

European forest externalities: Introduction of COST Action E45 EUROFOREX

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Forests produce several non-timber products, like mushrooms, berries, medicinal herbs, and alike. They also provide other services to society, like recreation, attractive landscapes, CO₂ sequestration, erosion prevention, hydrological regulation, biodiversity preservation, etc. called externalities. The research undertaken in Europe on forest externalities is considerable, but - generally not coordinated, focusing on one or a few local externalities - of very uneven quality and rarely with a regional or European vision. The situation will improve by the development of protocols, as there are in other fields and regions. A COST Action covering the main methods for non-market forest products and externalities seems the most adequate to establish, due to the common grounds needed in the field, since the task does not involve new empirical research, but needs much cooperation and agreements that will be obtained in a series of thematic meetings. The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of the 16 countries participating in the planning of the Action, at EUR 17 million at 2005 prices.