

5th NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the INTEGRAL project!

We are pleased to report that important research findings of INTEGRAL were distributed to the audience of the largest forest research conference in October 2014. Many INTEGRAL scientists (from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, University of Freiburg, Technical University of Lisbon, Technical University in Zvolen, etc.) have contributed to the 24th IUFRO World Congress "Sustaining Forests, Sustaining People: the Role of Research" in Salt Lake City (USA) by organising thematic sessions and holding presentations. Key project-related topics such as "Forest sector modelling and policy analysis", "Forest biodiversity and ecosystem services" or "Environmental conflicts in forest policy" have been addressed and discussed (www.iufro2014.com).

In this newsletter issue we will outline the ongoing project activities such as problem-solving oriented backcasting for integrated forest management, describe the Slovak experiences with participatory backcasting, introduce current research activities and the interdisciplinary project team in Ireland.

Enjoy reading!

NEWS FROM THE INTEGRAL RESEARCH:

The last eight months of 2014 have been dedicated to the so-called **backcasting process** in 20 case study areas throughout Europe¹. Backcasting is a central approach when talking about strategies for the future. The central question in this approach is: what should we do to reach a certain desirable future?

The Wageningen University (the Netherlands) coordinates this ongoing project activity in cooperation with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the University of Freiburg.

The backcasting exercises strive to explore different pathways for the governance of integrated management of forest landscapes. In doing so, the INTEGRAL scientists consider both the present situation and the challenges in the future, and suggest ideas of how to reach a situation that is desired. As tangible results, mixtures of policy instruments will be described which are likely to be successful (including, for example, good practice regulations, market-based payments for ecosystem services and new modes of governance and networking).

Backcasting builds on the results of the scenario development process in INTEGRAL (coordinated by the Fachhochschule Salzburg).

In order to interpret the future scenarios and to discuss different policy objectives, pathways and instruments, the INTEGRAL researchers have launched **backcasting workshops** and involved relevant local and regional stakeholders. ►

¹www.integral-project.eu/about/project-description/integral-landscape-case-study-areas.html

FUTURE SCENARIOS IN INTEGRAL:

The INTEGRAL researchers described possible futures of European landscapes during 2013 and in the first months of 2014. The scenario research started with a diagnostic analysis of relevant policy and socio-economic drivers of change in integrated forest land-use in 20 case study areas throughout Europe. In addition, the project partners investigated the management aspects of European forested landscapes, based on decision support systems and ecological modeling. Key objectives of the scenario research were to (1) assess which ecosystem services will be possibly provided in the given area in the future (such as biodiversity, wood provision or recreation) and (2) how relevant stakeholders might act under given conditions in the future.



▶ The latter includes decision-makers, private and public forest owners, forest managers and industry players, state forestry and environmental authorities, environmental NGOs and recreational groups and other relevant land-users like hunters, water managers, farmers, etc. *(In the next article, the Slovak project partners report on their experiences with participatory backcasting exercises.)*

In spring 2015, 20 regional roadmaps will be created, including a set of policy instruments and forest management strategies for each case study region. These sets will be developed based on the policy actions suggested during the backcasting workshops. In the next step, the INTEGRAL researchers will use decision-support systems for forest management (forest DSS) in order to reflect the effects of the managerial responses to the policy instruments on forest ecosystem goods and services at the landscape level. Finally, the INTEGRAL researchers will provide an overall synthesis of the backcasting process and the roadmaps for sustainable forest management in Europe (www.integral-project.eu).



PARTICIPATORY BACKCASTING WORKSHOPS – THE SLOVAK EXAMPLE

The Slovak project partners have successfully conducted two participatory workshops in each of the case study regions Podpolanie and Kysuce. The participants were policy-makers such as representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, representatives of the regional forest administration, forest owners, forest industry stakeholders, NGOs and scientists. We asked Yvonne Brodrechtova and Rudolf Navratil (Technical University in Zvolen) about the workshop outcomes.

1. What were the most important findings to emerge from the backcasting workshops?

One of most desirable outcomes mentioned across all backcasting exercises in both case study areas was “promotion and new

income possibilities from fulfilment of other non-production ecosystem services”. All participants agreed that it is necessary to look for new sources of income, as at the present the only source of their income is timber production. Thus, they are often perceived as “woodcutters” in Slovakia. However, the society is often not aware of foresters managing forests also in order to fulfil directly or indirectly many non-production functions. As a consequence, participants wondered why there are still no schemes or tools that would financially support these functions. Some participants even proposed ideas of policy actions demanding mainly changes in state politics. Among the ideas mentioned were geopolitical valuation of carbon sequestrations and O₂, subventions for impro-

vement of the environment, payments from polluters of particular areas, subsidies for securing drinking water, payments from water processing and treating companies.

2. Has the participatory research approach successfully worked out?

The participatory research method has been still relatively new to our research team. Thus, in order to manage the workshops as smoothly and professionally as possible, a test workshop was held with professionals from our university. Through this experience we learned the following lessons: to shorten the introductory part, clearly state methodology and goal of the backcasting workshop, and very simply explain future scenarios. We also became aware of the important role of the moderator in managing the workshop and keeping discussions alive. As a result, our research group was well-prepared to support a moderator in order to enable successful workshop procedure (by using flip charts and interactive white-

boards, for example). Despite our relatively limited experience with organising such types of participatory workshops, both workshops were evaluated as successful based on the good response and feedback from the participants. Quite surprisingly for us, we received a great deal of attention from forest actors using the scenario approach. Especially in the case of Kysuce, participants were particularly involved in this issue and worked together on collecting (policy) instruments for the better future for their region.

In summary, we can say that we could establish close cooperation between researchers and practitioners. All participants (including our research team) have highly appreciated the direct contact with various stakeholders and the platform for exchanging ideas which the participatory workshops have offered us all.

*Yvonne Brodrechtova, Rudolf Navratil
(Technical University in Zvolen)*



INTEGRAL PARTNERS IN FOCUS: THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN/ FORESTRY RESEARCH GROUP

The University College Dublin (UCD) is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities where undergraduate education, postgraduate master's and PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement altogether form a dynamic continuum of activity. Within the University College Dublin the Forestry Research Group takes part in the project. The research group focuses on developing solutions to problems tied with changes in the economic, environmental and social context in which forestry operates. The main research activities are forest management, decision support systems and policy development. The INTEGRAL project team consists of five people, two working on the second work package: Prof. Maarten Nieuwenhuis and Edwin Corrigan; and three in the third work package: Dr. Aine Ni Dhubhain, Nana Bonsu and Charles Harper. UCD is involved in two case studies. One of them, the Western Peatland area, was chosen as a case study as it represents a site type, namely peatlands that were afforested between the 1950s and 1970s with the objectives of employment generation and timber production. At the time the environmental value of peatland was not appreciated in the way it is today. Many of these forests are now considered to be "in the wrong place" or managed with the wrong systems, given the change of emphasis to landscape, biodiversity, conservation, water quality and carbon sequestration. Furthermore, the productivity of the forests is typically low requiring high levels of fertiliser input and drainage to even reach the relatively low productivity levels. It can clearly be said that there is a need to identify new approaches to managing these peatland forests. We asked the research team about the experiences with the case study research in INTEGRAL.

1. How could the research activities in INTEGRAL contribute to respond to the environmental challenges with regard to the peatland forests?

The research activities in INTEGRAL made it possible to identify how different approaches to management, both of the forests and of the wider landscape, influence the ecosystem services that the Western Peatland forested landscape generates. It further identified what policy measures would be required to bring about these changes to management. Stakeholders involved in the research became aware of the combinations of ecosystem services produced by different management

approaches and by the conflicts and synergies between ecosystem services.

2. Is it useful to conduct the case study research within an international and transdisciplinary collaboration project?

The benefit of conducting the research within an international and transdisciplinary environment was that it allowed the Irish researchers to learn from colleagues in other countries and to become familiar with new research methods. It also added weight to the project and allowed us to attract a wider range of stakeholders than if it had been a national project. The trans-

disciplinary approach required communication between researchers from different backgrounds, resulting in a project that produced better results than if it had been carried out within separate disciplinary teams.

3. How well has the participatory research approach worked in your case?

Although it was difficult to attract a wide range of stakeholders to the participatory workshops, those that did attend made robust and lively contributions that allowed plausible

scenarios for the future development of the forested landscapes to be produced. The structure of the workshops provided the opportunity for stakeholders to hear and appreciate other stakeholders' views regarding the development of forestry and the landscape. Their identification of an agreed vision of what level of ecosystem services the landscape should deliver in the future, and the required policies and regulations to arrive at the desired outcome, was also a reflection of the success of the process.



The UCD team: Charles Harper, Prof. Maarten Nieuwenhuis, Dr. Aine Ni Dhubhain, Nana Bonsu and Edwin Corrigan

PROJECT RELATED NEWS AND EVENTS:

New section on the INTEGRAL Website: "OPINIONS FROM THE NGO PERSPECTIVE"

The INTEGRAL project consortium can benefit from the experience and expert opinion of the European interest group organisations EUSTAFOR and CEPF (European State Forest Association and the Confederation of European Forest Owners) and the environmental NGO FERN (Stichting FERN). All three organisations operate across Europe and contribute to the project implementation by reflecting the opinion of different players such as private and state forest owners as well as environmental groups. This is valuable feedback which the researchers take into account in the (policy) conclusions of their scientific work.

In the new section "[Opinions from the NGO Perspective](#)" on the project website we would like to give these organisations an opportunity to publish their positions on ongoing issues in Brussels which may affect European forest-related policies. These statements are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the INTEGRAL consortium.

FERN's assessment of possible changes in forest-related policies as a consequence of the newly formed European Commission is now available online. Further articles from CEPF and EUSTAFOR will be available soon.

Follow the updates on the INTEGRAL website! (www.integral-project.eu)

CEPF Members Day 10 December 2014, Academie Royale de Belgique (Brussels): "Who is steering the EU forest policy and where are we moving?" High-level speakers from various EU institutions, governments and stakeholders will meet with forest owners' representatives from more than 20 national forest owners' organisations at this event, to discuss the development, challenges and opportunities of the current and future EU forest policy. For further information please visit: www.ceph-eu.org/artikkel.cfm?ld_art=511



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PUBLICATION, EDITORIAL AND DESIGN:

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Layout: Inga Zhirkóva
Photo Credit: Jödis Winkler, Charlotta Gard, Tara Walsh, Technical University in Zvolen

INTEGRAL KEY FACTS

Project acronym: INTEGRAL

Project full title: Future-oriented integrated management of European forest landscapes

Project duration: 01.11.2011 – 31.10.2015

Funding scheme: EU FP7 Seventh Framework Programme

Project Partners: 21 partners from 13 countries - Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, University of Freiburg, University of Padua, Wageningen University, University of Forestry Sofia, Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, University of Oxford, The Technical University of Lisbon, University of Molise, Joint Research Centre, Technical University Zvolen, Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Technische Universität München, Fraunhofer MOEZ, EFIATLANTIC, IRSTEA, University College Dublin, The Catholic University of Portugal, CEPF, FERN, EUSTAFOR



This project has received funding from the European Union's
Seventh Programme for research, technological development
and demonstration under grant agreement No 282887