

ALTERFOR: New forest management models will help to meet major challenges of the 21st century

Silvicultural methods have evolved in response to historic conditions and are often confined to a national or regional setting. Are they adequate to meet the challenges of the 21st century?

The goal of the ALTERFOR project is to provide improved and new approaches that are robust enough to address the pressures of increased use of bioenergy and uncertainties such as climate change, the complex dynamics of evolving global markets, and the increased focus on forest's social values. An international consortium of research organisations and forest owner associations, forestry authorities as well as forest societies, led by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), will develop and test new forest management models in case study areas that cover representative forested landscapes in Europe.

“The first great challenge in the four and a half year project is to develop a common roadmap how to implement new forest management models considering the great variety of forest management practices, socio-ecological settings and management contexts in Europe” commented Ljusk Ola Eriksson, coordinator and professor at SLU. This will be an overarching task to deal with from the start in April 2016.

In the course of the next years, the project partners from 11 countries will carefully evaluate the improved management models. They will be studied under different future climate change scenarios and with respect to desired ecosystem services like biodiversity conservation, timber production and cultural values. To be of value for policy makers and practical forestry, the analyses will incorporate the actual behaviour of forest owners and managers.

The researchers obtain independent advice from distinguished scholars who form the scientific advisory board (SAB) of the project. The chair of the SAB is David Foster, director of Harvard Forests, one of the oldest forestry schools and ecological research centres in the USA. Further members of the SAB are Sten Nilsson, former director of IIASA and CEO of the Forest Sector Insights AB, Euan Gordon Mason, professor for forestry at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Eduardo Rojas Briales, Assistant Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

More than 60 researchers and representatives of forest-related associations and organisations will meet for the kick-off meeting of the project ALTERFOR in Alnarp/Sweden on 6-8 April 2016.



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