Forest ownership changes in Europe: trends, issues and needs for action

A summary of the COST Action FP1201 FACESMAP: Forest Land Ownership Changes in Europe: Significance for Management And Policy

Professor Anna Lawrence, University of the Highlands and Islands, UK
Seventy-fourth session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
18-20 October 2016, Geneva, Switzerland
Interest in forest owners ...

Publications / year on ‘forest* and owner*’ - Web of Knowledge
Geographical focus

USA
FINLAND
SWEDEN
CANADA
GERMANY
ENGLAND
AUSTRALIA
BRAZIL
FRANCE
SPAIN
NORWAY
JAPAN
PEOPLES R CHINA
AUSTRIA
SWITZERLAND
INDIA
ITALY
POLAND
NETHERLANDS
NEW ZEALAND
SCOTLAND
INDONESIA
CZECH REPUBLIC
ROMANIA
New publications on forest owners in four European countries

- Scotland
- Austria
- Finland
- Romania
Goals and outputs of the COST Action

1. To **analyse attitudes** and constraints of forest owner types in Europe, and the ongoing changes;
2. To **explore innovative management** approaches for new forest owner types;
3. To **study effective policy instruments**;
4. To draw **conclusions and recommendations** for forest-related policies, forest management practice, further education and future research.
What we did ...

- 30 participating countries; 28 expert country reports
- Field visits and interaction with stakeholders using innovative ‘Travellab’ method
- Three European-level stakeholder meetings
- Collaboration with UNECE-FAO Forest and Timber Section and the Confederation of European Forest Owners
- 22 small groups focusing on specific topics producing 25 papers and book chapters.
- Internal workshops to deepen understanding across working groups, and an internal online survey
Literature review on forest ownership in change

182 selected reports/publications (28 countries)

Number of selected references per country and their language

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Four drivers for changing ownership

1. Restitution or privatisation
2. Purchase
3. Afforestation
4. Changing lifestyle and values
Trends in Forest Ownership Change in Europe

New Forest Ownership through Restitution or Privatization of Forest Land
(time period: 1985-2015)

Legend
Restitution
Significance
- 0 (not relevant)
- 1 (to some extent)
- 2 (rather important)
- 3 (highly important)

East Germany
- 2 (rather important)

Privatization
Significance
- 1 (to some extent)
Trends in Forest Ownership Change in Europe

New Forest Ownership through New Private Forest Owners who have bought Forests
(time period: 1985-2015)

Legend
Significance
- 0 (not relevant)
- 1 (to some extent)
- 2 (rather important)
Trends in Forest Ownership Change in Europe

New Forest Ownership through Afforestation of formerly Agricultural or Waste Lands (time period: 1985-2015)

Legend
Significance
- 0 (not relevant)
- 1 (to some extent)
- 2 (rather important)
- 3 (highly important)
Two examples of FACESMAP outputs
“Degree of freedom in private forestry”

A property rights analysis across 27 European countries

Led by Liviu Nichiforel, University of Suceava, Romania
## The Property rights index in private forestry (37 indicators)

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Extension, advice and knowledge exchange for private forestry: diversity and change across Europe

Anna Lawrence, Philippe Deuffic, Teppo Hujala, Liviu Nichiforel, Torgny Lind, Erik Wilhelmsson, Meelis Teder, Lelde Vilkriste, Krzysztof Jodlowski, Didier Marchal, Diana Feliciano, Ari Talkkari
Advisory systems: overall trends

Diversification and liberalisation of information; open market for advice:

• Questioning expertise, reliability of information, and trust.
• Owners’ practice-based knowledge and experience comes to fore
• Advisory system needs stability, structure and skilful educated personnel
• Adapt advisory offer and demand to diversity of forest owner profiles
Six cross-cutting themes
Theme 1: The variety of trends in changing land ownership

What did we already know?

• Lots of change
• Restitution and privatisation in post-socialist Europe
• Urbanisation of western European forest owners

What have we added to that?

• Restitution in CEE and SEE has had very diverse goals and implementation;
• Other new modes of ownership – trends and patterns quasi-quantified
• Range of new and old community groups
Theme 2: Simplistic understanding of ownership types and owner categories

What did we already know?

• Many attempts to develop typologies, often relying on owners’ motivations

What have we added to that?

• Increasing diversity of legal forms of forest ownership types
• Separately (overlapping) increasing diversity of owner values, motivations, knowledge systems
• Hybrids and grey areas: new self-organised community groups, environmental and social NGOs, hobby owners
• Useful typologies have to capture more complex relations and be developed to fit the specific issue and conditions at hand
Theme 3: Ownership is only one component of property rights

What did we already know?

• *The owner’s freedom to manage the forest varies widely*

What have we added to that?

Geographical patterns include:

• central control of forest management in (some) former socialist countries
• more access restrictions in private forests in southern European countries

Historic trends include:

• some liberalisation of property rights
• privatisation and decentralisation of public forests
• emergence of governance arrangements which enable management without ownership
Theme 4: Challenge of national data

What did we already know?

• Challenges with data harmonisation

What have we added to that?

• Lack and inconsistency of statistical information and forest owner surveys limits possibilities of:
  – overview and comparison
  – better understanding of variety of owners’ goals and behaviour

• Some countries lack:
  – complete land registration or cadastral records
  – national records on individual characteristics e.g. gender
Theme 5: Valuing diversity, providing advice and services

What did we already know?

• *Private owners are important for the delivery of forest policy objectives*

• *Extension and advisory systems (aim to) support this policy delivery*

What have we added to that?

• Owners and their objectives are more diverse (and knowledgeable) than is recognised by policy and advisors

• New approaches need to build on participatory approaches while acknowledging a need for forestry technical knowledge

• A diverse and interconnected advisory system may be most useful but possibly does not yet exist.
Theme 6: Need to evaluate and design effective policy instruments

What did we already know?
• A range of policy instruments has been developed and targeted at private forest owners
• On the whole such instruments are perceived to be under-achieving

What have we added to that?
• Policy interventions are rarely documented and even more rarely evaluated (this varies between countries)
• Lack of knowledge on effects of policies on different forest owner types, and lack of specific policy instruments tailored to the needs and objectives of diverse owners.
Conclusions and needs

1. More positive way of seeing the diversity of owners
2. New owner structures (associations, commons, charities) as social innovation
3. Support for advisory services and organisations that work with owners in different ways
4. Proactive thinking about silviculture and innovation
5. Opportunities for learning through doing
6. Evaluate the policies and the advisory services
Further information: anna.lawrence.ic.@uhi.ac.uk
http://facesmap.boku.ac.at
Action Chair: gerhard.weiss@boku.ac.at