.

Forestry and Wood Update

October 2008 Volume 8 Number 10

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COFORD’s activities are funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan, 2000-2006.

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# COFORD Research Programme

# Call for proposals

COFORD invites suitably qualified individuals and organisations to submit proposals for research and development projects and /or programmes in the thematic areas of:

* Forest Energy
* Silviculture

Application documentation (including scoping papers) is available from the COFORD office or can be downloaded from [www.coford](http://www.coford). The closing date for receipt of the proposals is Friday 7 November 2008 at 5:00 pm.

For queries and further information please contact: Alistair Pfeifer, Research Programme Manager, COFORD, Arena House, Arena Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18. Phone 01 2130725, email: alistair.pfeifer@coford.ie

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# COFORD R&D programme project update

*Each issue of the newsletter carries a short article on new and ongoing COFORD-funded projects. Feedback on the articles is welcome and should be addressed to the project leaders (contact details at the end of the article).*

## CARBiFOR – Forest Ecosystem Processes

As part of the COFORD-funded CARBiFOR II project, the impact of stand age on the exchange of greenhouse gases with the atmosphere is being investigated. The gases of interest are carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O), due to the important role they play in global warming. Eddy covariance (EC) techniques are being utilised to measure the exchange of CO2, water vapour and energy between both forest and non-forest vegetation and the atmosphere. Exchanges are summed over a period of time to arrive at the net uptake of carbon dioxide by forests.

A mobile eddy covariance tower has been designed and built for the project. It is taking measurements over a range of different canopy heights, ranging from 2-25 m, and is the first of its kind to be used in such studies. Trace gas measurements of CH4 and N2O efflux are being made on the same chronosequence (a time-series of stands starting with a grassland, representing the development of a forest) as the EC measurements. The graduate student working on this part of the project is collaborating with the University of Helsinki.

Simultaneous to the EC measurements, surveys have been carried out on plots in the same stands, recording tree diameter, height, tree crown depth and other variables. These data will be used to model biomass development over time, both above- and below-ground, and according to species. This will enable the project to quantify the gas flux measurements in terms of traditional forest assortments (e.g*.* timber volume, total biomass etc*.*), as well as verifying the EC estimates of forest productivity.

Soil sampling is also being undertaken throughout the chronosequence in order to quantify changes in soil carbon stocks. With this suite of measurements, the project should establish a better understanding of the impact of afforestation on the carbon status of a particular site type, and of how forest management can affect this status.

A further aspect of the forest ecosystem carbon budget being examined is the breakdown of timber and non-timber woody material left in the forest, and its significance within the forest carbon cycle. Harvest residue varies from branches and lop-and-top, to parts of stems and stumps. A further component, often forgotten, is the below-ground root system, which the previous phase of the CARBiFOR project established accounts for about 20% of the total biomass of Sitka spruce trees. Samples are currently being taken from across this diverse range of material to establish its speed of decomposition and, hence, residence time. Such information has implications for the biodiversity and nutritional health of the forest – particularly important information in the present climate when much of the available forest material is being considered for biomass provision for the energy market. Apart from establishing the extent of the carbon store, and the period it is locked away for, such information should provide a guide as to the implications of a wide scale removal of such a store.

*For more information, contact Brian Tobin (**brian.tobin@ucd.ie**).*

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# Information and support services

# CARBON CORNER

## Agriculture, forestry and national climate change policy

The draft Climate and Energy Package from the European Commission, currently being debated by the EU Environment Council and the Parliament, sets a target for Ireland to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions levels by 20% by 2020. Reductions will be required across all sectors, but large installations, currently part of the national envelope and involved in the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), will be moved to an EU-wide scheme, post-2012. This new arrangement will still leave Ireland with a target to reduce the 47.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted in 2005, to 37.9 million tonnes by 2020, or an annual reduction target of 9.5 million tonnes. The sectors with the highest levels of emissions are agriculture and transport. Emission reductions are difficult to achieve in agriculture without resorting to the obvious ones – reducing animal numbers or taking land out of production. Neither seem realistic options at present – in fact, the new 2008-2012 Suckler Welfare Scheme has resulted in a larger national herd, and commodity prices have increased rapidly in recent years, expanding production levels. It is ironic that as agriculture moves back to a sounder economic footing and seeks to increase its competiveness, it finds a climate change hurdle in its path.

Ways to overcome the hurdle are available, but at a price. At the outset, some lessening of the burden may be possible in the final shape of an agreed Climate and Energy Package. Whatever the outcome, getting to targets will remain very difficult for agriculture, especially without forestry sequestration being taken into account.

**Carbon Corner** has previously advocated the need to better reflect climate change policy with the government REPS scheme, to get more forests planted and thereby generate a national offset to agriculture and other emissions. Indeed, for the first commitment period of Kyoto to the end of 2012, forestry will contribute 11 million tonnes of carbon dioxide to national compliance with emission reduction targets. Post-2012 the contribution will double, to over 4 million tonnes by 2020. If the full level comes into the package currently under negotiation, then almost half of the compliance load of 9.5 million tonnes could come from the forestry sector. While the actual contribution is predicated on the final shape of the Climate and Energy Package, and the outcome of the international negotiations due to conclude in Copenhagen at the end of 2009, it is more than likely that forest sinks will be a key element in arriving at national compliance with greenhouse gas emission targets up to 2020, and indeed beyond.

National policies and investment should therefore reflect the reality that forestry will provide the single most effective way of bringing the overall agriculture sector into line with emission targets.

Innovative thinking and approaches to link afforestation to agriculture greenhouse gas compliance needs are therefore required. But the answers should not be too hard to find. Forestry and agriculture are land-based activities; linkages could be found at processor or farm level, depending on how emission targets are allocated and monitored. Other potential emission reduction measures in the agriculture sector, such as changes in animal husbandry and waste management, can also be closely linked to locally available supplies of wood chip and fuel. In terms of research and development, why not investigate how to achieve the carbon neutral farm – or group of farms – using a combination of land uses and farming practices?

Many economists predict that for Irish farming to develop in the face of increasing competition, scale will have to increase – this may mean less farms, more animals or both. At the same time onerous emission reduction targets post-2012 mean that agriculture, in common with other sectors, will have to contribute to national targets. Squaring this circle will not be easy, but a start could be made by piloting some of the ideas described here – or other innovative ways to expand production and contract emissions. To do nothing is not an answer, the need to address climate change is not going away, and early action brings its own rewards through innovation and lower costs in the medium to long term. Farming has shown itself to be highly flexible in the past – in a new partnership with forestry it can be so in future.

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# Wood energy: fuelling your future

The ***Wood Energy: Fuelling your future*** conference and demonstration on the potential of Wood Energy attracted over 200 delegates to the Westport Woods Hotel in Co Mayo on 10 September 2008. Organised by COFORD, Teagasc and Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) the event highlighted the potential of wood fuel from local forests to supply local energy needs and provided a one-stop shop on wood energy with presentations, information, trade exhibits, working boilers and forestry demonstrations.

The programme included a field trip to a forest near Aughagower, where delegates were led by experts from COFORD and Teagasc through demonstrations of chipping, round and firewood production, and a discussion on wood fuel quality standards.

Presentations will be available to download from the COFORD website shortly.

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# 7th Framework Programme update

The regular supplement supplied by InnovaWood ([click here to download)](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/iws-October08.pdf) contains information about:

*Events, conferences and courses:*

* Events in brief
* FP7 Environment and Energy National Information Day

*European research opportunities:*

* Calls for proposals

*InnovaWood information service:*

* InnovaWood projects
* Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform: the first years
* Management of recovered wood: proceedings of the 3rd European COST E31 conference

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# National & international news

# Eco-friendly wood products:

## International experiences in forest certification and the making of a green label

A free public lecture by Yale scholar, Dr Connie McDermott, will take place in Galway at the Menlo Park Hotel on 8 October 2008 at 8 p.m. and in Dublin at the Cultivate centre on 15 October 2008, also at 8 p.m. Dr Connie McDermott, of the Yale Program on Forest Policy and Governance, is visiting Ireland to learn about the multiple perspectives and complexities of the certification process as it is unfolding here, and to offer an international perspective on the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification and stakeholder processes. Dr McDermott will be speaking from her experience in analysing forest policy, forest certification, and public involvement.

FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation established to promote the responsible management of the world’s forests. FSC provides standard setting, trademark assurance and accreditation services for companies and organizations interested in responsible forestry. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations. Look for the tree-and-checkmark trademark logo to help ensure that you are buying responsibly harvested forest products.

FSC Ireland is developing a national Irish standard for responsible forest management. Interested people can make contributions to the standard by commenting on drafts and joining the Consultative Forum. For more information, please e-mail FSC Ireland at ifci@irishforestcertification.com or Sasha Bosbeer at sasha.bosbeer@gmit.ie or visit [www.irishforestcertification.com](http://www.irishforestcertification.com) and [www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org).

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# Wicklow Forestry Forum

The Wicklow Uplands Council is organising the first meeting of the Wicklow Forest Forum in the Glendalough Hotel on Wednesday 1 October 2008. This Forum is part of a project “***Meeting the Needs of the Forest Owner***” and is funded by the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and supported by Teagasc.

It is envisaged that the Forum will:

* Promote linkages between woodland owners and relevant statutory and non-statutory stakeholders,
* Establish information exchanges on relevant issues,
* Develop short and long-term partnerships as appropriate that bring maximum economic, social and environmental benefits to the forestry sector, and
* Provide a structure to woodland owners in Co Wicklow and adjoining border county areas to enable them to manage their woodlands to best silvicultural and environmental standards.

For further information contact Michael Doyle, Project Manager, Wicklow Uplands Council at 086-2527294.

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# Tree Council announces Tree Day

Thursday 9 October 2008 has been designated Tree Day (La na gCrann) by the Tree Council of Ireland. According to Helena McGorman, President of the Council, this is the twelfth year that Tree Day, our primary school initiative on trees has been run. This year the theme is the ‘Year of the Alder’, as this is one of our important native broadleaved species. The aim of Tree Day is to create a learning experience that will enthuse and enlighten all children by making them aware of the magic, beauty and importance of trees. The event is supported by the Department of Education and Science.

For further details contact the Tree Council of Ireland at 01-4931313 or [www.treecouncil.ie](http://www.treecouncil.ie)

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# Presentation on Western Red Cedar

The Canadian Embassy Dublin, in association with Western Red Cedar Export Association of British Columbia, are pleased to invite you to a presentation on Monday, 13 October 2008 from 3-5 pm in the Canadian Embassy, 7/8 Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2. Explore the possibilities and benefits of using one of the most durable, attractive and unique timber species available. Learn about specialised coatings and treatments which complement the use of Western Red Cedar in exterior and interior applications. Professionals who recognize all the advantages that wood has to offer and who regularly work with timber products will find this seminar interesting and informative.

To reserve a place tel: 01-234 4036 or email: Julian.Gay-de-Montella@international.gc.ca. For further information contact Gerry Mongey, Trade Commissioner, tel: 01-234 4017, email: gerry.mongey@international.gc.ca.

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# Mitigating climate change - The challenges and opportunities for forestry in Ireland

This conference takes place on 5 November 2008 at the Silver Springs Hotel, Cork. The cost is €85 (including lunch).

The Irish Natural Forestry Foundation (INFF) is hosting this conference in order to stimulate debate and cooperation between all sectors involved in forestry, farming and water management. The conference will help develop the informed policies and practices necessary to address the challenges of climate change and will therefore be of relevance to those involved in both policy making and land management where forestry is or has the potential to be incorporated. This one day event will include speakers from Ireland and abroad and will be an opportunity to showcase the lessons learned from the INFF Demonstration and Education Centre on the Manch Estate in West Cork.

The programme will be chaired by Dennis Byrne, Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and includes the following presentations:

* Dr Georgios Xenakis, Ecology Division, Northern Research Station Roslin: *Adapting Scotland's forests to a future climate.*
* Dr Douglas MacMillan, Reader in Conservation and Applied Resource Economics: *Valuing the non-timber benefits of forests.*
* Alistair. R. McCracken, Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Belfast: *Using Salix spp. genotypes as a disease control strategy in Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) willow plantations.*
* Dr Jim McAdam, Agroforestry Applied Plant Science Division, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute and Queen's University Belfast: *The potential and opportunities for agroforestry Systems in Ireland.*
* Rod Leslie, Acting Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise England (retired) and Head of Policy for the whole of FC England (retired): *Policy decisions for good forest management.*
* Markus Muller, North Western Regional Fisheries Board: *Ecological effects of forestry practices in spate river catchments of NW Ireland.*

For more information and booking please contact the INFF: www.inff.ie; e-mail: enquiries@inff.ie; tel: 023 – 22823.

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# IREC08 - Global challenges: Community solutions

The International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition will take place on 29 and 30 October 2008 at the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, Co Down. IREC08 will showcase the latest technological developments in the renewable energy sector, with particular focus on business opportunities in Northern Ireland for developing renewable energy infrastructure and applications on a local community scale. International and local speakers will discuss topics such as small scale renewables; the food vs fuel debate; global renewable energy controversies; community based renewable energy solutions; and Northern Ireland’s position in achieving renewable energy targets. View the conference programme at [www.irec08.com](http://www.irec08.com).

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# 2016 Countdown to zero: Wood futures conference

This conference will take place at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on 6 November 2008. The UK government says that from 2016 all new homes must be ‘zero carbon’ – and all commercial building three years later. But what does this mean for the construction industry and its suppliers? And is the goal achievable? At this year's Wood Futures conference on November 6, 2008, speakers will tackle the following questions and more from a timber trade perspective:

* What is zero carbon building?
* What products will it demand from the timber and wood products sector?
* How will the zero carbon culture impact on existing buildings and the RMI market?
* What demands will be placed on suppliers’ own environmental performance?
* What does zero carbon construction mean for the supply chain’s carbon footprint?

For more information, contact John Andrews on: + 44 (0) 208 269 7769, email jandrews@ttjonline.com, [www.ttjonline.com/countdowntozero](http://www.ttjonline.com/countdowntozero)

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# Groundbreaking Ghana-EU

## ‘Trade and Aid’ deal on forests guarantees legal timber exports to European market

The European Union and the Government of Ghana have announced a groundbreaking trade agreement that would stop imports of illegal timber into Europe from Ghana and offer European consumers a credible guarantee that Ghanaian timber products have been obtained in a manner that protects Ghana’s remaining forests and benefits local forest communities.

Illegal logging has been responsible for rampant deforestation in the West African nation, and estimates gathered by the World Bank suggest that around 60 percent of logging has been illegal in recent years. Globally, the World Bank has estimated that illegal logging and uncollected timber taxes cause losses in assets and revenue in excess of US$15 billion annually, more than six times the total official development assistance to the sustainable management of forests.

The deal is the first of a series of legally-binding bilateral agreements, known as Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), envisioned between the EU and individual timber-producing countries. VPAs are part of a package of measures set out in the European Commission’s 2003 Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), which recognises the EU’s responsibility to tackle its own demand for high-risk imported wood. The deal commits the Government of Ghana to developing transparent systems for collecting timber taxes and ensuring legal compliance in their forest sector; and the EU to establishing border measures to exclude unlicensed Ghanaian wood from the European market.

European and Member State development assistance has also been made available to the Government of Ghana for investment in enforcement and auditing systems for their export sector. “For many years, Europe has talked the talk of saving the world’s forests but demanded increasing volumes of cheap wood imports, providing profitable markets for illegal wood from very poor countries,” said Dr Ralph Ridder, EFI FLEGT Team Co-ordinator. “Now European consumers are increasingly sensitive to global deforestation, so the EU has responded by seeking to turn around this dynamic through the VPA mechanism and this agreement.”

Voluntary Partnership Agreements are also currently being negotiated with Indonesia, Cameroon, Malaysia and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). The EU expects that ‘FLEGT timber’, as the licensed products are currently known, will begin to be exported by partner countries from late 2009. The EFI FLEGT Team is actively providing technical support in the VPA’s preparation, negotiation and implementation.

Further information contact Ralph Ridder (ralph.ridder@efi.int). Background information is also available at [www.efi.int/portal/project/flegt/ghana\_vpa\_conclusion/](http://www.efi.int/portal/project/flegt/ghana_vpa_conclusion/)

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