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Newsletter

ALTERFOR

Alternative models and robust decision-making for future forest management

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LETTER FROM THE COORDINATOR

Silvicultural methods are often found in a national or regional setting where they have evolved in response to historic conditions. Are these methods still adequate to meet the challenges of the 21st century? Can they satisfy our needs in view of uncertainties caused by climate change, the complex dynamics of evolving global markets and the pressures for increased use of bioenergy?

This is why I am very excited about the project ALTERFOR that explores the potential to optimize forest management concepts currently in use in different forested areas across Europe. In practical terms, it means that scientists and forestry practitioners from nine countries work together for four and half years and examine alternative forest management models (FMMs) under different future scenarios. We will evaluate whether the FMMs are robust enough to deliver the desired combination of ecosystem services and to reduce socio-ecological risks. The multi-actor approach applied in the project will foster the capacity to implement alternative forest management models in practice.

Currently, we are developing a common roadmap for ALTERFOR on how to optimize forest management models

*considering the great variety of forest management practices, socio-ecological settings and management contexts in Europe. I am very excited to discuss the planned approaches and methods with project partners and the Scientific Advisory Board at the **first project meeting in Zvolen, Slovakia (8-10 November 2016)**. The meeting will also be used for cross-regional learning through a new initiative, Travellab. It combines the conventional field excursion with round table discussions with local stakeholders and follow up sessions with the aim of a deeper understanding of the local context and improved knowledge of current and alternative FMMs and their implementation.*

*Professor Ljusk Ola Eriksson,
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences SLU*

ALTERFOR IN NUTSHELL

ALTERFOR (“Alternative models and robust decision-making for future forest management”) is a research collaboration project funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

In the four and half year project (2016-2020), researchers and practitioners (forest owner associations, forestry authorities and other stakeholders in the participating countries) examine current forest management models (FMM) and the potential to optimize them for use in ten different European case study areas. Located in Germany, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden, and Turkey, the case study areas are characterized by various forest management practices and different socio-ecological conditions. The consortium also explores the implementation potential of selected alternative forest management models for a broad range of interests, from profit-oriented private forestry to nature conservation.



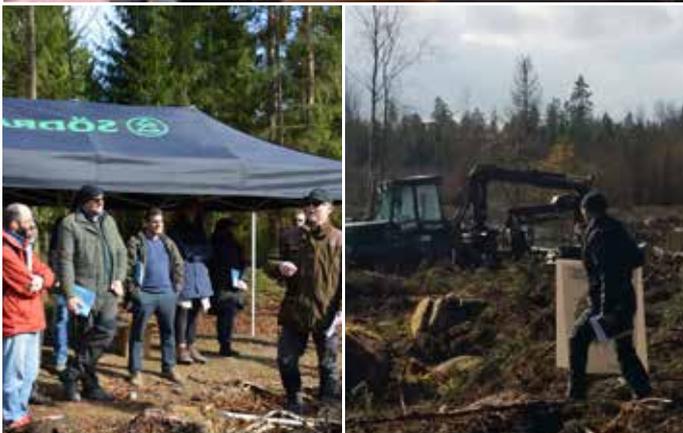
ALTERFOR project partners attending the kick-off meeting in Alnarp, Sweden

The ALTERFOR consortium is advised by a group of highly esteemed scholars forming the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the project. The chair 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**, professor at the Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain.

PROJECT EVENTS

KICK-OFF MEETING

More than 60 researchers and representatives of forest-related associations and organisations from nine European countries across Europe met for the kick-off meeting of ALTERFOR in Alnarp, Sweden on 6-8 April 2016. In addition to discussing the first steps in implementing the project, the consortium members had a well-organised excursion by Södra, the largest forest-owner association in Sweden. The participants saw practical demonstrations of current silvicultural techniques, from planting to harvesting with modern Scandinavian machinery. The current forest management models were discussed with forest owners with diverse sets of priorities, from intensive management for timber to nature conservation.



The 1st ALTERFOR Cross Project Meeting will take place in Zvolen, Slovakia on 8-10 November 2016



WORKSHOP AND TRAINING IN GÖTTINGEN

The Department of Forest and Nature Conservation Policy at Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany, which leads work package four, co-ordinates the research efforts to enhance implementation of alternative forest management models in the case study areas and beyond. Scientists at the Göttingen University organised the workshop “**Forest Policy Issues & Actor Networks in the Case Studies**” from 26-30 September 2016. The workshop is aimed at training all case study field researchers from the nine participating countries within ALTERFOR to learn how to apply the **RIU model**: a newly developed multi-actor approach of knowledge transfer from science into practice. A research team led by **Professor Max Krott** developed the model that incorporates three key elements of effective knowledge transfer: (1) research, (2) integration, and (3) utilisation. ‘Using the RIU model within ALTERFOR, the adoption of alternative forest management models can be fostered by a process of knowledge transfer that integrates the alternative forest management models into forest policy processes in all participating countries,’ said **Dr. Nataly Jürges**, project team member at Göttingen University. The knowledge transfer process includes the assessment of the interests and power resources of diverse relevant actors (e.g. state forest services, private forestry, nature conservation, water associations, and timber industries). Field researchers from Sweden, Italy, Lithuania, Turkey, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Portugal and Ireland were trained how to identify and engage actor networks based on the RIU-model and thus, to foster knowledge transfer between science and forest management practice. They visited the City Forest of Göttingen, a forest owned by the State Lower Saxony and a privately owned forest by Niedergandern - all managed according to different silvicultural concepts.

Project Title

ALTERNATIVES MODELS AND ROBUST DECISION-MAKING FOR FUTURE FOREST MANAGEMENT

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