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## **Proposal for an external study for SCAR SWG FOREST**

(Strategic Working Group on forests and forestry research and innovation)

### **Title: Synthesis on forest bio-economy research and innovation in Europe**

#### **Duration:**

Start: 04/2017

End: 12/2017

#### **Background and rationale**

The forest-based sector is characterised by Complexity – Diversity – Fragmentation. This is also true for the research associated with the forest sector. The concept of bio-economy adds to the complexity and diversity. In order to overcome the fragmentation, respectively to ensure a coherent process when addressing the needs for research related to the forest-based bio-economy, it is crucial to know what has already been done. To get an up to date picture of the stakeholders/research institutions that are already involved or should be involved in the future is of utmost importance.

When it comes to innovation some parts of the forest based bio-economy have been quite successful (e.g. some paper and pulp companies) but others are lacking much behind. Gathering the success stories would offer fast track experience to those lacking behind. A study on good practice examples and a synthesis report on successful innovation has the possibility to boost innovation in the forest related bio-economy.

Gathering information about existing research does not have to start from zero as there have been done some mapping exercises by those former and existing ERA-NETs involved in the forest based bio-economy. FORESTERRA and SUMFOREST recently have mapped the existing public research capacities in those countries that are partners in the ERA-NETs. SUMFOREST has extended its mapping to the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia while FORESTERRA concentrated on the south and north Mediterranean countries. In both ERA-NETs the European Forest Institute (EFI) has been responsible for the mapping tasks and has gathered great experience.

SUMFOREST and FORESTERRA focussed on national/regional public financed research and research capacities. They mapped research activities, capacities and funding related to forest management issues and did not extend their mapping to downstream research e.g. wood and pulp related research; research and innovation (R&I) capabilities in downstream processing have been more recently mapped in the frame of ERIFORE initiative ([www.erifore.eu](http://www.erifore.eu)) for an EU infrastructure on circular forest bio-economy. Additionally, side stream research mapping (e.g. lignocellulose coming from agriculture or forest plantations, or recycling streams) and an overview of research financed by the EC and private/industry financed research is however missing. Data on European financed research has been collected in Cordis but a synthesis regarding forest based bio-economy relevance has not been conducted. Additionally, the H2020 project Platform gathered information about research projects funded within all bio-economy relevant ERA-NETs, again a synthesis is missing.

An overall synthesis based on updated information on forest bio-economy research and innovation covering the complete forest-based systems is thus missing for Europe. It will be

an important baseline for future strategic advice and new initiatives from the SWG to strengthen coordination in research and innovation work between the EU, member states and stakeholders; it will be also of great use for alignment and reference in the design and framing of European and national calls within the area, and in relation with overall European bioeconomy strategy.

In order to cover complete forest-based systems and value chains in the context of the circular bio-economy, it is proposed that the expert study would be led by EFI in collaboration with InnovaWood, EFPRO, and FTP:

- EFI ([www.efi.int](http://www.efi.int)) - EFI is an international organization established by European States and conducts research and provides policy support on issues related to forests;
- InnovaWood ([www.innovawood.com](http://www.innovawood.com)) - the umbrella organisation that integrates four European networks in the Forest, Wood-based and Furniture industries into a more effective mechanism to support innovation in these sectors – would be a starting point to gather information on research capabilities and innovation activities in the wood related part of the bio-economy;
- EFPRO ([www.efpro.eu](http://www.efpro.eu)) - the Association of European Fibre and Paper Research Organisation – together with the CEPI research team (CEPI is the Confederation of European Paper Industries) are knowledgeable about research capacities and innovation aspects in the wood fibre sector.

The expert team and the SWG will interact during the 2 plenary meetings planned in 2017 (Helsinki, 8-9 June; location tbc in October) in connection with SUMFOREST meeting and final conference. If required for the study, it is expected that country representatives in SWG FOREST will be in a position to complement or update information at national levels.

### Objectives

The study will look into synergies and coherence of research and innovation needs in the forest-based bioeconomy through synthesis of R&I activities and examples of best practices. The main task will be to review and synthesize existing updated information about forest bio-economy research and innovation in different member states in Europe, including:

- mapping the most relevant research capacities and areas where activities are already ongoing at regional/national, transnational and European level, and specifically relevant for the Bioeconomy Strategy 2012
- analysing gaps and draw conclusions about
  - Overlapping activities
  - Missing activities
- mapping existing innovation examples in Europe and worldwide;
- providing best practise guidelines for innovation in the forest-based bio-economy.

### Outputs

A report synthesising in its first part the mapping exercise and providing recommendations about possible synergies and future research needs. The second part of the report will include guidelines and best practise examples of innovation activities in Europe and world wide. An executive summary will be prepared for policy makers.

### Dissemination

Beside the general channels of SCAR (Programme delegates, SCAR members, EC publications), the report will be widely distributed via the active networks of EFI,

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InnovaWood, EFPRO, FTP, COST office and IUFRO (the global network of forest research organisations); it will be also presented to the Standing Forestry Committee.

**Budget**

A lump sum of 20.000 € will be needed to cover expenses (incl. traveling and accommodation for meetings).

**Experts involved:**

- dr. Robert Mavsar (EFI; main contact person)
- dr. Marko Lovric (EFI)
- other experts from FTP, EFPRO, InnovaWood (tbc)

**SWG FOREST contact persons:**

- Jean-Michel Carnus (chair)
- Karin Perhans (core group member)

**Draft Terms of Reference (ToR):**

The ToR will be based on the text from the proposal above including following aspects::

- Background and rationale
- Description of the study including objectives, activities, outcomes/outputs
- Duration and period of the study
- Methodology and approach: the study will be a desk study led by EFI and in cooperation with FTP, EFPRO and InnovaWood
- Dissemination: the SWG will disseminate the results of the study
- Communication with SWG will be channeled through the chair and the core group

The terms of reference will be finalised with the expert after approval of the study by SCAR.