



EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE

Annual Report 2016





2016:

Building the new
EFI Strategy 2025
— together with
our network



Visuaalinen viestintätoimisto Salama

Overview

The year 2016 was a turning point with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change coming into force. Both of these agreements contain significant political messages regarding the need to reshape the global economic system to end poverty, protect our planet, and ensure prosperity for all.

However, to transform our economic system we need more than international agreements. We also require new knowledge that can be converted into actions that will build a new economic paradigm. This is the crucial global context that was considered when the European Forest Institute (EFI) prepared its new strategy during 2016. EFI's Strategy 2025 is based on the vision that forests will play a fundamental role in building a sustainable future based on the use of renewable resources.

This new strategy is structured around three interconnected themes – bioeconomy, resilience and governance – that form a framework for our activities which aim to connect knowledge to action. We want to make a difference by achieving three mutually reinforcing goals: an ambitious European forest research area, effective science-informed policies, and increased awareness in society of the importance of forests.

During 2016, EFI was increasingly recognised as a science-policy platform. We

provided scientific knowledge to support dialogues on important policy issues such as climate change, bioenergy, bioeconomy and biodiversity.

Our projects such as INTEGRATE+, Star-Tree and IN-TREE, have produced new knowledge and facilitated unique science-to-practice transnational dialogues on important emerging issues such as integrating biodiversity into forest management, promoting non-wood forest products, and understanding the challenges of invasive species.

During 2016 our membership services were reinforced by introducing new capacity building activities such as short scientific visits for young scientists from our member organisations. Our Young Leadership Programme, focusing on Russia, is recognised as a pioneer initiative that can build bridges between Russia and Europe, while also building capacity in Russia.

Last but not least, EFI ended 2016 with a financial surplus. After three consecutive positive years, EFI's reserves now represent 11% of annual expenditure. This enables us to move on to the implementation of our new strategy with an ambitious plan.

I would like to thank EFI's staff and our Member Countries, Member Organisations and other collaborators for their support and commitment, which helped to make 2016 a successful year for EFI.

Marc Palahí
Director



An ambitious European forest research and innovation area

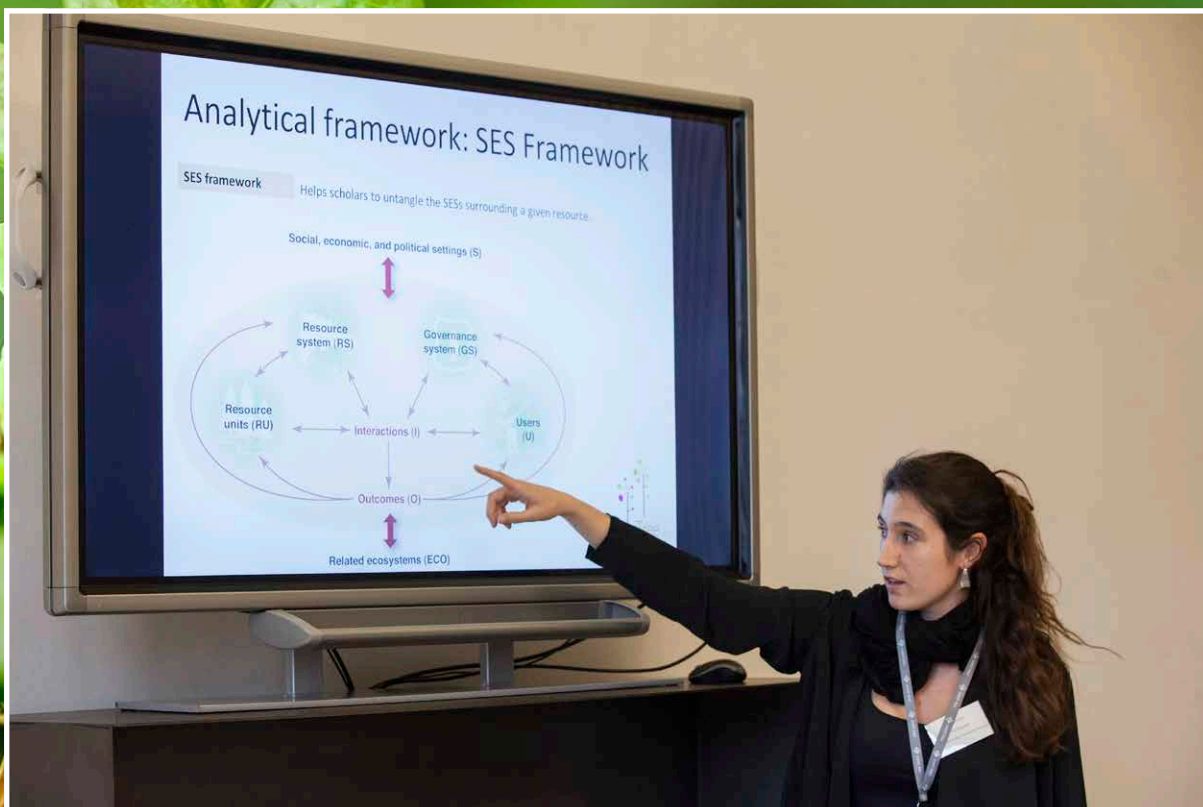
Transnational and interdisciplinary research is important for building a strong pan-European research and innovation area. With growing competition for funding from such EU sources as Horizon 2020 intensifying every year, funding from other sources is becoming more important.

For example, in 2016 the FP7 ERA-NET Sumforest programme issued a call for transnational collaborative research projects under the theme “Sus-

tainable forests for the society of the future”. The call focused on three topics: (i) Comparative assessment of the sustainability performance of forest-based, other renewable and non-renewable raw material-based value chains to inform policy decisions; (ii) Risk resilient forest management – adapting forest management regimes which incorporate risk assessment related to potential climate change impacts to inform policy decisions; and (iii) Investigation, appraisal and evaluation of trade-offs related to the provision of forest eco-

system services to inform policy decisions. Overall 26 eligible proposals were submitted of which 7 were funded.

EFI responded actively to the call and this resulted in two successful project proposals: BenchValue (Benchmarking sustainability performance of value chains using ToSIA, the Tool for Sustainability Impact Assessment); and POLYFORES (Decision making support for forest ecosystem services in Europe – value assessment, synergy effects and trade-offs).



MOWO Productions Judith Contreras



Anna Romo

For EFI Research, 2016 was very much shaped by the successful completion of emblematic projects, such as Integrate+ and StarTree.

15,000 HOUSEHOLDS

FROM 28 COUNTRIES IN EUROPE WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH WILD FOREST PRODUCTS



91.5%

HOUSEHOLDS HAVE CONSUMED WFPs



82%

OF WFPs CONSUMED ARE PURCHASED FROM A SHOP

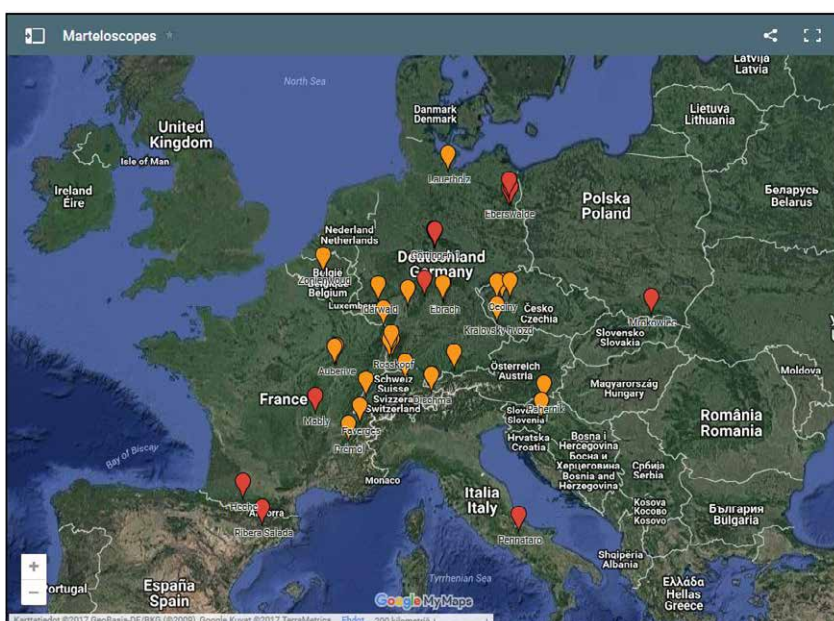


25%

HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS EUROPE PICKED WFPs IN 2015



The first ever Europe-wide household survey on the collection and consumption of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) showed that nearly 90% of households had consumed NWFPs in 2015, and about 25% of households had gathered such products themselves, illustrating how the collection of NWFPs is an important social activity. This survey was carried out by the StarTree project (Multipurpose trees and non-wood forest products: a challenge and opportunity) aimed to increase understanding, spread information, and provide guidance and tools to support stakeholders including forest-owners, resource managers, enterprises and decision-makers.



Integrate+ (Establishing a European network of demonstration sites for the integration of biodiversity conservation into forest management), aimed to establish demonstration and training sites in Europe's main forest types, the so-called marteloscopes. These sites enable the virtual implementation of integrative forest management concepts and transnational exchanges of experiences. The project also developed IT tools that will enable practitioners to perform virtual tree selection exercises under different scenarios and forest management strategies.



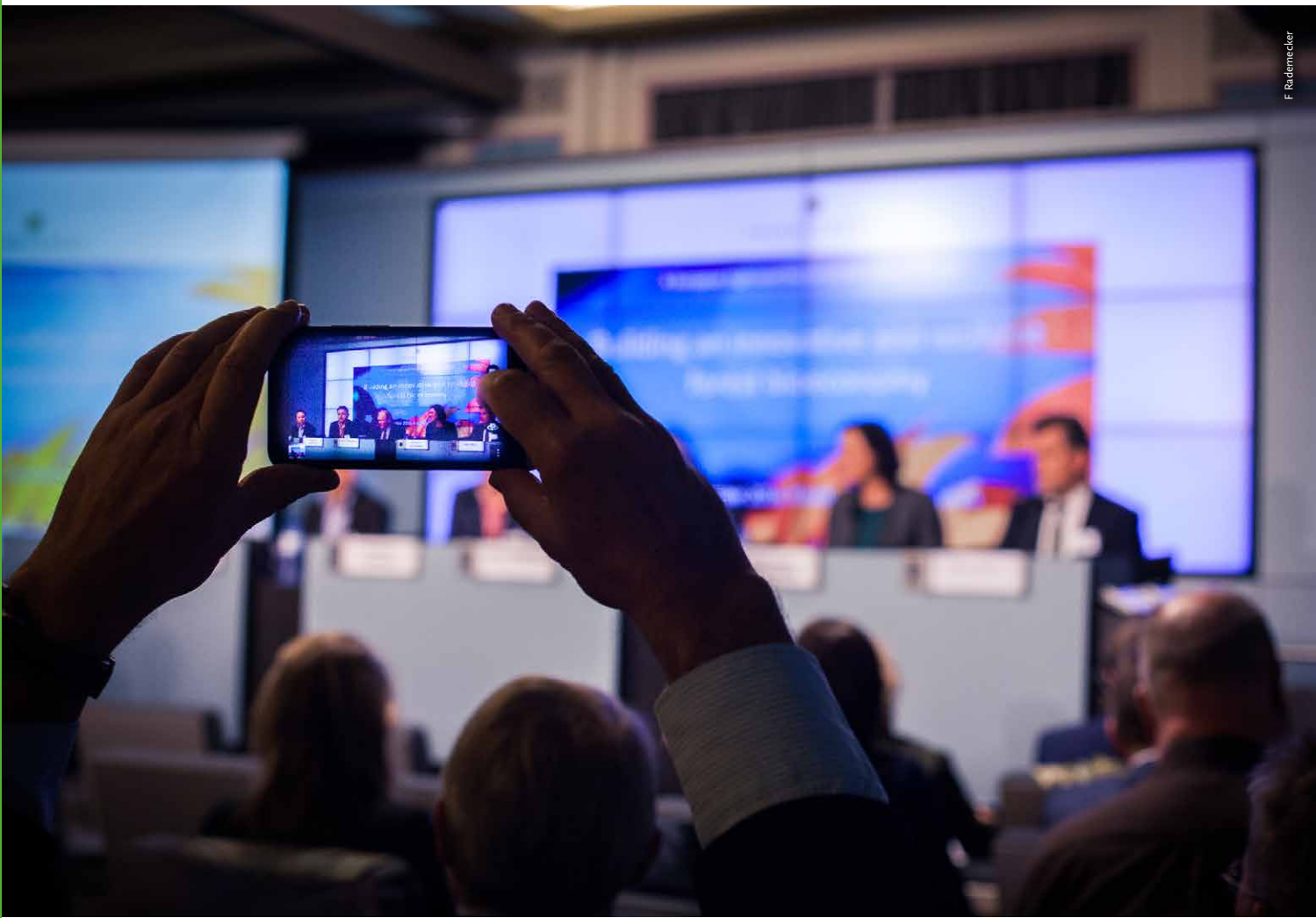
EFI also launched a number of new projects, particularly in the field of forest governance. The Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN) project promotes innovative tools designed to facilitate species identification and the determination of the geographic origin of wood to verify trade claims. The project nicely complements EFI's existing project portfolio (e.g. SAFARI) as well as wider ac-

tivities designed to combat illegal logging, such as the EU FLEGT facility.

Capacity building remains one of the cornerstones of EFI's new strategy. Through this, EFI aims to enhance the capacity of scientists, policy makers and practitioners to tackle future societal, scientific and communication needs. In 2016, the Marie Curie Initial

Training Network's CASTLE project (Careers in Sustainability Excellence) was successfully completed. We also organised the third EFI Young Leadership Programme in Joensuu, Finland, where 20 young professionals with leadership potential learnt about emerging opportunities and challenges faced by the Russian forest sector, especially with regard to governance issues.

In 2016 EFI launched a new programme of grants for short scientific visits. Such visits can strengthen EFI's network by fostering collaboration and exchanges of knowledge. Grants will be issued to early stage researchers from EFI's associate member organisations. During the visits the young researchers will be able to get involved in international level forest research and co-operation. In 2016 five short scientific visits were successfully arranged.



Science-informed policies to address societal challenges and opportunities

The year 2016 was the second year of operations of EFI's Policy Support Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). Newly introduced activities and tools included the ThinkForest Roundtable Discussion event, and ThinkForest events held in MDTF member countries. By the end of the year MDTF

had nine contributing Member Countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain and Sweden).

Two new *From Science to Policy* reports were published: one provided insights into the scientific debate on forest biomass, carbon neutrality and

climate change mitigation; while the other analysed the potential use of forest-based sector indicator sets in Europe. Our online *Science Supporting Policy-making* newsletter reaches almost 2000 subscribers.

Another important milestone in 2016 was that Indonesia became the first



Roni Rekoma / Lehtikuva



S Pugh

Four ThinkForest science-policy events were held on the topics: Climate policy after COP21; Bioeconomy; Forest biomass; and How to build a resilient forest bioeconomy. These events were attended by a total of more than 400 people and followed through online video-streaming by more than 480 people.

country to issue FLEGT licences to timber products it exports to the EU. This was the result of the Indonesia-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), whose implementation the EFI-hosted EU FLEGT Facility supported. FLEGT licences signify that shipments conform with relevant national laws and so meet the requirements of the EU Timber Regulation, which prohibits operators in the EU from placing illegally harvested timber and products derived from illegal timber on the EU market. Operators can therefore place FLEGT-licensed products on the market without conducting further due diligence.

Building bridges with neighbouring regions and strategic partner countries remains high on EFI's strategic agenda – especially with regard to strengthening scientific cooperation with Russia. EFI and the Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO jointly organised an open lecture by former Prime Minister of Finland Mr.



European Commission

Esko Aho bringing together European and Russian representatives leading the bioeconomy agenda to discuss opportunities, barriers, tools and potential areas for collaboration between Europe and Russia within bioeconomy frameworks.

In April, EFI's Director visited China to begin exploring possibilities for European-Chinese co-operation on forest research and science-informed policy support, especially focusing on the development of the bioeconomy in both China and Europe.



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Building awareness of the importance of forests

EFI's new strategy places a stronger focus on awareness raising and communications. The year 2016 will be used as a baseline for monitoring such activities in the coming years. EFI's work has been covered by global media such as the Washington Post and the Huffington Post, reaching almost 100 million readers. We continued to expand our social media activities, with individual staff members becoming increasingly active on Twitter, for instance. Such communications can significantly support our institutional objectives



Marcus Lindner @marcuslindner_ · 21 Oct 2016

Another #VOLANTE contribution got published. Our pathway analysis is a variant of #backcasting with land use scenario models.

Wolfgang Cramer @wolfgangcramer

Identifying pathways to visions of future land use in Europe #REEC
link.springer.com/article/10.100... @marcuslindner_

Our vision

A world where forests significantly contribute to sustainable wellbeing

Our mission

Connecting knowledge to action



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Additional details are available in
the EFI Annual Report 2016 supplement at www.efi.int

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