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fresh findings on the region's specific status quo, chances and proposed solutions.

In this issue, we focus on our work in two regions:

- **Bavaria (Germany)**
- **Slovenia**

We also have a roundup of news from our regions, including the recent SIMWOOD Mid-term Conference.

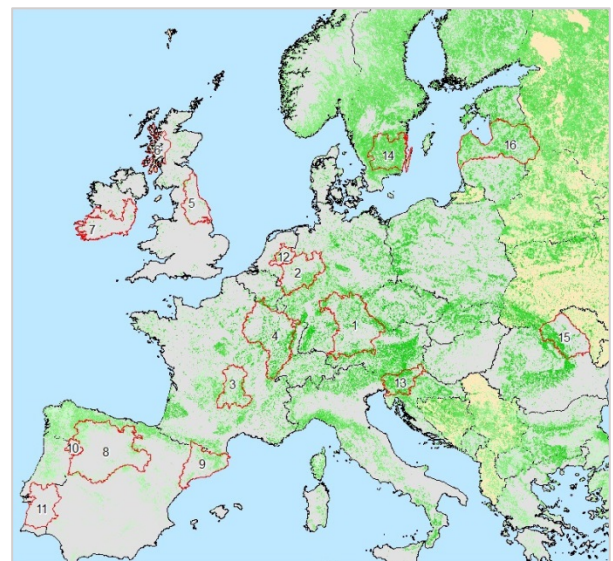
## Overview

In November 2013, 28 organisations from 11 countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom) began the European collaboration FP7 project **SIMWOOD (Sustainable Innovative Mobilisation of Wood)**.

This four-year project seeks to provide solutions on how to mobilise forest owners, promote collaborative forest management and ensure sustainable forest functions in order to mobilise the present unlocked wood resources in Europe.

We work in **16 regions across Europe**, selected for their high relevance to Europe's wood mobilisation challenge. In each of our model regions, we've made a detailed analysis of the present situation, and the barriers and challenges for wood mobilisation which currently exist. Now we are working on identifying objectives, developing possible tailor-made solutions, and selecting some to be tested in a series of pilot projects.

In each region, we have a Regional Learning Laboratory (RLL) as an integral part of the research process. This is linked to existing initiatives in the region, and is collaborative: teaming up with regional stakeholders to obtain



**1. Bavaria, GER 2. North-Rhine Westphalia, GER 3. Auvergne, FRA 4. Grand-Est, FRA 5. Yorkshire & North East England, UK 6. Lochaber, UK 7. South Eastern Ireland, IRE 8. Castile and León, ESP 9. Catalonia, ESP 10. Nordeste, PRT 11. Alentejo, PRT 12. Overijssel & Gelderland, NLD, 13. Slovenia, SVN 14. Småland, SWE 15. North-East Romania, RO 16. Latvia, LV**

## Focus on Bavaria (Germany)

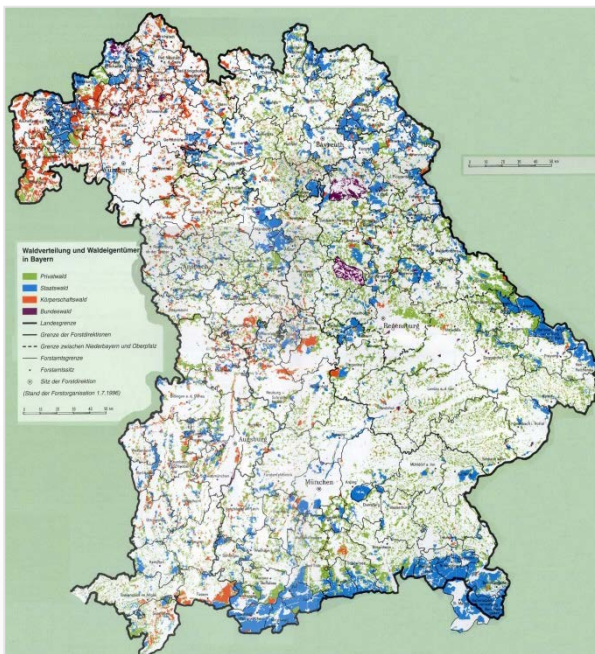
### Background

Bavaria is the largest Federal State of Germany, located in the south-east. It has a land area of 70,550 km<sup>2</sup> and 12.5 million inhabitants. 2.5 million ha are forests (36%) and 47% farmlands.

There are 15 regional natural forest ecosystems distinct in Bavaria. Conifers are still dominating the Bavarian forests (64%), with 36% deciduous species. 42% are spruce, 17% pine and 14% beech (BWI2012). The focus of SIMWOOD's work lies on one hand on alpine mixed forests with high importance of forest functions and on the other hand on the lower mountain ranges, where beech would dominate naturally.

### Forest ownership

Privately owned forests (green)	57%
Bavarian State Forests (blue)	30%
Communal (town) forests (orange)	11%
Federal State Forests (violet)	2%



Source: Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten

Germany holds the highest growing stock in Europe (3.66 billion m<sup>3</sup>) and 27% of it stands in Bavaria. The average timber stock amounts to 400 m<sup>3</sup>/ha and the average harvests to 11m<sup>3</sup>/ha (BWI2012).

The forestry and timber industry is economically and socio-politically one of the most important sectors in Bavaria: The turnover in the forestry and wood-related industries rose by more than 32% between 2005 and 2013 from 28 billion to 37 billion Euros. In 2013 196,000 people were employed in 22,500 mostly small and medium-sized enterprises in the sector (Cluster Forst und Holz, 2016).

The contribution of the Bavarian forestry and wood-related industries to climate protection is a combined effect of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction through substitution and compensation. In 2012 these effects reached 18.1 million tons of carbon dioxide. This represents an increase of 21% since 2005 (Cluster Forst und Holz, 2016).

### SIMWOOD's work in the region

The SIMWOOD project focuses on the support for private and communal forest owners to maintain and foster their activities in managing two-thirds of the Bavarian forested land.

All over the state, initiatives have been started by the Forest Administration. Round tables have been established to define goals and measures in a participative way. On the micro-level this is pushing activities in the project areas and helps concentrating the personal and financial support from the Forest Administration. On the macro-level these activities contribute to the overall forest policy goals like "adapting forests to the future climate" or "sustainable wood mobilisation".

As part of SIMWOOD's work, a focus study has been carried out and two pilot projects have been selected in two areas.

## Focus study

The first part of the focus study concentrated on identifying actors and their role in forest initiatives' networks. 44 forest initiatives of Bavaria, launched and supported by the Forest Administration, have been examined. We found similarities as well as differences in the perceptions on the implementation of goals in these initiatives by the actors involved.

The results are helpful and will first be discussed with the responsible Ministry. So far we can say that the results of the "Social-Network-Analysis" prove that the networks, which have been continuously developed over decades, are trustworthy and strong enough to bear the manifold tasks of contemporary forest management.

The second part of the focus study looked deeper into the Forest Owner Association (FOAs) networks in Bavaria. Their foundation has been promoted politically and their development was supported by the forest administration. They actually build a counterpart to the highly concentrated timber industry. They are still professionalizing their way of activating and unifying forest owners to overcome the structural deficits of the mostly small-sized private forest holdings.

The third part of the focus study aimed at private forest owners, to better understand their decision making and how they use their forests. Forest owner structures are very different, and the results will help assess the potential and develop strategies for a better activation and, as a result, sustainable wood mobilisation.

## Pilot Project 1 & 2

Two pilot projects in the region concentrate on activating forest owners in two different areas: southwest Bavaria (Grünten) and northeast Bavaria (Bibersberg/Thiemitztal).



Photo: LWF

Following the principles of Bavarian forest policy, the key target for both projects is to start and support a decision-making process supported by almost all stakeholders to identify the required functions (ecosystem services), to weigh them and to agree on the necessary measures.

Successful initiatives should lead to satisfied and more active owners and provide forest management that pays attention to the forest functions in a sustainable way.

The process includes

- Providing advice to start and/or support forest owner decision-making processes;
- Creating and showing 'positive examples' of management;
- Gaining more information about the forest condition and the goals / preferences of the forest owners and other actors, to offer suitable measures to meet as well the challenges of climate change;
- Reducing the risk of storms and pests by forest conversion.

## Grünten

The **Grünten pilot project** works to engage forest owners in sustainable forest management with



special emphasis on alpine forest-functions. The area covers 2,750 ha, including 1,000 ha of private and communal forests, on steep terrain (Grünten-Summit: 1738m), with alpine pastures underneath and strong touristic use for skiing, hiking, mountain biking and the historical abandoned ore mines which partly can be visited.

The situation with many, sometimes conflicting interests like here in this area, is typical for most of the alpine counties in Bavaria. A working group was founded (round table) and according to the different goals of the involved participants 'target states' were formulated (e.g. suitable forest roads for the whole project area, or the improvement and better coordination of the hunting activities to reduce damage on forest juvenation) and a 'Roadmap' to reach the targets was worked out.

A SIMWOOD Workshop is planned to discuss and agree on specific measures to reach the goals in the near future.

### Bibersberg/Thiemitztal

The **Bibersberg/Thiemitztal pilot project** aims at establishing sustainable forest management and to adapt the forest stands to future climate change.



Photo: LWF

Bibersberg lies within the Frankenwald area, which is a large forest area with similar

conditions: steep terrain, lack of access / forest roads etc. in many places. After overcoming the access problems (forest road), which also made harvesting in the area economically feasible, the stands should now be thinned and regeneration should be initiated with tree species which are adapted to future climate. Joint harvests and thinnings will be offered (harvester and forwarder) organised i.e. by the local forest owner association.

The local forest administration will implement the chosen measures and will be supported by the stakeholders of the 'round table'. LWF and KWF will be partners as well as observing research units for evaluation.



Photo: LWF

### Who to contact in the region

The SIMWOOD local team includes staff from the Bavarian State Institute of Forestry (LWF) of the Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten (StMELF) and the German Centre of Forest Work and Forest Technology (KWF).

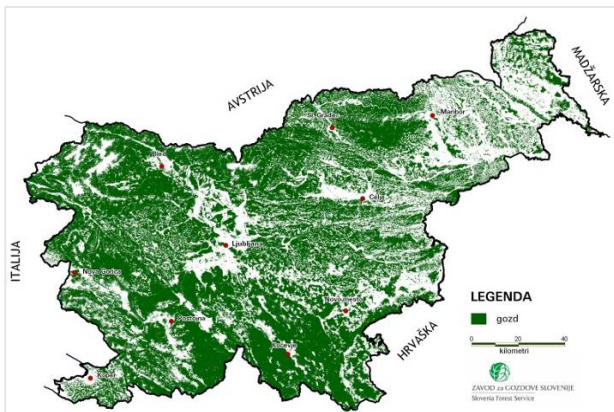
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## Focus on Slovenia

### Background

Slovenia is situated in southern Central Europe between the Adriatic coast, Alps and Pannonian lowlands. It covers 20,273 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 2.06 million inhabitants. The territory is mostly mountainous with a mixture of continental, Mediterranean and Alpine climate. This reflects in a significant biological diversity and wide variety of habitats which also influence forests.



Forest cover in Slovenia  
Source: Slovenia Forest Service

Slovenia is the third most forested country in Europe. In 2014, approximately 58.3% of land was covered by forests.

Land covered by forests	1,181,943 ha
Productive forests	1,073,495 ha
Protection forests	98,947 ha
Forest reserves	9,501 ha

75% of forests in Slovenia are privately owned by more than 300,000 forest owners, 22% of forests are public - owned by the state - and 3% are owned by local communities.

Most Slovenian forests are located within areas of beech, fir-beech and beech-oak sites (70%), which have a relatively high production capacity.

According to the data from forest management plans, average growing stock in forests has reached 293 m<sup>3</sup>/ha in 2014 and yearly increment has been estimated to 7.27 m<sup>3</sup>/ha/year

### SIMWOOD's work in the region

The work in SIMWOOD focuses on the main barriers to mobilisation of the private forest sector in Slovenia:

- fragmented ownership;
- lack of professional organisation and cooperation of forest owners;
- weak forest-based industry;
- high production costs in private forests.

Forests are a large unused natural resource in Slovenia - actual felling in Slovenian forests in the period 2008–2013 was only around 70% of allowable cut prescribed with forest management plans.

The Slovenian focus study and pilot project are aiming to enhance forest owner cooperation, to improve forest data availability for final users and to engage forest owner associations / networks in wood mobilisation issues.



### Focus study

The objective of our focus study was a social network analysis of 25 forest owner associations in Slovenia (FOAs). The focus study has been carried out in cooperation with the Bavarian State Institute of Forestry. We aimed to identify the main actors and their roles in FOA networks,

investigate FOA's preferences in forest management / use and recognize potential facilitators, together with appropriate instruments for wood mobilisation from private forests in Slovenia.

The most important actors in Slovenia's FOAs are the Slovenia Forest Service (SFS), National Forest Owners Association, Municipalities and Agricultural and Forestry Chamber. The most important goals for FOAs have been recognized education and awareness of members, and active advocacy for members' interests in the formulation of forestry and hunting policy.

Only at a lower level are goals such as the joint appearance on the markets, informal socializing of members and networking to introduce new technologies recognized. Joint forest management, combining several estates, and caring for nature protection receive least attention.

Potential for improvements is seen by FOAs in:

- improving internal organisational structures;
- the professionalization of their representatives and the education of forest owners;
- strengthening joint forest management and appearance on the market;
- raising the engagement of forest owners.

Externally, improvements mentioned include better cooperation and communication with other actors, for instance with the SFS for joint forest management in a certain area, with the public, also with neighbouring FOAs or for joint training at a higher level.

The focus study has also pointed out the main facilitators of solutions to future forest problems and what instruments would work best. This information will be very important for the development of the Slovenian pilot project and for SIMWOOD outcomes in general.



### Pilot project

The Slovenian pilot project is called **“Improvement of forest owners associations capacities for mobilisation of wood from private forests”**. Its main aim is to improve the performance, efficiency, outputs and internal organisation of already established and newly established local associations of forest owners.

The focus study results will be improved with analysis of past activities of FOAs, analysis of current barriers to wood mobilisation on the forest owner's side in Slovenia (from Regional Learning Lab results) and experiences from the forestry sector response to the 2014 ice-break and consequent bark beetle outbreak in Slovenia.

As a result of the pilot project, model information and a communication internet platform will be developed with solutions (regarding governance, motivation, production cost optimization and forest management planning) adapted to FOA members and forest owners in Slovenia. In addition, we will produce a Handbook for internal organisation of FOAs and other forest owner's cooperation initiatives.

### Recent natural disasters in Slovenian forests and their consequences

In February 2014 a huge ice-break occurred in Slovenia, a natural disaster which damaged more than 9 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood and affected over 50% of Slovenian forests (600,000 ha). 15,000 km of forest roads were blocked and 14,000 ha of



forests were destroyed to that extent that they have to be re-established. Financial damage in forests was estimated at 214 million EUR. In 2015 a bark-beetle outbreak started in Slovenia due to the large amount of damaged spruce trees in forests, and rather warm and dry weather in summer 2015. Till the end of 2015 2.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of bark beetle infested spruce have been marked for felling after the ice-break.



Those disasters revealed some important mobilisation issues. The SIMWOOD team tried to document and discuss these with stakeholders to benefit from the situation. Slovenia has a very undeveloped wood market and depends on the export of timber after natural disasters.

In addition, the market for forestry services is not transparent and not efficient. The weakest links in the chain are the capacities for concentration of wood on the market and a rigid domestic wood processing industry, which cannot create higher demand. The level of private forest owner organisation/cooperation is low and cannot be improved in a few months, despite strong state intervention.

The ice-break also accelerated activities across the whole forestry sector (governance, forestry services, wood production, wood market, import and export of services / wood) which gave us other opportunities to learn about how to progress when the salvation logging is finished.

### Quality wood auction – a promising practice for better wood mobilisation



Slovenian auctions of valuable wood have been held every February for 10 years in the town of Slovenj Gradec. They are an established way of selling valuable timber, organized by local forest owners association Mislinjska dolina, the National Forest Owners Association and Slovenia Forest Service. In the 2016 auction valuable logs have been offered by 401 forest owners amounting to 2,532 m<sup>3</sup> of wood. 25 customers participated in the auction, from Slovenia (8), Austria (8) Germany (5), Italy (3) and Croatia (1). The highest price was reached by a log of sycamore maple - € 7,555 per m<sup>3</sup>.

The auction attracts a lot of attention from forest owners and the public especially on an “Open Door Day”, when all the logs can be seen and prices compared. It also expands the timber marketing options of forest owners, promotes planned forest management and contributes to the improvement of silvicultural work in forests.

#### Who to contact in the region

The SIMWOOD local team includes staff from Slovenian Forest Institute and Slovenia Forest Service.

To get involved in SIMWOOD’s activities, please contact:

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## Regional news

### Making good progress

The SIMWOOD Mid-Term Conference took place at Kilkenny Castle and JFK Memorial Park and Arboretum, Wexford, in Ireland from 30 November to 2 December.

The event brought together over 70 forest-related scientists and stakeholders from all over Europe, many of whom were Irish non-members of the SIMWOOD project.



Photo: Pat Moore

The conference highlighted that SIMWOOD is making good headway. Project coordinator, Roland Schreiber (Bavarian Forest Institute) said “Thanks to the constructive cooperation between the project partners we made significant progress in achieving the set objectives. The identified wood mobilisation solutions will be implemented and tested in the model regions and the gained experience will be compiled in the “Mobiliser” information system and made available for a broader public. We are looking forward to an interesting and challenging 2016!”

The event was opened with welcoming words and a series of recommendations for wood mobilisation by experts from COFORD, the Council for Forest Research and Development, a representative body from the forest sector in Ireland.

The SIMWOOD project was praised by the representatives of its Advisory Board of the Regions, following an overview given by Roland Schreiber and Áine Ní Dhubháin (University College Dublin) with a summary of project status, regional profiles and focus studies.

Feedback was also positive regarding the progress of the pilot projects which aim to improve wood mobilisation in the SIMWOOD regions. A presentation revealed that the number of studies found in literature evaluating the measures in favour of mobilisation is very low.

SIMWOOD’s mobilisation support tool known as the “Mobiliser” was demonstrated for the first time by Richard Sikkema (Joint Research Centre). He showed how this tool could provide relevant information on the lessons learned in the project in an interactive way, for example using search tools, maps, wiki, etc. The Mobiliser tool will be launched in 2017.



Photo: Forest Enterprise Ltd

During the fieldtrip, the participants visited a broadleaf forest in County Wexford, where the owner is diversifying the plantations and their products as a response to an increasing demand for fuelwood (including wood chips). In this way, as much added value from the wood is captured as possible and forestry work can be paid for. The forest owner also demonstrated how financial support has contributed to creating roads and how the advice of management support groups like the Irish Wood Producers have helped to plan wood mobilisation.



The conference featured in the local press:

>> Irish Farmer's Journal: [Timber mobilisation - an Irish and EU challenge](#)

>> [Wood growers focus group get fired up about local forests](#)

Kilkenny People: Castle hosts conference on sustainable wood

### Press round up

SIMWOOD's work in its 16 regions, and in particular the regional pilot projects have been featured in the media over the last few months.

The [Catalonian](#) pilot project's work in Montseny and Maçanet was reported on by the Diari de Girona in February:

>> [Com aprofitar la fusta sense malmetre els boscos singulars](#)

Pilot projects in [Bavaria](#), [Nord-Rhein Westfalen](#) and [Auvergne](#) were featured in the magazine AFZ-der Wald:

>> [SIMWOOD – nachhaltige und innovative Mobilisierung von Holz](#)

Le Bois International reported on the Auvergne region's workshop in Grenoble:

>> [Recolte des bois surterrains pentus : cable aerien et diverses perspectives](#)

### Regional events

**9-12 June, 17th KWF-Tagung**

Roding, Bavaria, Germany

*Forests, People, Markets – Sustainable Synergies*

Sunday is traditionally reserved for small private forest owners 'Waldbauerntag'. Additional events and presentations will focus on the need of small forest owners to manage their forests.

>> [Download more information](#)

### Who to contact for more information

**If you would like to become involved in our Regional Learning Labs, please contact the coordinator for your region. You can find them on the SIMWOOD website: [www.simwood-project.eu/contacts.html](http://www.simwood-project.eu/contacts.html)**

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