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Application of the typical enterprise approach in forestry: a pilot study to collect economic key figures in small-scale private forest enterprises

T4.24 Provision of Ecosystem Services from Small-scale Private Forests - Is it viable?

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Abstract: In the EU, forestry as a supplier of wood and other ecosystem services, is an important source of employment and income and has a high ecological, social and cultural significance. About 50% of the European forest area is managed by private forest owners. In this context, small-scale private forest owners with less than 20 ha of forest account for about 33% of the total privately owned forest area (Hirsch et al. 2010). As a result of the need to adapt forest management to climate change as well as increasing societal demands, European (small-scale) private forests are facing major challenges.

For evidence-based policy decisions, knowledge about the economic situation of small-scale private forest enterprises (SSPFE) is of high importance. So far, however, there are no or only few operational key figures on forest management in SSPFE in many EU Member States. Furthermore, the few existing key figures are hardly internationally comparable. Against this background, the collection and comparative analysis of economic indicators of forestry production in SSPFE is of great importance. For this purpose, an EU-wide harmonized approach for data collection in SSPFE is necessary, but does not exist yet.

Therefore, in a pilot-study within the joint research project "Valorising small scale forestry for a bio-based economy (ValoFor)" comparable key figures on forest management in SSPFE in Germany, Finland, Austria, Sweden and Slovenia were collected, using a modified "typical enterprise approach". For each country, a typical SSPFE with typical management measures and economic indicators was created through in-depth literature analysis and expert interviews. On this basis, comparable key figures for forest management in the five partner countries were derived for the first time. Exemplary, it was found that in the reference year 2021, the highest timber revenues in typical SSPFE were achieved in Austria (66 €/m³). This was followed by Germany with 57 €/m³. For the typical enterprises in Finland, Sweden and Slovenia, timber revenues of 41 - 42 €/m³ were calculated.

The "typical forest enterprise" approach, which can be realized with comparatively little effort, can serve as a valuable basis for further forest economic impact assessments for EU policy processes.