



## 1st European level stakeholder workshop

# “Forest Land Ownership Changes in Europe: Policy and practice Issues”

Side event at the European Forest Week in Rovaniemi, Finland (METSÄ2013), 11/12/2013

### *Summary of results*

**Introduction/chair:** Gerhard Weiss

**Facilitator:** Diana Feliciano

**Workshop time:** 1.5h

**Format:** Fishbowl

### **Participants from COST Action**

Heimo Karppinen (WG 1), Diana Feliciano (WG 2) , Sonja Quiroga (WG 3), Gerhard Weiss (Chair)

### **How would you characterize trends of changing forest ownership? Who are the new forest owners?**

The main trend that was indicated in the workshop was that forest owners increasingly do not manage their forests for income any more. Increasingly they see their forests as a hobby, keep them only as a capital, and have no knowledge about or no time for forest management.

It was also said that tradition is important and forest owners still feel a relation and commitment to their forests but that does not necessarily imply that they have an interest in managing them in the traditional foresters sense and for wood production. The growing age of forest owners was also mentioned: both traditional and new forest owners are often over 50 when they get (most often inherit, more rarely buy) a forest. It was also mentioned the different trends in Western and Eastern European countries (restitution in Eastern Europe).

Other aspects of changing forest ownership were only mentioned by few people, including forest investment funds as new owners, trends to more intensive forest management that may threaten biodiversity, and more sustainability-oriented owners.

The dominating picture of the new forest owners is one of owners with small properties and with very limited knowledge about and interest in traditional forest management. Connected to this, more active and entrepreneurial owners were called for. Measures to make them more interested in managing their forests are, first of all, seen in advisory services and cooperative or joint management of small properties.

### **Do we need new forest management approaches for new forest owner types (and which)?**

The common view was that new forest management approaches (in terms of silviculture) are not needed but rather the implementation of existing ones. The issue is not about different or new management approaches but to encourage the traditional management. The problem is seen in a lack of management and thus in the question how to reach the owners and how to motivate them.

The participants of the workshop see forest management almost exclusively as a means for wood production. Only rarely other possible management goals were mentioned, such as

multiple objective management, different ecosystem services such as biodiversity conservation, recreation, carbon sequestration, or NWFP (e.g., bee-keeping) etc.

Knowledge gaps about the motivations of the forest owners was problematized, but not in a view to better orient policy goals at their different or new goals, needs or wishes but in a view to develop more effective instruments to increase their interest in traditional forest management. Cooperative and association structures were mentioned as a model to deal with small scale forest ownership because they are assumed to help in a more efficient and competitive management of fragmented forests.

### **What adequate policy measures are needed in order to address new forest owner types?**

There was a common view that measures to support owners are needed, including to address new owner types. The measures that were repeatedly mentioned are training and advisory services, promoting forest management plans, encouraging cooperation and support for timber/wood marketing.

The central problem when it comes to new forest owners is how to reach them effectively. In this regard there are two major information gaps on the side of policy-makers or advisory structures: firstly, in many countries we do not know who owns which parcels, and secondly, we hardly know about the motivations of non-traditional forest owners.

It was largely assumed in the discussion that the overarching policy goal should be to make forest management more profitable (or profitable at all) and to produce wood for the market. The assumption obviously is that only profitable management would make owners interested in managing their forests. In addition, only wood procurement was problematized in the discussion, and hardly the fulfilment of other policy goals (climate change problems, biodiversity conservation or other ecosystem services). The question, what should be the governments' goals, and the question, in how far the goals of forest owners fit with governments' goals, were raised by researchers that participated in the discussion round.

### **Is there a need to improve data situation on different forest ownership types?**

Information needs are seen primarily in (1) who owns which forest, and (2) what are the owners' motivations for forest management.

Cadaster information is missing in most South European countries and UK, but in many other countries, particularly in North European countries the cadaster is available. There is a huge diversity in data availability across Europe. Research about forest owner's goals is highly important but mostly missing.

Public opinion surveys in order to know better about public views on forests seems not to be a shared issue because they were mentioned only once.

Better statistical information was discussed a while: This information is said to be always valuable but a strong need to collect more data or more specifically for different ownership types was not seen. It was said that data collection is costly and that often sufficient data exists but it is not applied or used. The question if we would need to know better about differences between different ownership categories was not seen as a major problem.



#### **FACESMAP (Forest Land Ownership Change in Europe: Significance for Management and Policy)**

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