



EUROPEAN FOREST  
INSTITUTE

# *Annual Report* **2018**



# 2018:

Connecting forest science  
to the future





Johanna Kokkila

# Overview

**2018 was EFI's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.** Twenty-five years might not seem a long time, but during the last 25 years we have seen immense global changes: poverty has been reduced from 40% to less than 10% of the world's population, the global GDP and the global middle class have tripled, and urban population has doubled while we have experienced a new revolution, the digital revolution. However, during the last 25 years science has also provided clear evidence that we are crossing the resilience boundaries of our planet due to climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of our natural resources.

During this period, EFI was established and has developed into a unique institute and network supporting transnational forest research collaboration, and more recently science-informed policy support. The fact that EFI is now considered as an honest science-policy broker explains why in 2018 we became the host of the EUFORGEN Secretariat, and how the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy published in 2018 heavily relied on EFI work.

However, the world is changing faster than ever. We need to continuously adapt so we can increase the relevance and impact of our work. I believe that in the future EFI needs to go beyond the forest research networking activities that dominated its first 25 years. We should build on those activities and on our unique European forest research network, to become a platform where forest science meets other relevant sciences to discuss and formulate the right questions. A platform where science also meets policy, practice, business and media to discuss and formulate the right answers to our increasingly complex societal challenges. Last but not least, EFI needs to look forward and be a constant support for our younger generations working on forests so that they can successfully connect knowledge to action to create a sustainable future.

The annual report 2018 proves that EFI has already started its journey to the future. A journey that we would like to make with you!

*Marc Palahi*





Artigiano Danu

# An ambitious European forest research and innovation area

**E**FI's research is stronger than ever and has been able to retain and attract highly qualified and committed staff. The share of EFI research staff holding a PhD degree has increased, enabling us to have a more proactive and central role in conducting and coordinating research activities. In 2018, our project research funding reached a record level of 3.66 million euros.

A recent analysis of forest-related research in EU-funded projects<sup>1</sup> revealed the central role of EFI in transnation-

al research collaboration and coordination. EFI's key role in building a strong European forest research area is further strengthened by our recent important investments to activate and support joint research activities, knowledge exchange and the capacity building of EFI's member organisations. One such investment has been the **EFI Network Fund**, a unique instrument expected to provide 1 million euros over the next five years exclusively for EFI Associate and Affiliate Members.

<sup>1</sup> Lovric et al. (2019) Mapping forest-based bioeconomy research in Europe, *Forest Policy and Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2019.01.019>



In 2018, five EFI Network Fund projects were kicked-off. These include 37 EFI member organisations from 19 countries.

**ENGAGING – Engaging owners of small private forests in active management**

*Coordinator: Robert Jandl, Austrian Forest Research Centre, Austria*

This project aims to identify examples of engagements of small-scale forest owners in active forest management, analyse the reasons for success or failure, and derive recommendations for regionally relevant campaigns.

**FORMASAM – Forest management scenarios for adaptation and mitigation**

*Coordinator: Christopher Reyer, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany*

This project aims to develop forest management scenarios that focus on increasing forest resilience and contributing to the bioeconomy, to provide input into future forest sector outlook studies and the updating of the “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” (INDC) of the EU and its member states for the Paris Agreement.

**FORSCEE – The future of a forest-based bioeconomy in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe**

*Coordinator: Bernhard Wolfslehner, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, Austria*

There is a central notion that the Central-Eastern and South-Eastern European regions are lagging behind in

the development of bioeconomy strategies, and there is still a deficit in the connectivity of the research community. FORSCEE wants to overcome this by e.g. mobilizing the EFI network to provide sound policy support for bioeconomy development in the region.

**FOSPREF-Wind – Wind risk to European forests under climate change**

*Coordinator: Tom Locatelli, Forest Research, UK*

The main aim of the FOSPREF project is to bring together researchers and stakeholders from Scotland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Poland and Latvia to develop a portable, spatially-explicit wind-risk modelling platform that can be implemented across Europe.

**PerForm – Perceiving the Forest-based Sector in the Bioeconomy**

*Coordinator: Daniela Kleinschmit, Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany*

The aim of PerForm is to better understand regional disparities of national bioeconomy policies and the perceptions of a forest-based bioeconomy especially in Europe and Russia.





## Supporting young forest researchers and young leadership

In collaboration with IFSA and IUFRO, EFI launched the project **“Equipping young forest leaders for a changing work environment”** in 2018. The project aims to provide a clearer picture of the future of work and the required skills and competencies in a transforming forest sector, all with a unique focus on the students’/future employees’ perspective. A special focus will be placed on so-called “green jobs”. Capacity building and student engagement in science policy processes are an integral part of the project, as early involvement in these processes and exposure to international networks not only increases students’ understanding of science-policy interactions, but also better integrates youth contributions and perspectives while preparing individuals for future leadership.

The **Young Leadership Programme (YLP)** targets the leaders of the future, bringing young professionals working on forest-related issues together with experts to create a new space where change can happen. The first three editions (2014–2016) focused on connecting Russia to other European countries, while the 2018 edition had a Medi-

terranean focus. The Mediterranean, with its ecological and social specificities, has untapped potential to contribute to the leading role played by the forest sector in the global bioeconomy.

**Innovation Schools** aim to provide the latest scientific-based knowledge to forest professionals and other experts working in related areas. In 2018 EFI, in collaboration with the University of Valladolid, organised a course on Forest Data and Management. The event provided background information, practical applications and training in multiple aspects related to data management in the forest sector.

**Building bridges** for science-based cooperation with other regions and key countries has been another of the 2018 highlights. Some important steps were taken regarding China: a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Chinese Academy of Forestry to strengthen bilateral collaboration in forest science and capacity building; and EFI successfully applied for an H2020 project (CLEARING HOUSE) which aims to review existing knowledge and collect new data emerging from the comparative analysis of ten case studies in Europe and China.





Albert Garduno



Satu Ikonen-Williams



Xiaoqian Chen



Angelo Dau





# Science-informed policies to address societal challenges and opportunities

**T**he **Policy Support Facility** is a central element of EFI's policy support activities, financed through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). The Trust Fund completed its first three-year period at the end of 2017, and started a new three-year period on 1 January 2018. Currently, 10 countries are members of the MDTF, namely Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Ger-

many, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and Sweden. The main activities of the Policy Support Facility in 2018 included the publication of two From Science to Policy studies and organisation of two Think Forest events.

The From Science to Policy report on **Substitution effects of wood-based products in climate change mitiga-**





tion provided the first comprehensive synthesis on the substitution effects of wood-based products in terms of climate change mitigation. This work is of crucial importance, because while the positive role of forests in climate change mitigation is generally well perceived, the contribution of wood products to mitigation is much less known and understood. The report provides the most updated knowledge on greenhouse gas effects of various wood products compared to alternative materials, and what the limitations are. It also identifies important research gaps that should be covered to have a better understanding of the substitution effects.

Another important milestone in policy support activities is the hosting of the Secretariat of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme ([www.euforgen.org](http://www.euforgen.org)). **EU-FORGEN** is an international cooperation programme that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe as an integral part of sustainable forest management. During the first year of its hosting by EFI, EUFORGEN successfully obtained a H2020 Coordination Support Action: the GenRes Bridge project (Genetic resources for food-secure and forested Europe - [www.genresbridge.eu](http://www.genresbridge.eu)). The project aims to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources (GenRes) by accelerating collaborative efforts and widening capacities in plant, forest and animal GenRes domains.

Hosting EUFORGEN further broadens the portfolio of EFI's activities related to forest genetics. For exam-

ple, EFI administers the **EVOLTREE Network of Excellence**

([www.evoltree.eu](http://www.evoltree.eu)), which links four major disciplines (Ecology, Genetics, Genomics and Evolution) to address global issues that European forests are currently facing like environmental changes and erosion of biodiversity.

The **EU FLEGT Facility** main achievements in 2018 were that three more countries achieved key milestones in the Voluntary Partnership Agreement process: Guyana and Honduras both initiated their VPAs with the EU and thus concluded their respective negotiations; the EU and Vietnam signed their VPA and are preparing implementation activities. In addition, the Facility supported Indonesia and the EU to address technical challenges with FLEGT licences.

The main achievement of the EU REDD Facility for 2018 was the adoption of its strategic focus and priorities for the period 2018–2022. The Facility's strategic goal is to help countries engaged in REDD+ to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation through improved forest and land-use governance. This will be achieved by addressing three key objectives: supporting the clarification and implementation of legal frameworks; enabling sustainable land-use investment and management; and informing deforestation-free production and trade.



# Awareness in society of the importance of forests

In 2018, EFI's visibility in the media increased dramatically, with a media reach of 496 million, which is more than double that of 2016. There has also been significant growth in social media, both in terms of number of followers (for example on Twitter, Facebook), and in terms of engagement to further multiply EFI's messages. This was further amplified by the development in 2018 of a new dynamic EFI website, which showcases EFI's work by integrating information from across the organization's Programmes, Facilities and locations, highlighting current issues and narratives.

In 2018, Lookout Station – EFI's innovative science-media platform – continued to offer programmes for journalists to experiment like scientists, to test and try new ideas in order to tell climate change related stories. A two-day Solution Hack brought 18 journalists to Barcelona and combined training on the Disruptive Design Method with field visits to cork oak forests. Lookout Station also offers help to scientists to formulate narratives about their research in a simple form which is understandable for journalists. In 2018, a **'Handbook for Scientists: Driving Scientific Research into Journalistic Reporting on Forests, Environment and Climate Change'** was published.





Rik De Vriesse



Albert Garduno

In autumn 2018, EFI organized the **Biocities Forum** as part of the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona. The forum explored how to improve urban infrastructure, sustainability and wellbeing by introducing nature-based solutions. For example, cities using wood in construction become carbon capture and storage infrastructures. In addition, urban forests and the strategic placement of trees around buildings, decreases the energy consumption in buildings for heating and cooling. They also reduce the increasing problem of the urban heat island effect. So wood, trees and forests could become the backbone of climate smart cities: Biocities. The Biocities

concept was also presented by the EFI Director at the first World Forum on Urban Forests organized in Mantova in November 2018.

To further strengthen our work on the topic of urban forestry and biocities, EFI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **European Forum on Urban Forestry (EFUF)**. This MoU should help to advance the understanding of the potential of urban forests, forestry, nature-, and bio-based solutions in supporting the development of sustainable cities.



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Additional details are available in the EFI Annual Report 2018 supplement at [www.efi.int](http://www.efi.int)

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