EFORWOOD

Sustainability Impact Assessment
of the Forestry - Wood Chain

Project no. 518128-2

EFORWOOD

Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment

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Stakeholder interaction preliminary assessment

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CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Contents

1 Summary

Over the past nearly 18 months it has become clear that there is no one-fits-all panel approach to the EFORWOOD interaction with Foresty-Wood-Chain stakeholders.[1] Evidence from the IP SENSOR project has showed difficulties in establishing the right type of contact. Divergent interests and aims among the Modules as well as a broad spectrum of relevant FWC stakeholders, including end-users have been identified. Moreover, many of the hitherto involved Pan-European stakeholder organisations are busy and sought after for many projects and issues, hence commitment can be difficult to maintain. Altogether, this seems to call for a more flexible and adaptive approach of interaction.

Three main groups of stakeholder to focus on
Three main categories of stakeholders to focus on have emerged: industrial stakeholders, commission services and other significant non-industrial stakeholders. A specific Task Force has been created for the industrial stakeholder relations. Similar action will be taken in relation to the commission services and significant non-industrial stakeholders.

Two key topics
Two key topics for the coming 18 months are ToSIA development and the EFORWOOD scenarios. The first topic is especially relevant for potential end users (commission services and industry), whereas the second topic is relevant for the broader part of non-industrial stakeholders.

Communications strategy
It will be ensured that future interaction will be integrated/coordinated according to the communications strategy (and plans) elaborated by M6 in collaboration with WP0.1. This strategy also sets out key definitions, aims and visions for communication. The collaboration with M6 will also ensure a steady flow of information to stakeholders and keeping communication channels open.

Focused meetings, "roadshow" and broader workshops
A combination of smaller, focused, bilateral meetings and interviews with a few key stakeholders (a so-called "roadshow") and larger workshops with broader representation and possibility for inter-stakeholder discussion should ensure input and feedback. To the extent possible, the stakeholder web portal part will be expanded.

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[1] It is important to note the difference between *project* stakeholders and *FWC* stakeholders. For example, the federations CEPF; CEPI and CEI-BOIS are FWC stakeholders, but are also partners in EFORWOOD and thus not project stakeholders.

2 Introduction

This report presents a status and an assessment of the stakeholder interaction in the first 18 months of the EFORWOOD project. The report builds on PD0.1.2 Stakeholder procedures and consultation plan and draws upon the communication strategy and plan drawn up by M6 in collaboration with WP0.1.

WP 0.1 ensures active and integrated stakeholder and user-groups participation in the SIA of the FWC to secure a continuous dialogue using best practice methods of involvement.

A stated aim of sustainability impact assessment (SIA) is to improve transparency in public policy decision making. A requirement in SIA is to involve stakeholders to ensure relevance and legitimacy in the use of SIA results. However, also in the *development* of the tool for conducting SIA (ToSIA), interaction and direct dialogue with end-users and other stakeholders along the FWC (e.g. industry, commission services, political decision makers, forest administrators, intergovernmental bodies and NGO's – all at different levels), is considered highly important by EFORWOOD.

One of the central aims of the involvement is to get stakeholders' views, constructive feedback and recommendations on key EFORWOOD developments and outcomes. Thus, an essential role of stakeholder interaction in EFORWOOD is to supplement the technical and scientific expertise of project partners. For example, in completing the first draft set of proposed indicators for the whole European FWC, end-users and other stakeholders provided valuable input and discussion. Future interaction, including physical meetings, written comments as well as web-based surveys and discussions will take place on e.g. FWC scenarios development and on the purpose, interface and uses of ToSIA.

As defined in the communications strategy, a **FWC stakeholder** is seen as anyone who can affect or be affected to a significant degree by the selection of an alternative and who is felt to have a legitimate claim to have their interests considered by the decision makers in the project. Some FWC stakeholders are already part of the EFORWOOD project as partners (e.g. industry and private forest owners associations) whereas others (e.g. European Newspaper Publishers' Association) are not.

It is important to note the difference between **project stakeholders** and *FWC* stakeholders. For example, the federations CEPF; CEPI and CEI-BOIS are FWC stakeholders, but are also partners in EFORWOOD and thus not project stakeholders.

Some of the stakeholders are also **end-users** of the results of EFORWOOD. An end-user, or **user-group**, is the ultimate user of the results for whom the EFORWOOD outcomes are intended (e.g. Commission services, industry planners and strategists). The user-group can be seen as a specific type of stakeholder who may benefit from using the tool after it has been fully developed by EFORWOOD.

A **wider range** of stakeholders include a broader range of relevant industry-based organisations along the forestry wood chain, NGOs (such as various European consumer organisations), the wider research community, European legislators and politicians at various levels.

In EFORWOOD context, we have furthermore distinguished between primary, secondary and key stakeholders. **Primary** stakeholders are taken to be those whose interests and behaviour are ultimately affected by the decision/process or action, here, in relation to FWC. **Secondary** stakeholders are intermediaries in the process, and include typically interest organisations, umbrella associations and so on.

Key stakeholders are defined as those who can to a significant degree influence or are otherwise important to the process, thus Groups A, B and C are referred to as key stakeholders, cf. Figure 1. These include EU Commission services, FWC related industry (e.g. CEPI, CEI-Bois), FWC related non-industrial stakeholders such as forest owners associations (CEPF) and non-governmental organisations active in and/or impacted by the FBS (e.g. IUCN).
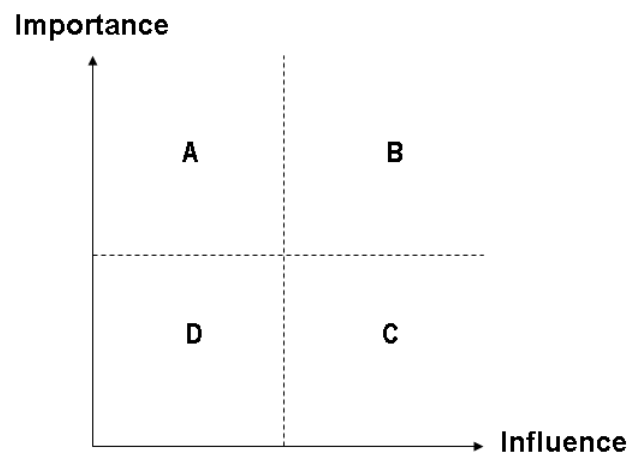

Figure 1. Stakeholder groups plotted in a Importance/Influence Grid. After Studd (2002).

Group A, characterised by high importance but low influence, traditionally require special attention because of low influence as e.g. 'socially excluded' group or in the context of EFORWOOD those that may not be normally well represented (e.g. SMEs, public groups) from various parts of Europe. With Group B, the ones with high importance and high influence (e.g. forest industry) a good relationship must be established to ensure support. Group C, with high influence, but low overlap of interests with the project, may constitute a risk. Some of these groups might be special interest organisations. Group D has low priority for the project, and is unlikely to be involved.

3 Status for stakeholder interaction

In the context of EFORWOOD, stakeholder participation has been through representation from companies, organisations, associations, federations, networks or other groups. Participation, meaning to take part, is used for processes ranging from information giving, public meetings to joint decision making. In EFORWOOD, participation outside the sphere of project partners has involved the steps aiming at information gathering and consultation, i.e. listening and learning, but will all decision-making made by the project. M6 is responsible for information giving. *Consultation* is carried out through a combination of written consultation documents, remote surveys (can be web-based) and deliberative procedures in the format of bilateral meetings of a select group of stakeholders and end-users.

The aim has been to get interaction with FWC relevant industry, forest and other land owners, forest managers, policy makers, international and EU forest related organisations, other forest related organisations, environmental NGOs as well citizens and other society organisations. In the EFORWOOD project so far, groups B and C (cf. Figure 1) have dominated as stakeholders to include, as there is no statutory obligation or legal requirement to include stakeholders as Group A in the development process. More so, they are to be contemplated more in the implementation phase of the TOSIA.

Database
A stakeholder database as a tool for managing stakeholders has been set up. Through the database, the stakeholders' details have been recorded to provide easy referencing for ongoing communications and to ensure that the future consultation process is not undermined by failure to identify or contact stakeholders, including end-users, to meet promised requests for actions. In general terms, the database lists the key stakeholders, how to contact them, and where their interests might lie to ensure a consistent process. The database has the following fields and presently holds 120 entries.

Organization name	Org_abbreviation	Subdivision	First name	Surname	Contact Email	Contact phone
Street address	City	Postal code	Country	Website	Meeting1	Meeting2
Meeting3	Contact with WP0.1	Mail documents to?	Delivered written input	EFORWOOD relation	Type of stakeholder	Potential end user
Status of stakeholder	Power/Interest relation	Level	Overall and/or a specific part of FWC	Contact with other Modules	Comments	

Figure 2. Selection of entry fields in the stakeholder database.

Interaction

In the past year, WP01 has had two internal deliverables, one on the stakeholder database and one on the procedures and definitions of end-users and other stakeholders, as according to plan. The first stakeholder meeting under the EFORWOOD project took place on 13 September 2006 in Kerkrade at the Abbey Rolduc – venue of the annual EFI conference 2006. Total attendance was approx. 45 stakeholders, including project external stakeholders (15-20) – representing research & development, industry along the forestry-wood chain (FWC), forest owners, forest managers, NGOs – and policy making related stakeholders as well as IP board members and other representatives of EFORWOOD partners.

The aim of the meeting was two-fold: (i) to introduce the EFORWOOD project and the tool for sustainability impact assessment (ToSIA), and to (ii) to get comments and recommendations on a draft set of indicators for the whole European Forestry-Wood Chain (FWC) from a panel composed of a wide range of FWC-related stakeholders. Comments to the current indicator draft set were invited to sort out the issue of whether the development of indicators was on the 'right track', covering issues such as the purpose of the indicator set, the overall structure of the indicators and the adequate number of indicators. The meeting also marked a beginning of interaction with stakeholders. Several participants expressed great interest in the project and in continuing interaction as panel. Not all stakeholders groups were present at the meeting, and not all in the same number due to various reasons. However, further plans are to focus on particular groups at the next two meetings. For a more detailed description of the workshop, please see PD0.1.3.

Furthermore, an email-based survey on MCA was carried out to a wider range of stakeholders in January/February 2007. MCA is one of the tools for sustainability impact of the forestry-wood chain. MCA is a set of methods designed to take account of multiple, conflicting indicators, criteria or objectives, structure a decision problem, identify the most preferable option among alternatives, e.g. between optional FWCs. In this context, stakeholder input was highlighted as a way to help with the selection of indicators (from a defined list) as well as other aspects of the sustainability evaluation. The period of time between last engagement (the Kerkrade meeting) and this survey, however, showed the pitfall of engaging with a larger group of voluntary stakeholders, i.e. one of maintaining interest and commitment.

Task force

To aid the process of keeping industry stakeholder relations, a Task Force (EFORWOOD "European FWC Task Force") has been set up as the IP Board decided to give more focus and to make better use of industry relations. To try to achieve this it has been decided that the tasks of Module 4 (Processing and Manufacturing), Work Packages 4.2 & 4.3 should include a pronounced focus on industrial stakeholder perspectives. In more general terms, the aim of this Task Force has been to discuss the expected overall outcome of the project including the intended purpose and use of ToSIA.

Internal Module interaction

Interaction between WP0.1 and the rest of Module 0 and other Modules and WPs has taken place. In particular there has been interaction with WPs in Module 1 – concerning indicators and MCA – and with M6 – concerning knowledge transfer and most importantly communications strategy and plan.

Interaction with "sister" IPs: SENSOR and SEAMLESS

Communication with the two IPs – SENSOR and SEAMLESS has been initiated, a process which should bring benefits to EFORWOOD, not least with regard to contacting commission services stakeholders, which can be difficult to get hold of. Moreover, experiences from how they have been dealing with stakeholder interaction may prove useful further in the process. However, as they are further in the project cycles, learning experiences are likely to go one way (towards EFORWOOD), which may explain the languor in their interaction.

4 Assessment of stakeholder interaction

The EU review carried out for the first year of EFORWOOD also assessed the stakeholder interaction and noted that, "Although several activities have been made to involve stakeholders their participation has been limited until now. Stakeholders should play an important role in the indicators definition as well as in project activities in general." (Blanco, 2007: 14) While agreeing to the general point being made, it must be noted that a broader range of stakeholders in fact took part in giving feedback and input to the draft set of indicators. Probably, the term stakeholder refers to FWC stakeholders as well as project stakeholders. With regard to the latter, the EFORWOOD Task Force

The reviewers further noted that, "Stakeholders are mainly industry and forestry owners but other parties giving high emphasis to social and political issues have to be considered as well (e.g. biodiversity, landscape, environment, water, cultural heritage) in order to identify a balanced and political meaningful combination of sustainable indicators, criteria and scenarios. The involvement of stakeholders is at the moment still rather low and additional efforts will be required." (Blanco, 2007: 3). Here, again, the observation is valid, noting that in fact the FWC stakeholders participating in the indicator consultation in the format of the Kerkrade workshop were to a large degree outside industry and forest owners (on board the project as partners). However, in relation to the scenarios efforts will be made through bilateral interviews and a collective workshop to get other parties with emphasis on social and political issues such as biodiversity and landscape to state their views and give their input.

As a recommendation from the EU review team, it was stated that, "The identification of and interaction with significant stakeholders outside the industry community needs special attention (see effort made – "stakeholder task force" for the industry). To avoid an unbalance in the project similar actions are needed towards other significant stakeholder groups. Specific actions to approach a few key stakeholders, in particular among European Commission policy makers, are necessary." (Blanco, 2007: 4). Agreeing to

the general point, and with the remarks made in the preceding section, specific efforts to the commission service are planned for this year (2007) with the aim of setting up a more constant information group. Moreover, the "roadshow" – with bilateral meetings may work towards this objective.

With regard, specifically to scenarios, the EU reviewers observed that, "Significant stakeholders should be strongly involved in defining relevant scenarios to be studied in this project. Given the low involvement of stakeholders at the moment, there is a risk that scenarios will not be well defined and, therefore, their potential impact on the project will decrease, even if the ToSIA tool is successfully developed. It is thus important to identify all the relevant stakeholder groups, policy makers, environmentalists, etc. and to start the interaction early enough in the project to fully meet the final project objectives." (Blanco, 2007: 5). Here, again, agreeing to the point of getting scenarios well-defined, the plan outlined in the communications plan specifically addresses this issue, getting FWC stakeholders to give input and help to the define scenarios and drivers through bilateral consultations.

With regard to the identification and selection of stakeholders to engage, the reviewers observed that, "The involvement of stakeholders has been low until now. Some users and stakeholders have been involved (forest owners and the wood processing industry) but other e. g. environmental, nature protection and landscape conservation NGO's should also get involved. The internal demands from the services of the European Community have to be considered." (Blanco, 2007: 19). To this comment, it must be noted that in fact several environmental, nature protection and conservations NGOs (e.g. European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE)) have been involved in the indicator consultations as has representatives from the EC (e.g. DG Research/Joint Research Centre and DG Development).

Further, the reviewers concluded that, "today a list of some 100 potential stakeholders exists. There has to be a process to select a manageable group of stakeholders. A more clear definition and identification of the stakeholders group is needed and a limited number of key actors should be identified. It is important for the credibility of the project that there is a balance between the industry on one hand and other relevant societal groups on the other hand." (Blanco, 2007: 19) The stakeholder database is the gross list of potential stakeholders as well as a log of interaction. In fact, key categories of stakeholder have been defined (allowing for division into FWC relevant industry, forest and other land owners, forest managers, policy makers, international and EU forest related organisations, other forest related organisations, environmental NGOs as well citizens and other society organisations (see also the target groups defined in the communications strategy and plan). That being said, emphasis is now on three major groupings: FWC related industry, commission services and other significant non-industrial stakeholders. Interaction and communication planned with the two latter should help to get balance between industry and relevant societal organisations. This is in line with the note the reviewers made with regard to key stakeholders, namely that, "There are two significant use potentials relevant for policy makers, industry federations, universities

and large companies: a) An impact assessment instrument based on mainly quantitative criteria and indicators that allows better understanding of the dynamics within the forest-wood-market chain. b) An assessment instrument allowing an evaluation of cross-sector impacts from public policies on the forest-wood chain respectively impacts on such policies." (Blanco, 2007: 18)

With regard to communications, the reviewers observed that, "However, there is a need to focus the range of activities and to develop a strategy to identify the targets of dissemination and their needs. It is urgent to base the outreach on a clear strategic program concentrating on policy makers inside and outside the forest and wood processing sector. This refers in particular to interested groups within the European Community itself, to the leading European associations and stakeholder groups and to selected addressees in the UN system." (Blanco, 2007: 13) This specific point has been dealt with in greater detail through the newly produced communications strategy and implementation plan up for internal review currently. In the current draft of this strategy it is stated in the vision (if the objectives are achieved) that, "Key target groups understand the purpose of the EFORWOOD project and feel that they have had a chance to present their knowledge and views on the project. They are fully informed of major milestones and achievements throughout the lifetime of the project … Users of the tools developed by EFORWOOD fully understand the boundaries within which the tools operate and eagerly anticipate their availability at the end of the project" (Strategy, 2007:2).

5   Next steps

Follow up upon the status and assessment, the nesxt steps will be to strengthen coordinated interaction with stakeholders: a) with a focus on commission services and significant non-industrial stakeholders identified in month1-12 and new ones; and b) industrial stakeholders through their partnership and the established Task Force, maintain database and assess stakeholder representation, capacity and interaction and at the of this reporting period to give recommendations for further involvement.

A first task is to ensure the communication with key stakeholders (industrial and non-industrial as well as commission services) on FWC issues. This will be done through a communication strategy drawn up in close collaboration with M6 – and partly with the development of, and input to, a permanent stakeholder area within the EFORWOOD portal. A second task is to ensure the sustained stakeholder involvement and input through workshops and meetings in 2007/2008 on ToSIA, and on FWC scenarios. In the period, targeted interaction with non-industrial stakeholders and commission services will be intensified, and industrial stakeholders will maintain interaction through their partnership and the established Task Force. Smaller meetings will be coordinated and held as need arises, and two workshops are foreseen. The EFORWOOD conference (held in autumn 2007) will target high level stakeholders.

A third task is to maintain the stakeholder database, keeping it updated and functioning as a log of interaction to keep a balance between industry and other relevant societal

groups, for practical and documentation purposes and make it available for partners at the EFORWOOD closed area of the portal. A fourth task is to ensure knowledge and experience sharing on stakeholder interaction with the IPs SENSOR and SEAMLESS.

A fifth task is to review and analyse the industrial and non-industrial stakeholder and user-groups involvement and representation in order to revise and make recommendations for the further stakeholder involvement. In meeting the tasks, efforts will be made to co-ordinate the work of WP0.1 with other Modules, and in particular Module 6, to ensure WP0.1 activities are in line with the overall project progress, and to keep all WP0.1 partners informed and involved.

6 Conclusion

Taking into account the experiences of the first 18 months:

- **A more flexible and adaptive approach of interaction than originally planned for, must be used**. It has also emerged that bilateral stakeholder interactions within specific Modules are not easily planned ahead for. To a point, internal project discussions about focal points have also come to point where it is easier now to conclude on those first discussions in order to focus work in the coming period.
- **There will three main categories of stakeholders to focus on: industrial stakeholders, commission services and other significant non-industrial stakeholders**. A specific Task Force has been created for the industrial stakeholder relations. Similar action will be taken in relation to the commission services and significant non-industrial stakeholders.
- **There will be two key topics for the coming 18 months: ToSIA development and the EFORWOOD scenarios.** The first topic is especially relevant for potential end users (commission services and industry), whereas the second topic is relevant for the broader part of non-industrial stakeholders.
- **It will be ensured that future interaction will be integrated/coordinated according to the communications strategy** (and plans) elaborated by M6 in collaboration with WP0.1 This strategy also sets out key definitions, aims and visions for communication. The collaboration with M6 will also ensure a steady flow of information to stakeholders and keeping communication channels open.
- **A combination of smaller, focused, bilateral meetings and interviews with a few key stakeholders (a so-called "roadshow") will be focused on**. Maybe, in addition, larger workshops with broader representation and possibility for inter-stakeholder discussion should ensure input and feedback.

7 References

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