



WOODISM INFO

Information about the European Research in the wood industry – Number 1, 2005

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1. Forest-Based Industries and European Research

The forest-based and related industries (F-BI) are among the most important sectors in the European Union, representing approx. 10% of the EU's manufacturing industries. Present in all EU Member States and in peripheral regions this sector is characterized by a high majority of SMEs and offers direct employment to about 3 million people. Its activity is based on raw material resources that are renewable and on efficient recycling. It's a sector with excellent perspectives for sustainable development.

Like other sectors the F-BI faces significant challenges. Research and development activities are necessary to develop new products, processes and organization models to face the economical and societal evolution. European RTD activities offer real

chances in this matter. However SMEs concentrate first on their core business and aren't often aware of the opportunities offered by European Research programmes. Thus 17 partners coming from 12 countries, with a strong commitment to the F-BI sector, have joined forces in the **WOODISM project to raise awareness and facilitate the participation of SMEs in the European RTD activities** (read more on page 2). Woodism is looking for partnerships and synergies with institutions, networks and projects also willing to increase the competitiveness of the F-BI sector through a more effective and systematic implementation of knowledge into products and services. The experience from the 5th Framework Programme shows that a large number of **RTD projects had an important impact on F-BI** (read more on page 3). The F-BI has to continue in this direction. In order to better prepare the sector for its future challenges the major stakeholders are currently preparing a **strategic research agenda within the Frame of the Technology platform F-BI** (read more on page 4).

Cédric Höllmüller, Wood engineer and Swiss National Contact Point for SME participation in research activities under FP6

2. Presentation of the WOODISM Project

The SMEs of the decentralized and small structured Forest based industries (F-BI) have insufficient resources to follow and grab the opportunities offered by European research activities. "Translators" and "stimulators" are needed to tap the full potential, like the partners of the WOODISM project. The main objective of this project is to stimulate, encourage and facilitate the participation of SMEs of the F-BI in the European RTD activities, with a particular focus on the New Instruments of FP6.

WOODISM focuses on the whole sector of wood and wood industry, as these consist of interrelated sectors, each of them having a considerable influence on the performance of the others. A profound knowledge of the nature of these interdependencies and the ability to translate them into clear analyses of the consequences, at industrial, cluster and societal level constitutes the reason of the big number of partners. Thanks to the 12 partner countries the dissemination and cooperation in IP and NoE at national and European level can be guaranteed and improved.

The project intends to support exchange and assimilation of innovative technologies in the SMEs in wood-based business by providing an integrated set of complex services:

- Technology Audits to identify innovative technical solutions and approaches in the wood domain,
- Training of SMEs for their participation in Integrated Projects (IPs) and Networks of Excellence (NoEs),
- Partner Search to cluster the suitable SMEs to SME groupings,
- Following of ongoing FP projects and initiatives,
- Matching FP projects / initiatives with SMEs,
- Creating awareness in the research community
- Improvement of the Relationship between SMEs and Researchers, and
- Market Evolution Alert to enhance competitive positioning generated by research.

In a more general way, the proposed project will also contribute to a more innovation friendly environment throughout the EU as well as to stimulate technological innovation. By gathering, analysing and disseminating information on Science & Technology developments, needs, applications and markets, the project will build a bridge between the F-BI and other sectors (and vice versa). This will stimulate the economic and technological intelligence, encourage innovation transfer between different industrial and handicraft sectors and increase the competitiveness of SMEs in the forestry/wood chain. Finally, WOODISM will contribute to increase the use of wood in housing and industry, an important contribution to tackle climate change, as it's specifically recognised in the EU's 6th Environment Action Programme.

For further information visit the WOODISM website <http://www.tts.fi/woodism/> and contact your nearest WOODISM partner.

3. The impact of EU research (1998 – 2004) on the Forestry Wood Chain

Thanks to European Union funding under the Fifth Framework Programme's Quality-of-Life Key Action 5 on Sustainable Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, pioneering research spanning the entire forestry-wood chain from forest genetics, forest management, conservation, wood quality and timber processing, to pulp and paper production, is now coming into its own.

No fewer than 63 forestry and wood chain research projects are being funded by the EU using € 80 million on 'Multifunctional management of forests' and 'Strategies for the sustainable and multipurpose utilisation of forest resources; the forestry-wood chain'. More than 500 researchers are working to sharpen the forestry-wood chain's competitive edge, improving the sustainable production and rational use of Europe's oldest natural resource, as well as developing new technologies and multi-disciplinary, integrated approaches.

Their efforts could provide valuable input for the revised European Forestry Strategy and for current and future environmental, agricultural, rural development and industrial strategies. And important lessons are being learnt for future research, not just for integrating the new Member States into the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) projects, but also for planning recommendations and guidelines for FP7.

Most of these projects have already finished and some are in their final stages. A workshop was organized in 2004 with successful project promoters and stakeholders from the Forestry-Wood sector from across the EU. One message that emerged loud and clear from the workshop is the need for a stronger European vision and effort in research and development through diverse means such as a solid platform for disseminating the results and putting them to work on the ground to help the industry meet the challenges of the 21st century. Beyond mere networking, many experts believe a technology platform linked to a broader strategy is what the industry really needs.

The conclusions and recommendations are presented in the document "The Forestry Wood Chain – impact of EU research (1998-2004)". This document is available on :

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/agriculture/pdf/forestry_wood_chain_eu_rtd_impact_1998-2004.pdf

cf. The Forestry Wood Chain: The impact of EU Research (1998 – 2004); European Communities 2004



4. Technology Platform of the European Forest-Based Sector (FTP)

A joint project of the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois), the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) and the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) is set up to establish a Technology Platform for the forest-based sector. This is an industry driven joint project and it aims at establishing and implementing the sector's R&D roadmap for the future and is supported by a wide range of different stakeholders to support the sector's strategy.

In order to boost R&D, the European Commission has created a tool called Technology Platform (TP). This is a private public partnership aimed at developing sectoral R&D programs in a more rapid and effective way in order to provide benefits to the European citizens, to create competitiveness for European companies and to ensure that EU R&D investments deliver higher value.

In essence, a TP is a mechanism to bring together all interested stakeholders to develop a long-term vision to address specific challenges, create a coherent, dynamic strategy to achieve that vision and steer the implementation of an action plan to deliver agreed programmes of activities and optimise the benefits for all parties.

In achieving its wider goals, a TP should, in a medium to long term perspective, generate sustainable competitiveness and world leadership for the EU in the field concerned, by stimulating increased and more effective investment in R&D, accelerating innovation and eliminating the barriers to the growth and implementation of new technologies.

At present the elaboration of a Strategic Research Agenda for the specific value chains of the Forest Based Technology Platform takes place. An open call has been published on the official homepage: www.forestplatform.org asking for input to the strategic research agenda process. The deadline for the input to the value chain secretariats is the 15th of June 2005.

For further information and guidance how to deliver your input, please visit:

www.forestplatform.org

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