On **Wednesday, 28 October 2020**, the InnoForESt consortium gathered key stakeholders in the supply and financing of forest ecosystem services (FES) including forest owners and managers, non-profit and non-governmental organisation representatives, researchers, and entrepreneurs to showcase the InnoForESt project and its main findings, share lessons learned and policy, business and management recommendations, followed by a panel discussion to debate the results and their usability with key EU level representatives.

Part 1: Enabling governance innovations development focused on the approach for assisting innovation development in Work Packages (WP) 3-5, shaping the Innovation Action with a collaborative, future-oriented innovation approach that develops prototypes and considers context factors.

The introduction on WP3: Smart ecosystem services governance innovations, presented by **Tatiana Kluvankova (CETIP)**, raised 2 key questions: (1) 'what kind of governance/business innovations can support sustainable provision of forest ecosystem services in the long term?' and (2) 'what are the influencing factors (fostering/hindering) to enable prototypes of governance/business innovations? Innovation prototypes are reconfigurations of existing FES management practices (scenarios) upon influencing/hindering factors. Several best performing designs of innovation prototypes were then proofed in practice in WP4: Innovation platforms for policy and business, as explained by **Christian Schleyer (UIBK)**. WP4 was dedicated to selection and matching, co-design, and establishment of prototype development in WP3, and an implementation analysis of innovation networks in a real-world context. A mixed-methodological approach was used for matching the prototypes and case studies, as it can capture complex social-ecological system related interactions.

WP5: Innovation Process Integration served as the basis for the integrated multi-disciplinary, multi-actor and multi-layer approach of InnoForESt. WP5 compiled and connected the decisive economic, socio-technical, political-institutional, and biophysical-ecological conditions, as assessed in WP2 and identified in WP3, with the objectives of generating and integrating knowledge and innovations that serve as real-world input as well as empirically informed and holistic validation, sharing and merging the analytical and practical knowledge in InnoForESt.

Part 2: Governance innovations for forest ecosystem services in practice included new payment schemes and business approaches for the provision of FES within the InnoForESt project with contributions from the Collective Governance innovation in the Czech Republic (Liberec region) and Slovakia (Hybe region) from **Jiří Louda (IREAS)**, Waldaktie innovation in Germany (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania) from **Peter Adolphi (ANE)** and the Finnish Innovation (nation-wide), Habitat Bank, from **Minna Pekkonen (SYKE)**.

The common idea of new actor alliances and networks compiled insights from the innovations in Austria (Eisenwurzen), Italy (Trentino), and Sweden (Gothenburg region). **Francesca Bussola (PAT)** explained the innovation in Trentino, Italy, where they use forest pasture management for scenic beauty, tourism, and biodiversity conservation to encourage the revival of the traditional rural landscape.

The Austria innovation, Value Chains for Forests and Wood, which aims to increase the region's socio-economic and ecologic resilience by strengthening stakeholder networks around the creation of innovative wood-based products and/or forest-based services, overcame its challenges through several steps within the InnoForESt project, as explained by **Wolfgang Baaske (STUDIA)** and **Hannah Politor (STUDIA)**.

Christa Törn-Lindhe (UNIVERSEUM) and **Sara Brogaard (LUCSUS)** from the Swedish innovation, explained that during the project, the innovation has been evolving through change of content, method, main target groups, funding and case partners, increased knowledge regarding children's relationships with forest ecosystems and linkages between national policy and the ability to provide diverse ecosystem services.

Part 3: Bringing it all together

Embedding innovation niches in the European biophysical and institutional context

Eeva Primmer (SYKE) and **Davide Geneletti (UNITN)** provided an EU-wide overview on Work Package 2 (WP2): Mapping and assessing forest ecosystem services and institutional frameworks. WP2 was designed to collate a broad understanding of forest ecosystem services with the innovation potential from recent and emerging niches, in interaction with the existing socio-technical regime in the forest sector. For this purpose, WP2 merged European level information on ecosystem services and various governmental and industry sources to map the socio-economic and institutional

landscape across Europe. From the analysis, a map and framework were produced, onto which further detailed innovation analyses can be based, and gain a deeper understanding of the social-ecological and institutional conditions for policy and business innovations. The maps can be found online.

Policy, management and business recommendations for boosting governance innovations to sustainably provide forest ecosystem services

Carolin Maier (FVA) & **Carol Grossman (FVA)** presented recommendations for boosting governance innovations to sustainably provide FES. The project results suggest that all six targeted actor groups can contribute to securing FES provision and financing by catering to one of more of the overarching themes, or by addressing them through different means. More information about these recommendations can be found in Deliverable 6.3 and the targeted policy briefs, available soon on the project website.

Chances and challenges for governance innovations in the EU forestry sector

A panel discussion offered opportunities for exchange on the following questions: (1) What are the main chances and challenges of the EU forestry sector to enhance the sustainable provision of FES? And (2) how can we boost the development of governance innovations for FES provision?

For the forest sector, **Eeva Primmer (SYKE)** highlighted, an important message would be to open up the debate and consider what different audiences and stakeholders have, examine the ecosystem services that are often framed as regulating services (e.g. flood prevention, carbon sequestration, green infrastructure) and truly take these as opportunities for the future.

Following this, **António Paula Soares (ANPC - National Association of Landowners in Portugal, CAP - Confederation of Portuguese Farmers)** emphasized that, as explained in InnoForESt, solutions cannot just be provided at the EU-level. There needs be a general plan, one that is adapted to each region to a level that goes to each Member State as there are many different scenarios across EU forests. We need new policies and business models that are attractive and always consider the principal of the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. We cannot just reach for the environmental pillar without considering the economic impact for forest owners and managers and societal demand.

Conceição Santos Silva (UNAC – Mediterranean Forest Union) concurred with the point from Mr. Soares about the 3 pillars of sustainability and went on to further say that the economic driver is a major challenge in countries like Portugal where forests are mainly private. We must find new ways of rewarding landowners such as direct payments or indirect measures e.g. green reduced taxation, FSC schemes and other measures that could help in rewarding landowners.

Michael Wolf (DG AGRI) expressed that, while we can see is that the forest area has been growing in the past decades, the ecosystems are under increasing pressure due to climate change which intensifies other key drivers such as pressures, pests, extreme weather events, forest fires, among others. Therefore, we need a policy framework that coordinates and ensures the cohesion of forest-related policies and allow synergies with other sectors that influence forest management. In this context the EU forestry strategy will set a policy framework to deliver the forests we want in the future.

With exceptional attendance of our 124 participants, representatives of policymakers, forest owners and managers, non-profit and non-governmental organisation representatives, researchers, and entrepreneur were in attendance.

More information

View the programme.

Download the 'What is the InnoForESt project?' and 'Innovation Regions in Focus' infographic on our website.

The recording of the workshop is available on our YouTube channel.