



23 partners from European countries and international institutions take part in SUMFOREST. Photo Mats Hannerz

SUMFOREST will reinforce forest research

A smart and sustainable use of the forests can substantially contribute to the Europe 2020 objectives for jobs and growth. But achieving this is a challenge that requires coordinated efforts. This challenge has been taken up by SUMFOREST, that was launched in January 2014.

SUMFOREST, *Sustainable forest management; Multifunctional Forestry, European Forest Policy,*

is one of the actions of the European ERA-NET within the 7th framework programme (FP7). Its main objective is to reinforce scientific cooperation on European forests, reduce fragmentation and maximise the impact of research activities on sustainable forest management and multifunctional forestry. It will also ensure that forest policy decisions are based on solid scientific foundations. SUMFOREST has 23 partners

from 15 EU member states, three associated states and two international institutions. SNS (Nordic Forest Research) is one of the key actors, responsible for the website www.sumforest.org.

Fragmented research

One of the incentives behind the SUMFOREST action is the fragmented forest research landscape in Europe. The existing research capacity is substantial; with 3 600 person years (approximately €300 million per year) spread over 50 national and regional forest research institutions, excluding universities. An equivalent amount of work is also going on at universities.

The research in Europe is often mono-disciplinary and unevenly distributed. Especially in the south, forest research organisations are spread out and with insufficient critical mass to secure high quality.

The European Research Area (ERA) has as core message to overcome the traditional fragmentation of research efforts in the EU.

The ERA-NET Scheme was launched to improve the coordination across Europe of national and regional research programmes.

The partners in an ERA-NET action mostly work in government ministries or in national funding agencies, which implement programmes on behalf of their governments.

SUMFOREST is coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, with Martin Greimel as coordinator.

Partners from the Nordic countries include EFI (*European Forest Institute*), SNS (*Nordic Forest Research*), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland, the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (*FORMAS*) and the Research Council of Norway.





From the SUMFOREST kick-off in February 2014. Photo: Dietmar Jäger

Forest research organisations in east and north-east European countries are still struggling with administrative obstacles in their integration with other national research organisations.

Other problems include narrow specialisation, lack of long-term funding and lack of work to synchronise data and results, leading to duplication of work and inefficient use of available resources.

SUMFOREST strives to overcome this existing fragmentation, to increase the effectiveness of European-scale research and to enhance the competitiveness of the forest-based sector.

Progress has been made

SUMFOREST concludes, in its project proposal, that there is light at the end of the tunnel. The EU Research Framework Programme (FP) has seen its funding substantially increased, and has been able to foster transnational collaboration by European research organisations (cooperation programme, COST etc.), as well as increased mobility of researchers and stronger infrastructures.

One proof of the increased efforts by the EU is that the total budget for forest-sector based projects increased from 208 M€ in FP6 to

693 M€ in FP7. But still, there is a need to strengthen collaboration and coordination of forest research.

The Forest-based sector Technology Platform (FTP) has developed a long-term vision and integrated strategic research agendas. In addition, forest-related ERA-NETs have been and are funded; these include Woodwisdom Net, FORESTERRA and Eurobiodiversa.

Fragmented forest policies

Europe lacks a common forest policy. In contrast, the common agricultural policy (CAP) was adopted as early as 1962. The absence of a European forest policy means that forestry issues are addressed within different policy fields, particularly agriculture, environmental and nature protection, energy, competition and internal markets, trade, industry and development cooperation.

The European forest policy is, therefore, very fragmented, complex and sometimes contradictory because general forest policy is often developed on the basis of sub-sectorial issues.

The new EU Forest Strategy (see below) strives to provide coordinated and coherent forest-related policies at all levels. SUMFOREST has identified priority areas where this strategy could add value at EU level.

What will SUMFOREST do?

SUMFOREST will contribute to the coordination of forest research by, inter alia:

- developing a model for mapping research programmes implemented throughout Europe, allowing the identification of redundancies, priorities and gaps.
- developing common standards for prioritising, commissioning and evaluating of joint research proposals, leading, for example, to minimising the duplication of work.
- pooling resources, exchanging best practices and integrating lessons learnt at individual levels.
- integrating neighbouring countries, especially Russia, to enlarge the ERA.
- giving an overview of all European policies relevant to sustainable forest management and multifunctional forestry.
- providing a framework to address the most important political issues and enable better policy making based on scientific knowledge.

Read more: www.sumforest.org

About EU Forest Strategy

A new EU Forest Strategy was adopted on 20 September 2013. It provides a new framework in response to the increasing demands put on forests and to the significant societal and political changes that have affected forests over the last 15 years.



Inga Bodeker, SNS secretary, is responsible for SUMFOREST's website

Photo: Mats Hannerz

Natural disturbances – we need to act now!

Global climate change has accelerated disturbances affecting our forests. "We cannot continue as before in the hope that our planted trees will take care of the carbon problem", says Professor Kalev Jõgiste at the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

Instead of managing the forests by taking a "business-as-usual" approach, he advocates a more open attitude. Uneven-aged management and continuous cover forestry offer new tools to elongate rotations and accumulate carbon in forest soils. And why rely only on indigenous species? With changed conditions, other species may be better suited.

– We need to do something fundamental, and do it now, he says. Otherwise our problems will increase.

Storm damage is the worst

Natural disturbances have large implications for Europe's forests. Figures from EFI tell us that about 0.12% of the standing volume of European forests is damaged annually, equivalent to about 38 million m³/year. Wind is responsible for 51% of this, wildfires for 16%, snow for 4% and other abiotic damage for 6%. Biotic damage adds 17% (mainly bark beetles).

Multidisciplinary approach

A complete understanding of how natural disturbances affect ecosystems and how they impact on social and economic interests is a challenge. The field requires both a multidisciplinary and an interdisciplinary approach.

The EFINORD-SNS network FORDISMAN, also known as "Natural disturbance dynamics for forest ecosystem management", has been working on this challenge since 2002. Kalev Jõgiste has coordinated the network since it started.

The network has, over the years, arranged workshops, conferences and excursions on an annual basis. Several conferences have also resulted in scientific outcomes published in journals such as *Forest Ecology and Management*, *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research* and *Baltic Forestry*.

Joint activities

In the last few years, cooperation with other networks has been increased. Common activities have been particularly intensive with the SNS-supported network PRIFOR (described in *News & Views No. 6, 2012*), that focuses on the structure and dynamics of primeval forests, and thus has many links to the FORDISMAN network.



Photo: Kallu Tšiler

Kalev Jõgiste looks forward to the next FORDISMAN-PRIFOR conference.

The networks organised two joint workshops in 2012. One was held in Estonia, focusing on "Impact of ungulates and other mammalian herbivores on forest ecosystems" and the other, in Latvia, was based around the theme "The Mosaic Forest Landscape".

In 2013, a workshop was arranged with carbon sequestration as the focus. 18 participants from seven countries discussed carbon dynamics in disturbed and managed forests.

FORDISMAN will also cooperate with the new EFINORD-SNS network "Continuous Forest Cover Experiments in Northern Europe".

Conference in Tartu

Currently, FORDISMAN and PRIFOR are jointly preparing an international conference in Tartu, Estonia, in August 2014. The conference is entitled "*Forest landscape mosaics: disturbance, restoration and management at times of global change.*" Kalev Jõgiste hopes to see 200 participants from all over the world.

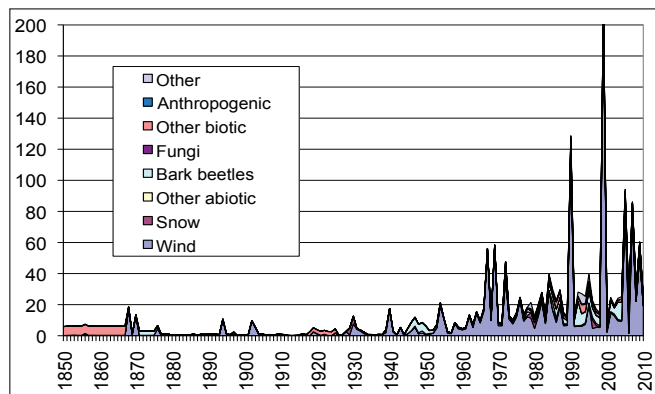
– We have received some 140 abstracts, and we look forward to a really productive conference, he says.

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Read more on FORDISMAN website <http://ecosyst.emu.ee/index.php/intoduction>

The conference website
<http://www.forestdisturbances.com>

Disturbance damage has increased markedly, which is illustrated in the figure redrawn from an EFI-report (data provided by Mart-Jan Schelhaas). It shows total damage in European forests (million m³).



"Other" includes anthropogenic damage, unidentified and mixed causes.



Photo: Przemek Majewski

From the meeting in The Helge River Model Forest – one of the Baltic landscapes established by the EU-project “Baltic landscape in change” (see *News & Views* 3, 2012).

This southern-Swedish landscape blends timber production and nature conservation values from the perspectives of small forest owners. Discussions focused on **governing** versus **governance**, the traditional, hierarchal way of enacting laws and regulations from above – versus a more flexible way of making decisions based on participation by stakeholders.

Governance instruments in focus

By: *Gun Lidestav*

In August 2013, researchers and students from Sweden, Finland and Poland gathered along with practitioners and stakeholders in the Helge River area to share experiences relating to forests and forestry in the transformation of the societies in Northern Europe.

The meeting was partly initiated by the SNS- and EFINORD-supported network “Forests in urban and rural studies”.

Multiple goals

In many European countries, a move from governing to governance is at hand. At the same time the forests are expected to deliver increasing volumes of timber as well as other products and services. Thus, the issue is: how can more ambitious and multiple goals be attained in the absence of coercion or economic incentives?

One way forward, exemplified by Maxim Trishkin (University of

Eastern Finland), is the FSC group certification approach in Ilomantsi Model Forest.

The Model Forest-concept should, according to Julia Carlsson (SLU), be considered an option worth testing in order to ensure that different actors cooperate on a landscape level.

One policy instrument that has been tested in Sweden is the Nature Conservation Agreement (NCA). However, results have proved rather disappointing. By analysing how interdependency is played out among the actors, Ulrika Widen (Umeå University), found that those involved perceive the content of this form of protection quite woolly.

Social values

As pointed out by Jeanette Eggers (SLU), current governance instruments in Sweden focus on wood production. Nature conservation is also considered to some extent, but it appears that social values are under-developed in the various governance instruments.

An explanation put forward by Sabina Bergstén (Umeå University) is that social values are conceptually multi-dimensional and they encompass wide spectra of values.

With the recreational aspects in focus, Olof Olsson (Umeå University) suggested a range of complementary participatory methods in order to develop a peri-urban forest as a demonstration site within the prospective Helge River Model Forest.

According to Jan Lannér (Swedish Forest Agency and SLU), there are also local bottom-up initiatives to learn from. The area around the lake Römningen (Helge river area) provides one case where personal and national cultural heritage has been surveyed and incorporated into a collaborative process.

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Read more: www.nordicforestresearch.org, *News & Views* No. 3, 2012, and network N2013-09 (*Forests in Urban and Rural Studies*).

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More info about SNS:

www.nordicforestresearch.org

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