

THE IMPACT OF ADVISORS' VALUES AND ATTITUDES ON ADVISORY

Several studies have analyzed the factors affecting the outcomes of forest advisory processes. Some of them have considered the role of the forest owners as a target group of the forest based advisory companies, while others have concentrated on the importance of tailoring the advising processes for different kinds of forest owners. However, significantly less focus has been put on the forest advisors' role, even though their impact on the advising process is equally important.

The forest advisors' personality, values, attitudes, and behavior influence how and what information is brought to the discussion with forest owners, which in turn impacts on the success of the advising process. Through understanding the effect of these issues, service providers can consciously change their advising methods to improve their performance.

Purpose

In this pilot, the aim was to understand how the forest advisors' opinions and attitudes influence the advising processes. For this, Finnish Forest Centre advisors (n=50) and received responses from 33 advisors. The questionnaire included questions on: advisors' opinions on the "proper" use of forests and their opinions on forest owners, advisors' satisfaction in their current job, professional identity, negotiation skills, values and personality. In addition, the outcome of the advising process as well as the used contact method and the general customer feedback were collected from the Forest Centre database. The database contains closely followed and documented details about the advising process, which was the reason why

the Forest Centre advisors were chosen as the survey's target group in the first place.

Conclusions

The results revealed that no individual attitude/element alone explains the success of the advising process. This confirms the fact that successful advisors can have several different kinds of characteristics and still be able to provide forest owners with high-quality advice that encourage owners to take actions concerning their forests. In addition, it seemed that the more positive opinion the advisers had on the forest owners' skills and knowledge regarding forest related issues, the better was their success rate in the advising process. Thus, a certain respect towards the forest owners' own skills seemed to help to reach the desired outcome.

In addition, the advisors' engagement towards the Forest Centre and its work community appears to be related with the success in advising processes. This engagement can also relate to job satisfaction. In line with this, the results also showed that advisors who are more satisfied in their job, also are more flexible and ready to changes in their job description.

In conclusion, the results suggest that a versatile collection of forest advisors may be best capable of supporting forest owners who themselves are a diverse group. Therefore, it may be recommended that forest advisory companies encourage employees to develop their advising methods based on individual strengths. Further research will be conducted to study if some advisor characteristics combined with certain type of forest owners would explain positive advisory processes.

PILOT SUMMARY



EUROPEAN UNION

Interreg
Botnia-Atlantica

European Regional Development Fund



Prosperous forest

Diversification through Inclusion and Specialisation