

Support for implementing the EU 3 Billion Trees Pledge

Challenges for tree planting with ecological objectives/forest restoration

Milieu Consulting

With the support of: Ecologic and Stritih

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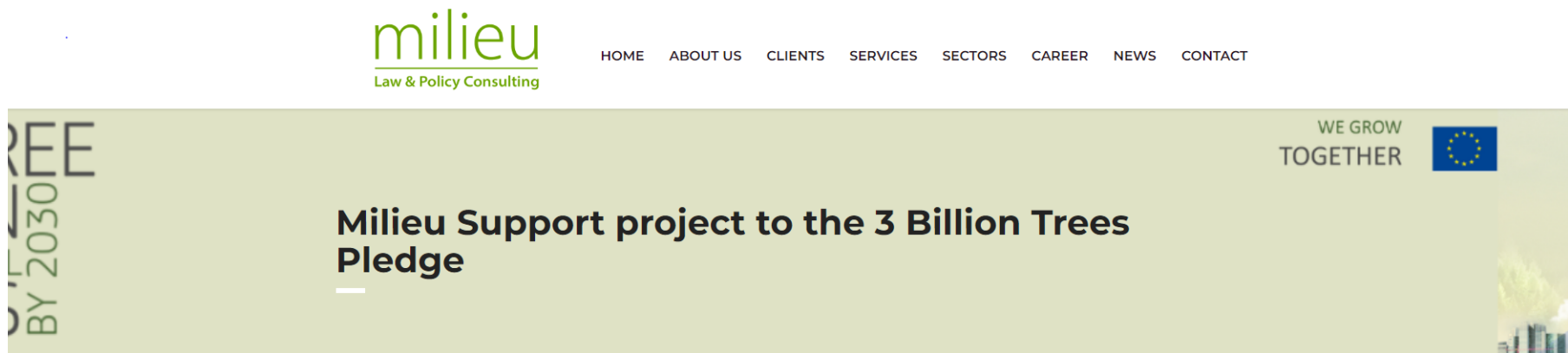
Structure of this session

- ▶ Project to support DG ENV in implementing the EU 3 Billion Trees Pledge
- ▶ Key findings from the report on Challenges for tree planting
- ▶ Financing Guidelines: Opportunities for funding in Greece

Project's General Objective

- ▶ compiling information on tree planting initiatives & stakeholders
 - ▶ Survey
- ▶ Understanding the challenges for tree planting with ecological objectives and providing support to find solutions
- ▶ Raising awareness about the EU 3 Billion Trees pledge

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The EU Forest Strategy for 2030 provides a roadmap to **implement the 3 billion additional trees pledge** to reverse the current trend of biodiversity loss and climate change. The pledge aims to **double the EU's forests expansion rate under the business-as-usual scenario**, by promoting the planting of 3 billion additional trees by 2030 in three overarching ecosystems: forests, agriculture, and urban areas. This ambitious initiative, requires the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the tree planting process on the ground together with others working at a regional or national level providing the necessary support for the success of this EU pledge.

Project Tasks & Outputs



Information on planting initiatives in EU, mapping relevant stakeholders to sign up for 3 Billion Trees Pledge



Guidance document on funding sources



Report on challenges and barriers



Organisation of events:

To discuss challenges to tree planting and
To promote registration

Methodology to identify challenges



Desk research - initiatives & stakeholder mapping, funding sources and challenges



Survey questions on stakeholder, initiatives, funding and challenges for tree planting with ecological objectives



Interviews:

Interview template & focus group

Interview table (type of actors, biogeographic region type of ecosystem and type of challenge) and summaries



Events on funding & challenges - information



Additional research based on information from interviews and events

Types of challenges for tree planting / forest restoration



The availability of public/private funding.



Land needs and land-use conflicts.



Compliance with ecological conditions.



Legal framework and compliance with legislative provisions.



Consistency with national and regional forest and nature conservation objectives.



Political support.



Insufficient stakeholder cooperation and coordination.

Challenge: availability of **FUNDING** (public/private)

- ▶ The challenge most often mentioned by stakeholders, i.e. private companies and NGOs
- ▶ **Sustainability** of existing funding for tree planting schemes to allow planning – some are one off and not structural
- ▶ **Costs** not covered: land preparation & cleaning and staff
- ▶ **No funding for long-term** management, maintenance, restoration, monitoring, risk prevention or other measures.

Challenge: availability of public/private funding

► Public funding

- EU level: no dedicated funding to tree planting
 - existing funding sources for nature (e.g. LIFE) and agriculture (e.g. CAP) available but **not promoted** and short duration
 - Existing CAP funding schemes for agroforestry introduced, used 5%
 - Funds coupled with other sources such as State aid is not known.
- National sources: No dedicated funds for tree planting –
 - existing sources available but no easy access and subject to political priorities.
- Administrative capacity is also mentioned as a barrier to get funding by municipalities and civil society organisations.

Challenge: availability of public/private funding

- ▶ Carbon credit: innovative private/public funding
 - ▶ Compensation system: CO2 emitters or landowners
 - ▶ Complex system: requires dedicated well-informed staff.
 - ▶ Companies do not re-invest in planting trees – planting organisations would
 - ▶ Atomization and need to demonstrate and report on impact
 - ▶ Some consider investment in carbon credits for reforestation: low credit returns and the lack of short-term benefits.

Challenge: Recommendations suggested



Administrative body to facilitate financial engineering.

Slovak Environmental Agency project & Belgian BosPlus/BosFonds

Both reporting to MapMyTree



Clear financing framework for tree planting at EU and national level, prioritizing degraded areas that need cleaning, nurseries and long term



Promote tree planting with legislation offering financial benefits to individuals and organisations and covering all governance levels

Challenge: Legal framework and compliance

The most important challenge for tree planting by

- ▶ individuals and academic institutions
- ▶ NL and BG (PT and SL)

Carbon credits

Legal framework
and permitting
requirements

Landuse
reclassification

Biodiversity
requirements

Unclear legal
framework for
funding

Legal Challenge: Carbon credit

- ▶ Compensation system: credit owner emitting installations or landowner.
 - ▶ The legal system: no access to carbon credits ownership by tree planting organisations or NGOs
 - ▶ re-invest in planting trees
- ▶ Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming Regulation considers reforestation and tree planting as 'temporary' carbon removals.
 - ▶ Implications for methodology and effectiveness re. level of carbon removed
 - ▶ 3BT requirement to maintain the trees planted for decades
- ▶ Existing national carbon registries (ES and FR) lack a harmonized approach to carbon price. CRCF will provide a EU-wide Registry harmonizing rules and compatibility/interoperability.

Legal challenge: permitting for afforestation

- ▶ Complex and lengthy permitting procedures: delays and uncertainty
 - ▶ urban and peri-urban areas, with more competing regulatory demands.
- ▶ Outdated business prone legislation: barriers to non-agriculture purpose
- ▶ Legislation requires acquisition of ownership of land (agricultural): authorisations by ministry and fees, non-agriculture purpose restriction
- ▶ Legal restrictions for tree planting along roads or water courses.
- ▶ National legislation prevents preserving felling trees for several decades
- ▶ Stringent national requirement of EIA for tree planting in large areas
 - ▶ high administrative costs.

Legal challenge: Land conversion

- ▶ national legislation requires the land that is converted to forest (e.g. through land abandonment or acquisition)
 - ▶ Legal recognition by the legal land planning designation or land ownership registry – hinders tree planting.
 - ▶ Lack of enforcement and lack of census to know the forest owner
 - ▶ Authorisations not always simple / Obligations to maintain agriculture land

Challenge: Recommendations suggested



CRCF: Tree planting projects that comply with the 3 Billion Trees Pledge conditions to be classified as permanent carbon sinks



Carbon credits legal systems recognize tree planting organisations as carbon credits owners - law in Andalucia



EU Member States streamlining permitting processes, revising land use policies to promote reforestation.

Challenge: Compliance with ecological conditions

Primary challenge faced by local and regional authorities.

The key issues identified are:

- selecting the appropriate tree species: native species
- ensuring proper planting methods,
- choosing suitable locations,
- guaranteeing the longevity/sustainability of these projects: scarcity of water, forest fires

Challenge: Compliance with ecological conditions

Additional key elements

- Changing climate conditions
- Expertise. National or EU level technical guidelines
- Timing of harvesting
- Monitoring indicators
- Financing considerations