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## *forestXchange* – New Ways in Knowledge Management

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*Beyond classical approaches of knowledge transfer, new ways of communication between scientists and practitioners are emerging. Community building, new technologies, web-based knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer communication, new possibilities of integrating experts into knowledge management (KM), and a new perception of the notion of "knowledge" and "expertise" open up the evolving field of knowledge management in forestry.*

From 25 – 27 October 2006, experts in knowledge management from all parts of the world met at the international *forestXchange* conference in Freiburg, Germany, to discuss these issues at an interdisciplinary level covering **theoretical, applied, sociological and technological aspects** of knowledge management.

*forestXchange* was seen as a platform for discussing new approaches to **the valuation of and the exposure to knowledge** in the field of forestry. Implications for the practical management of knowledge assets were presented, and established ways of knowledge management were critically examined.

Participants gave examples of knowledge management **systems and solutions** such as web-based communication platforms, and discussed new technologies and instruments like Internet Wikis and their application to the field of forestry. The implications of modern KM theories and concepts for the knowledge management in organizations ("Learning organization") and the limitations of the traditional knowledge transfer paradigm were also addressed.

The more theoretical approach was complemented by the relation of **practical experience** in the wide field of KM including knowledge transfer initiatives for forest land owners, KM and decision-making support systems in forest and wood-based industries or KM in forest research organizations.

As a main result of the conference, an impressive variety of existing KM initiatives and approaches became visible. However, it also became obvious that in many organizations and institutions in forestry a true promotion of KM initiatives from the management was sometimes missing, especially when it comes to resource allocation. KM in forestry is in some respects still a matter of single initiatives by individual persons. **There is a need for an intensified exchange of experience and knowledge within a Knowledge Management community of practice**, also on the national level where networks of KM experts often do not exist.

The *forestXchange* conference can be regarded as an important step into this direction. The presentations, which are available for download via the **conference website** [www.forestxchange.org](http://www.forestxchange.org), serve as good starting points for establishing contacts with KM experts and are an invitation to further explore this evolving and promising field of KM in forestry.

*(Text adapted by the editor;  
illustration from conference website)*

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The conference was organized by the developers of the joint international information platform [www.waldwissen.net](http://www.waldwissen.net) and founders of an EU co-financed international network for knowledge transfer in the Alpine Space (KnowForAlp), and supported by IUFRO Division 6 (<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/>), the IUFRO Task Force "Communicating Forest Science" ([www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/communication/](http://www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/communication/)) and IUFRO Units 6.06.01 (Technology Transfer), 6.06.02 (Extension) and 6.15.00 (Improving education and further education). Approx. 120 experts from 22 countries, mainly from the field of forestry (research institutions, universities, state forest services, consultants etc.) participated and 45 presentations were given.  
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