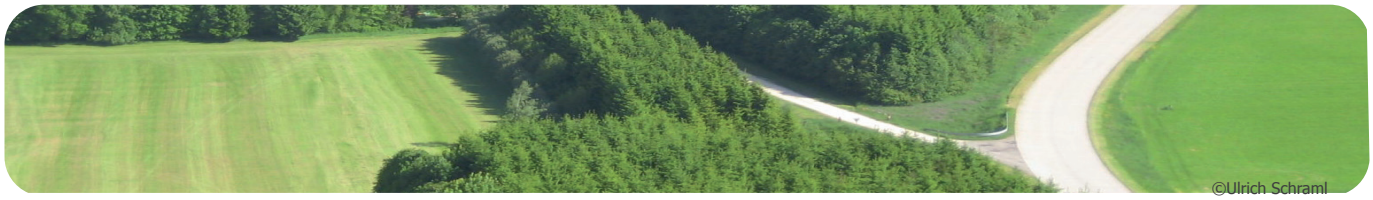
1st NEWSLETTER



The European collaboration project INTEGRAL (Future-Oriented Integrated Management of European Forest Landscapes) seeks to provide solutions on how to implement multifunctional forest and integrated land-use management at the landscape level in Europe. Twenty organizations have started to cooperate in the four-year project in November 2011 and will establish together a knowledge and competence base for integrating European, national and local levels in participatory decision-making and planning processes. Interdisciplinary research activities in 20 pilot forest landscape areas in 10 different countries (Bulgaria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and Slovakia) aim to provide coherent policy instruments, management strategies and decision support tools for integrated and future-oriented conservation and use of forest resources in Europe. The lead partner of INTEGRAL is the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

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Professor Karl-Reinhard Volz
University of Freiburg (Germany)
INTEGRAL Scientific coordination

INTEGRAL – Future-oriented thinking for Europe´s forests

The University of Freiburg (Germany) is the scientific coordinatior of the INTEGRAL project. When asked about the main goals of INTEGRAL, Professor Karl-Reinhard Volz, the director of the Institute of Forest and Environmental Policy at the University of Freiburg, said that there are two main questions that have been considered when setting the project specifics:

1) How to devise a coherent future-oriented forest policy which fosters multifunctional forest development in Europe?

2) How can INTEGRAL effectively support relevant policy and management decisions?

Starting with these central questions, the INTEGRAL activities focus on developing an improved policy and management approach for sustainable use of new and existing forest lands in Europe. Essential for the project are the following suppositions:

• By taking related policy sectors – in terms of "integrated policy" - into account when formulating forest policy, forest management will create fewer problems.

• Forest management conflicts can be solved more easily on the landscape level than on the national level. On landscape level, impacts of regulations and effects of the applied tools are more obvious and specific, and thus can be better identified and compared with each other.

• Finding solutions for forest management conflicts is easier when problem solving is projected into the future.

"We would like to realize this by means of a future-oriented scenario technique. As soon as we have an idea of how the problem could be tackled, we look for the best concrete solutions by means of back-casting," Professor Volz describes the projects idea. It is important to cooperate in INTEGRAL not only across national borders but also disciplinary ones – such as linking social and nature science knowledge and methods. "Nobody can fulfill societal demands without knowing whether these demands are realistic with respect to the given ecosystem services of a certain landscape. At the same time, nobody can manage ecosystem services of a forest landscape appropriately without knowing societal demand and without assessing potential use conflicts", underlines Professor Volz. "We hope very much that our projection of the future in INTEGRAL will lead to processes of policy learning!"

First cross-project meeting in Freiburg, Germany

On 16th of April 2012, five months after the kick-off meeting of INTEGRAL, over 50 representatives of the partner organizations arrived in Freiburg (Southern Germany) in order to participate in a three-day cross-project meeting.
The main points to discuss were the ecological and technical drivers in the selected 20 case-study areas and the adaptation of forest decision support systems (DSSs) and forest ecosystem goods and services modeling.
Furthermore, the common conceptual framework for policy and socioeconomic analysis, and the concrete topics for analyzing social, ecological and economic barriers and drivers were discussed.
In addition to the aforementioned discussion on content, the partners agreed on different instruments, which enable the distribution of project results successfully. The first important step towards informing the decision makers, forest practitioners, scientist and the interested public was the successful launching of the project website, as the main information platform of INTEGRAL: www.integral-project.eu.

Veerle Dossche

European Forest Campaigner for FERN (Stichting FERN), Netherlands

http://www.fern.org/

Veerle Dossche:

"EU-wide cooperation in INTEGRAL has already been established"

Partners in Focus

The presence of environmental NGOs in the INTEGRAL project assures the special integration of environmental and social aspects into the forest management planning tools. Ms. Veerle Dossche is European Forest Campaigner for FERN, one of three key stakeholder organisations working together in the project. FERN was created in 1995 to keep track of the European Union's involvement in forests and to coordinate NGO activities at the European level. One of FERN's focal points is the preservation of forests and forest peoples' rights in the policies and practices of the European Union. The main task of FERN in INTEGRAL is to assure the application of research results in reality and to monitor the progress of the project. We asked her about her understanding of the INTEGRAL-goals as well as her planned activities in the project.

INTEGRAL: In your opinion, what is the main goal of the INTEGRAL project?

VD: Forests in Europe provide environmental, social and economic functions, but the delicate balance to ensure that the needs of all of these functions are met has not yet been achieved. With demand increasing, the concept of sustainable forest management will become unattainable. The concept is not strong enough to deal with trade-offs such as quantity versus quality. In addition to this, forest-related policies are fragmented, sending out contradictory messages to forest managers. In FERN's opinion, the INTEGRAL project's main aim should be to deal with this situation by developing policy and management approaches that will support implementation of integrated forest management now and in the future.

INTEGRAL: How can and will FERN contribute to successful project implementation?

VD: FERN will monitor and provide project input at several stages in order to ensure that INTEGRAL is based on political realities. FERN will also play a role in ensuring that stakeholders provide input throughout the project period, and will contribute to the wide dissemination of project results.

INTEGRAL: What are your experiences concerning transnational cooperation in INTEGRAL and the project's development so far?

VD: There have been two project meetings so far. Many partners only met during the first meeting, but by the end of the second meeting, strong connections had already been made. The project also enables FERN to interact with scientists from different countries and disciplines. This improves our knowledge, understanding and background, and it has been an interesting experience for all concerned.

Jeremy Rayner:

"Multiple case studies at the landscape level are a key strength in INTEGRAL"

Jeremy Rayner

Professor and Centennial Research Chair at the University of Saskatchewan (Canada)

http://www.usask.ca/

Partners in Focus

Within INTEGRAL, the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) will advise the researchers, supervise the progress of the project, and critically review the main results of the project. Jeremy Rayner, Professor and Centennial Research Chair at the University of Saskatchewan (Canada), is one of four highly ranked scientists who is part of INTEGRAL's SAB. His research currently focuses on governance arrangements for complex policy problems, especially at the intersection of forests, climate change and energy. We asked Professor Rayner about his expectations towards INTEGRAL and his planned contribution to support the project activities.

INTEGRAL: How would you summarize the main aim of the INTEGRAL project?

JR: The main aim of the INTEGRAL project is to provide a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by integrated forest management in Europe.
The project is especially innovative in linking developments at the management and programme levels with policy change. Managers often talk vaguely about the need for policy change to enable new management practices, but policy development often takes place without direct knowledge of management challenges. Bridging this gap will be a major achievement.

INTEGRAL: How can you, as member of the Scientific Advisory Board, contribute to reaching the goals of INTEGRAL?

JR: As a Canadian researcher, I can bring my knowledge of our own as well as American efforts to bridge this policy/management divide. I've also worked on a number of projects that encouraged natural scientists and social scientists to work together, and I'm aware of the very real challenges that this kind of cooperation can present. I'm also continuing to research and publish in the area of policy integration.

INTEGRAL: What are your experiences concerning transnational cooperation and the project's development so far?

JR: I don't really have any direct experience of how this is working in the project right now. However, I was very impressed by the breadth of representation from different parts of Europe at the Freiburg meeting, and the evident good will and desire to help the project succeed on everyone's part. The „place-based" nature of the project with its multiple case studies is another key strength, but in the European context, depends completely on transnational cooperation.

Imprint

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Project Website
www.integral-project.eu

integral — Future-oriented integrated management of European forest landscapes

1st PROJECT NEWSLETTER 05-2012

The INTEGRAL-newsletter will be published every 6 months. It provides information on the ongoing project progress, facts concerning the project-related activities of the INTEGRAL project partners and up-to-date news addressing the INTEGRAL target groups.

Each issue is available both in PDF and HTML format via the INTEGRAL-website www.integral-project.eu.

Please feel free to subscribe to the newsletter on our website, if you wish to be regularly informed about INTEGRAL.

INTEGRAL Key Facts

Project acronym: INTEGRAL

Project full title: Future-oriented integrated management of European forest landscapes

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