Deal for Green? Contribution of managerial economics, accounting, and cross-sectoral policy analysis to climate neutrality and forest management

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: The importance of forest owners' understanding of European forest-related policies for their successful implementation

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: ABSTRACT

To address the climate crisis, the European Green Deal was adopted at the EU level, with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EU Forest Strategy, and the EU Bioeconomy Strategy as flagship initiatives. Forests are a fundamental source of raw materials for most European bioeconomy strategies. The success of achieving the visions of a forest-based bioeconomy and, at the same time, the Green Deal, is highly dependent on the availability of renewable natural resources and other benefits provided by forests that are reflected in the state of their ecosystem services (ES) (i.e., provisioning, regulating and cultural). In a nationwide (Slovenia) survey of forest owners' preferences for European forest-related policies, we primarily examined the perceived importance of individual ES in relation to the bioeconomy. The sample was selected to be regionally representative according to the spatial distribution of forest ownership in the country and the age and gender structure of forest owners. We defined three key aspects related to European Green Deal policies, formulated three sets of statements on different forest ES, and on aspects and potential impacts of European policies for the bioeconomy, forestry, and biodiversity conservation. We assessed respondents' agreement with individual statements related to the willingness of owners to adapt their forest management (forest tending and wood use, biodiversity protection, introduction of non-native tree species). The sets of statements were complemented with questions on the forest owner's current forest management and objectives for future management, as well as socio-demographic characteristics.

: KEYWORDS

Forest owners, opinions, ecosystem services, forest management, bioeconomy