

EU CAP Network

'Circular bioeconomy – valorisation of forest by-products'

AGENDA

Update 17 March 2025

26-27 March 2025 | Kouvola, Finland

Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI



Funded by
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Workshop 'Circular bioeconomy – valorisation of forest by-products'

This workshop will explore innovations that support the development of value chains for high-value products derived from forest waste and residues. It will consider technological advancements as well as innovations in governance, business, and cooperative models. The aim is to support robust value chains that facilitate a fair distribution of benefits to rural communities and foster a more effective circular bioeconomy in forestry.

The workshop is organised within Specific Objective (SO) 8 of the CAP, which promotes the circular bioeconomy and sustainable forestry, employment, growth, and local development in rural areas. This workshop will specifically examine novel technologies and methods for creating high-value or new products from forestry residues and waste, and strategies for nutrient recycling. The focus of the event will be limited to residues that are sourced from forestry, which will contribute to a more efficient use of resources by minimising waste and converting residues into high-value products.

Additionally, this workshop aligns with SO 1 and SO 3 of the CAP, as it aims to increase farm income derived from forestry and improve the position of farmers in the value chain. It has an indirect contribution to SO 5, enhancing the management of resources. It also supports the cross-cutting objective (CCO) of the CAP, which seeks to modernise agriculture and rural areas by fostering and sharing knowledge, innovation and digitalisation, and by encouraging their uptake by farmers through improved access to research, innovation, knowledge exchange and training.

The workshop will be developed around three main and interconnected building blocks:

- › **More traditional and well-established value chains**, highlighting several examples such as production of biochar, fibres, mulching material, pellets or wood composites, raw materials used for agriculture, incorporation into the soil, furniture industry, and different types of energy production. Although these value chains are not new, they can still be improved, optimised and enhanced, especially to benefit primary producers (foresters including forest managers, owners, and farmers) and rural communities in general.
- › **New, innovative value chains** with the potential to generate higher added value and higher carbon sequestration, including production of materials for the chemical industry (including bioplastics), transport and food industries, the energy sector, and others. While still in the early stages in Europe, these new technologies and production methods represent a promising area for the circular bioeconomy in forestry, capturing the attention from the private sector and other stakeholders. Some illustrative examples are the combined production of bioenergy, biochar and high-purity carbon dioxide (green carbon) or production of biocoal and bioethanol.
- › **Experiences on business models, governance and cooperation**, which support circularity, competitiveness and job creation in rural areas, while promoting efficient and sustainable value chains and a fair distribution of revenues, especially towards supply providers and rural communities. These could include examples of cooperatives, start-ups and new business models, or regional and local bioeconomy



hubs, networks and strategies. Within these initiatives, it is particularly important to examine the role of primary producers (farmers and foresters). For example, instead of just providing raw materials, farmers and foresters could potentially carry out some primary **processing** activities that would give their products higher added value and improve their position in the value chain.

The specific objectives of the workshop are :

- > **Showcase successful initiatives:** These may include innovative projects and initiatives that have successfully developed or supported value chains for forest by-products, new experiences on valorisation of forest by-products, generation of new business opportunities, markets and jobs in rural areas, and examples of governance and cooperation that enhance the role of forest owners, managers and farmers on these value chains. These initiatives may involve various feedstocks and diverse high-value products derived from them. Furthermore, they can link to different parts of the value chain, e.g. forecasting and inventory of feedstock, processing, and promising technological developments of new products from residues, business models, new applications or markets for bio-based products.
- > **Identify and map key value chain actors and roles:** Identify the key actors involved in the different value chains, their roles, and their position within the chain. This will require to also pay attention to the position and role of the rural communities in these chains. Mapping will help to understand the current dynamics and identify opportunities for optimising and improving.
- > **Discuss innovative practices and ways forward:** Identify potential challenges and opportunities for improvement within the value chains, to promote the circular bioeconomy in forestry, and maximise the opportunities to support the competitiveness and development of rural communities (for example strengthening their position in the value chains, creating jobs and markets, etc.). These innovative practices and ways forward could deal with the diversity of the forest sector, the availability of resources, or stakeholder and community involvement, among others.
- > **Identify gaps in current knowledge and practice** that hinder the development of efficient forest by-product value chains. Identify and propose areas where further research and innovation are required to develop efficient and fair value chains for high-value forest products derived from forest residues and waste.
- > **Encourage networking** and foster partnerships between EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, Horizon Europe multi-actor projects, industry players and other relevant actors, to exchange innovative practices and ideas with the aim of supporting the development of resilient, sustainable bio-based value chains.

More information [on the event webpage](#).



Draft agenda

Update 17/03/2025

Timing	Day 0: Tuesday 25 March 2025
19:00 – 21:30	<i>(Optional) Welcome dinner at Kouvola City Hall. Offered by the City of Kouvola and the Rural Network Support Unit of Finland. Participants are welcome to join at any time.</i>

Timing	Day 1: Wednesday 26 March 2025
8.30 – 9.00	Registration day 1
9:00 – 9:50	Introduction to the workshop and welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Getting to know each other › Welcome – Teemu Hauhia, Rural Network Support Unit of Finland › Welcome – Elin Johnsson, D.1 'Rural areas and networks', DG AGRI, European Commission
9:50 – 10:15	Setting the scene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › EU policy framework for forest bioeconomy – Michael Losch, B.2 'Environmental sustainability', DG AGRI, European Commission › Valorisation of forest by-products – Nataša Lovric, Coordinating expert, EIP-AGRI Support Facility
10:15 – 10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:45 – 11:45	Poster session: Showcasing successful initiatives
11:45 – 12:00	Debrief and reflections
12:00 – 13:30	<i>Networking lunch</i>
13:30 – 18:00	Parallel field visits to inspiring initiatives on valorisation of forest by-products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Field visit 1: More than a century of forest innovation: Stora Enso and Ekovilla Oy › Field visit 2: New value chains and innovations: Ecopulp Oy and BioSampo › Field visit 3: The role of private forest owners in the forest value chain: KouMet Oy and Keltakankaan lämpö Ltd.
19:00 – 22:00	<i>Networking dinner</i>



Timing	Day 2: Thursday 27 March 2025
8:30 – 9:00	Registration day 2
9:00 – 9:25	Feedback from day 1
9:25 – 9:50	Future scenarios and opportunities for the valorisation of forest by-products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Envisioning the future – Nataša Lovric, Coordinating expert, EIP-AGRI Support Facility ➤ EU research and innovation opportunities – Laura Liepina, F.2 'Research and Innovation', DG AGRI, European Commission
9:50 – 10:30	Group discussion: Backcasting from the Future to Next Steps
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00 – 11:45	Group discussion (continuation): Overcoming barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Challenges and barriers ➤ Solutions and practical actions ➤ Knowledge gaps and research needs from practice
11:45 – 12:20	Debrief and key messages
12:20 – 13:00	Evaluation and closing of the workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collecting learnings ➤ Evaluation ➤ Closing – Elin Johnsson, D.1 'Rural areas and networks', DG AGRI, European Commission
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Networking lunch and goodbye</i>

