



FOREST4EU partner: CNPF

OG: FPP-EGG

OG's country: France

Type of Innovation: Organisational

Group management trial

Introduction

The fragmentation of private forest properties, with no sustainable management document, represents a real challenge for the development of sustainable forest management. To involve small owners, it is necessary to rely on dynamic local owners. The originality of this project is that the owner is a municipality, which could potentially lead to a revival of forestry on a massif-wide scale and thus provide information on an applicable method and on the juridical difficulties of this type of initiative. In fact, there are around 300 communal forest properties in Normandy not subject to the forestry legislation, for which the mayors often have ambitions, which could be inspired by this initiative and simultaneously lead many small neighbouring private forests towards sustainable management. This operational group aims to support the development of sustainable public-private management of forests in Normandy. The aim is to create a regional approach based on experiments in grouped public-private forest management, as well as common tools for consultation between the various organisations involved.

Methodology and results

The area selected was the upper part of the Becdal ravine in the communes of Quatremare and Mesnil Jourdain (27). The massif comprises 35 hectares of forest divided into 38 properties, with 10 hectares belonging to the municipality and more than thirty private forest owners owning the remaining area. The stands, soil and climate (current and future) were characterised, in order to define potentially interesting silvicultural projects. The majority of participants expressed the wish not to disrupt the landscape of the valley, and a financial balance will be pursued between income and expenditure to enable renewal without investment by the owners, apart from income from harvesting. Initially, there was no support for owners to join a structure, as each owner wanted to maintain his or her autonomy. If actions can be grouped together without being modified, then the possibility of a regrouping will be conceivable. The French National Centre for Forest Ownership (CNPF) was able to identify a strong desire from owners to conserve a high level of biological diversity. Stands and forest management in general were discussed and demonstrated in the field. Landowners were given technical factsheets corresponding to their stands, which raised a high degree of interest, and were analysed and discussed during individual interviews. The stands for which silvicultural

action is accepted are those affected by dieback and/or biotic attacks. In order to offset the cost of reforestation and ensure sufficient revenue, it was proposed that living trees should be harvested by thinning. For non-declining stands, thinning was also proposed on the basis of biodiversity conservation criteria. The volume of wood cut is likely to be small and from a variety of species, which makes it difficult to commercialise. However, by grouping together, it is possible to offer sufficient volume to interest buyers. The CNPF has launched a call for proposals to estimate the volume and value of the thinning. This was sent to all the owners to obtain their agreement before the call for proposals was launched. However, the municipality's agreement could not be obtained before the end of the project. As a result, the worksite in the communal forest could not be approved, blocking the effective launch of the overall worksite.

Lessons learned

The municipality's commitment enabled a calm and effective dialogue, leading to the mobilisation of a number of private owners. To gain the trust of the owners, the preferred method was to approach them collectively and individually. This method led to a felling and reforestation project being proposed for 4 landowners representing 15 hectares in the commune.







In communal forests, the procedures for submitting land to the forestry legislation are very demanding, generating a caution and a long reflection period. In the absence of submission to the forestry legislation and of a Standard Management Agreement, it is not possible to draw up a sustainable management document for the communal forest, which then remains ineligible for subsidies. It seems difficult to envisage joint management unless private owners align themselves with the worksites, service providers and buyers identified by the national forestry office. The current situation is that the forestry code is designed to completely and systematically separate public management from private management. A national review of changes to the forestry code should therefore be considered in order to envisage joint management.

The information presented in this factsheet was developed by the FOREST4EU partner, drawing on the innovations and knowledge generated by the indicated operational group with their explicit authorization.

Further information

<https://www.xn-reseau-national-agricultures-ruralits-bkd.fr/centre-de-ressources/projets/fpp-egg-forets-privées-et-publiques-essai-de-gestion-groupee>



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