

GENETIC RESOURCES

THE KEY TO ADAPTATION OF FORESTS TO GLOBAL CHANGE



SCIENCE-TO-POLICY EVENT

BRUSSELS, 13 DECEMBER 2019 - RADISSON RED HOTEL, RUE D'IDALIE 35

The aim of this event is to present and discuss the relevance and implications of recent research findings and guidelines for policy and practice. The main focus is the role of forest tree biodiversity, in particular genetic diversity, for the adaptation of forests to climate and land use change.

BACKGROUND

Global environmental and land-use changes have considerable and long-lasting impact on forests in Europe, modifying the functioning of forest ecosystems and species interactions, thereby affecting the provision of ecosystem services. Trees are long-lived organisms and thus individual trees and tree populations need to withstand significant and rapid environmental changes over their life span and across generations. The capacity of European forests to adapt to such changes, and to continue to provide essential ecosystem services to the society, depends largely on their diversity at species and intraspecific level.

Several ongoing transnational research and implementation initiatives examine the state and resilience of forests under unprecedented global changes. Their findings provide substantial information for existing EU regulatory frameworks and enable to derive new policy recommendations.

AGENDA

8.45 - 9.30 - Registration and welcome coffee

9.30 - 11.00 - Presentations of recent findings from the four EU research projects on the conservation and sustainable use of forests and their genetic resources

- **Barbara Vinceti**, Bioversity International (International), GENTREE project (H2020)
- **Santiago C. González-Martínez**, INRA (France), SPONFOREST project (BiodivERsA)
- **Silvio Schüler**, BFW (Austria), coordinator of the SUSTREE project (Interreg)
- **Hojka Kraigher**, SFI (Slovenia), coordinator of the LIFE GENMON project (LIFE)
- **Michele Bozzano**, EFI (International), coordinator of the EUFORGEN programme

11.00 - 12.30 - Panel discussion involving the presenters and the participants

12.30 - 13.30 - Lunch

This event is jointly organized by four European research and implementation projects - GENTREE, SUSTREE, SPONFOREST, and LIFE GENMON - along with the EUFORGEN programme





GENTREE (Optimizing the management and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe) is a research projects funded by Horizon 2020. The goal of GenTree is to provide the European forestry sector with better knowledge, methods and tools for optimising the management and sustainable use of forest genetic resources (FGR) in Europe in the context of climate change and continuously evolving demands for forest products and services. The objective will be reached by designing innovative strategies for dynamic conservation of FGR in European forests, broadening the range of FGR used by European breeding programmes, preparing new forest management scenarios and policy frameworks fully integrating genetic conservation and breeding aspects, to adapt forests and forestry to changing environmental conditions and societal demands. www.gentree-h2020.eu



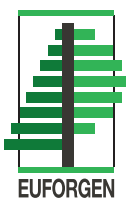
SUSTREE (Conservation and sustainable utilization of forest tree diversity in climate change) is an Interreg Central Europe project that brings together experts on forest provenance research and breeding from eight institutions and six countries with the objective to identify valuable and endangered forest genetic resources and to discuss seed transfer across country borders. The goal is to ensure the utilization of the best forest reproductive material that is fit for the challenges posed by climate change affecting the forests of the region. SUSTREE results on forest vulnerability and assisted seed transfer are being disseminated to forest and nursery practitioners with the SusSelect smartphone app and to policy makers within two policy briefs. www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SUSTREE.html



SPONFOREST is a BiodivERsA3 project, focused on unravelling the potential of spontaneous forest establishment for improving ecosystem functions and services in dynamic landscapes. Forests play a key role in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. European policy strongly supports the afforestation of former farmlands but has to date largely neglected opportunities for passive landscape restoration. Spontaneous forest establishment is occurring in many parts of Europe following the widespread abandonment of agricultural land use. This process can contribute to the creation of multifunctional, diverse landscapes, yet it is often regarded rather as a challenge than an opportunity for landscape management and conservation. SPONFOREST aims to elucidate the potential of spontaneous forest establishment as a cost-effective and politically feasible tool for reinforcing networks of self-sustaining forests in fragmented rural landscapes. www.biodiversa.org/1024



LIFEGENMON (LIFE for European Forest Genetic Monitoring System) is a LIFE implementation project focused on introducing monitoring of forest genetic resources into conservation programs and sustainable forest management. Genetic diversity ensures survival and adaptability of forest trees under changing environmental conditions and is needed to maintain the vitality of forests to cope with a large number of increasing threats. The project promotes the adoption of a genetic monitoring manual to serve as an early warning system in assessment of a species response to environmental change at a long-term temporal scale, and provide a decision support tool for policy makers to decide on the needs and means to implement it at the national, regional and European levels. www.lifegenmon.si



EUFORGEN (European Forest Genetic Resources Programme) is an international cooperation programme promoting the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe as an integral part of sustainable forest management. The Programme was established in 1994, following the adoption of the 1990 resolution by the 1st Forest Europe Ministerial Conference. More than 30 European countries have contributed to EUFORGEN and its work, to date. Currently, 28 countries provide direct financial support to the Programme. The EUFORGEN Secretariat is hosted by European Forest Institute. www.euforgen.org