



CONNECT – COLLABORATE – EXCHANGE

Guidelines of the European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP)

Draft as of 15 May 2023

1. PURPOSE

These guidelines set out the rationale for establishing the European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP) and outline the ways, in which the platform will work together to accomplish shared goals. The shared goals have been set out in the woodPoP Call on upscaling wood policy cooperation in Europe (see Annex 1) as presented at the 1st woodPoP High Level Meeting on the 1st of December 2022 in Innsbruck/hybrid, Austria.

Furthermore, these guidelines provide for the governance structure and basic working modalities to ensure significant impact and efficiency, while preserving the informal and transparent nature of the platform.

[These draft guidelines were endorsed by the Director Generals for Forests and present at the 2nd High Level Meeting of the European Wood Policy Platform in Helsinki, Finland on 4 October 2023.]

2. INTRODUCTION

Over the last years, public attention and interest for wood and other wood-based materials and their value chains has increased in light of their simultaneous potential in addressing climate change, creating more sustainable economies and societies.

In view of combating climate change, a growing number of countries, regions, cities and communities across Europe are committed to enhance the sustainable use of wood and other renewable materials through specific initiatives and actions. Climate mitigation and adaptation are inherently connected to the sustainable use and management of land, as forests and wood store carbon and can act as a carbon sink. When utilized, wood substitutes fossil materials. Active, sustainable forest management can increase the resilience and adaptability of forests towards impacts of the changing climate as well as provide for the maintenance or increase of carbon stocks. Trade-offs between carbon stocks in biosphere and technosphere hence need to be addressed in a balanced way.

Scaling-up circular and sustainable wood-based pathways can create further impetus for a coherent and supportive policy framework. Initiatives and actions with a special focus on wood and wood-based materials can gain weight and impact by promoting exchange of knowledge, insights and experiences between government representatives including input from scientists and business experts as well as relevant European stakeholders (industry and environment) and national organizations and processes.

In order to facilitate the transition to an enhanced wood-based bioeconomy, the European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP) provides a dedicated forum for multilateral policy, knowledge and experience exchange between public and private actors from the wood sector at national and regional level to share best practices and opportunities of coordinated approaches in developing policy solutions.

3. GOALS OF THE PLATFORM

The European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP) pursues the following goals:

- **encourage and facilitate policy dialogue and vivid exchange** on sustainable production and consumption of wood and its contribution to an innovative, circular bioeconomy supporting energy transition and climate objectives;
- **foster interdisciplinary exchange of technical and scientific knowledge and policy experiences** to build a joint understanding on efficient, future oriented wood-based pathways and support and stimulate innovation integrating existing European and national resources;
- **promote cooperation and joint activities** on wood related matters as well as effective wood policy development and implementation in the pan-European region, including supporting the harmonization of the regulations and the standardization of wood products;
- **increase the visibility and promote the added value** of an enhanced utilization of wood, wood-based materials and especially long-lived wood products from sustainable forest management as key drivers for inclusive green growth, contributing to climate protection and mitigation through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The platform will support participants to connect, collaborate and exchange on wood-related policies and activities highlighting the multifunctional role of forests.

4. ORGANISATION AND WORKING MODALITIES OF THE PLATFORM

The European Wood Policy Platform will organise regular meetings in different formats, as outlined under overall meeting structure (4.1).

Its overall work is led by the Co-Chairs (4.3) under the guidance of the informal Steering Committee (4.4) with the support of the woodPoP Secretariat (4.4).

4.1 Overall meeting structure

Meetings can be organised in person, hybrid or online. It is encouraged to use the synergies of organising meetings back-to-back with other events and conferences.

The following standing groups provide the overall structure of the platform:

- **High Level Meeting (HLM):** Main decision-making body, delegations from Pan-European ministries led by high-level government officials (for instance Ministers, Secretaries of State, Director Generals, Directors) with the participation of international, regional and stakeholder organisations, as well as observers;

- **Expert Group Meeting (EGM):** Main forum for exchange on an operational level; participants from national and regional ministries and private sector, representatives from stakeholder, research, as well as international, regional organizations and networks;
- **Technical Working Group Meetings:** Thematic fora focusing on specific subject matters (see 4.2); representatives from public and private sector, interest groups, research organizations and networks, government officials and invited experts.

4.1.1 Thematic work

The following working groups will be set up under the platform:

- *Governance:* Wood policy formulation and implementation, wood-related policies (e.g. bioeconomy, circular economy, deforestation, restoration, energy, sustainable forest management)
- *Building:* Use of wood in construction and green public procurement (e.g. fire regulations, building technology development, data collection and digitalisation), prefabrication, use of wood in renovations, wood construction value-chains, circularity in wood usage and processes, etc.
- *Innovation and Research:* Research initiatives and collaboration (eg. EU Research and Innovation Strategy), joint programmes (e.g. material and energetic use of wood, bio-based solutions)
- *Education and vocational training:* Educational and professional qualifications along the wood-based value chain, job creation initiatives (e.g. European Qualification Framework Timber, New European Bauhaus Academy)
- *Communication and information:* Wood promotion and advocacy, public awareness

The Technical Working Group meetings will work on the basis of jointly agreed issues with the support of external expertise, if needed, and will provide inputs for the Expert Group Meetings as well as the High Level Meetings.

Each Working Group appoints its officers for a duration of two years. This includes a leading country officer and if deemed necessary two deputies. To the extent possible geographical and gender balance will be taken into account.

The dates and work of the Technical Working Group Meetings are being coordinated by the country officers leading the work stream. Possible costs in view of the organization and preparation of the meetings are to be covered by the leading countries.

4.2 Co-Chairs

The two Co-Chairs are appointed for three years by affirmation at the High Level Meeting. Reappointment is possible.

The Co-Chairs are responsible for the coordination of meeting dates of the High Level Meetings, Informal Steering Group and Expert Group Meetings and conduct these meetings. The Co-Chairs will prepare the draft agenda, in consultation with participants of the meeting, in due time in advance to the respective meetings. The Informal Steering Group will provide guidance to the Co-Chairs.

Representatives from participating ministries have the possibility to call for a meeting and submit agenda items, the final agenda is agreed on at the beginning of the meeting.

4.3 Informal Steering Group

The Informal Steering Group is composed of representatives of interested governments at working level for an initial duration of three years. The countries represented will be announced at the [2nd High Level Meeting of the European Wood Policy Platform in Helsinki, Finland on 4 October 2023.]

The Informal Steering Group (ISG) provides guidance to the Co-Chairs on strategic issues as well as on the preparation of the High Level, Expert Group and Working Groups Meetings. The meetings are being organized at least once per year upon recommendation of the Co-Chairs.

4.4 woodPoP-Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for building up and further developing the European Wood Policy Platform. To this end it is charged to run all operational work on woodPoP related activities on a day-to-day basis. It supports the Co-Chairs and, upon request, the Technical Working Group Leaders, to facilitate the organization of meetings and provide background papers as needed within its financial boundaries. It serves as contact point for interested participants and the public sector.

The Secretariat and its officers are funded by the Co-chairing countries. The Secretariat is encouraged to utilize additional sources of funds as well as in-kind contributions by countries.

4.5 Participants

Participation in the platform is voluntary and upon expression of interest.

Participants of the platform include:

- **Government officials and representatives** from the Pan-European region working with wood policy and wood-related matters;
- **Representatives of wood-related regional, stakeholder and research organisations;**
- **Experts** in the respective field and technical subject matters;
- **Interested participants**, including from other regions, can join as observers upon expression of interest.

4.6 Language requirements

The working language of the platform is English.

If needed, interpretation including for High Level Meetings is to be provided for by the participant country or organisation requiring interpretation.

4.7 Decision making

Decisions and policy-related recommendations relating to the objectives and activities of the platform will be endorsed by the High Level Meeting. The Co-Chairs will aim to seek an informal agreement on the main points for endorsement during the Expert Group Meeting.

Initial inputs can be provided by the Co-Chairs, the Informal Steering Group, the Expert Group and Technical Working Groups.

As a voting procedure is not foreseen, the Co-Chairs will aim to seek consensus on the basis of the views expressed.

4.8 Endorsement and review of the Guidelines

The Guidelines will be endorsed at the High Level Meeting. Subsequent decisions and adaptations of the Guidelines will be discussed in the Expert Group Meeting as appropriate, following the guidance of the Informal Steering Group.

As a voting procedure is not foreseen, the Co-Chairs will aim to seek consensus on the basis of the views expressed.

4.9 Transparency

The High-Level Meeting, Expert Group Meetings and the Technical Working Groups are open to interested participants upon request. Documents endorsed at the High Level Meetings will be made publically available following the meeting.

The Secretariat will support the Co-Chairs in sharing of relevant information and documentation with participants in due time in advance of the meetings. .

5 Review of activities/ Sunset clause

After three years, the European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP) will be evaluated. Based on this review and following recommendations from the Informal Steering Group, the High Level Meeting will take a decision in view of the prolongation or termination of woodPoP activities.

Annex 1:

WOODPOP CALL¹
on upscaling wood policy cooperation in Europe, for the
benefit of

- **FACILITATING** a wood-focused policy dialogue platform on sustainable production and consumption of wood and its contribution to an innovative, circular bioeconomy
- **FOSTERING** cooperation and joint activities on wood related matters as well as effective wood policy development and implementation in the pan-European region
- **PROMOTING** the added value of wood, wood-based materials and especially long-lived wood products from sustainable forest management as key drivers for inclusive green growth, contributing to climate protection and mitigation through reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- **EMPHASIZING** the numerous benefits of multifunctional forests and the need for transformative change in order to foster wood use as a nature-based solution, to promote its climate mitigation and adaptation potential and contribute to halting the global loss of nature
- **ACKNOWLEDGING** the broad expertise and vast knowledge of the forest-based sector in Europe as a key enabler to develop efficient, future oriented wood-based pathways

¹ as endorsed 1st High Level Meeting of the European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP) 1st of December 2022, Innsbruck/Austria in the presence of representatives from Austria, British Columbia/CA (observer), Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg (observer), Netherlands, Norway, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland.