

## Enhancing forestry and agroforestry networks in Europe: the launch of the FOREST4EU project

Around Europe, there are hundreds of small projects promoted by small groups of farmers, researchers, forest managers, environmental associations and local communities, that all share the same goal; advancing innovation and good practices in forestry and agroforestry sectors.

These initiatives are known as “Operational Groups” (OG) and are usually financed by regional and European funding, in the context of the EIP-AGRI platform. However, the innovations and best practices developed, tend to remain in the local environments and do not reach other European communities or OGs beyond the national borders, losing in turn precious know-how and experiences.

The FOREST4EU project has the mission of tackling this problem, connecting dozens of OGs around Europe, and favouring the transfer of knowledge and best practices between experts of forestry and agroforestry sectors in 9 member states.

FOREST4EU partners will bring together existing OGs from different countries, focussing on five main topics:

**Wood mobilisation** - increasing the production value and overall supply of wood from private forests.

**Forest adaptation to climate change** - finding new solutions to help foresters adapting to climate change effects.

**Sustainable forest management and ecosystem services** - promoting those practices that balance profit-oriented logging with environmental and social goals.

**Non-wood forest products** - develop and share new business models revolving around the supply of non-wood products.

**Agroforestry** - increase the attention on the need for design and implement adapted support policy measures within the production system of agroforestry.

FOREST4EU will collect, share and disseminate knowledge related to innovations. This will be done by providing tailored dissemination materials accessible through existing platforms, as well as capacity building materials developed according to identified regional needs and transferred to where the innovation can find new applications.

The project results and activities (including international and national workshops) will benefit forestry and agroforestry practitioners as well as policymakers, providing valuable inputs on how to refine regional policies, funding opportunities and CAP specific measures.

The FOREST4EU project has just started, with partners celebrating the kick-off meeting in Florence on the 6th of February, 2023. The Consortium is led by the University of Florence, Department of Agriculture, Food, Environment and Forestry, and has 17 partners from 9 countries:

Fundacion Centro de servicios y promocion forestal y de su industria de Castilla y Leon - CESEFOR (Spain), European Forest Institute - EFI (Finland), Steinbeis 2i GmbH – S2i (Germany), Gozdarski Institut Slovenije – GIS (Slovenia), Centre National de la propriete forestiere - CNPF (France), Associação dos Produtores Florestais do Vale do Sado - ANSUB (Portugal), Federació Catalana d'Associacions de Propietaris Forestals - BOSCAT (Spain), Latvijas Logistikas Asociacija – LLA (Latvia), Bayerisches Staatsministerium fur Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten - StMELF-LWF (Germany), Solutopos Recursos e Desenvolvimento - Solutopus (Portugal), Regione Toscana -RT (Italy), ETA Florence Renewable Energies (Italy), Associação para a Investigacao e Desenvolvimento de Ciencias - FC.ID (Portugal), Centar Kompetencija doo za Istrazivanje i Razvoj - CEKOM (Croatia) and Universidad de Santiago de Compostela -USC (Spain).

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