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Working groups

Supply and demand for  
labour 2020

From technology to  
social innovations

## Forum working groups searching for trends for the future

*April was the first anniversary of the establishment of the "Future Forum on Forests of Finland". During this period, more than 60 experts have participated in the Forum's work, whilst more than 350 experts have taken part in the discussion on anticipated future trends. One core part of the Forum's work has been the five working groups. In all events and discussions, several indicators for potential future change have been discovered, some of which will be presented and discussed in the Forum's next seminar in Tampere, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2004.*

### Working groups

**Forest technology and silviculture.** The ageing Finnish population and the decreasing government budget calls for new models for organising public services in the future. New social and technological innovations are needed, for example, to tackle the problems of unsatisfactory development in efficiency in silviculture, inflexible structures in forest administration and to some extent poorly targeted R&D efforts in the sector.

Another set of issues raised in these groups has been the somewhat contradictory situation where a major part of income from forestry for forest owners originates from logwood sales whereas the wood industries, in general, profits most from pulpwood processing. What outcomes and consequences this contradiction will bring for forestry and silviculture in the future? Another pressure on logwood prices is due to increasing competition from Central and Eastern European enterprises in sawnwood and plywood production, and the demographic development in Western Europe that may decrease demand, especially for wood products. Is it possible to still improve the logistics in wood procurement to decrease the costs of wood transportation and retain the ability of the forest industries to pay similar stumpage prices as today?

Another set of issues has been to examine how the forest cluster, as today, may retain its competitiveness. For the cluster to continue to be competitive, it is necessary that the core of the cluster, i.e. forest industries, will continue to invest in Finland in the future. Some threats to future investments include the recent deve-

lopments in economic, social and labour policies in Finland. Additionally, the price of electricity and roundwood, especially if still increasing, will adversely affect the competitiveness of forest industries. How can the availability of wood be secured under different wood demand conditions? And how is it possible to synchronise the rising environmental demands and the changing attitudes and values of forest owners with the industrial demands for efficient wood production?

The combined forest technology and silviculture working groups have organised five workshops to build scenarios on the driving forces for forest technology and silviculture change in the future. The working groups have also interviewed various experts to gain more in-depth knowledge on certain up-coming questions.

**Forest industries.** The threats and opportunities for forest industries have been explored, for example from the point of view how the attitudes on timber exports have developed in different countries. In general, it appears that the attitudes depend little on the abundance of forest resources but rather on the cultural understanding of what is good for the country in question.

Particularly in the former socialistic countries the acceptance of timber exports is low. In these countries, the former political ideology emphasised the full utilisation of natural resources as well as the export of those products which had the most labour input. The export of any raw material, in this sense, can be seen as a sort of colonialism, which view emphasise the sensitivity of timber exports issue in these countries.

An illustrative example is Russia Karelia, where results of a questionnaire of 2700 people published in 2000 indicated that 78 % of the respondents had a negative attitude towards timber exports. A timber export ban was supported by 67 % of the respondents whereas 15 % opposed it. It is believed that as the sense of democracy gets stronger in Russia, the more peoples' opinion is reflected in political decisions and less timber will be exported.

**Environment.** The "environment" working group organised two workshops in autumn 2003. The three most important environmental issues for the next 20 years were foreseen to be climate change, protection of water resources and the preservation of biological diversity.

The need to understand the environmental issues in a broader social context was repeatedly raised in the workshops. It was generally estimated that policy instruments are needed in the future to avoid (emphasise) negative (positive) environmental impacts occurring. Often these instruments provide room for new livelihoods. Examples of policy processes that could bring opportunities for new livelihoods are carbon emission trading, utilisation of wood for energy, nature based tourism and the know-how based services on environmental protection. One major obstacle foreseen in the workshops is the somewhat stubborn way of thinking in the forest sector that may restrict the acceptability of new operations and modes of action.

**Social sustainability.** Here, social sustainability is understood as the ability of the forest sector to sustain and advance the welfare of the people. With respect to this definition, the working group on social sustainability will: (i) explore the

dynamics of social change from the point of view of the forest sector, (ii) foresee the future development on forests from the citizens' point of view, (iii) assess the potential for new livelihoods related to the multifunctional uses of forests, and (iv) from the point of view of social sustainability, locate the potential critical issues in the future development of the forest sector.

The working group on social sustainability has two sub-groups, one for social sustainability issues and one for nature based tourism. In these thematic groups, studies will be conducted, for example, on:

- the dynamics of social change from the point of view of the forest sector
- the potentials for livelihoods in the utilisation of multiple products and services of the forests
- the present conditions and future prospects in nature based tourism

#### **Supply and demand for labour 2020**

It is likely that the availability of labour will be a major obstacle for the forest sector's development in Finland, especially in silviculture, timber procurement and timber transportation on roads after 2010. This problem has arisen as a result of the rural depopulation and a large number of the entrepreneurs as well as the employees in the related professions are fast approaching retirement age in the 2010s.

To gain a better insight on the coming changes and to foresee what efforts could be efficient to maintain labour supply, the Forum has agreed with Jaakko Pöyry Management (Europe) Ltd. to conduct a special survey on labour availability through to 2020. The study will be completed by the end of October 2004.

#### **Seminar "From technology to social innovations - new models for operations", 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004, Tampere**

How will silviculture and wood procurement be organised in the future? Will the structures and operations in private forestry change? How to advance social innovations that forestry could be competitive in this changing environment?

Further information and registration:  
[www.metsaforumi.fi](http://www.metsaforumi.fi)

Publications on future:

CEPI 2003. A partnership for European Forests. A CEPI study on future wood availability.  
[www.cepi.org/files/WoodAvail-092107A.pdf](http://www.cepi.org/files/WoodAvail-092107A.pdf)  
Full study:  
[www.cepi.org/files/woodavail-full-112802A.pdf](http://www.cepi.org/files/woodavail-full-112802A.pdf)

Unasylva Vol. 52, No. 1 (No. 204) - Looking forward. [www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X8820E/X8820E00.HTM](http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X8820E/X8820E00.HTM)

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