



Regional project managers at the Auvergne workshop

Planning the future of Europe's forests

Welsh forestry scientists are beginning to piece together a charter of climate change principles which could transform the face of woodlands across Europe.

Experts from FUTUREforest, the INTERREG IVC European project looking at how forests can adapt to climate change and provide opportunities for mitigation, have spent the last 12 months investigating all the latest thinking on the climate proofing of forests.

Now the Welsh team, working with their partners from Catalonia in the south to Latvia in the north are pulling together all the best practice in a piece of work which will be used to help guide policy makers at European and regional level.

And at the Auvergne workshop, the Forestry Commission Wales delegation began the painstaking task of sifting through the lessons learned across the regions that will be incorporated in an all region document which will help policy makers and politicians plan for the future.

CATALONIA REPORT – new moves

Catalonia goes political to put trees on the agenda

The Catalonian Ff team has approached the Catalan Office for Climate Change to discuss including forests in the next two year mitigation plan the OCC is currently drafting. Forests have been ignored so far in Catalan mitigation plans.

Though the adaptation measures will only be a priority for OCC over two years, we feel it is important and a good window of opportunity provided by Ff to get trees on the agenda. We hope it will raise awareness in the OCC teams. There has already been one meeting and another is scheduled for the end of March.



In parallel, the Forest Service is currently designing a booklet on the use of wood as a carbon sink and a mitigation tool against climate change, and has distributed internally in Catalonia, the presentation on the forest sector, prepared by the Ff working group on timber production.

Following the fruitful Auvergne meeting, we are currently evaluating the possibility to launch a “Imagine your Future Forest” contest directed at students of the Forestry university of Lleida, the prize for which would be participation in the Wales conference for the winning student(s).

The whole Catalonian Ff team will meet before the end of March to review the annual action plan and start concrete actions to work on the integration of the project’s results and a climate-related perspective within the different forest planning and policy tools at regional level with Brandenburg.



WALES REPORT – planning ahead

Making preparations

Project teams from Wales and Brandenburg met in Liverpool to discuss the best way forward for the second phase of the FUTUREforest project. Georg Wagener Lohse and Christian Hohm, from Brandenburg (the lead partner in Ff) met with five of the Wales Ff team. In the six hour meeting discussions focussed on the details of the draft basic structure of the final report.

“It is vitally important that we know exactly what we are aiming for at this stage of the project. There is so much information and we must prioritise its presentation,” said Georg.

The outline proposals were agreed at the second workshop session, held in the Auvergne in February.



Meanwhile, planning is well under way for the Welsh conference, to be held on 18 November in Cardiff. Welsh Forestry Minister Elin Jones AM will be opening the conference and politicians from all seven partner regions are expected to attend.

“We are hoping to make the conference an event that will show off the work we will have achieved in the second phase of the project and prepare us well for the third phase – Transfer to Policy,” said Wales Ff project manager Helen Cariss.

She is currently working on the Water Management element of the report which will focus on the challenges of changes in water availability and the opportunities that forests offer for the management of water.

SLOVAKIA REPORT



The OZ PES civic organisation, in the following project stage, has focused on dissemination and worked on the Slovak project output. Dissemination activities include an essay writing competition focused on FUTURE Forest. Apart from the essay competition, we declared an art competition, too. Both competitions are open for general public. Everybody can participate, the age limit is 18. The competition lasts till the end of June, when the results will be published.

Within the internal communication among Slovak experts, we started to prepare our proposal for improvement of relations between forest owners and the state. It serves as recommendation for the preparation. From other dissemination activities, we propose promotion of the project in other countries, organizations and business subjects. For example, it refers to promotion of the project in Russia. We have also received an invitation from a planting enterprise in Germany. From Norway we received an invitation for the training connected with the topic of forest caretaking for forest owners (IT usage) and to present the project.

For the cooperation in the project, we would like to create an international group of the essay and art competition winners who will communicate and prepare a collective project. We promote the project mainly among young people as part of our dissemination programme.

BULGARIA REPORT – new support for forestry

Courageous ideas and cooperation - a new way of funding for forests?

The team that manages the FUTUREforest project for Bulgaria, presented their ideas and received support to develop a "Program of measures for adaptation of forests in Bulgaria and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on them."

Bulgaria confirmed its commitment for organisation and delivery of the forthcoming Third Workshop Phase II "Developing together", to be held between 28-30 June, 2010.

Probably the new Forest Act for Bulgaria, if adopted in the first half as expected, will be presented. The seminar will be held in the Burgas regional forestry directorate area, within the unique nature of Strandja Mountain, which is world famous for its historical and cultural wealth.

Fruitful results are expected of the work on the topic of the seminar - "Tools for funding in the forestry sector, related to reducing the negative impacts of climate change."

It is expected to make a presentation of different types of documents and instruments related to the sustainable development of forests and their adaptation to the climate changes, both at European and national level - legislation, policy papers, grants and other projects ...

As a result of the project, Bulgarian experts also consider the parameters of specific guidelines for implementing best practices.

At the meeting in February in Auvergne presentations of the partner countries on climate change and their relationship with the planning of activities in the forests, showed that the process in the European forestry sector is done by different systems and methods. Closest to the Bulgarian model, is that of Catalonia.

In talks with Catalan partners we found useful opportunities for bilateral cooperation in areas such as: preventing and fighting forest fires, pest and disease and erosion control. During the upcoming meeting in Bulgaria at the end of June, discussions with colleagues from Catalonia will continue in order to define and coordinate specific areas and issues of bilateral cooperation.



Competition as a teaching aid

The Forest sector in Latvia has already devoted substantial work to children and youth in different activities. The Competition *My little hike* has almost become a movement, encouraging children and youth to learn about forest sector enterprises and prepare study work.

The competition started in 2006 when the Ministry of Agriculture, with national financial support from the Forest Development Fund, presented all school public libraries a book written by famous poets I.Ziedonis and R.Ziedonis *To Forest Land Latvia! Let's go!* Another company *Latvijas valsts meži* presented a map *Welcome to Recreation in Latvia State Forests* and in 2008 presented a DVD *Forest Land Latvia*.

Competition chair Ē.Hänbergs, a famous Latvian writer, is happy to see the ideas of poet I.Ziedonis continue to live with children and youth learning outdoors about nature and forest sector enterprises, gaining new knowledge and positive emotions.

During 2010 the competition has been run by EU INTERREG IVC project FUTUREforest in co-operation with the Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava". The aim of *My little hike 2010* is to encourage children and young people to gain awareness and knowledge about climate change processes in Latvia and globally, and understanding of the forest sector contribution to climate change mitigation. Competition entrants' task is to study information sources on climate change, its processes and influence on the environment and economy as well as forest sector capability to mitigate climate change.

Participants go for an educational hike or trip to get acquainted with climate change processes and mitigation activities in Latvia. After that they prepare a creative study work, supplementing their description with stories that local people can tell concerning how different climate change aspects become apparent in a local district or in Latvia during the last 40 years

Climate change: a new deal for forest policy

German, Welsh, Latvian, Slovak, Bulgarian and Spanish Foresters were gathered in Clermont-Ferrand 9.10 and 11 February to discuss forest policies conducted in their countries or regions. They were invited by the National Forest Office, in partnership with the private forest owners's regional organization, the regional union of municipalities forestry owners of Auvergne and Limousin and the Regional Council of Auvergne.

A seminar to pool practices of each country

During three days, experts have worked on various existing documents that lead forest management in each country. The aim of this workshop was to decide together how to influence these policies so that they better take into account climate change.

For this subject, the anticipation is strategic. In Auvergne, it was the opportunity to present the first draft of the guidelines for Auvergne forests (forest regional orientation ORF)written by DRAAF (forest State administration).

This workshop gave the opportunity to local elected representatives (regional council) to present the forestry and environmental policies implemented now and also to explain how the FUTUREforest project is important for the regional council of Auvergne.

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