

The FTP report advocates increased R&D efforts to generate innovative new forest products, such as “smart paper” and biofuels

FTP – new Technology Platform to enhance forestry research in the EU

– **The Forest Technology Platform (FTP) will ensure that forest-based research will be implemented in industrial applications, says Kaj Rosén, vice president of Skogforsk and the coordinator of the large EU-funded project EFORWOOD.**

The Strategic Research Agenda for FTP was officially inaugurated at an event in Austria on 2–3 May, 2006, attended by 180 representatives from 25 European countries. It will guide future EU-research related to the forest industry. Five strategic goals have been established. These are to:

1. Develop innovative products to meet changing market requirements and customer needs
2. Develop intelligent, efficient manufacturing processes, which *inter alia* consume less energy
3. Enhance the availability and use of forest biomass to produce energy and material products

4. Meet multifunctional demands on forest resources and their sustainable management

5. Enhance the sector in a societal perspective.

– Former EU-programmes were usually initiated by researchers, and industrial representatives were invited

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– *The FTP will strengthen the profile of forestry-based research in the EU hierarchy, says Kaj Rosén.*

Technology platforms

Technology Platforms are expected to play a major role in mobilizing Europe's research and development efforts. They bring together the key stakeholders (industrialists, national and European public authorities, the academic community, financial institutions and consumers), providing a common vision for developing the technologies concerned.

Currently, some 30 technological platforms for various sectors are being developed in the EU. The technological platforms are not formal EU-organisations, but have a clear EU-stamp, according to Kaj Rosén. Currently, they receive no direct funding, but they are obliged to follow a certain protocol.

The technological platforms will have a strong influence on the 7th framework programme for research. The first call for proposals will probably come at the end of 2006.

to participate in a second step, says Kaj Rosén. With the FTP, industrialists have had the initiative from the start, and they have worked closely with researchers and other stakeholders to establish a common vision.

– The researchers involved in the FTP will probably derive substantial advantages, since the 7th research programme will give priority to research identified by the platform, says Kaj Rosén. Thus, research associated with the platforms will normally be supported by ordinary research funding from the EU.

Nordic initiative

– The forest-based sector, although important in the Nordic countries, has been largely neglected for a long time in a European perspective. In fact, forest research was hardly mentioned in the first drafts of the EU's 6th research framework programme. However, its position is slowly advancing, due in large part to strenuous lobbying by the Nordic forest-based industry, says Kaj Rosén.

The idea of the FTP was discussed by the Nordic forest industry in 2004. A vision document was presented to the EU in February 2005.

Although the initiative comes from Nordic industry, representatives from most EU-countries are involved, and have helped to develop the programme.

Read more: www.forestplatform.org

New Norwegian research institute

Skogforsk and NIJOS in Norway have merged. The new organisation, named the Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute, officially came into being on the 1st of July 2006.

– Our hypothesis is that 1 + 1 will be much more than 2. This is the rationale for the merger, said Undersecretary Per Harald Grue of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Norway in his opening speech when the Institute was launched.

– The plan is that the new institution will be able to tackle more complex problems, be better prepared to meet increased competition and participate in international cooperations, be more customer-oriented, broaden the research to address the whole value chain, and exploit more comprehensively the potential benefits of forestry research and geographical information systems, he continued.

– In addition, the new institute should become a strong centre for the management of genetic resources.

The new institute will be the leading Norwegian organisation for research regarding the utilization of forest resources, forest ecology and the environment. National mapping programmes and resource inventories related to land cover, forestry, agriculture, landscape and the environment will also be key activities.



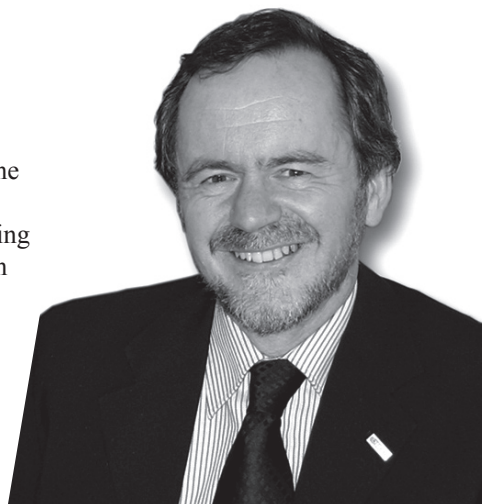
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NORSK INSTITUTT FOR
SKOG OG LANDSKAP

rest from NIJOS (the Norwegian Institute of Land Inventory).

Read more: www.skogoglandskap.no

The director of the new institute is 52-year-old Arne Bardalen, who was previously the director of NIJOS.



Norwegian gene resource centre

The recently established “Norsk genressurscenter” is a unit of the new Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute. The centre will be responsible for the conservation and management of genetic resources of cultured plants, domesticated animals and forest trees. In addition, it will initiate research and development, provide information about genetic resources and advise the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The director of the gene resource centre is Professor Tore Skrøppa, who has had a long career in genetic research, mainly on forest trees.

The centre is responsible for conservation and management of forest-tree genetic resources in Norway.



NordForsk enhances Nordic research cooperation

The Nordic countries with their 23 million people are collectively no larger than a medium-sized European country. Unit sizes in research endeavours are growing, so there is a clear need for collaboration to achieve a critical mass. These are remarks made by Liisa Hakamies-Blomqvist, director of the cooperative research body NordForsk in NordForsk Magasin.

NordForsk was established in January 2005 to facilitate cooperation between national research-funding bodies under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research. NordForsk succeeded the former organisation NorFA (Nordic Academy for Advanced

Study) and the Nordic Science Policy Council.

More than 6,000 researchers participated in NordForsk-financed activities in 2005. In 2006, a range of new initiatives was launched, including various training courses and networks of graduate schools, national centres of excellence, and researchers.

NordForsk covers the whole spectrum of research, from medicine to social sciences. However, several forestry-related networks are funded by the organisation, including (*inter alia*) the network for dendroecological and dendrochronological research in Northern Europe, led by Taneli Kolström in Finland, and Carbon dynamics in managed terrestrial ecosystems, coordinated by Sune Linder from Sweden.

Why go Nordic if we can go European, Liisa Hakamies-Blomqvist says in the article and gives a twofold answer:

First, if a researcher can choose between two equally good collaborators, ... why choose the non-Nordic one? In Nordic collaborations, distances are short – both geographic and cultural – and you gain in efficiency, by virtue of the similarities in the light administrative culture, ease of communication, short distances to travel, etc.

Second, let's not forget that there is no clear-cut choice between Nordic and European – the Nordics are, indeed, European. Within the 6th framework programme, the success rate of applications with a Nordic coordinator has been higher than average.

Source: NordForsk Magasin and www.nordforsk.org

Shortcuts

Forest floor turns blue in Sweden

Twice as many blueberries as normal are expected in the Swedish forests this year. The abundant flowering and favourable ripening conditions seem to promise an excellent year for lovers of the berries, according to predictions from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). In extreme cases up to 1,000 berries per square metre are anticipated.

– Between 50 and 75% of the flowers have produced berries, which is a high proportion, says Ola Langvall, head of SLU's research park at Asa in southern Sweden. The forecast also predicts a good year for lingonberries.

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Nordic prize for Danish professor



Thomas B. Randrup was awarded the NOVA prize for his contribution to the ambitious establishment of new educational programmes in Urban forestry and Urban greening.

A one-year course has been cooperatively established by KVL (Denmark) and SLU (Sweden), which is to be extended to a two-year international Master's course.

NOVA is a university network of seven universities in the Nordic countries (see News and Views No. 4, 2005).

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Russia introduces Nordic thinning schedules

The Federal Forestry Agency of Russia will introduce thinning schedules based on those used in Sweden. The schedules have been adapted for Russian conditions and will be tested in the Pskov Model Forest Project (PMFP); a cooperative sustainable forestry program with Swedish and Russian partners coordinated by the Swedish Forest Agency.

As well as in the Pskov model forest, the thinning schedules will be tested on a larger scale in the Russian counties Leningrad, Pskov, Vologda and Novgorod Oblast.

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The goal: a well managed, thinned Nordic pine forest.



Photo: Mats Hannerz

Prize for innovative timber-sorting system

With better grading before sawing, it is possible to increase the value of sawn products substantially. Swedish sawmills consume some 200 million logs per year. It has been estimated that the economic returns can be doubled for at least 5 million of these logs by better sorting.

Håkan Lindström, Associate Professor at the Department of Forest Products and Markets of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, received the "ALMI Företagspartners" innovation prize for his patented sorting system. The sawmills are expected to make large savings by grading the

timber into different categories before sawing. The system involves the application of a combination of acoustic, laser scanning, weight and temperature measuring techniques to obtain the required information about each log. Patented software helps to sort

the logs into correct grades. Håkan Lindström is presently head of the recently established enterprise "A-Sort AB", which aims to commercialize the innovation.

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High-tech sorting of the timber before sawing increases profitability for the sawmills



Photo: Skogforsk, Sweden

Shortcuts

New lobby for state forests in Europe

Members of the new European interest group EUSTAFOR – the European State Forest Association – held their first general assembly in Brussels in May.

The group was founded by the state forest organisations of Finland, France, Latvia and Austria. However, membership of the organisation is open to all 25 EU member states and European countries outside the EU. There are currently 21 prospective members.

EUSTAFOR is intended to be the voice of the European state forests within the EU. The lobby organisation will be headquartered in Brussels, and will collaborate with other international interest groups such as the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF).

Director General Jan Heino of Metsähallitus, Finland, was elected as the chairman of EUSTAFOR.

Source: www.metsa.fi

Finnish forests grow more rapidly

The annual growth of wood in the Finnish forests amounts to 97 million cubic metres, according to the 10th National Forest Inventory (NFI); 12% higher than in the period covered by the previous NFI. Scots pine and deciduous trees account for most of the increased growth. Many young pine forests are now at a stage where growth is rapid, while many Norway spruce forests are mature and ready for regeneration felling.

The annual increment is much higher than the amount of wood removed each year. Metla estimates the maximum cutting potential to be 66 million cubic metres of commercial wood per year. In recent years, about 85% of this amount has actually been harvested.

Source: www.metla.fi

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