



**Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
Economic Commission for Europe**



**European Forestry Commission
Food and Agricultural Organization**

TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON SUSTAINABLE FOREST PRODUCTS

Introduction

The Paris Agreement¹ on Climate Change cast the global society the challenge to drastically reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, so as to retain global warming beneath 2°C and preferably 1.5°C by 2050 vis-à-vis the pre-industrial era. To achieve even the former target requires drastic and concerted measures by governments at all levels, industries and citizens for energy reduction and resource efficiency. In this context, forest-based materials and products from sustainably managed forests have great potential to demonstrate their compatibility with such requirements on a functional and performance-oriented basis. One of the obvious fields in which to demonstrate such performance is that of construction.

The need for carbon-neutral, energy-efficient solutions in the construction sector can be met in many cases by a range of innovative forest-based materials, products and systems. These are applicable to all construction markets including: starter homes, subsequent homes, offices, public buildings and infrastructures, including for both new construction and for renovation, for tenants, owners and investors^{2,3}.

The remit of the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products (ToS SFP) is to broaden the awareness of the use of forest products in the UNECE region⁴. The ToS SFP proposes to run a series of workshops, the intention of which is to grow the awareness and raise the profile of the forest products for building amongst construction-related professionals. These include at least: building owners and developers; planners; architects and engineers; developers; estimators; quantity surveyors; valuers; housing associations; banks; investors; insurers; building contractors; regulatory bodies and the forest products industries.

Wood WORKS! is a programme of the Canadian Wood Council that supports a wood culture by connecting individuals, sharing best practices and celebrating innovative successes⁵. Over twenty years in operation, this programme has successfully grown the market share for forest products in construction markets in Canada. Similar initiatives have been run in Sweden⁶, Finland⁷ and the Baltic States. Moreover, wood-based biomass is a key part of Austria's climate change plan to reduce its GHG by 36% by 2030⁸.

Through this series of workshops, we seek to build on this experience of our Canadian, Nordic, Austrian and other colleagues by developing awareness and knowledge of forest-based materials, products and systems amongst the broader construction constituency.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

² https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/downloads/Cover_of_Canadian_Wood_-_Renewable_By_Nature_-_Cdn_Forest_Product_Assoc_-_June_20089491.pdf

³ <https://ttf.co.uk/ttf-sustainability/>

⁴ <https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/mis/tos/2018/Mandate2018.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.woodworks.org>

⁶ <https://www.swedishwood.com/swedish-wood-award/swedish-wood-award-50-years/>

⁷ <https://mmm.fi/en/en/forests/use-of-wood/wood-construction>

⁸ https://www.ieabioenergy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CountryReport2018_Austria_final.pdf

As of August 2019, the workshops which are in planning include:

- An ancillary event on the use of forest products in housing on 3rd October 2019 at the Annual Meeting of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, Geneva, Switzerland⁹.
- *Meeting your building's climate-change challenges: how sustainable forest products can help*, a one-day workshop to be held in Brussels, Belgium, during week commencing 9th December 2019.
- A one-day workshop on innovation in housing to be run in Spring 2020 with the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, Geneva, Switzerland.

A construction workshop in Brussels, December 2019

We are proposing to run a one-day workshop in Brussels in the week commencing 9th December 2019. The objectives of this workshop are to increase the awareness and knowledge of the benefits of using forest-based materials, products and systems in construction projects. The audience for our workshop includes: planners; developers; regulatory bodies; architects and engineers; estimators; quantity surveyors; building contractors; building owners; housing associations; finance (banks and investors); insurance; valuers; ; the forest products industries; and.

Our proposed workshop title is:

'Meeting your building's climate-change challenges: how sustainable forest products can help'.

Although this event is run by the above ToS, with the aim of spreading awareness and knowledge of forest products for construction, these are only profiled on a functional and performance basis, not a material one. Accordingly, workshops conferences will be run on a material-neutral basis.

The proposed agenda is as follows:

Session I: The Challenge from Paris:

- **Keynote: "Answering the call from Paris: the challenges for construction from climate change for a low-carbon, circular bio-economy by 2050"**. (A climate change speaker to set the climate-change context as a backdrop for innovative building solutions to respond to the Paris Agreement on climate change.
- **Buildings use the most energy: how to reduce construction's carbon footprint, cutting waste and bills.** (40 % (CHECK!) of all energy and emissions globally come from the manufacture, installation and use of buildings. An expert analysis will show how this consumption is composed and could be cut down).
- Panel and audience discussion.

Session II: "Wood is good but it twists or rots; burns or flops. Yes - BUT!": real-life stories overcome folk tales:

- Stabilising wood by drying and/or chemically altering: from Kyanase to Thermowood.
- Don't talk rot!: a session on protecting and extending the life of wood.
- Trial by ordeal: more than Tinder
- I'll huff and puff – and shake the ground: resistance of wooden structures to wind and seismic shocks.

Session III: some traditional wooden solutions: some are still good: a brief review of famous case histories

- Round and sawnwood solutions: from Woodhenge, through wattle-and-daub to post-and-beam: a series of short presentations on various traditional wooden building systems, materials and products.

⁹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51150>

Session IV: A woody renaissance

- Engineered wood products: demonstrating how cross-laminated timber (CLT); glulam and laminated veneer lumber (LVL) can provide tailor-made, efficient, convenient, sustainable and affordable construction and usage solutions for single or multi-storey occupancy.
- Structural panel solutions.
- Insulation innovation: how woody and other bio-based fibres can keep us warm – and save money.
- Meeting your buildings' energy requirements: from wood stoves to passive houses.

Speakers shall be selected who are among the leading experts in their field in each of the categories as detailed above.

The expected output of the workshop would be a set of strategic conclusions and recommendations about how the UNECE region's forest-based sector can, inter alia, best contribute to the needs of the growing demands for energy-efficient and climate-friendly housing and other buildings as part of the response to the challenge of the [Paris Agreement](#).

In order to seek broad support for this initiative across the UNECE region¹⁰, a number of key sectoral organisations are being approached. These include: [Wood WORKS Canada](#); the [Architect's Council of Europe \(ACE\)](#), [CEI-Bois](#), [EOS](#), [EPF](#), [WEI](#), [Fertigbau](#), etc. Accordingly, we actively seek your support to develop and organise a successful workshop, as well as participate at it.

A side event at UNECE Housing and Land Management Annual Meeting

To reach out to other relevant sectoral bodies about the potential for using sustainable forest products for construction, the [41st Session of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management](#) (UNECE, Geneva, 27th – 29th March 2019)¹¹ invited the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products to reinforce its links with and [the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management](#)¹², which works to promote¹³:

- energy-efficient, accessible and affordable adequate housing, including for those with special needs and vulnerable societal groups;
- densification, inclusive, resilient, smart and sustainable cities and
- transparent and efficient land-use and property registration.

In support of the remit from the Working Party, it has been agreed with the UNECE that the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products will organise and run a side event on 3rd October 2019 at the [80th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management](#), to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It is proposed that this side event would be run on a theme to compliment the focus of the 80th session namely: *'Affordable, accessible and climate-friendly buildings and infrastructures for all societal groups'*¹⁴. In keeping with free-market and competition policy considerations, this side event will be run on a material-neutral basis. The format of our proposed side event will be designed to maximise debate and discussion between participants on how forest products can best be used in construction projects in the UNECE region. This event would also serve as a prelude and link to the Brussels workshop.

¹⁰ <https://www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/region.html>

¹¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48832>

¹² **Forward looking**

It is also highly desirable that future links include the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy; given the role that forest-based biomass has in the renewable energy sector, in addition to wooden structures conserving energy through their natural thermal properties.

¹³ <https://www.unece.org/housing.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51150>

Please contact me on  +353 87 967 9528 (GMT business hours, Monday – Friday) if you have any queries or comments in relation to this proposal. We look forward to talking to you in September to discuss how we can best move this proposal forward.

Regards



Eoin O'Driscoll
Team Leader
UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products

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T: +353 87 967 9528

E: eoin@drima.com