

## Managing forests for multiple purposes

### New decision support tools for wild forest product management

Previously, there was little information on how forest management affects the yields of wild forest products (WFPs). New research in StarTree has improved various existing forest DSSs and developed new ones, optimising forest management that considers both timber production and WFPs. Additionally, a new, expert-knowledge-based DSS is introduced, that considers production possibilities of WFPs at regional and Forest Management Unit (FMU) level, from a broader perspective than that of forests alone.

**Decision support systems (DSSs)** provide decision makers, such as forest owners or forestry professionals, help for forest management decision making. This can be at stand, forest management unit (FMU) and regional levels. A solution from DSSs is only a recommendation on how to manage forests, not an absolute truth!

**What is a DSS?**

What's new...?	Who are these results for?
<p><b>... at stand level?</b></p> <p>Optimised treatment schedules for new WFPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pine honey, cork production in Spain, ecosystem services.</li> </ul> <p>Improved solutions for some WFPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e.g. berries including picking costs.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The primary target is forest managers: they include direct recommendations on how to manage certain kinds of forest stands.</i></p>
<p><b>... at Forest Management Unit level?</b></p> <p>Examples from Portugal, Spain, Finland and Turkey showed growing support for a multi-objective forest management approach based on the development and evaluation of FMU-level alternatives. Results can be visualised through production possibility frontiers and thematic maps.</p>	<p><i>Most beneficial for FMU forest owners: they illustrate the outcomes of certain forest management strategies.</i></p>
<p><b>... at regional level?</b></p> <p>Scenarios for production possibilities of WFPs were considered.</p> <p><b>Expert-knowledge-based multi-method DSS</b> advanced in three important dimensions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operational environment can be considered more broadly than only from the forest perspective</li> <li>includes the possibility to examine both the FMU and region level capabilities of WFPs production</li> <li>several predefined WFPs can be considered at the same time.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Particularly for forest policy formulation: can be used in the preparation of regional forestry programmes in target setting and activity development.</i></p>

As a result of StarTree, more WFP yield models are available, the properties of DSSs are advancing and additional characteristics that resemble real-life situations have been introduced. Nevertheless, simplifications are still occurring too frequently and models for WFPs are still too restricted to certain regions and management systems. However, opportunities are growing for increased utilisation of WFPs among other renewable natural resources in businesses related to forests and recreation. Interest in WFPs among consumers is increasing and, as a result, forest owners are seeking to increase profits through use of WFPs.

**Want to know more? [Read the whole report!](#)**

