

Press release

Forest Innovation Workshop: Driving Innovation in European Forestry

The 6th Edition of the European Forest Innovation Workshop, held on February 11th and 12th, 2025, in Brussels, highlighted the crucial role of innovation in shaping the future of sustainable forestry across Europe. Co-organized by the FOREST4EU Horizon Europe Project, European Forest Institute (EFI), the ERIAFF Network, the Tuscany Region, and other key partners, the event successfully brought together over 210 participants, including 55 distinguished speakers, 13 European funded projects, and 14 EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs).

Attended by representatives from the European Commission's DG Agri, the EU Research Executive Agency, regional authorities, and a wide range of forest stakeholders, the workshop provided a platform for an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities facing European forests. Discussions centered on the urgent need for innovative solutions to enhance forest resilience, drive the bioeconomy forward, and leverage digital technologies to improve forest management and decision-making processes. The event covered a broad range of critical themes, with a particular focus on:

Sustainable Forest Management: strategies for enhancing biodiversity, improving carbon sequestration, and developing climate-adaptive silvicultural practices that enhance forest resilience were key points of discussion. Participants explored ways to mitigate climate-related risks and strengthen the long-term health of forests.

Bioeconomy and Value Chains: the workshop emphasized the significant contribution of forests to the circular economy. Special attention was given to small forest ownership, non-wood forest products, and agroforestry systems, which play an essential role in sustainable forest management.

Digitalization in Forestry: optimizing supply chains and enhancing decision-making processes were explored in depth. Participants discussed the integration of digital tools into traditional forestry practices to enable more efficient and sustainable forest management.

Social Innovation: the importance of community engagement and participatory governance emerged as a key takeaway. Strengthening local knowledge-sharing platforms and supporting forest-dependent communities, especially small forest owners, were identified as essential steps for ensuring the success of sustainable forestry practices.

Dr. Francesca Giannetti, coordinator of FOREST4EU and researcher at the University of Florence, reflected on the challenges of fragmented forest ownership, the growing role of non-wood forest products and the need to increase efforts to work on social innovation. "True innovation is rooted in collaboration, digital transformation, and long-term knowledge-sharing," she noted.

Dr. Kathrin Böhling, from the LWF and partner in FOREST4EU, emphasized the importance of aligning policy with the needs of the sector. "Innovation is not just technological—it requires institutional and managerial change. Government authorities must tailor better support to sector needs," she explained.

The event set the stage for the future of European forestry and agroforestry, highlighting the crucial role of ongoing cooperation between researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders.

Both the EIP-AGRI and Horizon Europe projects are indispensable for driving innovation and tackling the urgent challenges facing forestry and agroforestry. They provide essential support for research, restoration strategies, and collaborative efforts across Europe. By adapting strategies to local conditions, ensuring effective knowledge transfer, overcoming barriers to innovation, and fostering partnerships, we can ensure the sustainable management of our forests while cultivating a stronger connection between society and nature. These combined efforts are key to building a more resilient, prosperous, and secure Europe for future generations.



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Organizers

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FOREST4EU Project, more information:

- [Official website](#)
- [LinkedIn page](#)

About FOREST4EU project

A key objective of FOREST4EU, funded by the Horizon Europe program, is to connect these OGs across Europe, fostering synergies and facilitating the exchange of best practices. The project is actively collecting and disseminating valuable information developed by these OGs, creating a central resource for the forestry community.



Partners



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