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ForestValue: kick-off meeting 2017

Katja Ceglar (MIZS)

The kick-off meeting of the ERA-NET Cofund project ForestValue (ForestValue – Innovating forest-based bioeconomy), co-funded by the European Commission, took place on 12-13 December 2017 at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the European Union in Brussels. A day before, on 11th December the ForestValue Management Team had its internal meeting.

Because of extremely bad weather conditions the Brussels Airport was closed early on Monday 11th December and thousands of flights and train services were cancelled across Europe, leaving many travellers stranded. This caused that unfortunately a number of partners were not able to attend the meeting at all, and some were arriving later than expected. Nevertheless, the meeting was held following the prepared agenda.

Besides the partner organisations' representatives, on the first meeting day Mr George Predoiu (ForestValue Project Officer, European Commission/ Research Executive Agency/ Unit B2 - Sustainable Resources for Food Security and Growth) and Mr Doru-Leonard Irimie (Research Programme Officer, European Commission/ DG Research & Innovation/ F3: Agri-Food Chain) were attending and participating in the meeting.



Figure 1: The ForestValue team at the kick-off meeting in Brussels



As project officer, I'm happy to welcome this new forestry ERA-NET under Horizon 2020, building on past FP7 ERA-NETs.

The EU Research Executive Agency (REA – unit B2) is in charge of monitoring the implementation of ForestValue and I am the contact point for your consortium.

We closely collaborate with colleagues from EC-DG Research and Innovation (RTD- F3) in order to monitor the policy dimension of ForestValue.

In the following years, we and your consortium will work together and our roles are clearly defined in the Grant Agreement.

Communication between us is essential and I encourage you to share the implementation problems but also the success stories.

Good luck in the implementation of ForestValue!

*George PREDOIU, PhD
Project officer ForestValue*

A long and winding road to ForestValue

Martin Greimel (BMNT) and Mika Kallio (MMM)

The European Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development (FP1 to H2020) had a very positive effect on the coordination of research efforts in many sectors. Unfortunately, the forest related research sector for a long time did not benefit from this effect and stayed dispersed.

Only under FP6 this started to change with the establishment of a new funding instrument called ERA-NET. Under the Scandinavian guidance the first ERA-NET in the forest sector - WoodWisdom-Net - was set up in 2004. Additionally, the development of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP) in 2005 was helping to coordinate research in the sector.

In 2006 a meeting under the auspices of the European Commission General Directorate Research and Development (DG RTD) brought together the main stakeholders of forest research funding on the European level. A long time schedule for ERA-NET Initiatives in our sector was discussed and informally agreed upon. The plan was to:

- have a prolongation of the WoodWisdom-Net Initiative (that resulted into the ERA-NET Actions WoodWisdom-Net 2 and WoodWisdom-Net+)
- set up an ERA-NET for the Mediterranean (north and south part incl. geographical areas with similar forest conditions) to coordinate and increase the research in this specific climatically area (which gave rise to the ERA-NET Foresterra)
- initiate an ERA-NET that coordinates the forest related research all over Europe and reaches out to international forest research initiatives (which led to the ERA-NET Sumforest)
- combine all the above-mentioned activities to address the whole forest value chain: **ForestValue**.

Finally, in 2012 and 2014 there were launched two new ERA-NETs focussing on forest research:

- in 2012 ERA-NET FORESTERRA (until Dec 2015; to reinforce the scientific coordination and integration of Mediterranean forest research programmes as well as scientific cooperation with Mediterranean-area countries (including EU and non-EU member states) and with countries from other Mediterranean Climate Areas (MCA) in this case, Australia, South Africa, Chile and California), and
- in 2014 ERA-NET Sumforest (until Dec 2017; to reinforce scientific cooperation on European forests, which will also build new cooperation arrangements with EU neighbourhood regions, aiming at a reduced fragmentation and maximised impact of research activities on sustainable forest management and multifunctional forestry).



Figure 2: Logos of the ERA-NETs FORESTERRA, Sumforest and WoodWisdom-Net

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As Sumforest was the last ERA-NET under FP7 that had a budget for coordination activities, special tasks (T5.3 “Preparing long lasting cooperation” and T6.2 “Link to Foresterra”) were set up to guarantee cooperation after the end of the three initiatives (WoodWisdom-Net, Foresterra and Sumforest). In a meeting in November 2014 the coordinators and some partners from WoodWisdom-Net+, Foresterra, Sumforest and the Bio-based Industries (BBI) met in Vienna and drew up a draft work plan for a joint future coordination. Together with the work done within the two Sumforest tasks and additional activities performed during the final Foresterra conference and several WoodWisdom-Net seminars led to the idea of ForestValue.

It still took a lot of effort to convince the Member States and the Commission to support the idea of ForestValue. Finally, the Commission with the support of the Programme Committee of the Societal Challenge 2 of H2020 could be convinced to open up a call for an ERA-NET Cofund under the Work Programme 2016 (SFS-19-2016-2017) in early autumn 2016.

As preparatory work for the ERA-NET Cofund proposal started already late 2014 (see above), the proposal was developed in a short time and was submitted to the European Commission in February 2017. Finally, ForestValue had its official start on the 1st of October 2017.

In total, these three ERA-NETs behind ForestValue have had national investments of around 67 MEUR to a variety of trans-national co-funded RDI projects (64 funded projects), the total volume of these projects being around 86 MEUR. Now, after the joint effort under the ForestValue ERA-NET Cofund, the total volume of national investments is expected to grow with another 25 MEUR, which means that since the first ERA-NET in 2004 the total national investments into forest research through these networks of national funders will be up to more than 100 MEUR.

ForestValue Facts

Project duration: 60 months October 2017 - September 2022

Partner countries: Finland, Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Argentina, Egypt

Coordinator: Mika Kallio, MMM - Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

EU funding: ca. 5 M€

Website: <https://forestvalue.org/>



What is ForestValue?

ForestValue is an Horizon 2020 ERA-NET Cofund. The overall objective is the promotion of increased innovation and competitiveness of the forest-based sector in Europe and the support of a transformation from a resource-intensive to a knowledge-intensive, productive, resource-efficient and resilient sector.

The consortium consists of 30 partners representing different programmes in the bioeconomy funding sector, coming from different regions and countries inside and outside Europe.



First statistics of ForestValue Call

Boris Vashev, Carina Lemke, Franziska Nych

The ForestValue Call was closed on 23rd January 2018 and in total 114 pre-proposals were submitted. After a brief formal eligibility check of the call office 102 proposals were identified as valid. The following statistics refer to a total of 102 valid pre-proposals.

The great majority, about 70% of the pre-proposals, were assigned by the applicants to the thematic research area B: Innovative industrial production and processing technologies, products, concepts and services.

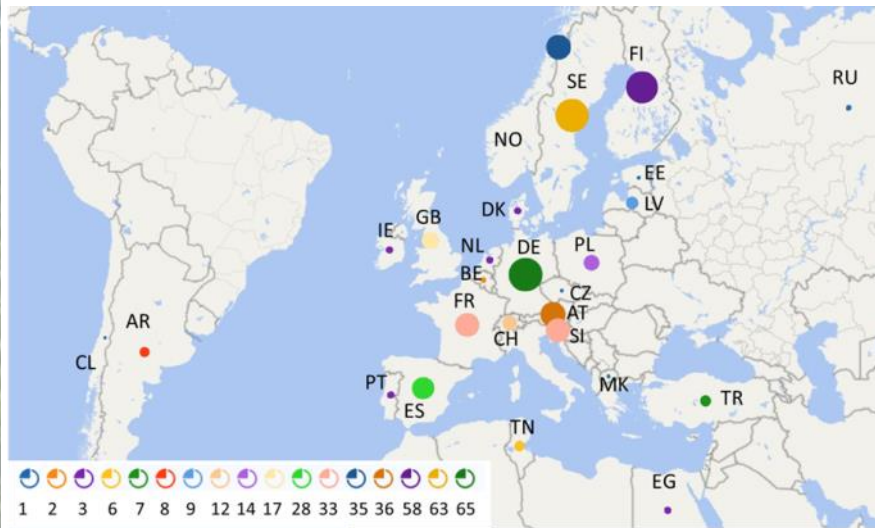


Figure 3: Number of participations in pre-proposals per country

The majority of consortia consist of 3-12 partners, however there exist also bigger consortia having up to 23 partners. On average, 8 partners are involved in a project. The most coordinators are coming from Finland, followed by Sweden, Germany and Austria.

Germany, with 65 cooperations, has the highest number of participation in pre-proposals closely followed by Sweden and Finland. Also partners from countries like Austria, Norway, France, Slovenia and Spain are involved in a significant number of pre-proposals. 17 partners from 8 countries (Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Macedonia, The Netherlands, Portugal and Russia) beyond the ForestValue consortium are involved in 15 pre-proposals.

Ca. 38 % of the applicants are representing universities and 28 % are coming from research organisations. The industry - SME and large companies together account to 30 % of all consortium partners. The majority (70 %) of the submitted proposals includes at least one industrial partner. 54 pre-proposals include 1-4 industrial partners, but overall 17 pre-proposals include even 5-11 partners.

Next steps in the Joint Call

Now, the proposals will be scientifically evaluated by independent experts. In the end of May 2018, consortia will be informed if they are invited to submit a full proposal. After the evaluation of full proposals, projects are expected to start in the end of 2018 or beginning of 2019.

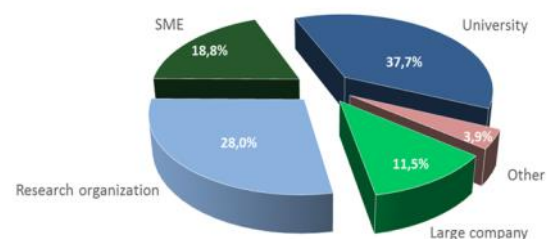


Figure 4: Type of the participating research institutions

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Project Partner 1 /coordinator - MMM



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry secures domestic food production and sustainable use of renewable natural resources and creates the preconditions for economic activities and well-being derived from these. Therefore, the Ministry is actively involved in building the bioeconomy sector.

Contact: **Matti Mäkelä**, matti.makela@mmm.fi, Tel: +35 829 516 2307; **Mika Kallio**, mika.kallio@forestvalue.org, Tel: +35 829 516 2212

Project Partner 2 - AKA



The Academy of Finland's mission is to fund high-quality scientific research, provide expertise in science and science policy, and strengthen the position of science and research. We are an agency within the administrative branch of the Finnish Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. We work to contribute to the renewal, diversification and increasing internationalisation of Finnish research. Our activities cover the full spectrum of scientific disciplines.

Contact: **Tuula Aarnio**, tuula.aarnio@aka.fi, Tel: +35 829 533 5146; **Risto Vilkkö**, risto.vilkkö@aka.fi, Tel: +35 829 533 5136

Project Partner 3 - Business Finland



The goal of the Business Finland innovation funding agency is to enable companies to grow internationally and to create world-class business ecosystems and a competitive business environment in Finland. Business Finland creates new growth by supporting companies to go global, as well as funding innovations. Business Finland's expert network speeds up the identification of business opportunities around the world and helps to transform them into global success stories.

Contact: **Ilmari Absetz**, ilmari.absetz@businessfinland.fi, Tel: +35 829 505 5837; **Tuula Savola**, tuula.savola@businessfinland.fi

Project Partner 4 - YM



Ympäristöministeriö
Miljöministeriet
Ministry of the Environment

The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for preparing matters to be submitted for consideration by the Government and Parliament, such as matters concerning communities, the built environment, housing, biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources and environmental protection.

Contact: **Petri Heino**, petri.heino@ym.fi, Tel: +35 829 525 0203

Project Partner 5 - BMNT

The BMNT has long-term experiences with ministry-related research offices, as well as contract research and development projects in the broad range of agriculture, food, forestry, water management, and environmental topics. It has set up policy priorities for the forest based sector and has participated in FP 7 ERA-NET Plus, WWN+ and coordinated the FP 7 ERA-NET Sumforest.

Contact: **Martin Greimel**, martin.greimel@bmnt.gv.at, Tel: +43 171 100 607217

Project Partner 6 - MoA



The Ministry of Agriculture manages research and development for the entire agricultural sector. It identifies priorities for national and international programmes of research, development and innovation in the sectors in its competence. It also coordinates collaboration in the areas of research, development and innovation and the involvement of scientific research teams both in national and European research projects.

Contact: **Martin Smrž**, martin.smrz@mze.cz, Tel: +42 022 181 2127 ; **Tomáš Krejzar**, tomas.krejzar@mze.cz

Project Partner 7 - FGMRI



Forestry and
Game Management
Research Institute

Forestry and Game Management Research Institute (FGMRI) is a public research institution established by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. The prevailing part of FGMRI activities lies in a research focused on forest management as well as expertise and consulting services for state administration and forest owners. FGMRI participates in coordination of the national applied forestry research activities.

Contact: **Vít Šrámek**, sramek@vulhm.cz, Tel: +42 025 789 2232

Project Partner 8 - ADEME



The French environment and energy management agency (ADEME) is active in the implementation of public policy in the areas of the environment, energy and sustainable development. The Agency provides expertise and advisory services to businesses, local authorities and communities, government bodies and the public at large, to enable them to establish and consolidate their environmental action.

Contact: **Miriam Buitrago**, miriam.buitrago@ademe.fr, Tel: +33 241 207 418;
Maeva Tholance, maeva.tholance@ademe.fr, Tel: +33 493 568 49



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Project Partner 9 - ANR



ANR provides funding for project-based research in all fields of science - for both basic and applied research - to public research organisations and universities, as well as to private companies (including SMEs). Employing a method based on competitive peer reviews compliant with international standards, ANR provides the scientific community with instruments and programmes promoting creativity and openness, and stimulate new ideas and partnerships, particularly between academia and industry.

Contact: **Dr Isabelle Hippolyte**, Isabelle.hippolyte@agencerecherche.fr, Tel: +33 178 098 074

Project Partner 10 - BMEL



The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture covers a wide variety of activities. Besides political activities arising out of these fields, BMEL focuses on the research sector which is closely linked to the future centric topics i.e. climate protection, renewable resources and feeding the global population. One of the main goals is to protect the natural environment through sustainable agricultural production and forestry.

Contact: **Dr. Tilman Schachtsiek**, tilman.schachtsiek@bmel.bund.de, Tel: +49 301 852 90

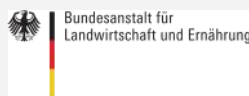
Project Partner 11- FNR



The Agency for Renewable Resources is the central coordinating agency for the promotion of biomass and bioenergy in Germany. Being a federal agency associated to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, FNR's main tasks are the implementation of the R&D programme "Renewable Resources" and the "Energy and Climate Fund". It is also in charge of data collection and holds a biomass information service for interested parties.

Contact: **Carina Lemke**, C.Lemke@fnr.de, Tel: +49 384 369 30169

Project Partner 12 - BLE



The Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) is the central service provider within the scope of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). We focus on tasks related to the implementation of measures aiming to strengthen sustainable agricultural, food, forestry and fishery industries along with rural development, and on the central provision of administrative and information services for the scope of the BMEL and other departments.

Contact: **Vera Steinberg**, Vera.Steinberg@ble.de, Tel: +49 228 684 53653

Project Partner 13 - DAFM



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

The Forest research programme CoFoRD is part of The Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine (DAFM) research division, which operates three 'public good' competitive research funding programmes for agriculture, food and forest to support innovation and economic success across the bioeconomy.

Contact: **Tony Quinn**, Tony.Quinn@agriculture.gov.ie, Tel: +35 316 702 684;
Niamh Hennessy, NiamhM.Hennessy@agriculture.gov.ie, Tel: +35 316 702 344

Project Partner 14 - LAAFS



Latvian Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences (LAAFS) is a non-profit scientific organisation, where scientists, basing on voluntary principles, are unified, representing the following branches – agriculture, rural economy, veterinary science, food science, engineering sciences, food and wood processing. In total the LAAFS unites 116 full members, all of them holding PhD degree.

Contact: **Baiba Rivža**, President of LAAFS, Baiba.Rivza@llu.lv, Tel: +37 129 254 469

Project Partner 15 - VIAA



The aim of the activities of State Education Development Agency (VIAA) is to implement the national policy in the field of development of higher education and science, lifelong learning system, vocational education system and general education system and to implement and monitor projects financed by European Union (EU) Structural Funds, education innovation projects, EU research and innovation programmes and other financial instrument programmes, projects and initiatives.

Contact: **Dr. Maija Bundule**, Maija.bundule@viaa.gov.lv, Tel: +37 167 785 423



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Project Partner 16 - NCN



NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE

The primary task of the National Science Centre (NCN) is to support scientific excellence by means of a variety of funding programmes open to researchers at every stage of their research career. With a budget of over € 200 M a year NCN funds initiatives in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering in a form of research projects, scholarships for PhD students and post-doc internships.

Contact: **Magdalena Łopuszańska-Rusek**, magdalena.lopuszanska-rusek@ncn.gov.pl, Tel: +48 123 419 164

Project Partner 17 - MIZS



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND SPORT

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport - MIZS) is responsible for regulating all levels of education (from pre-school to higher education), as well as fields of science and sport. The Science Division as part of the Science Directorate defines the expert bases for the adoption of political documents in the field of research policy. MIZS hosts the National Contact Points (NCP) network for H2020. The ministry representatives sit in the EC Programming Committees.

Contact: **Katja Ceglar**, katja.ceglar@gov.si, Tel: +38 614 784 705

Project Partner 18 - MINECO



The Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (MINECO), through the State Research Agency (AEI), is the department of the General State Administration responsible for elaborating and implementing government policies on scientific research, technological development and innovation in all sectors, as well as for coordinating state-owned research institutions.

Contact: **Juan Climent**, era-agro@aei.gob.es, juan.climent@aei.gob.es, Tel: + 34 916 037 242;
Justyna Chojnacka, era-agro@aei.gob.es justyna.chojnacka@aei.gob.es, Tel: + 34 916 038 728

Project Partner 19 - CDTI



The Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology E.P.E. (CDTI) is a Public Business Entity, answering to the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness, which fosters the technological development and innovation of Spanish companies. It is the entity that channels the funding and support applications for national and international R&D&I projects of Spanish companies.

Contact: **María José Montilla**, mariajose.montilla@cdti.es, Tel: +34 915 815 500

Project Partner 20 - Formas



Formas is a Swedish governmental research council for sustainable development. The council supports basic and applied research, as well as innovation, within the areas of the environment, agricultural sciences and spatial planning.

Contact: **Karin Perhans**, karin.perhans@formas.se, Tel: +46 877 540 36

Project Partner 21 - SWEA



For a more efficient energy use, the Agency supports the development and dissemination of knowledge targeted at households, industry, and the public sector. The Agency finances research for new and renewable energy technologies, smart grids, and vehicles and transport fuels of the future, and also supports commercialization and growth of energy related cleantech.

Contact: **Åsa Forsum**, asa.forsum@energimyndigheten.se, Tel: +46 165 442 255
Susanna Widstrand, Susanna.widstrand@energimyndigheten.se, Tel: +46 165 442 465

Project Partner 22 - Vinnova



Vinnova is Sweden's government agency for innovation. Our mission is to contribute to sustainable growth by improving the conditions for innovation. We do this mainly by funding innovation projects and the research needed to develop new solutions.

Contact: **Anders Holmgren**, anders.holmgren@vinnova.se, Tel: +46 847 332 13



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Get to know the ForestValue partners!

Project Partner 23 - FC



The Forestry Commission operates in England and Scotland as forestry regulator and manager of the national forest estate. We sponsor forestry research and development for the national forest estate and the private sector. We have been a member of WoodWisdom since its inception, and continue this with ForestValue. Our funding for ForestValue is provided through FC cross border, FC Scotland, and Scottish Enterprise.

Contact: **Andy Leitch**, andy.leitch@forestry.gsi.gov.uk, Tel: +44 300 067 6159

Project Partner 24 - RCN



The Research Council of Norway support the ForestValue initiative through the programme BIONÆR (Sustainable Innovation in Food and Bio-based Industries). The BIONÆR programme will promote research and innovation that enhances value creation in Norway's bio-based industries. The total annual funding for research and development activities from BIONÆR programme to the forest-based sector is approximately 5 million Euros.

Contact: **Petter Nilsen**, pn@rcn.no, Tel: +47 980 948 60

Project Partner 25 - Innosuisse



Innosuisse does help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Switzerland to further enhance their innovative strength to pursue their business development in all kind of scientific fields. The aim is to encourage SMEs to take calculated risks and approach challenges in new areas as well as to offer them new proposals by promoting innovation projects and forming partnerships with the academic community.

Contact: **Alain Dietrich**, alain.dietrich@innosuisse.ch, Tel: +41 584 649 287

Project Partner 26 - FOEN



Federal Office for the Environment FOEN
Action Plan Wood

The mission of the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) is to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources including soil, water, air, quietness and forests. It is responsible for the protection against natural hazards, safeguarding the environment and human health against excessive impacts, and conserving biodiversity and landscape quality. It is also responsible for international environmental policy.

Contact: **Achim Schafer**, achim.schafer@bafu.admin.ch, Tel: +41 584 691 796

Project Partner 27 - IRESA

Institution of Agricultural Research and Higher Education (IRESA), Tunisia

Contact: **Ali Rhouma**, ali.rhouma@iresa.agrinet.tn; **Ahlem Laaroussi**, ahlem.laaroussi@iresa.agrinet.tn, Tel: +21 671 784 672

Project Partner 28 - TUBITAK



Founded in 1963, TUBITAK is the leading agency in charge of management, funding and coordinating scientific and technological research in Turkey. TUBITAK functions under the fold of the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology with adequate administrative and financial autonomy. TUBITAK is also the national coordinating body for the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020 in Turkey.

Contact: **Alperen ERDOĞAN**, alperen.erdogan@tubitak.gov.tr, Tel: +90 312 298 1270

Project Partner 29 - MINCyT



The Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCyT) established policies and coordinates actions aiming to strengthen the country's capacity to respond to priority sectorial and social problems in order to improve society's quality of life. The Liaison Office Argentina – EU manages all the related work with the European Union.

Contact: **Alejandra Davidziuk**, madavidziuk@mincyt.gob.ar; **Paula Brennan**, pbrennan@mincyt.gob.ar, Tel: +54 011 489 95000 ext. 4162; **Diego Galeano**, dgaleano@mincyt.gob.ar, Tel: +54 011 489 95000 ext. 4126

Project Partner 30 - ASRT



ASRT is a national authority that provides a public service by ensuring independent, unbiased assessments of the sciences and an executive arm of the Egyptian Ministry of Scientific Research with respect to the design and implementation of national programs, designing national STI strategies and roadmaps. ASRT has within its structure the national patent office, the national innovation and invention development agency, and the national science policy research unit.

Contact: **Dr. Amr Radwan**, Head of Research and Innovation Management Dept., Radwan.Amro@gmail.com, Tel: +20 227 920 126



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<https://forestvalue.org/>

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We hope you enjoyed reading!



See you soon!

The team of ForestValue



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