

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION, ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MONITORING OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED TREES: A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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The EU-COST Action FP0905 aims at collecting the available scientific knowledge of genetically modified trees (GMTs) related to biosafety. Collected existing and new information from European countries will be evaluated to support future EU policy and regulation recommendations regarding the use of GM forest trees.

To fulfill these aims, the COST Action FP0905 is divided in four Working Groups (WGs). The Working Groups 1 and 2 (WGs 1 and 2) focus on (i) the biological characterization of GMTs aiming to evaluate existing knowledge including the experience from expert scientists in the field of forest GMTs (WG1) and (ii) the assessment of possible environmental impacts and monitoring of GMTs in the whole production chain from plantation to final products (WG2).

For this, WG1 has launched a database that gather the current knowledge on field trials and greenhouse experiments with transgenic trees. This information will be used to establish biosafety protocols to increase the safe use and management of GMTs in forest tree plantations and to protect forest ecosystems. To support this goal, WG2 is aiming to (i) evaluate the environmental impacts of the GMTs already developed, (ii) assess the efficiency of existing transgene containment strategies, and (iii) investigate effective pre- and post-market monitoring techniques.

Preliminary results derived from WG1 and WG2 activities will be reported.