

Developing forest Energy Governance in Northern Europe

The forest energy governance exists as phenomena in each country separately in Northern Europe. However, interaction between the countries is lacking in this field. The idea behind this SNS-funded network was to bring the specialist from Northern Europe in one place to discuss the similarities and common features which can be taken further as an examples of best practices and promoted elsewhere around the globe.



Photo: Meeting with representative of North Karelia Regional Council in Joensuu city hall/ Maxim Trishkin

Breaking the ice of forest energy governance

A two-day seminar was hosted by University of Eastern Finland, it was a combination of indoor seminar the first day; and outdoor visits the second day. The seminar has gathered the partners across the Nordic and Baltic countries to discuss the hot points of forest energy governance in Northern Europe. Each partner had a chance to present own vision on development of forest governance in the country and present strong and weak sides of it. The moderator of the seminar was the coordinator of the project, Adj. Professor Blas Mola-Yudego who kept the track of the main hot spots in the presentations and

mind-mapped the common peculiarities in all the countries.

Based on common discussion & group work the participants agreed on further needs to discuss the forest energy governance further on.

A common platform for potential conflict resolution in forest governance

The participants of the seminar presented a platform, which could be used as a basis across the Northern Europe to map the potential stakeholders, descriptive data, and potential ways for conflict resolution in forest governance. In order to be transparent in a process it was suggested to utilize online debeg.org source which will be adapted if necessary to the needs of the forest governance in Northern Europe. The platform is highly interactive and spatially explicit which helps to identify problematic areas on a delayed level. Moreover, the platform is also publicly accessible, which means anybody who is interested or would like to make an input with his/her own case in known location is more than welcomed.

At the moment the database contains over 25 bioenergy conflicts in Northern Europe, whereas over half of them are in Sweden and Finland. The conflicts are mainly disputes 200 bioenergy conflict cases around the globe which were found in more than 40 countries.

Forest energy in Latvia and Lithuania

Both countries are important biomass suppliers for Nordic countries, in forms of roundwood, chips and pellets. In recent years, both countries are facing decreased employment in forestry sector, due to automation and mechanisation of many processes in the supply and value chain.

Short-rotation forestry in Sweden

Despite the technological advancement and demand of market for woody biomass from short-rotation forestry the current oil prices and

changing policy framework slow down the development of short rotation.

North Karelia regional strategies – fossil oil free & bioeconomy

The participants of the seminar discussed the current strategy presented by specialist on regional strategy to be an oil-free region in Northern Karelia; moreover, the concept of bio based economy was opened up more with local features. It has many advantages, firstly, energy security in the region; secondly is additional employment and promotion of local economies.

All in all favorable political environment, availability of expertise and existing potential to increase use of woody biomass for energy production of cost-competitive manner makes it more of reality than a myth.

The increased share of biomass resources utilization is in line with one of the three specialization choices set up by Regional Council of North Karelia which is forest bioeconomy. It is a new era of natural resources which includes forest-based bioenergy, decentralized bio-refinery and wood-based materials, forest technology and logistics of forest harvesting, bioinformation economy, sustainable multiuse of forests and natural resources. Each of the specialization in forest bioeconomy is a smart specialization choices, which means that it supports advanced technological process. Involvement into bioeconomy in general supports the competitiveness of the forestry sector and strengthening of expertise. Successful expertise or so called “good or best practices” are the key channels to strengthening the internationalization and expansion to foreign markets.

Currently renewables contribute 63% to North Karelia energy sector, whereas over 80% is woody biomass. Quite a starting point for development of bioeconomy and fossil free energy supply.

North Karelia has a diverse experience on forestry resource efficiency which makes the potential products cost efficient and competitive from one side, of course human costs is another side. Efficiency of utilization is driven by increased material efficiency, improvement of recycling and focusing on low carbon and being climate change preventive.

Company’s view on energy efficiency and carbon neutrality

The participants of the seminar had a chance to have a site visit to KESLA Ltd. who is one of the world leaders in forest machineries. The company puts many efforts to improve its competitiveness by investing into energy efficiency and hybrid technology, which was in line with the headlines of the seminar.

Thinking outside the box

The summing up of the event concluded the importance of the joint collaboration and cooperation between the partners. Each partner participated in brain storming towards further development of the concept had a chance to bring own ideas and suggestions.

Further cooperation

The partners of the seminar highlighted the importance of the event and agreed on further steps of cooperation, we are very grateful to SNS network for the given opportunity to host the seminar and bring the partners together.

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