

Joint FOREST EUROPE and FAO workshop
hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary

Understanding the Contribution of Agroforestry to Landscape Resilience in Europe

How can policy foster agroforestry towards
climate change adaptation?

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Ministry of Agriculture,
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Background and Rationale

In the Madrid Ministerial Resolution 2 **Protection of forests in changing environment**, adopted at the Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe held in October 2015, awareness was expressed of the European countries about changing climate patterns and associated natural hazards. It was recognised that climate change brings many associated effects, which include increasing temperatures, fluctuations in precipitation, and more extreme events, such as storms, floods, fires, heat waves and droughts, soil erosion, desertification, and damage caused by pests and diseases. These factors are significantly affecting the landscape on the scale of forest and non-forest ecosystems.

Ministers responsible for forests in the pan-European region also underlined that the nature of these threats is transboundary and thus strengthening the cooperation is crucial to secure provision of ecosystem services and increase resilience of forests. Commitment made in Madrid calls for intensification of information exchange on management experience in maintaining the protective functions, taking stock of the particular solutions under different climatic conditions, and to promote cooperation between researchers, policy makers and forest management in the field of forest hazards.

Moreover, the ministers committed themselves to **intensify the work on adaptation of forests and forest management to climate change** to prevent and mitigate damages caused by changing conditions at the local and regional levels in order to secure all functions of European forests, and to improve their resilience to natural hazards and protection against human-induced threats. With the aim to put into practice policy commitments, the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme for 2016-2020 includes a specific activity focused on **sharing expertise and experience on agroforestry as a way to contribute to adaptation of forests to climate change**.

Agroforestry also should be seen in the context of **global strategic policies**, such as those described by the United Nations and Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. It is fully aligned with the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and the FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development**. Moreover, agroforestry can help to address a large number of European level initiatives including the Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Strategy, the European Convention of Landscapes, and the European Climate Change Programme. Agroforestry in the EU should be understood also in the context to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and, in this context, the Cork 2.0 Declaration was established by different policy actors and farmers dealing with agricultural and forestry lands.

Whilst agroforestry can effectively contribute to a number of high-level environmental and societal goals, the value of some these benefits are not fully perceived by markets and some current policies.



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Agroforestry as a tool for landscape resilience in Europe

Agroforestry (AF) is a significant approach for climate change adaptation, contributing to rehabilitation of degraded land while providing livelihood and food security for people.

AF is an important management option, reducing fire risk in fire-prone forests, particularly in the Mediterranean. In this region, agro-silvo-pastoral systems can play a key role in preventing or reducing fire damage. Landscape perspective of AF systems includes shelterbelts in agricultural fields, riparian vegetation, short rotation forestry and coppices on abandoned agricultural land, and creating landscape mosaics. Such AF components can have positive impacts on resilience of the landscape, e.g. through increased biodiversity and reduced wind speed and subsequent erosion and soil desiccation in exposed landscapes. AF plays a clear role at territorial and landscape levels where it can improve the health and well-being of both rural and urban societies.

Demand for food and other agricultural products is expected to increase by 50 percent between 2012 and 2050. Demand will undergo structural changes, owing to factors such as population growth, urbanization, and per capita increases in income, while the natural resource base, upon which agriculture depends, will become increasingly stressed. Producing more with less, while preserving and enhancing the livelihoods of small-scale and family farmers, is a key challenge for the future. Substantial improvements in resource-use efficiency and gains in resource conservation will need to be achieved globally to meet growing and changing food demand, and halt and reverse environmental degradation.

The negative side effects of intensive use of chemical inputs in crop production have become increasingly visible and pose serious sustainability concerns. Investments in agriculture, fishery and forestry, and funding of research and development need to be stepped up. This is required to promote the adoption of sustainable production systems and practices, including integrated crop-livestock and aquaculture-crop systems, conservation agriculture, agroforestry, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, sustainable forest management and sustainable fisheries management. These, and other, forms of climate-smart agriculture will help, ecosystems and local communities to adapt to, mitigate and build resilience to climate change, and address country-specific needs and gender-specific contexts.

Pan-European region, with its significant variability in natural conditions, has a huge diversity of traditional and modern agroforestry systems with a high environmental and cultural value. This region has a high potential for establishment of modern agroforestry systems, which could become a great source of inspiration to learn about interactions, symbioses, biodiversity and agroforestry practices in such systems while contributing to resilience of the landscape.



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Workshop objectives

Main purpose of the workshop is to share state-of-the-art knowledge and build mutual understanding and cooperation in the field of agroforestry between agricultural and forest sector with the aim to increase ecological resilience at the landscape level.

The workshop will **focus on** searching for possible options for further joint work and formulating recommendations on further steps in the pan-European region, namely at policy level, to promote agroforestry as a tool for adaptation of landscape to climate change, combating land degradation and desertification, biodiversity protection, forest fragmentation, improving water regime and soil fertility etc.

Target audience includes representatives of the forest and agricultural sectors, as well as other related sectors, where agroforestry stands for one possible way for sustainable land-use management. The workshop will establish a common platform for both agriculture and forest sectors, policy makers, researchers, representatives of academia and education with the aim to build bridges among various stakeholders searching for application of agroforestry towards increasing landscape resilience and promoting adaptation to climate change.

Specific objectives

- To explore benefits and potentials of AF to contribute to strengthening landscape resilience, adaptation to climate change as well as to well-being of societies;
- To exchange experience, share expertise and examples of successful implementation of agroforestry approaches across pan-European region;
- To discuss main drivers and barriers for agroforestry in order to formulate recommendations for its further promotion;
- To exchange views on how to promote interplay, cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships between relevant stakeholders in the policy development to support adaptation to climate change;

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