



The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) is a non-profit, non-governmental international network of forest scientists, which promotes global cooperation in forest-related research and enhances the understanding of the ecological, economic and social aspects of forests and trees. IUFRO's 125th Anniversary Congress was held in Freiburg, Germany, 18-22 September 2017.

IUFRO is "the" global network for forest science cooperation. It unites more than 15,000 scientists in almost 700 Member Organizations in over 120 countries, and is a member of the International Council for Science (ICSU). Scientists cooperate in IUFRO on a voluntary basis.

IUFRO's field of scientific activity is spread over nine Divisions covering key forest research fields: Silviculture; Physiology and Genetics; Forest Operations, Engineering and Management; Forest Assessment, Modelling and Management; Forest Products; Social Aspects of Forests and Forestry; Forest Health; and Forest Policy and Economics.

Each of those Divisions is broken into units that focus on specific aspects that fall under the divisional umbrella.

Five of the nine Divisions held all-division meetings in conjunction with the IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress. At the all-Division meetings, researchers were brought up to date, through a number of presentations, on issues and findings pertinent to them.

Division 9 – Forest Policy and Economics includes: information services and knowledge organization; management of forest research; forest and woodland history; forest sector analysis; social and economic aspects of forestry; forest policy and governance; forest law and environmental legislation.

The units within Division 9 look into: Information and communication; Forest sector analysis; Forest history and traditional knowledge; Forest resource economics; Forest policy and governance; and Forest law and environmental legislation.

Daniela Kleinschmit, Chair of Forest and Environmental Policy at the University of Freiburg and Coordinator of Division 9, elaborated on her division's work:



"More than 30 sessions were offered by Division 9 at this Congress" Dr. Kleinschmit said. "The range of themes was as diverse as our Division. It started early Monday morning with a session on 'Institutional drivers and barriers for the management of climate related hazards in the forest' and ended with a session on community forestry and co-management on Friday afternoon.

"It shows the great range of activity among the scientists involved in the area of forest policy and economics.

"The Division 9 meeting was very successful," she said. "I was very excited by the enthusiasm and interest shown by everyone at the meeting."

One thing that especially pleased her about her Division's meeting was the unanimous call for **gender and regional balance**. Though Division 9 is, when it comes to gender balance, already doing well, there is a common agreement to work further on this in the future. "We included that in our presentations and it's an issue we really must address. I plan to work on and promote that idea."

Overall, she said, Division 9 provides analysis and options about different ways of steering forest management ranging from the participation of local people to public policy.

“Understanding and explaining these steering mechanisms is at the heart of providing policy relevant information for sustainable forest management,” Dr. Kleinschmit said.

“Our Division covers a **wide spectrum of social scientific research areas** – the historical perspective, the economic and political analysis and-or the regulative dimension. And, within these areas, a diversity of topics is addressed, e.g. bio-diversity, cultural diversity, bio-economy, ecosystem services, landscape management and, of course, people and society,” she said.

“Some of the units within Division 9 have strong and lasting networks that have been meeting annually for the past 17 years – the research group on forest law and environmental legislation, for example,” she added. “Others may be more recent in origin and meet less often, but with great international resonance or a growing resonance in regions where collaboration among forest researchers can be enhanced.”

Among Division 9’s achievements, she notes its **impact on policy-making** and gives the example of a conference of the research group on forest history and traditional knowledge. “It served as the basis for the Florence Declaration on the links between biological and cultural diversity.”

And, of practical relevance to the scientists she says, is a new **communication guide for forest researchers** developed and published by the working party on communication and public relations.

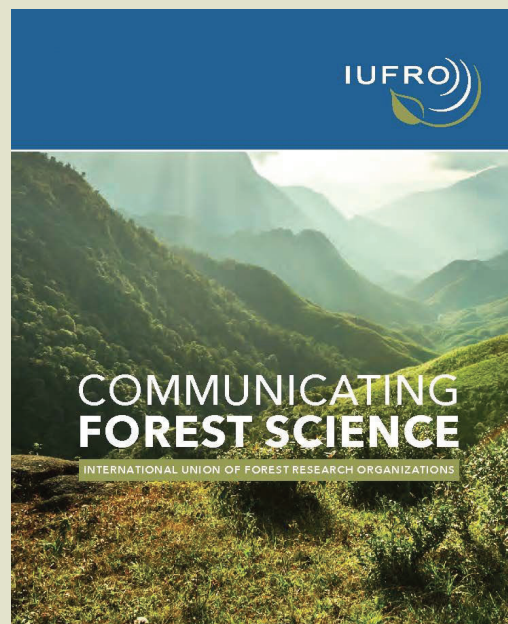
Her division’s main focus has been and, going forward will continue to be, the **steering of forest management** – through historical lenses, traditional knowledge, public policy, law and legislation, participation and markets. “This will continue to be a priority,” she said, “as there is still great need to improve the knowledge of governance mechanisms and ways to implement them.

“I also assume that climate change, biodiversity and the bio-economy will remain relevant topics. And, an issue that has been gaining more attention and will likely see that attention increase, is the topic of **forest restoration**,” Dr. Kleinschmit said.

These issues will be addressed from the different perspectives of the different units within Division 9, she said.

“But we don’t attack these issues from one approach or methodology. Instead, the activity, output and outcome result from the interest of the researcher in the subject. This ensures the **diversity of perspectives**.

“And that,” she said, “is the charm of IUFRO.”



Visit the [IUFRO Anniversary Congress website](http://iufro2017.com/) for an overview of the program and for photos. Videos of the live-streamed sessions will soon be available on: <http://iufro2017.com/>