

Building the EFI science-media interface

Our world is increasingly globalised and interconnected. Decision-makers are confronted with unprecedented challenges that transcend frontiers and require transnational approaches. We need contextualised knowledge, which connects the dots between disciplines, sectors and different geographical and temporal scales. A good example is the issue of climate change.

In a complex environment, the role of science is more important than ever: to create new thinking and knowledge to be a basis for effective policies that can catalyse transformational change towards sustainable development. Transformational change also requires more than ever the active participation of citizens. In this respect, we are facing a paradox. Never before in human history have there been so many scientists and so much scientific knowledge available. We have the means to understand many of the challenges we are facing, yet we face a climate of post-truth politics, as well as contradictory media and science messages.

Therefore, science needs to partner with media to have impact - and to ensure a science-informed discussion when we try to tackle the grand societal challenges we are facing. At EFI we are determined to contribute to this task because we believe in the importance of science as a motor of change, as well as in the key role our forests play in a sustainable future. Over the last year we have started a new and ambitious set of activities to create a new space connecting journalism and science communities. We aim to build a trusted platform for journalists and scientists to interact and discuss, focused around the importance of our forests. We believe that by doing so, we can jointly create a science-informed narrative about forests, which is urgently needed to engage our increasingly urbanised society.

"We need more scientists speaking like journalists and more journalists thinking like scientists." (Marc Palahi)

Building partnerships with media – the Lookout Station initiative

EFI created the Lookout Station initiative to create a platform between science and media communities in order to maximise the societal impact of forest science.

The Lookout Station offers programmes to both science and media communities. It supports storytellers to produce engaging science-based stories about forest-related topics such as climate change, with innovative new tools. It also helps scientists simplify their communication so that the storytellers can accurately report about the topic with scientific facts, data and evidence.

The initiative focuses on closing the gap between science and media, so that the wider public gets evidence-based information in the digital environment, about topics important to the work of EFI and its member organisations.

- 1) As a pilot project, the European Forest Institute and the Global Editors Network joined forces to launch [Lookout360°](#) that focuses on 360 video storytelling on climate change. The project started with a bootcamp for journalists, trainers and scientists, in Lapland. The final video projects will be showcased at the [GEN Summit in Lisbon](#) on 30 May – 1 June 2018, both on the conference main stage and in the GEN Dome, an immersive storytelling-focused exhibition. The GEN Summit will be attended by 750+ editors and feature speakers incl. Jimmy Wales (Wikipedia), Borge Brende (World Economic Forum) and [many more](#).
- 2) Media partnerships have so far produced stories on forest fires in Portugal (Euronews), on climate change effects in Morocco (Al Jazeera), and deforestation and climate change effects

in Argentina (The Guardian). The stories have reached tens of millions of people, and brought great visibility for EFI.

- 3) Partnerships have also been formed, amongst others, with MIT's Joint Programme for Global Change, the Finnish Forest Foundation, UN University, and World Science Journalism Federation.