest biomass, carbon neutrality)	Oct 2016	n/a	1,268	16,799
FSTP 2 (A new role for forests)	Dec 2015	n/a	751	11,590
FSTP 1 (EUTR-FLEGT)	Apr 2015	n/a	726	8,761

3.2. Impact and feedback from stakeholders and network

In general, the importance of the MDTF work was acknowledged in 2019 by major policy makers both in Europe and in China. For example, a joint declaration by the Ministers of Agriculture of seven Eastern European countries called for strengthened international cooperation and contributions to EFI's work in improving resilience and adaptation of forests to climate change.[1]

The EFI Director had several meetings with His Royal Highness Prince of Wales (HRH), and in those meetings discussed also the work based on MDTF publications. HRH, with the support of the World

[1] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12883-2019-INIT/en/pdf

Economic Forum, established the Sustainable Markets Council in September 2019, and the EFI Director was invited to be a member of this forum.

Mr. Peng Youdong, Vice Minister National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China stressed in his opening speech of the MDTF event held in Finnish Embassy, Beijing on 14 November the important role EFI is playing in advancing the circular bioeconomy, and providing the expertise and support for this also in China.

The lead author of the study, Prof. Tomáš Hlásny presented the study results and implications also in the Czech Republic Parliament in June 2019. On October 2019, the Czech Parliament decided a few important legal reforms to the Czech forest law that help to improve the resilience of forests in the future. The MDTF work on bark beetles was used as one input in this process.

In summary, both the direct and indirect impacts of the MDTF work carried out in past years and in 2019 have had significant impact at a very high level of policy.

ThinkForest seminars

In summary, the events have been considered to be timely and tackling topical issues. In particular, participants have appreciated that issues high on the political agenda have been brought to the discussion, and additional science-based information has been provided by the publications and ThinkForest events. ThinkForest events have been considered important e.g. by European Parliament and European Commission staff and Brussels-based stakeholders. Below are some examples of the comments received.

ThinkForest event on How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe (4 April)

This was the 3rd ThinkForest organized in cooperation with a MDTF country's Ministry (Ministry of Agriculture, the Czech Republic), and first time with another organization, Forest Europe. The event was held at the Hotel Grandium, Prague. It had wide reach, including an audience from the Czech Republic that usually does not attend the ThinkForest events in Brussels. During the event, it was also followed by 311 viewers via webstreaming and after the event a video recording was watched by an additional 1,154 viewers. See above for some of the impacts of this study and event.

ThinkForest event on the Future of Plantation Forests in Europe (17 December)

This ThinkForest event was organized in the International Press Centre in Brussels and gathered 68 participants. During the event, it was followed virtually by 107 viewers, and after the event by another 160 viewers. Discussion during the event, in particular during the panel was very lively.

'It was great to attend the event. I've signed up to receive your newsletters. I particularly like the format of the panel, which was new to me, of using the statements from each of the panellists to prompt discussion – I think it worked really well and introduced some very interesting discussion. Environment & Transport | Scottish Government EU Office

A new science-policy study 'Plantation forests in Europe: challenges and opportunities' was presented at this event. However, since the publication was launched so late in 2019 (17 December), it is still too early to judge its impact.

After each ThinkForest event, **a news release** on the event has been published at the EFI website. **As a follow-up, stakeholders have published news on their own websites** (see Table below).

ThinkForest event	Number of (web)articles
ThinkForest event on Forest Disturbances in Europe, 4 April 2019	3 ministry 6 industry (agriculture/forestry) 3 other
ThinkForest event on Future of Plantation Forests in Europe, 17 December 2019	1 ministry

The detailed information is available in Table 4.

3.3. Expert presentations, statements and hearings

Two EFI *From Science to Policy* –series studies were published during 2019. The authors of the studies, and the Chief Editor of the publications, have presented the study results in many different forums. However, since the FSTP no. 9 was published very late in the year (10 December), there were few presentations of it.

Below, is a summary of the presentations, expert statements and hearings held in various policy and science-policy forums. In 2019, 32 presentations were held.

Publication	Presenter / event
"Leading the way to a European circular bioeconomy strategy", FSTP5 *(Published, Dec. 2017)*	1. Hetemäki, L. Circular Bioeconomy in the European Union- "China-Europe Forest Bieoconomy" seminar, Embassy of Finland Residence, Beijing, 14 November 2019 2. Hetemäki, L. The forest Bioeconomy outlook in the EU. Forest Bioeconomy Studia Generalia -lecture, University of Eastern Finland, 30 October 2019, Joensuu. 3. Hetemäki, L. The forest Bioeconomy and climate change. World Bioeconomy Forum, 12 September 2019, Ruka. 4. Mauser, H. Forest-related Policy Making in the EU. University of Oxford Brussels Field trip, 15 March 2019. Brussels. 5. Hetemäki, L. European forest bioeconomy: key sectors and principles. Young Leadership Programme 2019, 11 March 2019, Joensuu Science Park.

"Climate-Smart Forestry: mitigation impacts in three European regions", FSTP 6 *(Published March 2018)*	1. Nabuurs, G.-J. Invited talk 'Dutch forest climate policies' National climate action conference, den Bosch, 3 Dec. 2019 2. Nabuurs, G.-J. Invited keynote at Thinktank of Mondi-IUFRO event on future wood supply from Europe, 26 Nov. 2019 3. Nabuurs, G.-J. Hardwood supply in future. Invited presentation at Int Hardwood conference, Berlin, 21 Nov. 2019 4. Nabuurs, G.-J.: Wood supply in future from EU forests. Invited keynote at Raw Materials week, Brussels, 18 Nov. 2019 5. Mauser, H.: What is Climate Smart Forestry?, PEFC EU Policy Seminar 26 Sep. 2019, Brussels 6. Nabuurs, G.-J. Keynote 'Climate-Smart Forestry' at CLIMO Cost action, Tatras, Slovakia, 8 Sep. 2019 7. Nabuurs, G.-J. Invited talk 'European forest policy in the frame of bioenergy-IEA workshop, Athens, Georgia, USA, 1-3 May 2019 8. Nabuurs, G.-J. Invited talk 'Role of European forest management' at Global Carbon project meeting RECCAPP2, Gotemba, Japan, 19-23 March 2019 9. Nabuurs, G.-J. Invited lecture at the science seminar of VERIFY H2020 project 'Impact of forest management on European Forests' carbon balance' Reading ECMWF, 13 March 2019 10. Nabuurs, G-J. Invited talk at Green Deal Sustainable Forest Products: 'Chances for sustainable forestry from climate point of view'. Ridderkerk Netherlands. 27 Nov 2018 11. Nabuurs, G-J. Invited talk Prince Edward Island University (UPEI). Sustainable forestry practices for PEI: compatible ideas from Europe. 18 Nov 2018 12. Nabuurs, G-J. Invited talk at Universite Laval Quebec. European forests: challenges in meeting climate mitigation goals. 15 Nov. 2018 13. Nabuurs, G-J. Purdue University, Lafayette, IN, USA. Invited talk: European forests issues under climate change. 12 Nov 2018 14. Nabuurs, G-J. IEA Task 43. Invited lecture 'Role of European forests in provision of biomass under LULUCF Forest Reference level'. Uppsala. 30 August 2018. 15. Nabuurs, G-J. Invited Key note at Royal Swedish Academy, Stockholm. 'A principle choice – manage forest for wood production or leave it as a carbon sink'. 12 March 2018 16. Nabuurs, G-J. Invited keynote at KNAW symposium. 'Multi functionality in European Forests – the EASAC report'. 19 February 2018 17. Nabuurs, G-J. Invited talk at European Parliament: 'Bioenergy policy post 2020. Can Europe's forests supply sustainably under climate smart forestry?' Organised by Skogs- industrierna, Brussels, 9 Jan. 2018
"Substitution effects of wood-based products in climate mitigation", FSTP 7	1. Leskinen, P, Climate change mitigation as driver towards bioeconomy, Barents Forest Forum, Umeå 16.10.2019, Keynote. 2. Leskinen, P, The role of wood-based products in climate change mitigation, Koli Forum, Koli, 9.10.2019, invited presentation. 3. Leskinen, P, Forests in climate change mitigation and sustainable bioeconomy, Forum Wood Building Nordic, Helsinki, 27.9.2019, Keynote. 4. Hans Verkerk, Pekka Leskinen, Giuseppe Cardellini, Elias Hurmekoski, Roger

(Published, Dec. 2018)	Sathre, Jyri Seppälä, Carolyn Smyth & Mariana Hassegawa. Substitution effects of wood-based products in climate change mitigation. Poster presented at the XXV IUFRO World Congress, 25.9.2019, Curitiba, Brazil 5. Hans Verkerk, Climate-Smart Forestry: the missing link. CMCC-EFI webinar: Forests: solutions and perspectives to fight climate change, 21 March 2019. 6. Hans Verkerk, European forest under climate change and Climate-Smart Forestry, YLP Eurasia, Joensuu, 11 March 2019. 7. Leskinen, Pekka. Invited talk on Forest bioeconomy in climate change mitigation at World Resources Forum. Antwerp, Belgium. 26 February 2019 8. Verkerk, H. Climate Smart Forestry, BioMonitor and other outlook activities at EFI. Workshop on Exchange of Experiences in Forest Sector Outlook Studies and Related Work, Koli, Finland. 14 February 2019 9. Verkerk, H. 2018. Mitigating climate change through Climate-Smart Forestry. FORMASAM kick-off meeting, 12-14 November 2018, Wageningen.
"Living with bark beetles: impacts, outlook and management options", FSTP 8 *(Published, April 2019)*	1. Hlásny, T., Presentation of the report at the meeting of the Slovak Academy of Agriculture Sciences, Zvolen, Slovakia, 17.11.2019 2. Hlásny, T., Presentation of the report at the Wood Forum (Virkenforum), Stockholm, Sweden, 11.9.2019 3. Hlásny, T., Two interviews with Swedish journalist, 11.9.2019, https://www.landskogsbruk.se/skog/all-avverkning-koncentreras-till-dod-skog-i-tjeckien/?fbclid=IwAR34PcGU5IWIJNDE6kI-l0dSHTokZ07zk_oXifW-efl8FbDcStV7c_jCXSk 4. Svoboda, M., Presentation of the report in the FECOF meeting, Prague, Czech Republic, 20.10.2019 5. Hlásny, T. Presentation of the report at the General Assembly of the European Organization of the Sawmill Industry, Vienna, Austria, 18.6.2019 6. Hlásny, T., Presentation of the report in the meeting with senators in the Czech Parlament, Prague, Czech Republic, 10.6.2019 7. Hlásny, T., Input to the Czech TV, Prague, Czech Republic, 4.4.2019 8. Hlásny, T., Presentation of the report at SURE project meeting, Prague, Czech Republic, 3.4. 2019
"Plantation forests in Europe: challenges and opportunities" *(Published, Dec. 2019)*	1. Freer-Smith P. US Forest Service Forests and Fire Ecology Lecture series 12 March **2020** Invited talk title: Forest Land Use and Management Strategies to deliver European Climate and Bioeconomy Policies' 2. Freer-Smith, P., Presentation of the preliminary results of the study at the EFI Annual Conference Scientific seminar, Aberdeen, UK, 19.9.2019

3.4. Media impacts

Media invitations

Press invitations were distributed by email, using an off-the-shelf system, Meltwater. This allows you to create distribution lists based on country and the journalist's 'beat' (area of specialism), and to monitor whether each invitation has been opened.

Meltwater covers all journalists in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA. In addition, a separate in-house list of Brussels-based correspondents is used; this was updated in summer 2019.

Event	Mailing list size	Press invitation to event *(% read)*	Media attendance	Press release post-event **(% read)**	Media articles
ThinkForest: The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe, 17.12.2019, Brussels	226	23.5%	0	26.2%	4
ThinkForest: How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe, 4 April 2019, Prague	168	15.7%	6 (including Reuters)	13.7%	17
EFI event on China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy, 14 November 2019, Beijing	n/a	n/a	4	n/a	3

Media attendance and immediate coverage of events is often limited, with journalists mostly using events as an opportunity to gain background information on a subject. It is not possible to know how many journalists watch the livestream.

Media coverage

Post-event media coverage and ongoing media monitoring was also carried out via the Meltwater system. The forest disturbances event, held in Prague in April, received the widest media coverage during 2019, reaching many Czech, Slovak, Finnish and Norwegian print, online and radio outlets, as well as an article in Reuters (See Table 5 for more details). The China-Europe forest bioeconomy event in Beijing in November also received good coverage, including in China Daily and trade news.

3.4.1 Sound Reporting Co-Lab media bootcamp

The Sound Reporting Co-Lab is a 6-month media support programme from EFI's Lookout Station that helps journalists produce sound-based stories around climate change impacts on forests, biodiversity and local communities. This project was supported by the MDTF with 7,000 euros in 2019 (other funders included EUFORGEN, SURE project, the Polish Forest Research Institute (IBL) and Hindenburg Systems).

On location in Bialowieza forest (photo: E.Hermanowicz/EUFORGEN)

A bootcamp took place in the Bialowieza forest, Poland in July, focusing on bark beetles and their impacts on ecological, social and industrial systems. A group of journalists from 6 media/teams heard experts from EFI, the Polish Forest Research Institute (an EFI member organisation) and the University of Warsaw share their scientific insights into the complex and disputed situation in Bialowieza. This holistic view on the issue was complemented by practical sound training from a team of award-winning trainers from Cornell University and National Public Radio (US) to connect science, sound and storytelling.

As well as hearing from scientists and experts in a seminar room, the journalists also had a chance to visit three different forests to make field recordings: old forest unaffected by bark beetles; forest that is currently under attack; and forest that was attacked four years ago.

During the rest of 2019, the Sound Reporting Co-Lab provided mentorship and expert support for the journalists as they developed their stories, including a series of expert meetings. Experts included Tomas Hlasny, lead author of the From Science to Policy study on bark beetles published in 2019.

The journalists' outputs are expected during 2020.

4. Reporting of expenses

4.1 Background

The general background principle for reporting of the funding and budgeting of the MDTF for 2019 is given here. Due to the time lag between closing of the accounts, as of 20 January 2020 (time of writing this) the financial accounts for EFI 2019 have not yet been closed.

4.2 Expenditures by cost category

In 2019 the MDTF funded partial salaries of the Assistant Director managing the MDTF, Communication Officer responsible for the administration and event organisation, Administrative Officer responsible for administrative procedures (e.g. contracting) of MDTF SC, Head of Communications responsible for the MDTF communication, and Brussels Liaison Officer supporting the dissemination and increasing the impact of the MDTF work and networking in Brussels (all positions partly funded by MDTF). These salary costs were linked to the general management, planning, administration, communication, networking, and coordination of the MDTF work. All the other salaries paid from MDTF 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 MDTF Guidelines (shown also in Chapter 1.2) were covered by the MDTF funds.

According to MDTF Guidelines, 13% is allocated to overheads (indirect costs). Compared to common practices, this is a very low share. For example, in European Commission Horizon 2020 overheads is 25% for research and innovation projects. Indeed, in the MDTF 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 MDTF activities (e.g., coordination, management, administration, EFI lawyer costs related to subcontracting and country agreements, working for the publications and ThinkForest events) are reported under MDTF salaries, not overheads.

The activities under MDTF have been organized for administrative and cost following purposes under Work Packages (WP). In 2019, costs were related to following WPs:

1. FPS Multi-Donor Trust Fund General
2. FPS MDTF WP3: Climate substitution impacts (2018)
3. FPS MDTF WP4: Europe post-2020
4. FPS MDTF WP5: Afforestation and plantation
5. FPS MDTF WP6: Bark beetle
6. FPS MDTF WP7: China-Europe forest bioeconomy
7. FPS MDTF WP8: Sound reporting co-lab
8. FPS MDTF WP9: Public perception on forests

5. Current and emerging forest-related policy issues and trends in Europe[2]

According to the MDTF Guidelines *"EFI will provide on a yearly basis a broad overview (summary) of the current and emerging European forest-related policy issues and trends"*. This chapter seeks to fulfil this objective.

An upcoming EFI *From Science to Policy* report on "European forest governance post-2020" will broadly assess governance options to meet international and European challenges for future forest policy-making in Europe (Wolfslehner et al. 2020). This chapter, however, focuses on some significant changes in the general EU framework that took place in 2019 and are likely to mark a turning point in forest-related policy making for the coming years. What are these changes, and how could they impact on the European forest sector in the new decade?

5.1 Changes in the EU governance framework in 2019

5.1.1 European Parliament

In the newly elected European Parliament with 60% new members, the centre parties lost their traditional majority. Liberal and green-oriented groups gained more power. As the composition of the European Parliament is now more fragmented and diverse, decision making will become more complicated. Majority building will be more case by case, as there appear not to be many shared policies between the political groups.

5.1.2 European Commission

The new College of Commissioners from 27 EU Member States, led by President von der Leyen, is more diverse regarding the personal political background and party affiliation of Commissioners than the previous College under President Juncker. The hierarchy within the College has been changed by establishing a new level of 3 Executive Vice-Presidents, in addition to 5 Vice-Presidents. Both levels have coordinating power in specific policy fields over the remaining Commissioners. It has to be seen how this new hierarchy will work in practice. The Mission Letters from the President to each Commissioner raise questions on the distribution of some tasks. In particular, the portfolio of Executive Vice-President Timmermans cuts across almost the whole College.

President von der Leyen requested the Commissioners to include in their cabinets more staff members from the European Commission services, and fewer external people. The impact of this measure has to be seen. Currently there are concerns that the cabinets contain too many former European Parliament aides and diplomats who until recently worked for national governments.

5.1.3 Political guidelines 2021-2024

The political guidelines of President von der Leyen establish a strategic orientation for EU policy making that differs from those of proceeding terms. The two previous presidents Barroso and Juncker mainly prioritized economy, growth and employment topics. President Barroso in his second term (2010-2014)

[2] Lauri Hetemäki and Harald Mauser, European Forest Institute

focused on a successful exit from the economic crisis with a vigorous and coordinated EU-wide economic strategy for restarting economic growth and ensuring long-term sustainability and competitiveness. Fighting unemployment, reinforcing social cohesion, turning the challenge of a sustainable Europe to a competitive advantage, and leading on climate change were also parts of this orientation. President Juncker (2014-2019) strived for a new boost for jobs, growth and investment, a connected digital single market, a resilient energy union with a forward-looking climate change policy, a deeper and fairer internal market with a strengthened industrial base, and a deeper and fairer economic and monetary union.

The new political guidelines for the European Commission 2019-2024 are presented as a unique aspiration of living in a natural and healthy continent. These guidelines reflect the general political trend that stresses the importance and urgency of tackling climate change and meeting the Paris Climate Agreement. A European Green Deal should help Europe to be the first climate-neutral continent. Preserving Europe's natural environment is highlighted as an important element of this endeavour. The political guidelines also prioritize an economy that works for people, a Europe fit for the digital age, and protecting the European way of life.

5.1.4 The European Green Deal

The European Green Deal is introducing a new political narrative and direction by setting a clear focus on climate, sustainability and biodiversity conservation for all policy areas. The main objective of the Deal is the EU's carbon neutrality by 2050. This objective is widely shared and the approach in the document represents a new kind of sustainability thinking within the Commission. The Deal acknowledges the need for a systemic transformation, not only piecemeal policy changes, to achieve goals set by the Paris Climate Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals and Convention of Biological Diversity. The political importance of the Deal is evident also from the requirement that "All EU actions and policies will have to contribute to the European Green Deal objectives" (EC 2019, p. 3). Also, the Commission is ready to promote procedures for deciding on the new directives to support the Deal's objectives that require only qualified majority voting rather than by unanimity.[3]

The new political guidelines, in particular the European Green Deal, present needed and ambitious goals. They reflect the mood in the EU Member States, where environmental issues are perceived to be more important and urgent. But it is this very matter of urgency, and the sometimes narrow scope of the actions put forward by the Deal that could prove to be its pitfall. Von der Leyen may have dug the pit herself by announcing that the new Commission would complete the European Green Deal within 100 days. This has resulted in a hurry in the preparatory work, and probably is also reflected in the narrow scope of forestry issues. It gives an impression that maybe there has not been sufficient time for consultation with experts and stakeholders. This is likely to be reflected in future in how well the Commission is able to handle trade-

[3] "*The Commission will propose to revise the Energy Taxation Directive, focusing on environmental issues, and proposing to use the provisions in the Treaties that allow the European Parliament and the Council to adopt proposals in this area through the ordinary legislative procedure by qualified majority voting rather than by unanimity*." (EC 2019, p.5).

offs, create ownership and support for the Deal. Without sufficient ownership, the Deal will not work efficiently in practice.

The financial framework to bring to reality the new policy orientation is still missing. An approved EU budget for 2021-2027 will not be possible until the second half of 2020 under the German Presidency. Yet, the ambitious timetable of the European Green Deal strives for concrete achievements very soon. For example, the Climate Law should be finalized by February 2020, before an agreement on the Multi Annual Financial Framework has been concluded. Also, the new EU Industrial Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy should be adopted by March 2020. Against this background, it has to be seen to what extent the EU Member States will support all the goals and the very tight timeline, and engage in the design and implementation of the announced policies and legislation.

5.1.5 Forests in the new political orientations

Forests are hardly mentioned explicitly in the political guidelines of President von der Leyen, in the mission letters to the Commissioners, in written answers by the Commissioners-designate to the written questions from the European Parliament Committees, or in the hearings of the European Parliament Committees with the Commissioners-designate. If at all, most of any statements on forests express problems (not opportunities) like deforestation, threats to forests and biodiversity, and argue for forest and biodiversity restoration and protection. With respect to climate action, forests are mainly addressed as a carbon sink. There is no single statement on the multiple benefits forests provide to society and the benefits which forest-based bioindustry could contribute to a more sustainable and climate-neutral society, and how they could help to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

In summary, there are many new actors in the EU policy arena with a quite diverse understanding of forests and the forest-based sector. To enable them to take sound decisions, solid information and evidence on the complexity, diversity and long timeframe of forest issues will be needed to support proper assessment of the implications of the new political orientations. This situation stresses the importance of disseminating and communicating evidence-based information to the European Parliament, European Commission and the Member States on the multiple roles that EU forests and the forest sector play. This is in essence the work that the EFI Policy Support Facility, supported by the Multi Donor Trust Fund, is already doing.

5.2 Forest-related EU policy making: new thinking with narrower scope

The changes in the EU governance framework described above already strongly affect the role of forests and their use, as well as the relevance of forest-based value chains, in upcoming EU policy making and legislative processes.

5.2.1 Evidence of a paradigm shift

The guiding paradigm in forest policy at EU and pan-European level has been the *multifunctional use of forests* to benefit society with a broad range of products and services, respecting the ecological, economic and social dimensions of sustainability. The long-lasting dispute between conservation interests on the

one hand, and wood production interests on the other, was handled within this framework of multifunctionality, but mostly limited to those actors responsible for forest policy in the strictest sense. The balance between the impacts of these two main interests on EU policy making periodically shifted. For example, the "Green Paper on Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change" in 2010 promoted stronger protection of forests. In recent years, nature conservation and biodiversity policy received less attention in EU discussions, due to the growing role of climate change related topics and economic issues, like the circular economy and bioeconomy. The forest-based sector has been acknowledged as a major enabler and contributor to these new economic models.

Recently, this situation has begun to change, with more emphasis on the so-called "climate and biodiversity crises". Nature conservation and biodiversity are becoming more important again in all relevant EU policy discussions. Together with the urgency from climate policy on negative emissions, there is a growing pressure to shift the main paradigm of forest policy. Instead of multifunctional use, the protection and restoration of biodiversity and the improvement of carbon storage in forest ecosystems are established as priority objectives for the management of forests. This shift is already executed in two recent policy documents:

(1) The communication on the **European Green Deal** from December 2019, within its chapter on "Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity", addresses the increasing pressure on forest ecosystems as a result of climate change. Improving the forested area in quantity and quality by sustainable re- and afforestation and the restoration of degraded forests is stated as a need. This should "*increase absorption of CO_2 while improving the resilience of forests and promoting the circular bio-economy. Building on the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, the Commission will prepare a new EU Forest Strategy covering the whole forest cycle and promoting the many services that forests provide. The new EU Forest Strategy will have as its key objectives effective afforestation, and forest preservation and restoration in Europe, to help to increase the absorption of CO_2, reduce the incidence and extent of forest fires, and promote the bio-economy, in full respect for ecological principles favourable to biodiversity. The national strategic plans under the common agricultural policy should incentivise forest managers to preserve, grow and manage forests sustainably.*"

In addition, the new EU Biodiversity Strategy could "*include quantified objectives, such as increasing the coverage of protected biodiversity-rich land and sea areas building on the Natura 2000 network. Member States should also reinforce cross-border cooperation to protect and restore more effectively the areas covered by the Natura 2000 network. The Commission will identify which measures, including legislation, would help Member States improve and restore damaged ecosystems to good ecological status, including carbon-rich ecosystems.*" The Commission will also "*consider drafting a nature restoration plan and will look at how to provide funding to help Member States to reach this aim. All EU policies should contribute to preserving and restoring Europe's natural capital.*" These intentions will affect forest areas and their use.

The actions in the European Green Deal proposed specifically on forests raise questions regarding other land-use requirements, the role of forests and wooden products in mitigating GHG emissions, in regional

development, and in the transition to a circular bioeconomy. EU countries are diverse regarding forests, their management and the economic importance of the forest-based sector. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible. For countries like Spain, the problem from a climate perspective may be increasing risks of severe forest fires because of high fuel loads due to too much biomass in the forests, rather than too little. Spain's forest area has increased by 40% in the past four decades. For those Member States with already high forest coverage and a long tradition in sustainable forest management including obligatory regeneration, a new EU Forest Strategy with priorities on afforestation and reforestation could be less effective in climate mitigation than promoting the role of the forest-based sector in the transition to a more sustainable and climate neutral society by strongly contributing to a circular bioeconomy. Yet, in the communication on the European Green Deal, there is no single reference to the EU Bioeconomy Strategy that was just updated in October 2018.

(2) In preparing a **new EU legislation on sustainable finance** (Taxonomy), the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU reached in December 2019 an agreement in the trilogue negotiations on the Taxonomy regulation. This agreement also *includes a definition of sustainable forest management that differs remarkably from the currently used definitions* introduced by the Forest Europe Process and referred to in the EU Forest Strategy, as it states: "In the context of this Regulation, *'sustainable forest management should be understood by considering practices and use of forests and forest land that contribute to enhancing biodiversity or to halting or preventing degradation of ecosystems, deforestation and habitat loss;* by considering the stewardship and use of forests and forest land in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems, as defined in Resolution H1 General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe, MCPFE 1993; *and by considering Regulation (EU) 2018/841[2]* (Comment: LULUCF)*, Regulation (EU) No 995/2010[3]* (Comment: EUTR)*, Directive (EU) 2018/2001[4]* (Comment: REDII) *and European Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest based sector,"*

The *text in Italic* indicates new elements that were added to the current definition of sustainable forest management established by the Forest Europe process. In essence, the new definition implies that whatever the reasons for loss of or pressure on biodiversity, the first priority for sustainable forest management is to enhance biodiversity or halt or prevent degradation of it.

This sustainable finance (Taxonomy) definition is an outcome of a legislative process to improve the European Capital Markets Union. In this process, the forest administrations and stakeholders were hardly involved. The importance of this feature is heightened by the fact that European Commission has very little "in-house" expertise in forest issues. It can be expected that this definition will be referred to also in other upcoming EU policies.

To implement the Taxonomy regulation, a delegated act is under preparation that will stipulate for forest activities three cumulative qualitative and quantitative mitigation criteria which shall result in substantial greenhouse gases sequestration and soil and biodiversity maintenance and/or improvement. Only forest management fulfilling all three criteria would be assessed as sustainable. One of these criteria requires a

progressive increase of above ground carbon stocks over the economic life time, to be reported every 5-10 years. This would be in many cases in contrary to forest management needs. Serving other societal interests, or adaptation to climate change (e.g. harvesting in order to replant more mixed-species), forest measures can lead to temporary reduction of carbon storage and sequestration capacity. Forest management has so far been regarded as sustainable, even if the carbon stocks and sequestration capacity are decreased for a number of years that can be longer than the time intervals used in the Taxonomy for reporting the steady progress in carbon storage. Also climate change can impede forest growth and consequently reduce the carbon storage capacity in the coming decades. Management of such forests cannot result in an increasing above ground carbon stock and therefore would not fulfill this sustainability criterion. In essence, the requirements seem to be at odds with the natural dynamics of forest growth and the different stages they go through in their long cycle.

The shifting focus of the role of forests and the new definition of sustainable forest management stated in these two policy documents raises the following questions:

- Are the suggested policies helping to utilize fully the potential which EU forests and forest sector have for climate mitigation and adaptation, and the different measures which are likely to be implied in the Member States depending on the structure of their forests and forest sector?
- Is the new approach paving the way towards confrontations between different uses of forests, rather than helping to avoid them? Are the policies in line with maximizing the potential synergies and minimizing trade-offs between different functions of forests, e.g. between biodiversity and bioeconomy (see Hetemäki et al. 2017)?
- How well are the suggested actions in line with the views of IPCC (2018) on the multiple role of forests in mitigating climate change, or the different roles forests play in achieving the SDGs? Or with the other science-based reports pointing to the multiple roles European forests need to play in climate mitigation and in moving towards more sustainable economy (e.g. Berndes et al. 2016, Hetemäki et al. 2017, Leskinen et al. 2018, Nabuurs et al. 2015, Wolfslehner et al. 2016)?

In short, it appears that the new approach adopted by the European Commission in forest-related policies takes a rather narrow view on the potential role the European forest-based sector can play in helping climate change mitigation and reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. It tends to see more problems than opportunities in the EU forest-based sector. Moreover, the connection of mitigation to climate adaptation in forests and what measures it requires seems missing (e.g. the role of forest disturbances and adaptation to these).

The Commission's shifting focus of the role of forests may also bring new risks for achieving goals in other EU policies, as demonstrated by the following examples of the EU industry, energy and agricultural policies.

5.2.2 Industry policy

The renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy from 2017 aims to maintain and reinforce Europe's industrial leadership in the age of globalisation, sustainability challenges and rapid technological change. It strives to facilitate investment in new technologies and embrace changes brought on by increased digitisation and the transition to a low-carbon and more circular economy. To implement this strategy, an Industry

2030 High Level Industrial Roundtable was established by the European Commission in December 2017 that provided in June 2019 its final report, 'A vision for industry until 2030'. This envisages an industrial transformation that takes full account of the global Sustainable Development Goals. A new European industrial model must ensure Europe remains a leader in technology, innovation and sustainability. A particular focus on developing strategic value chains and value-creating networks is recommended. Europe's industry should become climate-neutral, circular and resource-efficient, with reliable access to low carbon energy and raw materials.

In 2018, the Strategic Forum for Important Projects of Common European Interest was established to identify key strategic value chains in Europe and propose a common vision for joint actions and investments between the EU, Member States and industry. These strategic value chains are interlinked and integrated industrial activities with great potential to contribute to Europe's green and digital transformation, and to improve Europe's industrial competitiveness. The forum selected 6 strategic value chains, one of them low-CO_2 emission industry. This includes the chemicals industry that should develop new chemical production plants based on non-fossil feedstocks, like sustainable biomass. Besides being an alternative for fossil raw materials, biomass will have a role in balancing the energy use in processes and for negative emissions in combination with carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS). The use of alternative feedstocks from biomass and other materials is key to the reduction of CO_2 emissions for the chemical industry and especially the reduced usage of fossil carbon sources for petrochemicals. An appropriate EU regulatory framework should be created that supports the deployment of low CO_2 emissions technologies, including securing the supply of materials for the energy transition and the low CO_2 emissions industry.

In November 2019, the High Level Group on Energy Intensive Industries published the masterplan on the transformation of EU energy-intensive industries to enable a climate neutral, circular economy by 2050. Among others, the chemical and pulp and paper industries are also included. Ensuring access to alternative feedstock sources by promoting the use of renewable and (carbon-based) recyclables beyond energy production is identified as a strategic priority.

In parallel to the energy-intensive industries, in November 2019 the forest-based industries in the EU presented a "Forest-based Industries 2050: a vision for sustainable choices in a climate-friendly future". The European forest-based industries, as defined in this document, include the wood working industries, the industries manufacturing pulp, paper and paper products, the furniture, printing and bioenergy industries. They jointly aim to be the most competitive, innovative and sustainable provider of net-zero carbon solutions for a climate neutral Europe. An important precondition to successfully reach this 2050 vision is the supply of raw material in the right quantity and quality. To this aim, the provision of secondary raw materials will have to be increased by boosting material collection and recycling. At the same time, the industry will still need primary raw materials, provided sustainably from available wood resources and without compromising other forest functions and services. With support from research and innovation, an increase in the sustainable harvesting possibilities in Europe of at least 30% by 2050 from today's levels is envisaged.

The European Green Deal includes a 'Renovation wave' initiative for the building sector and a Circular Economy Action Plan, including a sustainable products initiative and particular focus on resource intense sectors such as textiles, construction and plastics. For both initiatives, wood as feedstock and wooden products will be important contributors.

In summary, more use of sustainably sourced biomass for energy generation and material production is stated as a key element for the future development of EU industries. This is in line with the intentions of the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy. Biomass from sustainably managed forests can provide an important share of the alternative feedstock needed, avoiding the competition for food and feed uses agricultural biomass faces.

5.2.3 Energy policy

In recent years the EU has agreed a comprehensive update of its energy policy framework to facilitate the transition away from fossil fuels towards cleaner energy, and to deliver on the EU's Paris Agreement commitments for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The changes will provide an important contribution to the EU's long-term strategy of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Renewable energy sources are a crucial element of this future policy. The original renewable energy directive from 2009 requires the EU to fulfil at least 20% of its total energy needs and at least 10% of transport fuels from renewable sources by 2020. In December 2018, the revised renewable energy directive entered into force, establishing a new binding renewable energy target for 2030 of at least 32% of the total final energy consumption, with a clause for a possible upwards revision by 2023. It also establishes sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions saving criteria for biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels.

The European Green Deal strives for a higher greenhouse gas emission reductions target for 2030 than previously agreed, namely 50% reduction on CO_2 emissions relative to 1990 level (earlier it was 40%). Further decarbonising of the energy system is critical to reach these climate objectives. The power sector should be based largely on renewable sources. The EU's energy supply needs to be secure and affordable for consumers and businesses.

In 2017, about 14% of the EU gross inland energy consumption came from renewables and biofuels, of which about 62% were produced from biofuels and renewable waste. Forestry accounts for more than 60% of all EU domestic biomass supplied for energy purposes. The domestically sourced biomass supply will need to grow to meet the 2020 and 2030 targets. Although the supply from agriculture and from waste will need to grow much more than the supply from forests and forest-based industries, forest biomass will continue to be an important contributor to energy security and the mitigation of energy poverty.

5.2.4 Common Agricultural Policy

In June 2018, the European Commission presented the legislative proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020. The future CAP must be modernised to meet broad new challenges and to be more coherent with other EU policies to maximise its contribution to the Sustainable Development Golas. It will need to support the transition towards a fully sustainable agricultural sector and the development of vibrant rural areas, especially in view of emerging opportunities for action in the areas of trade, the

bioeconomy, renewable energy, the circular and the digital economies. Significant synergies will be obtained by including, for each Member State, under one strategic framework of the CAP Strategic Plan the implementation of interventions also supporting other EU policies, like climate, environment and the bioeconomy. The European Green Deal requires that these plans incentivise forest managers to preserve, grow and manage forests sustainably.

Strengthening the socio-economic fabric of rural areas is stipulated as one of the three general objectives of the new CAP. To achieve this, specific objectives are stated, amongst them

- support for viable farm income and resilience across the Union to enhance food security;
- contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as sustainable energy;
- attract young farmers and facilitate business development in rural areas;
- promote employment, growth, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including bioeconomy and sustainable forestry.

Forest-based value chains could strongly contribute to achieving all these objectives, in particular by, but not limited to, their crucial role in the bioeconomy. Forest management and the processing of wood are important contributors to the economic development, employment, innovation, identity and dynamism of rural regions. The proper inclusion of forests and the forestry sector is crucial, in particular to

- strengthen the contributions of land-based production systems to the bioeconomy. They have to respond to growing biomass needs for food and non-food applications and to demands from other sectors/policies on ecosystem services generated by the same natural systems.
- support prosperous territorial development adapted to ongoing changes in the rural and urban landscapes, increasing their resilience.

The three policies presented above (industry, energy, agriculture) will need biomass from sustainably managed forests to achieve their objectives. How these objectives are made compatible with the forest-related polices outlined in the European Green Deal is still unclear.

Enabling EU forests and the forest-based sector to optimally contribute to relevant EU policies in view of upcoming challenges will need innovation, investments and the forest owners' interest in active management of their resources. Today, mainly selling wood enables forest owners to generate income. Maybe in future significant income can be generated by also selling carbon sequestration and biodiversity. However, in the current situation, the impediments of providing wood to markets pose risks for the economic sustainability of forestry. Moreover, the impacts on economic sectors interested to change to renewable biobased feedstock in their transition to a more sustainable and climate-friendly business model, as requested by the EU policies above, have to be carefully assessed. The European Green Deal proposal has not yet addressed these issues.

In general, the role that current and new forest-based products need to play in the transformation to a low-carbon and sustainable economy is still missing in the Green Deal. The focus on environmental aspects is too narrow, e.g. by failing to see the necessity of using renewable biological resources to substitute for fossil and non-renewable ones. Moreover, there is a lack of acknowledgement of the high relevance of

wood products in the daily life of EU citizens, and of the important role of markets in the decision-making of forest owners, managers and the wood-processing industries.

5.3 Green Deal: a promising start, but not yet there

The Green Deal proposal's strength is that it responds to the call. It reflects the mood in the EU Member States, where environmental issues are perceived to be more important and urgent. The Deal represents also a new kind of sustainability thinking within the Commission, which acknowledges that increased efforts are needed for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The main objective of the Green Deal is the EU's carbon neutrality by 2050. There is broad consensus on this goal, but not necessarily on all the means to achieve it.

The European Green Deal includes several actions directly affecting forests and the forest-based sector. But from the forest sector perspective, the Green Deal proposal has still too narrow a scope. Many of the potential problems related to forests are well acknowledged, but the opportunities are scarcely mentioned. There is a need to develop Green Deal policies to better utilize the opportunities that EU forests and the forest sector offer to contribute to a low carbon economy and Sustainable Development Goals, also via circular bioeconomy. Neither are forests in EU countries carved from the same tree. Therefore, one-size-fits-all policies are not necessarily the best for all Member States. The Green Deal proposal needs to better acknowledge this in its future development.

The European Commission has set a very ambitious timetable for the Green Deal (see Annex below). Some important policies and legislation should be finalized in the first half of 2020 or until the end of 2020. Given the complexity of forest-related issues and the long time period that must necessarily be assessed, this timetable poses serious challenges for sound decision making to reach an optimal balance of all the benefits which forests provide to society, not only a few. Maximizing synergies and minimizing potential trade-offs between the diverse needs for forests in society, and the impacts from dynamic natural conditions, markets and societal developments, requires a thorough analysis, forest sector know-how, and the involvement of stakeholders. Using more time to engage forest sector expertise and stakeholder views would allow better use of the evidence-base, and a wider perspective of the forest sector's potential to contribute to the Green Deal's strategic objective: carbon neutrality by 2050. This would also create more shared ownership for the policy, and therefore also more effective policy implementation. In summary, the Green Deal proposal is a promising start, but still needs clear improvements

Finally, the European Green Deal raises also a more fundamental question for the EU forest sector. With the Deal, the EU has an increasing influence on each Member State's forest sector and stakeholders. Indeed, the Deal is another good example of how the EU is *de facto* formulating and implementing forest policy, even though this is the competence of the Member States. The Green Deal proposal, and the history of forest-related policy making in the EU, also indicate that there is a need for better strategic vison and policy coordination on forests. Coordination of forest-related issues between different services of the European Commission and with the Member States is weak. It is also problematic that the European

Commission has strikingly scarce forest expertise. This is reflected e.g. in the narrow understanding of some key forest sector features in the Green Deal and the Taxonomy proposals. Without official forest policy status, the forest sector's ability to influence its own cause in the EU is also limited. The Commission's preparatory work and the forest-based sector suffer from these shortcomings. The current situation is not optimal, and improvements are needed.

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Annex to the Communication on the European Green Deal Roadmap - Key actions

(selection of activities of relevance for forests and the forest-based sector)

Actions	Timetable
Climate ambition	
Proposal on a European 'Climate Law' enshrining the 2050 climate neutrality objective	March 2020
Comprehensive plan to increase the EU 2030 climate target to at least 50% and towards 55% in a responsible way	Summer 2020
Proposals for revisions of relevant legislative measures to deliver on the increased climate ambition, following the review of Emissions Trading System Directive; Effort Sharing Regulation; Land use, land use change and forestry Regulation; Energy Efficiency Directive; Renewable Energy Directive; CO_2 emissions performance standards for cars and vans	June 2021
New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change	2020/2021
Clean, affordable and secure energy	
Assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plans	June 2020
Strategy for smart sector integration	2020
'Renovation wave' initiative for the building sector	2020
Industrial strategy for a clean and circular economy	
EU Industrial strategy	March 2020
Circular Economy Action Plan, including a sustainable products initiative and particular focus on resource intense sectors such as textiles, construction, electronics and plastics	March 2020
Initiatives to stimulate lead markets for climate neutral and circular products in energy intensive industrial sectors	From 2020
Sustainable and smart mobility	
Assessment of legislative options to boost the production and supply of sustainable alternative fuels for the different transport modes	From 2020

Greening the Common Agricultural Policy / 'Farm to Fork' Strategy	
Examination of the draft national strategic plans, with reference to the ambitions of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy	2020-2021
Preserving and protecting biodiversity	
EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030	March 2020
Measures to address the main drivers of biodiversity loss	From 2021
New EU Forest Strategy	2020
Measures to support deforestation-free value chains	From 2020
Mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies	
Renewed sustainable finance strategy	Autumn 2020
Review of the relevant State aid guidelines, including the environment and energy State aid guidelines	2021
Align all new Commission initiatives in line with the objectives of the Green Deal and promote innovation	From 2020
Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in the European Semester	From 2020
Working together – a European Climate Pact	
Launch of the European Climate Pact	March 2020
Proposal for an 8th Environmental Action Programme	2020

6. Conclusions

The year 2019 was the 2nd year of operation of the new cycle of MDTF (2018-2020). In 2019, two ThinkForest seminars and two *From Science to Policy* reports were published. In addition, MDTF also organised a seminar on "China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy" together with the Embassy of Finland in Beijing on 14 November 2019. Work to still enlarge the MDTF with new countries in the future also took place in 2019 (with Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia). The cooperation with the European Commission continued, for example, with the bioeconomy work.

Despite acknowledging the difficulties of measuring the impact of MDTF science-policy support work (the impacts are likely to be gradual and at least partly indirect), the indicators related to ThinkForest event participation, publication downloads, requested expert presentations, statements and hearings based on the studies, social media activities, and direct communication from the network members, all indicate great interest in MDTF work and activities.

The importance of the MDTF work was acknowledged or disseminated in 2019 in many policy and important fronts. For example, a joint declaration by the Ministers of Agriculture of seven Eastern European countries called for strengthened international cooperation and contributions to EFI's work in improving resilience and adaptation of forests to climate change; the EFI Director had several meetings with His Royal Highness Prince of Wales (HRH), and in those meetings discussed also the work based on MDTF publications; Vice Minister National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China acknowledged in Beijing on 14 November the important role EFI is playing in advancing the circular bioeconomy, and providing the expertise and support for this also in China; the lead author of the "Living with bark beetles" presented the study results and implications also in the Czech Republic Parliament. In summary, both the direct and indirect impacts of the MDTF work carried out in past years and in 2019 have had significant impact.

Since there is no other similar platform, or other organization, engaging in such a pan-European forest-based sector related science-policy work, it is difficult to compare (benchmark) the work to others. In fact, exactly because of this, many policy makers and EFI Associate Member organizations have again expressed their interest to support EFI MDTF work. Given these responses and the information provided in this Report, the MDTF work appears to have reached well the set objectives for 2019.

Finally, the EFI Policy Support Facility team gratefully acknowledges the donors and Steering Committee for supporting the work, and providing strategic guidance for it. All the members of the Steering Committee have been very supportive. We wish to thank the Steering Committee and its Chair in 2019, Tomas Krejzar, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic for efficient work and support. Also, we wish to thank all the scientists who have contributed to the studies and activities in 2019! The support from the EFI Director has also been very important for this work.

Annexes

Table 1: Online statistics

Publication statistics

Title	Publication date	No of copies printed and distributed in 2019	No of electronic copies downloaded 2019	Lifetime copies downloaded
FSTP9 (Plantation forests)	Dec 2019	600	105	105
FSTP8 (Bark beetles)	Apr 2019	600	4,504	4504
FSTP 7 (Substitution effects of wood-based products)	Nov 2018	n/a	2,679	4,345
FSTP 6 (Climate-Smart Forestry)	Mar 2018	n/a	1,699	3,214
WSCTU 8 (Forest-based bioeconomy), plus Summary	Dec 2017	n/a	2,595	8,175
FSTP 5 (Circular bioeconomy) (EN, CN, RU)	Oct 2017	600 (CN and RU)	2,122	7,069
FSTP 5 Summaries (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, CN, RU)	Nov 2017-Apr 18	n/a	1,867	3,928
WSCTU 7 (Natura 2000) plus Summary	Sept 2017	n/a	497	4,076
FSTP 4 (Forest bioeconomy indicators)	Nov 2016	n/a	2,596	8,278
FSTP 3 (Forest biomass, carbon neutrality)	Oct 2016	n/a	1,268	16,799
FSTP 2 (A new role for forests)	Dec 2015	n/a	751	11,590
FSTP 1 (EUTR-FLEGT)	Apr 2015	n/a	726	8,761

Policy support electronic newsletter

Three editions of the policy support newsletter, *Science Informing Policy-making* were sent by email to subscribers during 2019. Note – a fourth edition was sent in early January 2020, due to the ThinkForest event in late December 2019.

Edition	Date	Number of subscribers	% read
1-2020	08.01.2010	945	39.3%
3-2019	13.09.2019	869	35.1%
2-2019	05.06.2019	851	46.0%
1-2019	23.04.2019	837	49.3%

Electronic event invitations

Four event invitations were sent by email to subscribers during 2019:

Event	Date	Number of subscribers	% read
Watch the livestream: Thinkforest Seminar on the Future of plantation forests in Europe	16.12.2019	731	41.9%
Register now: Thinkforest Seminar on the Future of plantation forests in Europe	03.12.2019	729	45.4%
Join via live stream: ThinkForest seminar on How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe, 4 April 2019	03.04.2019	616	45.8%
Register now: ThinkForest seminar on How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe, 4 April 2019	28.01.2019	590	47.0%

Social media

Twitter

1,629 tweets were sent out during the course of 2019, and by the end of the year, the EFI Twitter account had 8,853 followers. This represents an increase of 1,422 new followers during 2019.

	Tweets	Gain in followers
Total 2019	1,629	1,422
Total 2018	1,517	1,315
Total 2017	1,995	1,288
Total 2016	1,837	1,505
Total 2015	1,803	1,106

EFI's other social media channels were also utilised:

Other channels	No of policy support-related posts, 2019
Linked In	11
Facebook	30

Videos

Two policy support videos were published on the EFI YouTube channel in 2019:

Video	Published	No of views 2019
ThinkForest: The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe	17.12.2019	267
ThinkForest: How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe	04.04.2019	1,388

Previous video material:	Published	No of views 2019	Lifetime views
Climate policy and forest bioeconomy	04.12.2018	335	617
Role of bioeconomy in controlling forest fires	29.05.2018	222	904
Looking ahead to a circular European bioeconomy	07.11.2017	85	808
Implementing Natura 2000 in forests: lessons learned and looking ahead	27.09.2017	41	630
Leading the way to a new European bioeconomy strategy	10.05.2017	351	1,770
Building an innovative and resilient forest bioeconomy	15.11.2016	33	603
Building the bioeconomy: insights from European strategies	08.06.2016	51	978
Climate policy after COP21: Implications for the European forest-based sector	15.03.2016	11	568
7 videos from COP21 event: Climate policy targets – How can European forests contribute?	04.01.2016	129	1,198
Towards Paris 2015: How can the forest sector contribute?	Oct 2015	23	906
Bioeconomy is the future *(Göran Persson)*	Nov 2015	306	3,519
A new role for forests and the forest sector in climate targets *(Gert-Jan Nabuurs)*	Nov 2015	55	774

Website

In March 2018, EFI launched its new website, with a dedicated section for the Policy Support Facility (www.efi.int/policysupport).

This contains three main areas: Our work, ThinkForest and Publications. These pages showcase policy support information, and signpost users to related information which is now integrated into other areas

of the website (eg events, publications, news). The analytics from 2019 show an upturn in both unique visitors and page views, particularly to the ThinkForest area of the website.

Web pages	Page views 2019	Page views 2018	Unique visitors 2019	Unique visitors 2018
Policy support main landing page (policysupport/)	**1,736**	1,405	**1,259**	761
Our work (policysupport/ourwork)	**346**	457	**264**	269
ThinkForest (policysupport/thinkforest/) plus subpages	**10,025**	6,563	**7,458**	1,737
Publications (policysupport/publications/)	**702**	576	**545**	291

Table 2: Number of ThinkForest and other participants according to background

Participant background	**ThinkForest: How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe** 4 April 2019, Prague	**ThinkForest: The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe** 17 December 2019, Brussels	**EFI event: China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy** 14 November, Beijing
European Parliament	-	-	-
European Commission	-	4	3
Council of the EU	-	-	-
Ministries	27	5	6
Embassies, perm. representations	-	5	6
Forest industry	4	13	7
Forest owner	10	2	-
NGO	7	7	5
Other stakeholder group	7	17	7
Research	55	13	4
Other *(e.g. international org. incl. EFI)*	16	6	7
Media	6	-	4
TOTAL	**132**	**69**	**49**

Number of MDTF countries represented in ThinkForest/other related events
(out of 10 countries)

Participant background	**How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe** 4 April 2019, Prague	**The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe** 17 December 2019, Brussels	**EFI event: China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy** 14 November, Beijing
Ministries in total. From MDTF countries.	27 16	5 4	6 -
Embassies, perm. representations in total. From MDTF countries.	- -	2 1	6 4

Table 3: Stakeholder follow-up articles related to events and publications

ThinkForest event on How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe, 4 April 2019, Prague		
Publisher / Stakeholder	**Specified, article name**	**Link**
Norwegian government	Insektskader fører til at skogen i Europa dør	https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/insektskader-forer-til-at-skogen-i-europa-dor/id2640164/
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	Kalamitu v lesoch zvládneme, ak budeme postupovať v súlade s vedeckými poznatkami	http://www.mpsr.sk/sk/index.php?navID=1&id=14084&start
Czech Ministry of Agriculture (Ministerstvo zemědělství České republiky)	Ministr Toman zahájil mezinárodní konferenci ThinkForest Jak odpovědět na poškození lesů v Evropě	Facebook
Forest Owners Association of Lithuania	Kaip tvarkytis su dažnėjančiomis ir gausėjančiomis kenkėjų invazijomis miškuose?	https://forest.lt/go.php/lit/Kaip-tvarkytis-su-daznejanciomis-ir-gausejanciomis-kenkeju-invazijomis-miskuose/6284
Friends of the Earth (Czech Republic)	Ministerstvo zemědělství nezvládlo rajonizaci lesů	http://hnutiduha.cz/aktualne/ministerstvo-zemedelstvi-nezvladlo-rajonizaci-lesu
Friends of the Earth (Czech Republic)	Boj s kůrovcem dosavadními způsoby je zbytečný a škodlivý, vzkazují vědci z mezinárodní konference vládě a lesníkům	http://www.hnutiduha.cz/aktualne/boj-s-kurovcem-dosavadnimi-zpusoby-je-zbytecny-skodlivy-vzkazuji-vedci-z-mezinarodni
NIBIO	Klimaendringer baner vei for barkbillene i Europa	https://www.nibio.no/nyheter/klimaendringer-baner-vei-for-barkbillene-i-europa
Skogsnorge	Klimaendringer baner vei for barkbillene i Europa	http://www.skogsnorge.no/
Česká lesnická společnost (Czech Forestry Society)	Jak reagovat na narušení lesů v Evropě?	http://www.cesles.cz/163-jak-reagovat-na-naruseni-lesu-v-evrope
Silvarium.cz	Konference EFI v Praze: jak reagovat na narušení lesů v Evropě?	http://www.silvarium.cz/lesnictvi/konference-efi-v-praze-jak-reagovat-na-naruseni-lesu-v-evrope
Slovenia Forest Service	Evropski forum ThinkForest v Pragi na temo soočanja z naravnimi ujmami in njihovimi posledicami v gozdovih	http://www.zgs.si/aktualno/novice/news_article/evropski_forum_thinkforest_v_pragi_na_temo_soocanja_z_naravnimi_ujmami_in_njihovimi_posled_541/index.html
Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information	Vedecké poznatky by mali prispieť k riešeniu kalamity v lesoch	http://vedanadosah.cvtisr.sk/vedecke-poznatky-by-mali-prispiet-k-rieseniu-kalamity-v-lesoch

ThinkForest event on 17 December 2019		
Publisher / Stakeholder	**Specified, article name**	**Link**
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland	Minister Doyle opens Brussels event on the Future of Plantation Forests in Europe	https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/press/pressreleases/2019/december/title,137142,en.html

Table 4: Media coverage related to events

ThinkForest event on How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe, 4 April 2019, Prague			
Publisher	**Type of publication**	**Article name**	**Link**
AlphaGalileo	Global news distributor	International cooperation needed to deal with forest disturbances	https://www.alphagalileo.org/en-gb/Print/itemId/177610/userId/-1/cultureCode/en-GB
Reuters	Global news agency	Climate change to blame as bark beetles ravage central Europe's forests	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-centraleurope-environment-barkbeetle/climate-change-to-blame-as-bark-beetles-ravage-central-europes-forests-idUSKCN1S21LA
Hospodářské noviny	Czech daily newspaper	Současný způsob boje s kůrovcem nefunguje, zjistil tým vědců. Když se lesy nezmění, kalamit se nezbavíme, říkají	https://domaci.ihned.cz/c1-66547730-soucasny-zpusob-boje-s-kurovcem-nefunguje-zjistil-tym-vedcu-kdyz-se-lesy-nezmeni-kalamit-se-nezbavime-rikaji
Hospodářské noviny	Czech daily newspaper	Česká "lesní fabrika" zkrachovala. Příkladem nám může jít Bavorsko, kde si s kůrovcem poradili, říká děkan brněnské lesnické fakulty Jankovský	https://domaci.ihned.cz/c1-66547580-ceska-lesni-fabrika-zkrachovala-prikladem-nam-muze-jit-bavorsko-kde-si-s-kurovcem-poradili-rika-dekan-brnenske-lesnicke-fakulty-jankovsky
Deník	Czech regional daily newspaper	Vědci varují: Sázejte různé druhy stromů, jinak kůrovec nezmizí	https://www.denik.cz/z_domova/vedci-varuji-sazejte-ruzne-druhy-jinak-kurovec-nezmizi-20190403.html
Ekolist.cz	Czech web portal	Hnutí DUHA: Boj s kůrovcem dosavadními způsoby je zbytečný a škodlivý, vzkatují vědci z mezinárodní konference vládě a lesníkům. Rajonizace lesů z pera ministra Miroslava Tomana se jejich doporučeními neřídí a kalamitu neřeší	https://ekolist.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/tiskove-zpravy/boj-s-kurovcem-dosavadnimi-zpusoby-je-zbytecny-a-skodlivy-vzkatuji-vedci-z-mezinarodni-konference-vlade-a
Ekolist.cz	Czech web portal	Hnutí DUHA: Ministerstvo zemědělství nezvládlo rajonizaci lesů. Letos proto hrozí zvýšené použití nebezpečné chemie	https://ekolist.cz/cz/zpravodajstvi/tiskove-zpravy/ministerstvo-zemedelstvi-nezvladlo-rajonizaci-lesu.letos-proto-hrozi-zvysene-pouziti-nebezpecne-chemie
Radio Praha	Czech radio	Experts: Bark beetle infestations to get worse	https://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/experts-bark-beetle-infestations-to-get-worse
Metsälehti	Finnish forestry newspaper	Metsäinstituutti haluaa uuden mallin	https://www.metsalehti.fi/uutiset/metsainstituutti-haluaa-uuden-mallin-kaarnakuoriaisten-torjuntaan/

		kaarnakuoriaisten torjuntaan	
Metsälehti	Finnish forestry newspaper	Kirjanpainaja on sotkenut Euroopan puumarkkinat	https://www.metsalehti.fi/uutiset/kirjanpainaja-on-sotkenut-euroopan-puumarkkinat/
Loz.news (Lokale Online Zeitung fur das Herzogtum Lauenburg)	German online newspaper	Grüne warnen vor Gifteinsatz in den Forsten	https://www.loz-news.de/herzogtum-lauenburg/4357-gruene-warnen-vor-gifteinsatz-in-den-forsten
Bondebladet	Norwegian weekly newspaper	Følger barkbillens herjinger med argusøyne	https://www.bondebladet.no/landbruk/folger-barkbillens-herjinger-med-argusoyne/
WebNoviny	Slovak news portal	Zmena klímy zasahuje aj lesy na Slovensku, okrem požiarov ich ohrozujú nové druhy škodcov	https://www.webnoviny.sk/zmena-klimy-zasahuje-aj-lesy-na-slovensku-okrem-poziarov-ich-ohrozuju-nove-druhy-skodcov/
WebNoviny	Slovak news portal	Kalamitu v lesoch zvládneme, ak budeme postupovať v súlade s vedeckými poznatkami	https://www.webnoviny.sk/kalamitu-v-lesoch-zvladneme-ak-budeme-postupovat-v-sulade-s-vedeckymi-poznatkami/
Nas Vidiek	Slovak news portal	Les stojí pred novými výzvami. Ohrozuje ho zmena klímy aj úplne noví škodcovia	https://nasvidiek.sk/les-stoji-pred-novymi-vyzvami-ohrozuje-ho-zmena-klimy-aj-uplne-novi-skodcovia/
LES medium	Slovak wood magazine and journal	Kalamity v lesoch zvládneme, ak využijeme vedecké poznatky	http://www.lesmedium.sk/o-com-sa-pise/kalamity-v-lesoch-zvladneme-ak-vyuzijeme-vedecke-poznatky
Norsk Skogbruk	Norwegian trade journal for forestry	Klimaendringer baner vei for barkbillene i Europa	http://www.norsk-skogbruk.no/2019/04/12/klimaendringer-baner-vei-for-barkbillene-i-europa/

Embassy of Finland – EFI Seminar on China-Europe Forest Bioeconomy, 14 November 2019, Beijing			
China Daily	Chinese daily news	中欧林业生物经济研讨会在京举行	https://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201911/16/WS5dcff6a9a31099ab995ec51e.html
China Pulp and Paper	Magazines publisher	中欧林业生物经济研讨会成功举办	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/eBTJnaf8146crgF_FsuoIA
ChinaPaper.net	News portal	中欧林业生物经济研讨会成功举办	http://www.chinapaper.net/news/show-42492.html

ThinkForest event on The Future of Plantation Forests in Europe, 17 December 2019, Brussels			
EIN Newswire	Press portal	Minister Doyle opens Brussels event on the Future of Plantation Forests in Europe	https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/505078180/minister-doyle-opens-brussels-event-on-the-future-of-plantation-forests-in-europe
Agenparl.eu	Italian politics portal	Minister Doyle opens Brussels event on the Future of Plantation Forests in Europe	https://agenparl.eu/minister-doyle-opens-brussels-event-on-the-future-of-plantation-forests-in-europe/
Irish Examiner	Irish regional newspaper	Forestry expected to have a wide role in economy, Doyle tells audience	https://www.pressreader.com/ireland/irish-examiner/20191219/282144998243713
EU reporter	EU news portal	Green Deal needs plantation forests	https://www.eureporter.co/frontpage/2019/12/19/greendeal-needs-plantation-forests/

Other

Sound Reporting Co-Lab, 11-12 July 201, Poland			
Cornell Chronicle	Cornell University news site	Audio storytelling workshop to train journalists	http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/07/audio-storytelling-workshop-train-journalists#.XSQbZ2WtIiY
Press	Polish journalism magazine/news portal	Outriders oraz dziennikarze z Europy i USA szkolą się w Białowieży z opowiadania dźwiękiem	https://www.press.pl/tresc/57899,w-bialowiezy-dziennikarze-szkola-sie-z-opowiadania-dzwiekiem

STT / Audiomedia Oy 27.06.2019	Finnish news agency	Metsäpolitiikassa voidaan yhdistää taloudelliset ja ilmastopolitiikan tavoitteet	https://www.sttinfo.fi/tiedote/metsapolitiikassa-voidaan-yhdistaa-taloudelliset-ja-ilmastopolitiikan-tavoitteet?publisherId=4627873&releaseId=69861269
Forest.fi 17.06.2019	News from Finnish forest & forest sector	Janez Potočnik, ThinkForest: Forest policy can combine economic and climate policy goals	https://forest.fi/article/janez-potocnik-thinkforest-forest-policy-can-combine-economic-and-climate-policy-goals/

Table 5

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