



**Advisory methodology and system possibilities to educate
forest owners, professionals & consultants**

GUIDE BOOK



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

PREFACE

This document was created as a result of a Grundtvig Lifelong Learning adult education project **“Advisory Methodology and System Possibilities to Educate Forest Owners, Professionals and Consultants”** (acronym AdFor). The project was conducted in participation of four partner organizations from Estonia, Finland, UK and Italy. Partners have freely involved other forestry related organizations from their respective countries, to use their experience and knowledge in the benefit of the project.

The main national objective of the project was to promote the exchange of experience, best practices and learn from other countries systems and methodologies on advising and educating forest- and land owners.

One of the most valuable outputs of the project has been the exchange of experience through project meetings in all partner countries, where participants have been introduced with each country’s forestry sector and advisory methodologies. As a result of meetings and exchanged information local conditions were drafted in this guide book, which summarizes the best practices used in each country and partner organization as a roadmap of improving adult education in forestry sector.

The situation in forestry sector in participating countries is somewhat different so it is hard to find ideal practices that suit the needs of each country. The adult education in forestry differs from other fields of activity because it might take a person’s lifetime to grow a forest. This sets the focus on the consistency of forestry related education and advisory systems. The knowledge about sustainable forest management has to be passed on by generations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Key aspects..... 4**
- Cooperation between competent organizations..... 5**
- Promotion of sustainable forest management 6**
- Growth of Forest Owner Associations 8**
 - Joint timber sale and forest management organizations..... 9
- The availability of information 10**
- Forest management plans 11**
- Good example of engaging forest owners..... 12**
 - Case Study - Engaging Landowners to manage woodlands in the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve..... 12

KEY ASPECTS

Consistent support for forest owners is provided through forest owners' organizations therefore they play an important role in educating forest owners. It is essential to support **development and growth of strong and sustainable forest owner organizations**.

Common problem in all participating countries is **small average forest area per owner**. This means, that owners have **low incentive to manage their forest**. This could also mean that the owner is not ready to pay full market price for advice. The cost of advice can be compensated through government support or if the advice leads to profitable forest management deals.

Promoting sustainable forest management provides better quality forests and larger increment. This enables forest owners to make more profitable deals in the future.

Advisory system has to be **widespread and easily accessible** for forest owners, including information materials and publications created for educating forest owners.

COOPERATION BETWEEN COMPETENT ORGANIZATIONS

Consistent training has to be provided for forestry advisors, to guarantee their up-to-date knowledge and through this best advice for forest owners. Education for advisors should be organized in co-operation with researchers and practitioners, to provide diverse knowledge. To make advice more reachable, advisors should be available nationwide, in all regions. Well spread advisory system enables to reach forest owners through individual approach – by educating forest owners on forestry related issues making them see how their forest helps to accomplish the overall benefit of a region.

Finding and using opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences internationally, to participate in different projects and through this to find opportunities and new ideas for improving local advisory systems. Sharing knowledge is also important among forest owners on local level. Good opportunity for this is joint study tours or group trainings organized in cooperation between different forest owners organisations.

Education and trainings for forestry advisors and forest owners should be organized in cooperation with research organisations and forestry practitioners. It is important to maintain close relationship with researchers, to contribute to and learn from newest innovative ideas and technologies.

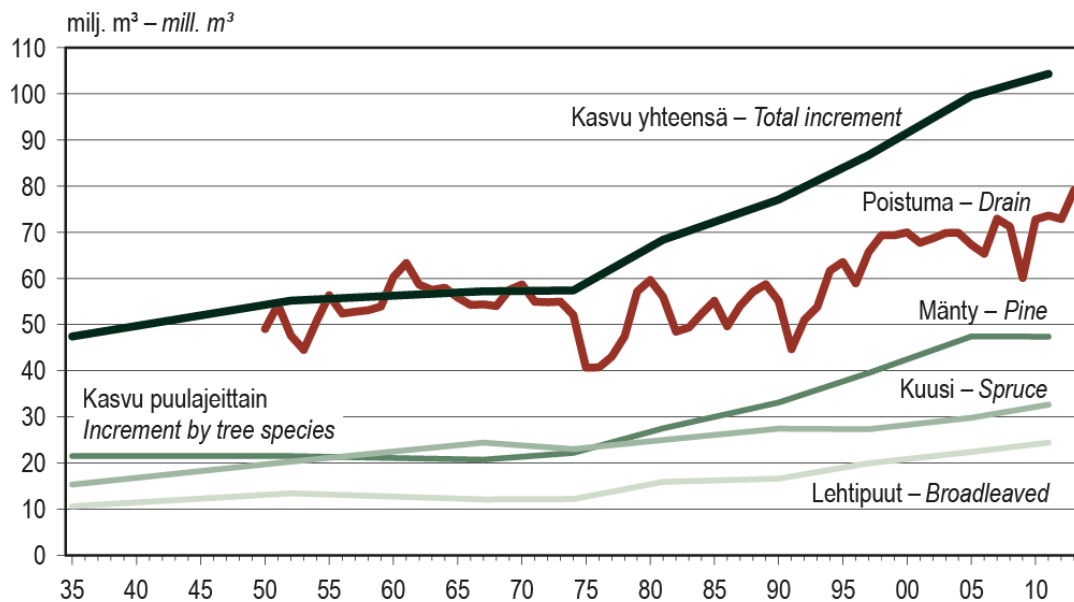
To keep forest owners interested in the fate of their forests, it is important to show the willingness to provide efficient support systems for forest owners. If government and regional regulations support private forest owners and work in the interest of sustainably managed forests, it will also be easier to engage forest owners in the cooperation with relevant organizations. One of the easiest (but most expensive) ways to enhance forest management is to offer subsidies for different forest management activities, depending on the values and goals set for forestry.

PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

One of the prerequisites of good advisory system is that there has to be an understanding of the importance of sustainable forestry in society. This creates the will to manage the forest areas in the best possible way. The will in turn creates the necessity for knowledge and education.

Promotion of sustainable forestry has to be consistent and come from cooperation with different kinds of organizations. Good example for this comes from Finland, where Finnish forest management guidelines have been prepared in collaboration with researchers and representatives of forestry organisations and NGO-s under the direction of Forestry Development Centre TAPIO. These recommendations are actively used by forest owners and forestry professionals.

The aim is for Finland's forests to be productive while at the same time ensuring their biodiversity. The guidelines aim at promoting silviculture and forest use. The annual increment of Finland's forests has risen from 58 million m³ to 104 million m³ in the space of 40 years (as shown in graph below).



Lähde: Metsäntutkimuslaitos - Source: Finnish Forest Research Institute

Puuston kasvu ja poistuma
Annual increment of growing stock and drain

Metsätilastollinen vuosikirja 2014

The guidelines promote an economically, ecologically and socially sustainable management and use of the forests:

- Economic sustainability means preserving the forests' vitality, productivity and ability to regenerate.
- Ecological sustainability means preservation of the biodiversity of the forests, mires and bodies of water, and preservation of clean water. Biodiversity in economical forests provides the basis for abundant and vigorous populations of organisms.
- Social and cultural sustainability means the fair taking account of forest-related well-being needs of society. Finland's public right of access means that everyone has access to commercial forests for recreation and for picking wild berries and mushrooms.

GROWTH OF FOREST OWNER ASSOCIATIONS

Forestry organizations play an important role in educating forest owners, they spread forestry related information, conduct group trainings for forest owners and bring local owners together, giving them a chance to exchange experiences in forest management. To support the growth of FOA-s and therefore enhance forest owners gaining knowledge and greater incentive to manage their forests, since 2015 certain forestry **subsidies** in Estonia are **provided only through forest owner associations**. Due to this, number of forest owners who have joined forest owners association has grown rapidly. This brings more private owners to the forestry related information field and therefore gives them better access to advice and education possibilities.

For advice to be most useful and profitable for forest owner, FOA-s should have capacity to provide all according services to implement given advice in practice. For example, Forest Management Associations (FMA) in Finland advise and serve forest owners in all matters related to forests, like forest management services (harvesting, regeneration, ditching etc.), training and planning services, timber sales services.

Employees of FMA-s have knowledge and experience to give advice, necessary technique to provide according services to forest owners is also available in these organizations. Similar service structure is successful in helping forest owners with advice and respective services and at the same time suitable in helping forest industry to obtain enough roundwood for their needs. In Finland 80-90% of the forest management activities in private forests and 75% of preliminary planning of timber sales are carried out by FMAs.

The key factor for forest owner associations and advisory organizations to survive is financing. This can be achieved with national and government support or other activities that produce revenue, like offering forest management services.

To contribute in development of professional, qualified and sustainable support system for forest owners, in Estonia **evaluation system for forest owner associations** has been developed and implemented. Local forest owner associations are assessed based on their volumes of different activities on previous year (e.g. volumes of forest regeneration, young forest

management, timber sales, number of forest owners served etc). Only forest owner associations who are active enough to fulfil the evaluation criteria will receive funding from Private Forest Centre.

Quality standards for services provided by forest owners associations are also currently in development process in Estonia. Option to choose advisor and partner in forest management from associations following fixed standards gives forest owners assurance in choosing best quality of advice and services. This also helps to raise general level of quality for services provided by local forest owners' organizations and makes their image more reliable. Planned quality standards include recommendations on different subjects, like technical conditions for serving forest owners, organization management and workflow, accounting, trainings for the staff, choosing partners etc.

Joint timber sale and forest management organizations

In Finland and Estonia timber sale and forest management organizations have been created by forest owners or local forest owner associations, to make better price conditions available to small-scale forest owners. These organizations help forest owners in managing their forests and in finding most profitable options for timber sales. Small-scale forest owners will gain from joint forest management and timber marketing as larger work and timber volumes guarantee better price conditions. This also gives an opportunity to cooperate with more reliable timber buyers and provides stable timber volumes for the industry.

Similar new initiative is also created in England. Ward Forester is a network of woodland owners and private foresters working with the Forestry Commission to create linkages between landowners and the forest industry. The project hopes to create a market for timber products to consolidate the relationships within the association.

THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

Project partners use different channels to make forestry information available to forest owners. More and more emphasis is placed on web-based materials, mainly web-pages where forest owner can access materials and recommendations on different forest management activities.

Video materials are used in England and in Estonia, to make some forestry subjects more interesting for forest owner and give better overview of large scale subjects. Freely accessible channel youtube.com is used to make videos available to more people. Examples of created videos can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ForestryCommission1> (Forestry Commission in England) and <https://www.youtube.com/user/eramets> (Erametsakeskus in Estonia).

Partner organizations are also developing materials and case studies and issuing publications about different forest management processes, like reforestation, harvesting, forest amelioration, taxes, forest owners' rights and obligations, wood-energy, managing woodlands etc. These publications are available free of charge and are distributed in different events and with the help of forest owner organizations. All publications are available and freely accessible in relevant organizations web-pages where forest owner can also find information about forestry subsidies, forest owner associations, forest management, events and other relevant topics.

Forestry related magazines are issued to bring forests and related subjects closer to people. In Estonia study-magazine "Sinu Mets" (Your Forest in Estonian) is issued 4 times a year, it introduces forest management issues, support system for private forest owners, hunting, environment and other relevant topics and is distributed to forest owners and other interested parties free of charge. It is valued among forest owner as one of the best sources for private forestry news. In Italy there are several magazines related to agriculture and forestry, most of them have a local or regional circulation and are published in areas where woods and forests are common. For example in Trentino Alto Adige (Northern Italy) bimonthly magazine "Sherwoods" deals with popularization, innovation and management of forests.

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

In all partner countries creating forest management plans is supported. It is considered to be one of the most efficient tools to guarantee best management for forests. With information provided in management plan, owners will have a good overview of their forests condition and a starting point for future forest managing.

Management plans are compiled to give forest owners recommendations in managing their forests. Forest management plans provide forest-owners with useful information, they describe the present state and value of each area of forest, as well as targets for forests' future productivity and utilisation, and projected incomes. Forest management plan includes forest inventory data, theme cards and conclusion of state of the forest and management activities needed. Among other things, management plan gives answers to questions like: How much and which forest do I have? How and when manage different parts of my forest? Which trees to cut? Which should be my forest after felling? Shall I plant new trees or let the nature do its job?

In addition to goals related to timber production, forestry plans also include objectives related to other uses of forests and the preservation of their valuable ecological features and landscapes. In some cases forest-owners can themselves help to shape these plans and the targets they contain. Plans for individual forest holdings are typically drawn up for periods of 10 years by local forestry associations, regional forestry centres, forestry service providers or forest industry companies.

Creating forest management plans helps forest owners to plan their activities and therefore contribute to sustainable forest management. Long term forest management plans help to manage forests throughout generations, especially when owners have also found a reliable partner in local forest owner association or other organization, who can advise owner in all states of managing their forests.

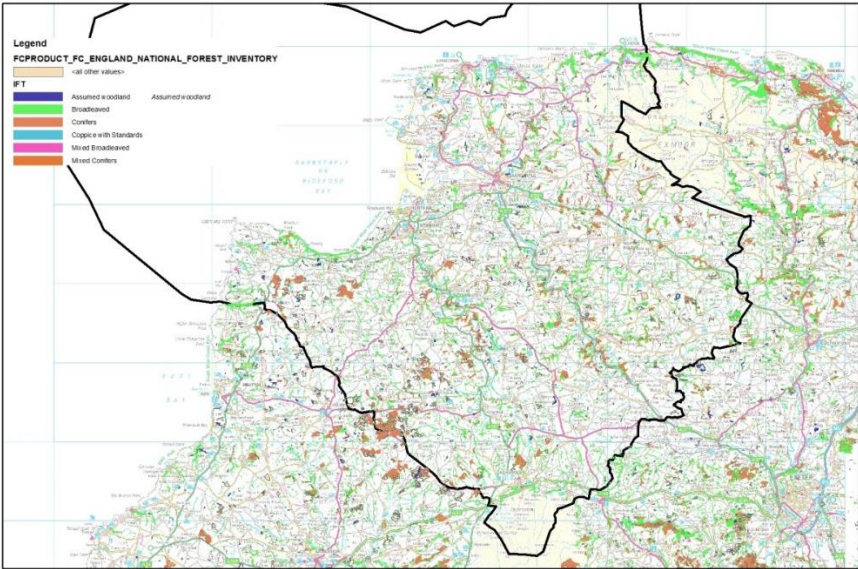
GOOD EXAMPLE OF ENGAGING FOREST OWNERS

Case Study - Engaging Landowners to manage woodlands in the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in North Devon was established in 2002. The purpose of Biosphere Reserve is to be world class examples of sustainable development on a regional scale. The Reserve in North Devon includes all of the catchments that drain to the north Devon coast. This is a terrestrial area of over 2600 sq Km.

The woodlands of the North Devon Biosphere Reserve are extremely important asset to the area. Woodland accounts for 11.4% (26,400 Ha) of the terrestrial part of the Biosphere Reserve. Approximately 76% of the wooded area is under deciduous woodland.

On a production economy the woodlands collectively are worth £16M and 490 jobs which is much lower than below the potential production. In terms of known ecosystem services the potential value is in the order of £58.5M (the timber component is based on standing values). A qualitative assessment of the condition and functionality of the woodlands by stakeholders in the Biosphere Reserve partnership suggests that the woodlands are under-performing and these values are not being reached.



In 2009 a study was carried out which explored the various scenarios of climate change and possible land-use change likely under various policy options. It concluded that in order to not increase flood risk to settlements at the bottom of the catchments, the area of land under woodland should be doubled, and the area of permanent grassland should also be doubled.

These have been adopted as long-term policy aims for the Biosphere Reserve.

With that target in mind, the landscape scale projects that are delivered through the Biosphere Reserve are designed to support more woodland creation. Furthermore, the need has been identified to bring many of the woodlands out of neglect and into sustainable management for the benefit of both biodiversity and economic outcomes.

Within the Biosphere Reserve there have been 2 projects; the Nature Improvement Area and the Taw River Improvement Project. Both of these projects required the achievement of woodland management and planting targets. Landowners were engaged in the following ways:



Mailshot to landowners followed up by offer of one to one advice; using the UK Government database on landowners and holdings, it was possible to identify the most likely owners of woodlands that were not in management supported by a selection process using GIS. The landowners were encouraged to contact the advisory service provided by the TRIP and NIA project. The response from these mail outs was higher than is normally expected from cold call

mailing. The reply rate was in the order of 17%.

The work culminated in 168 advisory visits on woodland to 112 holdings.

Targeted Workshops: The NIA ran 16 specific workshops for the landowners, advertised through website and social media as well as direct emailing. The workshops covered subjects such as, general woodland management, woodland pest management, harvesting, and wood-fuel. Feedback from the NIA landowners was that they valued having an advisor that they could call at any time. In the TRIP area the similar mailshot system was used, with one to one visits. Landowners came together (approximately 35) in a “wood meet” on 2 occasions for peer to peer learning on woodland management.



