



FORESTERRA Networking Workshop:

“Towards building a multi-level transnational network in Mediterranean forestry research”

The FORESTERRA Networking workshop took place in Marseille, France, on 12-13 December 2013. More than 80 participants attended the event and a total of 37 research organizations of 13 countries were represented (Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey).

The workshop was organized in order to foster the clustering of existing national forest research organizations in order to improve future coordination and maximize research impacts in the Mediterranean basin. This includes the following specific objectives:

- Reinforce the networking activities among forest research institutions, units and laboratories;
- Promote the mutual opening of national forest research infrastructures and information (experimental sites, facilities, databases);
- Encourage the development of transnational joint research units.

The meeting was opened by David González from MINECO (Spain) as FORESTERRA Coordinator. Mr. Rhouma from IRESA (Tunisia) and Mr. Bariteau from INRA (France), as coorganizers' institutes of the event, gave the welcome to participants.

During the first session, the current progress and future expectations of FORESTERRA were presented to participants. David González introduced the ERA-Net FORESTERRA, its scientific plan, the first transnational call of FORESTERRA, the on-going work and future expectations of FORESTERRA. Giuseppe Scarascia presented the results from the mapping of the existing forest research capacities and priorities in the Mediterranean basin.

During Session 2, directors of forest research institutes were invited to make a brief presentation to introduce their institution and current research activity in the forest field. There were a total of 26 presentations that allowed participants to find out about the research developed in other institutes and countries.

Session 3 was dedicated to explore the creation of networks based on the four strategic themes of FORESTERRA: global change, biodiversity, multipurpose forest landscapes and forest water-related services. Hamed Daly-Hassen introduced the process developed by FORESTERRA to approve the scientific plan and the strategic research themes. After an open debate with the audience about the possibilities of networking in these four themes, a Networking form to explore the creation of networks was distributed to participants (also downloadable at <http://foresterra.eu/marseille2013/index.html>).



Session 4 about Transnational Joint Research Units (TJRU) was divided in an introductory keynote speech by Andrée Sontot (Deputy to the Head of International Affairs of INRA) who launched a series of reflections about the constitution of TJRU; and followed by an open debate with the audience about the opportunities and blocking points that this type of entity may have.

During session 5, a scientific cooperation debate between forest research institutes and FORESTERRA partners chaired by Inazio Martinez (EFIMED, Head of Office) took place in order to discuss about how to strengthen the FORESTERRA network in the future. Participants identified the drivers for their participation to this networking workshop; besides, through a group dynamic, a SWOT table was completed by participants who identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for forest research in Mediterranean basin countries.

Session 6 explored the opportunities for mutual opening of experimental sites, forest research facilities and sharing data.

Firstly, there were a set of keynote presentations to introduce the main points of the subject to be discussed. Yohan Lecuona (European Project Manager, INRA Transfert) presented the Transnational Access programme of the project *Trees4Future* which offers external users free access to 28 specialized research structures and facilities. Eric Garnier (Director of the Center for Synthesis and Analysis of Biodiversity, France) talked about the challenges and opportunities of data sharing for scientific synthesis in ecology. Ilja Reiter (manager of O3HP experimental site) presented the forest observatory (O3HP) as example of a common database for field sites dedicated to experimental studies on climate change in Southern France. An open debate with the audience followed each of the keynote speeches.

Secondly, Jean Charles Valette (WP4 leader of FORESTERRA) gave an overview of the work developed in the context of FORESTERRA for identifying concrete forest research infrastructures of common strategic interest in Mediterranean region and promoting mutual opening of national research infrastructures and information. Up to that date, INRA had received more than 90 cards describing experimental sites, research facilities and databases from 13 Mediterranean forest research institutes of 8 different countries. This information will be soon available in the FORESTERRA webpage.

FORESTERRA thanks all contributions already made and wants to encourage further participation through: <http://foresterra.eu/marseille2013/sesion4forms.html>

For more information about the FORESTERRA Networking workshop, please visit:

<http://foresterra.eu/marseille2013/index.html>



FORESTERRA

Enhancing Forest RESearch in the MediTERRanean through improved coordination and integration

