



PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Digitalisation: Needs and Impacts

May, 2022

ROUND WOOD TRACEABILITY IN AUSTRIA

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Austria has a strict, long-existing forest law guaranteeing sustainability: the word sustainability originates from the domain forestry itself and is defined as guaranteeing more growth than felling. Nevertheless, to fulfil the yearly demand of roundwood, timber is acquired from the European and international market. This poses the threat of placing illegal deforested products on the European market, which is what the EUTR is tackling; illegality is not only defined as cutting down endangered tree species, but also breaching national forestry laws. The focal question dealt within this living lab is phrased the following way: *“How can digitalisation support and enforce the adoption of the European Timber Regulation (EUTR) concerning imported round wood in Austria?”*

The main entities involved can be divided into three domains, socio, physical and cyber. Interactions amongst the domains are dictated by interests and the availability of information. The socio domain consists of foreign countries exporting round wood, the Austrian operators and traders placing wood on the European market, the Competent Authority (CA) responsible for the implementation of the EUTR in Austria, the Federal Forest Office (BFW) and the European market as the destination for round wood. The physical domain comprises all relevant factors surrounding the physical forest. The cyber domain represents the digital technologies utilised to prove compliance with the regulation. To verify and confirm legality of wood and wood products, operators and traders are obliged to set up and maintain a due diligence system (DDS). The level of digitalisation as part of operating a DDS is rather low, the procedures of the EUTR heavily rely on paperwork. Here, the internet serves as a medium for communication and is used as a source of information. The main two reasons for the overall low level of digitisation are the lack of standards amongst EUTR member states, and the lack of incentives or policies in place, to motivate operators to utilise more technologies.

Living Lab

Timber Regulation
Round Wood Traceability in Austria

Key Digital Technologies

Internet based technologies for information sharing, e.g. documents, databases, websites

Keywords

Traceability, EUTR, illegal forestry

More info: <https://desira2020.eu/timber-regulation-austria/>



The effects of digitalisation concern the availability of information and the way information is exchanged and communicated. Digitalisation allows information to travel faster; generally speaking, transparency counters clandestine activities. Contrarily, an abundance of information needs efficient data filtering, storage and distribution. Forestry is a domain which is experiencing a high degree of technological advancement, only, the institutional circumstances are not there yet, for technological innovation to gain importance when tackling illegal logging.

