

EU Network INTEGRATE
- Integration of nature conservation enhancement in
Sustainably managed forests in Europe -
Description of tasks/objectives

I) Background and overarching objective

Integrated forest management approaches are a key strategy to further integrate nature conservation objectives into the practical implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). There is a rich tradition of these approaches at forest practice level across Europe. In the last decades several new concepts have been developed and implemented in different parts of the continent. Yet, despite this overall positive trend, their potential to integrate nature conservation and wood production under the changing socio-economic and ecological driving forces that impact these approaches now and in future is subject to ongoing political and scientific debate. For instance, the question of how the close combination of both nature conservation objectives and wood production can be achieved under a changing climate and increasing risks is crucial. Moreover, barriers exist in the science-policy communication about these approaches. Consequently, there is a need to demonstrate the potential of these approaches to policy makers backed up by scientific findings, and to initiate mutual learning related to the prospects of these approaches amongst policy makers, administration, practitioners and scientists.

In the framework of the EU Forest Strategy and its Multiannual Implementation Plan , with reference to lessons-learned and outcomes of the INTEGRATE/ INTEGRATE+ studies of the European Forest Institute (EFI) and based on the Prague Declaration on Forests signed by the Czech Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Jurecka, and by the German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Schmidt, at the Conference in Prague early October 2016, the two ministers invited for the establishment of a voluntary cross- border network on the further integration of nature conservation enhancement in sustainably managed forests in Europe. The overarching objective of this network will be to promote and advance forest management approaches for the integration of nature conservation in SFM at three levels: the decision-making policy level, the level of forest practitioners/managers, and the level of research and academic knowledge.

II) Objectives and tasks of the working group

A) Promoting cross- border and cross- sectoral learning and cooperation on innovative and successful approaches to further integrate nature conservation, respectively the mainte-

nance and enhancement of biological diversity, into sustainable forest management practices.

- B) Offering an active interface between research/academia, policy, administration and forest as well as conservation practitioner.
- C) Provide a platform for on the (forest) spot discussions of demands of nature conservation, including opportunities to reconcile and combine them with other forest functions and vice versa.
- D) Promoting knowledge transfer and capacity building on integration in all sectors involved.

III) Working modus

- a) Regular meetings once per year or irregularly on specific reasons (on invitation and hosted by members)
- b) Meetings (could also be combined with meetings under a)) in conjunction with on the spot forest visits and practical demonstrations
- c) Regular feedback/reports to the Standing Forestry Committee and other European fora
- d) Networking - to the extent feasible through national focal points
- e) Promotion of cross-border expert visits and exchanges
- f) Joint project work as needed and supported.

IV) Member's Contributions

- The network is voluntary, works on an informal basis and builds on effort-sharing.
- States members participate as they like and establish focal points at their responsible forest administrations.
- The European Commission as well as international research institutes that have relevant projects running in Europe can also join the network share their expertise and contribute to the discussions.
- Each Member State establishes at least one demonstration site in typical managed forest types for innovative and successful integration of nature conservation and offers an expose on it.
- Member States are invited to stand ready for hosting expert meetings on the (forest) spot as needed, following an effort- sharing approach.
- Member States are invited to promote the participation of national experts from science, administration, policy and practice in such meetings and in online-dialogues.
- All members are invited to contribute to joint reporting and feedback.

V) Facilitation

The European Forest Institute (EFI) facilitates the network's activities (in the framework of its project INFORMAR funded by Germany).