



The role of wood mobilisation in building a sustainable forest bioeconomy

Why innovations matter for the mobilization of wood?

The forest-wood value chain reduces European dependency on fossil materials, supports the bioeconomy, and revitalizes rural areas. However, wood mobilization remains a limited factor in many EU regions, influenced by a combination of fragmented forest ownership; inadequate infrastructure; low economic viability of harvesting operations; administrative burdens and lack of coordination among actors.

Innovations developed through EIP-Agri Operational Groups (OGs) have demonstrated that digital solutions, cooperative structures, and tailored advisory services can unlock the potential of dormant forest resources while contributing to the green transition in many regions.



Who can do what?



EU and National Policymakers can incentivise cooperation among businesses to ensure sustainable supply and increase efficiency across the forest-based value chain. This can be done by providing grants or tax breaks to encourage partnerships between forest owners, processors, and timber buyers. Supporting the digitalization of the forestry sector for management, monitoring, and marketing is key. Authorities that simplify administrative procedures (such as permitting and subsidy applications) promote active forest management.

Regional and Local Authorities can facilitate wood mobilization by investing in infrastructure including forest roads or local processing facilities to make the harvesting and transport of timber more efficient. These authorities are uniquely positioned to catalyse regional collaboration with multi-stakeholder platforms and alliances that unite forest owners, logging companies, sawmills, and other actors to co-design local solutions for wood mobilization.

Moreover, regional and local bodies can support demonstration projects that pilot innovative approaches and real-life examples of sustainable wood harvesting and utilization, as such approaches can accelerate the adoption of best practices in their communities.

Forest Owners and Managers are the operational heart of wood mobilization. They can increase their impact and efficiency by through cooperative management and marketing initiatives. Embracing modern digital tools (forest management software, online timber marketplaces, and remote sensing technologies) can help owners and managers to plan harvests better, monitor forest health, and connect with buyers more easily. Additionally, actively engaging in training programs through workshops, forestry extension services, or peer learning allows forest owners and managers to stay up-to-date on sustainable silvicultural techniques and new technologies.

Research and Innovation Actors can collaborate closely with practitioners in the forest sector to co-develop practical solutions including decision-support systems or harvesting equipment helping the wood mobilization sector to move forward. They can also make their research outcomes more accessible and easier to apply. Research and Innovation actors also help bridge the gap between innovation and practice through capacity building.

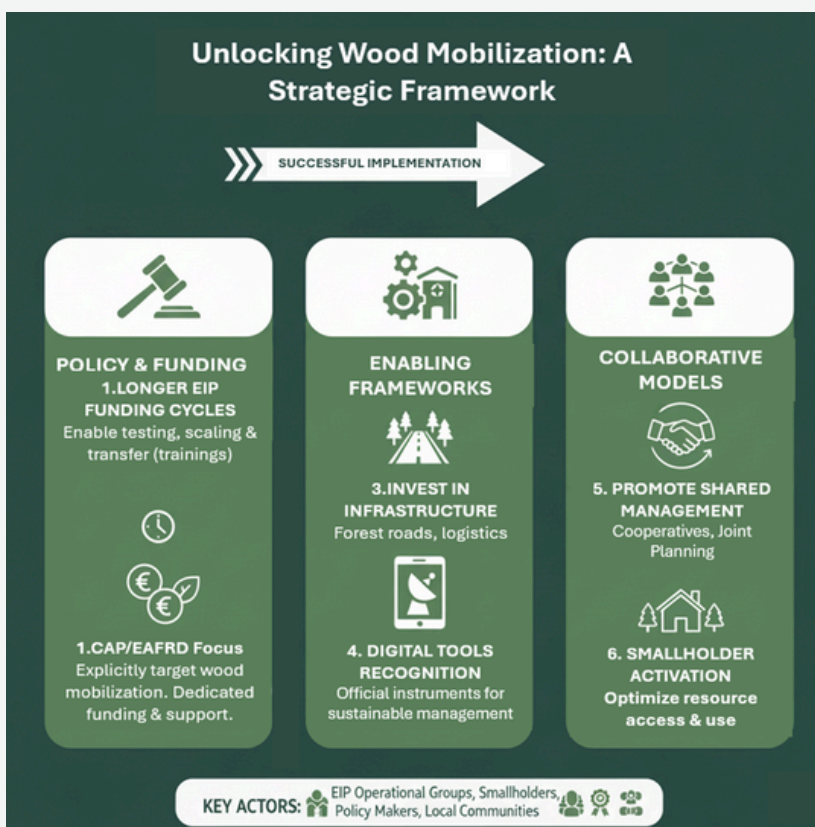




Private Sector can develop and refine business models that make sustainable forest management and wood supply economically attractive and promote awareness about the benefits of active and sustainable wood use. Moreover, businesses and training institutions can also offer regular training workshops for forest owners on how to use a new mobile app and provide helplines for troubleshooting.

Policy implications

The successful implementation of wood mobilization strategies rely heavily on a supportive policy environment. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) should explicitly target wood mobilization as a strategic objective, providing dedicated funding and support instruments. In parallel, EU frameworks should both invest in forest infrastructure and formally recognize digital tools and decision-support systems as valuable instruments in sustainable forest management. Promoting shared forest management models such as cooperatives or joint planning mechanisms, which can help activate smallholders and optimize resource accessibility as well as resource use.



Conclusions

Mobilizing wood sustainably is not just a technical challenge – it’s a governance opportunity. With the right policy support, wood mobilization can become a driver for innovations across the forest-based value chain, rural development, and ecological resilience. To improve forest resilience forests must be activated – not abandoned.

About FOREST4EU

The key objective of FOREST4EU, funded by the Horizon Europe program, is to connect Operational Groups 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.



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