

Forest-TREE

(working title)

**FOREST-related Training, Regional
governance, and development of Emerging
End-uses for wood.**

An Interreg IVC project

Project outline

19 August 2008



1) Background

Forests in Europe have an important role to play in the territorial development of European regions. In economic terms, the complexity of the relationship between economic development and forest management is constantly evolving. The exploitation of forestry material is also developing rapidly – new and innovative sectors in the wood value chain are emerging, for example, with regard to the use of wood in the biomass sector for energy provision. Sectors that were in decline are re-emerging, such as the use of wood as a construction material (eco-construction).

Maximizing the potential of the forestry sector, in economic and social terms, is a key aim for regions which have a high percentage of land covered by forest. As new markets for forestry develop and traditional ones re-emerge, it is important that relevant regional policies keep track with this sectoral evolution. In many cases, the sector is characterized by the presence of a high proportion of SMEs; policy instruments and methodologies need to take into account this characteristic, and promote the right “climate” for the development of these businesses. Forestry development and exploitation also has an important role to play with regard to wider society – it can help promote rural diversification, improve employment opportunities, and thus reinforce the social cohesion of communities which have been experiencing, or are at risk of decline.

Different approaches and practices have been applied in different regions, with a greater or lesser degree of success. If Europe is to maintain an economically competitive forestry sector, it is vital that best practices for regional development of the sector are identified and shared. Evidently, the aims of the Gothenburg agenda will remain at the forefront of the project as a transversal theme, and care will be taken to identify practices which have a particularly beneficial, or at least a neutral impact on the environment and sustainable development.

2) Objectives of the project

The primary objective of the project is to identify and share good practice in the field of forest development policy, which will permit partner regions, and other European regions with similar characteristics and challenges, to improve regional and local policy related to forestry development. Forestry development has a potentially large scope; the proposition within this project is to share practices which are recognised as contributing to the optimisation of the economic and social potential of the sector. Particular focus will be made on the exchange of good practice in relation to improving the value of forestry resources - specifically the main raw material - wood. Secondary objectives of the project will be the transfer of a certain degree of the best practices identified among the partners.

Target beneficiaries include SMEs and people employed in the forestry and wood sector at a local and regional level. Other beneficiaries also include regional competitiveness clusters and universities. Intermediary beneficiaries include policy-makers, and technicians responsible for developing and implementing public policy related to forestry development at a regional level.

All of the project partners will identify and share their good practices in forestry development policy, with a view to developing a best practice guide, the outputs of which will be fully exploitable by other European regions with similar interests and competencies in forestry development, to improve their own forestry policy.

Finally, the project will not merely stop at the simple sharing of good practices; the partners are convinced that in order to benefit fully from the identification of best practices, that the transfer of a number of these practices should actively be sought. This is why the second phase of the project envisages the transfer of practices and methodologies among the partners.

3) Partnership

Following the project meeting which took place in May 2008, participants from the following regions expressed an interest in actively participating in the project partnership:

Champagne-Ardenne (FR)

Lorraine (FR)

Wallonia (BE)

Central Ostrobothnia (FI)

Vysocina (CZ),

Types of partners included are regional authorities, regional representative bodies of the forestry/wood sector, regional representations of the state, research bodies and regional education and training organizations.

The participation of further partner regions is intended, and contacts are therefore ongoing with the following regions;

Vasterbotten (SE)

Moravian-Silesian region (CZ)

Lublin (PL)

With a project partnership structure of this type, it is intended that the relative heterogeneity of the different participating regions (from three distinct geographic “zones” of the European territory– Scandinavia, Western Europe and Eastern Europe), will allow for a wide scope for exchange, and the different experiences shared will have an enriching effect on the development of a good practice guide.

4) Planned activities

Project duration: 36 months

Project type: Regional Initiative Project

Sub-theme applied for: **Priority 1, Entrepreneurship and SMEs**

The project will use the following practices to achieve its objectives:

Creation of **working groups** around specific themes:

Specific sub-themes for the project will be identified which will allow the project partners to explore more deeply areas of particular interest. Proposed sub-themes are listed below (these are not yet definitive):

1) Human resources

- a) Vocational training and its role in the development of local businesses (ex. SMEs, local forest owners)
- b) Training for future technicians and managers in the forestry sector (nb supply chain, phases of production)
- c) *Informing potential employees of the sector to maintain a local workforce – attracting employees to the sector.*

2) Governance (or “management”) - regional public policy to create favourable economic climate for production;

- a) Valorisation with an appropriate use for wood (life cycle analysis). Awareness and anticipation of the economic context (and also what kind of forest to promote).
- b) Management/governance of the wood extraction sector (links between owners and wood transformation businesses) –
 - (i) policies to prevent fragmentation of plots; sharing techniques for governance in different regions.
 - (ii) mobilising owners: Methodologies for identifying ownership of different land parcels, and also for better identification of the distribution of tree types
 - (iii) organising optimum supply chain links
- c) regional policy/strategies (policy makers) *Informing the general public in order to raise the profile of the sector (sensibilisation of strong/positive aspects of forest exploitation – to counter negative environmental perceptions of general public)*

3) Innovation/development of new and emerging end-uses in specific economic sectors

- a) Relationship between competitiveness clusters and scientific experts and the wood sector (nb bolzano, moravia silesia, CO – “triple helix”) (research and development, technology transfer, tools).
 - i. Biomass and bioenergy
 - ii. Wood for industry
 - iii. Wood for construction
 - iv. etc:
- b) Tools to stimulate growth and development of wood related SMEs : financial, business parks, etc.

Organization of **thematic seminars**

These will be the main opportunity for project participants to identify and exchange good practice. It is likely that the seminars will be split into different sub-themes, given the wide scope of the project's focus. These sub-themes will likely follow those listed above.

Site visits:

These will be organized for thematic areas for which a particularly interesting good practice has been identified that merits a closer collaboration between the region that has developed the practice and the other project partners. It is likely they will be organized in conjunction with the seminars/workshops.

Creation of a **web-based knowledge-sharing platform**

The web-based platform will serve the following purposes in the execution of this project:

- i) A dedicated limited access “knowledge-sharing” area, where project partners can share ideas and prepare working papers, presentations and reports both upstream and downstream of seminar organization, site visits, etc.
- ii) A publicly accessible main site promoting the project's objectives, activities and results. This will include regularly updated information regarding upcoming and completed activities, and reports. The best-practice guide-book will also be placed online when completed.

Conception and development of a good practice handbook

It is intended that the main outcome of the seminars, working groups, study visits and meetings will be the development of a “handbook” for regional policy makers and technicians (private sector also) regarding the policies which optimize the economic and social potential of the forestry sector. This handbook will serve as a reference toolkit for regions seeking to optimise the development of the forestry sector (not only in the project partner regions, but in European regions which have an interest in this field).

Second stage of the project – pilot activities for the transfer of best practice

This phase of the project is considered to be a key factor which will add value to the project partnership. The aim is to allow the partners to take the cooperation a step further by realising the transfer of a selection of best practices identified in each

region. During the evolution of the project, potential areas for pilot projects could be developed.

Activities could include:

Exchange of staff

Development of a common training module to use in all the partner regions (a simple tool, but also allows an increased intensity of cooperation)

Possibly even low-scale trainee exchanges in pilot projects

5) Project timeframe

Total Duration: **36 months**

Start Date:

June 2009 (provisional, based on selection period of projects by STC and PSC)

End Date:

June 2012

Promotional/communication meetings

To involve wider stakeholders, decision makers, and target groups (SMEs, training organisations, etc.)

- 1) Kick-off/Inception meeting
- 2) Mid-term meeting
- 3) End of project meeting

Project partner meetings

To design methodology and tools for identifying and benchmarking good practice.

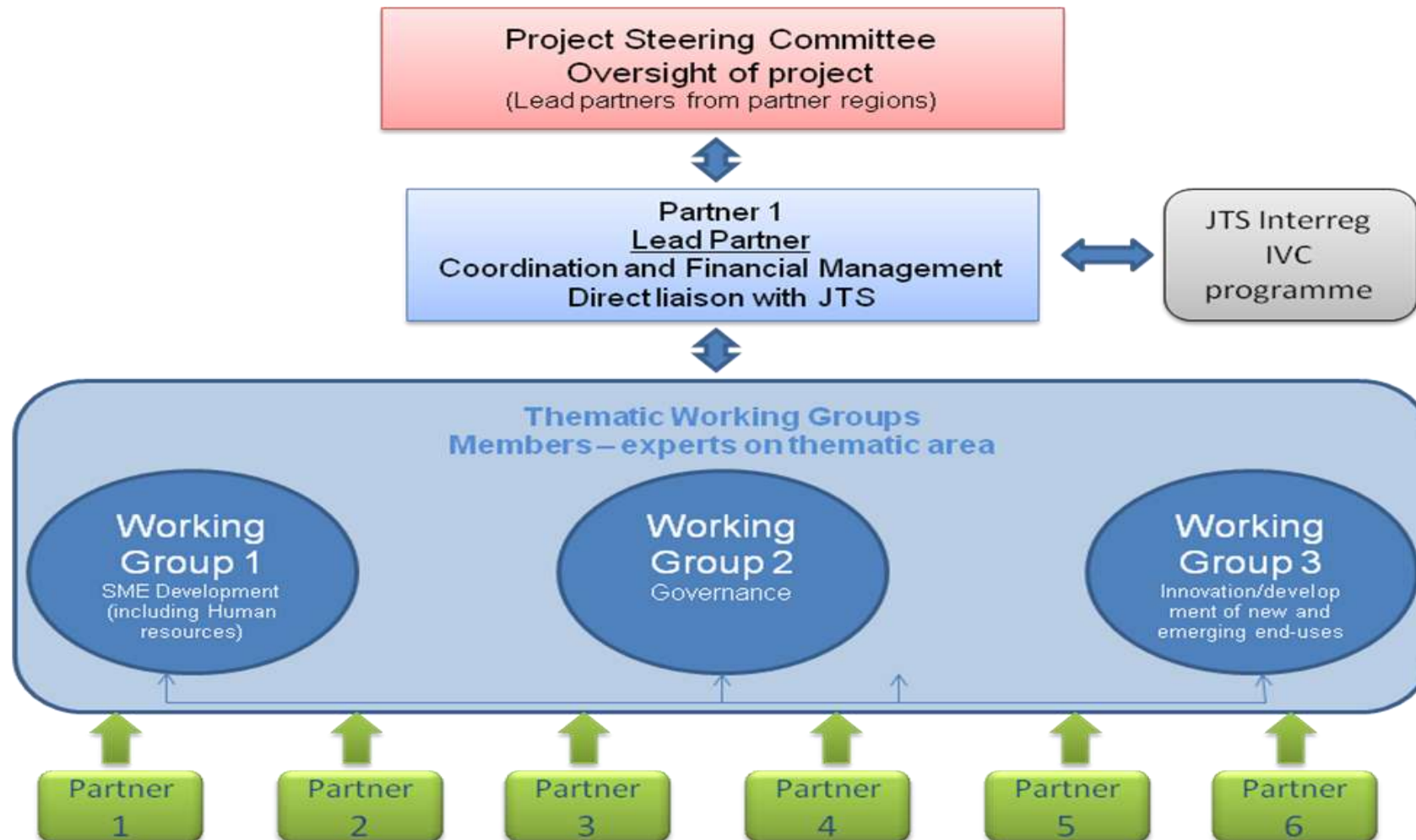
For sharing best practices and discuss/present results of working groups.

To prepare and implement the transfer of good practice phase

Steering committee meetings

To ensure the sound realisation of the project according to timeframe and objectives established in the project proposal. To 'flag' any deviations from projected course of the project, and to react in time to bring the project back on track/ propose modifications. These meetings can take place at similar stages to the partner meetings (either before or after).

6) Project Structure



7) Project Components

1) Management and coordination

- a. Component coordinator = Région Champagne-Ardenne

2) Communication and dissemination

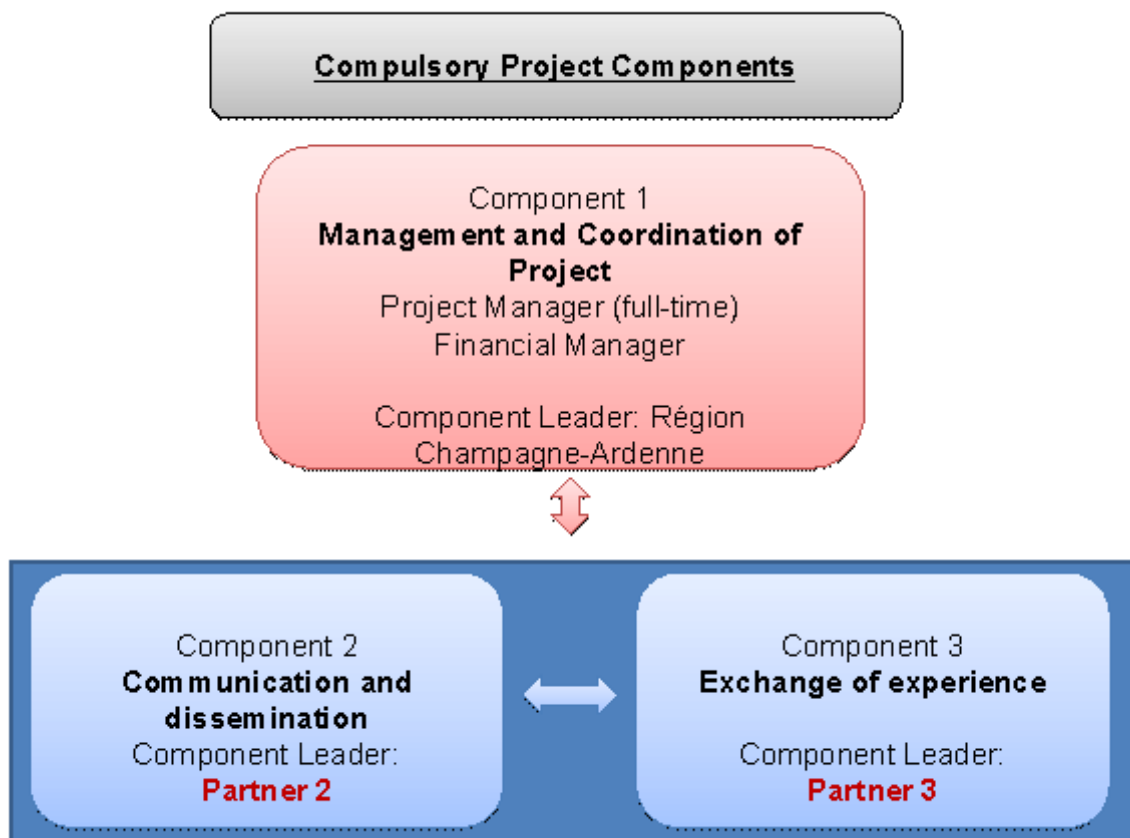
- a. Component coordinator = **to be defined**

3) Exchange of experience

- a. Component coordinator = **to be defined**

4) *Transfer of selected good practices (pilot actions/training module etc.)*

- a. Component coordinator = **to be defined**



8) Outputs

- Identification and transfer of best practices at a regional level (grouped by thematic area) (nb obligatory quantifiable output)
- Seminars for sharing best practices (**2 – 3** per year)
- Compendium/database of identified best practices
- Best practice guide for forestry development, notably with relation to the thematic areas focused on in the project. Can also include policy recommendations.
- Project website
- Project newsletter (twice per year) – to be distributed widely amongst stakeholders, decision-makers and policy practitioners in partner regions.
- pilot activities
- staff exchanges
- training modules

9) Expected Results

- Improved knowledge for practitioners and decision makers on best practice in forestry development.
- Improved efficacy of regional policies relating to forestry development
- Improved capacity of decision-makers and key actors in the field of forestry development to optimise policies aimed at developing the economic potential of the forestry sector.
- Further cooperation and projects as a spin off of the project – in other fields for example
- Staff members with increased capacity and better knowledge

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