

Private Forest Owners Play Key Role in European Forest Fuel Utilisation

- AFO-project set to secure and increase wood fuel flow from privately owned forests to bioenergy facilities

Half of the European Union's 20 percent renewable energy production target by 2020 is assigned for wood fuel combustion. Possessing over half of the forested area in Europe, private forest owners are the most essential stakeholders in wood fuel mobilisation. Nine European R&D organisations from six countries have launched an international *Activating private forest owners to increase forest fuel supply* (AFO) project to meet the ambitious targets of energy wood utilisation.

The challenges of mobilising the emerging wood fuel reserves in privately owned forests are similar in most of the European countries: forest holdings become more and more scattered and they belong to diverse and urbanizing group of owners. The AFO-project aims to activate forest owners to raise the utilisation level of their forests and to form wood fuel supply clusters. The aim is to identify and then help reduce the barriers for increased forest fuel supply. We will also identify current and potential users of wood fuel regionally, concentrating on the small and medium size class heating enterprises.

Matching regional supply with demand

The AFO-project operates on selected target regions with great shares of private forests, which will act as pilot studies for the later EU-wide dissemination. First we will analyze the wood fuel supply and combustion potentials in relation to the current markets in the regions. After spotting the potential supply and demand parties with inquiries, we will initiate and support the formation of wood fuel clusters and the organisation of the supply chains. We will disseminate best practise examples from Austria and Finland - countries of strongest expertise and long traditions of forest fuel production. In the last phase of the project, results and approved activation methods will be disseminated to all EU 27 countries.

AFO facts:

AFO will be carried out during 2009-2012. The project consortium consists of nine partners from two countries providing proven practices and vast experience of energy wood production and procurement chains (Austria and Finland) and four recipient partner countries with selected target regions (France, Slovenia, UK and Latvia). Activation methods include questionnaires, interviews, workshops, seminars, field trips and study tours on regional, national and international levels. The results i.e. proven activation methods and supply chain models will be disseminated EU-widely through stakeholder organisations.

Contact for further information:

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