

EU launches new Forest Information System to improve knowledge on forests and woodlands

The [FISE web portal](#) will provide tailor-made information products to key users including national, EU and international policymakers, experts working in the forest industry, forest owners and conservationists, as well as scientists and researchers. Data will be collected, analysed and made available from across Europe, including EEA Member States, plus the six cooperating countries from the West Balkan region. It is the first common database on forest information in Europe. The aim is to facilitate expert knowledge sharing, research and innovation through the FISE platform, helping users better understand the complex changes and challenges facing forest ecosystems and their management. The platform will underpin the European Green Deal and the development of the expected new EU forest and biodiversity strategies. The portal was launched at the [International Conference on forests for biodiversity and climate](#) (4-5 February 2020) in Brussels, Belgium.

“The European Environment Agency is pleased to play its part in the creation of this important new knowledge tool. FISE will help us to improve the health and resilience of our forests, which play a vital role in protecting our biodiversity and in mitigating climate change,” said Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director.

Forests face increased pressures

Forests and other wooded land cover more than 40 % of Europe, making it one of the most forest-rich regions in the world. In addition to providing lumber and wood products, our forests are home to many ecosystems, which have multiple functions and are home to a major part of Europe’s biodiversity. Their ecosystem services contribute to our health and well-being.

Forests also act as an important stopgap to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Although forests are increasingly seen as a major carbon sink, current management practices to increase this function are not always in line with the needs to ensure high biodiversity in woodland ecosystems. In addition to an increased demand for forest-based products like timber, forests and their ecosystems continue to face air and water pollution, urban sprawl, landscape fragmentation, habitat and biodiversity loss. Moreover, the impacts of climate change, which has led to more fires, pests and extreme weather, including droughts and storms, are putting forests under increased pressure.

A growing number of EU and national policies draw on, or affect directly and indirectly, Europe’s forests, including their ecosystems. Forests are addressed across a range of environment, climate and sectoral policies in the EU and also features in the European Green Deal. Forests also impact many

policy areas meant to use forest resources sustainably and protect biodiversity, ecosystems, species and habitats.

Work on FISE will be phased up over the coming years and will cover five priority themes for forest information on forest basic data (cover and types, species), bioeconomy, nature and biodiversity, climate change mitigation and forest health and resilience.



FISE partnership

The Forest Information System for Europe is a partnership between the European Commission services and the EEA, drawing on the preparatory work already done by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). The EEA will manage the FISE web portal and will collect and analyse the data coming from national data centres via the European Environment Information and Observation Network, in collaboration with the JRC. FISE will also draw data and information from the EU's Earth observation and monitoring programme Copernicus.