Draft proposal for a

European Partnership under Horizon Europe

Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future

Version 26.06.2024

- Collected by SCAR FOREST Proposal Core Writing Group -

About this draft

In January 2024 the Commission services asked potential partners to further elaborate proposals for the new candidate European Partnerships identified during the strategic planning of Horizon Europe for the years 2025-2027. These proposals have been developed by potential partners based on common guidance and template, taking into account the initial concepts developed by the Commission and feedback received from Member States during consultation.

This document is the first draft of the partnership proposal, released for the purpose of ensuring transparency of information on the current status of preparation (including on the process for developing the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda). As such, it aims to contribute to further collaboration, synergies and alignment between Partnership Candidates, as well as more broadly with related Research and Innovation (R&I) stakeholders in the EU, and beyond where relevant.

At the stage of writing the present document, there are still uncertainties with regard to the involvement of entities in the partnerships. Strong attention will be paid to avoid any risk jeopardising a sound implementation of the partnership. This and other necessary details shall be clarified in the partnership preparation.

This document does not reflect the final views of the Commission, nor pre-empt the formal decision-making (comitology or legislative procedure) on the establishment of European Partnerships. During the next steps of preparation, the Commission Services will further assess these proposals against the selection criteria for European Partnerships. The final decision on launching a Partnership will depend on progress in their preparation (including compliance with selection criteria) and formal decisions on European Partnerships (linked with the adoption of work plans, and legislative procedures, depending on the form).

A key precondition is the existence of an agreed draft Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). The launch of a partnership is also conditional to partners signing up to final, commonly agreed objectives and committing the resources and investments needed from their side to achieve them. The remaining issues will be addressed in the context of the development of the SRIAs/Roadmaps, and as part of the overall policy (notably, the respective legal frameworks).

All partnerships need to have a well-developed logical framework with concrete objectives and targets and with a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to monitor achievement of objectives and the resources that are invested. Aspects related to implementation, programme design, monitoring and evaluation system will be streamlined and harmonised at a later stage across initiatives to ensure compliance with the implementation criteria, comparability across initiatives and to simplify the overall landscape.

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Abbreviations and definitions

AnaEE	Analysis and Experimentation on Ecosystems
BBI JU	Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking
BIC	Bio-based Industries Consortium
BIOEAST	Central and Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Forestry and Aquaculture in the Bioeconomy
CAP	European Union's Common Agricultural Policy
CBE JU	Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking supported through Horizon Europe
CO2	Carbon dioxide
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service
COST	European Cooperation in Science and Technology
CRC	Carbon removal certification
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action of the European Commission
DG ENV	Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission
DG GROW	Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission
DG JRC	Directorate-General for Joint Research Centre of the European Commission
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission
EDPI	European Decarbonisation Pathways Initiative
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFI	European Forest Institute
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
EHIA	European Hardwoods Innovation Alliance
EIT	European Institute of Innovation & Technology
ENFIN	European National Forest Inventory Network
ERA	European Research Area
ERA-NET	European Research Area Network
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
EU	European Union
AC	Associated countries to Horizon Europe
EU MS	EU Member States
FAIR	Findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability
FISE	Forest Information System for Europe
FTP	European Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform
ICOS	Integrated Carbon Observation System
ICP Forests	International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests

Interreg	Interregional cooperation programme, co-funded by the European Union
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LIFE	European Union's funding instrument for the environment and climate action
LULUCF	Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCTs	Overseas Countries and Territories associated with the European Union
ORs	Outermost Regions of the European Union
PPP	Public-private partnership
R&I	Research and Innovation
RIA	Research and Innovation Action
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
RDI	Research, development and innovation
SCAR	Standing Committee on Agricultural Research
SCAR Forest SWG	Strategic Working Group Forest and Forestry Research and Innovation of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SRIA	Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
TWG	Thematic Working Group
WG	Working Group
woodPOP	European Wood Policy Platform

1   General information

1.1   Draft title of the European Partnership

Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future

1.2   Lead entity (main contact)

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1.4   Summary (max 500 characters)

The partnership aim is to promote healthy, biodiverse and resilient forests that are sustainably managed and able to provide a wide range of key ecosystem services, including climate change mitigation through carbon removals and a continuing supply of materials and services for the development of the bioeconomy. As the primary R&I instrument of public organisations from EU countries and beyond to join forces in the forest-based sector and its related value-chains, it will foster collaborative research and innovation among various actors, towards competitiveness in the sector through supporting digital and green transition. This collective effort aims to provide the scientific rigor necessary to ensure the delivery and management of resilient and socially, environmentally and economically sustainable forests and forestry sector for the future.

2 Context, objectives, expected impacts

2.1 Context and problem definition

As stated in the European Green Deal[1], addressing global changes and limiting their impacts requires a transformative change of our European societies towards a resource-efficient and competitive economy, without net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 and with a decoupling of economic growth from resource use. **Forests are at the intersection of global challenges such as increasing use of natural resources, climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation.** Forests in the EU are a major reservoir of carbon and sequester 10% of EU gross greenhouse gas emissions (Forest Europe 2020[2]). Forests are hosting the largest share of terrestrial biodiversity and provide ecosystem services that are key for people and the planet. Forest also supply crucial renewable materials like wood and non-wood forest products, they provide income and local resources to population in rural areas, recreational services in particular in urban and peri-urban forests, health and well-being, and regulate the climate, and ensure soil and water quality. All this emphasises the multifunctional role of forests for the nature and human societies.

As highlighted in the 2019 Commission Communication on stepping up EU[3], socio-economic resource dependencies mean that EU actions to address EU citizens' needs for food and natural resources also have an impact on forests globally. Concurrently, **societal desire for closer to nature forests, coupled with conservation and restoration** presents challenges to current forest economic models. This necessitates innovation to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities across the value chain of the Forest Sector which must be backed by scientific rigor. Focusing specifically on climate change, the final report of the High-Level Panel of the European Decarbonisation Pathways Initiative (EDPI)[4] emphasizes the urgency to act and limit the impacts of global changes. The European climate risk assessment[5] has identified major climate risks and policy priorities for forests and other ecosystems. Notably, ecosystem restoration is seen as critical to mitigate climate change risk.

Forests offer unique solutions to the global challenges we face. The EU Forest Strategy for 2030, recognises the central and multi-functional role of forests, and the contribution of foresters and the entire forest-based value chain for achieving by 2050 a sustainable and climate-neutral economy while ensuring that all of ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected. With the adoption of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU committed to strictly protect all remaining primary and old growth forests and also calls on Member States to increase forest quantity, quality and resilience against fires, droughts, pests, diseases and other threats likely to increase with climate change.

The multifunctional role of forests the forest-based bioeconomy requires a "systems-perspective", balancing and safeguarding options. It is well established that forest products can not only help decarbonise the land use sector, but can also displace high-energy embedded materials such as steel and concrete in the construction sector. The systems-perspective is critical to ensuring forests are key to reach by 2030 the EU target of net carbon removals by natural sinks of 310 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent set out in the revised LULUCF Regulation (Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry)[6], climate neutrality by 2050, and to generate negative emissions thereafter. With the recently agreed Regulation on Carbon Removal Certification Framework (CRCF)[7], forests and forest-based sector, along with the value chains, have the opportunity to significantly increase carbon removals. This can be achieved through carbon farming activities, such as improved sustainable forest management, afforestation, and reforestation, as well as by using more long-lived and other climate-smart long-life wood products. Building with wood is an important work stream of the New European Bauhaus initiative supported through Horizon Europe. Forests provide inspiration for sustainable design, materials, and green spaces, aligning with the movement's focus on blending aesthetics, sustainability, and innovation in architecture and urban planning. In line

with Renewable Energy Directive, the European Commission (EC) developed in 2022 operational guidance on the new sustainability criteria for forest biomass for energy. The work will also contribute to the EU´s Circular Economy Action Plan, which provides a future-oriented agenda for achieving a cleaner and more competitive Europe in co-creation with economic actors, consumers, citizens and civil society organisations.

The forest sector has a crucial role in ensuring a sustainable transition of our societies towards a resource-efficient and green economy. The forest-based sector in the EU consists of a multitude of value chains, both commercial and non-commercial, representing over € 117 billion manufacturing added value and creating 2.6 million jobs and it is vital for regions less developed and in transition. Yet, the potential total value created could be increased by optimising resource utilisation, introducing circularity into material flows, and diversifying and developing both existing and new value chains, such as integrating ecosystem services into payment schemes. In line with the key strategic orientations of the Second strategic plan for Horizon Europe (2025-2027), the research and innovation in the sector will be oriented to resilience, green transformation and digitization. Forests play a vital role in achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); for example, by contributing to climate change mitigation (SDG 13), biodiversity conservation (SDG 15), sustainable livelihoods (SDG 1), and overall well-being (SDG 3). The forest-based bioeconomy connects the entire forest value chain, from the management and use of natural resources to the delivery of products and services. Thus, responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) is a pivotal goal for the forest sector, as is decent work and economic growth (SDG 8).

To help our society face global challenges, we must ensure our forests adapt to climate change and future climate scenarios. In some regions, forest ecosystems are already undergoing a decay process linked to elevated temperatures. The number and intensity of biotic and abiotic disturbances are increasing in European forests, while climate-driven disturbances such as forest fires and severe droughts are causing serious damage also in regions where they were not common in the past. **Thus, there is an urgent need for sustainable management, as well as disaster management and adaptive forest restoration approaches that strengthen the resilience of EU forests.** To avoid escalating socio-economic costs from forest disasters caused by pests and diseases, protect people, land and houses from floods, storms, fires and landslides, and preserve the carbon stock and sink function and other ecosystem services provided by forests that are vital for human health and wellbeing, such as clean air, water regulation, and habitat for the variety of living species they host.

Forestry practices dominated by single coniferous tree species may be less resilient and more vulnerable in a changing climate. For example, higher temperatures and droughts create more favourable conditions for bark beetles, affecting tens of millions of cubic meters of wood yearly, with a knock-on effect of increasing the frequency and scale of fires. Changing climate conditions also favour spread of invasive species and may have adverse effects on soil carbon pool.

Reliable and up-to-date information on forest ecosystems and resources, including from earth and environmental observations, is critical to tackling global challenges. Forests must be monitored over time to drive management practices towards enhanced forest resilience. The EC adopted in 2023 a proposal for a Regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework with a set of indicators. Forest monitoring systems and precise information sources on forests are required to monitor forest attributes dynamics, detect disruptive events that may be the early warnings of tipping points in forest changes, and ensure targeted and effective measures to improve forest resilience and to track progress in forest contributions to the achievement of climate neutrality and other sustainability objectives. Combined with ground-based data, forest monitoring can greatly benefit from advances in digital tools and technological innovation (remote sensing, LiDAR, statistical inventories, crowdsourcing,

wood quality detection, digital tracing, auctioning, big data management and artificial intelligence employment), but it can also be a driver of this digital innovation.

Unlocking the full potential of forests demands a holistic approach. By recognising them as ecological and economic systems influence by policy and society, we can foster complementary actions and synergies. This opens doors for sustainable opportunities like climate change mitigation, biodiversity protection, and economic growth through responsible forestry practices. Finding win-win solutions for competing demands will be crucial, but the potential rewards are significant.

2.2 Common vision, objectives and expected impacts

As a common vision, **the Partnership is committed to support the EU's strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive, nature positive and climate-neutral economy by 2050, striving to become the world's first climate-neutral continent - an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.** The European Partnership on Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future presents a powerful opportunity to unlock the full potential of forests.

The vision is to collectively achieve healthy, biodiverse, and resilient forests though the implementation of nature-based solutions[1], that are sustainably managed and able to provide a wide range of key ecosystem services. While the final vision and intervention logic of the partnership still must be carefully co-created in connection with the SRIA - Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda - process (see below) with broad contributions of all relevant actors, and finally among the partners who will sign up to final, commonly agreed objectives, below the first outline of the logical steps towards the above-mentioned vision, identifying some required general, specific and operational objectives.

The main objective is that **by fostering a holistic approach that recognizes the socio-ecological and economic value of forests, the Partnership will create synergies and drive innovation across the forest sector.**

The Partnership is actively engaging Member States (MS) to ensure alignment with key EC policies, including:

- The European Green Deal: The Partnership will directly contribute to the Green Deal's ambitions for climate neutrality and a healthy planet by promoting sustainable forest management practices.
- The EU Forest Strategy for 2030: The partnership aligns perfectly with the strategy's goals, particularly in fostering a competitive forest sector and bio-based economy.
- The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: The Partnership will support the strategy's protection and restoration efforts, alongside the proposed forest monitoring framework.
- The EU Bioeconomy Strategy: By promoting innovation and resource efficiency, Partnership strengthens the EU's bioeconomy goals.
- Other key policy areas: The partnership will also contribute to the European Industrial Strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan, Clean Energy Strategy, EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation.

This comprehensive approach, coupled with strong political leverage from the European Commission, positions the Partnership to deliver significant benefits. By collecting

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[1] Defined under UNEA5as actions to protect, conserve, restore,
sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems
which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while
simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefit.

information from MS and informing the EC on progress, we can ensure all efforts are coordinated and targeted towards the same ambitious goals.

Therefore, the Partnership's impact is in **mobilization of sectoral R&I to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable forest bioeconomy** with a wide range of actors who are joining forces in the Partnership, which is to support to reach the EU's 2030 and 2050 climate targets and biodiversity objectives.

Addressing forest challenges with a siloed approach focusing solely on areas like biodiversity loss, climate change, or industry in isolation risks opposing solutions rather than optimising synergies and trade-offs. We therefore aim to research and innovation approaches to address multiple goals simultaneously, which often requires **transdisciplinary approaches** to properly define relevant research questions. Innovative approaches and improved knowledge are needed to create a solid foundation for sound decision making and action to reach the most optimal trajectory for forests to contribute to a sustainable green transition, while assuring their adaptation to future climate conditions. New products and innovative technologies can improve efficiency in use of resources, increase the added value of wood products, decrease the carbon and water footprint of products and processes, reduce pollution, and waste generation, and improve circularity.

Further expected impact of the partnership is **coordinated forest research and innovation at European leve**l to provide a shared and robust knowledge base to make this transition a success.[8]

Value proposition of the partnership

- The partnership supports the **European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda**[9] and its 20 Actions 2022-2024 by actively promoting open knowledge generating, sharing, and valorisation and therefore by empowering the EU to become a leading expert on forests and sustainable forestry across boreal, temperate and Mediterranean zones. The partnership will also align to the New ERA actions which underpin green, digital and a more resilient future (corresponding to SO1).

- The partnership supports the **New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA)**[10] and its five Flagship Areas, which together aim at positioning Europe as a leading player on the global innovation scene. The partnership provides knowledge and expertise for data-driven forest policies, which can be used to promote the competitiveness of European economies while simultaneously mitigating climate change and promoting environmental sustainability (corresponding to SO1).

- Fragmentation of regional, national and European R&I landscape, public research efforts and governance in the forestry and forest-based bioeconomy has to be overcome. Despite the successful past actions targeted to the forest-based sector, funding activities have remained scattered at national and regional levels. This partnership is needed **to reinforce work on research priorities that call for a stronger coordination and collaboration in the EU** (corresponding to SO1).

- Multifunctionality and socio-ecological approaches and analyses (integrated with social sciences and humanities) become increasingly important with respect to the sustainable use of forests, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection, resilience and restoration, and other broader societal aspects. Since different Member States face these challenges differently, research and innovation activities aiming at a **holistic view** in the EU require an EU rather than local or Member States approach (corresponding SO2 and SO3).

- **Capacity building, education and vocational training** needs to be scaled up in the

forest-based sector and it must be ensured that there is a better connection to research. This is to provide people working in the forest sector with the skills that enable people to handle the challenges and needs of today's realities but also to attract young generations to the sector and to equip them with the skills needed to work in a sustainable forest bioeconomy (corresponding SO2 and SO3).

- There is a need to increase mutual benefits from the greater diversity of forest experiences and conditions at the European level than at the Member State level. **Interdisciplinary collaboration** of various scientific teams will produce significant outcomes (corresponding to SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4 and SO5).

- Prioritising **resilience and adaptation measures** under changing climate we aim to ensure that our forests not only continue to provide vital ecosystem services but also enhance them, thereby securing a sustainable future for both the environment and society. Adaptation is paramount to safeguarding our carbon pools and strengthening the carbon sink capacity of forest ecosystems (corresponding to SO2, SO3 and SO4).

- **Forest owners and small-scale forest-based rural enterprises** constitute an important part of the rural economy, and of the overall forestry and forest industry activity. They are considered promoters of local development and growth due to their contributions, but they are not well equipped to join and perform large (Horizon Europe) projects and therefore need smaller manageable projects. They will be the end-users for most of the activities created by this partnership. Hence their involvement in the creation of the Partnership from the very beginning is crucial for a successful uptake of the R&I solutions (corresponding to SO2 and SO3).

- The Partnership will also build on already successful joint programming and co-operations, further **widening the scope of partners and reinforcing the link with policy makers and diverse actors** such as researchers, forest practitioners, entrepreneurs, and citizens (corresponding to SO1, SO3 and SO5).

- There is a need to provide **scientific support for the implementation of the EU commitments** under the Global Biodiversity Framework and for the EU legislation in preparation (notably proposal for a regulation on a forest monitoring framework, proposal for an EU soil monitoring law) in a harmonised way in the EU (corresponding to SO2 and SO5).

General objectives:

GO1   Enhance and complement the related Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas from EU MS/AC

GO2   Foster the development and expansion of collaborations, facilitating the co-creation and dissemination of knowledge and solutions

GO3   Contribute the advancement of forest protection and restoration by improving prevention, detection measures against disturbances thereby strengthening the preparedness of all actors for current and emerging threats while also enhancing the valorisation and use-efficiency of forest biomass

GO4   Ensure that the R&I supported by the Partnership will provide results directly usable to deliver on the commitments taken under the multilateral agreements of the EU Green Deal, the UN SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Global Biodiversity Framework, thus contributing effectively to global sustainability efforts

Specific objectives:

SO1	Improve cross-coordination of the European R&I landscape, across different areas and sectors
SO2	Increase research-based knowledge
SO2	Develop and co-create innovations
SO3	Improve the sharing and access to knowledge on forests and forestry
SO4	Build a monitoring and data framework
SO5	Exchange with policymakers to support the implementation of existing and future strategies and legislations and diverse actors

Operational objectives:

OO1	Support transnational research and innovation activities
OO2	Build capacities of various actors
OO3	Improve access to and use of services provided by RIs
OO4	Set up a framework, data management, indicators, and tools to monitor the transition towards a sustainable forest bioeconomy
OO5	Design and implement communication and dissemination activities
OO6	Put in place mechanisms for science-policy dialogue
OO7	Promote, support and widen participation of various actors

Co-Creation of the partnership's SRIA

The draft SRIA of the European Partnership on Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future is being developed in the framework of the **Horizon Europe Project EUFORE (European Forest Research and Innovation Ecosystem)**[11]. Main purpose of this project is to facilitate the co-creation of a SRIA applying a multi-actor approach.

Co-creation is understood as collaborative process of creating new value together with external experts and stakeholders.[12] A **Multi-Actor Approach** facilitates the involvement of key stakeholders in all related research activities to ensure that feedback can be given at an appropriate time which allows the adaptation of work in progress along stakeholder needs and expectations. This approach will also need to ensure synergies and complementarities and to avoid overlaps with other ongoing initiatives and projects (see Chapter 2.4.1).

The process is supported by **targeted communication and dissemination** designed to not only inform stakeholders about results but to provide the means to get actively involved in the process. Direct and active involvement of stakeholders facilitates the creation of ownership and up-take of results. Such a demand driven R&I approach leads to results which are relevant to be taken-up by stakeholders and meaningful for society.

Stakeholder identification

Several groups and people will be directly and indirectly affected by the implementation of the SRIA under the Partnership as well as the funding decisions based on that SRIA. Stakeholders who are likely to be affected by the implementation of the SRIA should have the opportunity to get involved in its development. Stakeholder involvement is therefore also grounded in the concept of Responsible Research and Innovation, which can be described as a "transparent, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view on the (ethical) acceptability, sustainability and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products (in order to allow a proper embedding of scientific and technological advances in our society)"[13]. A stakeholder community forms the basis for the whole process of co-creating the SRIA. It is understood as

a pool of people identified and to be engaged within the SRIA development process. Stakeholders are ordered along the 4 dimensions of the quadruple helix, which lists all stakeholders as being part of one of the dimensions Industry and Business; Research; Civil Society and Governance & Regulators. Stakeholders are involved from regional, national, macro-regional and EU level. The aim is to achieve a good representation of all four stakeholder categories representing a broad range of interests and perspectives of the new and traditional forest value chains and society expectations towards them. The approach specifically covers stakeholders on EU member state level including public authorities and policy makers. Member states representatives and funding agencies in particular are further consulted through SCAR Forest meetings.

The majority of the stakeholders participate in the process of co-creating the SRIA via the **regional and European stakeholder workshops**. Two rounds of stakeholder workshops will be implemented at the regional level. The term "regional level" refers to six Pan-European macro-regions whereas each of the region consists of several EU and non-EU countries. The six regions and the corresponding countries are displayed in Figure 1. The categorisation of the six Pan-European regions was taken and adapted from a publication by Rametsteiner et al. who proposed the classification of the European forest-based industry based on several indicators.[14]
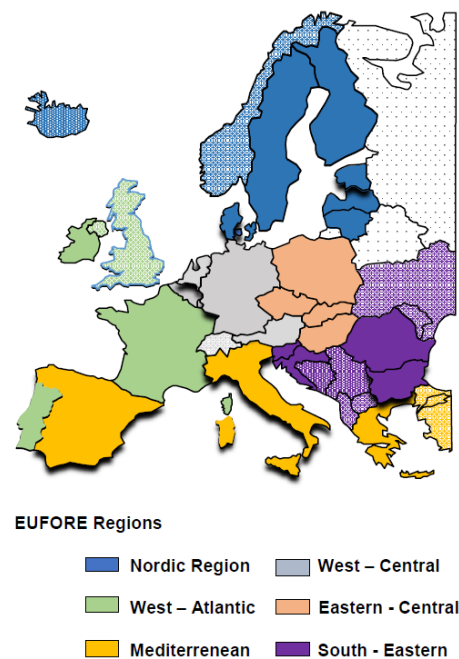

Figure 1. The six Pan-European macro-regions as defined by EUFORE.

The stakeholder community was identified based on the results of a **stakeholder survey** conducted by the EUFORE project coordinator European Forest Institute (EFI). This survey was sent out to all contacts in the CORDIS data base that have been beneficiaries in R&I projects related to forests and the forest-based sector financed by EU framework programmes. Further, the survey was sent out to all potential stakeholders that have been identified by the EUFORE project partners. The aim is to cover all regions and countries in the map above. Gap analysis was carried out to identify less represented stakeholder groups and appropriate measures are implemented to mobile these stakeholder groups. The stakeholder identification process is continued in order to extent the basis of engaged stakeholders. The contacted representatives of the institutions are asked to indicate the level of participation and kind of activities they would like to be involved in the EUFORE project. Only after the contacted

institutions/persons have declared their consent in being involved in EUFORE stakeholder activities, they are approached further. Each institution or person that declares its consent in being involved in EUFORE stakeholder activities is considered to be an active part of the EUFORE stakeholder community. The process of stakeholder identification and mobilisation is understood as ongoing activity and new stakeholders are added on a regular basis.

Engagement formats

Several mechanisms of stakeholder engagement were implemented to facilitate the process of co-creating the Draft SRIA and to involve the stakeholders appropriately. For the applicable stakeholder engagement mechanisms, it is important that they are understood and implemented as "a `two-way´ so that both sides have the opportunity to exchange views and information, to listen and to have their issues addressed"[15]. In order to achieve this, two particular formats are in the core of the EUFORE stakeholder engagement process. These are the **stakeholder workshops** that are implemented on both a regional and European level. The first round of regional stakeholder workshops can be considered the initial stakeholder engagement activity as it assembles the most relevant stakeholders at the regional level in several European regions. In that way, stakeholders are engaged from the very beginning and their continuous commitment during the process of SRIA development is strengthened. Content-wise, the regional workshops provide the initial impact for the process of co-creating the SRIA. Besides these stakeholder workshops **other mechanisms of stakeholder engagement** were implemented in parallel such as surveys, written consultations, (online) workshops and ad-hoc meetings.

Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) are established for the main writing activity to co-create the SRIA document. In a process of co-creation, stakeholders within a TWG jointly discuss and draft chapters of the SRIA. The TWGs were arranged topic-wise according to the already formulated themes of the SRIA. However, TWGs were able to create sub-groups to discuss specific issues in smaller settings, if needed and agreed upon by TWG members. Each TWG was led by one of the EUFORE consortium members. Further, all interested stakeholders in the stakeholder community could participate in the activities of the TWG. Each TWG took up the input provided from the stakeholder workshops. Within the TWGs results and feedback of the regional and European stakeholder workshops were discussed among the members of the TWG. Furthermore, this initial input was detailed, adapted, and compiled in a way that draft texts could be transferred to the SRIA Writing Group. TWG members were free to consult additional sources of information as well as experts during their work.

The **SRIA Writing Group** (SRIA WG) is responsible for compiling the input provided by the TWGs into one document. This document serves as the draft SRIA. The draft chapters of the SRIA were discussed with the SCAR Forest and the EC to ensure consistency with the requirements of the preparation for the proposal of the European Partnership on Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future as well as with this proposal. The group is composed solely of EUFORE project partners, including the TWGs leads.

Expected SRIA content

The document gives information about the main framework conditions and ambitious, strategic objectives of the SRIA. The SRIA will describe R&I themes to be implemented in form of joint calls under the Partnership. The main themes are:

- Forest Management
- Forest Ecology
- Forest Products
- Social Aspects and Forest Policy

The SRIA further provides indications for a prioritisation and timeline for the specific R&I gaps to be taken up within the Partnership. Furthermore, the SRIA provides an overview about suggested financing instruments and project types to be used during the Partnership. A draft SRIA and additional information on the status quo of the SRIA development is available on the EUFORE project website (https://eufore.eu/).

2.3   Necessity for a European Partnership

The European Partnership is an **objective of the EU Forest Strategy for 2030** and will build a strong forest research and innovation community that interconnects people/entities and a wide spectrum of scientific disciplines to reinforce the work on European priorities such as nature protection and restoration, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Despite its growing importance, the forest R&I capacity is still underdeveloped in comparison to other fields (e.g. agriculture) and the scientific knowledge base needs to be significantly enhanced to overcome the challenges faced by forests and to unlock their full potential. An ambitious Partnership would allow to speed up the scientific progress, underpin the implementation of relevant EU policies, increase efficiency (e.g. division of labour) and foster knowledge exchange in the whole forest domain.

A European Partnership is required to ensure a **holistic and balanced approach** regarding the multiple uses and benefits of forests and forestry in all individual parts of Europe while considering changing climate, environmental and socio-economic conditions. Without such a holistic approach, there is a risk for forest questions and forest research to be scattered among different domains such as climate change and biodiversity loss[16], societal expectations, industrial development or economy. Each of these domains is important but even more important and crucial is the design of synergies (when forest actions are complementary) and the balance of trade-offs (when actions are competing) between these domains. Such a holistic bioeconomy approach is all the more important as the bottlenecks in forest questions today precisely lie at the interface between different domains (e.g. reinforcing logging and biomass production vs. reinforcing protection with respect to climate and biodiversity objectives in different timelines; bringing societal expectations and forest industry into the same line; etc.). The need for striking an optimal balance in a range of forest functions and related societal values is a primary reason for considering a European Partnership on Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future.

Another reason for a European Partnership is that **forest research questions are inherently relevant at a much larger geographical scale** than that of individual countries/Member States as ecological forest biomes (Mediterranean, temperate, boreal) span across Europe. In a context of a changing climate, it means that for the adaptation of forests to climate change, countries will depend on exchanges with neighbouring countries. For instance, the management of tree genetic resources and forest reproductive material, that are key for the adaptation to climate change (for assisted migration, etc.), require a European approach in the context of a changing climate. The management of risks related to forests (wildfires, pest outbreaks, etc.) also require both European and regional approaches, as does forest monitoring and nature positive actions, including connectivity.

When it comes to **global forest issues like imported deforestation**[17], research on the role of Europe in this development is also needed. Imported deforestation is defined as the loss or degradation of forest in producing countries caused by the European Union's agricultural imports (agri-food, biofuels, aquaculture and forestry). From a scientific perspective, there are knowledge gaps to address in order to define, implement and assess measures that will successfully combat imported deforestation. Interdisciplinary research approaches are required that include different scientific domains such as economics, law, politics, ecology, agronomy, social sciences, remote sensing and geography.

Combatting imported deforestation through research requires international cooperation on both a European and an international level, and engagement by various stakeholders. The complexity and dynamics of the issues also demand a transdisciplinary, multi-actor and multi-level approach.

Similarly, **joint research and coordination** is needed in the invention of new and even more climate-beneficial wood-based materials and products and the penetration of products from renewable forest resources to other sectors (housing, packaging, pharmacy, textile industry, agroforestry, etc.). Therefore, a European Partnership on Forests and Forestry would allow European countries to get more benefits than the sum of countries' separate efforts would bring.

Beyond the inherent large geographical scale of forest ecosystems challenges, the huge variety of local ecological and socio-economic conditions in European rural areas means a **great complexity of the forestry sector problems**, which cannot be solved scientifically by local or national research. It is vitally important to keep in mind that social issues are of increasing importance in rural regions, where forestry and small-scale forest industry is often the major employer and the forest cluster, with the people working in this sector, has an impact on public live in general. A European Partnership will allow considering this complexity in forest research by integrating knowledge from different regions, sharing experiences, implementing nature-based solutions, involving stakeholders with different demands and approaches to the problems, etc., which in term would enable finding solutions compatible at different scales, from local to European level that guarantees the long-term sustainability.

Specific justifications of a European Partnership on Forests and Forestry are the following:

- **Transnational research cooperation still has to be firmly embedded in national research policies and processes in order to be long-lasting**. The experience shows that national programmes are committed to combined efforts.

- **Forest environmental policies and initiatives have more and more been adopted at global or at EU level** (e.g.: Global Biodiversity Framework, Paris Agreement, EU Forest Strategy, Proposal for a Regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework) and scientific support is needed at appropriate level (note the political leverage effect of the Partnership, see Chapter 2.2).

- There is still **a need to develop cooperation procedures in order to fund European level projects from national funds**. As forestry and the entire forest-based sector are facing immense challenges and are becoming increasingly international, the need to fund international RDI through national funds is also growing (note the financial leverage effect of the Partnership, see Chapter 3.2).

- **Stronger focus on the processes that lead to transformative changes** toward sustainability in the forest-based bioeconomy at EU level, which will also be key to the forest industry´s long-term competitiveness, in the EU and globally.

- **Building of capacities, education and training**, and a better connection of these with research are required to position Europe as a leader on the global scale.

- **Mutual benefits from the greater diversity of forest experiences and conditions** at the European level than at the Member State level.

2.4 Partner composition and target group

2.4.1 How the partnership will build on and strengthen or expand existing collaboration networks and initiatives

Forests and forestry span across many sectors and synergies can be established with other partnerships. The following European Partnerships[18] are complementary and will be linked to

the Partnership (EC support for building up the synergies is essential; the list could evolve with time):

- **European Biodiversity Partnership Biodiversa+** - Synergies on payments for ecosystem services, which are particularly relevant for forest ecosystems, biodiversity identification, on monitoring methods, on assessment of ecosystems status, on biodiversity protection and restoration, on nature-based solutions, etc.);

- **Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU)**[19] - CBE JU is mostly positioned on products and the development of technological innovation, but not specifically on forest management and supply. Complementarity between CBE JU and the Partnership can thus be obtained by focusing on primary producers (note the forthcoming CBE JU deployment group on primary producers[20]) optimisation of material streams and by fostering the transformation of forest products. Regional complementarity can also be built between the two partnerships;

- **Agriculture of data** - Synergies on stocktaking and solutions developed in the fields of Farm Management Systems (FMIS) and Decision Making Support Systems (DSS), including different types of farming models (e.g. conventional, organic, agro-ecological, agroforestry, circular etc.), ecosystem management/regional management, biodiversity, machine/operations optimisation (all supporting the EU's digital transformation[21]);

- **Accelerating farming systems transition** - Agroecology living labs and research infrastructures; synergies based on landscape approaches where different land uses (agriculture/ forestry) are linked;

- **Water4All** - Synergies on the organization of diversified landscapes to maintain the circulation of nutrients. Another synergistic challenge between Water4All and the Partnership deals with the development of large-scale nature-based solutions to address the deforestation-water nexus;

- **Built4People** - Brings together the whole value chain to accelerate people-centric innovation for a sustainable built environment;

- **Safe & Sustainable Food Systems** - Synergies on the shortcomings and trade-offs between climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation for arable land (for feed and food), food security, social coherence and jobs, etc., both inside and outside the European Union.

The Partnership will be complementary to other relevant Partnership candidates or EU programmes, and will provide a holistic approach that would contribute to the targets of the aforementioned partnerships. Synergies with other partnerships may be implemented through joint calls, the organisation of joint conferences, and networking. The European Partnership Stakeholder Forum[22] will be an important arena to ensure coherence and collaboration with other partnerships.

The Partnership will regularly identify activities that are relevant for the following EU Missions[23]:

- **A Soil Deal for Europe**: to address the critical role of forests in tackling with soil degradation by contributing to soil stability, nutrient cycling, and water regulation;

- **Adaptation to Climate**: Change to strengthen the role of forests as vital natural carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots, by mitigating climate impacts and enhancing ecosystem resilience;

- **Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities**: on forest contribution in providing urban areas with carbon sequestration, air purification, and green infrastructure, essential for mitigating climate change and fostering sustainable urban development.

The Partnership will feed these Missions with the outcomes of its relevant activities. Regular meetings with the Mission boards will be organized to discuss the implication of the Partnership in the area covered by each of these Missions.

The Partnership objectives are directly linked to **other forest dedicated platforms and initiatives under the European Green Deal,** including the EU Forest Strategy[24] and its 3 billion tree initiatives, the Bioeconomy Strategy[25], the revised LULUCF Regulation and the Regulation on Carbon Removal Certification Framework, the proposed EU Nature Restoration Law[26], the proposed Forest Monitoring Law[27] and New European Bauhaus initiative[28].

There are also potential synergies with COST[29] (European Cooperation in Science and Technology, a funding organisation for research and innovation networks) and EU-Farmbook[30] (a Horizon Europe project that is working at regional, national, and European level, to build a Digital Platform, gathering and sharing agriculture and forestry knowledge), but also obvious links to a number of other initiatives such as CAP[31] Strategic Plans, EUREKA[32], Erasmus+, EIPs[33] (AGRI, Raw Materials), EIT[34] Raw Materials and EIT Climate-KIC[35], PPPs (BIC[36]/ CBE JU), AnaEE[37], ICOS[38], EEA[39], EU Observatory for deforestation, forest degradation and associated drivers[40], European National Forest Inventory Network (ENFIN)[41], ICP Forests[42], European Wood Policy Forum (woodPOP)[43], Interreg[44], InvestEU[45] and LIFE[46].

2.4.2 Type and composition of partners

The partners of the Partnership will mainly include, indicatively:

- Ministries in charge of agriculture and forestry;
- Ministries in charge of R&I policy;
- Ministries of environment;
- Research funding agencies and foundations.

Note that the intention for the membership of this European Partnership is to consider Europe in a broad manner: all EU MS[47] and AC[48] are welcomed. In addition, collaboration will be promoted with non-associated non-EU countries, including from other continents. The Partnership will also engage with other relevant ministries, in particular ministries in charge of climate and/or environmental policy, and environmental protection and biodiversity agencies. Other organizations like Research Performing Organizations (RPO) may be partners of the Partnership to implement additional activities beyond joint calls. Nevertheless, such organizations will not be eligible for joint calls.

Ukraine, as an AC to Horizon Europe, is fully eligible to join the Partnership. Specific action should be taken to fully integrate Ukrainian forest science and education in the Partnership to strengthen sustainable forest management in the conditions of climate change and the post-war environment.

Given the role of the EC, regular interactions will occur with DG AGRI (lead service) on the different aspects of the Partnership. More generally, regular links will be established with DGs involved in the Partnership (i.e. DG AGRI, DG ENV, DG RTD, DG CLIMA, DG GROW and DG JRC) as well as others as needed (such as DG INTPA).

2.4.3 Target group / stakeholder community

The diversity of forestry challenges at local, regional, national, European and international level requires wide participation in the Partnership:

- National and regional agencies, universities, research organisations and national forest inventories supporting research and innovation developments of forests and the forest-based sector; (ii) EC DGs in link with the sector, (iii) MS/AC ministries of more than

20 countries;

- FOREST EUROPE[49] and the BIOEAST Initiative[50] (specifically the BIOEAST thematic working group of forestry value chains);

- Platforms such as ForestValue2[51], the European Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform (FTP)[52], the European Forest Institute (EFI)[53], InnovaWood[54], European Hardwoods Innovation Alliance (EHIA)[55], European Environment Agency (EEA), European National Forest Inventory Network (ENFIN), European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)[56], NetworkNature[57]; European Wood Policy Platform (woodPOP),

- Collaboration with other Partnerships (e.g. Biodiversity Partnership);

- Collaboration with industry (especially SMEs), regions and other economic actors (including forest owner associations);

- Collaboration with climate, biodiversity and conservation actors;

- Collaboration with non-research organisations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are producing knowledge on forests and society.

3 Planned Implementation

3.1 Activities

In order to reach its objectives, the Partnership is expected to deploy a wide range of activities, including, but going much beyond, joint calls for R&I proposals. It will be the partners to decide on the final list of activities but below a few examples of activities that could be foreseen:

- *Activities to regularly update the Partnership vision and strategy*: production and regular update of a SRIA according to the overarching objectives of the Partnership shared by all partners; and the establishment of annual implementation plans indicating the type of activities to be implemented, identifying topics for possible flagship programmes to be implemented, Third Parties to be sub-contracted when relevant, stakeholders to be engaged, and resource allocation accordingly;

- *Activities to promote and support R&I programmes and projects across the European Research Area*: identifying knowledge gaps on topics of interest for the Partnership in order to launch ambitious joint calls to fund transnational R&I projects; implementing mobility schemes for example for young scientists or between academia and business; promoting the reuse of existing data/data sets and synthesis research; alignment with EU open data policies; reinforcing the link between R&I projects and research infrastructures, observatories and demonstrators; promoting citizen science; activities covering the specificities of Outermost Regions (ORs)[58] and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)[59];

- *Activities to build capacity of R&I actors and increase the impact of R&I programmes and projects, including science-based policy support in relation to the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030.*: capacity building to help scientists facing the challenges of Open Science and of stakeholder engagement in particular; supporting future studies on European forests and the forest sector; monitoring trends in emergent forest-related value chains related to the transition of economies; and activities to increase the brokerage and transfer of science-based knowledge, science-based support to policy evaluation and policy design, development of best-practice, collaborative learning and awareness raising;

- *Activities consisting of special accompanying measures a) to start-ups and SMEs* (for example, promotion of EIC Accelerator[60]), in collaboration with the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP)[61]; and *b) to Widening countries*, closely linked to Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence actions under Horizon Europe[62] (see also the hop-on facility[63];

- *Activities to reinforce the excellence, visibility and impact of European R&I at the international level*: promotion of international collaboration (taking into account the European Union's strategy for international cooperation[64] as well as the EU approach to enhance economic security[65]) and capacity building, incl. activities covering the specificities of ORs and OCTs, supporting the Paris Agreement and its goal of keeping global warming within safe levels as well as a wide range of other jointly agreed international commitments and legal frameworks relating to the scope of the Partnership (such as the Global Biodiversity Framework[66]).

The exact activities and quantified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be defined in each annual roadmap and where relevant.

3.2   Resources

The available budget will be known once the partners' commitments are provided later in 2024. The distribution of the budget and the contributions in cash and in kind to carry out the Partnership's tasks and actions will be further elaborated during the SRIA and Partnership preparation. Nevertheless, based on the announced tentative Union contribution for the entire duration of the Partnership of 70 M€ (30%), a total budget of 233 million € is the ambition of this Partnership. The Partnership would thus require investments of a minimum of 163 million € from the partners (70%).It is noteworthy that the financial leverage effect of the Partnership (EC contribution + MS commitments + possible additional MS funding + in-kind contributions + own commitments of the funded projects' participants + any other co-funding e.g. from industry) will increase the volume substantially. It is expected that the EC will get with a 70M€ investment a programme of a total value of even up to 500M€.

For realising the Partnership, the following kinds of commitments could be expected but must be negotiated among the partners:

- Financial commitments and in-kind contributions to the joint calls and other dedicated implementation actions;
- Efforts for national coordination.

It should however be highlighted that the precise activities have not been decided at the moment of writing the present document and that the required activities and respectively the costs need to be concretely refined during the Partnership preparation and implementation and once the total financial and in-kind commitments available for this Partnership will be known.

3.3   Governance

The Governance of the Partnership will be further refined in 2024/2025 and must be considered as a suggestion. The Governance will be a central aspect of the future Consortium Agreement. The below mechanisms for the governance of the European Partnerships under Horizon Europe, including the role of EC, are drafted based on best practises from the past collaborations as well as from ongoing partnerships.

At this date, it is foreseen that the Partnership on Forests and Forestry will include partners from at least 24 countries (24/27 delegations of the Strategic Programme Committee configuration expressed their support to the Partnership in their positions on the Commission services' assessment by 19 December 2023) but further participants from regions are expected. A majority of the partners will be research funding agencies, but also national agencies and local governments are expected to participate. What comes to the participation of other stakeholders representing science, business and society, the Partnership will provide ample opportunities to enable the involvement of all these groups into a range of different types of activities implemented in the Partnership, such as foresight processes, knowledge hubs, science-to-policy activities and calls for research and innovation directed to broad consortia consisting of both academic and non-academic participants. One of the options to be considered is to involve specific stakeholders on a permanent basis i.e. through stakeholder panels or advisory boards. Altogether this will enable a stable governance structure, while still meeting the needs of both academia and practice.

The diversity of challenges related to forests, forestry and the forest-based sector at local, regional, national, European and international level requires wide participation in the Partnership, like it is described in the above Chapter 2.4. Obviously, there is an added complexity with a large number of partners, therefore the Partnership has to consider carefully the complexity of managing additional partners and whether bringing on a partner is worth the trade-off.

One of the options to be considered is to create specific deployment groups/ advisory bodies i.e. permanent groups with representatives of relevant actors and/or initiatives, meeting on a regular basis, to involve a process of discussion and sharing expertise, to highlight the factors most impactful in collaboration, looking for synergies, overlaps and areas of conflict.

The Partnership will bring together a broad range of partners and different societal actors with a wide expertise, but with complementary missions and expectations, and will ensure a strong link with EC services.

The successful development of a Partnership and its ability to achieve its main objectives will largely depend on

(i)   the collaboration between partners and between the different governance bodies;

(ii)   the efficient link with relevant EC services;

(iii) the interaction with a broad range of stakeholders; and

(iv)   the development of specific links with third parties playing specific roles in the forest-based research landscape and bringing in complementary expertise.

Typically, the two key pillars of Partnership governance are 1) the core governance (including functions ranging from strategic planning and decision making to compliance) and 2) the collaboration governance including stakeholder engagement, EC involvement (strategic and policy), coordination with other European Partnerships, missions, and R&I initiatives, as well as international cooperation.

The Partnership will base its governance on previously successful models for European Partnerships with following main functions:

1.   General Assembly
2.   Governing Board
3.   Partnership Management Team
4.   Coordination Team
5.   Call Board and Call Office
6.   National Mirror Groups
7.   Ethics Advisory Board
8.   Scientific Advisory Board
9.   Stakeholders Committee

Involvement of the European Commission

A strong and smooth collaboration with the Commission services will be key in order to ease the implementation and administration of the Partnership. The EC role will also be to follow the preparation of the annual work plans, the implementation and regular updating of the SRIA/Roadmap and to assess which areas may be addressed by topics in the Horizon Europe work programmes rather than in the Partnership, as complementary approach. The EC will also help to ensure that appropriate interaction takes place with other relevant European partnerships and that EU and international policy developments are brought to the attention of the Partnership.

DG AGRI, as lead DG for this Partnership will be invited to take part in the Governing Board meetings as full partners (details to be discussed).

In addition to the role of certain Commission services (see Chapter 2.4.2) as observers in the Governing Board, the EC steering role will be decided at a later stage of preparation of the Partnership: either through an external Steering Group (as implemented for certain Horizon 2020 European Joint Programme co-funds), or as part of a European Mirror Group. Either

solution would facilitate a two-way flow of information, from the GB to the relevant DGs and vice versa.

3.4   Openness and transparency

A clear and transparent governance will be set up from the beginning of the Partnership, allowing the participation from a broad range of actors in the Partnership, with no unjustified barriers. The partners of the Partnership will consist of ministries in charge of research and forest-related areas, research funding organisations, and forest-related sectoral agencies from MS and AC. The Partnership will remain open to new partners during its whole lifetime, and specific efforts will be developed to ensure a good geographic coverage within the Partnership with special focus on countries in Europe that are less performing in these types of collaborative networks and thus less inclined to participate.

How will the Partnership establish a broad, open and transparent approach towards different sectors and geographical areas?

Ensuring involvement of all relevant actors (as partner or as stakeholder) is at the core of the Partnership.

The Partnership will organise more inclusive discussions with the identified consortia and other experts, in coordination with the Commission services on the basis of the present proposal, in order to refine the preparation of the activities and governance of the Partnership.

The participation of research actors in transnational projects selected through external calls will ensure a high level of inclusiveness as regards sectors and geographical areas.

As described above in Chapter 3.1, activities that could be foreseen to support approach towards different geographical areas may consist of special targeted accompanying measures, however, in a rapidly changing world keeping in mind the geopolitical competition EU is facing.

How will the Partnership ensure easy and non-discriminatory access to information about the initiative and dissemination of and access to results?

Once the Partnership is established, a dedicated website will be set up where the SRIA and the outputs of the R&I activities will be published. Furthermore, webinars, regular workshops, conferences and meetings will be organised for the research community and other actors from different parts of society. Their results together with main results of R&I activities will be disseminated throughout appropriate communications channels for a wider audience of stakeholders.

A Communication and Dissemination Plan will be developed and implemented together with experts in scientific communication. The plan will specify the different tools for effective communication with different stakeholders such as: social media for researchers, forest owners and managers, programme owners, citizens (LinkedIn, research gate, Facebook, X…), newsletters, brief policy advice, posts, press news, etc. Specific efforts should be put in the communication and dissemination of outputs and outcomes to professional non-research parties (regional, national and international authorities, sectors, industries, etc.) and to the public, who has a specific interest in developing the forest-based sector.

A specific publication policy will be drafted with guidelines for optimal dissemination of scientific manuscripts. All publications and deliverables will be made publicly available without delay following the Open Science and FAIR principles[67].

How will the Partnership establish a proactive recruitment policy?

This will be determined during further discussions on the final Partnership proposal.

At this stage, the EU MS/AC should be aware of the intentions to establish the Partnership, since, besides the many EC efforts to communicate on Horizon Europe and the European Partnerships, the draft SRIA is being developed in the framework of the Horizon Europe RIA Project EUFORE (European Forest Research and Innovation Ecosystem) where several mechanisms of stakeholder engagement are implemented to facilitate the process of co-creating the draft SRIA and to involve the stakeholders appropriately.

As regards potential partners from the public sector, it is expected that the representatives in SCAR SWG FOREST, as well as the contact persons identified by the MS/AC for this Partnership and who were associated to the discussions, have been ensuring coordination within their own country. A proactive policy to stimulate the participation of countries not yet part of the Partnership will be undertaken.

Process for establishing annual work programmes

This should be determined during the development of the SRIA.

The first annual work programme will be based on the SRIA and both documents will be updated through input of the Scientific Advisory Board and the Stakeholders Committee of the European Partnership on Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future.

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