

The Role of Forests and Forestry in Integrated Environmental Assessments in Europe

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Over the past decades, emphasis in European forest management has shifted from wood production to a broad spectrum of goods and services ranging from fiber production to landscaping and from biodiversity conservation to sustainable use of non-timber forest products. Consequently forestry and forest management have to be considered in a wider context and other sectors and issues are increasingly carrying out assessments at the European scale that encompass forests, but that hardly involve the forestry sector. Examples are European scale projects like Bioscore, Sensor, and Carbo-Europe, and examples in the policy process are the drawing up of a Pan European Ecological Network (PEEN).

Concurrent with this development, and in line with other developments in society, stakeholders have become more vocal, demanding and influential. Forests and forestry are not the exclusive domain of foresters anymore (if they ever were). Yet, forestry and forest management remain responsible for stand management and, together with a wide range of stakeholders, for deciding on long-term objectives and targets.

Following the European Forest Institute's annual conference, over a 100 people met in the Abbey of Rolduc in Kerkrade, The Netherlands, on 15th September to discuss this topic. Keynotes included were those from Peter Duinker from Canada on 'Forests and Environmental Assessment: How Do They Link?', Tor-Björn Larsson of the European Environment Agency (EEA) on 'Forest Biodiversity Indicators and Forests as Part of Nature Conservation Areas', Mark van Oorschot from the Netherlands on 'The Role of Forestry in the Global Biodiversity Outlook', Marta Pérez-Soba from Spain on 'Assessing the Impacts of EU Policies on Sustainable Forest Management: the Sensor Approach', and Rik Leemans from the Netherlands with 'ATEAM: Vulnerability and Resilience of Forests in Europe' (ATEAM stands for *Advanced Terrestrial Ecosystem Analysis and Modelling*).

The seminar concluded that as part of these developments, a strict sectoral approach to forest management may be unable to cope with the variety of



*Seminar Participants during the excursion
Photo by Gert-Jan Nabuurs*

demands on forests, and a more integrated view on land use is required.

As part of this, forests are only one form of land use, although still fulfilling its various roles. Contrary to the more integrated approaches, forest ownership is fragmented, owners may not depend on the forest for their income, and stumpage prices remain low. As a consequence of these developments, industry is becoming more interested in the forest resource of the European part of Russia.

Thus, although there is increasing interest in the role of forests, e.g. within Natura2000 networks, for biodiversity conservation, in aesthetic values, and in climate change mitigation functions, many forest owners are not prepared for this, and the economics of forest management often do not reflect the increased interest. The result is that forestry is sometimes seen in integrated land use views as a slowly adapting conservative player. Also, forestry research is lagging behind in these developments. Forest scenario modelling tools and forest sector models should take up these new challenges.

Seminar organized by Alterra, Wageningen, Chair of Forest Ecology and Management, Wageningen University, European Forest Institute, and [IUFRO 4.02.07](#) Large-scale forest inventory and scenario modelling.

Terminology: [What does it mean?](#) - Paradigm Change in Forest Management?