



Workshop on the implementation of the European Commission's Forest Guidelines in the Boreal Region 27-28 January 2025

Event Background

The **European Commission's Forest Strategy 2030** represents a cornerstone of the EU's commitment to improve the quantity and quality of EU forests for unlocking their full potential for the environment, economy and society as resilient and multifunctional ecosystems. In 2023, the Commission published **a key set of three guidelines** to support sustainable forest management:

- Guidelines for defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting EU primary and old-growth forests;
- Guidelines on biodiversity-friendly afforestation, reforestation and tree planting; and
- Guidelines on closer-to-nature forest management.

The **European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment** and the **Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry** and the **Finnish Ministry of the Environment**, is organising a two-day workshop in Helsinki, Finland, with the support of **Milieu Consulting**, which aims to serve as a platform for furthering the implementation of these guidelines in the Boreal biogeographical region of the European Union.

This workshop will focus on the 2023 guidelines' role in **enhancing the resilience and sustainable use of forests as multifunctional ecosystem in the boreal region**, a topic of particular importance in light of the challenges faced by forests from both increased climate stressors and the needs of the bioeconomy.

The workshop will bring together forestry experts and practitioners from Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to foster knowledge exchange, identify implementation barriers and opportunities, and develop concrete strategies for implementing the guidelines in the Boreal region.

Event Programme

The workshop will be moderated by **Matthew Geraci**, Policy Advisor at Milieu Law and Policy Consulting.

Location: **Tieteiden talo, Kirkkokatu 6, 00170 Helsinki, Finland.**

Day 1: 27 January

12:15 – 12:50	<i>Registration & Coffee</i>	
12:50 – 13:00	<i>Welcome</i>	
Primary & old-growth forest mapping & protection: current status, challenges and barriers		
13:00 – 13:20	Setting the policy context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adrian Tistan, Policy Officer, European Commission, DG ENV 	
13:20 – 13:50	The devil in the details – What should be considered for a scientifically based definition of European primary and old-growth boreal forests? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bengt-Gunnar Jonsson, Professor, Mid Sweden University <p>Q&A with the floor</p>	
13:50 – 15:30	Breakout Groups (under Chatham House rule)	
	Group 1 – Sweden & Finland Moderated by Jernej Stritih	Group 2 – Estonia, Latvia & Lithuania Moderated by Katarina Mulec
	Update on the current status in the five Boreal region countries in defining, mapping and protecting primary and old-growth forests on the basis of the EU definitions and guidelines. <p>Sharing different stakeholder perspectives and Q&A with the floor</p>	
15:30 – 15:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
15:45 – 16:00	Reporting from the breakout groups by the rapporteurs	
16:00 – 16:25	The crucial role of old-growth forest for sustainable forestry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mikko Mönkkönen, Professor, University of Jyväskylä <p>Q&A with the floor</p>	
16:25 – 17:15	Use of public incentives for voluntary forest protection – example of the METSO program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terhi Koskela, Research Scientist, Natural Resources Institute, LUKE, Finland <p>Old-growth forest protection and ecotourism opportunities – short video message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jessica Sannö – ecotourism entrepreneur, Tiveden National Park, Sweden 	

	Landowner perspective – Q&A with the participating landowners Q&A with the floor
17:15 – 17:30	<i>Concluding remarks</i>

Day 2: 28 January

9:00 – 9:15	Recap of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2
Closer to Nature Forest management: challenges, opportunities, and knowledge gaps in the Boreal region	
9:15 – 9:30	Setting the policy context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stefanie Schmidt, Policy Officer, European Commission, DG ENV
09:30 – 10:45	<p>Making Boreal forests fit for future: the role of closer to nature forestry</p> <p>CNF in the boreal region - options and obstacles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasi Rautio, Research Professor, Natural Resource Institute, LUKE, Finland <p>Combining biodiversity goals and multilayered stand structures with economic profitability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nils Fagerberg, Senior Lecturer in Silviculture, Linnaeus University, Sweden <p>Moving from clear-cut based forest management to closer to nature in Estonia- mission possible?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silvia Lotman, Leader for the Nature Forest Programme, Estonian Fund for Nature, Estonia <p>Q&A with the floor</p>
10:45 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00 – 12:15	<p>Moving from theory to practice in closer to nature forest management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vesa Junnikkala, Sustainability Director, Metsä Group, Finland • Ellen Nystedt, Chair, Skogens Mångbruk, Sweden • Marcus Walsh, Founder & Chair, Innofor Ltd., Finland • Martin Pilstjärna, Impact Director, Qarlbo Biodiversity, Sweden
12:15 – 13:15	<i>Light lunch</i>

Biodiversity-friendly afforestation, reforestation, and tree planting: challenges and opportunities environment	
13:15– 13:30	Setting the policy context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marco Onida, Team Leader, European Commission, DG ENV
13:30 – 14:45	Choice of tree species/provenances: how to best combine resilience to future climate change scenario with the need to protect and enhance biodiversity at local level; the role of tree nurseries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katri Himanen, Research Manager, Natural Resources Institute Finland, LUKE • Silvio Schöler, Head of Department of Forest Growth, Silviculture and Genetics, Austrian Research Center for Forests BFW, Vienna, Austria • Gediminas Brazaitis, Professor, Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy Kaunas, Lithuania
14:45 – 15:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:00 – 15:30	Reforestation – natural regeneration and/or tree planting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Jentzen, Forest Engineer, Ekoskog, Sweden
15:30 – 16:00	Soil and water protection, peatland preservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raymond Flynn, Associate Professor, Queens University in Belfast, Northern Ireland
16:00 – 16:30	Not only forest: tree planting in agroforestry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua S. Finch, Agroforestry in Nyland, Project Leader, Green Ecosystem Services, Team Leader, Novia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
16:30 – 17:00	Q&A with the floor
17:00 – 17:15	<i>Concluding remarks</i>