

Climate Smart Forestry could cut EU CO2 by additional 9%

02.12.2015

The ThinkForest seminar “Climate policy targets: how can European forests contribute” brought together policymakers, scientists and stakeholders at the COP21 Climate Generations area in Paris on 1 December. Discussions focused on three major issues: expanding the mitigation potential of forests, the bioeconomy and the possibilities it offers for substitution of fossil-fuel based products, and economic incentives.



Prof Lucas Bretschger talked about the need to design efficient and fair climate policies. Climate policies, for example a uniform carbon price, have an equity cost. Trying to find an acceptable balance and compromise is at the centre of the COP21 negotiations.

Balance was also at the heart of **Prof Gert-Jan Nabuurs** presentation on the results of the new EFI science-policy study ‘ [A new role for forests and the forest sector in the EU post-2020 climate targets](#) ’, which was launched at the event. “If you look at global forests, there are not that many regions in the world where forests are sustainably managed. EU forests are a fine example where you can find a balance – we should see the opportunities here”, he said. European forests and the forest-based sector are already contributing significantly to climate change mitigation and substitution, amounting to some 13% of EU emissions. They have the potential to contribute more – even up to an additional 9% – through Climate Smart Forestry. This is an approach which mainstreams climate mitigation by using forests and the forest sector, and related policies and measures in a way which makes use of the different regional characteristics and circumstances of the EU Member States.

This depends on the right policies and economic incentives being given, not only focusing on forest sinks, but also on products and energy. The substitution potential of wood-based products and what is in reach with today’s technologies was also emphasised by **Henrik Ehrnrooth** from Pöyry PLC. “The four components of biomass: fibre, lignin, sugars and nanocellulose can create huge climate and business benefits. These materials are wonder materials”, he said. This theme continued in the lively panel discussions. “If you can make it out of wood, you should make it out of wood”, said panelist **Paul Brannen**, European Parliament.

In wide-ranging discussions, panelists and the audience looked at the issues of subsidies and market mechanisms, the potential in Europe for planting and reforestation, and carbon storage in forest soils. They also discussed the opportunities for Climate Smart Forestry – the fact that there is a great variety of options for how forests and the forest sector can contribute to mitigation in the different regions of Europe.

The seminar was chaired by ThinkForest president **Göran Persson**. He was optimistic about the contribution from the forestry sector to solve climate change problems, and called for action. “We owe this to the next generation”, he said.

Further information: Lauri Hetemäki, Assistant Director, European Forest Institute, tel. +358 (0)10 773 4316; Email: firstname.lastname@efi.int

The ThinkForest event ‘Climate policy targets: how can European forests contribute?’ was held at the COP21 Climate Generations area, Le Bourget Paris on 1 December 2015. ThinkForest is facilitated by the European Forest Institute, an independent, science-based international organization.

A new role for forests and the forest sector in the EU post-2020 climate targets by Gert-Jan Nabuurs, Philippe Delacote, David Ellison, Marc Hanewinkel, Marcus Lindner, Martin Nesbit, Markku Ollikainen and Annalisa Savaresi was published on 1 December in EFI’s From Science to Policy series. The publication is freely downloadable [here](#) .

Photo: F. Radermecker