

Abstract for the conference “A century of national forest inventories – informing past, present and future decisions”

Dear author. This is a two-page template that in the first page will ask for information on presenter name, topic, and preferred presentation form.

On page two, you are asked to fill in your abstract in the format and font size indicated. Please remember to include authors affiliation information in the footer section of page two. The length of the abstract may not be more than one page including references.

Abstract title:		Reflections from 35 years of National Forest Inventory in Germany: Challenges and lessons learned
Take-home message:		Establishing a National Forest Inventory is much more than development of a statistical design. It is always a compromise between requirements and limitations. Today’s concepts have to meet the information needs for future decades. Important for acceptance: Scientific sound, transparent and independent.
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General topic, see website: (please double click on the check box and activate the relevant one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Improving future NFIs by learning from the past
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NFIs today and in the future
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cutting edge and futuristic inventory techniques and technologies
Preferred presentation form:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oral presentation
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poster
<i>Abstracts will be reviewed by members of our scientific committee and you will be given information on decisions in due time after the submission deadline has passed.</i>		

Reflections from 35 years of National Forest Inventory in Germany: Challenges and lessons learned

Heino Polley, Thomas Riedel

The public discussion about forest dieback in the early 1980s was an important impulse for the forest monitoring in Germany. As one result of this public discussion, the federal government complemented the Federal Forest Law with the implementation of a National Forest Inventory in 1984. Until that time, such national forest inventories had been introduced by eleven European countries. The organization of the National Forest Inventory follows the federal structure of Germany, where forestry falls within the jurisdiction of the federal states. The Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture has mandated the former Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products – today integrated into the Thünen-Institute – with the national inventory administration.

After putting the National Forest Inventory into legislation the appropriate institutionalisation and adequate financing was a long process. We have learned that there is a mutual dependency between the amount of inventory output to forest politics on the one hand and the political and financial support to the National Forest Inventory on the other hand. The development of the Inventory is always a compromise between requirements and limitations. Over the years the following efforts were generally accepted in Germany: a sampling grid of 4 km x 4 km, a repetition every ten years and a time consumption for fieldwork of about one hour per inventory plot. The development over four inventory cycles has shown that the willingness for investments in a denser sampling grid and for intermediate inventories on a sub-sample is higher than for the assessment of additional attributes.

To establish the National Forest Inventory as a suitable information basis for political decisions, the knowledge of the decision makers about the value of the inventory data and the acceptance of the results is crucially important. That requires a broad communication and a scientifically sound, transparent and independent inventory process.

Currently the National Forest Inventory data especially support the following questions: forest biomass and wood resources, biodiversity and nature protection, climate protection and climate adaptation of forests.

The most important challenges for the future are the adaptation to changing information needs, timeliness, estimates with higher regional resolution, improvement of the European harmonisation and the communication of the results into political processes.

During our presentation we will highlight the challenges and the lessons learned from the development process of the German NFI during the last decades. We focus on statistical, political, financial and administrative issues and their mutual influences. In addition, we will show our national solutions but also existing gaps. In that sense this presentation may act as a multiplier for possible solutions to and from other NFIs.