

Forestry and Wood Update

November 2008 Volume 8 Number 11

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# COFORD Research Programme

# COFORD contribution to forest sector set to continue

Budget 2009 included an announcement that COFORD would be merged with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF). We are working with the Department to facilitate the new arrangement which is set to see the Council continue its role, for the research programme to be funded, and for the range of COFORD products and services, including the newsletter, publications and advice to remain.

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# COFORD establishes new development groups to address priority areas for the forestry sector

At its most recent meeting the COFORD council established three development groups dealing with roundwood supply and demand, and the afforestation programme. The objectives of the groups are:

***Supply side***

* determine the level of roundwood and forest harvesting residues supply potentially available on the island of Ireland on an annual basis over the period to 2029;
* identify constraints and needs (including access to and within forests, harvesting capacity and competence, and the regulatory framework) to optimise wood harvest, and ways to address constraints.

***Demand side***

* determine the likely level of demand for roundwood, sawmill co-products and harvest residues on the island of Ireland on an annual basis over the period to 2029;
* identify policy and market issues that are likely to impact on demand and seek ways to identify synergies between different demand streams.

***Afforestation programme***

* identify scientific and technical issues, such as environmental designation, land availability and suitability, land valuation and others that constrain the attainment of the national afforestation programme and sustainable forest management;
* identify, through a series of COFORD position papers, based on research and related outcomes, the background to and validity of constraints and ways to effectively address them;
* identify communication channels and means to effectively communicate the COFORD position on the constraints identified and addressed.

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# 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** and **silviculture**. Application documentation (including scoping papers) is available from the COFORD office or can be downloaded from [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie). 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).*

## ALDER

 In recent years there has been increased interest in planting common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), a native species approved for grant-aided forestry. This article is an overview of the work of the Alder tree improvement programme which is being carried out by a collaborative team comprising UCD, Teagasc Forestry Development Unit and COFORD. The team is working towards the development of sustainable, locally adapted, healthy seed sources of alder to meet current and future market demands. Three approaches are being adopted, each with different time-frames:

* Seed collection from existing healthy young stands (shortest route).
* Selection of plants exhibiting vigour in seedling beds to establish an untested seed orchard (seed available in 4-6 years).
* The third approach is a tree breeding programme that will use grafts of good quality mature alder to establish a tested clonal orchard (longest time-frame).

In October 2005, Senan Kelly (Forest Service), Pat Doody (Coillte), Derek Felton ((Woodstock Seed Ltd.) and Ellen O’ Connor (UCD) selected 88 plus-trees on seventeen sites. The ideal trees were healthy, straight, had light and symmetrical branching and had a large volume of timber. The heights of the plus-trees ranged from 13 – 23 m but were typically in and around 18 m. DBH was more variable and ranged from 0.30 to 0.99 m. The ages of the trees were unknown but all were thought to be 60 years or more.

Scion wood for grafting was collected in February 2006. In many cases, the age, the height and the small crown size of these mature trees made the collection of suitable scion wood difficult. Tree climbers were engaged and scion wood was collected and successfully grafted from eighty-two of the selected trees. These grafts are being used to establish an indoor alder orchard for seed production in Teagasc Kinsealy, Co Dublin. If approved and registered, the material produced from this orchard can be considered ‘Qualified’ under the FRM regulations. In addition, grafts have been used to establish conservation clone banks for future research and/or exploitation of these genotypes.

In October 2006 seed was collected from 86 of the original selected plus-trees and from three other plus-trees: 89 seedlots in total. The plants were used to establish progeny trials in 2008 testing the ability of the mother trees to produce good quality offspring. Commercially available material was used as controls for comparison. Two progeny tests were established in Counties Cavan and Clare and a third is planned for Co Tipperary in autumn 2008. Over the years, the trees will be assessed for volume, quality and health. The progeny will be assessed on a family (seedlot) basis and when the best families have been identified, the good parents will be maintained in the clonal seed orchards and the parents producing poor quality offsping removed. An application can then be made to have the clonal orchard designated as ‘Tested’ status.

Plus-tree selection and testing is ongoing and since the original selection, a further 36 plus-trees have been identified. The aim is to increase the number of plus-trees to 200 to expand the genetic base of the breeding population and the conservation clone banks. The team would like to thank all the people who have helped along the way, and especially the landowners hosting the progeny trials.

*For more information contact* *elaine.oconnor@teagasc.ie*

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# BIHIP Annual General Meeting and Field Trip in Scotland

The British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme (BIHIP) was set up in 1991 to promote and improve the quality of home-grown hardwoods. It operates a number of species groups (ash, oak, birch, sycamore, cherry, sweet chestnut and walnut) and works to achieve its objectives through the following processes:

* Locate and secure material from the very best trees (plus-trees) and very best stands (seed stands) across Great Britain and Ireland;
* Collect seed and scion wood from these selected trees to produce seedling and clonal seed orchards to provide the highest quality seed for the forestry sector;
* Carry out research into the genetics and silviculture of trees that produce high quality timber;
* Promote high quality timber production as a component of a sustainable forest industry.

The 2008 AGM and field trip was held on Thursday October 23 at the Northern Research Station at Roslin, near Edinburgh and the following issues relating to the management of BIHIP were discussed:

* Funding – Despite the downturn in most economies it is envisaged that a similar level of funding to that available in 2008 will apply to the various species groups for 2009.
* Treasurer’s Report - Audited accounts for 2008 were presented, agreed and accepted.
* Organisation of BIHIP - Jo Clark (BIHIP Secretary) prepared a short discussion paper suggesting possible future changes in BIHIP. This paper provoked a lot of discussion, which was agreed should continue and be debated at future meetings.
* The British and Irish Hardwood Trust – This Trust was successfully registered as a charitable trust in the UK in 2004. Since then work has been progressing to attain a similar status in Ireland. This has been continuing with the relevant authorities and in September 2008 the Revenue Commissioners finally confirmed the acceptance of BIHT as a charity in Ireland. The main objectives of the Trust are to secure adequate funds and other financial support to continue the development of the BIHIP programme in Ireland and the UK.
* BIHIP database and website – Progress was reported on the updating of the website and database; however, detailed information on most of the species groups needs to be updated.
* Establishment of BIHIP Beech Group – Scot Wilson reported on the progress made in discussions with interested groups in the Chilterns and in the Cotswolds and agreed to continue these discussions with interested parties.
* Business Plans - Most species groups are continuing to work with David Boshier of Oxford Forestry Institute on the updating and development of their individual business plans which will all be available on the website in the near future.

The field trip took place at the Dalkeith Oak Breeding Seedling Seed Orchard (BSO) on the outskirts of Edinburgh. Problems with uncharacteristic growth patterns were discussed. This orchard is one of the eight oak BSOs established by the BIHIP Oak Group of which one is located in Ireland at Rathluirc. All were measured and analysed after five growing seasons at the end of the 2007 growing season. The indoor clonal birch orchards developed by the BIHIP Birch Group at Bush were visited and the potential of these indoor seed orchards was discussed. These orchards are based on the Scandinavian model for indoor seed orchards and in Ireland a similar orchard is presently being developed at Kinsealy based on improved material from the COFORD Birch Programme. The final stop was at an indoor aspen flowering experiment in Bush where a system for the production of improved aspen seed for Scotland is being developed.

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# EUFORGEN Forest Management Network meeting in Leuven, Belgium

Conservation and use of forest genetic diversity is a cornerstone of sustainable forest management. However, this fact often remains unrecognized while sustainable forest management is discussed at national, regional or international level. In 2003, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) addressed the importance of conservation of forest genetic diversity as an integral part of sustainable forest management under Vienna Resolution 4 (Conserving and enhancing forest biological diversity in Europe). Subsequently, the EUFORGEN Steering Committee decided to establish a new thematic Network to promote this integration during Phase III (2005-2009).

The Forest Management Network was formally established in January 2005 to promote practical implementation of gene conservation and appropriate use of genetic resources as an integral part of sustainable forest management. The thematic Network collaborates closely with the three species-oriented Networks and its representatives include persons with national responsibility in areas related to national forest programmes, forest management, forest reproductive material or forest policy. The activities of the Network include facilitating integration of forest genetic resources issues into national forest programmes and other forest-related policies. The Network is also developing protocols to evaluate genetic consequences of different management practices and identify genetically appropriate management practices in collaboration with forest managers and policy makers.

The Network will meet in Leuven, Belgium from Tuesday 4 November to Thursday 6 November. For further information visit the Bioversity website at: [www.bioversityinternational.org](http://www.bioversityinternational.org)

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# Information and support services

# Out-wintering pad demonstration

Teagasc and COFORD are hosting the second out-wintering pad demonstration, this time at Teagasc Moore Park, Fermoy, Co Cork on Tuesday 4 November 2008. The demonstration will look at the use and construction of out-wintering pads as well as wood chip supply. The event is free of charge, and open to all. If you wish to attend, please convene betweeen 11 am and 1 pm at Moore Park. For further information, phone Teagasc at 025-42457.

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# New COFORD Connects notes

The latest set of COFORD Connects notes has been distributed to subscribers. These notes are available on request from COFORD and can be downloaded from [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie). Titles in the latest set are:

* A handy stand for sharpening your chainsaw
* Assessment of wild edible fungal production in Irish woodlands
* Controlling the large pine weevil, *Hylobius abietis*, using natural enemies
* Crossing drains
* Dispelling myths: the true extent of recent peatland afforestation in Ireland
* Estimated woodflow for the Republic of Ireland in 2007
* Eucalyptus as a potential biomass species for Ireland
* Lifting and handling stresses can cause shoot dieback in oak
* Seed source significantly influences growth, form and silvicultural management of oak
* Social impacts of forestry: A case study approach
* The economic impact of the forestry and wood products sectors in Ireland

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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-November08.pdf)) contains information about:

* Events, conferences and courses
	+ Events in brief
	+ Consultation on Ireland’s involvement in ERA initiatives
* European research opportunities
	+ Calls for proposals
	+ FP7 Research topics with relevance for the forestry–wood chain (FWC)
* 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

# 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 includes the following presentations:

* *A ‘License to Operate’: The British experience* - Roderick Leslie, retired from the Forestry Commission (GB) in February, having been Acting Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise, and Head of Policy for England
* *Adapting Scotland's forests to a future climate -* Dr Georgios Xenakis, Ecology Division, Northern Research Station, Roslin, Scotland
* *Valuing the non-timber benefits of forests in a changing climate* - Dr Douglas MacMillan, Reader in Conservation and Applied Resource Economics, Head of Department of Anthropology, University of Kent
* *The potential and opportunities for agroforestry systems in Ireland -* Dr Jim McAdam, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Belfast.; Queen's University, Belfast
* *A sustainable disease control strategy as pathogen pressures on SRC willow increase, due to climate change and larger areas of planting* - Alistair R. McCracken, Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Belfast
* *Lessons from long term forested catchment studies* - Dr Mark Robinson, Head, Catchment Facilities Group, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Oxfordshire
* *Ecological effects of forestry practices in spate river catchments of NW Ireland: a fisheries perspective* - Markus Muller, Fisheries Information Manager, North Western Regional Fisheries Board, Co Mayo

[Click here to download the registration form.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/inff-conference.pdf.pdf) For more information and booking please contact the INFF: www.inff.ie; e-mail: enquiries@inff.ie; tel: 023 – 22823.

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# Job opportunity: Co-ordinator, FSC Ireland

The new position of Co-ordinator for FSC Ireland is a challenging position involving communication with a variety of stakeholders. The co-ordinator will be a central pivot in collaboratively interpreting and defining responsible forestry in Ireland. Promotion nationally and liaising with similar groups internationally are other major aspects of this position. The FSC Ireland (Irish Forestry Certification Initiative Ltd.) is a company established to develop a national forest management standard in Ireland based upon the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). It is accredited as the National Initiative in Ireland. FSC Ireland is a membership-based organisation which is directed by a Steering Committee. The objectives of FSC Ireland are to promote responsible forestry in Ireland and abroad. One of the main tasks is to develop a national standard in a collaborative manner and based on science.

Specific responsibilities include:

* Act as central contact and communication for voluntary initiative, under direction of Steering Committee and Chairperson. This includes updating the website and co-ordinating communications between FSC International, FSC Ireland members, FSC Ireland Steering Committee members, Standards Development Group, Consultative Forum, and others.
* Promotion and marketing: raising awareness of FSC and FSC Ireland, liaising with local and national media, forest management and wood-based companies etc; drafting press releases, newsletters, and other promotional material.
* Oversee the smooth implementation of organisation’s work plan, including organisation of and attendance at meetings; monitoring and reporting on progress.
* Work to increase membership of FSC Ireland and related fora.
* Prepare, collate, and /or distribute background material in advance of meetings; compile information on assigned topics as needed. Maintain and organise records in digital and paper formats.
* Keep books, prepare annual accounts, payments, and regular financial reports.
* Process memberships, and carry out other administrative tasks.

Contact details: Geraldine O’Sullivan, FSC Ireland, c/o IFA, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12, ifci@irishforestcertification.com

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# Heritage of the World in Trust: Conservation in a Changing Climate

13th ICNT comes to Ireland in September 2009. An Taisce, The National Trust for Ireland (ATNTI), has been selected to host the 13th International Conference of National Trusts (ICNT13) from Sunday 13 to Thursday 17 September 2009 at Dublin Castle. More than 300 delegates are expected in attendance, representing all corners of the world. This first ICNT since the establishment of INTO has the theme “Heritage of the World in Trust: Conservation in a Changing Climate,” around which plenary presentations, working sessions and site visits will revolve. For more information: www.antaisce.org Phone: +353 1 4541786 E-mail: icnt13@irishnationaltrust.org

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# Forest Research note on the benefits of improved Sitka spruce stock in UK

In September this year Forest Research published a research note entitled *Benefits of improved Sitka spruce: volume and quality of timber* which shows that an increase in timber volume gained from planting improved Sitka spruce stock has been estimated to be between 21 and 29% at the end of a rotation.

The authors, Shaun Mochan, Steve Lee and Barry Gardiner, present the results of new research designed to investigate the impact of using improved Sitka spruce stock on quality characteristics which determine the volume of green sawlogs produced in the forest and the quality of construction-grade timber produced in the sawmill. The study was carried out using trees close to the end of rotation age from a trial of improved Sitka spruce in a forest in Cumbria in the north of England. A number of characteristics relating to growth rate and timber quality were assessed on the standing trees in the forest and on the timber obtained from these trees after felling. The volume of sawlog meeting minimum strength requirements for construction was also calculated. Three improved lots with (1) the highest wood density, (2) the fastest growth and (3) best stem form were compared with a standard control of unimproved Sitka spruce of Queen Charlotte Island (QCI) origin.

The results at both the individual tree and per hectare level showed increased sawn timber volumes from improved planting stock without deterioration in construction grade strength requirements. In the best progeny, increases of up to 130% in both green sawlog volume and sawn timber volumes per hectare were predicted with equivalent mechanical properties to the QCI control stock.

For further information contact: shaun.mochan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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# Conference: The Climate Challenge

Together with the UN Association of Northern Ireland, UNA-UK is holding a major one-day conference on climate change in Belfast on 6 November – the second in a series of conferences taking place around the UK throughout 2008-09. The conference will take place at Grosvenor House, 5 Glengall Street, Belfast.

The Climate Challenge will equip delegates with practical ideas for reducing individual CO2 emissions, evaluate government climate policy, and take stock of progress in UN-led negotiations towards a strengthened global climate deal. The conference will open with a keynote speech by Dr Bernard Bulkin, a leading expert on energy and the environment and former Chief Scientist of BP. Dr Bulkin is a member of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, the government watchdog on sustainable development, and chairs its climate change, energy and transport group. Conference delegates will also hear from Polly Higgins, a practicing barrister and environmental activist. The afternoon session will feature an interactive discussion during which delegates will have the opportunity to put their questions to our panel of climate change experts. The speakers from the morning session will be joined by Professor Sue Christie, Director of Northern Ireland Environment Link – a network of voluntary organizations working on the environment – and formerly Visiting Professor in the University of Ulster’s Department of Environmental Sciences.

The conference is free and open to all, but places are limited. For further information, contact John Phillips climate@una.org.uk or phone 00 4420 7766 3448.

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# IUFRO World Congress

The First Announcement of the XXIII IUFRO World Congress to be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, during August 23-28, 2010 is now available to download at http://www.iufro2010.com/. The theme of the Congress is "Forests for the Future: Sustaining Society and the Environment".

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# Third Conference of Young Chilean Scientists in Europe

This conference takes place from 11-13 February 2009 at the Max-Planck-Institute for Experimental Medicine, Göttingen, Germany. “Encuentros” is a scientific meeting that aims to provide a formal and interactive forum for exchanging scientific experiences and enhancing networking among both young (PhD and post-doctoral level) and established Chilean and European scientists. By improving communication and networking, we hope to assist young Chilean scientists to be better informed about their options upon returning.

The programme consists of short presentations by young speakers from across a wide range of fields which are based in different European countries (based on an abstract submission process). The programme is complemented with distinguished Chilean and European speakers and senior scientists who will contribute to the collaborative and networking environment we hope to generate. The official language of the conference is English, although some round-table meetings may be conducted in Spanish. For more information, email contact@encuentros2009.org

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