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# Public Consultation on the new EU Framework for Forest Monitoring and Strategic Plans

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Introduction

## Background

European forests are under increasing stress as a result of climate change and other human activities and pressures. The new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/forest-strategy\_en) addresses these challenges and aims to unlock the potential of forests for our future.

Knowledge of forests' status and trends is crucial for targeted and effective responses. The many EU policies affecting forests require accurate and harmonised EU-wide forest information and a basis to exchange about short, medium and long-term visions of forests and the forest-based sector. Today, information is patchy on the status of forests in the EU, their social, ecological and economic value, as well as the pressures they face and ecosystem services they provide. Forest managers and policymakers rely on national forest inventories with varying designs and update cycles to access forest data. Only a few initiatives, such as the International Co-operative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests (ICP Forests (http://icp-forests.net/)) and the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS (https://data.jrc.ec.europa.eu/collection/id-00334)), provide forest-related information across the EU. Effective policymaking is hindered by the limited information available and fragmented forest planning.

The Commission is consulting the public and other interested parties about the content of a new legislative proposal on an EU Framework for Forest Monitoring and Strategic Plans. This initiative aims to improve forest monitoring across the EU. In addition, and subject to an impact assessment, Member State competent authorities would prepare long-term strategic plans for forests and the forest-based sector, which would provide a comprehensive picture of the state, the evolution and the future developments of forests in the EU, as envisioned by Member States.

## Guidance on the questionnaire

This public consultation aims at giving EU citizens, including stakeholders and experts, an opportunity to express their views on the upcoming legislative proposal for a new Framework for Forest Monitoring and Strategic Plans.

We want to hear your views on how to make the new framework as effective as possible. By replying to our EU Survey and sharing your views with us, you will help us to do so.

You are invited to respond to the following questions below regardless of your level of expertise.

The estimated time for completion of the general part is 10 minutes, followed by an optional section with a set of technical questions that should take another 10 minutes. At the end of the questionnaire you will be able to upload additional information.

All the responses to this consultation will be assessed and considered as a key input for the impact assessment of the upcoming legislative proposal. We will also produce a stand-alone summary of the results of the consultation.

Note: the questionnaire will generally refer to "forest information", which includes forest data collection and value added products (such as forest cover, forest health, the frequency of forest fires, etc.) that contribute to enhancing our knowledge about European forests. Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

## About you

\*Language of my contribution

English

\*I am giving my contribution as

Business association

l am

- A forest owner (less than 5 hectares of forest)
- A forest owner (more than 5 hectares of forest)
- A provider of forest data
- None of the above

\*First name

EUSurvey - Survey

The Bioenergy Association

#### \*Surname

of Finland

#### \*Email (this won't be published)

info@bioenergia.fi

## \*Organisation name

## 255 character(s) maximum

Bioenergia ry - the Bioenergy Association of Finland

## \*Organisation size

Micro (1 to 9 employees)

### Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register (http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do? redir=false&locale=en). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

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### \*Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

Finland

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published. Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

## \*Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

Anonymous

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

Public

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the personal data protection provisions (https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/specific-privacy-statement)

## Section A - Use of forest information

Do you consult forest information for professional purposes?

Yes

🔵 No

## 17.11.2022 22.23

For which sector(s) or purpose(s) do you consult forest information?

- Forestry and wood production
- Other bioeconomy sectors
- Recreation and tourism
- Climate mitigation
- Climate adaptation
- Biodiversity
- Air quality
- Hydrology (e.g. water quality or quantity)
- Soil science (quality, erosion, nutrients)
- Natural and cultural heritage
- Other non-wood products and services
- Education
- Spatial planning
- Other

What sources do you consult for information on forests?

- Government publications and websites
- Publications by academics, such as from research centres, universities and research projects
- Private data providers, such as companies, business associations and individuals
- General and specialised media and news outlets
- Forest sector organisations and media
- Non-governmental organisations (NGO)
- Other

## Section B - General questionnaire

## Background: Forest Monitoring

Today there is only patchy information on the state of forests in the EU, their social and economic value, as well as the pressures they face and ecosystem services they provide. Since 2007, when the Forest Focus Regulation (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003R2152) expired, there have been no comprehensive reporting requirements. In addition, there are challenges related to the use of remote sensing data (e.g. satellite imagery, airborne laser-scanning, etc.) together with ground-based data (i.e. lack of interoperability, common definitions, ambiguity in data interpretation, a lack of long and comparable very high resolution time-series, and limitations of the current standard forest products from Copernicus (https://www.copernicus.eu/en)). EU Member States have acknowledged the central role of forests and the forest-based bioeconomy in the EU's transition to a climate-

neutral economy. However, monitoring and reporting mechanisms are scattered, and operate on different definitions, time scales and intervals across the EU Member States.

The legislative proposal will establish an EU-wide integrated forest monitoring framework, ensuring/promoting the use of remote sensing technologies integrated with ground-based monitoring. It will consider different options aimed at ensuring that the public has access to harmonised, timely and interoperable information with high spatial granularity on EU forests.

Forest information: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

We need EU-wide harmonised and timely information on...

	Agre e	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagre e	No opinion
…forest health	۲	0	0	0	0
forest disturbances (e.g. pests, wildfires)	۲	0	0	0	0
climate change impacts on forests	0	۲	0	0	0
climate change projections for forests	0		0	0	0
forest biodiversity	0	$\bigcirc$	۲	0	0
wood production	0	$\bigcirc$	۲	0	0
forest carbon stocks and flows	0	$\bigcirc$	۲	0	0
other forest ecosystem services	0	$\bigcirc$	0		0
forest management	0	$\bigcirc$	0		0

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non-wood products and services, including recreation	0	$\bigcirc$	0	۲	
Other	0	0	۲	0	$\bigcirc$

### If other, please specify

We need to fully utilise Member states' advanced monitoring systems. This does not exclude EU wide integrated monitoring for specific purposes.

### Please indicate how important you consider the following possible improvements to forest monitoring in the EU.

	Very import ant	Imp orta nt	Somewha t important	Not import ant	No opini on
More consistent and comparable forest information across borders	0		0	0	0
More frequent forest information, e.g. monthly or yearly instead of multi-annual data	0	0	0	۲	0
More timely forest information, e.g. data will be available days after data collection instead of months or even after multiple years	0	0	۲	0	0
Higher granularity of forest information, e.g. land parcel level, grid-cell, resolution	0	0	0	۲	0
More accurate and trustworthy forest information, e.g., through the use of modern technology, common definitions and increased transparency	0	0	۲	0	0
Better and easier access to forest information, e.g., data portals, search functions, APIs, one-stop shop	0	0	۲	0	0
Better thematic data on forests e.g. more thematic data layers, less generalisation	0	0	۲	0	0
Other	0	0	$\bigcirc$	0	0

In your view, what are the main current challenges to ensuring EU-wide forest information that is detailed, accurate, regular, timely, comparable and openly accessible?

Use drag&drop or the up/down buttons to change the order or accept the initial order.

 Insufficient uptake of information derived from remote sensing
 Data availability
 Limited comparability of data due to lack of standardised national forest inventories
 Absence of a regulatory framework and standards
 Privacy or trade secret issues
 Other

If other, please specify

The accessibility of forest information can vary: it can be paid, free, shared in aggregated form (e.g. only national averages), with certain information obfuscated (e.g. hiding exact geographic coordinates), in difficult to use data formats or be available only on demand. In your view, is better access to forest information needed?

- Yes, whenever possible with open access to full data
- Yes, whenever possible with open access to aggregated data
- Yes, but only under specific conditions (Please specify)
- No
- No opinion

## EUSurvey - Survey

Monitoring technologies: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Agr ee	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disag ree	No opinion
Monitoring systems should mainly build on field observations		$\bigcirc$	0	0	0
Where applicable, monitoring systems should mainly build on remote-sensing technologies	0	$\bigcirc$	۲	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
Monitoring systems should integrate both field data and remote- sensing	۲			$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
Monitoring systems should make use of the most cost-efficient technologies	0	$\bigcirc$	۲	0	$\bigcirc$
Other	0	0	0	0	0

Policy options: To what extent do you agree with the following policy options?

	A gr e e	Some what agree	Somew hat disagre e	Di sa gr ee	No opi nio n
Member States should continue current monitoring systems (business-as-usual)		0	0	$\bigcirc$	0
Data from Member States' monitoring systems should be better integrated, but with little change to monitoring methods	0		0	0	0
Data from Member States' monitoring systems should be better integrated, and the EU should coordinate the use of standardised forest monitoring methods implemented by Member States	0	0	0	۲	0
The EU should operate a single monitoring system	$\bigcirc$	0	0		0
Other	$\bigcirc$	0	0	$\bigcirc$	0

What are the main benefits from creating an EU-wide forest monitoring system with detailed, accurate, regular, timely, comparable and openly accessible information?

Use drag&drop or the up/down buttons to change the order or accept the initial order.

Better scientific knowledg	ge (e.g. on forest health, climate adaptation, etc.)
Better preparedness to pr	event and respond to natural disturbances (e.g. forest fires, storm damages, floods, pests, geological nation across borders
Savings from the use of r	remote-sensing technologies and economies of scale
Better forest managemer	nt and forest planning
More sustainable use of	forests for the bioeconomy
Diversification of forest e	cosystem services
. More transparent market	s for forest products (e.g. on management practices, carbon certification, etc.)
Better control of illegal lo	gging
More effective policy make	king
: Other	
f other, please specify	

Policy options: To what extent do you agree with the following policy options?

	A gr e	So m ew ha t ag re e	So me wh at dis agr ee	D is gr e	N o pi ni o n
Financing should be provided only through existing EU financial programmes, e.g., Copernicus (https://www.copernicus.eu/en/about-copernicus), Horizon Europe (https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)	0	0	0	0	۲
Financing should be provided only through Member States' resources	0	0	0	0	
Financing should be provided only through resources from relevant private sectors	0	0	0	0	
Financing should be provided through a combination of Member State, private and EU resources	0	0	0	0	
Other	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	0	$\bigcirc$	

Any further important aspects which should be considered for forest monitoring?

## Background: Forest Strategic Plans

Forests serve overlapping, sometimes also competing, economic, environmental and social demands that may change over time. In parallel, forests are changing because of other pressures such as climate change.

Existing Member State plans (e.g., the National Energy and Climate Plans, Strategic Plans for the Common Agricultural Policy or forthcoming Nature Restoration Plans) already address forests and the forest-based sector but in a limited way. Few Member States have developed strategic documents for forests with a planning horizon beyond 10-years. So far there is no system to assess e.g., multiple demands on forests, facilitate policy integration and consistency or ensure needed adjustments of forests and the forest-based sector to a changing climate.

The Commission is considering legally requiring Member States or, as applicable, regional authorities to prepare Strategic Plans for forests. These would lay out the strategic vision of Member States for their forests and the forest-based sector for the next several decades. The plans would not be subject to approval by the Commission but could contain common elements and a general structure to allow for comparability, exchange and coordination among Member States. They could thus provide a comprehensive picture of the state and the evolution of forests in the EU, as envisioned by Member States.

How well do you know the following strategies and planning tools?

	l don't know them	I have heard of them	l know them	I use them or work with them
National or regional forest programs, plans or strategies	0	0	0	۲
National Energy and Climate Plans	0	0	0	۲
Strategic Plans for the Common Agriculture Policy	0	۲	0	0
National or regional Climate Adaptation Strategies	0	0	0	۲
National Forestry Accounting Plans	0	0		0
Long-term Strategies for the climate	0	0	0	۲
National Forest Risk Assessment Plans	۲	0	0	0
National/regional forest management plans	۲	0	0	0
Disaster-risk reduction strategies/documents	0	۲	0	0
Prioritised Action Frameworks	۲	0	0	0
National Biodiversity Strategies	0	0	0	۲
National Ecosystem Assessments	0	۲	0	0

Management plans of Natura 2000 sites		0	$\bigcirc$	0
National Bioeconomy Action Plans	0	0	$\bigcirc$	۲
National reports to Forest Europe	0	۲	0	0
Other key document	0	0	$\bigcirc$	0

In your view, what could be the added value of Strategic Plans for Forests?

- Better disaster assessment and preparedness
- Better policy design
- Better policy coherence
- Better management of forest use and future forest demand
- Providing a holistic view on forest status and trends
- Overall coordination of long-term forest planning
- Comparability and exchange with other Member States
- None
- Other

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Do vou adree tha	at Stratedic Plans	s for forest should	i tackie/cover the	following issues?

	A gr e e	Some what agree	Somew hat disagre e	Di sa gr ee	No opi nio n
Policy integration and consistency, e.g., common entry point, single strategy or planning document integrating all policies addressing forests; coherence with other planning documents	0	0	0	۲	0
Policy planning on, e.g., biomass provision for the bioeconomy and bioenergy, carbon storage, habitat protection, biodiversity restoration, clean water and air, recreation, social space	0	0	0	۲	0
Policy monitoring, e.g., coherence in forest monitoring, policy design and control based on monitoring	0	0	۲	0	0
Forest disturbance/disaster prevention and preparedness, e.g., current and future risk assessment, climate-related risk management		0	0	0	0
Changes in forest management, e.g., future silvicultural management, ecosystem resilience; biodiversity; non-wood resources; needs for peri-urban forests; impacts on forest-based sector	0	0	۲	0	0
Other	$\bigcirc$	0	0	0	0

In your view, which will be the main stakeholder groups benefitting from an EU framework for forest monitoring and strategic plans? Use drag&drop or the up/down buttons to change the order or accept the initial order.

	Government organisations
	Research
:	Non-governmental organisations (NGO)
:	International protocols, networks
	General public
	Businesses and business associations
	Private forest owners
	Nobody

Any further important aspects which should be considered for forest strategic plans?

Strategic plans should provide value added - if introduced - compared to all the other existing reporting and planning in Member States, and fully utilise and build on the existing national and EU processes. It should avoid duplicating reporting.

Any further comments you would like to share?

## Section C - Specialist questionnaire

In your view, how important is it to monitor the following forest indicators?

	Very important	Impor tant	Somewhat important	Not importan t	No opinio n
Forest/tree cover	0		0	0	0
Forest biomass	0		0	0	0
Canopy height	0		0	0	0
Forest carbon (as far as possible separated among carbon pools)	۲	0	0	0	0
Forest foliage/phenology/anomalies	$\bigcirc$	۲	0	0	0
Tree age	۲	0		0	0
Tree species/composition	0		0	0	0
Deadwood (volume, type, diversity)	۲	0	0	0	0
Forest soil properties (carbon, compaction, soil biodiversity)	0	0	۲	0	0
Presence of red-listed species	۲	0	0	0	0
Abundance of common forest birds	۲	0	0	0	0
Forest fires (number, area and volume burnt, etc.)	۲	0	0	0	0
Storms (number, area and volume affected, etc.)	۲	0	0	0	0
Pest and disease outbreaks (number, area and volume affected, type of pest or disease, etc.)		0	0	0	0
Other forest disturbances	۲	0		0	0
Forest/tree cover change (gains, losses)	0		0	0	0
Forest connectivity/fragmentation	0	0	۲	0	0
Tree health	۲	0	0	0	0
Forest growth	۲	0	0	0	0
Tree age diversity	0		0	0	0
Tree species diversity	0		0	0	0
Silvicultural system	0		0	0	0
Main management objectives (production, conservation, protection)	0	0	۲	0	0
Forest type	0	۲	0	0	0
Areas of primary and old-growth forests	0	۲	0	0	0
Forest ancientness (length of time without land-use change)	0	0	۲	0	0
Forest structural diversity	0	0	۲	0	0
Diversity and share of forest habitats	0	0	۲	0	0

Volume of wood harvested	0	0	۲	0	0
Forest areas covered by a management plan	0	0	۲	0	0
Forest areas with independent certification	0	0	۲	0	0
Ratio of annual fellings to annual increment	۲	0	0	0	0
Forest revenues (timber and non-timber)	0	0		0	0
Price of wood and wood products	0	0		0	0
Employment in the forest sector	0		0	0	0
Frequency of forest visits	0	0	۲	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0

To rate the monitoring of several forest indicators in the following question, please choose a country whose indicators you would like to rate

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

Finland

How would you rate the monitoring of the following forest indicator currently monitored in the chosen country?

	Excelle nt	Goo d	Fa ir	Deficie nt	No opinion
Forest/tree cover		0	0	0	0
Forest biomass		0	0	0	0
Canopy height		0	0	0	0
Forest carbon (as far as possible separated among carbon pools)		0	0	0	0
Forest foliage/phenology/anomalies		0	0	0	0
Tree age		0	0	0	0
Tree species/composition		0	0	0	0
Deadwood (volume, type, diversity)	0		0	0	0
Forest soil properties (carbon, compaction, soil biodiversity)	0		0	0	0
Presence of red-listed species	0		0	0	0
Abundance of common forest birds	0		0	0	0
Forest fires (number, area and volume burnt, etc.)		0	0	0	0
Storms (number, area and volume affected, etc.)		0	0	0	0
Pest and disease outbreaks (number, area and volume affected, type of pest or disease, etc.)		0	0	0	0
Other forest disturbances		0	0	0	0
Forest/tree cover change (gains, losses)	۲	0	0	0	0
Forest connectivity/fragmentation	0		0	0	0
Tree health	0		0	0	0
Forest growth		0	0	0	0
Tree age diversity		0	0	0	0
Tree species diversity		0	0	0	0

Silvicultural system		0	0	0	0
Main management objectives (production, conservation, protection)		0	0	0	0
Forest type		0	0	0	0
Areas of primary and old-growth forests	0		$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
Forest ancientness (length of time without land-use change)	0	0	0	0	
Forest structural diversity	0		0	0	0
Diversity and share of forest habitats		0	0	0	0
Volume of wood harvested		$\bigcirc$	0	0	0
Forest areas covered by a management plan		0	0	0	0
Forest areas with independent certification		0	0	0	0
Ratio of annual fellings to annual increment		0	0	0	0
Forest revenues (timber and non-timber)		0	0	0	0
Price of wood and wood products		0	0	0	0
Employment in the forest sector		0	0	0	0
Frequency of forest visits		0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	

What do you see as technical challenges for an improved forest monitoring in the EU?

Ground or in situ data ...

	Major challenge	Minor challenge	Not a challenge	No opinion
availability	$\bigcirc$		$\bigcirc$	۲
access	0	0	0	۲
collection frequency	۲	0	0	0
spatial sampling density	۲	0	0	0
sampling design	۲	0	0	0
Other	0	$\bigcirc$	0	0

## Remote-sensing data...

	Major challenge	Minor challenge	Not a challenge	No opinion
availability	0	0	0	۲
access	0	0	0	۲
collection frequency	۲	0	0	0
spatial resolution	۲	0	0	$\bigcirc$
comprehensiveness	0	۲	0	$\bigcirc$
integration with ground or in situ data		0	0	0
Other	۲	0	0	0

## If other, please specify

reliability