



Robinwood



Forest Management



Forest Management Principles

Why manage forests

“Living forests are the basis of life on Earth. By sustaining forests, we sustain life.”

4th Ministerial Conference on the protection of forests in Europe, Vienna 2003

Forests play an often-unrecognised role in the livelihoods of people. They are essential to rural areas and constitute an invaluable component of integrated rural development.

One of the key aims of Robinwood has been to find ways to improve the role of forestry in rural Europe.

For although our regions have widely differing forests through Robinwood we found we all share the desire and will to improve our forest resource, and to use this forest resource sustainably to aid rural development.

And we have acted to ensure that the principles of sustainable Forest management are strengthened at all levels within the partner regions with the signing of our Commitment.

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) can be defined as;

“the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way and a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future relevant ecological, economic, and social functions, at local national and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems”

Ministerial conference on the Protection of European Forests, Helsinki: 1993.



Robinwood – our commitment

We, the public administrators of European regions and of other European bodies, commit to promoting the spirit and contents of the pan-European indicators for Sustainable Forest Management and the proposed European Forest Action Plan by:

- Improving the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector and enhancing the sustainable use of forest products and services.
- Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, carbon sequestration, integrity, health and resilience of forest ecosystems.
- Contributing to the quality of life by preserving and improving the social and cultural dimensions of forests.
- Improving coherence and cross-sectoral co-operation to balance economic, environmental and socio-cultural objectives at multiple organisational and institutional levels.

Robinwood partners and the other signing bodies commit themselves to define a Local Action Plan in order to implement the above and assess its results every 5 years.

Increasingly forests and woodlands are recognised as providing a multifunctional role, fulfilling social and environmental needs, the economic function of timber production and alleviating floods and soil erosion.

More recently the role of forests in climate change mitigation is being recognised, not only in their role in the carbon cycle and carbon sequestration, but also in replacing fossil fuels with wood fuel.

Forests are becoming a very important part of Europeans lives, more people are becoming aware of “their” forests and most would welcome more involvement in their management.

ROBINWOOD Public Opinion Survey 2006

Europe has long recognised that to meet these many and varied demands forests must be managed and managed sustainably, *“in order that we meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Our Common Future 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development).*

The forest resource within the Robinwood partner regions

Within the EU there are 36 million ha of forest – 36% land cover, and unlike the rest of the world this is increasing by 0.3% annually.

	Brandenburg	Liguria	Murcia	Eastern Slovakia	Wales	EU
Area – ha	2,947,600	542,000	1,131,700	1,575,000	2,075,000	100,000,000
Forest Area – ha	1,100,000	335,000	508,950	598,500	285,000	36,000,000
% Forest cover	37%	62%	45%	38%	14%	36%
Main Forest type	Scots Pine plantations	Chestnut coppice	Mediterranean an evergreen trees and shrubs	Beech, Red fir, and Oak	Non-native conifer plantations	

Most people wanted more woodlands and forests, especially in those regions where forest cover is low. It is only in regions with a high forest cover of 60 per cent or more that people begin to indicate that they would prefer no change to woodland cover.

ROBINWOOD Public Opinion Survey 2006

Sustainable Forest Management principles

EU countries have adopted a set of “Pan European Criteria” (PEC’S) to be applied across the whole of Europe:

- Maintenance and enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles.
- Maintenance of the forest ecosystem’s health and vitality.
- Maintenance and encouragement of production from forests - wood and non-wood.
- Maintenance, conservation and enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems.
- Maintenance and enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)
- Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions.

These criteria apply to Europe as a whole but management must be linked to local, regional and national policies to ensure effective implementation.

Further reading:

- Robinwood Forest Management reports - www.robinwood.it
- UK Forest Standard - publications@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- Woodlands for Wales - publications@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- Better Woodlands for a Better Wales - publications@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- Sustainable Forestry and the European Union. ISBN 92-894-6092-X
- European Union - www.europa.eu.int
- Forestry Commission Wales - www.forestry.gov.uk

Making it happen

The Robinwood partners agreed that Forest Management has a key role to play in the future of rural revitalisation. They outlined the following key areas which need to be addressed to encourage greater management:

- 1) Co-operation, co-ordination and partnerships
Due to the multi-functionality of forests, forest policy often influences and is influenced by cross-sectoral decisions. Co-operation, co-ordination and partnerships across forestry, tourism, education, agriculture and health are vital to ensure the sustainable development of our forests.
- 2) National and regional laws and regulations.
These need to be integrated with the planning and certification process to ensure integration between regulations (national or regional) with certification standards.

In Brandenburg there was a view that national and regional forestry regulations were sufficient to guarantee SFM. However the Brandenburg administration recognised that local, national and international buyers of timber were increasingly demanding a certified product. It also saw certification of state forests as a means to encourage certification by private owners. Brandenburg Certification report 2006

- 3) Certification, a tool to help achieve (and monitor) SFM.
All Robinwood partners see certification as a tool to help achieve SFM
- 4) Effective and appropriate planning, necessary to achieve certification.
- 5) Use of public forests as exemplar/testing grounds.
- 6) Grants to incentivise policy/strategies
Properly monitored and evaluated over time.
- 7) Increase forest area

Forestry Operations are long term, and because of this a central place must therefore be allotted, within the framework of an ecologically coherent national forestry policy. **MCPFE Strasbourg 1990**

This report has been produced as a result of the Robinwood Project, a 45 month European Interreg 111c Regional Framework Operation project – a first for Wales and delivered by Forestry Commission Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It looked at how we should manage our trees and forests to provide solutions to hydrological issues, increase the amount of wood used in heat and energy and the key role they play in helping to regenerate rural communities across Europe.

The Italian project leaders named the project after Robin Hood – a deliberate play on the UK folk hero best known for taking from the rich and giving to the poor. Research carried out by the project now provides valuable new information on how forests can provide all kinds of opportunities for the future.