

# FOREST COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Land consolidation of jointly owned community forests in NRW, Germany

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 862681.

2<sup>ND</sup> SWE HUB IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP ◦ 3 NOVEMBER 2021 ◦ ONLINE

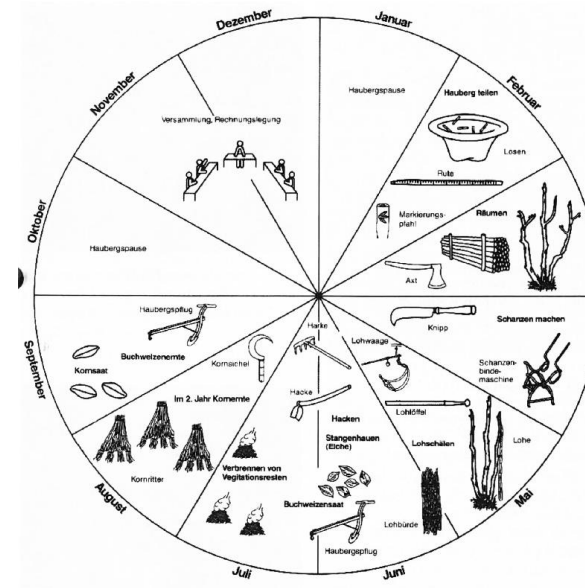


# Forest Cooperative Societies

## “Siegerländer Hauberg”

### Traditional community forests in Siegerland

- Multifunctional coppice forest system in 15-20 years rotation to secure firewood and other forest products.
- Forests are jointly owned and managed by village community: families own land shares.
- Land rights were granted to local “Waldgenossenschaften” (forest cooperative societies), to ensure sustainable, fair provision of forest products.



Photos: Stadtmuseum Hilchenbach, see [www.ahlering.de](http://www.ahlering.de)



# Forest Cooperative Societies

## NRW Community Forest Act 1975 (Gemeinschaftswaldgesetz)

### Legal basis for jointly-owned forest property

- Heterogeneous, traditional rights were transferred into a full legal act.
- Forest cooperative societies became a *public body by law* and can act on behalf of a majority vote.
- Landowners are shareholders, the FCS just administrates the land.

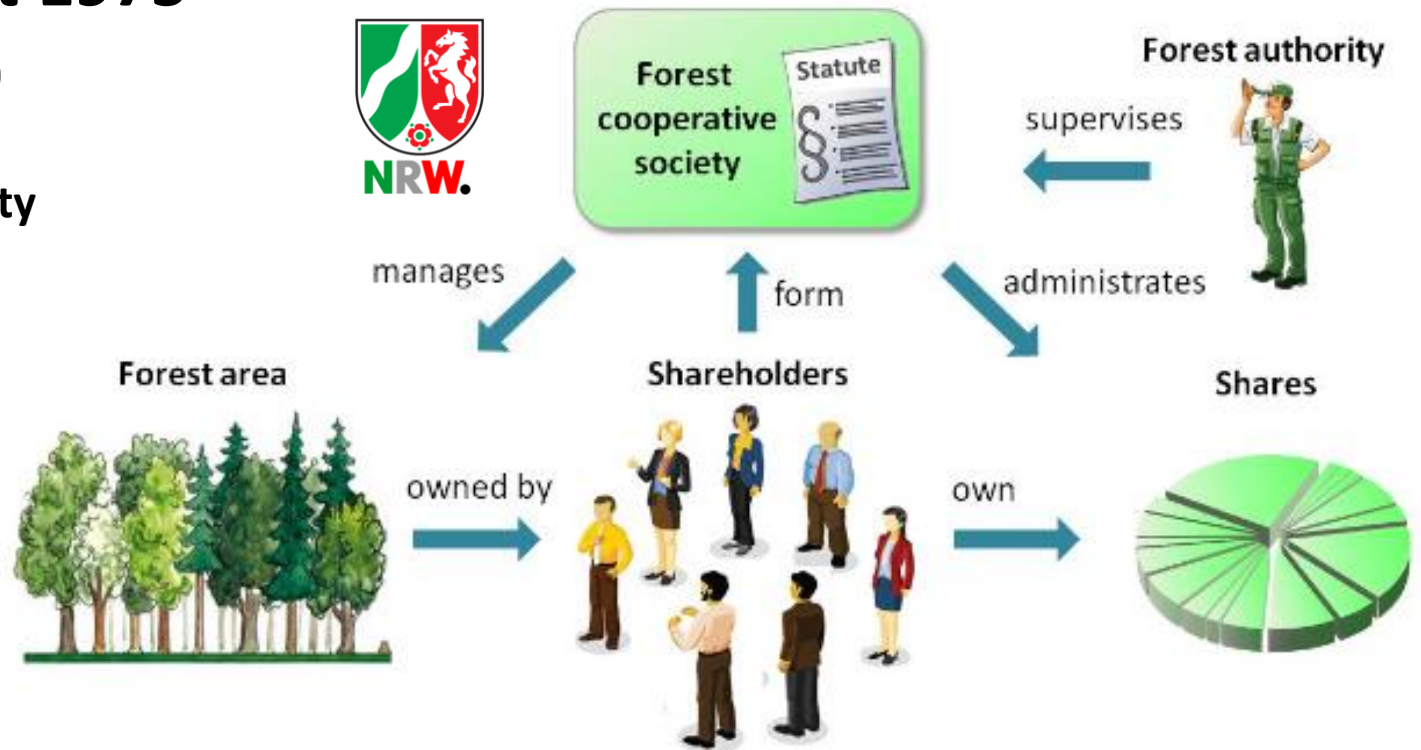


Figure 1 Legal status of a FCS according to the NRW GWG (adapted from Ewers 2015)



# Forest Cooperative Societies

## Forest land consolidation

### Readjustment of land property: example of GWG Müsen

- Merger of five small FCS into one large FCS with 500 shareholders
- Reaching viable management size: 542 ha of forest
- Dissolution of complicated boundaries
- Private owners joined the new FCS: activation of 13 ha unused forest

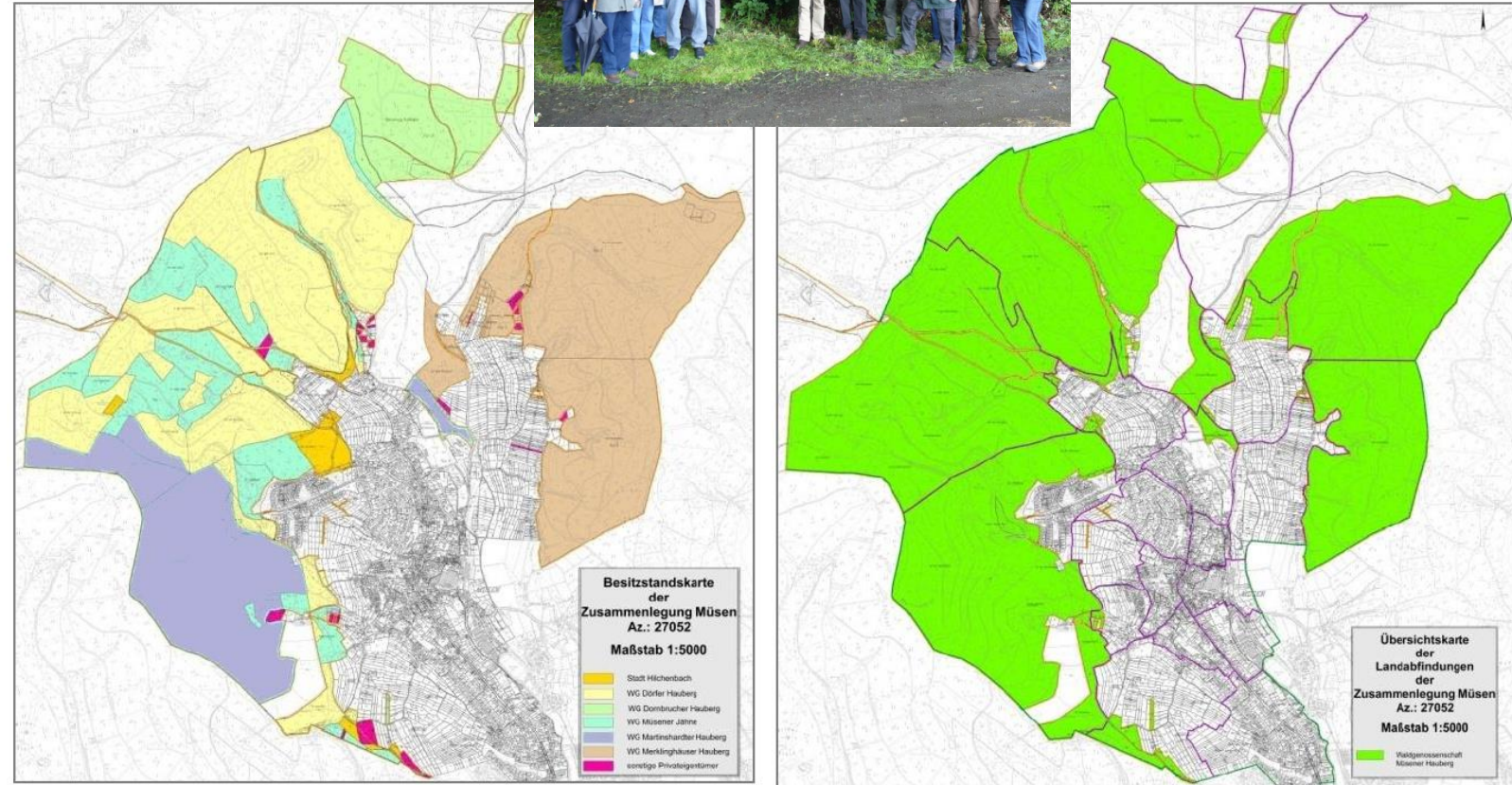


Figure 5 GWG Müsen: Situation a) before and b) after the forest land consolidation







# Forest Cooperative Societies

## Forest land consolidation

### Overcoming extreme fragmentation: example of FLC Biebertal

- Optimal realignment of land parcels (ca. 12 ha area)
- Municipality as one main driver
- Foundation of a forest management association (not a FCS)

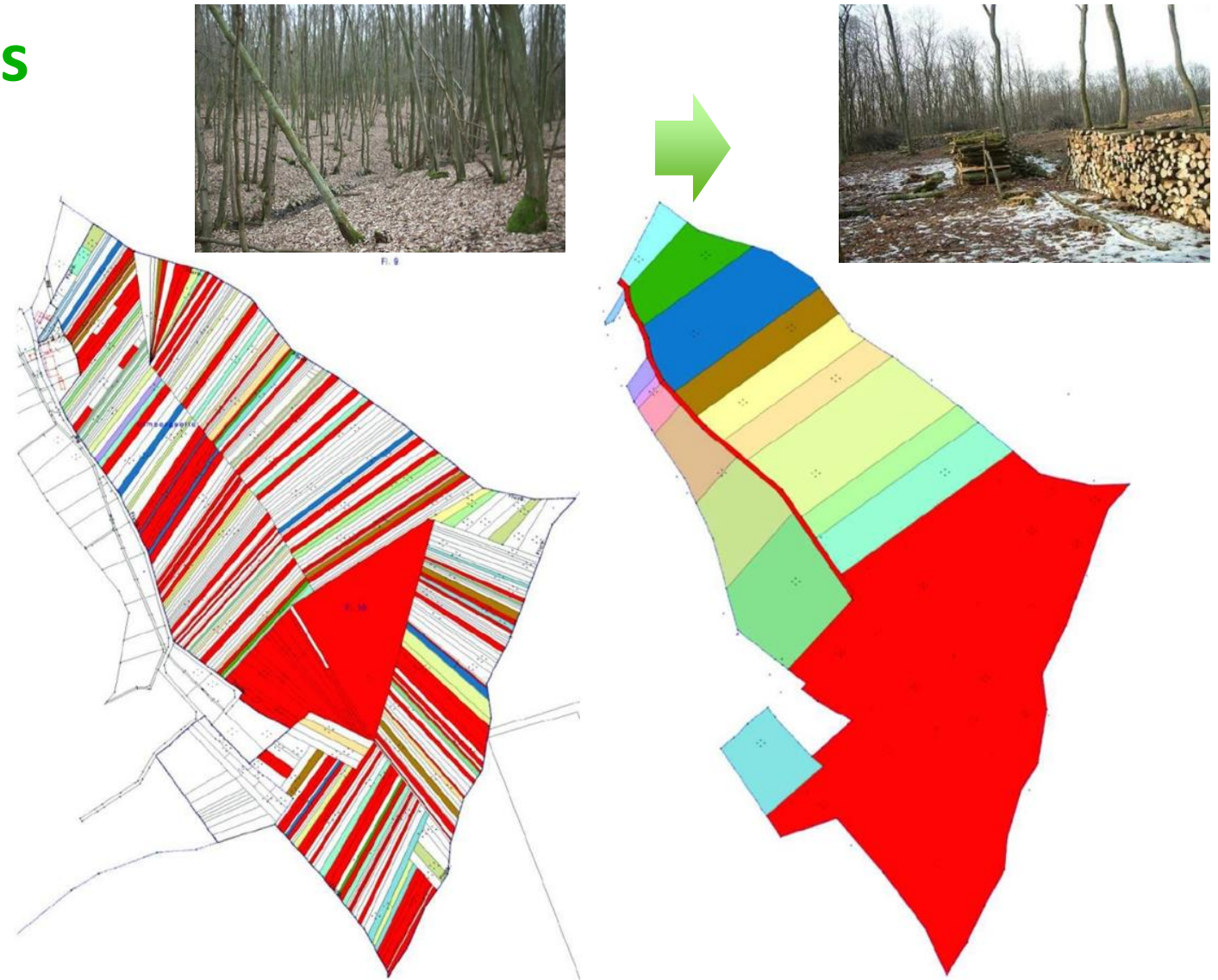
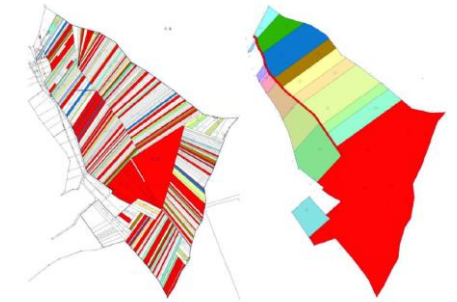


Figure 16 Forest ownership structure a) before and b) after the FLC Biebertal in Block 3

Colour codes: Municipality of Biebertal (red), various private owners (other colours)

# Forest Cooperative Societies

## Benefits and impacts \*



### **Consolidation of owners**

clear legal rights, reduced number of single owners, larger enterprise, viable size for group management



**+ Valorisation of ownership**

### **+ Consolidation of land parcels**

less parcels, less boundaries, optimized units, activation of unmanaged land



**+ Enhanced forest management**

### **+ Infrastructure and other measures**

roads/access, improve silviculture, landscape, water management, conservation, recreation



**+ Recreation and cultural heritage**

**+ Nature conservation and climate**

**+ Regional economic effects**

\* Evidence for impacts see cost-benefit studies by Hinz 2012, 2013



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Uwe Kies ◦ InnovaWood ◦ 03 Nov 2021





# Forest Cooperative Societies

*“Forestry is not about trees,  
it’s about people.”*

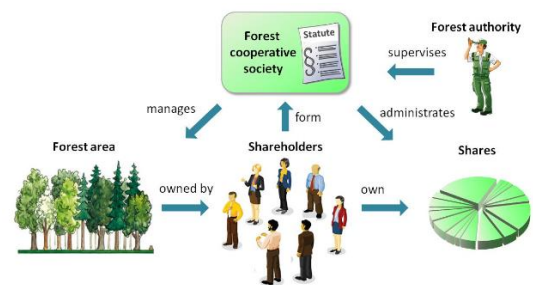


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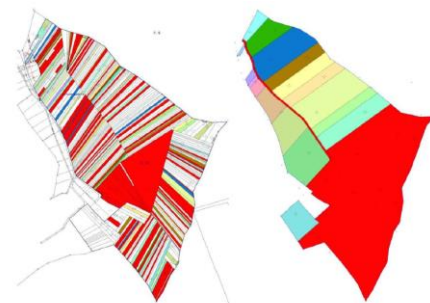


Abb. 16 Waldbesitzstruktur vor und nach der Waldflurbereinigung Biebertal im Teilgebiet 3  
Farbkodes: Gemeinde Biebertal (rot), private Waldeigentümer (andere Farben)



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Uwe Kies ◦ InnovaWood ◦ 03 Nov 2021







# THANKS ◦ MERCI ◦ DANKESCHÖN

Kies & Peter 2017. Forest land consolidation of community forests in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Link to report: <http://bit.ly/kies2017>



EU FP7 project no. 613762, 2013-2017  
<http://simwood.efi.int>

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# Forest Land Consolidation

## Ideas for future R&D

- Literature study: national approaches in community forests / consolidations
- Exchange between countries: meetings, excursions, interviews
- Demo “virtual” land consolidation: scenarios & modelling of impacts using GIS, testing & decision support for landowners
- Landowner cooperation: analysis of approaches & business models in Europe, both traditional & modern

