

Forestry and Wood Update

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# Forest Energy 2006

The spring harvesting demonstrations held across Ireland during the past month have been a huge success – attracting over 800 people, despite rain, snow and generally inclement weather conditions.

Timber felled during the harvesting demonstations has been left to dry in the forest over the summer. Chipping demonstrations will be held back at the same sites in the autumn. All of the stands are being measured prior to and after harvesting by students from Waterford Institute of Technology.

The objectives of the programme are to:

* Demonstrate a comprehensive range of biomass harvesting equipment and systems for early intervention in both broadleaved and conifer crops at representative sites in private sector forests,
* Show the importance of summer drying to reduce moisture content and facilitate needle loss in conifers and overall show how to produce dried wood chip for energy use,
* Stimulate the wood energy market in Ireland.

Wood energy offers huge scope for the development of local business supplying heat to hotels, schools, hospitals, down to individual home owners (now that grants for domestic boilers have also been introduced – see [www.sei.ie](http://www.sei.ie) for details). The final phase of the funding package, targeted at combined heat and power biomass installations will be launched in the coming months by SEI. For the grower, wood energy is win-win - enabling early thinning and adding value to the forest crop, and at the same time opening up extraction racks for future operations.

COFORD put this programme together with Pieter Kofman and Tom Kent (WIT), with tremendous help right across the forestry sector, from agencies, land owners and forestry companies. We also wish to acknowledge the very valuable input of the forestry staff of Teagasc to these days, and to Bord na Mona which is actively collaborating in these efforts.

Watch the COFORD website and the press for details about the chipping demonstrations to be held in the autumn.

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# CARBON CORNER

## Government approves National Allocation Plan under the EC Emissions Trading Scheme

Last week the government agreed the outline of the National Allocation Plan for the Kyoto phase of the EC Emissions Trading Scheme. It sets the overall amount of allocations to the trading sector at 23.014 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum, out of a total anticipated emission of 63.032 million tonnes. Emission reductions are set at just over 7 million tonnes per year, of which the 105 installations in the trading sector will be required to find 3 million, with the balance coming from government purchases.

A key assumption in the plan is that sequestration from afforestation since 1990 will contribute just over 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year over the five years of the first commitment period. This number is based on estimates prepared by the COFORD carbon sequestration team in late 2005, using the CARBWARE model (see description in previous Carbon Corners). Levels of afforestation since 1990 are used in the model to arrive at the sequestration estimates. While projected afforestation from now until the end of 2012 is also included, this will have little effect on sequestration as the model assumes very low rates of sequestration in early crops.

Overall a much clearer idea is now emerging of the Kyoto compliance and monetary value of carbon sequestration resulting from the national afforestation programme. The consultants who worked on the National Allocation Plan estimated that the cost of carbon dioxide purchases would be €15 per tonne. This puts an indicative value on the forestry contribution of over €30 million per annum. Some analysts feel the €15 per tonne figure is a base price and could rise to €20 or €25[[1]](#footnote-1). Sequestration estimates may also have to be increased when more up-to-date forest productivity data are available from the National Forest Inventory – currently coming to the end of the first field phase.

The consultants’ report, which is available in full and summary at the site posted at the end of the article, has two recommendations that directly relate to the forestry sector.

**Recommendation 5**. **Working Group on Availability and Costs of Carbon Neutral Fuels**

The Government should urgently act to deploy additional resources to investigate on an integrated basis the management of the complete forestry, biomass and waste management chains in order to ensure that Government waste policies are supportive of reductions in GHG emissions through increased use of biomass. Various stakeholders differ in their views as to whether there are sufficient streams of different forms of biomass, meat and bone meal, and other carbon neutral secondary fuels could be made available to the cement industry in sufficient quantities and at costs which would justify investments in changing to carbon neutral fuels. The parties which might be involved in such a working group should include Department of Agriculture, COFORD, the rendering industry (MBM and tallow producers), waste management sector, all plants manufacturing cement or cementitious products (e.g. Ecocem) and owners of solid fuel fired power stations.

The link in the recommendation between waste and biomass use clouds the issue to some extent – first and foremost it is not clear to Carbon Corner why the issue should not be formulated simply as an examination of the potential for wood fuel in power generation, but be that as it may COFORD will fully engage in any process in the area of wood fuel. We have already issued forecasts on the potential availability of woody biomass to 2015. Realising the potential will depend primarily on the price paying potential of woody biomass.

Recommendation ***7. Monitoring Carbon Sequestration and Forestry***

*Government should review its forestry grants and monitor this sector on an ongoing basis to ensure that the savings predicted by COFORD based on 14,000 hectares per annum are delivered in the 2008-2012 period and beyond. Failure to deliver this level of planting and the associated savings will inevitably result in a need for increased Government purchases of AAUs or CERs/ERUs.*

This is a key recommendation for the afforestation programme and is the first occasion where the forestry contribution during the Kyoto period and beyond has been spelt out in clear terms by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Increase in forest cover is a perfectly sound way of addressing climate change, as long as the forest cover is maintained. By restoring forest cover greenhouse gas emissions from centuries of deforestation on the island are being recaptured.

Further information on the Government’s decision and the consultants’ report are available at: <http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/wvNavView/Emissions+Trading?OpenDocument&Lang=#i3>

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# Forest Vegetation Management – A World Perspective

This conference will take place on Friday 12 May 2006 at the Waterford Institute of Technology. The event is hosted by COFORD in co-operation with Waterford Institute of Technology and COST Action E47: European Network for Forest Vegetation Management: Towards Environmental Sustainability, which is chaired by Dr Nick McCarthy of WIT. The Action brings together the leading scientists in vegetation management area in Europe.

Successful afforestation and forest regeneration requires young tree seedlings to be protected from vegetation that may compete for scarce resources such as water, nutrients and light. In recent years, forest managers have come to rely on herbicides as the cheapest and most effective means of controlling this competing non-crop vegetation.

In Europe there is an increasing political and public debate about pesticide use within forests, due to concerns about potential impacts on groundwater, biodiversity and human health. Government and European Union regulation, and voluntary forest certification schemes, aim to encourage a reduction and in some cases an eventual elimination of pesticide use within woodlands. However, for the most part, effective alternatives to herbicides do not currently exist. Without the knowledge or technology to implement effective alternatives, forest managers’ ability to protect and regenerate both natural and plantation forests will be severely threatened.

The main objective of COST Action E47 is to help forest managers reduce their dependence on herbicides in Europe’s forests by facilitating and coordinating the development of alternatives based on sound forest management principles. Any new methods that are identified must also recognise society’s need for the sustainable production of a wide variety of forest resources, and be sustainable, environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically viable. To date there are 15 countries (including Ireland, UK, France and Germany) involved in the action which started in April 2005.

This conference will provide an insight into what other countries have done to control vegetation in forests and disseminate knowledge and information to foresters, interested parties, and the public.

The objective of the COFORD-funded vegetation management research programme (FORVAMS) is to reduce dependence on herbicides in Irish forests by investigating and developing suitable alternatives, including the use of mulch mats in controlling vegetation. The conference will include a visit to a mulch mat trial on ash and Sitka spruce at a reforestation site in Aclamon, New Ross, Co Wexford.

Presentations will include:

* *Forestry herbicides used around the world and their environmental impacts* by Dr Jerry Michael, U.S. Forest Service, and Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Alabama
* *Mechanisms of tree seedlings competition by neighbouring herbaceous and woody vegetation in forests* by Dr Philippe Balandier, CEMAGREF, France
* *Towards reduced herbicide use in forest vegetation management* by Dr Keith Little, Institute for Commercial Forestry Research, South Africa
* *Biological control - a tool for the integrated management of invasive alien weeds* by Dr Marion Seier, CABI Bioscience, UK

There will also be a field trip to vegetation management plots in the afternoon.

The booking form can be downloaded from the COFORD website.

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# Small-scale Forestry and Rural Development - The intersection of ecosystems, economics and society

IUFRO 3.08 Small-scale Forestry International Conference to be hosted by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology Galway, 18 to 23 June 2006.

In the past decades, there has been a marked shift in the nature of small-scale forestry. This conference explores the evolving nature of small-scale forestry and the challenges and opportunities this evolution presents to sustainable rural development. Small-scale forests often represent considerable “viability” challenges to their owners and/or to the agencies responsible for developing policies and programmes to support and regulate them. Over the centuries, as society has changed, so too have the demands placed on forests and their subsequent management. In recent years, the emphasis in management objectives appears to have shifted from intensive, exclusive and singular (timber productivity) to a broader, more inclusive multipurpose approach. Concurrent with changes in the motivations for small-scale forest ownership/management, are the challenges of: ensuring continuity of supply from a disparate source; creating new markets for new forest products; and devising methods for internalising the welfare benefits of healthy and diverse forests for the owners of these forests.

The evolving nature of small-scale forestry presents a multitude of questions and challenges for the owners themselves, the practitioners working in the forests, the extension and rural development services that deal with forest owners and the public bodies who represent and regulate them.

We are seeking papers that explore the many issues associated with small-scale forestry and rural development and the implications these issues have for ecosystem health, economic viability and societal well-being.

The conference will be hosted by the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in collaboration with COFORD (National Council for Forest Research and Development) and Teagasc (Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority).

For further information, consult the website <http://ns2.gmit.ie/information/conferences/Forestry/> or email Sarah Wall ([sarah.wall@gmit.ie](mailto:sarah.wall@gmit.ie))

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# International Conference on Nanotechnology for the Forest Products Industry

The programme for the 2006 International Conference on Nanotechnology for the Forest Products Industry will include 24 sessions featuring panellists and speakers from a variety of agencies and organisations involved in nanotechnology R&D and deployment. The event takes place in Atlanta, USA, from 26 to 28 April 2006. See the InnovaWood portal for more information: <http://212.17.41.155/Innovawood/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=1&tabid=23>

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# Smallwood 2006

This event takes place from 16 to 18 May 2006 in Sheraton Richmond West, Richmond, Virginia, USA. Smallwood 2006 will provide current up-to-date information on woody biomass and small tree utilization and will foster peer-to-peer learning. Enormous quantities of biomass are being generated from thinning operations, land clearing, and hurricane disasters. These issues drive the need to create solutions for using low-value and waste wood. The conference will include an international slate of speakers, including researchers, material and equipment suppliers, manufacturers, and end-users. Smallwood 2006 will feature technical and poster presentations, discussions, and tabletop displays. The conference will also include tours on Thursday, May 18, in the surrounding Richmond area of mill sites, biomass energy facilities, and small forest products businesses, a state-of-the-art small log sawmill, and related forest products businesses.

Topics include:

* Community Partnerships
* Forest Health Restoration
* Supply and Availability
* Harvesting Systems
* Processing and Manufacturing
* Markets for Products
* Energy from Woody Biomass
* Workforce Training

For further information, consult the website http://www.forestprod.org/confsmallwood06.html

COFORD will consider applications for funding for attending this conference under the networking and knowledge transfer support initiative.

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# Nurserymachinery 2006

Nurserymachinery 2006, one of the largest exhibitions for nursery machinery in Europe, takes place on 17 and 18 August 2006 at the Horticulture Centre, north of Hamburg in Germany. Machinery on show will include tractors, soil tillage implements, soil care, planting machines, potting machines, irrigation systems, plant protection, plant lifting, bundling machines, transport, packing, wrapping, and office organisation. A special area for field demonstrations has been prepared and planted with hardy nursery stock spaced at 25, 50, 75 and 250 cm. New developments to be demonstrated include self-steering systems for tractors (camera, GPS), innovative tool carriers for nurseries, automatic grading machines for seedlings, transport systems for container plants, and software solutions for nurseries. For further information, email [info@baumschultechnik.de](mailto:info@baumschultechnik.de) or click on to www.nurserymachinery.com

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# Cultivate Green Building Forum

This forum on 22 April 2006 will explore building materials, energy systems and methods for retrofitting or building energy efficient homes.

Duncan Stewart will lead a public conversation with a selection of leading ecological design and green building advocates from Ireland and abroad. Guests will include Paul Leach on sustainable building and construction, Niall Crosson on energy efficient construction and air tightness using natural and intelligent solutions, Teresa Dunne on a new low energy block, Lars Pettersson and Tomas O’Leary on passive housing, Richard Webb on the Integer house, Councillor David Healy and Jeff Colley on progressive planning, Sally Starbuck and Brian O’Brian on the Village project.

There will be a ‘marketplace’ which will connect green builders and suppliers with members of the public. Quentin Gargan, a sustainability advocate who recently built and powered his own home, will outline his learning in this final session and discuss with various home energy experts what our options are for heating and powering our homes in a low energy world. This session will outline options and the grants available. Guests will include Xavier Dubbson on solar heating systems, Colm Byrne on wood pellet options, David McQue on heat recovery ventalation and Mike Cotter on geothermal heat pumps.

The event is organised by the CULTIVATE Centre in association with EASCA the Environmental and Sustainable Construction Association as part of the Convergence Sustainable Living Festival 2006 - see [www.sustainable.ie/convergence](http://www.sustainable.ie/convergence)

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# RES Market Places - Launches Regional ‘Virtual’ Market Place

RES (Renewable Energy Supply) Market Places is a European-funded project with the ultimate aim of setting up a ‘virtual market place’ for suppliers in the Renewable Energy Industry and consumers. This virtual marke tplace is a website that has been designed to help promote the use of renewable energy sources, as well as energy efficiency measures in new construction projects in rural areas. Ireland is one of a number of countries taking part – others include Austria, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Each region has the goal of identifying the potential use of RES/EE in new construction projects and in the refurbishment of buildings. In February a regional\* web page was launched exclusively for the Irish market. This web page will feature the latest information on RE Projects, useful case studies and contact details for suppliers/manufacturers and consultants in the Renewable Energy sector.

If you would like your business/RE Project featured on the website please contact Ann McCarthy, European Projects Co-ordinator, SWS Group on (023) 41271 or email [annmccarthy@sws.ie](mailto:annmccarthy@sws.ie). Log onto www.resmarketplaces.org.

\*The term "regional" here refers to not only to individual administrative entities but also includes co-operations beyond municipal boundaries between different actors in a particular geographical region.

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# EU BionetII - [www.eubionet.org](http://www.eubionet.org)

EUBIONET II examines the efficient trading of biomass fuels and analysis of fuel supply chains and business models aross a number of EU member states. The EUBIONET II - European bioenergy network is investigating current and future biomass fuel market trends and biomass fuel prices. The project partners, which include Ireland, are also gathering feedback on the suitability of the CEN 335 solid biofuel standard for trading biofuels. EU Bionet II is currently analysing the most suitable trading and business models for small and large scale biofuel supply chains for heat and power production. Throughout the project events and study tours will be organised. The project concludes in December 2007. EUBIONET II is supported by the European Commission under the Intelligent Energy - Europe Programme. For further information on any events, publications and study tours associated with the project please contact Ann McCarthy, European Projects Co-ordinator, SWS Group on (023) 41271 or email [annmccarthy@sws.ie](mailto:annmccarthy@sws.ie).

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# The future for wild harvests in Scotland

The Scottish Industries Cluster in partnership with Scottish Enterprise through the Wild Harvests Project will hold a seminar and field day on non-timber forest products entitled “The future for wild harvests in Scotland”. The event will take place at Beauly, close to Inverness, on 10 and 11 May 2006. The seminar will bring together land managers, collectors, buyers, processors, researchers, project funders and policy makers, to develop an overview of the sector and agree what can be done to help develop the industry. Some of the questions to be addressed at this seminar are:

* As commercial exploitation increases, how can this development be further encouraged without having a negative impact on households and other small-scale users?
* How can the public good provided by non-timber forest products use be supported?
* How can sustainable use of these products be encouraged through guidelines, forestry standards, etc?
* How can cultivation improve yields of non-timber forest products?

For further information on the seminar and field day please contact Liz Hughson [Liz.Hughson@confor.org.uk].

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# Climate change and forest genetic diversity:

## Implications to sustainable forest management in Europe

The workshop on climate change and forest genetic diversity, held recently in Paris, was one of the actions of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) Work Programme to implement [Vienna Resolution 5](http://www.mcpfe.org/mcpfe/resolutions/vienna/Vienna_Resolution_5.pdf) (Climate change and sustainable forest management in Europe). The purpose of the workshop was to analyse the role of forest genetic diversity in mitigating the effects of climate change and maintaining sustainable forestry in Europe. Its output is to provide recommendations to the MCPFE process based on current scientific knowledge on the topic.

Climate change will alter the environmental conditions to which forest trees in Europe have adapted and expose them to new pests and diseases and could increase average temperatures by 2–4°C in Europe over the next 50 years, with resultant changes in regional and seasonal patterns of precipitation. This will create additional challenges for forest management, with consequent impacts on the economic and social benefits that many people derive from the forests and on biological diversity in forest ecosystems.

It is unlikely that European forest tree species face extinction at the species level. However, some local tree populations are likely to decline as a result of climate change, in particular at the drier margins of the distribution ranges of the species. Forest trees are genetically highly diverse organisms and they have experienced several climate change events throughout their evolution. Research results indicate that many trees can adapt rapidly to new environments. Tree populations can migrate naturally through seed dissemination to more suitable climates in times of stress but this is a slow process.

Careful and well planned transfer of forest reproductive material (mainly seeds) can facilitate the migration of trees in response to climate change but there is a need to develop pan-European strategies and guidelines to achieve this. For forest owners, increasing the use of genetic diversity provides a recommendable risk-reducing strategy to increase flexibility in forest management. This also benefits society at large by ensuring future supply of goods and services from forests. European countries should strengthen their efforts in conserving forest genetic resources as part of sustainable forest management.

For further information, visit the EUFORGEN web site at www.euforgen.org or contact Dr Jarkko Koskela, EUFORGEN Coordinator at IPGRI ([j.koskela@cgiar.org](mailto:j.koskela@cgiar.org)).

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# Review of the Forestry Acts - Third Bulletin of the Consultative Group

The third meeting of the Consultative Group took place on 21 March at the Department of Agriculture and Food’s offices in Johnstown Castle, Wexford.

* Penalties and Prosecutions: the Group was advised about penalty structure that is currently in place in the Planning Acts. There is no scope for Local Authorities to impose penalties directly. All penalties are imposed either after summary conviction or conviction on indictment. The maximum penalties under the Wildlife Acts are €50,000. It was generally agreed that for the purposes of new Forestry Legislation, it would be preferable if the Minister had the power to impose penalties for infringements directly, rather than having to go through the Courts system every time. The option of Court action for serious infringements would remain.
* Foreign Legislation: Groups were asked to consider the foreign legislation circulated at the last meeting. Reference was made to these throughout the meeting, in particular to other countries’ replanting obligations. The various models will be considered in more detail as different topics are discussed.
* Open Forum: The Group agreed that an open forum should be held in early May. The Chairman of the Group again outlined the objective of this further public consultation process. Representation on the Consultative Group itself had, of necessity, to be restricted but the Department was anxious to give everyone who engaged in the consultative process to date a chance to vocalize their submissions. In addition, this session is necessary for the Consultative Group to ensure that they have captured all current thinking within the sector. It would also be an opportunity for the various contributors to have the opportunity to debate. An invitation will issue to all bodies/individuals that have made written submissions to the Department in response to either of the two calls for input. Further information on the open forum will be posted on the website.
* Proceedings of Meeting: At the previous meeting it had been agreed that the topic of felling would be discussed for as long as was deemed necessary. Previously, this topic had been summarised into 10 main headings, as follows: Role of An Garda Síochána; Felling Licence System; Prosecutions and Penalties; Public Consultation; Control of Felling; Exemptions; Environment; Appeals; Replanting Conditions; Miscellaneous Issues. Topics 1 to 5 had been covered at the last meeting. As was the case in the previous meeting, each of the issues raised in individual submissions in relation to the last 5 topics were examined and considered by the Group. It was agreed that of the remaining topics the most contentious was likely to be the Replanting Conditions. The basic premise behind the Replanting Obligation would appear to be to ensure that forestry is sustained/increased and to ensure that land is not left untended. Various models in foreign legislation were considered as to how these objectives were achieved outside of a replanting obligation. The importance of striking some sort of balance was stressed, including how to better reflect the flexibility which already exists in the current Act. The basis upon which flexibility might be shown was seen to fall into three categories: instances where on *environmental* grounds replanting was not desirable or should be constituted differently; the need to respond to a situation where the “perpetuity clause” was seen to act as a *disincentive* to afforestation in the first place; and instances where a *public good* was being served. In relation to appeals, it was agreed that the current legislative provisions need to be updated. How this should be done was debated and will be returned to at a later date. On related environmental issues, the importance of making specific provision to protect identified native woodlands was stressed, while it was felt that many of the other concerns could be dealt with by way of guidelines founded on an enabling provision in the new Act. On the question of exemptions, it was considered that the existing exemption for Local Authorities etc. from the felling-licensing regime was not a major cause of concern, given the controls otherwise in place and the public good nature of the work in most cases. However, it was agreed that the definitions of the areas concerned should be examined. This concluded the debate on Felling. The Group will review their work to date on this topic for the next meeting which is scheduled for 24 April 2006 and the topic for discussion will be planning.

For further information on any aspect of the review process please visit [www.agriculture.gov.ie/index.jsp?file=forestry/pages/leg\_review.xml](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/index.jsp?file=forestry/pages/leg_review.xml)

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# CEO for CRC Forestry, Australia

The Australian Co-operative Research Centre for Forestry is a consortium of industry, government and research provider organisations dedicated to research that will contribute to the economic development, sustainability and international competitiveness of Australia's forest industry. The contract of the current Chief Executive Officer concludes at the end of June 2006 and the position will need to be filled. The position description can be found on the CRC for Forestry's interim website at [www.crcforestry.com.au/employment.htm](http://www.crcforestry.com.au/employment.htm).

The successful applicant will report to the Board of the Company and will have the dual role of managing the business activities of the Company, and providing the professional and personal leadership necessary for the conduct of a vigorous, productive, multi-partner, research and development programme with strong emphasis on delivery of value, through an appropriate commercialisation and utilisation programme.

For further information on the position please contact Professor Rod Griffin, CEO, CRC Forestry Limited on 03 6226 7946 or 0407 871 003, facsimile 03 6226 7942, e-mail [rod.griffin@crcforestry.com.au](mailto:rod.griffin@crcforestry.com.au).

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# Vacancy at IrBEA

The Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA) is seeking a person to assist part-time with the administration of the Association. To date, the administration of IrBEA has been conducted on a voluntary basis, by the management committee members. The Association now has over 130 members and interest in the Bioenergy industry is growing, therefore a dedicated person is necessary to undertake the administrative duties, if IrBEA is to function well, continue to grow and represent the views of its members. A job description is available to download at <http://www.irbea.org>

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1. It is important to distinguish between prices in the ETS and those that governments may have to pay. ETS prices are likely to be considerably higher than government purchases, as the supply/demand gap is tighter in the ETS system than in the government sphere. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)