

Comments to the Draft Forestry Programme 2014 – 2020 IRELAND.

Comments below are specific to Forest Research.

Priority Area 1 appears to be where forest research has been identified as of greatest significance. However, it is clear that the findings and outputs of forest research have significance and clear relevance across all six priority areas in the delivery of priority area objectives and in the New Measures proposed. Forest Research Ireland (FORI), the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for forestry which sets out the forest research agenda over the coming years illustrates this through scope of its agenda.

As the FORI Report identifies

“Forest research has a solid track record in Ireland, dating back to the 1950s. Knowledge of appropriate species and provenance selection, silviculture and forest management systems still in use today were largely developed as a result of research carried out over the past five decades. In recent years the scope of the forest research agenda has diversified in response to emerging policy and knowledge needs and embraces social and ecological forest functions, as well as management, production and utilisation aspects against the backdrop of delivering on its multifunctional potential and the need to safeguard the sustainable management of the resource”

In addition current and future forest research primarily supported by DAFM, currently supports and will continue to support delivery of priority area objectives identified within and across the 6 priority areas and in the New Measures proposed.

Thought must be given as to how new (?) funding sources for aspects of forest research (including agro-forestry and forest genetic resource research) will be organised, funded and managed – in the context of FORI and DAFM’s forest research programme.

Perhaps a short paragraph on forest research could be included in Chapter 4.

More specific comments to the text are set-out below:

Section 3		
Page	Section	Comment
20	3.1.1 Point 4.	Add-in text in red, to read To reduce the gap between the provision of research results and the application of said results in policy and practice.
21	Strengths	Forest Research Ireland FORI, a Strategic Research Agenda for forestry has been prepared and published. It is available at http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/research/whatsnew/ForestResearchIreland20143Layout1091014.pdf
		Add the following to Strengths Support from DAFM (and from other sources) through its CoFoRD Forest Research Programme for forestry focused research projects.
21	Weaknesses	Add-in text in red, to read Over-emphasis in some areas of research on academic outputs rather than on policy and practice needs , technology transfer, commercialisation and innovation
22	Opportunities Bullet 4	To read as follows: Continuing support for forest research to address key issues for the sector with the potential to inform policy and develop new practices and technology.

	Threats Bullet 1	Add-in text in red, to read Cutbacks in research , training and advisory service allocations due to budgetary constraints
24	Opportunities Bullet	Add-in text in red, to read. See red text at the end of the paragraph. Producer groups and other collaborative mechanisms can improve the uptake of the findings of forest based research, the adoption of technology and the application of best practice at plantation level can be supported by the point is not completed.
Section 4		
39	4.3.3 (b)	Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and linking these sectors with the findings of research and innovation, including for the purpose of with particular focus on improved environmental management and performance
		Quantified Target. Continued support for relevant research across the 6 Priority Areas. Include as a Quantified Target across the 6 Priority Areas.
Section 5		
53	5.1.5.2	Support for the establishment of demonstration plots for research purposes may also be considered under this scheme. Thought must be given as to how new (?) funding sources for aspects of forest research (including agro-forestry and forest genetic resource research) will be organised, funded and managed – in the context of FORI and DAFM’s research programme.
90	5.7.2.1	The existence of a gap between the provision of research results and the application of innovative approaches can also be addressed under the structure of knowledge transfer groups. The aim would be to bring innovators and researchers together with forest holders to look at the specific topics of interest and concern . Within these Knowledge Transfers Groups, researchers and innovators representing the scientific community would access (?) practical issues whereas forest holders can benefit from the latest developments in the topic as presented to them. Note; In order for this approach to work it is critical that the researchers are not overly focused on academic outputs and clearly attuned to policy and practice needs. New approaches take too long to arrive on the ground and this approach could facilitate the adoption of new ideas within a shorter timeframe. (Not sure what this means – it may not be necessary to include?).
95	5.10.6 Bullet 4	Establishing seed orchards can be used as a continuation of existing seed or clonal research and therefore bring to fruition research carried out on resilience, productivity and wood quality.; Thought must be given as to how new (?) funding sources for aspects of forest research (including agro-forestry and forest genetic resource research) will be organised, funded and managed – in the context of FORI and DAFM’s research programme.

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10th October 2014