



2025  
EFI

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EFI STRATEGY

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*Connecting knowledge to action.*



## CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

The European Forest Institute (EFI) is a pan-European international organization. We have 25 Member Countries, and 116 member organizations from 36 different countries working in diverse research fields. This dual membership, together with our staff of over 100 experts, is our most important asset. It places EFI in a unique position to generate, connect and share knowledge at the interface between science and policy.

Our vision for 2025 is of an EFI which is globally recognized as a leading science-policy platform providing forest-related knowledge to build a sustainable future.



### VISION

A world where forests significantly contribute to sustainable wellbeing

### MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting knowledge to action

The new EFI Strategy is based around three interconnected and interdisciplinary themes: Bioeconomy, Resilience and Governance, and three strategic goals:

- An ambitious European forest research and innovation area
- Science-informed policies to address societal challenges and opportunities
- Awareness in society of the importance of forests

# GLOBAL CONTEXT

For the last 200 years we have relied on a fossil-based economy, which has delivered unprecedented economic and population growth, technological development and social prosperity. However, this has also resulted in great environmental and social challenges which threaten the wellbeing of existing and future generations.

A sustainable future requires a systemic change in our economy, to ensure it prospers within the renewable boundaries of our planet. We need to move from a linear fossil-based economy towards a circular bio-based society.

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## Key drivers of global change

**Climate change:** the largest threat multiplier, as it exacerbates water scarcity, food insecurity, biodiversity loss, land degradation, poverty, migration and affects human health.

**Globalization:** advances in communication, transportation, trade and technology make the world more interdependent than ever in terms of jobs, companies, products, finances, ideas and risks.

**Demography:** global population growth will create tensions over the access to and use of natural resources and land, and result in geopolitical and migration crises. An ageing population will challenge existing social models and consumption patterns.

**Urbanization:** the share of the population living in cities is growing. Cities will need to become climate-smart and energy efficient, while sustaining a larger and more diverse population.

**Digital and biological revolution:** jobs, trade and the production and consumption of goods will drastically change through unprecedented advances in biology, artificial intelligence, robotics, new materials, etc.

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In an environment of such profound change, our forests are fundamental if we want to move to a circular, bio-based society. Forests are the most important biological infrastructure on our continent and the main source for non-food and non-feed renewable resources. Advances in science and technology provide new

opportunities to transform those resources into bio-based solutions, replacing fossil-based and non-renewable raw materials and products.

Forest resources are therefore crucial to build a circular **bioeconomy** that replaces the existing linear fossil economy. However, the biodiversity, climate-, soil- and water-related services provided by our forests also play a key role in the **resilience** of our continent, regions and cities. These dual, complementary roles need to mutually reinforce each other. New ways of **governance** that use holistic policies and integrated management approaches to reconcile bioeconomy and resilience goals are needed.

Governing our forests in a time of transformational change makes the role of research, foresight and innovation more important than ever. The synthesis and contextualisation of scientific knowledge is key to supporting science-informed policies and decisions that can address current and future challenges and opportunities.

EFI's Strategy is built around three complementary, interdisciplinary research themes: Bioeconomy, Resilience and Governance. These form the framework for EFI's activities, to achieve three interconnected goals:

- An ambitious European forest research and innovation area
- Science-informed policies to address societal challenges and opportunities
- Awareness in society of the importance of forests



# THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

## BIOECONOMY

Forests, forestry and the forest-based sector are the cornerstone of the European bioeconomy, and a major contributor to climate change mitigation. The speed and scale of European forest bioeconomy development crucially depends on several questions, such as technological and market developments within and outside the forest-based sector, the dynamics of global biomass demand and supply, the European and international policy framework and the ability to use forests in a sustainable way. The forest bioeconomy is also affected by globalization, the digital economy and symbiosis with other sectors: construction, chemicals, textiles and energy, etc.

Foresight, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research at the interface of markets, products, policies and forest resources is therefore needed. Knowledge about the broad sustainability implications of developing a European forest bioeconomy, as well as the effects of different regulations and policy incentives is also important.

## RESILIENCE

The increasing impacts and complexity of global change call for a new strategic role for forests in fostering Europe's socio-ecological resilience. In a highly urbanised Europe where cities are responsible for 80% of the population and energy use, urban forestry and forest-based solutions like wood construction are key to developing climate-smart cities. The role of forests and trees in enhancing essential resources like water, soil and biodiversity needs to be better understood in the context of sustainable rural areas and agricultural systems. Increased knowledge about forest resilience, including a better understanding of the impacts of climate change and the role of forest management on biodiversity conservation is also needed.

This requires new interdisciplinary research connecting forest science to other land-use disciplines and urban studies to create a basis for effective, integrated policies and forest and land-use management strategies.



## GOVERNANCE

In the future, the dynamics of supply and demand for water, food, energy, raw materials and land will be drastically altered, as result of global change and the need to transition towards a circular, bio-based society. Land will become an increasingly scarce resource and conflicts around land resources may result in global political instability and increasing migration pressure. New transdisciplinary research is needed to support forest governance that is able to align diverging interests and perspectives (e.g., urban versus rural), integrate expectations from different stakeholders and sectors and seek synergies between forest land uses and forest management goals.

Knowledge is needed from local to global and from rural to urban levels, to form a basis for new, science-informed European governance schemes and policies that can reconcile among others resilience and bioeconomy-related goals.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## AN AMBITIOUS EUROPEAN FOREST RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AREA

To provide European forest research organizations and scientists with the resources, capacities and infrastructures to maximise their scientific and societal impact.

## SCIENCE-INFORMED POLICIES TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

To increase the relevance and impact of forest-related research on European policies, and support policy makers and practitioners in the transition towards a circular, bio-based society.

## AWARENESS IN SOCIETY OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS

To contribute to increased awareness of the role of forests and forest science in building a sustainable society, based on a science-informed narrative which especially addresses media, policy makers, young people and urban populations.

# STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

### Advocacy:

EFI advocates for European forest science, and for the importance of forest-related scientific knowledge in tackling key societal challenges and opportunities.

### Research and foresight:

EFI generates and contextualises high-impact research, foresight and policy analysis to enable science-informed policy-making.

### Knowledge networking:

EFI facilitates networking for the sharing, exchange and use of knowledge to bridge the gaps between scientists, media, policy makers, practitioners, and society at large as well as build synergies across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries.

### Capacity building:

EFI builds capacity among scientists, policy makers and practitioners to enable them to tackle future societal, scientific and communication needs.

### Building bridges:

EFI supports European countries' efforts for strategic, science-based cooperation with neighbouring regions and key countries in other continents (in cooperation with IUFRO).



A close-up photograph of vibrant green oak leaves, showing detailed vein patterns and serrated edges. The leaves are illuminated by bright sunlight, creating a mix of deep green and bright yellow-green tones. A white logo is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image. The logo consists of a thin white arc on the left side, followed by the year '2025' in a clean, sans-serif font, and the letters 'E F I' in a larger, bold, serif font below it.

2025  
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