



Ist Policy Steering Committee Meeting October 2022

During the kickoff meeting of the ForestNavigator project, PSC members gave their reflection of the state of the forest policy and emerging challenges at the EU level and two of the ForestNavigator case study countries (Czechia and Ireland). They also listed key aspects of how ForestNavigator could help the policy dialogue and some recommendations. A summary of their presentations and feedback is provided below.

Johannes Schuler (EC, DG-CLIMA) underlined the need for accurate and defensible assessments of EU forests sink under climate change impacts, for policies aligned to the LULUCF 2030 target, the 2035 AFOLU climate neutrality goal and the 2050 economy-wide climate neutrality, and considering synergies with agriculture, environment, and energy sector.

DG-CLIMA can benefit greatly from the new ideas and goals from stakeholders (Member States (MS), companies, NGOs, etc.). Most relevant is to provide a broader insight to potential questions, which can influence future assessments for DG CLIMA.

Some emerging challenges from a DG-CLIMA perspective are to:

- Accurately assessing and modelling climate change impacts on the land sector.
- Predicting better the consumer behavior and legislation, for example when it results in future demands for biomass use.
- Understand the interaction with other policies in agriculture, environment, and energy etc.
- Integrating new carbon removal technologies including biochar

Adrián Tištán (EC, DG-ENV) discussed pressures and impacts on EU forests and the importance of economic, social and environmental forest functions at the core of the new European Forest Strategy for 2030. He raised challenges to obtain EU wide indicators for monitoring the progress in policies, and, the need to concurrently address biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and bioeconomy.

Annemarie Bastrup-Birk (EEA) discussed the role of the EEA to delivering data and knowledge to achieve Europe's vision on climate and environment. She discussed the forest policy context and policy interlinkages between biodiversity and a sustainable circular bioeconomy. She raised the challenge of getting access to high-quality, comparable, high-resolution spatial and temporal data, and the need to prioritize pathways with the largest impact to reach EU targets. She also pointed out synergies for climate, biodiversity, and circular bioeconomy.

Tomáš Krejzar (Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic) presented forest policies in Czechia and the needs of considering forest adaptation, long term wood supply under climate change, and improved indicators for monitoring policy objectives.

Shane Flanagan (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland) presented Irish forest policies and forest sink evolution, and emerging challenges for the Irish context. He reaffirmed the need for more modelling of afforestation, changes of managements, and adaptation to disturbances.

The PSC members strongly supported for ForestNavigator to contribute to the European forest policy adaptation, by making available:

- **Data** necessary to monitor the progress towards policy objectives and protect forests: provide access to comparable, high quality, methodologically consistent, high resolution, timely, and openly accessible EU wide data in areas of forest resilience, forest biodiversity, and socio-economic forest functions.
- Accurate **assessment and modelling of climate change impacts** on the land sector in a standardized approach across Europe, including organic soils emissions and natural disturbances.
- Improved predictions of **consumer behaviour** (e.g. when increases future demand for biomass use).
- **Win-win-win forest management practices** for improving forest biodiversity, maximizing carbon sequestration, while rewarding forest thriving bioeconomy to reverse the worrying trend in forest land sink.
- **Tools for stakeholders** to find solutions for often-conflicting outcomes.
- **Impact assessment synergies**, including actions in the short term and directions in the long term. Support the increased need of pathways for supporting decision-making. Minimize trade-offs and maximize benefits in the pathways and prioritize the ones with larges positive impacts for reaching the targets.

PSC members also recommended to:

- Consider the circular bioeconomy within and outside the EU, consider how to increase the time when carbon is sequestered in wood products and possible payment for ecosystem services.
- Understand the interaction with other policies in agriculture, environment, and energy sectors.
- Integrate in the assessments new carbon removal technologies (e.g. including biochar).
- Create interlinkages with the FISE as a tool for supporting decision makers.