

eco2eco; ecology and economy together in one forest

Introduction

In the Interreg project eco2eco Belgium and Dutch partners work together on valuable and sustainable forests in the border area Belgium-Netherlands. These forests are not only valuable for nature, but also for the local economy. In the eco2eco project innovative forest management practices and timber harvesting methods are developed. Supply and demand of quality timber are coordinated locally. The goal is to demonstrate ecology and economy can be achieved in the same forest.

The partners are experimenting with new ways to plant seedlings, manage the forest and harvest timber in a sustainable way. Thanks to these new methods, the ecological value of the forest is maintained and enlarged and the timber extracted from the forest, has a higher quality and thus a higher value. Good timber, suitable for furniture, floors and veneer.

Forest management

One of the forest management methods used, originates from Germany and is called 'qualify and dimensify' (QD). In short; the best and straightest trees are selected and given space. This means removing all the trees around them so the chosen tree, gets the opportunity to develop a big canopy. In the rest of the forest the trees are left alone, thus creating a quiet space for wildlife and biodiversity to develop. The forest as a whole will be rich in structure and varied and will, in the end, deliver quality timber.

Forest regeneration

Experiments are set up in the forest, around efficient forest regeneration. This means for example planting the seedlings in groups of 20-40 seedlings. Mainly species that have nutrient-rich leaves are used, in order to improve the forest soil. Other experiments are set up trying to identify good methods to protect the little seedlings from being eaten by wildlife such as deer.

Harvesting of timber

Sustainable ways of harvesting timber are tested, this means ways that don't damage the soil so much. One example is using fixed extraction routes for the harvester machine, to reduce soil compaction. Other experiments are conducted using horses for timber extraction in vulnerable and wet forests.

The market

Another part of the project is getting to know the local timber market. Supply and demand are being surveyed to coordinate timber production and the selling of the timber. New ways of selling timber are tested as well.

Sharing of knowledge

The new knowledge resulting from the experiments is shared widely via internet, facebook, twitter, a regular newsletter and occasional workshops in the field. The partners also try to publish the results in specialist journals.

www.eco2eco.info | algemeen@eco2eco.info | [@projecteco2eco](https://twitter.com/projecteco2eco) | [fb/projecteco2eco](https://www.facebook.com/projecteco2eco)