



Stockholm City Hall, venue for the Presidents dinner at the IUFRO World Congress 2024. Photo Johan Fredriksson, Wikipedia commons.

## And the winner is – Sweden and the Nordic-Baltic forests!

**After a highly competitive bidding process, the IUFRO International Council decided to award the hosting of the 2024 IUFRO World Congress to Stockholm and Sweden together with the Nordic and Baltic countries.**

The decision was made on October 10 2018. The final shortlist of candidates was drawn up by the IUFRO board in November 2017, with Paris, Moscow and Stockholm being the remaining competitors. The nomination of the short list was preceded by a thorough quantitative evaluation of each of the applicants. An executive committee from the IUFRO board then embarked on a qualitative evaluation, and each of the potential hosts on the short list was visited on site.

Dr. Fredrik Ingemarsson, Program Manager at SIFI (see next page), scientific advisor at SLU and the chair

of the congress organising committee, has been tying together the application and marketing activities.

– We are very proud of reaching this final decision. I think we made it due to a strong organisation, a well-planned venue, support from all stakeholders, the reputation of Swedish forest research and a strong forestry tradition in the region, he says.

The initiative to the application came from SIFI, The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA) and the city of Stockholm. The main host of the congress will be the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), and the congress will be held in a summery Stockholm in July 2024. But SLU is not alone; there is a long list of Nordic and Baltic partners who have been involved in the planning and will be supporting the excursions and content of the congress.

– We have been over 100 persons working on the application, from all the Nordic and Baltic countries. We also have support and economic guarantees all the way from



Fredrik Ingemarsson: "The forestry model in the Nordic-Baltic region is of great interest to delegates from other continents."

Photo: Jenny Svernås Gillner, SLU.



## IUFRO 2024, cont.

national governments down to forest companies and NGOs.

Other partners are the African Forest Forum (AFF) and Forestry Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA). The Nordic countries have a long tradition of collaboration with Africa, particularly the eastern countries. This support probably helped to get votes from the board.

### Second chance

Sweden had led the competition, since the country also applied for the 2019 congress (which Brazil won). SIFI and Fredrik Ingemarsson was highly involved in that bid as well, and he is convinced that the experiences gained were valuable for the second chance, 2024.

– Sweden was on the shortlist for 2019, but the IUFRO board decided that it was the turn of South America, since no congress had ever been held there. With the experience of previous congresses, we argued that Europe needs to host the next one. Now, we could take advantage of past experiences. We knew that it was important to be active at an early stage, e.g. through videos produced for Youtube.

### Strong arguments

Fredrik Ingemarsson stresses that the support from the forest sector and interrelated sectors is essential. Representatives from Stockholm city, forest industries, NGOs, federations and universities took part in workshops at an initial stage, in order to identify topics and activities for the location.

– All agricultural universities in the Nordic and Baltic countries were present at these workshops, he says.

He also believes that the reputation of Nordic forest research is beneficial to the Swedish-Nordic-Baltic team. The Center for World University Rankings (CWUR) ranked SLU as number one in forest research in 2017.

– We shouldn't forget that the forestry model in the Nordic-Baltic region is of great interest to delegates from other continents. The combination of economic timber production, other values and set-asides on a single site is a rare management approach for many international visitors.

### Field excursions

The congress location allows a wide range of in-congress and post-congress tours. Post-congress excursions will include Iceland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, from coast to coast in Sweden and Norway, and Lapland tours in Sweden and Finland. Another example is an excursion dedicated to the theme "from table to tree", with visits in southern Sweden and Denmark.

– I believe that the field excursions will show a wide range of values and objectives that Nordic forests and the society can deliver. We will also be able to demonstrate that the economic value of the forest is the foundation of sustainable forestry, says Fredrik Ingemarsson.

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*Read more:* [www.slu.se/iufro2024](http://www.slu.se/iufro2024)

## SIFI

- The Think Tank for International Forestry Issues
- An international, non-governmental organisation established by KSLA. It was inaugurated in 2010 and is presently run as an independent think tank.
- An advisory committee with senior experts from the Nordic countries safeguards the credibility of SIFI. The committee assists with opinions and advice, and is also available to assist in carrying out assignments for SIFI
- More information on [www.sifi.se](http://www.sifi.se) and in News & Views No. 2, 2011.

## IUFRO World Congress

- Held every fifth year: 2010 in Seoul, South Korea; 2014 in Salt Lake City, USA; 2019 in Curitiba, Brazil; 2024 in Stockholm, Sweden.
- Nordic countries have been hosts three times: Sweden 1929, Norway 1976 and Finland 1995.
- Brings together some 5,000 delegates.

## IUFRO

- International Union of Forest Research Organizations
- Founded in 1892
- Unites more than 15,000 scientists in almost 700 member organisations from 110 countries
- Headquarters in Vienna
- More information: [www.iufro.org](http://www.iufro.org)



## IUFRO 2024, cont.

### “This is great for Nordic forestry and Nordic cooperation”

**SNS has worked closely with the organising committee in the bid for IUFRO 2024. Jonas Rönnberg is both vice dean at the main applicant SLU and Head of SNS' secretariat, a dual position very valuable for the bidding process.**

– The input of SNS has been essential when it comes to gaining support from the Nordic Council of Ministers and the governments in each country, he says. The Nordic component of the congress will be strong – this is not only a Swedish event, but a chance to demonstrate the Nordic-Baltic model of sustainable forestry and research collaboration.

Jonas Rönnberg is very happy about the positive decision taken by IUFRO. He foresees an even stronger

collaboration among the Nordic and Baltic countries in the years preceding the congress.

– The cooperation will indeed be intensified. This is great for both the Nordic forest sector and for Nordic cooperation *per se*, he says.

SNS and SLU will naturally be present at next year's IUFRO Congress in Brazil. Details are not yet available, but the forum will be used to promote the Swedish hosting of the event in 2024 and the role of SNS.

– The Nordic-Baltic organising committee will present the next location at the closing ceremony of the Congress, and SNS will arrange a side-event that we hope to be attractive to the delegates, he says.

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Jonas Rönnberg: "The Nordic component of the congress will be strong - this is not only a Swedish event." Photo: Mats Hannerz.

## Shortcuts from Nordic-Baltic forest research

### Sweden and Finland: Tandem Forest Values project has started

The bilateral research project Tandem Forest Values was established in 2017 as Sweden's official centenary gift to Finland. The call attracted 72 high quality applications. In the end, 12 of them were approved. In each project, a young scientist will be funded for two years, working partly in Finland and partly in Sweden. Several universities and institutes are involved in the projects. From Finland: Luke, Åbo Akademi University, University of Helsinki, Aalto University, University of Oulu and University of Eastern Finland. The Swedish partners are SLU, Umeå University, KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Luleå university.

**Source:** [www.projektandem.se](http://www.projektandem.se)

### Sweden: Warmer climate leads to nitrogen limitation

With a warmer climate and raised levels of carbon dioxide, access to nitrogen seems to be decreasing for soil-bound plants and trees. An international study involving 38 researchers led by Joseph Crain from the USA analysed the nitrogen content of more than 43,000 plant samples from throughout the world. They found a global trend over the period 1980-2017 towards lower nitrogen content. Ecosystems are becoming more oligotrophic. The results indicate that the forests' capacity to sequester carbon will be reduced due to nitrogen limitation. Dr Michael Gundale was the Swedish representative on the research team.

**Source:** [www.slu.se](http://www.slu.se)

*The report: Joseph M. Craine m.fl. 2018. Isotopic evidence for oligotrophication of terrestrial ecosystems. Nature Ecology & Evolution, Vol 2, November 2018, 1735–1744.*

### Finland: Nature draw foreign tourists

Finland had 8,3 million foreign travellers staying overnight in 2016. Professor Liisa Tyrväinen at Luke estimates that 25% of the travel business is related to nature-based tourism. According to Statistics Finland, nature-based tourism and recreation employ 33,800 man-years. Better marketing could result in more tourists from China, Japan and the rest of Asia. However, this requires coordinated efforts, since it is difficult for the often small enterprises to market themselves.

**Source:** *LEIA, Natural Resources Institute Finland's Stakeholders Magazine*

## Woodland key habitats – a Swedish “invention” used by the Nordic and Baltic states

**Scientific studies on woodland key habitats over the last 20 years have been reviewed and summarised for the first time. A report from SLU presents a synthesis of what science can teach us concerning species content, edge effects in small habitats, structures and dynamics of small patches and the woodland key habitats from a landscape perspective. The review covers studies undertaken in Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Baltic states.**

The term “Woodland key habitat” (WKH) was coined in the early 1990s by the Swedish Forest Agency. The idea was to identify small hotspots in the forest landscape with particular value for biodiversity, especially red-listed species. The WKH concept was soon established and became the start of probably the largest inventory ever of nature in Sweden. At present, over 100,000 objects have been registered.

The concept spread quickly to neighbouring countries. Finland and Norway adopted it in the mid-1990s and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania around the turn of the millennium.

Research with a primary focus on woodland key habitats started in the late 1990s, and since then many studies have been devoted to the concept. Among the questions researchers have raised are: Do woodland key habitats have more red-listed species than surrounding

forests? Is their size important? Can structures such as dead wood and old trees be used as indicators? Are woodland key habitats in a natural climax stage or do they represent a succession phase? Can and do the habitats need to be managed?

The review covers 70 peer-reviewed articles and about 20 “grey” reports (published but not peer-reviewed studies). The final report, written in Swedish, includes syntheses on themes such as a comparison between WKH and production forest, edge effects, landscape effects, attitudes and governance, management and forestry, size, extinction debt and forest history. All of the referred articles are summarised item by item.

Professor Lena Gustafsson at the Swedish University of Agricultural

Sciences (SLU) led the study. She concludes that there is now strong support for woodland key habitats having a richer fauna and flora than their surroundings. But also that many of the small patches (usually only one or a few hectares) are sensitive to cutting in the surroundings, due to edge effects.

– We are very happy to have completed this study. Despite the fact that research on woodland key habitats has been going on for two decades, many of the results have not reached outside the academy. Our review should be important in the ongoing debate about the value of woodland key habitats.

**Download the study:**

<https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/15711/>

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Lena Gustafsson: "Many of the reports on woodland key habitats had not reached outside the academy before." Photo: Hans-Örjan Nohrstedt.

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