

EFORWOOD
Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment

Final report on stakeholder interaction in EFORWOOD

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Preface

This report is a deliverable from the EU FP6 Integrated Project EFORWOOD – Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Forestry-Wood Chain. The main objective of EFORWOOD was to develop a tool for Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of Forestry-Wood Chains (FWC) at various scales of geographic area and time perspective. A FWC is determined by economic, ecological, technical, political and social factors, and consists of a number of interconnected processes, from forest regeneration to the end-of-life scenarios of wood-based products. EFORWOOD produced, as an output, a tool, which allows for analysis of sustainability impacts of existing and future FWCs.

The European Forest Institute (EFI) kindly offered the EFORWOOD project consortium to publish relevant deliverables from the project in EFI Technical Reports. The reports published here are project deliverables/results produced over time during the fifty-two months (2005–2010) project period. The reports have not always been subject to a thorough review process and many of them are in the process of, or will be reworked into journal articles, etc. for publication elsewhere. Some of them are just published as a “front-page”, the reason being that they might contain restricted information. In case you are interested in one of these reports you may contact the corresponding organisation highlighted on the cover page.

Uppsala in November 2010

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EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
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Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



Final report on stakeholder interaction in EFORWOOD is the tenth report on stakeholder aspects of research undertaken by the EFORWOOD Tools for sustainability impact assessment of the forestry wood chain. The report was prepared Christian Gamborg, senior scientist at University of Copenhagen, Forest & Landscape. Input to the report made by Kaj Rosén is gratefully acknowledged.

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EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



Contents

1	Summary.....	4
2	Introduction	5
3	Stakeholder interaction approaches in EFORWOOD	7
4	Outcome	9
5	Conclusions	12
6	References and further literature	12



EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



1 Summary

Interaction with stakeholders in larger EU projects is notoriously difficult. Questions of representativeness (i.e. who should be involved), issues (i.e. interaction about what) and purpose (i.e. why involve, and for the benefit of whom) need to be addressed and subsequently suitable methods must be applied.

This report summarises the main approach used to interact with stakeholders in the EFORWOOD project, the so-called roadshows, and describes the main outcomes and results of this interaction, concluding that this form of stakeholder interaction seems a more ‘sustainable’ approach than many bigger multi-stakeholder workshops often employed in similar projects.

Throughout the EFORWOOD project, various methods of interaction have been used, including workshops, interviews and written consultations. However, to enable more in-depth feedback from stakeholders and more consistent creation of awareness about the project among key stakeholders, a ‘roadshow’ approach was developed. A roadshow is here defined as a smaller dedicated, targeted two-way discussion meeting with key persons from EFORWOOD and representatives of a certain end-user or other stakeholder, i.e. the target group for the meeting, usually at their premises. The target groups for the roadshow comprised EU Commission, large industries, other FBS industry and associations, other decision/policy makers, as well significant non-industrial NGOs. The aim of the roadshow has been twofold: *a)* to increase awareness and understanding of project impacts, and *b)* get direct input/feedback on project developments (general + specialized). Approx. 25 stakeholder organisations have been visited in Europe and USA, at their premises.



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Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



2 Introduction

This report presents a synthesis on stakeholder aspects of EFORWOOD. The report builds on previous deliverables within this WP.

WP 0.1 ensures active and integrated stakeholder and user-groups participation in the SIA of the FWC to secure a continuous dialogue using best practice methods of involvement.

In 2002, the European Commission introduced impact assessment in order to make policy development more transparent and to improve the quality of policy making. But not only may the aim be to achieve better regulation, it is also seen as a tool to improve legitimacy of decision, to increase unity in European politics (Bäcklund, 2009). However, impact assessment is also seen as a way to demonstrate openness from the Commission's side to external stakeholder input (EC, 2005). In order to get the adequate quality, more evidence-based, more analytical and scientifically based integrated methods have been called for. To ensure the assessment work actually reflects this openness, the Commission has introduced consultations as an integrated part of the impact assessment procedures (EC, 2002). In theory, stakeholders can be allowed to influence every step of the work process (EC, 2005), however as Thiel (2009) documents, while cross-sectoral consultation and broad participation are important elements of this process, it is more rarely the case that stakeholders are involved in the actual impact assessment methodology work.

Within the past five year, several projects at the EU level have developed or worked with sustainability impact assessments methodologies. The multifunctionality of agriculture and the impact on rural area was examined by SEAMLESS (running from 2005-08), whereas SENSOR (running from 2004-07) assessed land use changes across Europe, and PLUREL (running from 2006-2009) focused on the urban-rural relations. In EFORWOOD (lasting from 2005-2008), the aim has been to model changes in the forestry supply chain and assess the impacts with regard to sustainability. Common to all projects have been various degrees of stakeholder interaction. This paper reports the approach chosen by EFORWOOD, in particular the attempt to use alternative methods to often-used, larger multi-stakeholder workshops, namely the use of a so-called road-show.

According to Cohen (1997), scientist-stakeholder collaboration has been a component in some integrated assessments. The collaboration helps to define critical issues – which might differ from those defined by the scientists – and it plays a role in identifying scenarios providing the context for the impact assessment. It is important to note that impact assessment is a non-linear process identifying problems, raising questions, proposing solutions and encouraging interdisciplinary learning. Having non-scientists to participate in such a process is a way to assist in analysing complex issues and problems which cut across several disciplines. As van Asselt (2000) point out, moreover when there are many scale and temporal levels in the assessment, participation of non-



EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



scientists become more pertinent, essentially raising the quality of the research by including different perspectives and local and contextual knowledge (REFRS I van ASSEIT 2002).

However, drawing upon stakeholders' knowledge in this process is likely to be time consuming and often costly and working outside one's peer group can be difficult. Hence in many cases, stakeholder interaction becomes more of meeting formal requirements rather than vehicle for useful input to the research and a mutually beneficial exchange of views and knowledge.

As Dobes & Bennett (2009, p. 17) explain, taking into account the view of stakeholders in policy or decision making, let alone analyses like impact assessments, has become, what they call "*de rigueur*", over the last decades. The problem is, however, in their view, how to actually define 'stakeholder' as it seems to be a fairly loosely defined concept of those have significant influence or are substantially affected.

ToSIA is a knowledge-based, methodological framework to assess sustainability impacts in the forest-based sector, especially forest-wood-chains (FWC) as affected by changes (Lindner *et al.* (2009). Such changes may occur in policies, markets or technology. The underlying idea of such a framework is to support decision-making by aiming at assessing the full effects along the sustainability dimensions (i.e. economic, ecological/environmental and social) of policy proposals. The tool has been commissioned by the EU commission (DG Research), as following 2002, any new policy to be introduced should be assessed for sustainability impact, thus potential use in for example DG Environment, DG Agri, DG Enterprise. Thus, ToSIA is developed in response to the needs of decision makers at various levels, policy makers, industry, as well as other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations (NGO)s, consultants and scientific researchers. ToSIA was developed in the project EFORWOOD (Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Forestry-Wood-Chain), a project funded by the European Commission.

ToSIA provides a knowledge-based framework to make a sustainability impact assessment of the FWC, i.e. linking quite different aspect of wood production, resource management and consumption patterns – *sensu latu* – but it does not tell which aspects of sustainability which should be emphasised. It allows for putting these different aspects together and for interpreting processes in a transparent manner (Lindner *et al.*, 2009) – hereby involving stakeholders with potentially conflicting views. As a consequence, it is important that stakeholders are part of the development process of the impact assessment tool.

As noted previously, interaction with stakeholders is an important element of impact assessment. However, stakeholders can be involved in several stages of the impact assessment 'life cycle'; from its conception and development, including testing, implementation and actual use. In the EFORWOOD project, the aim was to develop the methodological framework and make the actual software, hence interaction with stake-



EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



holders was focused on this part – conception and development of the impact assessment tool.

An example of where stakeholders may be involved, is the indicator selection process in order to ensure quality of the impact assessment tool, and moreover, to strive towards broader acceptance among stakeholder groups (Fraser et al., 2006). This was also the case in the EFORWOOD project. As Nilsson *et al.* (2008) report resources vary considerably among stakeholders, and so does the capacity to participate. Moreover, stakeholders clearly vary with regard to clarity of their preferences concerning the outcome of policy making.

3 Stakeholder interaction approaches in EFORWOOD

Research on impact assessment is rapidly increasing, and a comprehensive overview is presented by Renda (2006). Nilsson et al. (2008) analyse the use of policy appraisal tools, such as impact assessment, in the EU, making a distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘advanced’ assessment methods. Thiel (2009) discusses the role such tools may have in policy assessments in the future.

In their extensive methodological review of participation of stakeholders in integrated assessments and reporting on a 3 year project on non-scientist participation in impact assessment van Asselt & Rijkens-Klomp (2002) emphasise that inclusion of non-scientists in scientific research is especially needed when it comes to the analysis of complex issues concerning unstructured multi-problems and lie at the intersection of many disciplines – such as sustainability impact assessment.

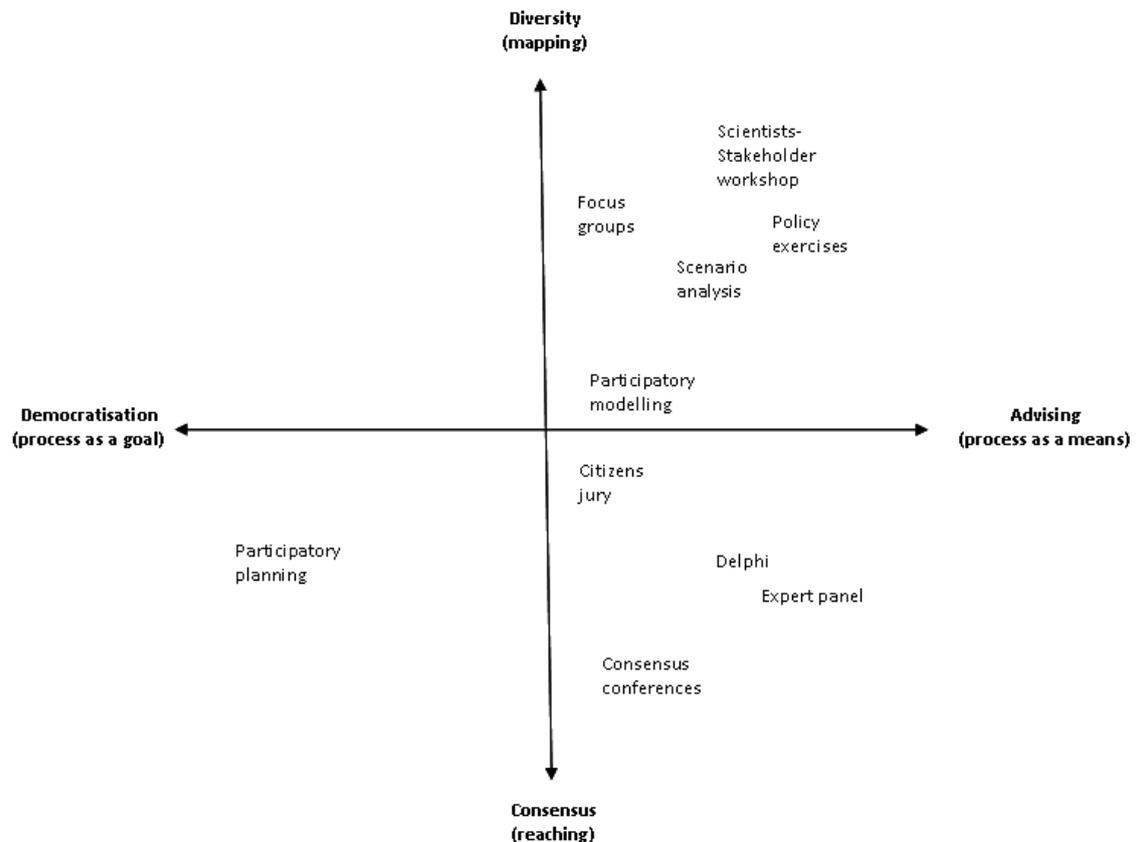


Figure 1. Participatory methods in relation to suitability of goals of participation (after van Asselt, 2000)

Figure 1 shows a diagram of different, well-known participatory methods with regard to the goal of the application. One dimension is the way the participatory process plays a role – as a means or an end in itself, on the one end of horizontal axis with reference to the nature of democracy, and at the other end of this axis, participation as part of advising, as a decision support process. The other dimension concerns the output – where some methods aim at mapping out diversity, seeking a spectrum of views, knowledge and concerns (i.e. divergence), and others to reach an agreement or consensus on a certain issue (i.e. convergence). However, as van Asselt & Klomp (2002) point out, it is not always possible to map/positioning one method unequivocally because some methods (such as focus groups) can be applied in different contexts.

The EFORWOOD roadshow approach can be characterised as a participatory method aiming at stakeholders advising the development process, and at the same time exploring the diversity of views, values and knowledge regarding the forest sector and with regard to sustainability concerns and priorities, thus belong to the quadrant between diversity mapping and advising, i.e. seeing the stakeholder interaction as a means.



EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



An essential role of stakeholder interaction in EFORWOOD has been to supplement the technical and scientific expertise of project partners. For example, in completing the first draft set of proposed indicators for the whole European FWC, end-users and other stakeholders provided valuable input and discussion. Further interaction included physical meetings and written comments to FWC scenarios development and on the purpose, interface and uses of ToSIA.

Throughout the EFORWOOD project, various methods of interaction have been used, including workshops, interviews and written consultations. Workshops has been held also under other Modules, e.g. MCA workshop with select stakeholders in the case of Baden-Württemberg. However, to enable more in-depth feedback from stakeholders and more consistent creation of awareness about the project among key stakeholders, a 'roadshow' approach was developed. A roadshow is here defined as a smaller dedicated, targeted two-way discussion meeting with key persons from EFORWOOD and representatives of a certain end-user or other stakeholder, i.e. the target group for the meeting, usually at their premises. The roadshow should build on current levels of awareness and understanding. The meetings should enable a more direct consultation and feedback on the general idea and outcomes of EFORWOOD, but also make room for discussion of more specialized issues (e.g. scenarios) or certain parts of the FWC if relevant.

The EFORWOOD project has defined a FWC stakeholder is seen as anyone who can affect or be affected to a significant degree by the selection of an alternative and who is felt to have a legitimate claim to have their interests considered by the decision makers in the project. Some FWC stakeholders are already part of the EFORWOOD project as partners (e.g. industry and private forest owners associations) whereas others (e.g. European Newspaper Publishers' Association) are not.

Some of the stakeholders are also end-users of the results of EFORWOOD. An end-user, or user-group, is the ultimate user of the results for whom the EFORWOOD outcomes are intended (e.g. Commission services, industry planners and strategists). The user-group can be seen as a specific type of stakeholder who may benefit from using the tool after it has been fully developed by EFORWOOD.

A wider range of stakeholders included a broader range of relevant industry-based organisations along the forestry wood chain, NGOs (such as various European consumer organisations), the wider research community, European legislators and politicians at various levels.

4 Outcome

The target groups for the roadshow comprised EU Commission, large industries, other FBS industry and associations, other decision/policy makers, as well significant non-industrial NGOs. More than 20 stakeholder organisations have been visited in Europe



EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



and USA, at their premises. The main European organisations visited are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Roadshow meetings held during EFORWOOD

In addition to the European stakeholder organisations, EFORWOOD was presented and discussed with 7 American organisations to get a non-European view of the approach taken by EFORWOOD. See PD0.1.8 for further details of these meetings.

**Table 1. Selected questions, issues and concerns (according to main topic, non-prioritised) raised during roadshow meetings**

Topic	Questions, issues and concerns
ToSIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will ToSIA look like – and what is it planned to do? • Who are the envisioned users of ToSIA? • Can ToSIA be used without expert help? • Can you compare different chains? • Is e.g. concrete/steel – in general substitution covered? • How are other materials than wood in products (e.g. plastic in packaging) handled? • How well does ToSIA reflect reality? • Who will be in charge of ToSIA; post-project maintenance and upgrading?
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of indicators are used? • How does the indicator set used in EFORWOOD compare with other sets (e.g. MCPFE)? • How are indicators consolidated? • Indicators used in ToSIA for comparisons of between FWCs should always cover the sensitive issues for both “lines” • How to handle import/export in relation to impacts?
MCA and CBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you compare/aggregate different indicators? • Who is determining the importance of indicator values? • How is subjective valuation handled? How transparent are the choices? • How are GHG emissions and carbon sequestration handled?
Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are scenarios, which areas? • How is the time aspect handled? • How to include external drivers (e.g. climate change, Chinese import) • FBS is global, not only European, how to take into account?
Other issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is renewability reflected? • Misuse of results to discredit FBS (e.g. by locating “hot spots”) • Use of results by policy makers to justify already decided policies (tweaking)

For further details, including answers to these questions, especially TOSIA indicators, MCA and CBA as well as scenarios, see Annex 1, cf. PD0.1.8.

Results were presented at the final scientific conference of EFORWOOD 23-24 September 2009 in Uppsala, and to the potential user groups the TOSIA training session taking place 9 November 2009 in Stockholm.



EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



5 Conclusions

- **Coverage of types of stakeholders has been satisfactory.** Coverage of key stakeholders has been satisfactory, especially when it comes to industrial stakeholders, commission services and other decision makers. The most difficult part has proven to be the significant non-industrial stakeholders. As it is evident from several EU projects and acknowledged by these types of stakeholders themselves, they are invited all the times by different scientific, political and special interest groups to discuss a very wide variety of projects.
- **Still room for some improvement.** Although interested in a project such as EFORWOOD, often these types of stakeholders, although significant, have very limited resources and overloaded work plans resulting in strict prioritization of engagements. Interaction with some of these non-industrial stakeholders was, however, obtained with the help of a broader workshop format during EFORWOOD.
- **Approach of roadshow appropriate.** The main approach used to interact with stakeholders in the EFORWOOD project has been the so-called roadshows, which has proven a useful approach. The answers have feed into the development of ToSIA and onto the EFORWOOD website for internal communication purposes and for external dissemination purposes.

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EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



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EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain



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