

One year and half of the EFORWOOD project: Interview with Kaj Rosen, vice president of the Forestry Research Institute of Sweden (Skogforsk) and coordinator of the project

1. How would you characterize the first year and a half of the EFORWOOD project?



The project has developed far better than I ever hoped. It's amazing to notice how 38 partners from 21 countries working in 7 modules and 28 workpackages, can cooperate towards a common goal. The partners have adapted to the complex content and structure of the project surprisingly fast. What has been more difficult during the initial phase of the project are the external relations. We have had some problems in explaining and selling the project ideas to primarily the industrial stakeholders.

2. What were the major project achievements in this time?

I think it is fair to say that a main achievement is that the project has been able to keep its time table. In line with this time table, we have launched the first prototype of the decision support model, ToSIA. Secondly we have been able to adapt our ways of working together, to meet the continuously changing demands of the project development.

3. What should be improved in the coming period?

A major effort must be made in order to improve our communication towards our stakeholders. This is crucial, since the success of EFORWOOD depends on the acceptance of the project ideas and results by the end users. Without users of ToSIA there is obviously no real benefit from the project. I'm less worried about the solutions of the scientific problems we meet as the project develops towards it's final results.

4. Interaction with Stakeholders has significant importance for the project: How do you see the role of stakeholders in/around the project?

Despite the problems we have in our own communication with the stakeholders, we have difficulties concerning the engagement of the stakeholders in the project. This is a classical problem, related to stakeholders who do not have an immediate connection or perceive obvious benefits or threats from the project. Therefore, in the case of EFORWOOD we engaged some of the key stakeholders as project partners. So far we can conclude that we probably had too high expectations on stakeholder engagement.

5. Why should policy makers be interested in EFORWOOD?

For the first time we will, as an outcome of EFORWOOD, produce a tool for integrated sustainability impact assessment of a complete industrial sector. This has never been done before, but such tool has been asked for by e.g. the European Commission.

6. How significant is this project in contributing towards the achievement of the Lisbon Agenda for FWC sector?

If we succeed in every respect of our overall objectives, EFORWOOD has the potential to contribute to both increased sustainability and to increased competitiveness of the forest-based sector. However, to achieve those ambitions the project consortium, as well as politicians and the business sector, has to respect the different roles we play in striving towards a more sustainable society.

7. What will be your message at this stage for EFORWOOD partners and also for people outside the project?

EFORWOOD is an ambitious project and has ambitious goals. Don't be disappointed if we don't see implementation of our results immediately after the project. We cannot expect to change how people act in the short term, but be sure, we will contribute to a change of the way people think!

9. During the EFORVISION contest (project modules song competition) in the last EFORWOOD week in Zvolen, Slovakia, project partners demonstrated that they have significant musical talents aside from their professional skills. As contest winner, can you reveal what was the secret of "your success"?

First, the true secret is hidden in the minds of the organisers of the EFORWOOD song contest. Second, the talents of the my women staff. Third, an outstanding and professional jury with high integrity (meaning that they did not deviate an inch from what was agreed in advance).

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