



Finnish Forest Industries



# Newsletter

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Paper and Wood

**New measures to protect forest biodiversity  
produce results in Finland**

**Wood supply and employment effects should be  
considered in decisions**

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## **New measures to protect forest biodiversity produce results in Finland**

**New measures have been developed to ensure forest biodiversity in Finland. The pilot stage of the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland (METSO) showed that voluntary protection measures are effective and also enjoy broad support among forest owners. Measures taken to promote the natural management of commercial forests have been in the right direction to ensure biodiversity.**

Many new voluntary measures to protect forest biodiversity have been created in the METSO programme. The evaluators of the pilot stage recommend that these be mobilized to the whole country. Results show that voluntary measures can successfully protect good and ecologically representative areas. The evaluation also notes that voluntary measures should be developed so that they cover a wider range of habitats and form more extensive networks.

Both Finland's Minister of the Environment and Minister of Agriculture and Forestry consider it important to prepare a new action and financing programme to improve forest biodiversity in 2007. Permanent Secretary Sirkka Hautojärvi at the Ministry of the Environment says that preparation work will begin immediately. The intention is to submit the programme to the Government for approval together with the revision of the National Forest Programme in autumn 2007. According to estimates projects aimed at protecting forest biodiversity will require 65 million euros a year in the next 10-year period.

## **Wood supply and employment effects should be considered in decisions**

When decisions are made concerning the level of forest protection and measures, attention should be paid to the social and financial effects of protection as well as ecological objectives. These should be evaluated from the viewpoint of the national economy as well as regional economies. Several studies have shown that voluntary protection has clearly fewer negative impacts on regional economies and employment compared with traditional statutory protection. Using voluntary measures is important in order to ensure employment and the vitality of regional economies better.

"Forest biodiversity in southern Finland can be protected mainly through the natural management of commercial forests and voluntary protection measures. The forest industries need a steady supply of raw materials, and increasing protection significantly would quite probably weaken the supply of wood. This would have a negative impact on employment and the economy more broadly and would reduce willingness to protect valuable habitats. Sufficient funds should be reserved in the state budget for voluntary protection areas," says Mr Anders Portin, Senior Vice President, Sustainable Development and Resources at the Finnish Forest Industries Federation.

Mr Portin also points out that in Finland forestry is sustainable and the natural management and protection of forests are top class in the world. Strictly protected forests account for over 8 per cent of forest land, which is the highest figure in Europe. In commercial forests biodiversity is protected using a wide range of natural management measures, such as saving key biotopes, increasing the share of deciduous trees and leaving retention trees. The forest industries will continue to develop natural management methods.

The METSO programme, which was approved in 2002, is an action plan to protect biodiversity in forests in southern Finland, the western parts of the Province of Oulu and the southwestern region of the Province of Lapland. The goal is to ensure important forest biotopes and habitats for endangered species as well as structural features typical of natural forests. The programme also includes broad research. The programme is directed jointly by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Finnish Forest Research Institute and the Finnish Environment Institute have been in charge of evaluating and monitoring the programme.

**Additional information:**

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**Previous press releases on the subject:**

<http://english.forestindustries.fi/press/2006/20060911114500.html>  
<http://english.forestindustries.fi/press/2006/20060503121607.html>

**More about the METSO programme:**

<http://wwwb.mmm.fi/metso/international/index.html>

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The Finnish Forest Industries Federation represents companies in the forest-based and related industries in Finland. Its task is to promote the competitiveness and profitability of the paper and wood products industries by strengthening their operating conditions and positive image in Finland and abroad. The organization's membership covers the entire pulp, paper and paperboard industries and about 80% of the wood products industry in Finland.

The sustainable use of renewable natural resources supports growth, employment, welfare and sustainable development in Europe. The forest-based sector is a significant European branch with a key role in promoting sustainable development. The sector wants to make the sustainable use of renewable natural resources one of the themes of the Finnish Presidency of the EU.