

NEWSLETTER
June 2015

WOODEN ROAD TOWARDS BIOECONOMY

Report on project meeting & second stakeholder workshop

The third internal project meeting was held on the 21st of April, 2015 at UNIQUE forestry and land use GmbH in Freiburg. The main points on the agenda were the launching of the public survey and the establishment of living labs for the workpackage 'Attitudes & Narratives'.

The survey will investigate people's current perceptions of the forest-based sector and its products. The questions directly query opinions, attitudes and knowledge in the eight previously identified Topics of Interest (TOIs). The results will show which topics are of high interest and will allow for the identification of subgroups with similar characteristics. As such, tailored communication strategies can be developed. However, the survey not only helps to prioritize TOIs, but will also highlight differences between the participating countries, Austria, Finland, Slovenia, and Germany.

The findings of the survey will serve as a knowledge base for the establishment of living labs. The pretest results from Austria illustrate that the sample group 'aged under 30 years, university background and eco-centric belief' were highly susceptible to information within the TOI C – Conservation & Production. Consequently, in Austria the first activity of the living labs will be the invitation of a focus group within this topic with the explicit participation of people with a pro-environmental attitude.

The choice of activity and TOI depend on the analysis of the online survey. The overall objective of the living labs is the development of narratives, which will be tested using cognitive response experiments. The best identified narratives will be used in the national social media campaigns.

International online survey

A crucial part of the W3B Project is an international online survey. The questions of the survey are intended to elicit people's opinion about the forest-based sector. The survey was launched in May and aims to provide suggestions for the future communication of sustainability in the forest-based sector. It covers topics such as sustainable forest management, the role of wood and forests in global warming or the development of innovative wood products that can make our lives more sustainable.

How to participate

Based on the selected TOIs, eight individual questionnaires were developed.

By following the link

[»http://survey.wood-w3b.eu/begin](http://survey.wood-w3b.eu/begin)

a questionnaire will be randomly selected for you. Please select a language in the drop-down menu on the top right corner. It will take approx. 10 minutes to conduct the survey. Everyone, independent of socio-demographics or their relationship to the forest-based sector, is allowed to participate in the survey. Filter questions are used to determine these parameters in the survey, in order to avoid any misinterpretation of the results

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SECOND STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

The second stakeholder workshop was held on the 22nd of April, 2015 at UNIQUE forestry and land use GmbH in Freiburg. Invited guests included practice partners and different stakeholders of the project. External speakers included representatives of the private forest owner association (Forstkammer BW) and two promotional agencies for wood use (proHolz Baden-Württemberg, proHolz Schwarzwald). The contents of the presentations were highly related to the project work packages and reflected the practitioners' perspective on findings and actions to be taken in the future.

A total of seven presentations were held and discussed:

- Presentation of the overall project, [Tobias Stern, Wood Kplus](#)
- The eight identified Topics of Interest (TOIs) – results from literature review and stakeholder workshops, [Katja Lätthinen, UoH](#)
- First results of the survey in Austria, [Lea Ranacher, Wood Kplus](#)
- The timber era has just begun - the need for cross-sector promoting of wood use, [Hagen Maraun, proHolz BW](#)
- A regional cross-sector wood promoting agency, [Jan Bulmer, proHolz Schwarzwald](#)
- „Who is the forest? ‘ – Forest owner survey to generate topics for image campaigns, [Yvonne Hengst-Ehrhart, Forstkammer BW](#)

The inspiring discussions following the presentations intensified the cooperation amongst the participants. Productive personal exchanges resulted in numerous impulses for further project activities and public relation undertakings.

SAVE THE DATE

Invitation to the next W3B Stakeholderworkshop: public perception of wood as building material on the 24th of September 2015

At our stakeholder workshop we will share results from the international survey about people's opinions on the forest-based sector. We will discuss the differences among countries with the focus on people's opinions about wooden buildings. Further discussion will be on the role of wooden buildings in smart cities. To ensure a successful progress we cordially invite you to participate and share your opinion and discuss further proceedings. More information and the agenda will be available in the next newsletter in August.

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How do forest owners want to be perceived by the public?

Yvonne Hengst-Ehrhart from the Forstkammer Baden-Württemberg in Germany presented results of their qualitative member survey conducted in November 2014: forest owners want to be perceived as providers of public welfare and sustainability services. At the same time they highlight the importance of acknowledging their property rights.

The membership of the Forstkammer consists of private forest owners including all holding sizes as well as community managed forests. In total 266 members across these owner types responded to the online survey containing the following main question: which image of the forest owner should be communicated by the Forstkammer? Open ended questions were used and answers were categorized in nine different core statements covering 90% of all answers. These core statements could again be condensed into following three themes:

“Public welfare” contains core statements which show openness towards public claims such as “Forest owners bear responsibility and are interested in their forests”, “Forest management is a service for the society” and “Forest owners seek a balance between forest functions”.

“Sustainability” contains core statements which cover basic principle such as “Sustainable manage-

ment is long-term value preservation over generations”, “Forestry delivers an important, renewable and environmentally friendly natural resource” and “Forestry is an approach to nature conservation through sustainable usage”.

“Owner interests” covers core statements based on the idea of property rights against external influences such as “The owner’s freedom in forest management is a basic requirement”, “Forest owners are qualified” and “Forest owners are a closed interest group”.

The majority of participants covered several core statements and highlighted the need for a balance between societal demands and owner interests. This may be explained by a long-term tradition and strong identification with the concept of sustainability among the whole forestry sector.

Discussions at the stakeholder meeting



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WHAT DOES THE FOREST-BASED SECTOR COMMUNICATE?

State-of-the art information on forest-based sector communication with a literature review and content analysis.

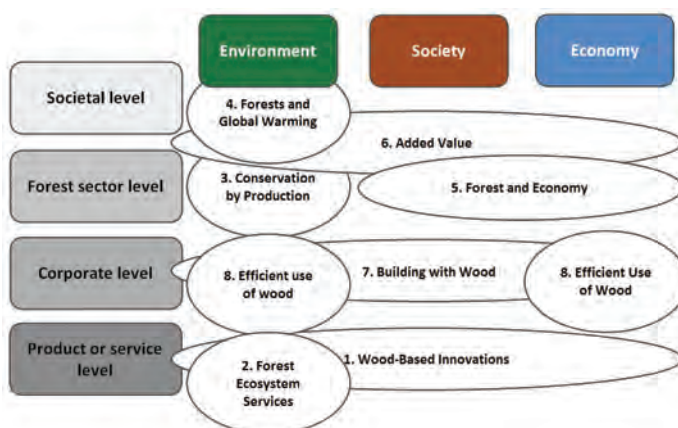
A literature review and online content analysis were conducted to acquire information on the current state of sustainability information exchange in the forest-based sector. The literature review, focused on scientific literature published during the 2000s regarding stakeholder information provided on different levels of sustainability, i.e., societal, sectorial, corporate and product sustainability. The online content analysis, studied the current topical issues communicated on websites of the wood products sector players. Both the literature review and the online content analysis were conducted in English, German, Finnish and Slovenian. In the literature review, the geographical area of interest was Europe, while for the content analysis the data were gathered from the official websites of corporate and industry associations located in Austria, Germany, Finland and Slovenia.

The results of the literature review show that the need for stakeholder communication is generally emphasized in scientific studies, but without further specification. Although corporate and product sustainability gained attention in literature, most of the results concerned societal and sectorial sustainability. According to the findings of the online content analysis, 'Forests and Economy' is currently the primary topic dominating sustainability communication in the forest-based sector. The topic 'Added Value'

also receives quite a lot of emphasis in the online communication. The objective of the literature review was to provide a background knowledge base for stakeholder discussions in terms of defining the Topics of Interests (TOIs). As a main outcome of the literature review and stakeholder interaction, eight TOIs were defined: 1) Wood-Based Innovations; 2) Forest Ecosystem Services; 3) Conservation by Production; 4) Forests and Global Warming; 5) Forest and Economy; 6) Added Value; 7) Building with Wood and 8) Efficient Use of Wood.

Both the results of the literature review and online content analysis show that the forest-based sector is severely lacking a pro-active approach on sustainability communication. First, according to the literature review, significant gaps exist on how to communicate issues of sustainability for different stakeholders and how the forest-based sector image should be built. Secondly, an alarming observation was, that two future-oriented TOIs, i.e., 'Wood-Based Innovations' and 'Forest Ecosystem Services' receive very little attention among the wood products sector. Thus, the focal question is: how can communication be tailored to stakeholders needs? Especially when those contain great opportunities and challenges of the sector in the future?

An illustration of TOIs by environmental, social and economic sustainability dimensions.



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HOW IS THE COMMUNICATION PERCEIVED?

The sector's sustainability communication works when deploying the image of forestry as a caretaker. However, there is plenty of work to do, in order to promote forestry as a business. People with higher environmental awareness could be the key. The survey shows that this population segment is more receptive to the sustainability communication of the forest-based sector.

Preliminary survey results illustrate a positive attitude towards communicated items concerning forest management in Austria, such as forest health and size of forest cover. However, the majority of respondents was indecisive whether domestic wood comes from ecologically sound sources and approved stricter regulations to protect the forest (see figure).

This indicates that forestry is positively perceived when communicated from a caretaker's perspective, however this is not the case for forestry as a business. Surprisingly, the positive perception of forest management is linked to a higher environmental awareness, independent of respondents' relationship to

the forest-based sector (see figure). Thus, people with a higher environmental awareness are more receptive to the sustainability communication of the forest-based sector. To successfully reconcile the image of forestry as a caretaker and forestry as a business, this population segment needs to be specifically targeted in future communication.

Items	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	IDK
FM contributes to a healthy and stable forest	14	12	71	3
Forest wardens have ecological expertise	3	21	68	8
FM allows many different tree species	21	21	50	8
FM results in a decrease of forest cover	48	22	16	14

W3B project enables communication of Wood Wisdom research to stakeholders

The conference "Forest and wood value chain in the European Research Area" was the second annual meeting of Wood Wisdom-net programme projects with Slovenian partners. It was held in Koper on the 8th of May, 2015. Additionally, a Centre of Excellence which is being developed at the University of Primorska through the Horizon 2020 framework programme was introduced during the event. In addition to consortium members from each project, industry members and representatives from two ministries attended the meeting.

CaReWood, Bioshapes, ReWoBioRef, W3B – Wood Believe, HCLTP, Aerowood, and EU Hardwoods project partners presented progress in their projects which cover topics from all parts of the forest-based value chain, including nanomaterials and biochemical properties as well as improving utilisation of recovered wood. Research examining modern technology-supported wooden construction, and high-tech materials for packaging and medical use was also presented. The W3B project brought all

of the themes together with important views from the general public.

The conference concluded that cooperation between research institutions and industry in international projects creates added value for the projects and enables transferring/applying best practices from abroad. However, it is important that open dissemination and communication also take place.

The conference with support of the W3B project successfully delivered the aim of communicating the research activities in the frame of WoodWisdom projects with Slovenian participation to target stakeholders. The conference should be used as a best practice example in other WoodWisdom countries.

More details:

www.woodwisdom.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/WW-NET-conference-Slovenia.pdf

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DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network & IUFRO Communication and Public Relations Party: Communicating the vital role of forests in the bioeconomy
Barcelona, Spain, 20-22 May 2015

InWood2015: Innovations in wood materials and processes
Brno, Czech Republic, 19-22 May 2015

Forest and wood value chain in the European Research Area
Koper, Slovenia 8 May, 2015

ÖGA Tagung 2015: Annual Conference of the Austrian Society of Agricultural Economics
Prague, Czech Republic, 16-18 September 2015

THE PROJECT TEAM

The project team
in Freiburg in April 2015



PROJECT FUNDING



Tekes
REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND SPORT



WoodWisdom-Net
www.woodwisdom.net

W3B FACTS

Type: ERA-Net WoodWisdom
Budget: 737,790 Eur
Duration: 3 years (2014-2017)

Participants

13 research partners
4 countries

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