

# ForestPaths

Co-designing holistic forest-based policy pathways for climate change mitigation

## Policy Engagement Forum Report

*Factors influencing decision-making around Climate and Biodiversity  
Smart (CBS) approaches in forest management*

November 21<sup>st</sup> 2024, 14:00-16:00 (CET) – Online (Zoom)



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## List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

Acronym/ Abbreviation	Description
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBS	Climate and Biodiversity Smart
CSF	Climate Smart Forestry
EFI	The European Forest Institute
ES	Ecosystem Services
EU	European Union
MBI	Minimum Business Increment
PEF	Policy Engagement Forum
PI	Prospex institute

## Executive summary

This Policy Engagement Forum event was dedicated to discussing the factors influencing decision-making around Climate Biodiversity Smart (CBS) approaches in forestry, and took place online on the platform Zoom on November 21<sup>st</sup> 2024 from 14:00 to 16:00 CET. The event gathered five external participants who actively participated until the end and five project partners to facilitate the sessions and moderate the discussions, and present the project overall and the work from WP1 concerning the event topic.

The event comprised a discussion around the central theme in two breakout groups using the online platform Mural. Each group was asked three questions, revolving around examples of CBS in Europe. Both groups had rich discussions and many insights were gathered. Additionally, the findings of ForestPaths concerning CBS barriers and enablers for forest owners were presented, expanding on some of the topics that emerged during the group discussions. Finally, a survey was conducted at the end of the presentation to evaluate the level of agreement around several statements concerning forest management.

Overall, the input provided by participants reinforced and confirmed some of the findings of ForestPaths, adding more nuance to the discussion. Participants appreciated the format and the time dedicated to these topics.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background on the project

ForestPaths is a four-year project funded by European Commission's Horizon Europe fund. To reach the goal of the Paris Agreement, the EU needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% in 2030. The forestry sector and forests in general play a crucial role in this, as they provide natural carbon sinks, and their products can substitute for emissions-intensive materials. For this to happen, policy pathways are needed that outline alternative trajectories for how European forests and the forest-based sector can contribute to the transition to a climate-neutral and resilient society and economy. ForestPaths aims to co-design, quantify and evaluate holistic forest-based policy pathways to optimise the contribution of forests and the forest-based sector to climate change mitigation. It will provide clear policy pathways that outline alternative trajectories for how European forests and the forest-based sector can help climate change mitigation while conserving their biodiversity and sustaining ecosystem services. Across-the-board stakeholders, such as forest owners, practitioners, researchers and policymakers, will be engaged in four demo cases and four policy labs to co-design and evaluate policy pathways, which will be quantified through next-generation integrated assessment techniques. The generated policy pathways will be available on ForestPaths' interactive CANOPY policy support platform.

Four periodic workshops, known as Policy Labs, are planned within the project's scope to gather input from relevant stakeholders. This approach ensures that different stakeholder groups, including policymakers, forest managers, researchers, non-government organizations, and industry representatives, can actively contribute to the project. This co-design process guarantees that the project's outcomes are practical and consider a broad range of perspectives.

Policy Labs represent just one component of the project's co-design approach. Other elements include the four demo cases in Romania, Germany, Italy, and Finland, as well as the Policy Engagement Forum. The project spans four years, with one Policy Lab scheduled each year. These labs are designed to build upon one another. The following are the topics of the Policy Labs:

**First policy lab** in September 2023: Opportunities and barriers for policy making

- Policy objectives and stakeholder needs were identified.
- Define stakeholders' main priorities and consider opportunities for policy-actions given different timescales, governance paradigms, enablers, and barriers for policymaking.
- Policy Lab 1 includes the official launch of the Policy Engagement Forum.

**Second policy lab** in September 2024: Stakeholder-driven visions and options for policy action

- Bringing together stakeholders and scientists to explore medium and long-term visions on European forests. Three visions resulted from the lab.
- The design of the visions was guided by the analysis of mitigation policies, biodiversity and other policy targets identified in T6.2.1 (policy mapping).

**Third policy lab** in October 2025: Co-creating pathways with stakeholders

- Stakeholders will be placed in experimental lab situations where they will engage with model results (exploratory simulations), capturing projected stakeholder behaviour.
- Based on Policy Lab 3 results, WP5 will model the defined pathways and analyse their efficacy in reaching targets/vision(s) to inform discussions in Policy Lab 4.

**Fourth a policy lab** in October 2026: Evaluation and conclusions

- Stakeholders and researchers will draw conclusions for a set of policy recommendations.
- These will be based on the synthesis of project findings.

The Policy Engagement Forum complements these discussions by gathering more in-depth insights on specific forest policy and forest management topics.

## 1.2. The Policy Engagement Forum

ForestPaths' Policy Engagement Forum (PEF) is a specific engagement process designed to unearth stakeholders' needs and preferences for engagement concerning holistic, diverse and innovative climate change mitigation policy pathways, related to European forests and the forest-based sector, which is the goal of ForestPaths.

The PEF engages a blend of online and in-person activities formats, ranging from webinars and online panel discussions, surveys, and moderated Q&As, among others. In addition to that, ForestPaths remains open to feedback from stakeholders on how engagement should look like and which formats benefit cross learnings and sharing of experiences. The activities of the PEF are in addition to the annual Policy Labs, pillar events of the project, and complement the results from other ForestPaths workshops and scientific work within the project.

This specific PEF event that this report focusses on was designed to instigate a discussion around understanding successful policies that increase the adoption of Climate Biodiversity Smart (CBS) practices in Europe and identifying the barriers and the enablers for the uptake of these CBS forest management approaches.

## 2. Policy Engagement Forum Event on 'Factors influencing decision-making around CBS approaches'

The event took place on the platform Zoom, and a detailed agenda of the vent is available [in the annex](#). Opening the meeting, Clint Richards from Prospex Institute (PI) and Hans Verkerk from the European Forest Institute (EFI) welcomed the participants with a quick round of introductions and introduced the ForestPaths project and the main topic of this event: **Factors influencing decision-making around Climate Biodiversity Smart (CBS) approaches**.

Hans Verkerk explained that the objective of ForestPaths to co-create policy pathways for EU forests that considers the pressing need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as maintaining crucial ecosystem services. He presents the first results of the project, including maps of forest disturbances and their structure and composition; a collection of forest management data and narratives; and wood product material flows and life cycle analysis.

He then briefly described the stakeholder engagement strategy of the project, adopting a co-design process with stakeholders with pillar events (Policy Labs) and the complementary events of the PEF, as detailed above.

Moving on, he gave the floor to Diana Feliciano, professor at the Teesside University (UK) to provide more in-depth background information on the theme of this event, namely Climate and Biodiversity Smart (CBS) forest management and woodland creation. These approaches are relevant, also on the policy level, mainly for two Ecosystem Services (ES): carbon sequestration, contributing to the ‘Net Zero’ target of the EU Green Deal, and biodiversity commitments.

The concept of Climate-Smart Forest management engages with the mitigation, adaptation and production dimensions. ForestPaths intends to extend this concept by including biodiversity in this framework, resulting in a comprehensive approach aiming to enhance not only productivity of forest ecosystems and forest value chains, but also their resilience. The integration of conservation, adaptation, and mitigation efforts is a strategy to cope with climate change and biodiversity status while improving sustainable forest systems and maintaining the provision of ecosystem services, which, in addition to preserving the ecosystem, contribute to societal well-being and developing a circular bioeconomy. It is a holistic concept that considers and adapts to regional differences and country-specific challenges.

This adopted definition is derived from a review on CSF definitions from 38 papers, a workshop with colleagues in April, and a word cloud analysis. The research team conducted a literature review on potential CBS forest management practices and their impact on mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. Below is a table with the results.

## Assessment of technical potential CBS forest management practices



Category	Practice	Mitigation	Adaptation	Biodiversity	Ecosystem services
Tree species selection	Type				
	Adapted provenances	(+), (*)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)
	Native and non-native tree species	(+)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+)
Diversity	Broadleaves	(+), (*)	(+)	(+), (*)	(*), (-)
	Genetic and species variation	(+), (*)	(+), (*)	(+), (*)	(+)
Thinning	Thinning method	(+), (-)	(+)	(+), (-)	(/)
	Intensity and density	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(/)
	Partial harvest	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(/)
Harvest regime	Rotation length	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (-)
	Silvicultural systems	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)
Measures for biodiversity	Set-aside/Non-management	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*), (-)	(+), (*)	(*), (-)

**Legend: + or – effect, and \* depending on the site**

Figure 1: Results from the literature review of potential CBS forest management practices



After this introduction, the workshop moved on to a group exercise.

## 2.1. Group exercise on Climate and Biodiversity Smart Forest Management

The audience was split in two breakout groups. Each group was given thirty minutes to answer the following three questions:

1. Why would CBS forest management be relevant in Europe?
2. What are the policies in place to ensure the wider implementation of CBS forest management across Europe?
3. Do you know where in Europe forest management practices are implemented that could be considered CBS?

After completing the discussions, the audience came back to plenary and the rapporteur, one for each group, was given five minutes to report back the discussion. Below is an overview of the results for each question and each group. The resulting Mural boards can be found [in annex](#).

### Question 1: Why would CBS forest management be relevant in Europe?

#### *Group 1*

There was significant emphasis on the fact that biodiversity is important for resilience, but it is often overlooked and sometimes **biodiversity targets are not in line with climate targets**, therefore a strategy for **aligning the two** is important. Participants mentioned that a biodiversity assessment is also key, as biodiversity is linked to all stages of forest development, and it is important to understand the impact at the landscape level.

One participant commented that CBS is lacking societal impact, and others pointed out that managing for biodiversity requires **a mix of management approaches**, while uniformity could create the opposite effect. Identifying the **scale of action** is also crucial and is a complex puzzle, especially at the landscape level.

#### *Group 2*

In the second group, there was a larger focus on climate change emphasising that, due to the strong impact of climate change on the forestry sector, there is no other option than CBS for forest management. It should be considered when planning management approaches for the future in order to minimise, mitigate or adapt to its impact. This is also important given that many current forest management strategies, namely **the most homogeneous**, intensive and those overlooking biodiversity targets have failed. In fact, someone pointed out that action should be based on local data, rather than homogenised priorities.

The need for **combined practices and diverse forests**, especially in European forests, was highlighted by this group as well. Someone emphasised that goals and **priorities should be clearly defined, especially because climate and biodiversity can have different outcomes**, potentially conflicting. Lastly, practices that should be considered are assisted migration and the planting of exotic species (rather than natives).

## Question 2: What are the policies in place to ensure the wider implementation of CBS forest management across Europe?

### Group 1

The first group identified the following EU-level and national-level policies that work towards CBS strategies:

- **National Plan for Resilience** in Romania, which also reflects the financial benefits for land managers.
- **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030**: which states that 10% of land should be kept for non-intervention areas.
- **Carbon farming** is also being considered in EU policies for forests for nature-based solutions, and it now has provisional status (no implementation yet).

### Group 2

- At the **EU level** there are several policies that support the implementation of forestry practices, e.g. the **CAP** and **national funds**.
- Besides the EU level, there is **national legislation** and **certification schemes** that also work.
- **The Forest Monitoring Law** is also deemed as a key policy to highlight forest management needs.

The discussion also revolved around the issues linked to these policies, mainly the **faults in their implementation** and how they are penalised by a **lack of a strong political view and societal awareness**. The **timeframe** and **financial issues** were also mentioned, namely linked to the fact that foresters get money after implementation, but they should get it before to provide for implementation. There need to be **financial incentives** for forest owners supporting wood-based incomes and local policy implementation, e.g. in relation to PES, tourism, and not only timber trade. Lastly, **too much bureaucracy** is also identified as a barrier to policy implementation.

## Question 3: Do you know where in Europe forest management practices are implemented that could be considered CBS?

### Group 1

In general, **small-scale examples** of CBS management can be found across Europe.

- In **Romania**, all forests are **strictly regulated** and there's **no flexibility** for forest owners and managers, and this approach leads to high biodiversity. However, 70% of the requirement scheme is covered by legislation in Romania. The restrictions have a clear financial impact and are not seen as beneficial. For forest owners, the cost should be shared.

- In **France**, management plans **must assess climate change and biodiversity**, but they are not completely CBS compliant.
- Some initiatives in **Denmark** also attempt to implement CBS.

### Group 2

In general, local conditions in Europe are different and can be a limitation for what can be implemented. There was a discussion on the fact that well-designed plantations may have a role in increasing absorption and storage capacity and can ease the pressure for more biodiverse forests. There was agreement on the fact that Closer-to-Nature practices are the closest to CBS management. A participant mentioned that the **Prosilva network** has a database on Closer-to-Nature forestry. Besides the general overview, the following country-specific efforts were mentioned:

- **Slovenia** has good experience on Closer-to-Nature management and continuous forest cover.
- In the **UK** there is a conversion of existing forests according to climate change impact.
- Management plans in **France** were again mentioned, as in the previous group.
- **Slovakia** and **Hungary** attempted to manage their forests according to climate change impacts, but they came across some challenges (*unspecified*).

## 2.2. Presentation of ForestPaths' findings of interviews and workshops with European stakeholders

After the group discussions Diana Feliciano took the floor again to present the findings of interviews and workshops with European stakeholders, as part of the research within ForestPaths. She commenced with tackling the notion of ecosystem services.

There is a variety of ES, but among the most relevant is carbon sequestration, especially useful for achieving no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 (a goal of the European Green Deal). She briefly explained that Net Zero refers to the balance between the CO<sub>2</sub> released in the atmosphere and the amount that is then absorbed by the carbon sinks.

The other ES is biodiversity, with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework making biodiversity an important commitment leveraging land use to contribute to the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The objectives of the research were to:

- Improve the understanding of forest management and the decisions that influence it in Europe,
- Identify feasible CBS forest management approaches,
- Identify different types of forest practitioners and their related management approach(es),
- Understand barriers and enablers to CBS.

CBS is comprised of three pillars: mitigation, biodiversity, adaptation. There is a discussion around which pillar to prioritise, whether it is biodiversity or a balance of the three, acknowledging the fact that they are related: if we have mitigation, we have adaptation.

She brought forward an example from England where new land management schemes are arising, substituting for CAP after Brexit. In particular, the landscape recovery scheme appeals to stakeholders, landowners and managers at the landscape scale to collaborate on delivering ES. They are implementing various strategies, e.g. substitution of species with those that are more adapted, and natural regeneration.

The research team conducted a literature review on the factors that influence decision-making in forestry, using a social sciences approach exploring actors' behaviours. They found that not everybody acts in a profit-oriented way, because people have other values and interests. Forests can be managed for direct or indirect use. The former could be consumptive or non-consumptive (more linked to recreation and spiritual values), while the latter concerns more the climate or water cycle regulation function of the forest. Other than use, forest management can be motivated by several values.

In the literature, it was found that the prevalent forest owner types can be broken into the following categories:

- Economic-oriented landowners,
- Tradition-oriented landowners,
- Environmentalists,
- Absent landowners, and
- Multi-objective.

Following the literature review, the researchers conducted nineteen interviews with landowners in Europe and asked them about their perceptions around forest management.

From the interviews, it emerged that **management** is mainly influenced by the following **factors**:

- Regulation,
- Public incentives,
- Family values,
- Climate change impacts.

Concerning which **management practices** are implemented (with a focus on their CBS potential), they identified:

- Forest hedges,
- Retention trees,
- Buffer zones,
- Deadwood,
- Set-aside areas,
- Terrain preservation.

To have a more complete overview of the **types of forest practitioners** and their values, in addition to the interviews, the research team also conducted surveys in thirteen countries.

Five typology groups emerged:

- The **environmentally conscious passives**, who prioritise passive management and deem it important to provide for regulating ES.
- **Environmental implementers**, who want to provide regulating ES but also want to be part of networks and implement minimum business increments (MBIs).
- **Traditionalist**, who want to provide regulating ES but are sensitive towards society opinion.
- **Maximisers**, for whom MBIs are highly important.
- **Public satisfiers**, who prioritise social opinion and recreational services.

The graph below shows the responses in relation to the implementation of CBS practices in the thirteen countries surveyed:

## Implementation of CBS forest management in 13 countries

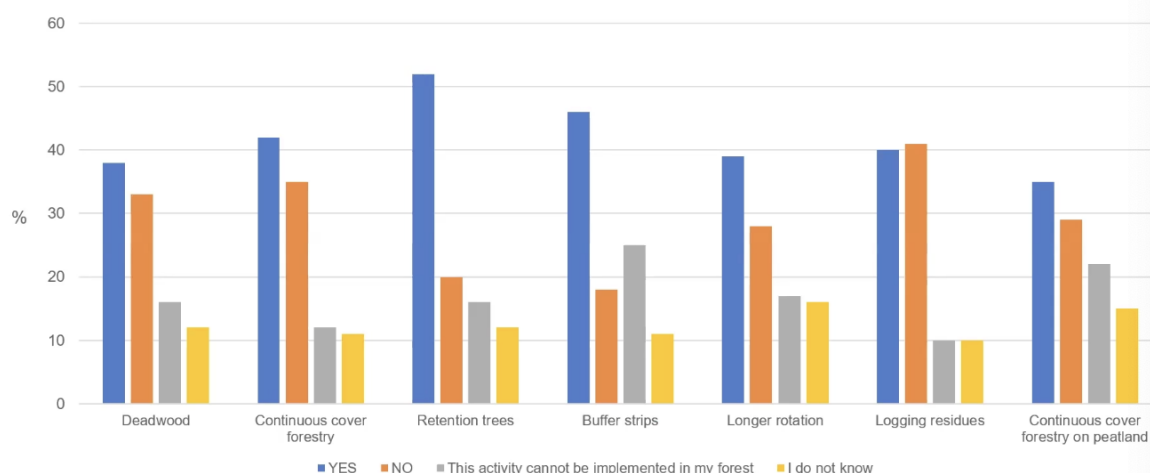


Figure 2: Implementation of CBS approaches in the surveyed countries

Lastly, the researchers conducted **workshops** in four countries (Finland, Netherlands, Romania and Italy (Sardinia)). Their objective was to gather more in-depth insights on the **suitability of CBS forest management** in specific regions. The researchers interacted with ninety-four stakeholders comprising forest owners, managers and experts, and policymakers.

The following topics were discussed:

- Local perceptions of climate change risks and impacts,
- Adaptation strategies,
- Contextual feasibility of CBS forest management.

Other benefits of the workshops:

- Knowledge dissemination about scientific literature on CBS,
- Contextualisation of barriers and enablers,

- Interaction with stakeholders and knowledge exchange,
- Triangulation of results (interviews, surveys, workshops).

Some of the **findings** on which CBS approaches are suitable were country-specific, but others were common to all four of those, including the following:

- Planting a drought-resistant species mix,
- Controlling game intensity (for example, reduced moose population in Finland),
- (Increase) deadwood and old trees,
- Increasing tree mix,
- Changing species proportion.

Concerning the barriers to CBS forestry, the findings of the workshop in Romania confirmed what the audience had said before about having strict legislation to contribute to this goal, but in Finland they saw more negative attitudes towards CBS, a lack of awareness of climate change impacts and a lack of knowledge on suitable forest management areas. In Sardinia (Italy), they saw a loss of traditional knowledge due to rural outward migration and to the lack of its official recognition. In the Netherlands as well there seems to be a lack of knowledge of the forestry sector from policy makers, extensive bureaucracy and a lack of holistic policies for the forestry sector overall.

## Main findings – Barriers of CBS



<p><b>The Netherlands</b>  <b>Subsidies to woody biofuels</b> which were perceived to contribute to carbon dioxide emissions by promoting more use of low-grade wood quality – Perverse incentive, policy  <b>Bureaucracy</b> around the uptake of <b>subsidies</b> – policy                      Lack of a stable long-term holistic vision for the forest sector and <b>non-holistic policies</b>  <b>Policy is focused on mitigation</b> and on achieving mitigation targets rather than on other dimensions (e.g., adaptation)  <b>Lack of knowledge</b> about the forest sector by policymakers</p>	<p><b>Romania</b>  <b>Strict legislation</b> imposed on forest management and lack of flexibility to experiment alternative management options on the ground – policy   <b>Lack of flexibility</b> and strict and unchangeable legislation, perceived to increase contribution to climate change risk – policy</p>
<p><b>Italy (Sardinia)</b>  <b>Rural outmigration</b> and loss of traditional knowledge and skills                      Scattered funding for forest management - <b>policy</b>  <b>Land fragmentation</b>                      Dated legislation - <b>policy</b>                      High cost of forest management  <b>Traditional knowledge</b> not recognised by authorities</p>	<p><b>Finland</b>  <b>Negative attitudes</b> towards CBS – attitudes                      Old habits and customs and resistance to new methods – attitudes                      Average <b>age</b> of forest owners  <b>Lack of awareness</b> of climate change impacts  <b>Lack of knowledge</b> on suitable forest management practices                      High cost of CBS forest management  <b>Forest disturbances hinder adaptation efforts</b>  <b>Deer numbers</b></p>

Figure 3: Barriers to CBS forest management in four countries

Concerning the enablers, in the Netherlands a wide understanding of multifunctional forest management and its benefits has largely enhanced the forestry sector, together with societal support. In Romania, because of the strict legislation, many CBS practices are already in place. In Italy, spiritual values towards the cork oak are at play, and also links and values towards traditional knowledge, despite the lack of official recognition.



## Main findings – Enablers (current)



<p><b>The Netherlands</b> Multifunctional forest management has been discussed and implemented for at <b>least 30 years</b>, and this has enabled the integration of the multiple dimensions of forests in management decisions</p> <p><b>Societal support</b> (emotional, passion) for measures to protect and recover it</p>	<p><b>Romania</b> Most CBS practices presented are already <b>mandatory</b> and considered by the compulsory forest management plans Other practices (e.g. introducing exotic species) not allowed</p>
<p><b>Italy (Sardinia)</b> <b>Spiritual connection with the cork oak trees</b> and the landscape – essential for understanding adaption requirements Existence of <b>(ancient) traditional knowledge</b> about fighting forests fire transmitted across generations</p>	<p><b>Finland</b> Not discussed</p>

Figure 4: Enablers of CBS forest management practices in four countries

Lastly, participants to the workshops shared which elements are missing to ensure the implementation of CBS approaches. Below are the main elements for each country:

## What should be implemented to enable CBS



<p><b>The Netherlands</b> <b>Subsidies</b> for afforestation and understory planting Policies and subsidies should focus on the outcomes (robust and healthy forest, healthy soils, biodiversity, adaptation)</p>	<p><b>Romania</b> <b>Legislation should change</b> and become less strict for them to be able to implement some alternative forest management practices. Financial support (incentives, or compensations) would be essential EU funding exists, but it is not being distributed for improving forest management among private owners and practitioners</p>
<p><b>Italy (Sardinia)</b> <b>Payments for ecosystem services (funding not reaching forest owners)</b> Establishment of forest cooperatives Joint forest management and associated plans covering contiguous small-scale forest area Educational activities for forest practitioners and Training for forest workers Recognition of traditional knowledge</p>	<p><b>Finland</b> Training Practical guidance and advice for forest owners, forestry professionals, and forest industry actors. More cooperation and partnerships Professional forest management advisory services <b>Financial incentives</b></p>

Figure 5: Elements that should be implemented to enable CBS in four countries

Finally, Diana Feliciano shares some key takeaways from their research:

- There are **common practices** in the four demo countries, albeit they present different conditions in terms of climate and landscapes.
- **Differences at the country level** explain most of the differences in the activities performed by forest owners (according to the surveys).
- Among the workshop participants, there is **consciousness around the increasing risks of climate change** – pests and diseases, drought risks and fires.

- **Current policies** were considered the main factor constraining the implementation of CBS.

### 2.2.1. Discussion

After the presentation, there was space to welcome any questions from the audience and a quick survey using the online tool Mentimeter. There was a question about clarifying whether training as an enabler for CBS was referring to new practitioners in the forestry sector. Diana Feliciano explained that they included training around how to manage to conserve biodiversity, production, mitigation and adaptation – so all those ‘new’ dimensions that should be considered but where there are no skills yet. However, in Finland, participants implicitly referred to the need for younger practitioners by discussing the age of forest owners.

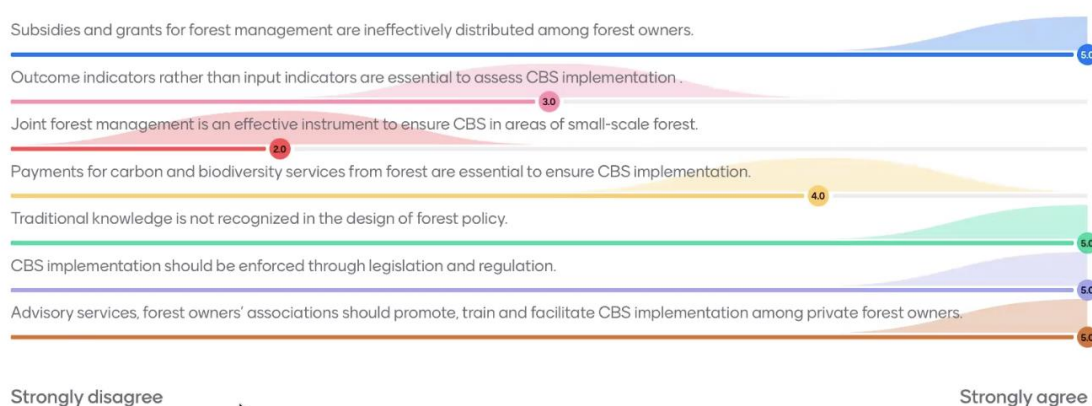
Concerning the survey, the audience was asked to state their level of agreement to several statements. Participants **strongly agreed** with the following statements:

- *“Subsidies and grants for forest management are ineffectively distributed among forest owners.”*
- *“Traditional knowledge is not recognised in the design of forest policy.”*
- *“CBS implementation should be forced through legislation and regulation.”*
- *“Advisory services, forest owners’ associations should promote, train and facilitate CBS implementation among private forest owners.”*

The statement with which most respondents **disagreed** was that *“Joint forest management is an effective instrument to ensure CBS implementation”*. While the statement *“Outcome indicators rather than input indicators are essential to assess CBS implementation”* received a **neutral** average response, and most respondents **agreed** that *“Payments for carbon and biodiversity services from forest are essential to ensure CBS implementation”*.

Here below a graphic representation of the survey results:

### CBS Presentation Survey Questions



Commenting on the discussion so far a participant reiterated what had already been mentioned in a breakout group – that they are not against more regulation as there is already



good regulation in place in most of Europe, the problem is that it is not well implemented. Certification bodies surely have the means to do that, but it is a small portion of the forestry sector, and voluntary certification only has a 30% reach. On the other hand, Romania is a good example for Closer-to-Nature forestry but even so there is a problem with illegal logging from other European industries. This suggests that, despite the strict law, perhaps the forest police are not sufficiently equipped, or the forestry sector is understaffed. Societal education around the need for good forest managers could be a solution to address good forest practices. Overall, it is a very complex issue.

### 2.3. Event closing and next steps

After the presentation, participants were invited to fill in a survey on the event. The results are included [in annex](#).

Wrapping up the event, Prospex Institute presents the ForestPaths events scheduled for 2025:

- *ForestTalks* Events with the projects PathFinder and ForestNavigator
  - Next event: “Update on EU forest-related policies” - Tentative date: March 17, 2025
- Next Policy Engagement Forum Event – Summer 2025
  - Topic to be decided and suggestions are welcome through our PEF platform
- Policy Lab 3: Co-creating pathways with stakeholders – October 2025
  - Taking our stakeholder visions for the future of forests in Europe by 2050 and co-creating policy pathways

Then Hans Verkerk took the floor to thank the participants for attending the event, re-stated how co-creation is a core value of the project and invited the audience to stay engaged with the project’s events.

## 3. Evaluation

The survey was filled in by five participants. The survey comprised of nine questions for which participants had to answer by giving a rating from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) and four more question with a free-form answer.

The event received overall good ratings. The quality of the event received an average score of 4.5 and participants gave an average score of 4.4 to the question ‘how far did the event reach the set objectives?’. When asked whether the composition of the group was beneficial to the aim and objectives of the event, the majority gave a 5 rating, resulting in an average of 4.5. 70% of respondents felt enabled to contribute to the discussions, and this question scored an average of 4.7. The question on the ability of participants to develop insights and knowledge relevant for their work received an average rating of 4.0, with most people responding 3 or 5 (41.2% each). The overall process and agenda of the event received an average rating of 4.6 and the work of the facilitator scored 4.7. The quality of the presentation scored 4.5 and the logistical or technical arrangements 4.6. The response graphs are available [in the annex](#).

The participants most appreciated the time dedicated to discussions and the exchange of ideas, together with the event’s ‘openness’. When asked what could be improved, one

participant advised to gather more participants from various backgrounds. Other answers highlighted that they appreciated ‘data driven’ presentations such as these, perhaps with more direct links to the literature mentioned. Concerning the additional topics that could be included in other events, someone mentioned to include a discussion on the definition and indicators of CBS and the feasibility of its implementation. Lastly, half of the participants thought that there was enough time for meaningful interactions among participants, while two respondents mention that it could have been a bit longer.

## 4. Conclusion

The objective of this online event was to gather insights around the factors at play when considering decision-making around CBS approaches.

The group discussion emphasized the fact that in Europe there is already good policy in place (EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, CAP, Forest Monitoring Law, among those mentioned), which allows for flexibility through national funds (except in a few cases, e.g. Romania where the legislation on forestry is rather strict) in order to tailor the forestry intervention to local conditions, which is an aspect of planning for management that participants have deemed particularly important. However, from the discussions it emerged that the issues exist in the implementation stage of these policies. That may be due to different factors, starting from a lack of political and societal support for these goals, together with insufficient resources in the forestry sector in terms skills, labour, and material for nurseries. Financial issues have also been identified.

The group discussions partly confirmed ForestPaths' findings of interviews and workshops with European stakeholders. There seems to be widespread agreement on ensuring diversity through mix species, and on the fact that financial incentives and subsidies are lacking. Finally, legislation should be flexible enough to implement national plans and adapt at the landscape level.

Lastly, the survey results partly confirmed what had been mentioned so far, namely: the ineffective division of subsidies and grants for forest management; the lack of recognition of traditional knowledge; the need to promote and train CBS implementation among private forest owners; and moderate agreement around the fact that PES are useful to ensure CBS implementation, especially in the case of carbon sequestration and reaching biodiversity targets.

## 5. Annexes

## 5.1. Event agenda

### Agenda

14:00	Welcome & introduction
14:15	Exercise in groups on CBS forest management
14:50	Plenary review
15:10	Presentation of ForestPaths' findings of interviews and workshops with European stakeholders <i>By Diana Feliciano, Professor at the Teesside University</i>
15:30	Discussion
15:50	Event closing and next steps

## 5.2. Mural board

**1. Why would climate & biodiversity smart forest management be relevant in Europe?**

**Biodiversity is important for resilience**

There are important, practical reasons for why we should be focusing more on biodiversity by integrating nature conservation into forest management.

Sometimes biodiversity does not always track with other objectives. Maintaining the two is important.

Not all forest practices focus on biodiversity, carbon and complementary.

Resilience is important in understanding forest as a complex system and a complex system needs to be understood.

Each of the CBS dimensions should be considered, possibly equal weight.

Resilience is a key concept in the CBS framework. It is the ability of a system to absorb disturbance and still remain in the same state of functioning. It is the ability of a system to absorb disturbance and still remain in the same state of functioning.

Monitoring for biodiversity requires a long-term perspective. It is important to have a long-term perspective on biodiversity.

Biodiversity assessment is also key, in all types of forests.

**2. What are the policies in place to ensure the wider implementation of CBS forest management across Europe?**

National Plan for Biodiversity in Romania does not reflect financial benefits for land managers.

Carbon farming is also being considered in EU policies for nature-based solutions.

Carbon farming is a practical policy in the EU space, as the EU is trying to encourage it. It is not significant forest poverty.

EU biodiversity strategy 2030: 30% of land being considered for non-intervention areas.

**Group 1**

**3. Do you know where in Europe forest management practices that could be considered CBS?**

Biodiversity is an example in all forests, but not private forestry regulated by forest certification.

In Romania, this approach needs to be high biodiversity, if it works, start for it.

The impact of the approach is positive in Romania. The approach is a new forest type, but not a complete solution. The approach is not a complete solution.

In France, management practices must consider climate change and biodiversity, but not completely CBS compliant.

Small examples of CBS implementation in forest areas in Europe, on local level.

Some initiatives in Germany attempt to implement CBS.

ForestPaths is an example in all forests, but not private forestry regulated by forest certification.

In Romania, this approach needs to be high biodiversity, if it works, start for it.

The impact of the approach is positive in Romania. The approach is a new forest type, but not a complete solution. The approach is not a complete solution.

In France, management practices must consider climate change and biodiversity, but not completely CBS compliant.

Small examples of CBS implementation in forest areas in Europe, on local level.

Some initiatives in Germany attempt to implement CBS.

1. Why would climate & biodiversity smart forest management be relevant in Europe?

- no other option than CBS
- climate is a strong influencing factor in forestry
- climate change is a crucial factor when planning for forest management
- big questions: biodiversity or climate change? Could have different outcomes
- question of what is the best management plan must be clear (climate or biodiversity or combined)
- important to build diverse forests
- we need combined practices
- Europe is a old continent - great example for other areas in the world
- Preserve European forests - which are very important
- We are taking about Europe but it is a movement need for every forest in the world
- action should be based on local data - no homogenised priorities
- important to consider the current situation of European forests and why
- necessary justification of other decisions, consider first the effects of climate change to define future steps
- it is important to set priorities
- there is room to improve existing forests, e.g. including other species to enhance resilience
- assisted migration should be an obligation

Group 2

- EU level - increased forest cover, reduced biodiversity, increased carbon storage in the forest as a result of the policy
- investigation consider what, how, why, how much, the role of the forest in the policy area in future impact
- Builds the EU level, there's nothing between legislation, Certification, schemes that work
- The problem is the lack of money for implementation
- Forest Monitoring Law - key role in highlighting the needs
- EU MS or regions need to support specific management commitments they can implement
- Forest interventions for forest owners to support wood-based incomes
- help them to implement the policies locally (e.g. PES, tourism and other nature based)
- Lack of societal awareness towards the forestry sector and forest implementation
- Also too much work to apply for the money
- There is a lot to learn from certification schemes

2. What are the policies in place to ensure the wider implementation of CBS forest management across Europe?

3. Do you know where in Europe forest management practices are implemented that could be considered CBS?

- Close to nature areas are the closest to CBS management
- Prosvina network has a database
- Slovakia - good experience and practices on close to nature, continuous forest cover
- local conditions in Europe are different and can be a limitation for what can be implemented
- France is also including climate change and biodiversity considerations in local development plans
- UK - innovation of existing forests according to climate change
- Is there any room for intensive management?
- France is also including climate change and biodiversity considerations in local development plans
- Balance the different needs
- Plantations have a role but it depends on the objectives