

Social innovation in forestry		
Panel 9		
Session Chair	Gerhard Weiss & Elena Górriz- Mifsud	
Presenters	Session 5.2	Carmen Rodríguez Fernández Blanco Todora Rogelja Valentino Marini Govigli Gerhard Weiss Mariana Melnykovich

Abstract Panel 9 – Social innovation in forestry.

The provision of multiple ecosystem services is a central concern of forest policies and the forest sector, furthermore, contributes in many ways to rural development. Recently, policy practice and research have discovered the role of social innovation as a potentially important mechanism to secure manifold services of forests for society. Since market mechanisms have strong limitations with regard to many goods and services with public good characteristics and top-down policy approaches face a range of barriers, social innovation promise to offer another institutional mechanism through common, collective or community action (E. Ostrom).

This panel aims to highlight the role of social innovation for securing multiple economic, ecological and social benefits of forests for society and rural development and to give insights into social innovation processes. Social innovation can be understood as new mechanisms for finding new solutions for the fulfilment of social needs where civil society actors have a central role. With this, they are distinct from market or policy innovations, although firms and policy actors may have roles in the process and policies form an important part of the environment for such innovations.

The presented papers use practical examples from across Europe and either analyse the mechanisms behind those innovations (Rodríguez Fernández Blanco et al.; Rogelja et al.) or assess their contribution to sustainability-related policy goals (Marini Govigli et al.; Weiss et al.). The former provide insights into the role of various actors in the development of social innovations, including public policy actors, as well as the role of institutional frameworks and policies. The latter illustrate the specific potential of social innovations to cater to a range of policy goals, particularly non-market benefits of forests such as social and ecological benefits and the contribution to regional economic development and well-being of rural communities.