

COFORD Forestry and Wood Update

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Contents

1. [Welcome from our Chairman](#_1._Welcome_from)
2. [COFORD - who are we?](#_2._COFORD_-)
3. [Funding programmes](#_3._Funding_programmes.).
4. [New Projects](#_4._New_Projects)
5. [Publications](#_5._Publications)
6. [COFORD Irish Forestry Calendar](#_6._COFORD_Irish)
7. [Carbon Corner](#_7._Carbon_Corner)
8. [Water Quality Update](#_8._Water_Quality)
9. [Wood Promotion](#_9._Wood_Promotion)
10. [New Wood Product wins top award](#_10._New_Wood)
11. [Forthcoming initiatives](#_11._Forthcoming_initiatives)

### 1. Welcome from our Chairman

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the latest initiative in COFORD's dissemination programme. Since 1994 we have administered and funded a research programme that covered all aspects of forestry and forest products. There are many success stories to be told from this programme and we are now renewing our communications effort to transfer the results of research projects to practioners and stakeholders.

We very much anticipate this communications activity being a two-way process and we would welcome your feedback on any aspect of our activities. Dr Eugene Hendrick, Director of COFORD and his Executive team would be happy to discuss any of the issues raised in this newsletter with you in greater detail.

If there are any additional features you would like to see added please feel free to suggest these also.

David Nevins

Chairman

### 2. COFORD - who are we?

For those of you who may not be fully familiar with COFORD, we are the National Council for Forest Research and Development. The Council is appointed by the Minister of State at the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, Hugh Byrne, T.D. For a list of the current Council members go to <http://www.coford.ie/about/council.html>

The COFORD Executive is made up of:

Dr Eugene Hendrick, Director

Joe O'Carroll, Research Manager

Dr Miriam Ryan, Research Projects Officer

Mel Molloy, Financial Administrator

We are effectively an agency of the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources. COFORD manages the Forestry RTDI programme of the Productive Sector Operational Programme. We are currently funded under by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

The COFORD Council sets the priority areas of the Research Programme. Proposals for research projects are then sought through advertisements in the National Press.

 All proposals undergo an independent evaluation procedure by a panel of international experts in each of the research areas.

COFORD has been in existence since 1993 and has funded over 80 projects to date. Details on all of these projects are available at: <http://www.coford.ie/research.html>

### 3. Funding programmes.

Funding is currently available for both applied and strategic research projects.

We are now calling for research and development proposals in the following areas:

Research programme – New Areas

1. **Renewable energy and biomass**
2. **Non-wood forest products**
3. **Nursery research and development**
4. **Socio-economic aspects of forestry**

Research programme – Second Call – Previously advertised but no contract awarded

1. **Forest operations – Quantification and management of erosion and siltation** *(co-funded with EPA)*
2. **Tree Selection and Improvement – Broadleaves**
3. **Vegetation management**

Desk Study Programme

Tenders are requested from suitably qualified individuals or organisations to conduct desk studies on a range of forestry and wood related topics. A full list of desk studies is available on our website ([www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie)), or from the address below.

The closing date for receipt of proposals in the areas outlined above is Tuesday May 11th, 2001 at 5:00 pm. Contracts will be awarded for research work as described in the project specifications and scoping documents. Interested parties should contact COFORD requesting the project specification and other relevant documentation by post, fax or email. Alternatively, all documents and applicant forms can be downloaded from our website.

Applied programme – Open Call

1. **Communications and Information Technology**
2. **Mechanisation (Harvesting and Silviculture)**
3. **Product and Process Development**

Our applied research programme is open for receipt of proposals, in any of these three areas, at any time during the period 2000-2006.

### 4. New Projects

Under our new 2000-2006 programme we have already launched two major projects.

*BIOFOREST (Co-funded with EPA)*

The conservation and appropriate enhancement of Ireland’s biodiversity in forest ecosystems and general forest operations is one of the key measures identified in the National Forest Standard, the Forest Biodiversity Guidelines and in the draft national biodiversity action plan. Biodiversity must be protected and enhanced at all stages in the forest cycle. This is particularly important in view of Ireland’s status as a signatory of the International Convention on Biological Diversity.

Following a public call for research proposals on forest biodiversity in May 2000 a successful research consortium comprising UCC, TCD and Coillte has been chosen to conduct the necessary research. The partners have just signed a contract with COFORD and the EPA for an in-depth five-year study. Interim results will be used to inform and revise policy and practice where appropriate.

 The project will examine the impact of afforestation and forest operations on the biodiversity of flora and fauna on a range of site types. It will also quantify the changes in biodiversity that occur throughout the forest cycle and most importantly, it will outline best practice for the enrichment of biodiversity in the forests of Ireland.

 Mr David Nevins, chairman of COFORD welcomed the new project by stating: ‘The research will cost £1m and will be the biggest national project to date on any aspect of Ireland’s biodiversity’.

 In taking the lead in this area COFORD and the EPA are demonstrating the importance that environmental and forestry agencies attach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

BOGFOR

Our most recently signed project is BOGFOR. This is a research programme to develop a forest resource on industrial cutaway peatlands in the midlands. Possibly 50,000 hectares of industrial cutaway with afforestation potential will become available over the next ten to twenty years. This could, obviously, contribute to the achievement of the afforestation targets set out in the Government’s strategy for the development of the forest industry.

However, before such sites can be afforested on a large scale, research is needed on species selection, nutrient availability, soil preparation, management practices and environmental considerations. To this end COFORD are co-funding the BOGFOR project with Coillte and Bord na Mona. Coillte and the Forest Ecosystem Research Group at UCD will carry out most of the work. The project will run for six years. Updates will be provided in later issues of this newsletter.

Other Projects

The COFORD executive is currently in negotiations with project teams of six new research proposals. Details of the projects will follow in subsequent issues of COFORD Forestry and Wood Update as they are agreed.

### 5. Publications

On March 28th, Minister Hugh Byrne, T.D. launched two new COFORD publications at the Mont Clare Hotel in Dublin:

1. *Forecast of Roundwood Production from the Forests of Ireland*

This publication, compiled by Gerhardt Gallagher and Joe O’ Carroll, presents a roundwood production forecast for the island of Ireland for the period 2001-2015. It is the first time that a production forecast has been produced that includes the private sector. It is a timely report given the current activity of the Timber Industry Development Group in developing a national strategy for the processing sector.

1. *COFORD Connects*

This publication should by a priority purchase for all forest and nursery owners and managers. It consists of a purpose made binder that will hold practice and information notes relating to COFORD funded projects and activities. This initiative will ensure that research results are transferred into practice, guaranteeing that a return is delivered on the money invested by COFORD in its research programme. COFORD Connects is targeted at practitioners in each of the industry sectors. Individual notes will be produced on an on-going basis over the years ahead. **NO FORESTER, NURSERYMAN, FOREST OWNER, ENVIRONMENTALIST WOOD PROCESSOR, RESEARCHER OR FORESTRY ACADEMIC SHOULD BE WITHOUT A COPY OF THIS FOLDER AND PRACTICE NOTE SERIES.** The notes will cover six primary areas:

* Reproductive Material and Nursery Management
* Silviculture and Forest Management
* Harvesting, Transport and Forest Machinery
* Wood Processing and Product Development
* Socio-Economic Aspects of Forestry
* Forestry and the Environment

To start the COFORD Connects series Minister Byrne launched the following five notes:

* The impact of herbicides on tree seedling quality.
* Computer software requirements in forest management
* Sodium Dominance Index as a measure of acid sensitivity in Irish rivers.
* New dyes for use in stump treatment.
* The mechanical and physical wood properties of a range of Sitka spruce provenances.

These, and other COFORD publications, are available from the COFORD office, and are also downloadable from our website <http://www.coford.ie>

### 6. COFORD Irish Forestry Calendar

The co-ordination of events such as workshops, lectures, symposiums, field days and other meetings is a problem within any industry. The forest industry is no exception, so COFORD has created a calendar for all forest and wood related events on our website. Visit the calendar at [www.coford.ie/frames/seminars.html](http://www.coford.ie/frames/seminars.html)

Any individual, or organisation, wishing to have an events hosted on the calendar should email info@coford.ie giving details of the event, time, date, location and contact details. We will immediately put the event on the calendar for all visitors to our site to see and take note of. We can also include details of the event in future issues of this newsletter.

Event organisers should refer to the site before organising their occasion, to avoid conflicting with existing events, or possibly to link up with these events to provide a more attractive joint venture that would generate a larger attendance.

### 7. Carbon Corner

Following the failure of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting at The Hague last November (COP6) efforts have been continuing to find a way forward for international agreement on formal ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. One of the main sticking points is the extent to which forest sinks will be included in the protocol. Forest sinks are those forests which have a net uptake of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. Under the Kyoto Protocol – which dates from 1997 and to which Ireland and the EU are signatories – certain forest types are eligible as sinks. Carbon stored in these forests, during the normal processes of growth and development, may be used to determine how a country is complying with reductions in its greenhouse gas emissions, reductions that were agreed at Kyoto. The problem lies in the extent to which sinks will be included during the so-called first commitment period, from 2008-2012, when countries will have to demonstrate that are complying with their greenhouse gas reduction targets. The US, Canada and Japan want to include a broader range of forests and forest-management activities as sinks than does the EU (in common with a number of other countries and many NGOs). The negotiations will continue at the resumed COP6, which is due to take place in Bonn from the 16 to the 27th of July next.

 As far as the contribution of forest sinks to meeting Ireland’s Kyoto targets are concerned the government anticipates that the main contribution will come from new forests planted on former agricultural land, since 1990. These qualify under article 3.3 of the protocol. COFORD estimates show that there should be sufficient sequestration in this ‘Kyoto forest’ to meet the national target of about 1 million tonnes of CO2 per annum being stored in forest sinks over the period 2008-2012. There was little or no controversy at COP6 about including such forest areas. The main difficulties arose over the extent to which additional forest management activities under article 3.4 will be included, and whether or not sinks will be permissible under article 12 – the clean development mechanism. The latter applies mostly to developing and underdeveloped southern countries wishing to sell carbon credits to third parties. The EU concerns include the fact that these 3.4 and 12 sinks are vast in scale and if included could remove the need for reductions in emissions in some countries and could therefore undermine the environmental integrity of the protocol. There are proposals that would allow such sinks to be included but they would be restricted in size through the use of caps and other mechanisms. Should an agreement emerge that includes 3.4 sinks there is scope for carbon credits to be generated from forest management activities in Ireland (in addition to the afforestation programme).

 COFORD is currently contributing to the development of the Irish and EU positions on forest sinks through the Department of Environment and Local Government and the Forest Service. We are at present negotiating an R&D contract that will refine current estimates of carbon stocks in Irish forests. We will keep you up-to-date with this and other developments in future issues of the Newsletter.

### 8. Water Quality Update

In May 2000, COFORD and EPA co-funded a research programme aimed at examining the relationship between forests and water. Proposals were sought for three separate projects – acidification, euthrophication and siltation. Negotiations are being finalised with the project teams of the short-listed proposals. Further details will follow in later issues of this newsletter, when the projects are launched.

### 9. Wood Promotion

The UK is our main export market for wood products. A new initiative underway in the UK is the 'Wood. For Good.' promotion campaign. Charles Trevor, Managing Director, described the campaign in the latest issue of their newsletter: "Our budget in £9 million over three years - an unprecedented sum for the industry. Wood for good is a limited company set up in the UK to promote sales of wood, in particular the European softwood that is the main product of our funders, through advertising, public relations and trade marketing.”

The Nordic Timber Council, the Forestry Commission, The UK Sawn Wood Promoters, The Timber Trade Federation, the Timber Growers Association and the Northern Ireland Forest Service sponsor the campaign. The first advertisements of the campaign have been of an exceptionally high standard and portray wood as the quality building material that it is. The TV advertisements have been pitched at peak viewing times, such as during the ever-popular 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?'.

Interested parties should visit <http://www.woodforgood.com> to check out the range of promotional activities being staged.

### 10. New Wood Product wins top award

Our congratulations go to Woodfab Timber Ltd who was recently awarded the prize for the best new garden product of the year. This was at the RDS Irish Hardware and Garden Trade Fair, for their new E-ZeeBuild™ decking system. The award was presented by Minister of State Mr Tom Kitt, T.D. and Mr Eddie Kelly, President, Irish Hardware and Building Material Association. This is a good example of an innovative wood product developed by a company with years of experience in the processing sector. It illustrates the uses that can be created for Irish timber given the correct mix of experience and creativity. Further details are available from <http://www.e-zeebuild.ie/>

We anticipate a number of other new product developments for Irish timber in the months ahead.

### 11. Forthcoming initiatives

The Wood Marketing Federation have been working hard on the compilation of Woodspec - a guide to wood specification for architects and specifiers. This publication will be launched shortly. COFORD will be hosting the Woodspec website, in addition to developing a CDROM to complement the publication.

This initiative will be of great assistance to all specifiers of timber. It will ensure that wood products are given a generic technical backup to help them compete with other building materials.

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