

Policies to promote the competitiveness of forest-based SMEs in resource-efficient European regions



NEWSLETTER #4

Welcome to FBI4EU newsletter!

In this fourth 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.



AI generated

FBI4EU



AI generated

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.



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A few numbers about the project



1,649,909 €
budget



01 Apr
2024-30 Jun
2028



8 partners

Meeting in Belgium #1

The 1st day of the FBI4EU project partners meeting took place on October 28, 2025, in Namur, Wallonia, and was entirely devoted to project meetings. The project partners held discussions, gave presentations and exchanged experiences. The program began with a welcome session and a review of the project's progress so far. The partners presented regional results and prepared for upcoming project milestones. The presentations provided an overview of Wallonia's timber sector, and Wallonie Bois presented training opportunities, skills and employment prospects in the forest-based industry.

[More information...](#)



Meeting in Belgium #2

On the second day, October 29, 2025, the FBI4EU project partners attended Study Visits in Wallonia, starting with a visit to Scidus in Étalle. The visit showcased the regional forest-based industry and the use of innovative technologies at a hardwood sawmill. Scidus combines traditional processing with modern solutions, while maintaining a sustainable approach and local sourcing. Participants learned about short supply chains, automation and product innovations. The visit provided practical insights for exchanging best practices and developing recommendations to support the European forest-based sector.

[More information...](#)



Meeting in Belgium #3

Following the first study visit, the FBI4EU project partners traveled to southern Belgium to visit Stallbois - a workshop that combines a social mission, craftsmanship, and sustainable wood production. The company provides employment for people with disabilities, offering adapted workstations and support on the production floor. Stallbois produces a wide range of products: small wooden items, crates and pallets, gazebos, summer houses, carports, animal shelters and small urban furniture, including benches, picnic tables and bus shelters. The visit demonstrated how the company combines economic growth with a sustainable resource management.

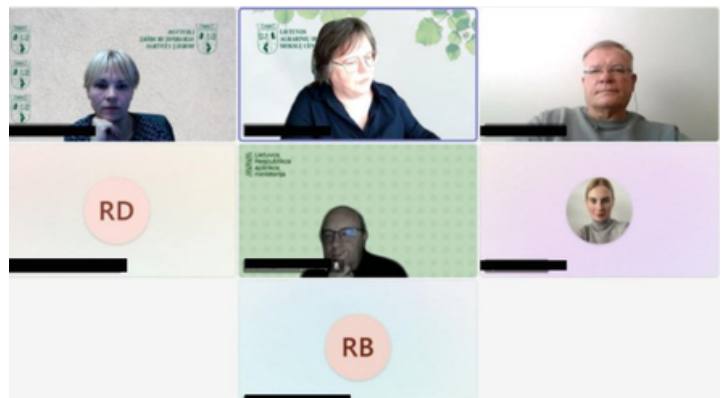
[More information...](#)



Regional Stakeholders Meeting in Lithuania

On September 19, 2025, a meeting of the project's Regional Stakeholder Group was held, during which participants discussed progress, challenges and opportunities for cooperation in the forest-based sector. Presentations and discussions focused on supporting the competitiveness of SMEs, sustainable development, and innovative business models based on the circular economy. Examples of best practices were presented and the meeting itself highlighted the importance of digitalization, modernization, and effective financial support for the development of an innovative and sustainable forestry sector.

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Regional Stakeholder Meeting in Međimurje County, Croatia

On November 27, 2025, the fifth meeting of the FBI4EU regional stakeholder group was held in Čakovec, focusing on the challenges and potential of the forest-based sector in the Međimurje region. Participants discussed the need to increase innovation, digitalization and higher-value-added products, as well as the importance of cooperation between businesses, research institutions and public authorities. The role of local processing, business diversification and advisory and training support for forest-based SMEs was also emphasized to fully leverage the region's potential and support its competitiveness and sustainable development.

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Roundtable discussion in Sweden

In February, a roundtable discussion was held in Linköping, attended by approximately 40 representatives from various forestry stakeholders, focusing on adapting forests to climate change and the demand for raw materials. The meeting, organized by the Östergötland County Administrative Board as part of FBI4EU, brought together forest owners, businesses, associations and universities. The need to strengthen cooperation, expand knowledge and foster dialogue was emphasized. These results will serve as the basis for Sweden's update of the regional forest strategy in Östergötland.

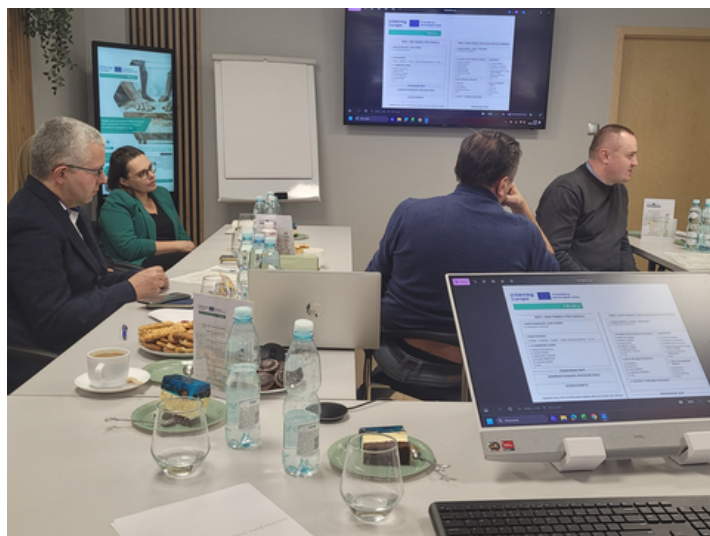
[More information...](#)



Stakeholder Meeting at the RRDA, Poland

On January 28, 2026, a meeting of stakeholders in the FBI4EU project was held in Rzeszow, attended by institutions supporting the development of SMEs. The project's objectives and the functioning of support programs at the regional and national levels were discussed. During the workshop, participants analyzed barriers and facilitators in accessing financing, as well as development pathways for forest-based SMEs. The conclusions from the meeting emphasized the importance of dialogue and better alignment of support instruments with the needs of enterprises. The results will be used in further activities within the project.

[More information...](#)



6th Regional Stakeholder Meeting in Međimurje County, Croatia

On March 24, 2026, the 6th meeting of the FBI4EU regional stakeholder group was held in Čakovec, focusing on the analysis and implementation of best practices to support forest-based SMEs. Participants discussed experiences from partner regions, focusing on innovation, cooperation, and the development of local supply chains. The discussion highlighted the potential of the Međimurje region despite structural challenges and the need to support innovation. The importance of better access to financing, advisory services and cooperation among stakeholders was emphasized. The conclusions from the meeting will be used to further improve policy instruments and strengthen the sector's competitiveness.

[More information...](#)



Fresh look at Wallonia's Wood Sector

A video presents the forest-based sector in Wallonia, its importance, challenges and future directions. The video highlights the role of forests as a strategic resource and the importance of sustainable forest management. It highlights the strong local wood value chain and the importance of wood processing for job creation and added value. It also draws attention to the role of innovation, digitalization and the circular economy, as well as the use of wood in the energy sector and industry.

[More information...](#)



Forests of the Future in Norddjurs Municipality

A video from the municipality of Norddjurs shows that forests play a key role in the lives of local communities, influencing the environment, the economy and residents' daily lives. It emphasizes that, in the face of climate and environmental challenges, the future of forestry depends on cooperation among various stakeholders. The municipality prioritizes dialogue and partnership, combining local initiatives with international cooperation within the framework of an EU project.

[More information...](#)

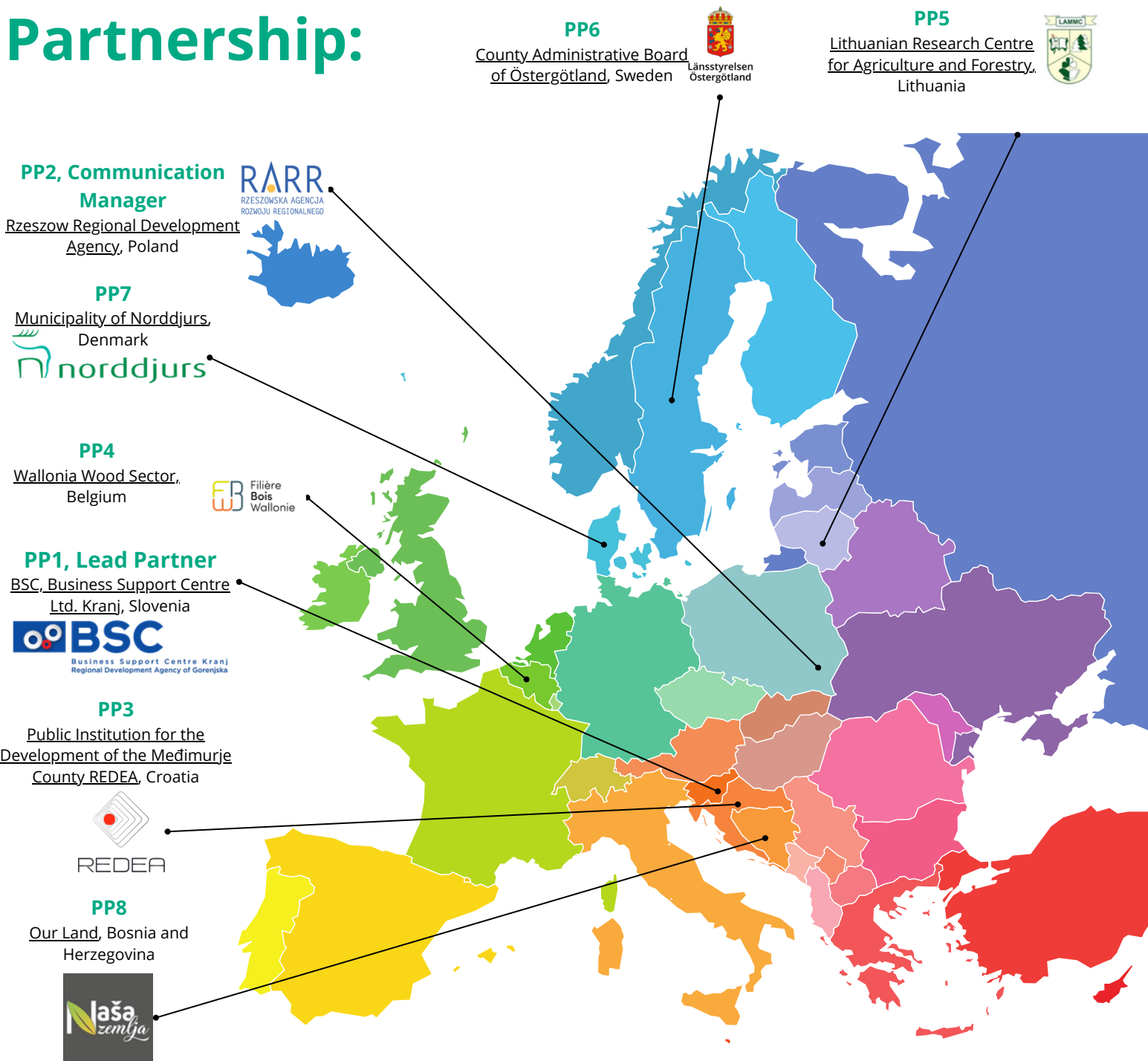


"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

– Helen Keller



Partnership:



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Interreg
Europe



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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!

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Contact details

Lead Partner:

Jelena Vidović: jelena.vidovic@bsc-kranj.si
Roko Padovac: roko.padovac@bsc-kranj.si
Gregor Eržnožnik: gregor.erznoznik@bsc-kranj.si

Communication Team:

Marek Duda: mduda@rarr.rzeszow.pl
Agnieszka Nedza: anedza@rarr.rzeszow.pl
Aleksandra Hendzel: ahendzel@rarr.rzeszow.pl