

Full details

All details held on the selected case study are shown below.

Went live on	Title	Reference
26 Aug 2011	QUEST forestry research influences international climate negotiations	SID0360

Synopsis

Research into the carbon sources and sinks in forests in developed countries has helped UK negotiating teams in international climate talks, including the Cancun negotiations of 2010.

Description

QUATERMASS was a major strand of NERC's Quantifying and Understanding the Earth System (QUEST) research programme. It aimed to quantify how much carbon landscapes absorb and/or release, potentially mitigating or exacerbating climate change.

From late 2008, Forest Research, the research arm of the UK Forestry Commission and a partner in QUATERMASS, was part of a commissioned research project investigating the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector for the UK's Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). (The energy and climate change consultancy AEA Ltd led the project.)

DECC wanted to know how land use affects greenhouse gas emissions and absorption in developed countries (the Annex I countries of the UNFCCC), and specifically to estimate how far those countries could use LULUCF to meet their obligations to cut carbon emissions under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. So Forest Research adapted the research they were already doing for QUATERMASS to answer this question.

When DECC got the initial results in early 2009, it asked Forest Research's Robert Mathews to present the findings at a UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) meeting, held in Bonn (June 2009).

DECC then wanted to refine the estimates of baseline greenhouse gas emissions from forestry and to get a better idea of how forestry might mitigate carbon emissions.

So in 2010, DECC contracted Forest Research to continue its research for a further year. Robert Mathews notes, 'We wouldn't have been able to supply this sustained delivery over several years without funding from QUATERMASS.'

'We are still feeding information on this directly to DECC, in particular Jim Penman [EU Chief Negotiator in the UNFCCC negotiations and head of Evidence at DECC],' says QUEST's Jo House. 'Jim has said the work provided through QUATERMASS has made a substantial contribution to the direction of progress at international climate change negotiations.'

Indeed, after the Cancun climate change conference of December 2010, Jim Penman emailed his thanks to Robert Mathews, saying Forest Research's timely information 'helped us resolve a tricky EU issue at a critical point and was material in securing an EU position for the agreement [on accounting for Forest Management].'

QUATERMASS has influenced policy in other ways too. Forest Research, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), based in Austria, Imperial College (London), and Ecomentrica (a greenhouse gas accounting firm) were all partners in QUATERMASS.

IIASA and Imperial College investigated how bioenergy use is modelled, refining models that are widely used by policy makers for purposes including EU negotiations. Both the EU Joint Research Centre and the Forestry Commission have also drawn on QUATERMASS research.

References and links

Hyperlinks

- [QUEST - Land use, bioenergy, forestry, mitigation](#)
- [QUEST Programme](#)
- [The Forestry Commission - Forestry Research](#)

Impacts

Actual impacts

Policy

Impact evidence

DECC contracted Forest Research to continue its research for a further year, recognising the ongoing need for the results. Results are still being fed directly to DECC, in particular Jim Penman (EU Chief Negotiator in the UNFCCC negotiations and head of Evidence at DECC). After the Cancun climate change conference of December 2010, Jim Penman emailed his thanks to Robert Mathews,

saying Forest Research's timely information 'helped us resolve a tricky EU issue at a critical point and was material in securing an EU position for the agreement [on accounting for Forest Management].'

Research and funding

Funding type	Research Programme	
Funding partners	<i>£ Unknown</i>	Department of Energy and Climate Change

Classification

Science themes	Climate system, Biodiversity, Sustainable use of natural resources, Earth systems science
Science areas	Terrestrial
Policy areas	Agriculture, food and fisheries, Climate/environmental change and impacts, Energy, EU requirements, Land use, Natural processes, Natural resources