

Global Summit on “Advancing Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches”  
23–25 February 2026, Vienna, Austria

## Guidance Note

### Item 8.2 — Growing forest-based innovations

#### 1. Date & Time

Tuesday, 24 February 2026, from 14:50 to 18:15 CET.

#### 2. Context

Innovation can be defined as “doing something new and different – whether solving an old problem in a new way, addressing a new problem with a proven solution, or bringing a new solution to a new problem”<sup>1</sup>. In the forest sector, innovation can be categorized as five types – ranging from cutting-edge tools and techniques (technology) to new funding mechanisms (financial), improved policy approaches (policy), organizational reforms (institutional), and community participatory approaches (social). These domains must often come together to form an ecosystem that enables the education, adoption and scaling-up of innovation. The innovation must also be context-specific, responsible, and inclusive to meet on the ground realities and needs.

The forest sector has shown a strong capacity for innovation across various types. However, significant challenges persist in identifying, adapting, and scaling-up innovations. We need a comprehensive understanding of the breadth of innovations occurring in the sector and strategize how to approach it on a global level. Taking into account the outcomes of COLI webinars no. 3 “[From forest to market: Advancing forest-based bioeconomy solutions to ensure resource supply meets growing demand](#)” and no. 6 “Bioeconomy cooperation: next steps to upscale forest-based bioeconomy”, the session will focus on identifying different types of innovation and its partnership opportunities among academia, government, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector which vital for the uptake of science-based forest sector innovations and enhancement of related skills.

#### 3. Objectives

This thematic session aims to identify:

- i. Key aspects of innovation as a driving force and its potential for advancing the forest-based bioeconomy.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. 2024. The State of the World’s Forests 2024 – Forest-sector innovations towards a more sustainable future. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1211en>

- ii. Challenges and immediate opportunities for innovations to advance the forest-based bioeconomy, including partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and skills.

#### 4. Guiding questions

- i. Which recent **innovations** have successfully advanced sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches? e.g. technological, social, policy, institutional, or financial.
- ii. Which **factors** currently prevent the large-scale implementation of innovative practices in the forest sector? e.g. such as policy constraints, institutional challenges, or financial gaps.
- iii. What are the most promising **short-term innovation opportunities** in the forest sector that can be rapidly scaled up to enhance the forest-based bioeconomy?
- iv. Which **collaborative efforts** between stakeholders are needed most to create the conditions that support the expansion of forest-based innovations and accelerate this transition? (e.g. government, industry, finance, and research)

#### 5. Format and modalities

The thematic session will be hosted by the session lead. The session comprises a keynote presentation, followed by stakeholder views and facilitated discussions in breakout groups on site and online. During the facilitated discussion, participants will have the opportunity to contribute to the above-mentioned four guiding questions. Time allows for approximately 15 minutes of discussion per guiding question within the breakout groups.

The key points from the parallel sessions will be presented in the plenary followed by an exchange of views giving participants the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of all topics.

#### 6. Draft programme

<b>Location: Room 8 (“Sophie”)</b>		<b>Speaker</b>
<b>Moderator: Ewald Rametsteiner,</b> <i>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)</i>		
14:50	Opening by session lead	<b>Akiko Tabata</b> Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
14:55	Keynote	<b>Eric Hansen</b> University of Oregon, US
15:10	Stakeholder views	<b>Denis Dobrynin</b> (tbc) Presidency in the European Bioeconomy University Alliance, University of Eastern Finland  <b>Heidi Brock</b> (tbc) International Council of Forest and Paper Associations, ICFPA

		<b>Mia Crawford</b> (tbc) Major Group Farmers and Small Landowners
15:25	World café	<i>Breakout group discussion on guiding questions</i>  <i>Facilitated by</i> Lisa Lehner (AT), Lyndall Bull (FAO), Nelson Grima (IUFRO), Peter Mayer (BFW)
16:25	Summary by facilitators	
16:40	Closing by session lead	
16:45	Coffee break	<i>Reconvene in plenary</i>

<b>Location: Room 10 (“Orangerie”)</b>	
<b>Moderator: Tiina Ryttilä-Broere</b> <i>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland</i>	
17:20	<i>Pitch of key points from Item 8.1 and 8.2</i>
17:40	<i>Exchange of views</i>
18:00	<i>Conclusion by Co-Chairs</i>

## 7. References

- i. **FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)**. 202X. *Summary report of Webinar 5. Building the future: innovative wood solutions for carbon neutrality and sustainable bioeconomy*. Rome, FAO. [link will be provided upon availability]
- ii. **FAO**. 2025. *Background paper of Webinar 5. Building the future: innovative wood solutions for carbon neutrality and sustainable bioeconomy*. Rome, FAO.  
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd7200en>
- iii. **FAO**. 202X. *Summary report of Webinar #6 - Bioeconomy cooperation: next steps to upscale forest-based bioeconomy* Rome, FAO. [link will be provided upon availability]
- iv. **FAO**. 2025. *Background paper of Webinar #6 - Bioeconomy cooperation: next steps to upscale forest-based bioeconomy*. Rome, FAO. [link will be provided upon availability]
- v. **FAO**. 2024. *The State of the World’s Forests 2024 – Forest-sector innovations towards a more sustainable future*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1211en>
- vi. **IUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organizations)**. 2026. *Policy Brief* [link will be provided upon availability]