

# StarTree Newsletter 1-2014

*StarTree is an EU FP7-Collaborative Project exploring the use of Multi-purpose Trees (MPT) and Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) for innovative forestry in rural areas. The StarTree Newsletter brings the latest findings, trends, and activities related to MPT & NWFP to your inbox*

## Highlights of StarTree General Assembly in Austria, 2–4 April, 2014

During the 4<sup>th</sup> StarTree General Assembly in April, the progress of each work package was discussed. All work packages are now moving from the initial data collection phase into in-depth case studies and data analysis. Some preliminary results were shared and several project deliverables are expected to be finalised in early autumn.

As the meeting was held in the heart of the [Styrian Case Study region](#), regional stakeholders were given the floor, too. During a visit to a local organic Christmas tree plantation, it was noted that Christmas tree production is an important aspect of the forest economy in a region which is, nevertheless, dominated by the timber industry. Read more [here](#).



### The “StarTree Marketplace”



The aim of the Marketplace was not just to simply present the products but rather to facilitate discussion between the regional representatives and the project consortium partners. One of the conclusions was that in a highly developed country such as Austria, labour costs are fairly high and thus the price of speciality products is rather expensive. While the products are attractive and interesting to the public, it still seems to be difficult to find the consumers that are willing to pay the higher price. Read more about the outcomes of the Marketplace [here](#).



## On-going work with interviews on supply chains and management and innovation

The [14 case study regions in StarTree](#) and the Regional Stake-holder Groups (RSG) are at the heart of the project. The local expertise is invaluable and input of the stakeholders is needed in several work packages. Over the few next months, two rounds of interviews will be carried out in the case study regions.

### Investigating NWFP Supply Chains in Europe

To better understand the potentials and limitations of NWFP value chains, a survey throughout the 14 case study regions will be carried out to illustrate the socio-economics of a diverse range of products. Besides edible mushrooms, which are tackled within all 14 countries represented in the consortium, the investigation covers an exciting range of NWFPs. The NWFPs in focus were carefully selected taking into account the local expertise of the Regional Stakeholder Groups (RSG) members.

The producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers form the different stages of the supply chains. In each region, they have already been identified and over the summer they will be interviewed.

### In-depth case studies to enhance NWFP knowledge and tools

As one of the aims of the StarTree project is to contribute to a more sustainable rural development within a European Bioeconomy, selected multi-purpose tree species and non-wood forest products will be studied in detail. In order to gather data on the related resources management, marketing and innovation, a number of in-depth case studies (IDCS) have been set up regionally.

In preparation for the interviews, an IDCS training workshop was organised in Barcelona, in June 2014. *Ivana Zivojinovic* (EFI), who was one of the participants, says the workshop included a mix of theory and practical training on the art of asking questions, on transcription and coding of interviews and extracting basic results for research.

*“The most important lesson for me was to understand that the work on an interview has three phases: before, during and after and that all phases must be very carefully planned. During an interview, our role is to listen and lead the interview in the right direction”,* Zivojinovic summarises.



## Knowledge and data on non-wood forest products still fragmented in Europe

One of the most recent deliverable reports from the StarTree project provides a summary of the state-of-research on the production of non-wood forest products in Europe. It summarises the advances, existing knowledge, data availability and gaps in order to highlight the potential lanes for progress in further research. The paper is structured along the lines of primary production, marketing and trade, institutional aspects, and innovation needs for the development of production lines and markets. The deliverable shows that – in contrast to other regions in the world – systematic knowledge on non-wood forest products is still fragmented. Also as non-wood forest products data are scarce and incomplete.

An integrated approach is needed to provide a better systematics of NWFP in Europe alongside national case-studies to explore the national and regional dimensions of NWFP. This is, indeed, one of the goals of StarTree. Both the micro- and macro-environment for the production and marketing of NWFP are to be addressed when highlighting the contribution of NWFP to sustainable forest management and their economic and socio-cultural dimension in European societies.

### Non-wood forest products in numbers

- More than 150 NWFP are of importance within international trade. (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report, Schvidenko 2005)
- Total value of NWFP in the Forest Europe region reached 2.763 million euro (Forest Europe, UNECE and FAO 2011)
- Nearly 64 million Christmas trees with a total value of around 870 million euro were marketed all over Europe in 2005 (UNECE 2014)
- The market value for edible mushrooms and truffles (390.122 tonnes) was assessed to reach approximately 186 million euro (UNECE 2014).

*Wolfslehner, B., Huber, P., Sheppard, J., Pettenella, D., Prokofieva, I., Weiss, G. and Mavsar, R., 2014. StarTree conceptual paper on multi-purpose trees and NWFP in Europe. Deliverable D6.3. 30 p. Available as [pdf](#).*

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