

Focus on Bavaria (Germany)

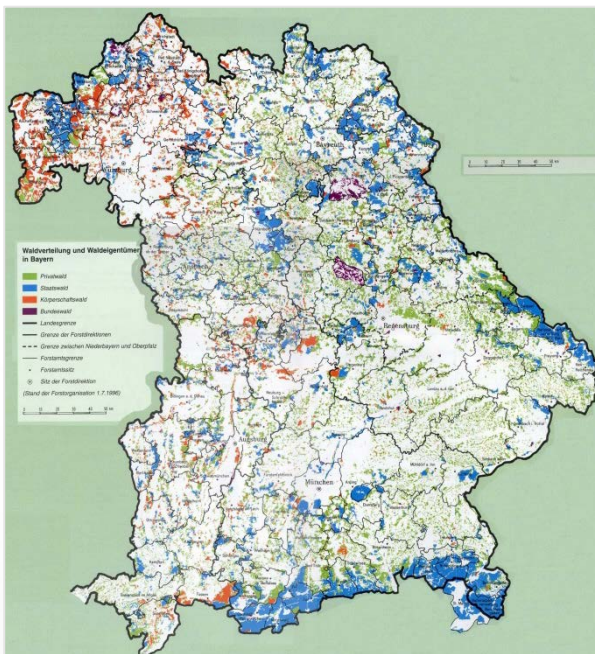
Background

Bavaria is the largest Federal State of Germany, located in the south-east. It has a land area of 70,550 km² and 12.5 million inhabitants. 2.5 million ha are forests (36%) and 47% farmlands.

There are 15 regional natural forest ecosystems distinct in Bavaria. Conifers are still dominating the Bavarian forests (64%), with 36% deciduous species. 42% are spruce, 17% pine and 14% beech (BWI2012). The focus of SIMWOOD's work lies on one hand on alpine mixed forests with high importance of forest functions and on the other hand on the lower mountain ranges, where beech would dominate naturally.

Forest ownership

Privately owned forests (green)	57%
Bavarian State Forests (blue)	30%
Communal (town) forests (orange)	11%
Federal State Forests (violet)	2%



Source: Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten

Germany holds the highest growing stock in Europe (3.66 billion m³) and 27% of it stands in Bavaria. The average timber stock amounts to 400 m³/ha and the average harvests to 11m³/ha (BWI2012).

The forestry and timber industry is economically and socio-politically one of the most important sectors in Bavaria: The turnover in the forestry and wood-related industries rose by more than 32% between 2005 and 2013 from 28 billion to 37 billion Euros. In 2013 196,000 people were employed in 22,500 mostly small and medium-sized enterprises in the sector (Cluster Forst und Holz, 2016).

The contribution of the Bavarian forestry and wood-related industries to climate protection is a combined effect of CO₂ emissions reduction through substitution and compensation. In 2012 these effects reached 18.1 million tons of carbon dioxide. This represents an increase of 21% since 2005 (Cluster Forst und Holz, 2016).

SIMWOOD's work in the region

The SIMWOOD project focuses on the support for private and communal forest owners to maintain and foster their activities in managing two-thirds of the Bavarian forested land.

All over the state, initiatives have been started by the Forest Administration. Round tables have been established to define goals and measures in a participative way. On the micro-level this is pushing activities in the project areas and helps concentrating the personal and financial support from the Forest Administration. On the macro-level these activities contribute to the overall forest policy goals like "adapting forests to the future climate" or "sustainable wood mobilisation".

As part of SIMWOOD's work, a focus study has been carried out and two pilot projects have been selected in two areas.

Focus study

The first part of the focus study concentrated on identifying actors and their role in forest initiatives' networks. 44 forest initiatives of Bavaria, launched and supported by the Forest Administration, have been examined. We found similarities as well as differences in the perceptions on the implementation of goals in these initiatives by the actors involved.

The results are helpful and will first be discussed with the responsible Ministry. So far we can say that the results of the "Social-Network-Analysis" prove that the networks, which have been continuously developed over decades, are trustworthy and strong enough to bear the manifold tasks of contemporary forest management.

The second part of the focus study looked deeper into the Forest Owner Association (FOAs) networks in Bavaria. Their foundation has been promoted politically and their development was supported by the forest administration. They actually build a counterpart to the highly concentrated timber industry. They are still professionalizing their way of activating and unifying forest owners to overcome the structural deficits of the mostly small-sized private forest holdings.

The third part of the focus study aimed at private forest owners, to better understand their decision making and how they use their forests. Forest owner structures are very different, and the results will help assess the potential and develop strategies for a better activation and, as a result, sustainable wood mobilisation.

Pilot Project 1 & 2

Two pilot projects in the region concentrate on activating forest owners in two different areas: southwest Bavaria (Grünten) and northeast Bavaria (Bibersberg/Thiemitztal).



Photo: LWF

Following the principles of Bavarian forest policy, the key target for both projects is to start and support a decision-making process supported by almost all stakeholders to identify the required functions (ecosystem services), to weigh them and to agree on the necessary measures.

Successful initiatives should lead to satisfied and more active owners and provide forest management that pays attention to the forest functions in a sustainable way.

The process includes

- Providing advice to start and/or support forest owner decision-making processes;
- Creating and showing 'positive examples' of management;
- Gaining more information about the forest condition and the goals / preferences of the forest owners and other actors, to offer suitable measures to meet as well the challenges of climate change;
- Reducing the risk of storms and pests by forest conversion.

Grünten

The **Grünten pilot project** works to engage forest owners in sustainable forest management with

special emphasis on alpine forest-functions. The area covers 2,750 ha, including 1,000 ha of private and communal forests, on steep terrain (Grünten-Summit: 1738m), with alpine pastures underneath and strong touristic use for skiing, hiking, mountain biking and the historical abandoned ore mines which partly can be visited.

The situation with many, sometimes conflicting interests like here in this area, is typical for most of the alpine counties in Bavaria. A working group was founded (round table) and according to the different goals of the involved participants 'target states' were formulated (e.g. suitable forest roads for the whole project area, or the improvement and better coordination of the hunting activities to reduce damage on forest juvenation) and a 'Roadmap' to reach the targets was worked out.

A SIMWOOD Workshop is planned to discuss and agree on specific measures to reach the goals in the near future.

Bibersberg/Thiemitztal

The **Bibersberg/Thiemitztal pilot project** aims at establishing sustainable forest management and to adapt the forest stands to future climate change.



Photo: LWF

Bibersberg lies within the Frankenwald area, which is a large forest area with similar

conditions: steep terrain, lack of access / forest roads etc. in many places. After overcoming the access problems (forest road), which also made harvesting in the area economically feasible, the stands should now be thinned and regeneration should be initiated with tree species which are adapted to future climate. Joint harvests and thinnings will be offered (harvester and forwarder) organised i.e. by the local forest owner association.

The local forest administration will implement the chosen measures and will be supported by the stakeholders of the 'round table'. LWF and KWF will be partners as well as observing research units for evaluation.



Photo: LWF

Who to contact in the region

The SIMWOOD local team includes staff from the Bavarian State Institute of Forestry (LWF) of the Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten (StMELF) and the German Centre of Forest Work and Forest Technology (KWF).

To get involved in SIMWOOD's activities, please contact:

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