

Press release December 12, 2016

Forest resources are too often left unused Stora Enso supports neo-forest owners with management

Ybbs an der Donau, December 12, 2016: **With the structural change in agriculture and forestry, the number of "new" forest owners is steadily increasing. However, a lack of knowledge and time for sustainable forest management allows small forests to become overgrown and lose value. So Stora Enso offers neo-forest owners professional advice and support.**



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Unused forests

About 50 percent of the Austrian territory is covered with forests, half of which are owned by small forest owners and each of which have an area of less than 200 hectares. In the forests owned by large forestry companies, growth and use are in line with each other, but in the past few decades, more trees have grown all over Austria than have been harvested. At more than one billion cubic metres, the stock of wood is higher than ever before. Particularly in small forests, this leads to a considerable amount of unused wood reserves, since the number of trees that are growing is greater than the number being used. One reason for this is the structural change in agriculture and forestry, which has increased the number of "new" forest owners. As a result of the sociodemographic changes on farms, the "new" forest owners have increasingly lost their connection with agriculture and forestry and their economic interest.

A study by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences of Vienna shows that currently around 32 percent of small forest owners can be described as "new forest owners" – which is a growing trend. Many of them have a strong desire to keep their forest in good condition. However, especially in cases of people with no background or education in forestry, the forest is regarded as a garden and managed this way.



Forest as garden

This group of forest owners does not go beyond care of the forest soil and individual trees, since they have no economic connection to forestry and they do not possess the necessary training and education. Many owners live in rural areas, but only one-third of them are members of one of the forest associations and it is therefore difficult to reach them to provide information to them. This is an obstacle to sustainable development of their property and leads to loss of value over the long term. Neo-forest owners also often do not depend on income from their forest property, so potential resources are not exhausted. Even with higher wood prices, these forest owners cannot be reached. Therefore, other strategies need to be found to persuade these clients to achieve sustainable forest management. "We are making great efforts to increase wood mobilization because there are still significant amounts, especially in small forests, that are not being cultivated," said Norbert Hüttler, Director Wood Procurement for Central Europe at Stora Enso.

This is where Stora Enso comes in, offering forest owners support and education about efficient forest management. Comprehensive support in the form of consultation discussions on proper forest management, support in sustainable harvesting, logistics and marketing result in "new" forest owners learning about economic and sustainable forestry and increasing the value of their forests. From the first conversation to transportation of the harvest, Stora Enso supports its business partners. For the finished round timber, the customer receives a corresponding credit note for the proceeds. Annual renewable resources can thus be used in a way that makes sense and a significant contribution can also be made to the reduction of CO2 emissions. It is only active forest management that also results in active climate protection.

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About Stora Enso Wood Products

Wood Products division provides versatile wood-based solutions for building and housing. Our product range covers all areas of urban construction including massive wood elements and housing modules, wood components and pellets. We also offer a variety of sawn timber goods. Our customers are mainly construction and joinery companies, merchandisers and retailers. Wood Products operates globally and has more than 20 production units in Europe.

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Questions and Images

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