



Finland and Japan Team Up to Enhance Global Wellbeing

Embassy of Finland in Tokyo Event Showcases Forest Bioeconomy and Climate-Intelligent Digital Solutions for Green Transition

By Naomi Moriyama

On November 12, 2024, the BIOSYS North Karelia International Growth Ecosystem held the “Finland-Japan Collaborative Symposium, Advancing Forest Bioeconomy and Climate-Intelligent Digital Solutions for Green Transition — Enhancing Wellbeing” with the BIOSYS Ecosystem partners and supporters at the Embassy of Finland in Tokyo.

It was a day of celebration and reaffirmation for Finland and Japan’s mutual commitment to increase engagement and collaboration among clusters of players to advance the forest bioeconomy and promote climate-intelligent digital solutions for the green transition in both countries. The objective is to enhance the wellbeing of people – and the earth.



The symposium brought together in one room Finnish and Japanese forestry/forest bioeconomy experts and decision makers from public, RDI, business and non-government sectors at both state and region levels.





This symposium was significant for strengthening the alliance of the actors in the two tiers — states (Finland and Japan) and regions (North Karelia, Nagano Prefecture, Ina City, and Hokkaido Prefecture) – with the objective of creating local solutions for global challenges.



Mr. Hidenori Okajima, Director General of Fisheries & Forestry Division, Hokkaido Government, and Mr. Erno Järvinen, Head of Forest and Bioeconomy Unit, Senior Ministerial Adviser in Forestry Natural Resources Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland



Mr. Hideki Momose, Nagano Prefecture, and Mr. Markus Hirvonen



Dr. Robert Prinz and Dr. Susanne Heiska, Senior Scientists, LUKE



From Left: Mr. Tetsuo Tanimoto, Director, International Forestry Cooperation Office, Forest Agency, Mr. Keita Nagasakiya, Director-General of the Private Forest Department, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Japan, Mr. Matti Karvanen, First Secretary, Trade & Economic Policy, Embassy of Finland Tokyo



From Left: Mr. Tanimoto, Ms. Akiko Tabata, Deputy Director, International Forestry Cooperation Office, Forest Agency, MAFF Japan, and Ms. Naomi Moriyama

The symposium brought together in one room Finnish and Japanese forestry/forest bioeconomy experts and decision makers from public (Ministries, regional governments' forestry departments), research-development-innovation (LUKE, University of Eastern Finland, The Council of Industry-Academia-Government Collaboration, Field for knowledge Integration and Innovation), business (Arbonaut, **Ritaplus**, **KESLA's** importer, **OJI Holdings Corporation**, **Guest House Co.,Ltd.**, **Marubeni**) and non-government (**Japan Woody Bioenergy Association**, **Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan**) sectors at both state and region levels. It was a well-balanced mix of professionals from different segments in the two nations with the core attendees being active participants of the BIOSYS Ecosystem.

Ambassador Tanja Jääskeläinen, the Embassy of Finland in Tokyo, opened the symposium with her warm welcome remarks.



Ambassador Tanja Jääskeläinen

Mr. Erno Järvinen, Head of Forest and Bioeconomy Unit, Senior Ministerial Adviser in Forestry Natural Resources Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland welcomed the audience. Mr. Järvinen stated that "The region of North Karelia has special expertise and research clusters of forest bioeconomy throughout the whole value chain, from forestry and forest management to digital solutions, technologies and forest-based industries and

wood construction.” He noted that “Finland has had a national bioeconomy strategy since 2014. The 2022 update of it has the vision of ‘Sustainably towards higher value-added’. It changed the focus from increasing the use of biomass to creating more value. In other words, creating more from less. Our vision is to double the value-added of the bioeconomy between 2019 and 2035.”



Mr. Erno Järvinen

Mr. Markus Hirvonen, Region Mayor of the Regional Council of North Karelia, presented an overview of the region with the forestry in focus.



Mr. Markus Hirvonen

Mr. Keita Nagasakiya, Director-General of the Private Forest Department, **the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Japan**, discussed Japan's goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 with smart cyclic use of forest resources through the Ministry's "Harvesting, Utilizing, and Replanting" forestry initiative, and expansion of wood use initiative.



Mr. Keita Nagasakiya



Ms. Naomi Moriyama, BIOSYS Communications Specialist, Regional Council of North Karelia



Mr. Mitsuo Takahashi, Previously Parliamentary Vice-Minister for MAFF and Member of the House of Councillors



Mr. Kaneshige Wakamatsu, Member of the House of Councillors



Mr. Hideki Momose, Assistant Director, General Forestry Department, Nagano Prefectural Government



Mr. Takashi Shirotori, Mayor of Ina City, Nagano Prefecture



Mr. Hidenori Okajima, Director General of Fisheries & Forestry Division, Hokkaido Government

Dr. Jutta Kauppi, BIOSYS Japan Ecosystem project lead and International Relations Manager, LUKE, Professor Erkki Verkasalo, LUKE, Professor Jouni Pykäläinen, University of Eastern Finland, and Professor Tuula Jyske, University of Helsinki and Senior Scientist, LUKE, gave thematic presentations of the BIOSYS North Karelia – Japan project.



Dr. Jutta Kauppi



Professor Erkki Verkasalo



Professor Jouni Pykäläinen



Professor Tuula Jyske

Finnish and Japanese businesses presented their activities in the forest bioeconomy.



Mr. Tuomo Puumalainen, Chief Operating Officer, Software Division, Arbonaut Oy



Mr. Yasuji Fujikawa, Representative Director, Ritaplus, KESLA Importer



Mr. Motosaburo Saito, General Manager, Oji Forest Value-Creation & Promotion Department,
Oji Management Office Inc. and OJI Holdings Corporation

Dr. Daishi Sakaguchi, Associate Professor, Nihon Fukushi University, gave a comprehensive presentation entitled, "*The forest bioeconomy, Focusing on Potential and Advantages of Wood and Wooden Architecture*," representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Japan.



Dr. Daishi Sakaguchi



Mr. Timo Leinonen, Regional Council of North Karelia

The BIOSYS Finland-Japan Collaborative Symposium's organizers, supporters and guests networked and exchanged ideas over authentic Finnish canapés and refreshments.



Mr. Erik Ullner, President, FCCJ, Mr. Atsushi Ueda, CEO & Architect, Guest House, and Mr. Antti Antti Kunnas, Executive Director, FCCJ



Ms. Kei Shigaki, Senior Advisor, Investment to Finland, Business Finland Tokyo, and Mr. Kaneshige Wakamatsu





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The BIOSYS North Karelia International Growth Ecosystem is run by **Natural Resources Institute Finland / Luonnonvarakeskus** as a project lead, the Regional Council of North Karelia **Pohjois-Karjalan maakuntaliitto**, **University of Eastern Finland** and **MKN Itä-Suomi | Rural Women's Advisory Centre (RWAC) of Eastern Finland**. The project is

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Next: The BIOSYS delegation visited Gangwon State in South Korea as part of a project and successfully completed the mission →



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