



# The Forests Dialogue

## ENGAGE! EXPLORE! CHANGE!

### Field Dialogue on Climate Positive Forest Products, Mass Timber

12 - 15 September 2022 - Helsinki, Finland

### Concept Note

**The Forests Dialogue (TFD) is convening a Field Dialogue on Climate Positive Forest Products (CPFP) focused on Mass Timber from 12th-15th September 2022 in and around Helsinki, Finland with the goal of building collective understanding, trust, and collaboration across diverse stakeholders.**

### ABOUT THE CLIMATE POSITIVE FOREST PRODUCTS INITIATIVE

TFD launched the CPFP Initiative in 2020. Using mass timber construction materials as an entry point, the Initiative aims to build agreement amongst stakeholders around the opportunities, challenges, and knowledge gaps related to utilizing forest products as climate solutions. The initiative will engage with topics across the full value chain from sustainable mass timber production to the potential impact of mass timber construction practices on regions where housing booms are predicted. The aim is to understand the range of stakeholder perspectives and questions about the opportunities and impacts scaling up mass timber construction practices might have on climate, forests, the built environment, and people.

TFD convened a virtual “Scoping Dialogue” in partnership with the Climate Smart Forest Economy Program (CSFEP) in April 2021. In April and May 2021, stakeholders came together during the virtual CPFP Scoping Dialogue to share a range of perspectives and build understanding around key insights, concerns, research gaps, and opportunities for mass timber to act as a climate mitigation tool. The meeting Co-Chairs identified a number of fracture lines – sources of disagreement and uncertainty between stakeholders – and articulated the need for further dialogue in the landscape to ground discussions on cross-cutting themes in real-world examples.

In particular, stakeholders identified a need for agreement on systems to assess and quantify the climate benefits and risks of forest products in different contexts. Many in the forests and climate change sector maintain that under the right conditions, expanding climate-positive forest product markets can meet regional forest management priorities and create incentives for investment in improved forest health and enhanced carbon capture through sustainable forest management. However, the potential environmental benefits of mass timber materials can only be realized if unintended consequences are adequately safeguarded against with regionally appropriate approaches. There are legitimate concerns that increasing a market for

The Forests Dialogue, at The Forest School, Yale School of the Environment  
360 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut, 06511, USA  
O: +1 203 432 5966 W: [www.theforestsdialogue.org](http://www.theforestsdialogue.org) E: [info@theforestsdialogue.org](mailto:info@theforestsdialogue.org)

#### TFD Steering Committee 2022

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Amata, Brazil

**Chris Buss**

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Switzerland

**Kerry Cesareo**

WWF, United States

**Marcus Colchester**

Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), United Kingdom

**Minnie Degawan**

Conservation International (CI), Philippines

**Gary Dunning**

The Forests Dialogue (TFD), United States

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Weyerhaeuser, United States

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**Antti Marjokorpi**

Stora Enso, Finland

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Klabi, Brazil

**Cécile Ndjebet**

African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF), Cameroon

**Milagre Nuvunga - TFD Co-Lead**

MICAIA Foundation, Mozambique

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Sappi, Switzerland

**Kittisak Rattanakrangsri**

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Thailand

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Brazilian Forest Dialogue (Diálogo Florestal), Brazil

**Francisco Rodrigues**

CMPC, Chile

**Carolina Toapanta**

Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation, Ecuador

**Mark Wishnie**

BTG Pactual, United States

such products without adequate safeguards will drive trends that result in a loss of forest ecosystem carbon, undermining rather than enhancing the climate mitigation potential of forests. Identifying agreement, persistent questions, and areas of deeply rooted disagreement on this issue and others is a necessary step in the process of crafting solutions and sharing best practices that will direct the growing interest in mass timber construction materials to positive forest, climate and social outcomes.

The Field Dialogues will advance conversations surfaced during the Scoping Dialogue and act on recommendations that further dialogue on CPFP should ground the high-level conversations in on-the-ground realities. Participants will visit and explore the use of mass timber such as Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL), and engineered wood in specific value chains in Europe. Exploring these key themes in the context of the mass timber value chain in Europe will offer insight and opportunity to foster greater agreement and alignment necessary for stakeholders to move beyond entrenched disagreements towards on-the-ground solutions and enabling environments for positive climate outcomes.



## FOCUS OF THE EUROPEAN VALUE CHAIN FIELD DIALOGUE

This CPFP Field Dialogue seeks to elevate stakeholder perspectives on the potential for mass timber materials to serve as a climate mitigation tool in the context of specific value chains in Europe. Through the lens of the Finnish context where mass timber materials are already available, it will explore themes surfaced during the Scoping Dialogue including current and potential future impact on forests, the construction sector, people, and long-term carbon storage.

The Field Dialogue will take place in and around Helsinki, Finland with visits to working forests, mass timber production facilities, and wooden buildings. Climate data related to the wooden buildings and case studies will be discussed. The dialogue will focus on the use of CLT, LVL and engineered wood and impact on forests in the European context in addition to highlighting ongoing work from across Europe, including recent building-level LCA codes proposed in other regions. A Background Paper on the specific regional and country-level context will help situate participants to the landscape and inform the dialogue. Participants will be invited from regions with ongoing efforts to scale mass timber construction (Europe and North America) and regions where housing booms are predicted in the coming decades and mass timber construction practices have the potential to make significant impacts (India, Brazil, China, and hubs across the African Continent).

## PROCESS AND OBJECTIVES

In partnership with local and international organizations, TFD will convene a multi-stakeholder Field Dialogue in September 2022. The dialogue will bring together approximately 50 participants in a four-day engagement process that will foster an exchange of ideas and perspectives as the group explores field sites and discussion around the full mass timber value chain. Dialogue participants will include forest managers, land owners, architects, conservationists, policy makers, as well as individuals working for NGOs, wood products companies, or academic institutions. The dialogue will engage people interested in exploring the possibilities and challenges of sustainable mass timber value chains in Europe and the potential impacts of mass timber construction in regions with forecasted housing booms such as Brazil and Gabon. Rather than arriving at a predetermined solution, the process is about building a deeper understanding from disparate perspectives and creating action from that shared understanding. Specific objectives include the following:

- ➔ **Foster learnings and collective understanding** through synthesizing current scientific knowledge on the topic, protocols and frameworks for the assessment of forest carbon and climate impacts, identifying knowledge gaps, exploring region-specific challenges and opportunities and allowing for sharing of sectoral knowledge across stakeholder groups.
- ➔ **Build trust and collaboration** through shared understanding of stakeholder perspectives, priorities, and concerns that are driving conflict and limiting the use of mass timber in construction.
- ➔ **Build stakeholder agreement** on the appropriate social and environmental safeguards, assessment frameworks, as well as challenges and opportunities to climate positive forest product utilization.
- ➔ **Mobilize stakeholder actions** at regional and global levels to move beyond present barriers and expand demand for sustainable mass timber products that provide benefits for forests, people, and climate.

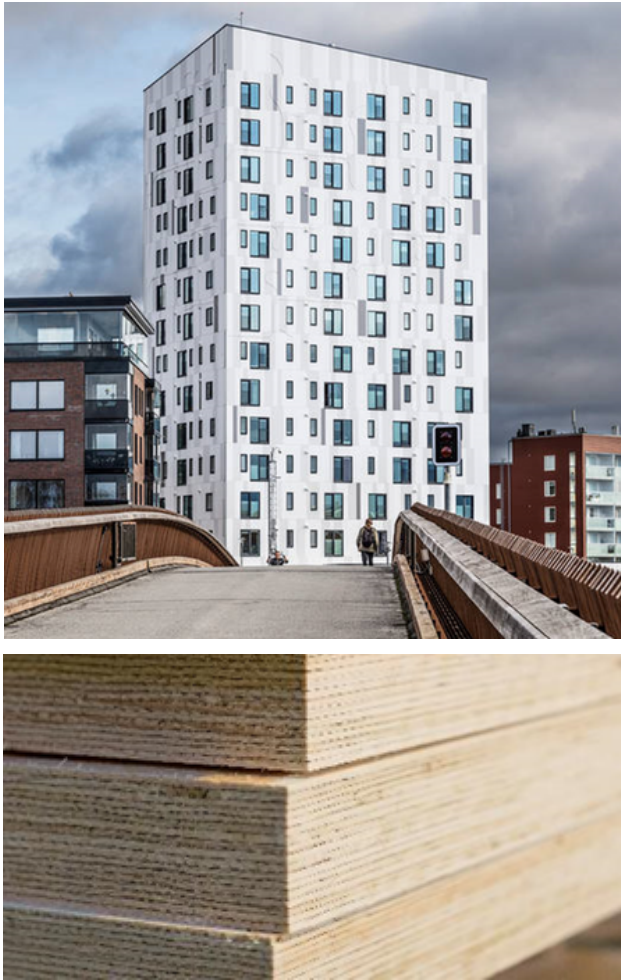
## DATES AND LOCATION

The Field Dialogue will take place from **12 – 15 September 2022** in and around **Helsinki, Finland**.

## COORDINATION

The dialogue will be co-convened by The Forests Dialogue, World Resources Institute, Stora Enso, and UPM, and the Finnish Forest Industries Federation (FFIF) who are coordinating logistics along side local partners. An Advisory Group steers the planning process and provides critical input on all aspects of the dialogue content and process. This Advisory Group is made up of representatives from TFD's CPFP Scoping Dialogue, partners from the Climate Smart Forest Economy Program, and key actors working across the mass timber value chain in Europe. For more information, please visit the TFD website at <https://theforestsdialogue.org/dialogue/field-dialogue-climate-positive-forest-products-finland>, or contact us at [info@theforestsdialogue.org](mailto:info@theforestsdialogue.org).





## AGENDA OVERVIEW

Dialogue participants will spend two days in the field visiting various field sites situated in the mass timber value chain in Finland, including managed forests, CLT manufacturing sites, and mass timber structures. Participants will have a chance to meet with other stakeholders including foresters, land owners, CLT manufacturers, and community members associated with mass timber structures to understand the intricacies of the perspectives and processes across the value chain.

Participants will then participate in a two-day facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogue process utilizing both plenary and small working group sessions to seek agreement on the challenges to and opportunities for building out sustainable mass timber value chains. Participants will build toward a solution space, build collaborations, and discuss the critical next steps necessary to advance efforts to create sustainable mass timber value chains.

## OUTPUTS

The dialogue co-chairs will prepare an official summary report that captures major discussions, synthesizes learnings, and identifies actionable steps generated with broad stakeholder consensus. The summary report will be distributed widely, and key findings will be presented to high impact actors as well as the CSFEP pillars to continue building connections and enact next steps. The need for additional outputs such as recommendations for future research, dialogues, or policy think-pieces will be identified through the dialogue process.

