

## NEWSLETTER #3

### Welcome to FBI4EU newsletter!

In this third issue of our newsletter, we are pleased to invite all readers to take part in our project and follow our efforts!



### What is the project about?

Forests are a vital part of Europe's landscape, covering 39% of the EU's territory and playing a significant role in the economy, environment, and rural development. The forest-based industry, dominated by SMEs, contributes substantially to the EU's GDP, employing around 3.6 million people across over 400,000 companies. However, the sector faces challenges, including diverse regional policies, modernization needs, and sustainability issues. Disparities across regions hinder the full potential of the sector, with some areas lacking the infrastructure or policies to support forest-based industries effectively.





## FBI4EU



The FBI4EU project aims to address these challenges by uniting eight partners from seven European countries, including business support centers, regional development agencies, municipal authorities, and research institutions. This collaborative effort is focused on enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of forest-based SMEs by developing targeted regional policies, promoting eco-innovation, and sharing best practices across regions. A key player, "Our Land" from Bosnia and Herzegovina, adds valuable regional insights to the project.

Through stakeholder engagement and tailored interventions, FBI4EU fosters sustainable growth, resource efficiency, and innovation in the forest-based industries. Its impact extends to economic growth in rural areas, job creation, and supporting the European Green Deal's goals for a greener, socially inclusive Europe.



## A few numbers about the project



1,649,909 €  
budget



01 Apr  
2024-30 Jun  
2028



8 partners



## Meeting in Croatia #1

The Third International Partner Meeting of the FBI4EU project took place in Čakovec, Croatia, from May 27-28, 2025. The program combined insightful exchanges with in-depth discussions on forest-based innovation, creating an active and inspiring start to the gathering. Hosted by Javna ustanova za razvoj Međimurske županije REDEA, the meeting brought together partners from across Europe to share expertise, align strategies, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Day one not only underlined the importance of innovation in the forest-based sector but also demonstrated the collective commitment of the partnership to driving sustainable impact.

[More information...](#)



## Meeting in Croatia #2

The closing day of the FBI4EU partnership meeting offered a closer look at Croatia's forest-based economy. Participants explored how local SMEs successfully integrate innovation, sustainability, and traditional craftsmanship during a series of site visits. At Sobočan, they learned about smart furniture and interior design solutions, while PIB extra d.o.o. ltd. showcased its commitment to high-quality timber processing and responsibility. The day concluded at Mađerka Hill, where the panoramic views offered a fitting setting to reflect on the partnership's shared mission.

[More information...](#)





## 2nd Lithuanian Stakeholders' Meeting

In February 2025, key stakeholders in Lithuania's forestry sector met at the AGROAKADEMIJA Training Centre in Kėdainiai District to discuss challenges facing private forest owners. Representatives from government, advisory services, and forest-based businesses reviewed sector trends, policy updates, and strategies for the future. Discussions focused on regulatory changes, the impact of national and EU policies on private forestry, and updates to rural development programs and financial support mechanisms, including common administrative challenges and grant eligibility.

[More information...](#)



## 2nd Stakeholder Meeting in Croatia

On February 18, 2025, regional institutions and forest-based businesses gathered in Čakovec, Croatia, for the second Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting of the FBI4EU project. Hosted by the Public Institution for the Development of Međimurje County (REDEA), the event facilitated idea exchange, policy discussion, and opportunities to boost the competitiveness of forest-based SMEs. The meeting concluded with a shared understanding that long-term support, collaborative efforts, access to investment, and integration of best practices into regional strategies are essential for a competitive and sustainable forestry sector in Croatia and beyond.

[More information...](#)





## Stakeholder Insights at Les Rencontres Filière Bois, Belgium

On April 15th, Filière Bois Wallonie hosted its annual event, "Les Rencontres Filière Bois," bringing together forestry sector stakeholders to discuss the challenges of climate change. Participants exchanged experiences on forest stand evolution, mixed-species forestry, and business adaptation strategies. The event concluded on a hopeful note, with a shared commitment to tackle these challenges. Insights from the workshop will guide future actions to improve funding access and help businesses seize opportunities offered by European projects.

[More information...](#)



## 2nd Stakeholder Meeting in Norddjurs Commune

The second stakeholder meeting brought together project representatives, forestry students, and local stakeholders to identify effective practices within the forestry sector. Building on surveys and interviews with SMEs, officials, educators, and students, the discussions highlighted the importance of balancing economic efficiency with environmental responsibility. The insights gained will help shape future strategies, supporting sustainable growth and innovation in forestry.

[More information...](#)





# Stakeholder Meeting in Rzeszów, Poland

In September 2025, Rzeszów hosted the second Regional Stakeholders' Group meeting of the FBI4EU project, bringing together forest sector representatives, public institutions, NGOs, and SMEs. Discussions highlighted the Podkarpackie region's strengths and challenges, including outdated technology, low innovation, limited funding, and an ageing workforce. Examples of good practices showed how sustainability and innovation can go hand in hand. The meeting concluded that stronger cooperation, targeted training, and improved access to funding are essential for a competitive and sustainable forest-based sector.

[More information...](#)



## A Journey Through Our Project Partners: Lead Partner

We are proud to introduce BSC, Business Support Centre L.t.d., Kranj, our lead partner shaping the future of Slovenia's forest-based industry. Based in Gorenjska, where 71% of the region is forested, BSC Kranj supports SMEs and fosters sustainable growth by bridging tradition and innovation. Through projects, training, and stakeholder collaboration, it promotes digitalization, eco-friendly practices, and advanced production techniques, strengthening local economies, informing policy, and ensuring the forestry sector thrives sustainably for generations.

[More information...](#)



Lead Partner:  
**BSC,**  
**Business**  
**Support**  
**Centre**  
**L.t.d., Kranj**





## Fostering Growth Through Afforestation in Gorenjska Region

Forests are central to Gorenjska's landscape and heritage, but fragmented private ownership and a focus on traditional wood processing limit their potential. Embracing innovative management and production methods is key to sustainable growth. Targeted afforestation, specialized wood products, eco-friendly construction, and nature-based tourism offer new opportunities. Collaboration between authorities, landowners, and researchers, backed by smart policies and training, drive this transformation. By modernising its forest-based sector, Gorenjska can build a stronger economy while preserving its natural wealth for future generations.

[More information...](#)



## Driving Growth in the Podkarpackie Region, Poland

The Rzeszów Regional Development Agency S.A. (RARR S.A.) drives economic and social growth in Podkarpackie by supporting SMEs, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable development. As a partner in the FBI4EU project, RARR strengthens the forest-based sector through policy support, innovation, and best practices in sustainable forestry. By balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility, the agency helps ensure a competitive and sustainable future for the region.

[More information...](#)

**RARR**  
RZESZOWSKA AGENCJA  
ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO

Communication Manager,  
PP2:

**Rzeszow  
Regional  
Development  
Agency,  
Poland**



## Podkarpackie Region: A Hub for Forest-Based Industry

Podkarpackie, in southeastern Poland, is rich in forests, covering over 35% of the region, and is a hub for timber, furniture, and paper industries. The region combines traditional craftsmanship with modern technology, producing high-quality wood products for domestic and international markets. Sustainability is central, with responsible forestry, regeneration practices, and protected areas like Bieszczady National Park. By blending innovation with environmental stewardship, Podkarpackie's forest-based sector supports regional employment, economic growth, and a model for balancing industry with ecological responsibility.

[More information...](#)





## Driving Sustainable Regional Development in Međimurje Region

The Public Institution for the Development of Međimurje County – REDEA drives sustainable growth and innovation in northern Croatia. Based in Čakovec, it connects local authorities, businesses, and communities to foster a resilient regional economy. REDEA supports SMEs and public institutions through guidance, capacity building, and regional strategies, focusing on energy efficiency, digital transformation, and the circular economy. As a partner in the FBI4EU project, REDEA shares expertise on SME support, local innovation, and the green transformation of forest-based industries.

[More information...](#)



## Croatia's Northernmost Gem Rooted in Nature and Tradition

Međimurje, Croatia's northernmost county, is known as "the flower garden of Croatia," with forests covering 28% of its territory. The region blends rural charm with urban accessibility, benefiting from its strategic location bordering Slovenia and Hungary. Its forest-based sector, driven by SMEs, combines sustainable timber practices with traditional craftsmanship and innovative technologies. Međimurje exemplifies how sustainability, heritage, and cross-border cooperation can shape a region's economic and ecological future.

[More information...](#)



## Filière Bois Wallonie – FBI4EU Project Partner from Belgium

Filière Bois Wallonie (FBW), created in 2023 from the merger of RND and OEWB, is the main organisation for the timber sector in Wallonia and a partner of the government in forestry policy. It supports the sustainable development of the industry, analyses trends, promotes local timber and strengthens cooperation between producers and processors. Since 2024, it has managed PEFC certification for public forests, confirming Wallonia's leadership in responsible forestry. It brings its knowledge and experience to FBI4EU, helping SMEs to face common challenges and build a sustainable forest economy in Europe.

[More information...](#)



PP4:  
Filière Bois  
Wallonie,  
Belgium





## Wallonia: Nurturing a Future for Innovation in Belgium

Wallonia, southern Belgium, is rich in forests covering 33% of its territory, including diverse hardwoods like oak. Ownership is split between public lands and small private plots, making coordinated management a challenge. Despite this, forests remain vital for biodiversity, carbon capture, and raw materials. The region's forestry and wood-processing sector blends tradition and craftsmanship, producing timber, furniture, and energy, while contributing to Wallonia's cultural and economic identity.

[More information...](#)



## Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry

The Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture (LAMMC) and Forestry brings extensive expertise in sustainable forestry and applied research to the FBI4EU project. As a leading scientific institution, LAMMC connects research, policy, and practice to strengthen the forest-based sector's competitiveness and innovation. Through collaboration with European partners, it promotes best practices and supports SMEs in adopting innovative and sustainable solutions, contributing to a more competitive and resilient forest-based economy.

[More information...](#)



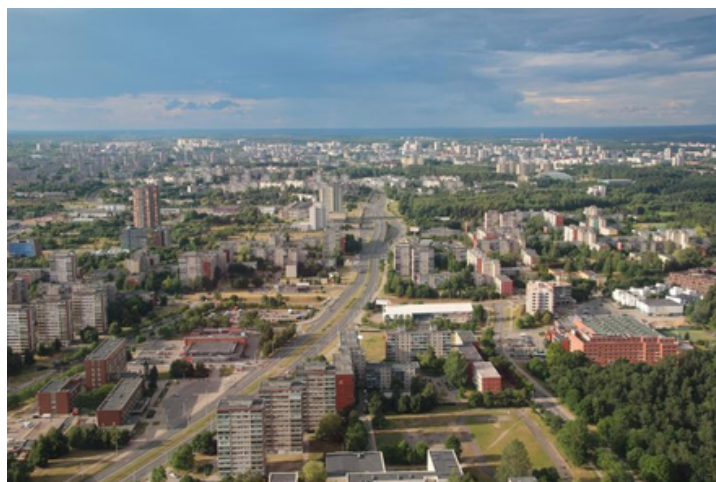
PP5:  
Lithuanian  
Research Centre  
for Agriculture  
and forestry,  
Lithuania



## Lithuania and its Forest-Based Industry

Forests cover about 33% of Lithuania, supporting a diverse forest-based industry that includes timber, wood processing, paper, and furniture production. Managed sustainably, these woodlands preserve biodiversity and supply high-quality materials for domestic and European markets. SMEs combine traditional craftsmanship with modern technology, while circular economy practices repurpose by-products for energy and materials. Strategic policies and eco-innovation make Lithuania a model of sustainable forestry and economic resilience in the Baltic region.

[More information...](#)





# Administrative Board of Östergötland

The County Administrative Board of Östergötland, Sweden, brings strong European cooperation experience to the FBI4EU project. Through programmes like Interreg Europe, LIFE, and Central Baltic, it has advanced SME growth, sustainable innovation, digitalisation, and climate action. By joining the project, Östergötland aims to boost SME support, integrate new approaches into regional strategies, and drive green and digital innovation. Its governance and policy expertise ensures project results lead to lasting regional and wider policy improvements.

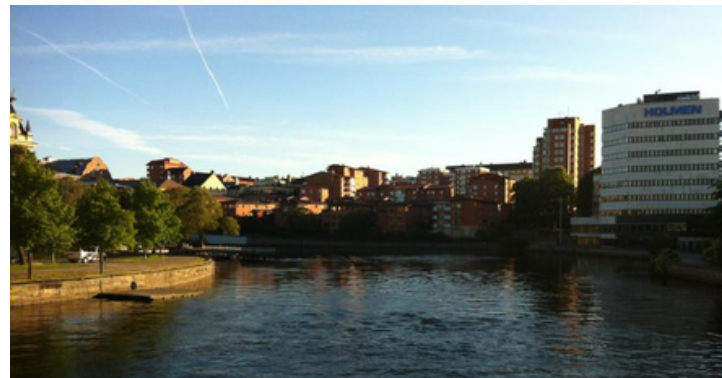
[More information...](#)



## Östergötland: area, forest cover, and the wood industry

Östergötland, southeastern Sweden, is dominated by forests covering nearly two-thirds of its land, with around 4.6% officially protected. The region combines natural wealth with industrial strength, exemplified by Holmen's Braviken paper mill and sawmill, producing timber and pulp for domestic and international markets. As a key partner in our project, the County Administrative Board provides expertise in sustainable forestry and regional development, linking Östergötland's forests to Sweden's global wood and paper industry.

[More information...](#)



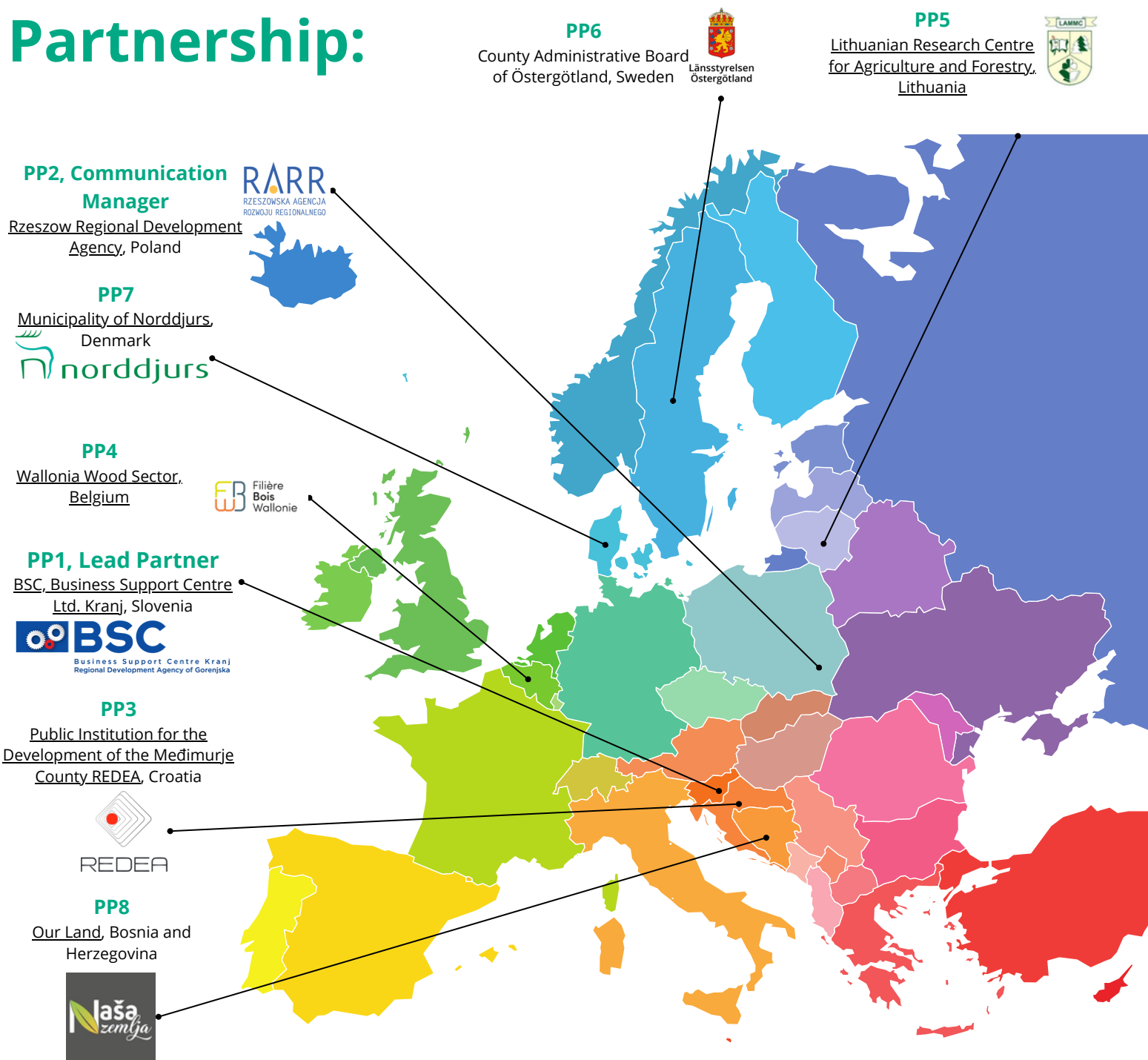
"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

– Helen Keller





# Partnership:



The project is co-financed by the European Union from European Regional Development Fund Under the Interreg Europe 2021-2027 program.

Interreg  
Europe



Co-funded by  
the European Union

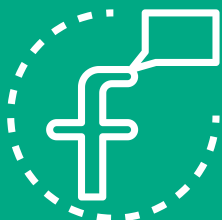
FBI4EU





Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We truly appreciate your interest and support in our efforts. We look forward to staying connected and welcome your continued engagement as we work together towards a sustainable and innovative future for Europe's forest-based industries. Stay tuned for further updates and opportunities to get involved!

## FOLLOW US!



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