Consultancy and advisory models to support adoption and scale

Tom Staton
University of Reading (UK)

The challenge of delivering effective agroforestry advice

- Requires knowledge of agronomy, animal husbandry, horticulture, forestry, and their interactions

- Need to build capacity for innovation and support for long-term complexity

- Lack of knowledge and technical expertise is a key barrier to agroforestry expansion[1,2]

- Learning from peers and demonstration examples is a driver of uptake[3]

1. https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.70110
2. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10457-024-01047-x
3. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10457-017-0139-9

Our question...

Are advisory services and knowledge-sharing systems ‘fit for purpose’ to support the upscaling of agroforestry in northern Europe?

Methods

- Surveys and interviews in four countries
- 16 participants:
  - 6 in UK
  - 4 in Denmark
  - 3 in Belgium
  - 3 in Poland
- Participants were experts in advice and knowledge sharing

Role	UK1	UK2	UK3	UK4	UK5	UK6	DK1	DK2	DK3	DK4	BE1	BE2	BE3	PL1	PL2	PL3
Farmer		x					x	x								
Charity/non-profit		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x					
Private adviser	x		x										x	x	x	x
Research institute												x				

Results: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	**STRENGTHS** Enthusiastic, growing peer-to-peer learning Strong scientific evidence (although context-specificity needed)	**WEAKNESSES** Lack of tailored advice Shortage of experienced advisers Lack of economic and market advice Advice declines across agroforestry journey
EXTERNAL	**OPPORTUNITIES** Increasing interest and farmer desire to learn Digital tool developments	**THREATS** Gov't support is insufficient or uncertain Legal complications around tree planting External market uncertainties Limited farmer capacity to pay for advice

Results: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	**STRENGTHS** Enthusiastic, growing peer-to-peer learning Strong scientific evidence (although context-specificity needed)	**WEAKNESSES** Lack of tailored advice Shortage of experienced advisers Lack of economic and market advice Advice declines across agroforestry journey
EXTERNAL	**OPPORTUNITIES** Increasing interest and farmer desire to learn Digital tool developments	**THREATS** Gov't support is insufficient or uncertain Legal complications around tree planting External market uncertainties Limited farmer capacity to pay for advice

Results: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	**STRENGTHS** Enthusiastic, growing peer-to-peer learning Strong scientific evidence (although context-specificity needed)	**WEAKNESSES** Lack of tailored advice Shortage of experienced advisers Lack of economic and market advice Advice declines across agroforestry journey
EXTERNAL	**OPPORTUNITIES** Increasing interest and farmer desire to learn Digital tool developments	**THREATS** Gov't support is insufficient or uncertain Legal complications around tree planting External market uncertainties Limited farmer capacity to pay for advice

Results: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	**STRENGTHS** Enthusiastic, growing peer-to-peer learning Strong scientific evidence (although context-specificity needed)	**WEAKNESSES** Lack of tailored advice Shortage of experienced advisers Lack of economic and market advice Advice declines across agroforestry journey
EXTERNAL	**OPPORTUNITIES** Increasing interest and farmer desire to learn Digital tool developments	**THREATS** Gov't support is insufficient or uncertain Legal complications around tree planting External market uncertainties Limited farmer capacity to pay for advice

Recommendations: Industry and Advisory Organisations

1

Fund advisory support alongside tree planting schemes

2

Sponsor knowledge exchange events and shows

3

Establish agroforestry adviser training and certification courses

4

Establish independent accreditation for experienced agroforestry advisers

myclimate
shape our future

Recommendations: Industry and Advisory Organisations

1

Fund advisory support alongside tree planting schemes

2

Sponsor knowledge exchange events and shows

3

Establish agroforestry adviser training and certification courses

4

Establish independent accreditation for experienced agroforestry advisers

Recommendations: Industry and Advisory Organisations

1. Fund advisory support alongside tree planting schemes
2. Sponsor knowledge exchange events and shows
3. Establish agroforestry adviser training and certification courses
4. Establish independent accreditation for experienced agroforestry advisers

E-ACADEMY AGROFORESTRY

AGROFORESTRY VLAANDEREN

DeFAF Deutscher Fachverband für Agroforstwirtschaft

Recommendations: Industry and Advisory Organisations

1. Fund advisory support alongside tree planting schemes
2. Sponsor knowledge exchange events and shows
3. Establish agroforestry adviser training and certification courses
4. Establish independent accreditation for experienced agroforestry advisers

Recommendations: Policymakers

1

Fund advisory services alongside capital / maintenance payments for agroforestry

E.g. Regionalised schemes in Belgium and Germany, funded advisory visits in Scotland

2

Provide stable and coherent agroforestry policy frameworks, reducing uncertainty and risk

3

Invest in demonstration farms, farmer networks and knowledge-exchange platforms

Recommendations: Policymakers

1

Fund advisory services alongside capital / maintenance payments for agroforestry

E.g. Regionalised schemes in Belgium and Germany, funded advisory visits in Scotland

2

Provide stable and coherent agroforestry policy frameworks, reducing uncertainty and risk

3

Invest in demonstration farms, farmer networks and knowledge-exchange platforms

Recommendations: Policymakers

1

Fund advisory services alongside capital / maintenance payments for agroforestry

E.g. Regionalised schemes in Belgium and Germany, funded advisory visits in Scotland

2

Provide stable and coherent agroforestry policy frameworks, reducing uncertainty and risk

3

Invest in demonstration farms, farmer networks and knowledge-exchange platforms

ROBUST
SKOVLANDBRUG

AGROFORESTRY VLAANDEREN

Recommendations: Research

1

Expand collaborations with farmers to promote peer learning e.g. living labs

2

Co-produce research agendas with farmers and advisers

3

Strengthen knowledge exchange with advisory services

REFOREST

AFINET
AGROFORESTRY INNOVATION NETWORKS

ROBUST
SKOVLANDBRUG

THE TREES-IN-FIELDS NETWORK

Recommendations: Research

1

Expand collaborations with farmers to promote peer learning e.g. living labs

2

Co-produce research agendas with farmers and advisers

3

Strengthen knowledge exchange with advisory services

Hood et al. In press

Recommendations: Research

1

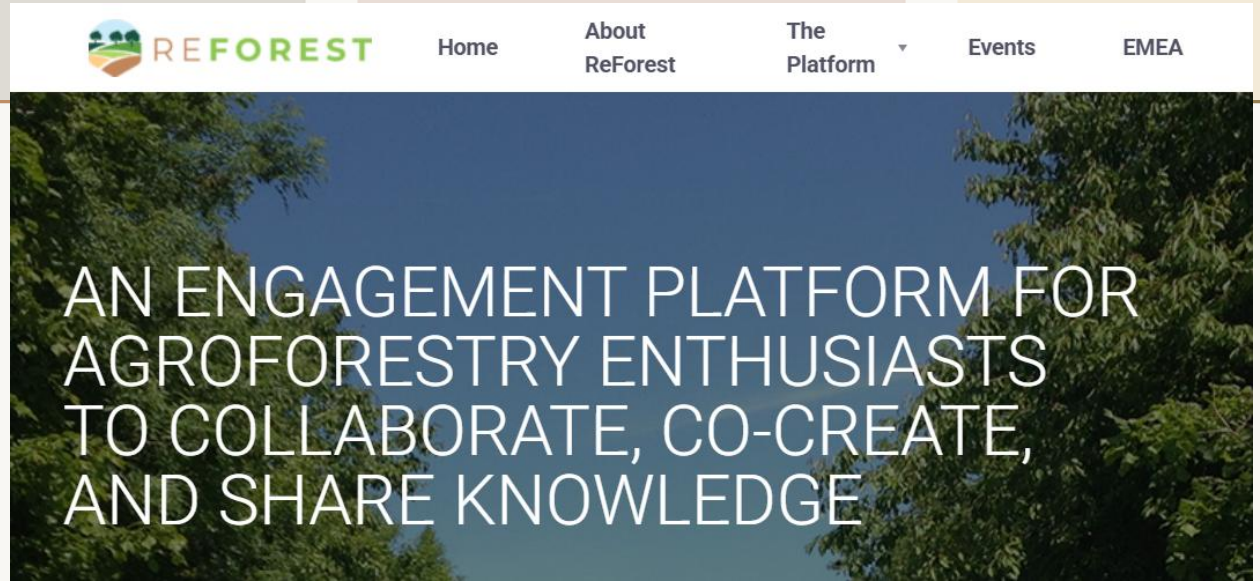
Expand collaborations with farmers to promote peer learning e.g. living labs

2

Co-produce research agendas with farmers and advisers

3

Strengthen knowledge exchange with advisory services



Thank you for listening

Any questions?

Thanks to:

- Willem Van Colen and Dieter Depraetere (Inagro)
- Paweł Radzikowski and Robert Borek (State Research Institute Poland and Polish Agroforestry Association)
- Albert Miquel Colom Bauza, Vaibhav Pradip Chaudhary and Bhim Bahadur Ghaley (University of Copenhagen)
- Laurence Smith (University of Reading)
- All of the experts who participated in the interviews

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101060635 (REFOREST). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Tom Staton
Tom.staton@reading.ac.uk