



EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE

Annual Report 2012



2012:

**Celebrating the commitment
and support of our
23 Member Countries and
132 member organisations.**



Overview

In 2012, EFI moved towards an even stronger research-policy support interface. We successfully launched ThinkForest with the support of many EFI Member Countries. ThinkForest is a high-level forum for dynamic science-policy dialogue, and its activities gained high interest among various stakeholders. Many of our member organisations have been among the keynote presenters at ThinkForest events.

The newly established EFI Liaison Office in Brussels supports our research and policy support activities, and keeps the flag of European forest research flying high at the European Commission.

Our presence in the European regions grew as the Central-East European Regional Office – EFICEEC expanded to include a South-East European Regional Office – EFISEE located in Croatia. EFICEEC-EFISEE now operates in Vienna and Zagreb.

EFI's growth continued, despite the financial challenges of the previous year. The number of staff grew by 10%, and we now have over 140 staff members in various locations in Europe and beyond.

In 2013 we celebrate EFI's 20th anniversary. Like any 20-year-old, we are optimistic and dynamic. We have found our niche in research and policy support, which provides ever more possibilities for our member organisations. ■



Research and

EFI's Research and Information has the following aims:

- to conduct and promote multi-disciplinary and policy-relevant research on forest-related and relevant cross-sectorial issues that have pan-European or regional relevance;
- to analyze and upscale information on forest resources, products and services on a pan-European level.
- to support the coordination, strengthening and networking of forest research capacities aiming to overcome the fragmentation of European forest research.
- to advocate for forest research within the forest sector as well as within other scientific domains.

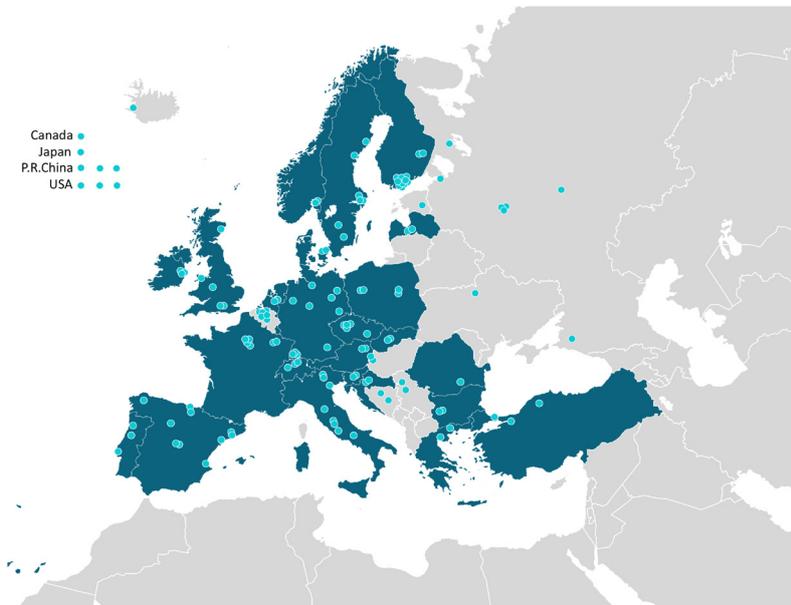
Research on sustainability, climate change and sustainable forest management has been active in several policy-relevant projects at the European level. For example, a new Marie-Curie Initial Training Network, 'Careers in Sustainability Excellence' (CASTLE), started under EFI coordination. In the European Union FP7 project 'Operational Potential of Ecosystem Research Applications' (OPERAs), EFI experts work on instruments and tools for decision support regarding land management, and in the 'Innovative and effective technology and logistics for forest residual biomass supply in the EU' (INFRES) project, where EFI is leading the work on sustainability assessment.

Integrated management of risk in forests has been focused on through two projects; 'Network for Innovation in Silvicultural and Forest Risks Management Systems' and the recently launched 'Future Oriented Integrated Management of European Forest Landscapes'. Sustainable Forest Management is studied in two projects funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection: 'Implementing Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in Europe' and 'Integration of nature protection in forest management and its relation to other forest functions/services'.



Information

EFI Country Members and member organisations



In 2012, EFI was the coordinator or partner for 57 research projects, which involved 73 Associate Members. EFI has been especially successful in the 7th Framework programme, where its success rate has been 42.6%, and 16 projects worth 4.55 million EUR have been secured so far. The total budget of EFI research & development (R&D) activities in 2012 amounted to 3.7 million EUR. EFI R&D projects typically involve the cooperation of experts across the various EFI units at Headquarters and Regional Offices, thus benefiting from their complementary capacities.

The most important activities under information services included the publication of a new European Forest Map that included forests in the European part of Russia. The EFISCEN (The European Forest Information Scenario) and ToSIA (Tool for Sustainability Impact Assessment) Models were further developed and opened to external users via the Trees4Future project, in which EFI plays a major role.



...Research and Information

EFI research on **socio-economic issues** was also dynamic in 2012. The STAR TREE project on 'Multi-Purpose Trees and Non-Wood Forest Products, a Challenge and Opportunity' started under the Mediterranean Regional Office – EFIMED coordination, aiming to provide better understanding, knowledge, guidance and tools to support relevant stakeholders in optimising the management of multi-purpose trees and developing innovative approaches to increase the marketability and profitability of non-wood forest products for a more competitive rural economy.

2012 was the concluding year of the 'Regions of Knowledge for Forestry' project (RoK-FOR) – an FP7 coordination action for research-driven clusters connecting sustainable forest management, providing renewable energy, sustainable construction and bio-based products. The project results serve as a basis for regional development planning and strategies in the participating regions, and helped to mainstream EU policy goals such as the Lead Market Initiative and smart specialization and Renewal Energy Strategy targets at the regional level.

Foresight research was carried out e.g. in a PhD research project on 'Outlook for European wood products markets and trade', as well as in an FP7 project 'Design of a systems analysis tools framework for the EU bio-based economy strategy'.

In **governance research**, the most important activities were the FOPER II project (Consolidation of the Human Capacities in Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research in the South-East Europe Region), that continued in 2012 in six policy-relevant research sub-projects throughout the Balkan region, as well as a Think-Forest study on European Forest Governance.

In 2012, the most important activity in advocating forest research was active participation in the revision of the Strategic Research Agenda of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform, which identifies the research needs of the sector until 2020. EFI participated in the core writing team of the Strategic Research Agenda, representing the forest research community and focusing on the forestry value chain. A vast number of experts from EFI Associate Members were involved in this process. In addition, EFI actively participated in advocating and developing a new ERA-Net scheme, 'Tackling the challenges in the implementation of sustainable and multifunctional forestry through enhanced research coordination for policy decisions' (SUMFOREST), to reinforce the integration of research regarding Multifunctional and Sustainable Forest Management. ■

Capacity building

EFI capacity building activities include short courses, such as Summer and Winter Schools and the Joensuu Forestry Networking Week, as well as longer-term participation in academic education programmes via collaboration with universities for PhD training of researchers. Institutional capacity building consists of approaches with Associate Members for the joint management of research infrastructures and resources. In 2012, there were a number of PhD students working on projects at the Headquarters and Regional Offices. EFI also offered internships and traineeships for both PhD and Masters students in various offices. ■



The infrastructure for capacity building in Forest, Policy Economics and Governance in the Western Balkan region grew significantly during the implementation of the FOPER II project. The FOPER Masters programme received international accreditation by the European Accreditation Agency for the Life Sciences (EAALS). During the implementation of the programme, FOPER has supported and graduated over 40 Masters students. The mobility of FOPER researchers and students was strongly supported. Furthermore, FOPER has established internship and mobility programmes for the students, the most significant of which were within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU), EFIMED, the University of Copenhagen, the University of Freiburg and the University of Wageningen. ■

The Joensuu Forestry Networking Week (JFNW), 2012 gathered together 70 participants from 15 different countries to study green growth based on forests. JFNW is jointly organised by EFI and four Associate Members in Joensuu, Finland, to combine research, university education and European network dimensions and expertise. JFNW also demonstrates successful means for integrating and using research findings in forest policy working processes. ■

The Central European Regional Office and the Observatory for European Forests (EFICENT-OEF) was responsible, with INRA, for a PhD course on “International Forestry and Global Issues” in Nancy, France, in May 2012. The event gathered 37 young students from 12 countries. ■

“EVOLution of TREES as drivers of terrestrial biodiversity” (EVOLTREE), is the only network of excellence involving 23 research groups in 13 European countries. Most of the means of EVOLTREE are devoted to supporting the establishment of common infrastructures, the development of genomic and genetic resources and the creation of common interoperable databases. The Atlantic European Regional Office - EFIATLANTIC has hosted the network facilitator since 2011, and five summer schools were organised by the network in 2012. ■

The international twinning action plan within EFIMED's Advancing Forest Research Capacities (AGORA) project linked research organisations in Morocco and Tunisia with selected forest research centres of excellence in EU Member States. The interdisciplinary approach of this project enabled a broad spectrum of senior and young scientists to visit forest research institutions in Spain, Italy, France, Portugal and Turkey for capacity building, knowledge transfer, skills updating and discussion on strategic priorities. In 2012, seven young researchers from Ecole Nationale Forestière d'Ingénieurs / Rabat-Sale (ENFI), Morocco and The National Research Institute of Rural Engineering, Water and Forests (INRGREF), Tunisia visited host institutions in Mediterranean Europe. ■



Policy

EFI's Policy Support function aims to help European political decision-makers, stakeholders, policy institutions and research organisations to:

- Identify emerging policy-relevant information needs, in order to better promote policy-relevant research;
- Improve the understanding of strategic and cross-sector forest policy issues, based on existing scientific knowledge and expertise;
- Enhance science-policy dialogue across all stages of the policy process for designing, formulating, monitoring and evaluating forest-related policies, programmes, instruments, strategies and governance development;
- Facilitate policy implementation in collaboration with economic, social and environmental partners and constituents from public and corporate sectors, as well as civil society;
- Help the EFI member organisations to transmit their research results to policy makers and relevant stakeholders at the regional and European levels.

EFI Policy Support aims for close dialogue with EFI Member Countries and European political institutions.

Among the most important activities in this field are the EU FLEGT and EU REDD Facilities coordinated by the EFI FLEGT and REDD Unit in the EFI Barcelona office. The budget volume of these two facilities in 2012 amounted to approximately 8.6 million EUR. The Unit now works in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Central-South America. The Unit is responsible for supporting the European Commission, European countries, other country governments and forest sector stakeholders during implementation of the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, while providing support to Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) countries building their REDD+ national frameworks.



Support

Another important activity is the ThinkForest high-level forum for science-policy interface on forests. ThinkForest offers a high level platform for our Associate Members to present their scientific results to policy makers. The forum was officially launched in Brussels on 15 May 2012, at the event 'Towards a green bioeconomy: unlocking the potential of Europe's forests', with the Commissioner for the Environment, Mr. Janez Potočnik, among the keynote speakers. Other ThinkForest events included a discussion on the future EU Forest Strategy in the emerging forest-related policy framework in September, and a seminar on Payments for Environmental Services: A Way Forward for Mediterranean Forests? Moreover, a study on 'European Forest Governance: Issues at Stake and the Way Forward', was launched in 2012.

EFI coordinated the ex-post evaluation of the EU Forest Action Plan, and its final report was published on the Europe-

an Commission's Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) website. The report contributed to the development of the new EU Forestry Strategy.

In 2012, EFI also provided continuous support to the Secretariat during the 1st and 2nd Sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe, as well as to the FOREST EUROPE process, e.g. through the German-funded project on the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management.

A feasibility study for the European Forest Risk Facility was started in 2012. The planned Forest Risk Facility aims to provide important information on biotic and abiotic risks affecting European forests, specifically for policy makers' needs, and to support co-operation between relevant national bodies in developing joint actions and measures in order to prevent, mitigate and control these risks. ■



Policy briefs:

- AGORA Making the Difference: Towards a Mediterranean Forest Research Area
- Payments for Environmental Services: A Way Forward for Mediterranean Forests?



Electronic means to facilitate networking were developed at the Headquarters and EFIATLANTIC. The Expert Directory compiled at the Headquarters has records from 235 experts from 71 organisations.



Networking

Face-to-face meetings still remain crucial, even through the rise of social media and tele-meetings as the status quo for modern communications. EFI has always invested in bringing its network partners together to share ideas and find new collaborators. In 2012, the main networking event of the year was the Annual Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, which was organised at the University of Istanbul. The event gathered 150 participants and was very successful in bringing new elements

together via short presentations and programme keynote speakers.

EFI Regional Offices also organised networking events. The EFIMED Week 2012 celebrated five years of Mediterranean Regional Office – EFIMED in Tunis, Tunisia. The strategic value of collaboration and networking for improved forest research and policy development was clearly in evidence over the course of the conference, with a young generation of foresters from North Africa and across

Europe integrating and innovating with senior researchers, policy makers and leading professors from Australia and the USA.

The Atlantic European Regional Office – EFIATLANTIC and the European Institute for Cultivated Forests (IEFC) 2012 Annual Meeting took place in the Azores, with a visit to an organisation installing the highest number of Atlantic field trials in the “Resource INFrastructures for monitoring, adapting and protecting European Atlantic FORests under changing climate” (REINFFORCE) project. Central-East and South-East European Regional Office – EFICEEC-EFISSEE organised the opening conference of the EFISSEE Office in November 2012 in Varaždin, Croatia.

The North European Regional Office – EFINORD was instrumental in organizing a Foresight workshop on ‘Ecosystem services provided by forests serving urban societies in Northern Europe’.

The EFI Annual Conference decided to establish a new EFI Project Centre Preserving and Enhancing the Multifunctionality of Mountain Forests-MOUNTFOR, which aims to provide a scientific basis for the sustainable management of mountain forests and to initiate expertise platforms for multiple stakeholders. It also aims to define priorities for research agendas in order to gather information on mountain forest catchments resistance and resilience to climate change, and to harmonize strategies regarding mountain water resources and ecosystem services. The MOUNTFOR Consortium is hosted by the Edmund Mach Foundation in San Michele all’Adige, Italy.



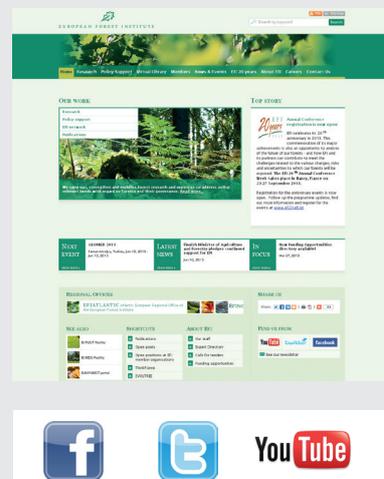
In 2012 155 staff members from 33 different countries worked at EFI.

Communications

The new EFI website was launched providing improved navigation and RSS feeds, and many new features. Our active presence in social media has grown significantly. EFI also released a new multimedia video on European forests called, “European Forests: Central to the World We Live in”, which gives an overall picture of Europe’s most versatile ecological infrastructure and traces paths from north to south and from east to west.

EFI led the communications of the MOdel for AdapTIVE Forest Management (MOTIVE) project, RoK-FOR project and Trees4Future project, which facilitated the dissemination of pertinent information to our target groups – such as researchers, practitioners and policy makers - within the projects.

EFI events continued to provide a platform for the exchange of information, for dialogue on European forests and forestry, and as forums to provide feedback on emerging forest-related issues and EFI activities. The events ranged from Policy Support events, such as ThinkForest, to networking events, like the Annual Conference and regional annual conferences. There were also smaller events, including a field visit with the Integrate II Steering Committee to the Ebrach forest district, to have first-hand insight on integrative management concepts from a best practices standpoint. ■





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