



EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE

Annual Report 2015

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of swirling colors in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange. Overlaid on this are several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, in light blue and white. The overall effect is dynamic and modern.

2015:

Science supporting
policy making



Visuaalinen viestintätoimisto Salama

Overview

During 2015 EFI's research and policy support activities continued to have considerable impact in society, with many significant steps taken.

2015 was the hottest year on record globally, but it also marked a historical turning point in relation to the great challenge of our times: combating climate change. The Paris climate agreement will now set the political context for the transition towards a low carbon economy. This groundbreaking agreement will shape our operating environment in many respects. It particularly represents an opportunity for our network to demonstrate the importance of forest research as a vital basis for any successful climate change mitigation and adaptation policy. EFI's From Science to Policy report on *"A new role for forests and the forest sector in the EU post-2020 climate targets"*, written jointly by several of our member organizations, is a very good example of our strength as a Network and the new impact EFI can have via its Policy support.

2015 was additionally a significant year for us since the foundations for development of EFI into a more robust and effective science-policy platform were also laid.

The new Multi-Donor Trust Fund set up to enhance our policy support work, with 8 EFI Member Countries already committing more than one million euros, has already demonstrated its unique value as a flexible science-policy platform that can help our Member Countries and organizations to address transnational issues. The successful work done by EFI under the Trust Fund to link knowledge to action has been duly noted by several EU commissioners and ministers.

The need to address social challenges is a key issue behind our research. This is reflected in our increasing cross-sectoral research activities and foresight work.

Another of our priorities is to facilitate the establishment of the Pan-European Forest Research Area. In this context important actions have been taken to increase the involvement of scientists and organizations from Russia and Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine).

New arrangements for our Regional Offices have been agreed to help them develop sustainably in years to come. The new framework will enable them to pro-actively develop forest research across Europe and articulate the European science-policy dialogue on the basis of a deep understanding of regional differences. Our host countries have already responded positively to these changes by committing new funding to help realize the full potential of EFI's Regional Offices.

We also made important advances in relation to our finances during 2015. Structural and operational changes enabled us to end the year with a surplus, giving us a good platform for building a more robust organization in the future.

I would like to thank all of our Member Countries, member organizations and partners for the commitment and support they have shown during my first year as the director of this inspiring organization.

Marc Palahí
Director



Visuaalinen viestintäomisto Salama



Research and

During 2015 EFI increasingly addressed cross-sectoral issues in cooperation with land use experts and professionals from various other disciplines.

Highlights included progress on the AGFORWARD project, which focuses on the role of agroforestry in rural development. EFI has now provided accurate estimates of the current extent of agroforestry in Europe, as an essential basis for future policy development. After mapping areas under agroforestry in the EU using Eurostat's land use and land cover data, EFI's experts concluded that the total area under agroforestry is about 24 million ha (5.7% of EU territory). Besides highlighting where agroforestry is currently practiced, the assessment indicates where there are opportunities for increasing this sustainable land use practice.

The development of a sustainable, climate-neutral and resource-efficient forest-based bioeconomy is the focus of the FORBIO project, launched in 2015 by EFI and several of our member organizations. The project aims to study and develop means to improve resource-efficiency and climate-neutrality in the sustainable management and utilization of forests in Finland, while also finding ways to adapt to the changing environment. EFI is particularly leading work on opportunities for the Finnish forest bioeconomy as a part of global change and the EU.

EFI has also become involved in the EU Horizon 2020 project SIMRA, which focuses on social innovation in marginalised rural areas, aiming to find new ways to solve shared problems and achieve common goals through closer collaboration. SIMRA also seeks to advance our understanding of social innovation in agriculture,

- 44 peer-reviewed scientific publications produced
- involved in 57 projects together with 53% of our member organizations

forestry and rural development, with a focus on the Mediterranean region. EFI is leading analyses of related case studies, while also assessing innovation actions and monitoring their environmental impacts more widely.



Saku Ruuska



Saku Ruuska

Information

The launch of the new EU research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 was an important development in 2015. EFI conducted a comparative analysis of EU-funded forestry-related research projects realized under the last three EU research programmes, identifying a clear thematic shift towards topics related to the bioeconomy and industry.

Our In-Tree project focuses on tree species introduced into European forests, and how they are managed. The main outcome of the project will be a book explaining related challenges and opportunities.

EFI's Atlantic European Regional Office (EFIATLANTIC) set up a new task force for the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) to focus on the Sustainable Management of Planted Forests for a Greener Future. This was done to follow up on the conclusion of the 3rd International Congress on Planted Forests (ICPF 2013) that planted forests

are part of the solution for meeting increasing demands on forest resources while preserving natural areas. The task force will foster international scientific collaboration, link IUFRO scientific activities more closely to wider society, and coordinate related research programmes.

EFI's research activities also extended beyond Europe. The SAFARI project aims to strengthen the global coherence of forest policies and test sustainable forest management approaches that can foster favorable interactions between the two global processes FLEGT (Forest Law En-

forcement, Governance and Trade) and REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). The project will comparatively analyse local and national cases in Indonesia, Suriname/Guyana and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. EFI is implementing SAFARI together with our SURF Project Centre (Supporting the global implementation of REDD+ and FLEGT).

EFI's RUSFOR Project Centre (Forest Policy and Governance in Russia) analyzed and summarized the best approaches, practices and achievements in forest governance and legislation for recommended application throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This assignment was given to EFI by the Inter Parliament Assembly Secretariat of the CIS countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). ■

Policy Support

Thanks to the new Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), EFI can now better identify knowledge gaps related to policy support, anticipate emerging forest issues, generate collective scientific assessments, and maximise the supporting impact of our member organizations on forest-related policy-making at European level. Although EFI had also earlier been active in science-policy support work, the MDTF has enabled us to expand this work and make it more systematic. By the end of 2015, the fund's first year of operation, it had a total of 8 contributing Member Countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway and Sweden).

Four flagship ThinkForest science-policy events were held during the year, enabling topics such as climate change, biodiversity and forest management to be keenly debated by policy makers, scientists and other stakeholders. A number of new activities were developed, including the new publication series *From Science to Policy*, an online *Science Supporting Policy-making* newsletter, various videos, and the live streaming of ThinkForest seminars.

At the 7th FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference EFI addressed future challenges and opportunities for Europe's forests and the forest-based sector, flagging the need for well-informed science-policy dialogues. To-

gether with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), Biodiversity International and the International Forestry Students' Association, EFI also delivered a joint Scientific Community and Youth Group Statement on the ongoing international negotiations for a legally binding agreement on Europe's forests.

The further development of indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM) was among issues prioritised during preparations for the 7th FOREST EUROPE Conference, held in Madrid in October 2015. Our Central-East and South-East European Regional Office (EFICEEC-EFISEE) contributed substantially to this work.



Two new From Science to Policy reports were published: one assessing the EU's Timber Regulation and FLEGT Action Plan; and the other analysing the forest sector's role in the EU's post-2020 climate targets. As major contributors to these reports EFI Associate Members gained visibility for their expertise. The study related to the EU's climate targets concludes that with the right incentives and investments a significant contribution can be expected from the EU's forests, forestry sector, and forest-based industries. This could result in a combined additional effect – on top of the existing sink and substitution effect – amounting to as much as 9% of the EU's current CO₂ emissions.



Jennifer Jacquemart

Two projects were run to evaluate the goals of FOREST EUROPE and targets for European forests for 2020, investigating how far current indicators can be used to assess progress towards SFM. The results served as an official background document for the Madrid conference.

EFI also contributed to the World Bioeconomy Summit and a G7 meeting on innovative bio-based products. These events improved our visibility among high-level decision makers and representatives of industry and business interested in issues related to Europe's forests in the context of the bioeconomy.

EFI also provides policy support at the regional level, as exemplified by our analysis of bioeconomy strategies for regions in southern Europe, and for Catalonia in particular.

The EU FLEGT Facility, hosted by EFI, supported the negotiation or implementation of Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the EU and 15 tropical timber producing countries. This work, other ongoing efforts in three regions, and our support for the FLEG Bilateral Coordination Mechanism between the EU and China, all helped to combat illegal logging and foster good forest gov-



F. Rademacher

ernance as set out in the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan. Highlights during 2015 included the provision of extensive support to Indonesia and Ghana to speed their progress towards issuing their first FLEGT licences and an interactive map of FLEGT projects.

The EU REDD Facility, also based at EFI, focused on building institutions

and incentives for improving land use governance, improving land tenure and land use planning, and decoupling commodity markets from deforestation. Highlights included the development of REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms in the Republic of the Congo and the creation of Land-Use Planner, an online tool providing useful information for decision makers. ■



Robert Ranaivosoa

Saku Ruusila

Capacity building

A PhD course on the “State of the Art in Payments for Environmental Services and Market-based Instruments” was arranged by EFI’s North European Regional Office (EFINORD) to address general approaches and related case studies, with a special focus on the Nordic countries.

The Careers in Sustainability Excellence (CASTLE) project, funded

through the EU Marie Curie Actions scheme, provided training for sustainability assessment experts. The project’s final conference concluded that product innovation and policy harmonization should be seen as vital instruments for promoting a sustainable bioeconomy. Stronger links and exchanges between science and practice can make a crucial difference when it comes to reaching ambitious targets for smart and green growth.

EFI aims to enhance cooperation between Europe and Russia on forest research by acquiring new knowledge on Russia’s forest sector and its governance, while also building leadership capacity. Over 40 participants from 8 countries have graduated from EFI’s Young Leadership Programme (YLP) since 2014. In 2015 the programme focused on the forest bioeconomy in Russia. ■



Networking

EFI's Annual Conference took a new form in 2015, creating increased opportunities for dialogue and networking. The event brought together over 100 European and Russian forest experts and decision makers in St Petersburg, Russia.

EFI's member organizations highlighted the need to reach outside the forest community to build new part-

nerships related to forests and forest research. Participants felt that EFI could provide two main kinds of support: firstly, by facilitating networking and the establishment of research consortia among member organizations at the European level; and secondly, by maintaining a strong research component at EFI itself, and actively building research partnerships among its network members.

EFI's Mediterranean Regional Office (EFIMED) co-organised the IV Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW) event, whose theme was "Improving livelihoods: the role of Mediterranean forest value chains in a green economy". Some 400 participants explored challenges and opportunities related to the development of value chains based on forests and rangelands, including wood-based and non-wood products and ecosystem services. ■



Georgi Shablovsky



Andreas von Kleinschmitt von Lengefeld



Georgi Shablovsky



Visuallinen viestintätoimisto Salama



Georgi Shablovsky

Outreach

Our scientific communications and policy support work were widely featured in both traditional media and social media. Our social media presence grew considerably, helping us to engage more effectively with policy makers, young scientists and media representatives.

One of the highlights of the year was the publication in Nature magazine of an article "Sustainability: Five steps for managing Europe's forests", which was facilitated by fruitful collaboration between EFI and our member organizations.





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the EFI Annual Report 2015 supplement at www.efi.int

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