

Guidance Note

Item 7.2 — Forest potentials beyond wood

1. Date & Time

Tuesday, 24 February 2026, from 10:10 to 13:30 CET.

2. Context

Agrifood systems face growing pressure to deliver food and biomaterials in ways that are inclusive, sustainable and resource-efficient. Forests are biologically rich systems, and they provide a wide array of renewable forest products¹ that support the livelihoods of billions of people, sustain agrifood systems, and contribute to a sustainable bioeconomy. Forest goods beyond wood provide food, feed, fuel, medicines, cosmetics, biochemicals, and more, that are central to many value chains and value-added products. They help drive innovation in diverse areas, including food security, nutrition, healthcare, packaging, bioplastics and construction. Today, the use of these goods is contributing to the growth of emerging multi-billion-dollar industries and catalysing new social arrangements. In parallel, forest services such as carbon sequestration, water regulation, biodiversity protection and ecotourism are also offering economic opportunities while conserving natural capital; therefore, they are important components of a sustainable bioeconomy.²

Taking into account the [COLI Webinar 4 “Accelerating inclusive agrifood systems: the sustainable use of forest products beyond wood”](#), this session is highlighting how forest-based bioeconomy approaches can transform agrifood systems by emphasizing social sustainability, equitable benefit-sharing and improved livelihoods. Local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth must be at the heart of the transition through fair benefit-sharing to ensure the long-term social and ecological resilience of forest-based bioeconomy.

3. Objectives

This thematic session aims to identify:

- i. Success factors, gaps, opportunities, and priority actions to advance the development and upscaling of forest products beyond wood.
- ii. Options for multi-stakeholder dialogues to strengthen and scale up the role of forest products beyond wood within the framework of a sustainable forest-based bioeconomy at all levels.

¹ This wide array encompasses goods (wood and non-wood); regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, waste and water quality; cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis and nutrient cycling.

² In line with FAO’s working definition of bioeconomy. <https://www.fao.org/in-action/sustainable-and-circular-bioeconomy/en>

4. Guiding questions

- i. What has **worked best** when scaling the sustainable use of forest products beyond wood? e.g. technical, policy-related, or finance and market-based level.
- ii. What **critical barriers** prevent scaling up the use of forest products beyond wood (e.g. technically, policy-related, or finance and market-based)?
- iii. What should be **targeted** in the short term to accelerate scaling up the use of forest products beyond wood?
- iv. Which **priority actions and partnerships** should be supported for upscaling the sustainable use of forest products beyond wood?

5. Format and modalities

The thematic session will be hosted by the session lead. The session will comprise an expert panel on the guiding questions, a poll, and an open discussion. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to raise them during the open discussion.

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

Location: Room 8 ("Sophie")		Speaker
Moderator: UNFFS		
10:10	Opening by session lead	Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo Ambassador-at-Large in charge of Climate, Environment and Sustainable Development, Gabon
10:15	Keynote	Carsten Smith-Hall University of Copenhagen, Denmark
10:30	Stakeholder views by Countries	Yingwen Jiang (tbc) National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China Rata Muda (tbc) Ministry of Primary Industries, New Zealand Ana Gabriela Saavedra López (tbc) Ministry of Environment and Energy, Ecuador
10:45	Panel discussion <i>1st round: interventions by panelists based on guiding questions (20').</i> <i>Interaction with audience via word cloud-poll (10').</i>	Bryony Morgan (tbc) Traffic, UK Aaron Adu Global Shea Alliance, Ghana

	<i>2nd round: reaction to the poll by the panelists (15')</i>	Sheam Satkuru International Tropical Timber Organization, ITTO
	<i>Open discussion with audience (30')</i>	Tim Payn (tbc) Bioeconomy Science Institute, New Zealand
11:55	Closing by session lead	
12:00	Coffee break	<i>Reconvene in plenary</i>

Location: Room 10 (“Orangerie”)	
Moderator: Tiina Ryttilä-Broere <i>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland</i>	
12:35	<i>Pitch of key points from Item 7.1 and 7.2</i>
12:55	<i>Exchange of views</i>
13:15	<i>Conclusion by Co-Chairs</i>

7. References

- i. **FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)**. 2025. *Summary report of Webinar 4. Accelerating inclusive agrifood systems: the sustainable use of forest products beyond wood*. Rome, FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd7241en>
- ii. **FAO**. 2025. *Background paper of Webinar 4. Accelerating inclusive agrifood systems: the sustainable use of forest products beyond wood*. Rome, FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/54f049de-f14f-45f5-b3bc-e7ec84fb27b1>
- iii. **Laird, S., Muir, G., Shanley, P., Pierce, A., López Binnquist, C., de Beer, J., Vinceti, B. & Walter, S.** 2024. *Forests, trees and wild species in agrifood systems: Optimizing benefits for biodiversity, climate and health*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2883en>
- iv. **IIUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organizations)**. 2026. Policy Brief [link will be provided upon availability]