**COFORD News Supplement**

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**Compiled by InnovaWood**

# Networking Special

## Content

## 1    Events, conferences

Growing towards the Future - Joint innovation for successful forest-based business in Europe. FTP conference in Slovenia, 19-21 May 2008 See http://www.forestplatform.org/index.php?mid=175

International Workshop "Woodfuel Supply Chain – Sharing Experience" Warwick, England 14th September – 19th September 2008 including Field Study Tour See http://www.ieabioenergytask31.org

3rd International Softwood Conference » will take place from 16 to 17 October 2008 at the Kalastajatorppa Hotel in Helsinki, Finland.
See http://eos-oes.eu/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=12

42nd International Wood Composites Symposium and Technical Workshop.
March 31-April 2, 2008 Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue, Seattle Washington USA
See: www.woodsymposium.wsu.edu

## 2    Networking for European Research

This article was based on information at http://www.businesslink.gov.uk

Face-to-face contact is still very important in developing contacts with a view to joining a European project. The amount of time allocated to personal interaction becomes very important. Conference delegates and meeting participants alike are encouraged to network formally and socially through forum discussions, brainstorming sessions, workshops, networking receptions and dinners.

Most research units recognise the benefits of developing their employees' knowledge and understanding of their industry and markets they work in. Networking with others allows smaller partners to share experiences and ideas and to improve their own knowledge. Research units can network with other educational establishments, trade organisations and businesses. Researchers that actively participate in networks generally find the partnerships more effective than passive participants.

Networking involves interacting with others for assistance and support. When you network for research purposes you will have the opportunity to do some of the following:
- meet in organised or informal forums
- receive news bulletins and invitations to events of general interest
- lectures by prominent research people or industry experts
- participate in debates on topics relevant to your research/industry or field of business
- contribute to or participate in surveys or research in your field

You stand to gain from the experiences of other businesses and share new ideas on a variety of subjects including:
- project/ collaboration opportunities
- training
- new products and results

- industry developments
- new industry laws and regulation

You may meet potential customers, competitors, suppliers and service providers who are all looking for similar benefits and to widen their contact base. When choosing a network or partnership to join, you need to think of your primary requirements, eg market information, training and development opportunities, or expert advice. Aim to balance your needs with the level of participation and involvement you are prepared to commit.

For example if you cannot spare the time to attend functions and events, you might focus on finding a network hosted on the Internet. Similarly if you do not think you will proactively pass information on or help someone else in return for advice, you might prefer a more passive network that supplies newsletters and bulletins (possibly for a subscription) and hosts online debates, rather than an events-based one.

## 2.1 Benefits of networking

Networking can help you improve your research contacts, knowledge of products and staff skills. It provides opportunities for you to develop your knowledge and skills, including:
- Participating in benchmarking opportunities to help you identify areas where you can improve your business performance (research).
- Establishing staff exchanges and secondments. For example, an outside expert may join your research group perhaps with Marie Curie funding to oversee a specific project or you may second a graduate to learn about a particular process.
- Benefiting from economies of scale by involving employees in joint skills development programmes for staff in your business sector.

You can use networking to boost your reputation and gather new leads. You can:
- raise your research profile by becoming an established and regular networking member, getting your face and your research known
- meet new people and build mutually research/ business relationships
- generate new research contacts with potential academic partners & industry participants

Networks can also be a key source of information and support. You can:
- compare and discuss issues of common interest, eg scientific, regulatory developments, staff & student exchange, supplier networks, customer service and computerisation
- develop and share ideas, innovation and knowledge of best practice

The extent to which you benefit will depend on the events and services the network partnership offers and how actively you become involved. The benefits of taking an active role in a network usually outweigh any potential concerns or reasons not to network.

## 2.2 Different kinds of network

There are many types of network. Often they set joining criteria to take members with common attitudes or requirements, eg type of research/ business or professional background.

You can establish links through a number of different channels. Some of these include:

- Education and research organisations - to explore development initiatives and to access studies or research into products, markets, customer preferences, best practice etc. See which organisations participate in networking on the Higher Education and Research Opportunities website.
- Learning networks - managers and other employees can attend training and development activities tailored to their responsibilities, keep up to date with best practice and current thinking, and hear from high-profile speakers and researchers. Approach relevant trade associations and industry bodies and ask them about their seminars and events.
- Trade development opportunities - find trade associations at the Trade Association Forum website.
- Employers' federations - eg the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). You can find support and best practice on employment issues on the FSB website.
- Regional/local organisations - eg Chambers of Commerce, for advice, support and local news. Find details of regional and local organisations on the British Chamber of Commerce website.
- Community organisations - action groups representing local, ethnic or social interests. Find community organisations at the Business in the Community website.

There are also various forms of networking:
organised meetings/conferences - structured ways of networking

- e-based discussion and debate - co-ordinated on many websites
- business trips - sponsored by a relevant trade organisation or similar can provide a co-ordinated way of establishing foreign contacts and learning about overseas markets
- social events - an informal way to meet people with a common purpose for attending
- survey and focus groups - allow you to meet fellow-contributors and the organisers

## 2.3    Finding network partners

Many businesses find networking partners:

- through personal introductions by an existing network member
- by contacting the organisation or body they are interested in directly
- General business networks

It's a good idea to attend research conferences and seminars to meet scientists with similar research activities. You can gain useful knowledge through talking to the research providers or conference coordinators.

Be an active participant in networks
Networks are established for collective benefits and are most successful and effective where there is give and take by participants and members. This involves sharing your experience through dialogue and interaction with other partners, as well as learning from theirs. For instance, you could attend debates and discussion groups to contribute your ideas and experiences or offer to speak at a conference. A network's strength in any particular area or service depends on how actively its partners exchange information with each other and reciprocate. For example, if you receive advice from a network partner, be prepared to offer your own help in the future. Partners who are willing to pass on skills to each other will establish the network as a centre of excellence or expertise and facilitate future collaborations. If you have been pleased with a particular supplier, training provider or consultant, let your partners know why or arrange for them to give a presentation of their services.

Research opportunities

Effective networking doesn't just happen, you have to put in the effort. When time is at a premium it helps to research networks in your area so that you can concentrate on those that will benefit your business most.

Monitor effectiveness
Keep a log of networking activities and contacts and make a rational long-term assessment of benefits against effort and cost.

## 3   Existing European Networks

### 3.1   European Forestry Institute (EFI)

EFI is an international organisation established by European States. It is the leading institution conducting and advocating forest research and facilitating forest research networking at the pan-European level. It is an acknowledged provider of and a major contact point for unbiased, policy-relevant information on European forests and forestry.

The EFI has an extensive network made up of nearly 130 Associate and Affiliate Members and seven Project Centres; it offers the best forest research contacts and acknowledged collaboration at the European level.

The purpose of the Institute is to undertake research on the pan-European level on forest policy, including its environmental aspects, on the ecology, multiple use, resources and health of European forests and on the supply of and demand for timber and other forest products and services in order to promote the conservation and sustainable management of forests in Europe.

Each year EFI employs some forty researchers, trainees, scholars and research support staff members who represent some 15 nationalities at any given moment

### 3.2   Innovawood

In 2001 Eurofortech, Eurifi, Euroligna and Eurowood launched the InnovaWood Initiative in order to create a coordinated support infrastructure for innovation in the Forest, Wood-based and Furniture industries sector.
InnovaWood is an umbrella organisation that integrates four European networks in the Forest, Wood-based and Furniture industries into a more effective mechanism to support innovation in these sectors.

### 3.3   COST Actions

COST is an intergovernmental network which is scientifically completely self-sufficient with nine scientific COST Domain Committees formed by some of the most outstanding scientists of the European scientific community. The scientific quality control is the main responsibility of the COST scientific Domain Committees which follow very rigorous evaluation procedures established by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) involving the mandatory use of external peer reviewers.

As clearly stated in the Declaration of the Ministers of the 35 COST countries convened in Dubrovnik in 2003, in 2002 there was a need for COST  to find "a capable, cost-

effective scientific secretariat to assist COST in the execution of the work" and this secretariat was identified in the European Science Foundation (ESF). A COST-ESF Memorandum of Understanding was agreed in September 2002 whereby ESF accepted the task to act as the legal entity  for COST and to provide and manage the administrative, technical and scientific secretariat for COST Technical Committees and Actions, dependent of the appropriate funding for the COST activities being made available from the EU RTD framework programme.

A contract between the ESF and the European Commission for COST was consequently agreed in 2003. To perform its duties of "service provider for COST", ESF established an " ad hoc" COST Office in Brussels which became operative in January 2004.

At its 164th meeting in March 2006 the COST CSO decided to assign to the core group of the CSO, the COST JAF Group, the task of monitoring the budget management and the COST Office activities.

Please click on the COST Domains website of your choice below:
BMBS - Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences
CMST - Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies
ESSEM - Earth System Science and Environmental Management
FA - Food and Agriculture
FPS - Forests, their Products and Services
ISCH - Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health
ICT - Information and Communication Technologies
MPNS - Materials, Physical and Nanosciences
TUD - Transport and Urban Development


### 3.3.1   Domain: Forests, their Products and Services

Forests and related industries are key components of a sustainable Europe. Within the COST countries, the forests cover 168 million ha (+ 38.5 million ha of other wooded land) i.e. 31% of their total land area. There are about 11 million forest owners, and 4 million people employed directly or indirectly in forests and forest-based industries, mainly in rural areas. Europe produces 28 % of the world's paper supply and is also a major operator in woodworking industries. Forests also fulfil numerous social and environmental functions, including the accommodation of large pools of biodiversity, and provide various goods and services beneficial to European citizens, their health and more generally their quality of life. Forests and their products contribute positively to an eco-friendly balance for many elements, including the carbon cycle. Furthermore, forests and their protection are highly placed on the European political agenda as demonstrated by the four successive Ministerial Conferences since 1990 resulting in common resolutions and commitments.

Forest and wood based products research in Europe is mainly operated by public organisations, whose characteristics show in general rather fragmented patterns. Moreover, many are narrowly focused, leading to a lack of interdisciplinarity and integration, and inhibiting a more coherent approach and vision of the Forest and Forest Industry Cluster. The setting-up of the COST Technical Committee for Forests and Forestry Products (FFP) at the beginning of the 1990's was a major step forward to fill these gaps. It was followed by a rapid increase in the number of Actions and FPS is today the second largest Domain within COST, This has also resulted in a broadening of

topics, greater interdisciplinarity, and integration of more countries and institutions, thereby promoting results dissemination and contributing to national capacity building. Today, the broad field of "sustainable production and use of forest natural resources", covered by COST, includes the following research areas: scientific bases of sustainable forest management, forestry policy and people, forest products and the environment, forest products: properties and performances, and process engineering in wood based industries. Dealing with scientific and/or technological aspects, most Actions bring together a large number of partner countries.


### 3.3.2    Running Actions in the Forest Products Domain

(URL: http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=142 )

FP0703 Expected Climate Change and Options for European Silviculture (ECHOES) (End Date: Dec' 12)

FP0701 Post-Fire Forest Management in Southern Europe (End Date: Dec' 12)

FP0702 Net-Acoustics for Timber based Lightweight Buildings end Elements (End Date: Dec' 12)

E32 Characterisation of paper surfaces for improved printing paper grades (End Date: Oct' 07)

E33 Forests for Recreation and Nature Tourism (FORREC) (End Date: Jun' 08)

E34 Bonding of Timber (End Date: Feb' 08)

E35 Fracture mechanics and micromechanics of wood and wood composites with regard to wood machining (End Date: Feb' 08)

E36 Modelling and Simulation in Pulp and Paper Industry (End Date: Jun' 08)

E37 Sustainability Through New Technologies For Enhanced Wood Durability (End Date: Jun' 08)

E38 Woody root processes (End Date: Jun' 08)

E39 Forests, Trees and Human Health and Wellbeing (End Date: Nov' 08)

E40 Innovative utilisation and products of large dimensioned timber including the whole forest-wood-chain (End Date: May' 08)

E41 Analytical tools with applications for wood and pulping chemistry (End Date: Jun' 08)

E42 Growing Valuable Broadleaved Tree Species (End Date: Nov' 08)

E43 Harmonisation of National Inventories in Europe : Techniques for Common Reporting (End Date: Dec' 08)

E44 Wood Processing Strategy (End Date: Jun' 08)

E45 European forest externalities (EUROFOREX) (End Date: Jul' 10)

E46 Improvements in the understanding and use of de-inking technology (End Date: Sep' 08)

E47 European Network for Forest Vegetation Management: Towards Environmental Sustainability (End Date: Apr' 09)

E48 The Limits of Paper Recycling (End Date: Mar' 09)

E49 Processes and Performance of Wood-based Panels (End Date: Mar' 09)

E50 Cell wall macromolecules and reaction wood (CEMARE) (End Date: Jul' 09)

E51 Integrating Innovation and Development Policies for the Forest Sector (End Date: Mar' 10)

E52 Evaluation of Beech Genetic Resources for Sustainable Forestry (End Date: Mar' 10)

E53 Quality control for wood and wood products (End Date: Mar' 10)

E54 Characterisation of the fine structure and properties of papermaking fibres using new technologies (End Date: Dec' 10)

E55 Modelling of the performance of timber structures (End Date: Dec' 10)

FP0601 Forest Management and the Water Cycle (FORMAN) (End Date: May' 11)

FP0602 Biotechnology for lignocellulose biorefineries (BIOBIO) (End Date: Jun' 11)

FP0603 Forest models for research and decision support in sustainable forest management (End Date: Jun' 11)

### 3.4 European Technology Platforms

From: http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/home_en.html

Provide a framework for stakeholders, led by industry, to define research and development priorities, timeframes and action plans on a number of strategically important issues where achieving Europe's future growth, competitiveness and sustainability objectives is dependent upon major research and technological advances in the medium to long term.

Play a key role in ensuring an adequate focus of research funding on areas with a high degree of industrial relevance, by covering the whole economic value chain and by mobilising public authorities at national and regional levels. In fostering effective public-private partnerships, technology platforms have the potential to contribute significantly to the renewed Lisbon strategy and to the development of a European Research Area of knowledge for growth. As such, they are proving to be powerful actors in the development of European research policy, in particular in orienting the Seventh Research Framework Programme to better meet the needs of industry.

Address technological challenges that can potentially contribute to a number of key policy objectives which are essential for Europe's future competitiveness, including the timely development and deployment of new technologies, technology development with a view to sustainable development, new technology-based public goods and services, technological breakthroughs necessary to remain at the leading edge in high technology sectors and the restructuring of traditional industrial sectors.

### 3.4.1 Forest Based Sector Technology Platform

From: http://www.forestplatform.org/index.php?mid=41

A European partnership for research and development in the forest-based sector

In 2004, the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois), the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) and the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) took the initiative to set up a Technology Platform for the forest-based sector. This platform aims at defining and implementing the sector's R&D roadmap for the future and is supported by a wide range of stakeholders. The Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform is an industry-driven process, embedded in industry reality, and supporting the sector's strategy.

The FTP has as its vision (for the year 2030):
The European forest-based sector plays a key role in a sustainable society.
It comprises a competitive, knowledge-based industry that fosters the extended use of renewable resources.
It strives to ensure its societal contribution in the context of a bio-based, customer-driven and globally competitive European economy.
The FTP is open to the entire sector. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact your National Support Group: http://www.forestplatform.org/index.php?mid=89