

Webinar: SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN EU INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

5 April 2022, 14:30-16:30, Webex

This webinar is part of the series of Webinars on European Green Deal - Greening EU cooperation (Environment and Climate Change), offered by the European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnership (DG INTPA). The webinar was organised by INTPA F2/Forest Sector with the support of the Forest for the Future Facility (F4).

Questions and comments posted in the chat

N	Question/Comment	Response
1	Q: should we use the word 'idle' for forest? they are not a product only for our consumption!	The term 'idle' was used with reference to a production forest with harvesting or other economic use. This was defined as 'idle' from the exclusive point of view of their objective and financial value. Yet, all forests, including forests with no economic value, perform a multitude of roles. Forest provide a broad variety of environmental, socio-economic, cultural benefits as well as ecosystem services. Forest play an important role in mitigating climate change, providing clean water and air, protecting soil and pollination, cooling down cities, offering essential habitat to diverse species and harbouring terrestrial biodiversity. Forests also play a critical role in contributing to human health and well-being, recreation and culture. Forest provide subsistence, safety nets and jobs to about one third of the world's population.

2	Q: Would be good to know linkage between forest plantations and EU biodiversity policy	<p>The EU biodiversity Strategy¹'s headline ambition is to ensure that by 2050 all of the world's ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected. As part of this, the world should commit to no human-induced extinction of species, at minimum where avoidable. Afforestation, reforestation and tree planting to support biodiversity and ecosystem restoration will be promoted. To support this, the Commission will develop guidelines on biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation and closer-to-nature-forestry practices.</p> <p>In the webinar, we explained how plantations are necessary for producing timber in the quantities that are needed for human development and climate change (better productivity than natural forests, carbon sequestration). We also insisted on the need of forest plantation for production purposes (timber being a good construction material and less polluting than concrete) and to fill the growing need for wood/its products in the face of population growth and economic development. Yet, it is important that production and biodiversity goals go in the same direction. To be aligned, state-of-the-art guidelines shall be followed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary rule is that plantations do not convert primary, old growth forests, native or other natural ecosystems into plantation. Plantations should be established in areas that have been deforested long time ago – typically old pasture areas or unproductive old agricultural land. The FSC cut-off date is 1994 and the PEFC cut-off date is 2010. • The standards and guidelines require a certain variety in gene pool. E.g. large mono-clonal tree plantations should not be allowed. • Ideally the establishment of a forest plantation is be planned in a way that it fits into the landscape context – e.g. with due consideration to the impact on watercourses and groundwater flow, to the risk for invasive species to spread into native forest stands, or to the competition over land with smallholder food production. Agro-forestry models that combine food production with timber production are to be promoted, while plantations should have areas for conservation or restoration of native forests or ecosystems, and the plantations should form a mosaic structure with ecological corridors. This is already mainstream practice in advanced forest plantation countries, such as Brazil, Chile
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N	Question/Comment	Response
		<p>and South Africa. The required conservation set-aside areas range from 10% to 80% of the landscapes, depending on the local conditions and the ecosystems (e.g. conservation of natural forest along water streams or in high conservation value areas).</p> <p>Following such best approaches, forest plantations can contribute directly to biodiversity goals by restoring biodiversity habitat within the plantation areas themselves and in conservation blocks, or by their function as links or corridors between conservation forests. Indirectly, forest plantations can also contribute to biodiversity goals as a legal source of fuelwood or construction wood for the local market, by reducing the need to collect this illegally and destructively from remnant trees or forests.</p>

¹ EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Brussels, 20.5.2020 COM(2020) 380 final (COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS).

N	Question/Comment	Response
3	Q: the linkage between deforestation and EU biofuel policies	<p>A number of reports seem to indicate that EU biomass consumption, and in particular that related to palm oil, might have contributed to a certain extend to deforestation in the tropics. For instance, the 2007 EU Parliament report on Palm Oil and Deforestation on Rainforests stated that palm oil is often entrenched with corruption, child labor, violation of human rights, omission of the rights of indigenous people, and a trigger to deforestation. Overall, the share of palm oil imports used for biodiesel production reached an all-time high in 2020, with 58% of EU palm imports used for biodiesel. In the above-mentioned report is also estimated that by 2020 the amount of land that will be converted globally to produce palm oil for biodiesel will be 1 million hectares, of which 0.57 Mha will be converted from Southeast Asian primary forests². Given the share of exports to EU, one of resolutions and recommendations of such report is to stop Crude Palm Oil (CPO) imports (including from Indonesia) in 2021.</p> <p>In July 2021, the European Commission published a proposal for a new revision of the Renewable Energy Directive, as part of the package “Delivering on the European Green Deal”. New rules are proposed to strengthen the sustainability criteria for forest biomass – to ensure products such as biomass can continue to make an important contribution in a way that is consistent with the EU’s biodiversity objectives. The Revised Renewable Energy Directive (2018/20021/EC) already classified palm oil as a high risk indirect land use change (ILUC) feedstock. In order to reducing and eliminating its use as a biofuel in Europe, in May 20019 the European Commission has adopted the Delegated Act (2019/807/EC) to address the issue ILUC.</p> <p>As a result of these regulatory changes, palm oil exporting countries claim their economies have suffered and to a certain degree are opposing to such measures.</p>

² Source: Globiom report in: REPORT on palm oil and deforestation of rainforests; Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. A8-0066/2017 European Parliament 2017.

N	Question/Comment	Response
4	<p>C: Inspirations yes, but the governance environment and values cannot be applied in some of the countries we are working with...Scandinavian countries have a reputation of integrity and high moral values this is certainly not the case for many countries where we are working</p>	<p>As mentioned in the webinar, these are examples from an entirely different part of the world. Still, they can serve as an example how the cooperative model can work in the forestry sector; it is a matter of creating enabling conditions in our partner countries. Sustainable forest management is about technique.</p> <p>We also see that countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, Mexico and others have developed major agro-processing industries, and major wood processing industries. These illustrate how a more industrial approach for the wood sector in partner countries is possible.</p>
5	<p>C: the pan-European Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) defined sustainable forest management as: "The stewardship and use of forest lands in a way and at a rate that maintains their productivity, biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future relevant ecological, economic and social functions at local, national and global levels and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems."</p>	<p>Thank you, this is correct.</p>
6	<p>C: Striking to see the low values in €/m³. Usually tropical timbers reach higher values, especially when exported</p>	<p>The prices in the case are not for export prices and the concession is located far from export ports. The prices are at roadside or at mill gate of the local sawmills. It is true that with standardisation and differentiation between assortments the prices can be higher. The high transport costs are a burden.</p>
7	<p>C: The EU has committed also to abide by the standards of the FAO VGGT guidelines. The guidelines set out principles and internationally accepted standards of responsible practices for the use and control of land, fisheries and forests.</p>	<p>Indeed, the 'Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security' is one of many guidelines the EU is committed too. (Forest) land tenure is typically addressed as one of the themes in a legality assurance system (TLAS) in VPA countries, and more broadly as one of the themes to be addressed as part of the promotion of 'good forest governance', in non-VPA countries.</p>

N	Question/Comment	Response
8	C: Yes, I've also heard that it is vital that the reforestation is of biodiversity, both for the reason of resilience to storms as to resilience from pests and also for the sake of animals! One of the biggest problems with using forest as a resource how I understood it, is that the replantation is often of the same kind of tree and of course that it takes years/decades for it to recover to the earlier state. I think it should be a policy to always keep some old trees around the trees we use, in order to protect to replanted small ones from storms etc...	<p>If the management regime in the tropical forests requires replanting, it is normally enrichment planting (within the remaining forest) with the appropriate species. Clear-cutting is not applied in the state-of-the-art tropical forest management.</p> <p>In restoration, normally, the idea is to apply natural regeneration and if needed planting, using local species.</p> <p>In afforestation or reforestation of deforested areas, it is important to plan the plantation within the context of the landscape, with a right balance of commercial species and appropriate native species. Without a commercial dimension, the restoration would be too expensive and not realistic.</p>
9	C: Plantation is not needed at concession level, but at global or national level, we need to promote timber plantation (and fuel wood plantations). Simply because the demand in timber will also increase and timber is better than cement for climate change.	<p>Correct. Please also refer back to question number 2 on the linkages between biodiversity and plantations. Plantations are needed in reforestation of deforested areas, especially if the natural regeneration does not work. Most of the wood used by industries is sourced from planted forests in the sub-tropical and tropical areas (even in temperate areas).</p> <p>Normally, it is better to have a long-term vision for valuable wood products, also with plantations. There are always residues and small dimension wood that can be used for fuel.</p>
10	C: Ecosystem services have on instances created divisions and tensions in communities, often even driving conflict (that is coming up more and more in the Pacific region)	<p>This is a reality unfortunately. Once economic value is attached to a service (through payments), tensions may arise.</p>
11	Q: How can we access the ES version of this video?	<p>You will find the Forest Partnership teaser video with subtitles in ES/PT and FR available at: https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-222768</p>
12	Q: Will you also share all of these interesting presentations?	<p>The presentations and other relevant materials are available at the Cap4Dev platform at: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-environment-climate/events/webinar-sustainable-forest-management-sfm-eu-international-partnerships</p>