**BIOEAST Foreseight Conference**

**Concept Note**

**TWG Forestry value chain**

Forests in the BIOEAST region represent significant natural resource, for which principles of sustainable management have been built and implemented respecting their social, economic and environmental aspects. Forests in our region represent an example of the sustainable use of natural resources - their area and growing stock are increasing for decades while providing wood, non-wood products, a range of environmental services and play a role in the economy, especially in rural areas.

Although forests serve as a stabilizing component of the landscape and biodiversity protection, changing climate and air pollution have adverse effects on the vitality of forest ecosystems and implementation of restoration and adaptation measures is an important component of forest management.

New EU Forest Strategy for 2030 (COM(2021) 572 final) recognizes that forests are a natural ally in adapting to and fighting against climate change, as well as recognizes multi-functional role of forests, and the contribution of the entire forest-based value chain for achieving by 2050 a sustainable and climate-neutral economy. The GHG removals by forests and forest products will play a crucial role. Strategy counts that forests will contribute to achieving the EU’s greenhouse gas emission reduction target of at least 55% in 2030, as set out in the European Climate Law.

To ensure provision of a range of forests’ ecosystem services, sustainable, balanced and timely management of forests is essential. Trends towards reduction of pollution and waste, efficient use of materials and energy from renewable resources, as well as protection of natural resources depend on boosting the sustainable productivity, development of bioeconomy, circularity and introduction of innovative value chains in addition to the conventional ones.

The BIOEASTsUP project outcome – BIOEAST foresight exercise – considers 4 presented scenarios: fully circular bioeconomy; linear bioeconomy; traditional fossil-based economy; sustainable circular bioeconomy. It is obvious that innovation will play an important role in future development in the sector and its role in economy. For that reason, the main challenges related to the forestry sector will be presented and discussed (balance of social, economic and environmental aspects in sustainable forest management; adaptation to climate change) as well as innovation examples will be presented in the thematic section.

**Invited speakers:**

**Tomaž Remic**, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia, tomaz.remic@gov.si:
**Introduction on forests and forestry in Slovenia** (5 minutes video)

**Nike Krajnc**, Slovenian Forestry institute, nike.krajnc@gozdis.si:
**Future challenges in the forestry sector** (10 minutes)

**Andreja Kutnar**, CoE InnoRenew, andreja.kutnar@innorenew.eu:
**CoE InnoRenew and forthcoming challenges in the wood processing sector** (15 minutes)

**Tomáš Bucha**, CoE LignoSilva, tomas.bucha@nlcsk.org:
**CoE LognoSilva - new technologies in wood processing value chains** (15 minutes)

**The questions for the BIOEAST Foresight Exercise related to Water**

The questions in the area of “WATER” discussed on the conference should be relevant to **the main priorities identified by the members of the TWG Fresh water-based Bioeconomy**, namely to 1) the current situation of the ecological and chemical status of surface and ground waters in the BIOEAST region and 2) the potential contribution to the understanding of the interactions between Water, Energy, Food and Climate (WEFC) as a framework for resource security and sustainable development in the BIOEAST region.

In the relation to the Foresight Exercise, the following related questions could be discussed on the conference, in the context of the 4 possible scenarios focusing on long-term sustainability and competitiveness:

1. Could we form the discussion-and-action groups composed of a broad selection of stakeholders from BIOEAST region, for the discussion of the potential conflicts in the allocation of water and between the water, energy, and food sectors to achieve the circular bioeconomy and maintain the environmental sustainability? Who will be involved?

Our cooperation would be organised on that premise that the stakeholders are a central element underpinning the whole process that set the scene for diagnosing, visioning, sharing, and generating knowledge and dialogues, co-creating, and validating resilient solutions, with the final aim to lighting the spark for actual implementation.

1. What are the main risks for the fresh water-based bioeconomy in the respective value chains, in the BIOEAST countries?

To define the scenario, we should identify responsibilities, potential instruments, and political, economic, and legal barriers in the BIOEAST region, that could influence the Foresight Exercise scenario definition.

1. Are we prepared to thetransition to a climate neutral, sustainable, and productive blue economy, where the innovative nature-based solutions will unlock the potential of the sustainable bioeconomy? How are the national strategies and instruments formulated to support this issue in the BIOEST countries?

The responses county by country will lead to a better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, and demographic drivers of change.