



The MSc programme EUROFORESTER at SLU

—
an evaluation with special consideration of
external scholarship agreements



Jörg Brunet, Desiree Mattsson, Vilis Brukas
Giulia Attocchi & Per-Magnus Ekö

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Report no. 52

Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre

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Foreword

This report presents the *first part* of an evaluation of the Euroforester MSc programme at the Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre (SSFRC), Faculty of Forest Sciences, SLU. It contains a description and analysis of the programme itself, including student statistics and courses, while the *second part* will focus on a student survey. This survey will include all students who participated in two or more Euroforester courses between 2007 and 2017, as well as a resurvey of the students from the years 2001-2006, who already had possibility to participate in the first Euroforester graduates survey.

Alnarp, March 2018

Jörg Brunet, Desiree Mattsson, Vilis Brukas, Giulia Attocchi and Per-Magnus Ekö

Summary

Euroforester is a MSc programme at SLU campus Alnarp focusing on education on forests and forestry in the Baltic Sea region and Central Europe. The educational set-up is specifically targeted to an international student audience and delivered by an international teacher team. Education is provided via comprehensive courses that last for ten weeks full-time and integrate many subjects. The main purpose of the programme is that students will acquire profound and relevant knowledge and generic skills, preparing them for a future career in the international forest sector.

In 2001, the Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre at SLU Alnarp launched a one-year course package in cooperation with several forest faculties around the Baltic Sea. IKEA agreed to finance 20 annual scholarships for students from our Baltic and Polish partner faculties. Since then, Euroforester has developed with new courses, academic partners and scholarship sponsors. However, until today, IKEA remained the main scholarship donor.

From the start in 2001 until the academic year 2016/17, 305 students have received scholarships from IKEA. This corresponds to ca 55% of all participants, when calculated on the basis of full-time students, and shows the decisive role of these scholarships for the development of the Euroforester programme. Other foreign exchange students accounted for 26% and Swedish students for 19%. Among scholarship students funded by IKEA, most have come from our partner faculties in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, subsequently joined by the Russian Federation, Ukraine, China, Romania, and the Czech Republic.

A first survey in 2008 revealed that Euroforester alumni appreciated the student-centred pedagogy of the programme, and that the knowledge and generic skills acquired greatly contributed to their current career. Many alumni also emphasized the long-term benefit of the personal and professional networks established during their studies in Alnarp.

Student evaluations of the past five years confirmed that most Euroforester courses were highly appreciated by the students. This was shown by high scores for the overall impression of a course, but also how the students assessed the general discussion climate, and the quality of the course administration and infrastructure.

Strengths of the Euroforester programme include a well-crafted course package, a large variety of master's thesis options, an experienced international teacher team of active research scientists, a close contact to the forest sector in southern Sweden, and an active alumni network.

The prospective development of Euroforester could include a more systematic assessment and follow-up of the content and pedagogy of the programme, for example concerning generic skills, sustainable development, practical training and examinations. In addition, student recruitment needs to be broadened to attract more students from Swedish universities, as well as more Erasmus exchange students from the EU Member States. Participation from outside the EU is hampered by high study fees introduced by the Swedish government in 2012.



Fig. 1. Euroforester students and some of the teachers of the academic year 2017/2018.

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Introduction

Rationale behind the Euroforester programme

Euroforester is a MSc programme focusing on education on forests and forestry in the Baltic Sea region and Central Europe. From the beginning, Euroforester was conceived as a programme with an international perspective. This is rather unique for forestry education in Europe, where most master's programmes are either strictly framed within national sector traditions, or "sandwich" programmes that are combinations of existing national courses. The educational set-up is specifically targeted to an international student audience and delivered by an international teacher team (Fig. 1). Education is provided via comprehensive courses that last for ten weeks and integrate many subjects. Teaching in class is frequently followed-up by field visits, including study tours abroad.

Euroforester is focused on the region surrounding the southern Baltic Sea, where the natural settings for forestry are relatively similar. However, both forest composition and forest management differ among the countries in the region due to tradition, history, population density, ownership, and other societal influences. These circumstances make an excellent background for a master's programme in forestry, with the ambition to cross national barriers and to understand how forest management may be adapted to suit different needs.

Our international team of teachers is well-suited for this mission. For example, the leaders of the six Euroforester courses given in the academic year 2017/18 originate from five different countries around the Baltic Sea: Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden. In addition, teachers from several partner faculties are giving lectures in Alnarp as a part of our courses, and we also visit some of these faculties during the programme studies.

The programme is, however, not exclusively designed for students in the Baltic region, but is also relevant to students from other parts of the world, since many of the issues addressed are of universal concern. Likewise, the requirements on foresters and forest education have changed fundamentally in recent years. A holistic view on forests and forestry is required, extending beyond production and economy only. In addition, an international perspective in education is crucial, since markets and forest related industries are becoming increasingly international.

The main purpose of the programme is that students will acquire profound and relevant knowledge and generic skills, preparing them for a future career in the international forest sector or in academia. We also aim to ensure that students gain important extracurricular experiences. The students form a close and united group, which creates an excellent platform for intercultural communication and learning. As the teaching language as well as the social language are English, the students gain much in their written and spoken English skills. A major benefit of the programme is the personal and professional networks that are maintained through individual contacts and alumni activities.

Chronology of Euroforester

In 1997, Dr Per-Magnus Ekö and colleagues at the Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre (SSFRC) started to develop an international master's programme in forest management. As a first step, courses were offered to Swedish students in 1998, including study trips to Poland and Lithuania. During the academic year 2000/2001, six Lithuanian students attended one semester of courses in Alnarp, a pilot project supported by the Swedish Institute. The contact with Lithuania was further strengthened the following year, when Dr Vilis Brukas joined the SSFRC and soon took a leading role in the development of the Euroforester network. In autumn 2001, a one-year course package was launched in cooperation with forest faculties in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Denmark. IKEA agreed to finance 20 annual scholarships for students from our Baltic and Polish partner faculties. The courses were also joined by 5-15 students from Sweden, Germany and elsewhere.

In 2002-2003, networking and joint activities were supported by the Nordic Grant Scheme (NCM) and the Swedish Institute. Building on this fundament, a three-year EU Socrates project was set off in 2003 to further develop course curricula and possibly extend the cooperation to a two-year programme (Euroforester project). Also in 2003, the number of one-year scholarships granted by IKEA increased from 20 to 25, and our network was joined by forest faculties in the Russian Federation (Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg and Moscow). In 2004, the forest faculty in Kiev, Ukraine, joined the network. Also in 2004, the Stora Enso forest company granted five annual scholarships for students from the Russian Federation and Ukraine. From 2008, these scholarships were also available for students from Uruguay. Between 2004 and 2007, networking and joint activities were supported by the Nordplus

Neighbour Programme under NCM. Through this extensive cooperation and developing work, Euroforester successively became a strong "brand" as a leading international master's programme in forest science in the Baltic Sea region and Europe.

In 2005, IKEA and SLU signed a new four-year agreement for 25 annual scholarships. One year later, 2006, we could launch the full two-year joint master's programme Euroforester¹. At the same time, exchange students from non-EU countries started to join one semester of courses through several international exchange activities supported by EU Erasmus Mundus (European Forestry and Sufonama) and the EU-USA Atlantis Programme. In 2012, we added two additional 15 ECTS courses on forest management in temperate and tropical regions at SLU campus Alnarp, thus now offering a full two-year campus-based master's programme with six courses and a one semester master's thesis. Since its launch as a full master's programme in 2006, we have had more than 400 incoming foreign students. On average, foreign students accounted for 80% of the student group.

From the academic year 2010/11, IKEA granted 15 scholarships per year. This agreement was extended for one additional year in 2017. After ten years of support and 50 scholarships in total, support from Stora Enso ended after the academic year 2013/14. In 2014, the first exchange students from Brasov, Romania, received IKEA scholarships, followed by students from Brno, Czech Republic, in 2016. In 2017, a three-year agreement was signed with Skogssällskapet comprising three annual scholarships for exchange students from the three Baltic countries. Since the first courses of the autumn term 2001 until the spring term of 2017, in total 755 students from 43 countries participated in one or more of the 1st year Euroforester courses.

¹ Brukas, V. 2006. An example of developing joint MSc programmes: Euroforester. In (Eds.) Zilinskas H., Skujans J., Sarlauskas A., Zaleckite R. and Kasparinskis G. BOVA – 10 years of successful cooperation in studies of agriculture, forestry and veterinary. BOVA University, Jelgava, pp. 49-51.

Brukas, V. 2010. Euroforester. In (Eds.): Brukas, V. and Chubinsky, M. Forestry Education towards Common European Space. Proceedings of the Conference at the St. Petersburg State Forest Technical Academy, Russia, November 26-27, 2009, pp. 33-39.

Structure and content of the Euroforester programme

Admission to the Euroforester programme requires a BSc in relevant topics (see Appendix 1 for details). Students are supported by IKEA scholarships during their *first year* of studies at Euroforester. This first year currently includes four mandatory courses of equal size, 15 ECTS (ten weeks). These courses are offered at SLU campus Alnarp. Below follows a brief overview of the four courses. A list of thematic course modules can be found in Appendix 2.

The aim of the first course of the autumn term is to give the students a comprehensive overview of the forest sector in the region, with a certain focus on coniferous forest management at stand scale in southern Sweden. To help accomplish this, two weeks of field studies at our experimental forests are included. Since students come from different countries and have diverse educational backgrounds, time must also be spent finding common grounds for future studies.

The second course in the autumn addresses issues on how forestry is planned and conducted in real world situations. Restrictions and challenges for forestry are discussed within a framework of sustainability issues, climate change, legislation, certification, and international commitments. Tools for forecasting and analysing the effects of different scenarios of forest management are studied and used for making short-term and long-term plans for an existing forest estate.

The third course starting in January focuses on the interface between forest and society. The international teacher team includes top scholars on such subjects as forest policy analysis, international forest policies, participatory processes, and forest policy instrumentation. Students engage in diverse learning activities, such as writing reflective journal, peer assessments and a role play. A study trip to the Baltic States or the Russian Federation is another highlight of the course.

The fourth and final course has a focus on forest dynamics, ecology and conservation of the temperate broadleaf forests of the region. An introduction to silviculture and use of oak and beech is also included, preparing the students for the first course of the second year. The course also includes a study trip to Bialowieza national park in north-eastern Poland, Europe's

most iconic lowland temperate forest (Fig. 2). This course and the academic year end in the first week of June.

During the second year students write a master's thesis, with a corresponding value of 30 ECTS (one semester). In order to obtain a master's degree, students also have to find eligible courses for another 30 ECTS. These courses can be taken at SLU, their home university, or at any other university. This arrangement is taken so that students can specialize within their desired area. Since 2012, our department has offered the courses Silviculture of temperate forests (15 ECTS), and Tropical and subtropical silviculture (15 ECTS) during the autumn semester. In addition to the Euroforester degree, students can also obtain a national degree by choosing courses that are compulsory according to their national standards.



Fig. 2. Students in Bialowieza national park, Poland, during one of the Euroforester study trips.

Student statistics and external scholarships

The initial development of the Euroforester curriculum was financed by the EU through a joint application from the networking faculties. The general financing for running the programme is from SLU and tied to the number of students and the extent of the courses. To cover our costs, normally 30 full time students are needed. Compared to most master's programmes, Euroforester needs extra funding, due to the costs for our national and international study trips and for involving teaching staff from other countries. We also have higher costs due to individual recruitment of international scholarship students. Furthermore, exchange students need more services than Swedish students (visa applications, health insurance, housing etc.).

The development of Euroforester would not have been possible without the scholarship agreements with IKEA. These agreements have been crucial for recruiting motivated and ambitious international students. Euroforester staff thoroughly tests every scholarship candidate, via written tests and individual interviews. Without the scholarships, most of them would not have had the possibility to study abroad at an international master's programme. Apart from the scholarships, the agreements have enabled proper individual recruitment of students and to maintain the contact with partner faculties of our international network.

From the start in 2001 until the academic year 2016/17, 305 students received scholarships from IKEA (Table 1). This corresponds to ca 55% of all participants, when calculated on the basis of full time students. Other foreign exchange students accounted for 26% and Swedish students for 19%.

Table 1. Euroforester students during the period 2001 to 2016. The numbers are shown in full-time equivalents (HST, helårsstudent, 60 ECTS) during the first Euroforester year per student category. This implies that one full HST may correspond to two or more individual students per year taking part of the programme.

Academic year	Sum full time students	IKEA students	Stora Enso students	Other exchange students	Swedish students
2001/2002	31	19	0	3	9
2002/2003	30	19	0	0	11
2003/2004	32	23	0	3	6
2004/2005	32	24	5	2	1
2005/2006	40	22	5	4	9
2006/2007	42	24	5	8	5
2007/2008	44	25	5	8	6
2008/2009	44	24	6	10	4
2009/2010	40	21	5	8	6
2010/2011	31	13	4	9	5
2011/2012	32	14	4	9	5
2012/2013	30	16	5	6	3
2013/2014	34	12	6	5	11
2014/2015	31	13	0	7	11
2015/2016	28	18	0	5	5
2016/2017	27	17	0	6	4

During most years, the mean number of students in the courses was around 30 or slightly above (Fig. 3). Between 2005 and 2009, however, the programme engaged 40 or more students. From 2013, there has been a trend of decreasing student numbers, which was however broken by an increasing number of students in 2017 (unpublished data). The share of IKEA scholarship students varied from about 40 to 70% of all students through the years (Fig. 4).

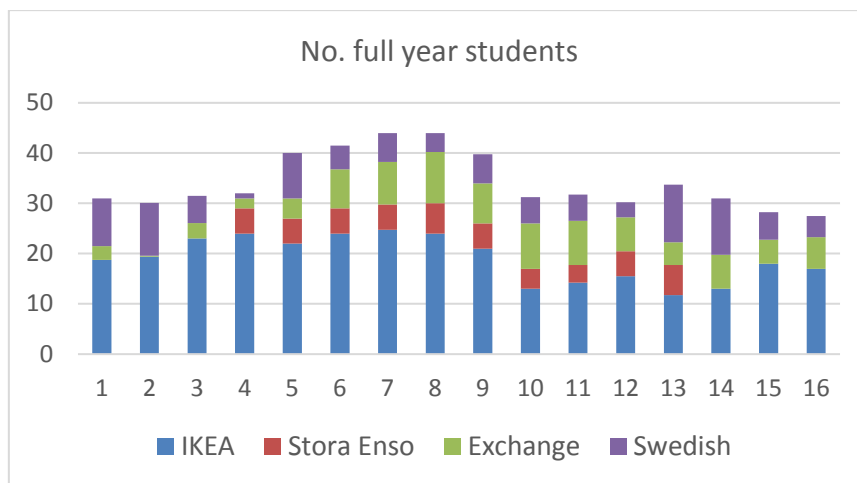


Fig. 3. Number of full year students (HST) with IKEA and Stora Enso scholarships, respectively, other foreign exchange students and Swedish students during the first year of Euroforester during the academic years 2001/02 (indicated as 1) to 2016/17 (indicated as 16).

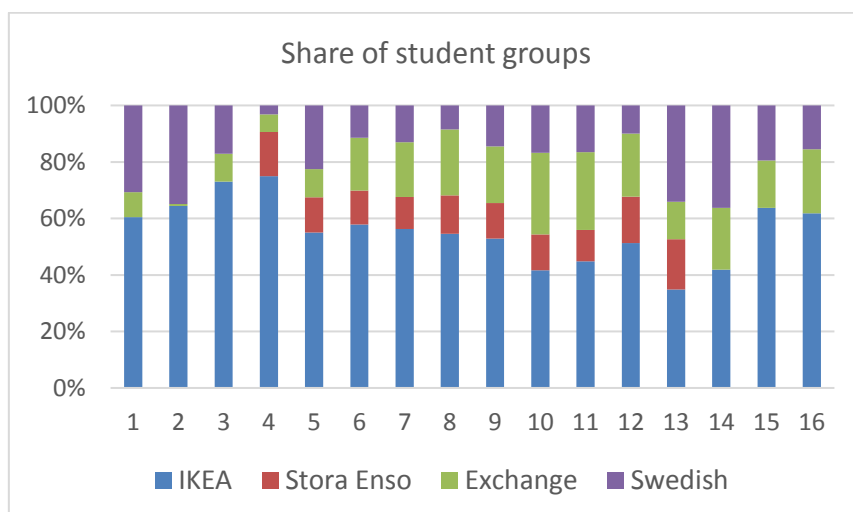


Fig. 4. Share (%) of full year students (HST) with IKEA and Stora Enso scholarships, respectively, other foreign exchange students and Swedish students during the first year of Euroforester during the academic years 2001/02 (indicated as 1) to 2016/17 (indicated as 16).

Whereas the majority of students comes from our network universities, the courses include representatives from many more nations. As an example, in addition to Sweden, students enrolled in Euroforester during the current and the past academic year (autumn terms 2016 – 2017) are from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Taiwan, Russian Federation, Ukraine, USA, and Vietnam.

Students in the programme represent the following categories:

- Euroforester scholarship students are the largest category. IKEA scholarship holders on average constituted 55% of all participating students.
- Swedish students follow the national undergraduate programme and choose Euroforester as their master’s specialty or take single courses as part of other Swedish master’s degrees.
- Erasmus exchange students are part of an EU exchange programme, organized so that students are able to bring the financial support they are entitled to in their home country when studying abroad. Erasmus students attend one to two semesters of studies.
- Erasmus+ exchange students from two Erasmus Mundus MSc programmes are eligible to study during their second year in our programme. These students come from outside the EU, mainly from Asia and Africa, and are financially supported by the EU. In addition, we currently have student exchange agreements with universities in China, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and USA, enabling exemption from the tuition fees for non-EU countries for a limited number of students.

Table 2. Number of students with IKEA scholarships by home country from the academic year 2001/02 to 2016/17.

Country	No. students	Master’s theses
China	16	2
Czech Rep.	2	0
Estonia	43	8
Latvia	53	8
Lithuania	42	5
Poland	79	23
Romania	7	1
Russian Fed.	54	16
Ukraine	9	2
Total	305	65

Among scholarship students funded by IKEA, most come from five countries with partner forest faculties, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the Russian Federation (Table 2).

However, the annual number of students from a particular country varies greatly (Fig. 5). This is caused by several factors, such as a fluctuating number of students initially interested in scholarships, and their performance in the recruitment tests. Also changes in the curriculum of a partner faculty, and start or ending of bilateral exchange agreements between partner universities are affecting the number of incoming students.

In 2010, the number of annual IKEA scholarships changed from 25 to 15, implying a corresponding decrease in the number of students in the four mandatory 1st year courses from 40-50 to 30-40. However, since 2014 some courses in the autumn term had less than 30 students. Therefore we have started several activities at department level to increase student recruitment, both nationally and internationally. Student recruitment is currently also highly prioritized at the SLU forest faculty, as the faculty has experienced declining numbers of applicants for the national forestry programme (jägmästarprogrammet) during the past years.

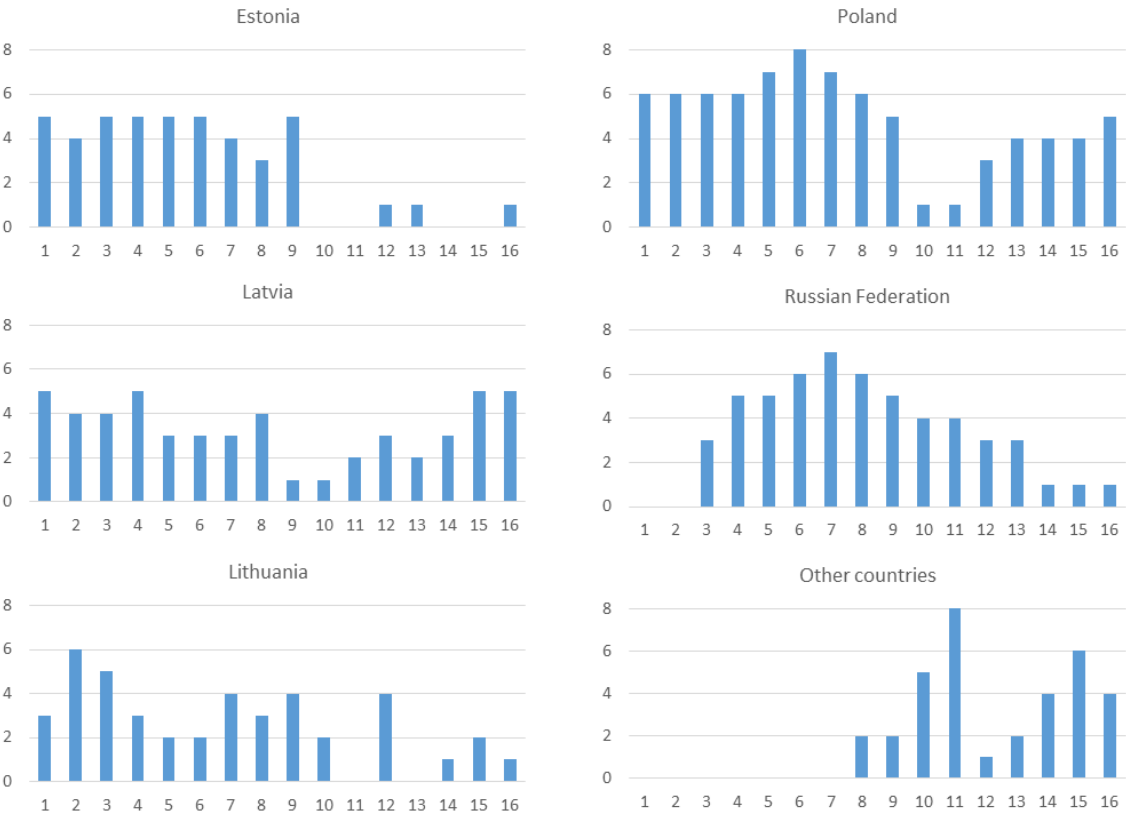


Fig. 5. Number of students with IKEA scholarships during the academic years 2001/02 (indicated as 1) to 2016/17 (indicated as 16), divided by countries.

Five annual Stora Enso scholarships were available from 2004 for students from the Russian Federation and Ukraine (Fig. 6). From 2008, these scholarships were also available for students from Uruguay.

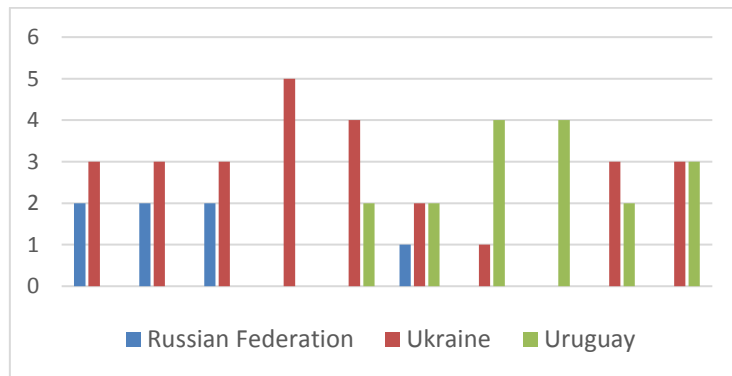


Fig. 6. Number of students with Stora Enso scholarships during the academic year 2004/05 (first group of bars) to 2013/14 (last group of bars), divided by countries.

Master's theses

Out of the students with IKEA scholarships, 65 wrote their master's thesis at SSFRC in Alnarp during their second year, corresponding to 21% of all scholarship students (Table 2). In addition, nine master's theses were written by students with Stora Enso scholarships (18% of Stora Enso students). Out of these 74 master's theses, 27 were written in forest management, 15 in ecology, 14 in forest policy, ten in forest planning, and eight in forest health. Three of the master's thesis students later completed a PhD thesis at the SSFRC and one is a current PhD-student.

First student survey and course evaluations

First student survey 2001-2006

Based on responses of 135 alumni from Euroforester, this first survey presented a detailed graduate analysis focusing on the following subjects: graduates' career pathways and job satisfaction; attitudes to selected forest policy issues; evaluation of international and national study programmes; and possibilities to develop a Euroforester alumni network².

The survey showed that most respondents (94%) were employed, with the majority within an occupation relevant to their education. The survey also revealed a high level of graduates' satisfaction with their current job situation, even though there are considerable differences by country and gender. The alumni had a high regard to the Euroforester programme, particularly appreciating student-centered pedagogy, acquisition of transferable skills and non-hierarchical relationships between teachers and students. It was encouraging for our teaching staff to know from the survey how positive scholarship students felt about our pedagogical skills and approach to teaching, often quite different from approaches prevailing in their home countries.

Many respondents mentioned that the knowledge and generic skills acquired in the programme were a very important contributor to their current career. In addition, many students also emphasized the long-term benefit of the networks they established during their studies. A majority of graduates, however, expressed a need for a more structured collaboration between alumni and were willing to tangibly contribute to network activities.

² Blicharska, M. and Brukas, V. 2008. Euroforester Graduates – survey report. SSFRC, SLU Alnarp.

Brukas, V. and Blicharska, M. 2010. Career pathways of Euroforester graduates. In: (Eds.) Proceedings of the SILVA conference "What do we know about our graduates? Graduate analyses for forest sciences and related curricula". University of Copenhagen, May 15-17, 2008, Copenhagen, Denmark, pp. 72-82.

Course evaluations 2007-2017

Students evaluate each course at the very end of the course by answering net-based questionnaires, including the possibility to add personal comments. After that, the course leader and the student course representative usually meet and discuss the outcome and possible future revisions of the course. Critical feedback given in the course evaluations is highly valuable and helps us to continuously improve and develop the programme. A mean value of more than 4 on the 1-5 scale applied can be considered as a very good performance, laying above the overall SLU mean score. A value between 3 and 4 may indicate a need for improvement. A value below 3 normally indicates a poor performance.

Table 3. Mean values (min 1, max 5) from net-based course evaluations of the academic years 2012/13 to 2016/17 (5 years) for the four mandatory 1st year courses of the Euroforester programme.

	Forestry	Planning	Policy	Broadleaves
No. students	29	29	31	33
% female students	39	38	40	40
Administration	4.5	3.1	4.6	4.4
Infrastructure	4.7	4.2	4.8	4.8
Discussion climate	4.6	3.9	4.6	4.5
Overall impression	4.4	3.0	4.5	4.5

The first year courses had around 30 students, with a mean share of female students of almost 40% (Table 3). During the past five years, most Euroforester courses were highly appreciated by the students (Table 3). This is shown by high mean values not only for the overall impression of a course, but also how the students assessed the general discussion climate, and the quality of the course administration and infrastructure.

However, the planning course, 2nd period of the autumn term, has received relatively poor reviews concerning administration and overall impression of the course. A new course leader reorganized this course in 2016. This has resulted in an increase of the overall score from 2015 to 2016 (Fig. 7), which continued also in 2017 (mean score 3.8 for overall impression). The other three mandatory 1st year courses have consistently received scores above 4 during

the past ten years for both the overall impression of the course (Fig. 7), the quality of the course administration (Fig. 8), and the general discussion climate (Fig. 9; first included in evaluations in spring term 2013).

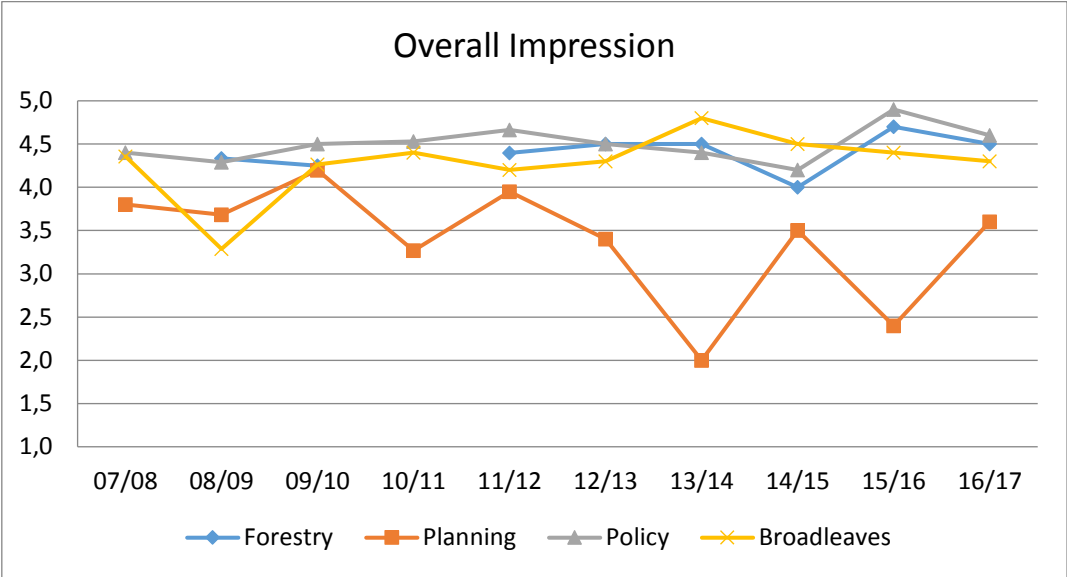


Fig. 7. Mean value for overall course impression for the four mandatory 15 ECTS courses of the first Euroforester year from the academic years 2007/08 to 2016/17.

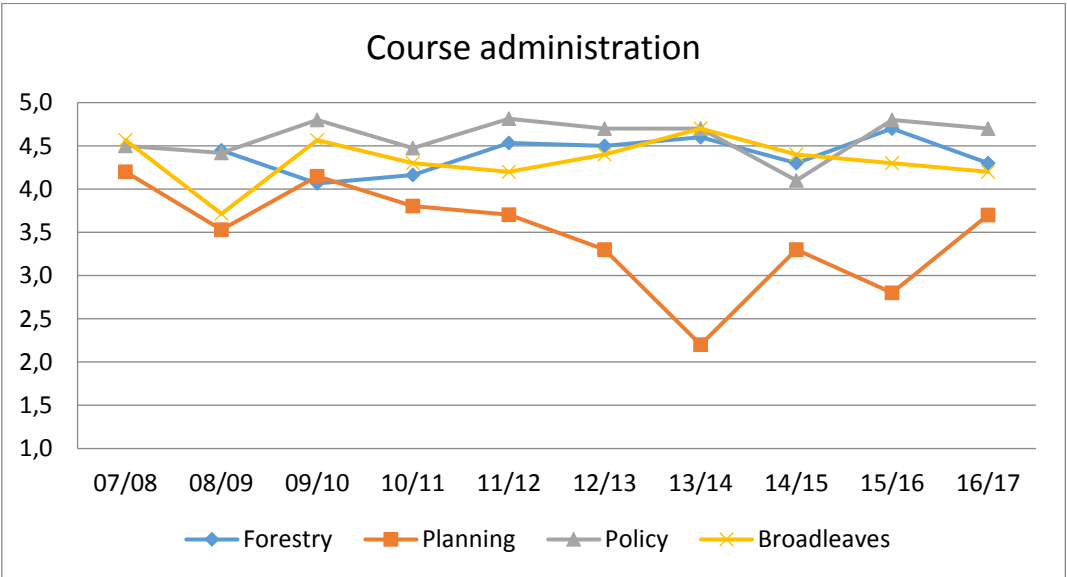


Fig. 8. Mean value for the quality of the course administration for the four mandatory 15 ECTS courses of the first Euroforester year from the academic years 2007/08 to 2016/17.

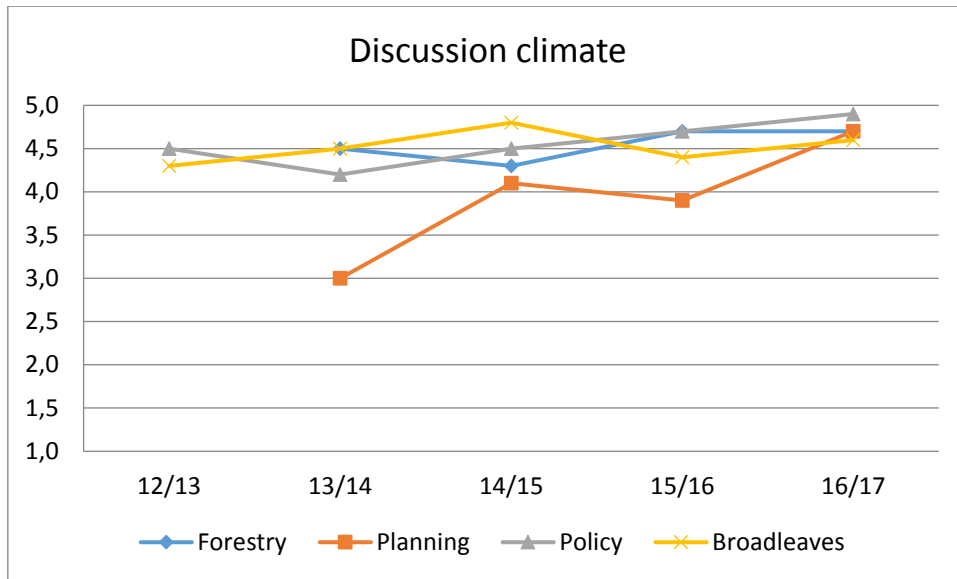


Fig. 9. Mean value for the general discussion climate in the four mandatory 15 ECTS courses of the first Euroforester year from the academic years 20012/13 to 2016/17.



Fig. 10. Students experiencing southern Swedish forestry during one of the many field trips of the Euroforester programme.

Internal programme evaluation

In the following we summarize briefly where Euroforester stands today and how we want to develop the programme in the future.

Strengths of the Euroforester MSc programme

- A highly appreciated 6 x 15 ECTS course package.
- A large variety of master's thesis options at the SSFRC and partner faculties.
- An experienced international teacher team with strong scientific background. All course leaders are active research scientists, ensuring course contents to be in line with current scientific progress.
- A large and well-established network of forest faculties in Europe.
- A multinational group of students sharing knowledge and experience.
- Good infrastructure on campus Alnarp, including well-equipped lecture halls and seminar rooms, a new student residence for Euroforesters on campus, and the Alnarp park, arboretum and landscape laboratory.
- Close contact to the forest sector in southern Sweden (Fig. 10).
- An active alumni network with alumni conferences every three years (see Appendix 3).
- A good job market for both exchange students and Swedish students. Many Euroforesters have moved on to postgraduate and academic positions. Others have been employed by state or private forest companies. Several Euroforesters work with IKEA's international operations in forests, timber and furniture (see Appendix 4 for examples).

Suggestions to develop the Euroforester MSc programme

- Most importantly, we aim to constantly and systematically follow-up and develop the content and pedagogy of the various courses and the programme as a whole. Here, the teaching staff will meet regularly to reconcile and develop the work with, among other things, generic skills, sustainable development, practical training and examinations. The pressure on global forest resources is steadily increasing and our teaching about conflicts of use and solutions needs to be developed.
- Study tours that are included in all courses play an important part in the students' learning and are highly appreciated. Teacher-led learning in small groups and individual feedback on individual assignments are important elements in courses to increase students' understanding and knowledge acquisition. These elements should be further prioritized, for example by involving more doctoral students in the teaching.
- Student recruitment needs to be broadened, to 1) attract more students with a bachelor degree from Swedish universities, and 2) attract more Erasmus exchange students from EU member states.
- Our student groups are heterogeneous, where the students have different knowledge backgrounds and come from different countries. Especially during the first term, we therefore need to further develop the work to establish a common knowledge and learning ground in the student group.
- New opportunities will be opened if our students are offered courses organized in collaboration with other SLU campuses or faculties. Examples of the latter include a new course in Urban Forestry that starting 2018 will be given during the autumn semester in collaboration with the Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management in Alnarp, and a campus independent course in International Forestry coordinated by SLU Umeå.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Part of academic curriculum for Euroforester

Extent: 120 ECTS

Level: 2 - Advanced

Exam: MSc degree

Programme code: SM001

Responsible faculty: Faculty of Forest Sciences

Requirements for admission

A BSc degree comprising at least 180 ECTS of which at least 60 ECTS must be in Biology or Forest Sciences or Environmental Sciences or Agricultural Sciences or Natural Resource Management, and knowledge corresponding to English 6 at Swedish upper secondary school.

Learning outcomes

Students shall have obtained:

- Very good theoretical and practical knowledge concerning forests and silviculture in the Baltic region
- Good understanding for ethical, ecological and legal aspects in forest management and governance
- Profound knowledge in forest management and forest ecology, including methodological aspects

Students shall be able to:

- Work independently within the forest sector, in particular in the Baltic region
- Make qualified judgements and take qualified professional decisions concerning, scientific, societal and ethical issues

Master's degree and further academic studies

MSc degree with a major in Forest Sciences is awarded to students who have completed the Euroforester programme. The MSc degree qualifies for further doctoral studies.

Content of the programme

Euroforester students obtain profound knowledge on the ecology, history, dynamics and sustainable management of the forests in the Baltic region and in neighbouring areas. Professional skills are trained during courses by comparative analysis, discussions and exercises (Fig. 11). Students develop their skills in data management, statistical analysis, forest inventory and use of several planning tools, such as production simulators, landscape simulators and GIS tools. Students improve their ability to present and discuss their findings in an international context. Critical evaluation of conditions and processes is trained throughout the programme, empowering students to question established truths and norms. For example, ethical problems such as conflicts between exploitation and conservation of forest resources and the implications for sustainable societal development are thoroughly discussed.



Fig. 11. Euroforester students present project work at Snogeholm landscape laboratory.

Appendix 2. List of 1st year Euroforester courses and course modules 2018

Sustainable Forestry in Southern Sweden (15 ECTS credits) – 1st part of autumn term.

Course leader: Dr Emma Holmström

- Concepts of forest growth and yield (2 credits)
 - Concepts of sustainable forest management in clearcutting systems (5 credits)
 - Retention forestry and management for biodiversity (3 credits)
 - Continuous cover forestry (1.5 credits)
 - Experimental design and analysis of variance (1.5 credits)
 - Data management in R (2 credits)
-

Planning in sustainable forest management (15 ECTS credits) – 2nd part of autumn term.

Course leader: Dr Renats Trubins

- Forest inventory methods, including remote sensing (2 credits)
 - Modelling forest growth and yield (3 credits)
 - Forest economics, Faustmann model (1 credit)
 - Multi-criteria decision analysis (1 credit)
 - Strategic harvest potential assessment using a computer-based decision support system (1.5 credits)
 - GIS, basic data manipulation and map formatting (1.5 credits)
 - Tactical forest management planning for a 10-year period (5 credits)
-

National and International Forest Policy (15 ECTS credits) – 1st part of spring term. Course leader: Assoc. prof. Vilis Brukas

- Social science in forestry: theories and methods of forest policy analysis (4.5 credits)
 - National forest policies, including mixes of forest policy instruments (4.5 credits)
 - Global and European forest policies, including actors, resources, processes, issues (1.5 credits)
 - Forest certification: set-up, actors, developments at multiple levels, pros & cons (1.5 credits)
 - Participatory processes and conflict management in forest use and conservation (1.5 credits)
 - Forest ownership and research of private forestry (1.5 credits)
-

Broadleaves: Forest dynamics, biodiversity and management for multiple use (15 ECTS credits) – 2nd part of spring term. Course leader: Prof. Jörg Brunet

- Broadleaf trees and forests: Biogeography, dynamics and history (3 credits)
- Temperate broadleaves: Silviculture and timber use (3 credits)
- Forest health: Diseases on broadleaves (1.5 credits)
- Biodiversity and conservation in broadleaf forests (1.5 credits)
- Case study: Ecology, history and dynamics of Bialowieza primeval forest (3 credits)
- Dynamics of broadleaf forest vegetation (1.5 credits)
- Restoration of broadleaf forests (1.5 credits)

Appendix 3. Euroforester conferences

In **2009** the first Alumni Conference took place in Tuchola, Poland, with more than 100 participants (Fig. 12). Since then three more conferences have been carried out, and more are in the pipeline (Table 4).

Table. 4. List of Euroforester conferences

Year	Organizing country
2012	Lithuania
2015	Latvia
2018	Estonia
2021	Sweden
2024	Russian Federation
2027	Ukraine
2030	Germany
2033	Poland again!



Fig. 12. Group picture of the first Alumni Conference, which took place in Tuchola, Poland, 2009.

The first Alumni Conference was very successful with participants that have been on the Euroforester Programme and also academic staff involved in the Euroforester programme, as well as invited speakers from the forestry sector.

In **2012** the second Alumni Conference took place in Kaunas, Lithuania and around 120 participants joined for the meeting (Fig. 13). IKEA was represented by Anders Hildeman.



Fig. 13. Group picture of the second Alumni Conference, which took place in Kaunas, Lithuania, 2012.

In **2015** the third meeting took place in Ratnieki, Latvia (Fig. 14). More than 150 former Euroforester students participated and the organisers in Latvia did an amazing job.



Fig. 14. Group picture of the third Alumni Conference, which took place in Ratnieki, Latvia, 2015.



Fig. 15. Euroforester students and staff enjoyed visiting Ingvar Kamprad in Småland 2005.

Appendix 4. Some thoughts from Euroforester alumni working at IKEA

Many of the graduates today have high positions in their home countries and internationally. Here we have a collection of thoughts by some of the graduates that today are working for IKEA.



Dmitry Loginov

IKEA Purchasing Services Russia LLC - Inter IKEA Group

EMAIL: dmitry.loginov@ikea.com

At Euroforester in Sweden 2008/09

Degree Master of Science in Forest Management from SLU 2012

I'm in IKEA for >6 years now. Working within Sustainability, located in Moscow, Russia. Current responsibilities: Global Supervisor for SSTS (Sub Supplier Tracking System), Sustainability Responsible in investment project, working with IWAY (IKEA Code of Conduct in terms of Environment, Health & Safety, Social conditions).

Why Euroforester was important for me:

- getting the real feeling and understanding of Swedish culture (Swedishness as we call it in IKEA)
- knowledge about Sustainable way of living and doing business: core principles, importance and benefits (Environment + People + Economy)
- important experience of international communications (students from >12 countries)
- Master's Thesis in Forestry Management (perfect fit with my other specialisations as woodwork engineer and economist)
- being ready for applying to IKEA and getting the job (that was my plan and wish since 2nd grade of University)
- and after all, that was one of the best years in my life! :)

All above naturally wouldn't be possible without support and scholarship from IKEA. Also thank You, Desiree, Vilis, Eric, PM and SLU!



Pavlo Polupan

Sourcing Developer Business Area Kitchen & Dining

IKEA of Sweden AB, Älmhult

EMAIL: Pavlo.polupan@ikea.com

At Euroforester in Sweden 2007/08

Degree Master of Science in Forest Management from SLU 2009

The Euroforester course had the huge impact on my development as a student, as a professional, and as a person. The main change was in the mindset – starting to think more holistically, more globally. So taking away the borders and creating the Togetherness is very much what Euroforester has given to me (apart of the knowledge of forestry of course). And when working now at IKEA I see that the values of IKEA are very much corresponding to the values of the Euroforester course.

The energy and the spirit is quite the same in Euroforester community and in IKEA community I must say: curiosity, challenging, togetherness, looking for the solutions by yourself, self-leadership and enthusiasm, and making the serious things with a lot of passion and fun! You know what I mean...

After finishing MSc at Alnarp I spent some time on the other assignments, but coming to IKEA I felt like home. The atmosphere was similar like in Alnarp. I really like it, and I still enjoy it.

Without IKEA sponsoring the Euroforester programme for me – I would not be there and who knows where I would be now... I am very grateful for both IKEA and SLU team for this great course. And for making this course available for the many people (like me).



Egle Petrylaite

IKEA Forestry Specialist

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYjt_1I-G_I&feature=youtu.be

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At Euroforester in Sweden 2002/03

There is no doubt that studies at Alnarp have helped me to get a job at IKEA. It's already over 10 years as I'm working at the company. I have only the best words to say about studying in Sweden: high quality of studies, professionalism of teachers, relevant topics, and big focus on the students. It was a very different way of studying as I have experienced in my country. Another important thing to mention is that the studies were very international. In my course we had students from Sweden, Poland, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. It was an incredible experience to be in such group and develop communication skills, get to know other cultures as well as to learn about forestry in other countries. I am sure for every person who has studied at Alnarp all this "set up" gave a very good basis for the further carrier. To get an IKEA scholarship was crucial for me. Without it I wouldn't be able to come for studies in Sweden. I believe at my time this was the case for all international students in the group.



Mikhail Baskatov

IKEA Purchasing Services Russia LLC - Inter IKEA Group

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At Euroforester in Sweden: 2005/06

I would like to share some of my thoughts, regarding SLU and IKEA.

I feel very happy, that I was studying in Sweden. I believe that studentship has two main advantages. The first one is of course, knowledge as such. How valuable it might be – to get something, which will allow you to build yourself, depending on your own skills.

Second main important thing is socializing. One of the best places for young men to understand life, to get new experience, to find difficulties, which seemed like heavy and almost “mission impossible”. But all that prepare a person to be cleverer, be ready for challenges and never give up)).

For some persons knowledge make more sense, for some social practical life. I’m lucky. I got with full cup both – knowledge and huge social experience. And that’s true – both helped me and due to them I’m here, in current company with interesting job.

Actually, I have one more bonus from my fantastic studying in Alnarp. English! Language, which is opening me doors even more widely.

I started in IKEA as a forester. With a position which fully represented my knowledge and my interest. And one of the main reasons, or may be the only reason, for receiving offer was my study in SLU. Even now, I hardly can fully assess – the importance of my journey to Sweden 10 years ago.

I’m sure, that partnership between IKEA and SLU will deliver even more enthusiastic and valuable professionals, who will serve for the people and for the nature.

Now I’m working with Sustainability issues as such, but my roots with Forestry. And my heart with SLU and Alnarp.



Azat Timerbaev

IKEA Purchasing Services Russia LLC - Inter IKEA
Group Business Developer, IKEA Components

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At Euroforester in Sweden: 2008/09

Picture from a visit in Alnarp, September 2016

I studied at SLU during 2008-2009 and every time I have an opportunity, I visit department to meet professors and to say thank you for the time I have spent there.

Obviously educational part of that year was the most important for me, because it gave me new knowledge, which I barely could get during study at home university. The way classes were going gives very good overview on wide topics, improves comprehension and presentation skills and of course influence on level of speaking language.

One of the most important to my mind was field trips on experimental plots and other countries, presentations from professionals in their field from other countries. Here we were discussing vital problems, which occur nowadays, not long time ago.

I think what was good is combination of subjects during academic year, which is suitable for different majors, will it be economics, silviculture or ecology or any other.

It is hard to overestimate influence of time spent in SLU, not just from educational point of view, but life experience and mind-set. To live abroad and study for students who cannot afford those themselves because of money is something special. Gives an opportunity to know new counties, cultures.

And finally it creates possibility for future development on absolutely different level. With the knowledge provided at Euroforester student become really valuable as a professional on the market.

I think the idea that IKEA is the company, which provide money for Euroforester programme, stimulates to give something back to that company, that is why I was trying to get job here.



Łukasz Tymendorf

Wood Manager IKEA Industry Poland Branch Wielbark

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At Euroforester in Sweden: 2003/04

I'm very good on my job position and I think that 70% of my success is the studies in Sweden. Now my daily work gives a lot of cost savings in wood purchase for IKEA in Wielbark. Also my ideas and opinions are seriously taken in to considerations by other industry units in Poland. Wood Supply Chain Concept which I create for Wielbark was implemented in new unit in Stalowa Wola.

I remember my first 3 months in the company. I got the task to create wood purchase strategy and present on the Management Council in Wielbark. Normally, on my studies in Poland we didn't have so many presentations, group works, and projects. I was ready for this task after studies in Alnarp. I made it and I got permanent job contract. Moreover, I didn't have problems with working in international environment and I didn't have problems with communication in work.

After studies in Alnarp I know how to:

- manage projects
- manage team work
- divide the task to right persons
- keep time regimes in projects
- be open minded!
- present my opinion

I went to Sweden totally terrified. Everything was undiscovered, unexpected, inexperienced. For me it was one year of big challenges and definitely the most valuable year in my life.