

PRESS RELEASE

THE FIRST YEAR OF SINTETIC. TRACKING TIMBER FLOW FOR A MORE EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY VALUE CHAIN.

On 14-16 May 2024 SINTETIC Project annual meeting took place in Braşov (Romania) hosted by two project partners, the Transilvania University of Braşov and ASFOR.

SINTETIC - single item identification for forest production, protection, and management- is the second largest project funded by Horizon Europe in the field of forestry. It aims to maximise the benefits of digitalisation in the timber value chain simultaneously improving efficiency, sustainability and transparency (*thus avoiding the illegal entry of wood in the value chain*). The identification system developed by SINTETIC can start with a physical marking approach using a log hammer or with an RFID tag, allowing for the traceability of each log from forest-site to further-processing companies. The adoption of timber quality sensors allows to integrate the tracking data with added-value information, enhancing the efficiency of the whole value chain.

The annual meeting provided an opportunity for the SINTETIC consortium to update on the overall status of the project, focusing on the technical Work Packages and tasks so far completed. Task Leaders presented, as well, the work ahead, while a thematic field trip focusing on the traceability of logs was organised in the forest of Brasov on the last day of the annual meeting.

In the past 12 months, researchers have mainly worked on developing the functional features that will enable the full traceability of wood, focusing in particular on an efficient data and information communication system. Additionally, the model of the Geo DataBase has been conceptually designed, which will form the basis of the interoperable services that need to be implemented to ensure traceability and meet the project requirements. The development of a smartphone APP for forest inventory and timber measurement is also underway. The app will scan single trees and logs by means of a Lidar, providing quantitative and quality information, plus others like date, location and IDs. The integration of SINTETIC sensor technology in forest management is expected to lead to more effective and sustainable practices.

Meantime, engagement and empowerment activities for forest owners are underway in some of the European countries that are more affected from forest fragmentation and rural areas abandonment. **In particular, the Forest Sharing platform is being used to aggregate and manage small forest properties in Italian test areas and its implementation is under development in Spain.**

Sustainable forest management and legality aspects remain at the heart of the project. For this reason, the two forest certification systems FSC and PEFC were invited to give an online presentation and explain their underway actions to align with the new requirements imposed by the new Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products, while ASFOR presented Romania's Timber electronic Traceability System, "Sumal 2.0", which provides real-time data about harvest authorizations and timber transports. The Sumal 2.0 APP provides information about the harvest permits (APV), the locations from where timber is loaded, transport ID and the destination, and the information related to these points on an online Web Map Service. APVs come from tree markings carried out throughout the year with the help of mobile devices.

Also discussions have been held regarding the possible contribution in implementing the new European deforestation-free products Regulation. Specifically, it was highlighted that in countries with high risk of deforestation and forest degradation, SINTETIC's log traceability system can offer several benefits. These include ensuring legal compliance, preventing illegal wood from entering the market, enhancing supply chain transparency, and supporting risk management and mitigation by identifying and addressing potential risks such as fraud, unethical practices, or environmental concerns.

During this first year, SINTETIC also focused on communication to present the project to a broader audience. Among other activities, a dedicated online seminar was organised in September 2023 to present the objectives of SINTETIC to the European sawmill industries. Additionally, a presentation of SINTETIC was also given in the framework of the forest industry expert group (Fbi) organised by DG GROW. During the General Assembly meeting it was anticipated that a dedicated project's page will be launched on Instagram in order to disseminate information about SINTETIC to a younger audience.

Looking ahead, the coming months will be used to complete the IT and technical structure characterising SINTETIC's technologies.

For further information

<https://sinteticproject.eu/>



SINTETIC Project

Contact: sintetic@ctfc.cat