



JOINT FAO/ECE/ILO COMMITTEE  
ON  
FOREST TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

# **RAISING AWARENESS OF FORESTS AND FORESTRY**

**Building bridges between  
people, forests and forestry**

*Report of the  
FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry  
and the  
FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network*

Sectoral Activities Department  
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE • GENEVA

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ISBN 92-2-113687-6

*First published 2003*

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# FOREWORD

The report was prepared by specialists from across Europe and North America, drawn from the "Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry", and the "Forest Communicators Network" made up of PR specialists. They included practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers, policy, private forestry and non-government advisers.

Over 18 months of work included organizational summaries, case studies, literature reviews, 2 intensive workshops, and 6 reports including this one. The work was prepared, organized, and coordinated by Yves Kazemi and Evelyn Coleman, and could not have been done without their dedicated and ongoing input, nor without the commitment of the specialists and their sponsoring organizations. Special thanks are due to the Flanders Forest Service who underpinned the coordination funding, and to the Portuguese and UK Forest Services for hosting the workshops.

Raising awareness of forests and forestry, as understood by us, is essential to establishing and maintaining a social relation between people and forests. It is dependent on focused and effective dialogue (communication). Where it meets peoples' interests and values, it can empower them to become involved, and so support sustainable forest management. We hope this work will help to develop the subject, and help to maximize the social benefits of forests.

**Miles Wenner**  
FAO/ECE/ILO  
ToS on Participation in Forestry

**Ingwald Gschwandtl**  
FAO/ECE  
Forest Communicators Network



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report on « Raising Awareness of Forests and Forestry », prepared jointly by the FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry and the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network, is the result of close cooperation of many people and organizations. The Team would like to warmly acknowledge the indispensable contributions of the following:

- The Direcção-Geral das Florestas of Portugal – Ms. Teresa Alves da Silva, Deputy-Director General, Mr João de Sousa Teixeira, and Ms. Maria João Pereira – for hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop in Sesimbra (Portugal) in March 2002.
- The United Kingdom Forestry Commission and Forestry Training Services – Mr Tim Rollinson, Head of Policy and Practice Division, Mr Marcus Sangster, Head of Social Forestry, and Mr Keith Hawkins, Head of Forestry Training Services respectively – for funding of the Leader of the Team on Participation, and for hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop in Dumfries (Scotland) in May 2002.
- The Ministry of Flanders, Division of Forests and Green Spaces – Mr. Dirk Van Hoye Head of Division, and Mr. Nico Coppé of the same Division – for funding the second half of the work, including preparation of the final report.
- All the countries and organizations for supporting the work of their specialists during the year, and at the 5 international workshop days.
- Mr Yves Kazemi and Ms Evelyn Coleman of "Forest & Society Consulting" for their outstanding and devoted Team co-ordination support, organization and facilitation of the content of the 2 workshops, and preparation of papers, including this report.
- Mr Peter Poschen and Mr Peter Blombäck of the ILO, for contributions to the work, for logistic support, and for printing this report, and Ms Elizabeth Arnfield of ILO for the final review of this report.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Operational definition of awareness raising*

i. Since there is no formal definition of what the notion of **awareness raising** actually means, the Team has defined this concept as « *a multi-way communication and interaction process which empowers people. This provides the basis for long-term relations and partnerships between the forest sector and the public, and enables better informed decision making* ». In this sense awareness raising can be considered as an integral part of the social dimension of sustainable forest management.

## *Why should we raise awareness?*

ii. In spite of the growing commitment of the forest community to increase consideration of the social dimension of SFM, it has not yet been given as much attention as the economic and ecological aspects. Disparities remain between the desire of the forest sector to raise public awareness on sustainable forest management and the actual changes in society's attitudes to forests and forestry. Too often sustainable forest management is hampered by misconception, forests and their products are undervalued because of lack of knowledge, and opportunities are lost. Raising public awareness is the crucial first step for many on the path to understanding the issues and a better appreciation of the benefits well managed forests provide.

iii. Forests as part of our natural environment are influenced by two groups: society, with its needs and demands towards forests, whether economic, environmental or social, and forestry, being the people working with and within the forest, whose aim is to meet these requirements within the frame of sustainable forest management. Successful awareness raising strengthens the link between forestry and society, leading to a more balanced and effective relations. It is also a means of enabling social changes. Increased knowledge and better understanding of forests and forestry can strengthen the willingness of society to support sustainable forest management.

## *What is awareness raising?*

iv. As part of a permanent and interactive communication flow, awareness raising is a process which opens opportunities for information exchange in order to improve mutual understanding and to develop competencies and skills necessary to enable changes in social attitude and behaviour. To be effective the process of awareness raising must meet and maintain the mutual needs and interests of the actors involved.

v. The Team differentiated various phases in the construction of a social relationship based on an awareness raising process:

- Opening a gateway: The first step is to enter into relations with the public by identifying its needs and interests. A positive personal experience, linked to each individual's interests and values, may indeed open a gateway to forests and forestry.
- Building bridges: Once a gateway has been opened, it is possible to create a relation – a partnership – as a more sustainable form of interaction between forestry and the public. Bridge building is a mutual empowerment process, strengthening everybody's support and commitment to forest and their sustainable forest management.
- Strengthening relationships: In a rapidly changing world, maintaining a relationship is a constant and dynamic process requiring regular adaptation. Consequently, successful awareness raising needs continual improvement based on impact evaluation.

### *Forms and Means*

vi. Awareness raising can take many forms and use many means:

□ Creating experience

The public has become somewhat disconnected from nature in general and from forests in particular. The best means to reconnect people is to provide them with a personal experience of forests. The positive experiences can then be used to connect and interact with them.

□ Information exchange and communication

At first, the information exchange may be one-sided (providing the public with information on the forests). The aim is however to change it into balanced communication in all directions. Providing knowledge and understanding is a means of transmitting values: "You can't value what you don't know".

□ Education and training

There are different forms of education which are relevant in the context of awareness raising: formal education in institutions (schools at all levels), environmental education in forests conducted by the forest organizations (often in cooperation with institutions), but also a wide range of informal education, e.g. as performed by parents.

Professional training at all levels is equally important for awareness raising activities. More disciplines are recognized today as relevant to forest management, e.g. social science, environmental or wildlife sciences. Conversely, education and training in the forest sector at all levels should include subjects and methods relevant for meaningful communication. The importance of training and extension programmes for target groups within the forest sector that are hard to reach, such as forestry contractors or owners of small forest properties, needs to be stressed.

□ Participation and involvement

Raising awareness can contribute to public involvement in that it helps people formulate their interests, knowledge and understanding as being a precondition for real participation. However public participation processes are also an important means of raising awareness: the involvement of the public in forest management decision-making is an important way of transmitting knowledge and values. They provide opportunities for dialogue, mutual learning, and trust.

vii. It is important to be creative at this point, using a range of techniques and instruments to diversify the impacts. This requires appropriate competencies and skills.

*Identify target groups*

viii. An important step in awareness-raising activities is to identify the various target groups and to segment the audience accordingly. This implies a solid knowledge of the social characteristics of the identified target group. To this end, social surveys and regular contacts are key instruments. Besides the forest sector itself, the Team identified a number of target groups meriting special attention in the context of awareness raising:

- Children
- Decision-makers and opinion-formers
- Urban population
- Media

ix. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to look at other potential forest user groups that may have special needs (e.g. women, non-organized interest, handicapped, etc.) or to define the audience regarding specific socio-economic criteria (e.g. rural, urban, active, sedentary, young, old, educational standards, incomes, etc.).

*What is needed to raise awareness?*

x. Successful awareness-raising activities must conform to the principles of professional communication, such as honesty and reliability, openness and transparency, fairness and continuity, but also the capacity of listening to the public and taking its concerns seriously. Professional communication and public relations offer a whole array of instruments and methods that can equally be used in awareness raising. The choice of the appropriate instruments depends very much on the context, objectives and characteristics of the awareness-raising process.

xi. Successful awareness-raising processes begin with the involvement of the people within the forest sector. It needs professional help from outside the sector, however, as well as an improvement of communication skills of all people within the sector. Communication skills must be given more consideration, e.g. when recruiting. Alliances within the forest sector, as well as with partners outside forestry, should be openly considered, especially as a means to overcome obstacles such as the lack of human, financial and technical resources.

xii. When possible, forestry should capitalize on the trust of the public in foresters. Where conflicting situations remain, strengthening the links between forestry and society may be a means to improve the public image of the forest sector.

xiii. In this context, the forest itself represents the most important awareness-raising tool of forestry, and must be given its full value. Providing people with personal and positive experiences in or with the forest is an excellent means of opening the gate to forests and forestry, and thus getting the public to take the first step towards more active involvement and to partnerships with forestry.

xiv. A better understanding of societal values and of their changes in time are essential for awareness raising. Knowing one's audience, listening to its concerns and interests, and monitoring changes in attitudes and opinions are key factors for a successful awareness-raising process.

### *Challenges rather than limits*

xv. Despite the high expectations placed in awareness raising, one must be conscious of the limits and difficulties. One basic limitation is that increased public knowledge of forests and forestry does not necessarily imply a change in attitude and behaviour on the part of the public. Other limitations are linked to the messages and the actors, such as the need to communicate complex issues with simple messages, or the necessity of focusing messages on groups of actors, thus excluding others. Last but not least, forestry must be aware of its responsibility in the development of public knowledge: its representation of forests and forestry becomes part of the public knowledge and shapes people's attitudes.

### *Awareness raising as an integral part of SFM*

xvi. The aim of awareness raising is to develop new understanding and competencies, empower people and pave the way for individual and collective changes (see definition). In this context, raising awareness of forests and forestry represents an important tool to connect people, forests and forestry, and to enhance society's support to sustainable forest management.

# ABBREVIATIONS

B	Belgium
CEPF	Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers
CH	Switzerland
ECE (or UN-ECE)	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
F	France
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCN	FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network
FIN	Finland
IC	Iceland
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPF/IFF	United Nations International Panel/Forum on Forests
IRL	Ireland
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
NGO	Non-governmental organization
MCPFE	Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe
P	Portugal
PP	Public participation
S	Sweden
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SK	Slovakia
ToS	FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Public Participation in Forestry
UK	United Kingdom
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
USA	United States of America
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the initiative

### *Background to the report*

1. Since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, the need to increase interaction between society and the forest sector has become a major issue of forest policy discussions worldwide. In this context, raising general awareness of forests and forestry has been recognized as integral to Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). This has been confirmed in recent times within the international forest dialogue at intergovernmental level (IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, 1997 and 2000) and at pan-European level (Pan-European Resolution L1, Lisbon 1998).
2. This evolution reflects not only a clear change in contemporary environmental policies that take greater account of the human dimension of environmental issues (Tolba 1992). It also mirrors a profound transformation in the relationship between forestry and society characterized by the growing importance of social considerations in forest management (ILO 1997) and the need for enhanced societal support to ensure sustainable forest management (ILO 2000).
3. While efforts to raise general awareness of forests and forestry have been undertaken – inside and outside the forest sector – there are some major uncertainties as to what this concept actually implies, about opportunities and limits of its application, about existing forms and experiences of awareness raising, and about their effectiveness in modifying people's attitudes towards forests and forestry and their impacts on sustainable forest management.

### *Background to the initiative*

4. The Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry (ToS) was established in 1998 by the FAO/ECE/ILO Joint Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training as a contribution to the Pan-European Process. Its mandate was to « clarify the concept of "participation" and develop the conceptual framework for participatory forest management (involvement of the public) »<sup>1</sup>. As a first result, the ToS published in 2000 the report "Public Participation in Forestry in Europe and North America" (ILO 2000).

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<sup>1</sup> TIM/EFC/WP.1/28 (mandate modified by Timber Committee September 1999).

5. As a second part of its mandate the Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry has undertaken to clarify the concept of « raising awareness of forests and forestry » in the perspective of participatory forest management and to provide recommendations for action. To this end, the Team joined forces with members of the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network (FCN) – formerly known as the Team of Specialists on Public Relations.

### *Background of the Team*

6. The FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry and the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network jointly prepared the present report. It is based on the views expressed by the Team members at meetings in Sesimbra (Portugal) on 25-27 March 2002 and in Dumfries (Scotland) on 22-24 May 2002. Mr. Miles Wenner (United Kingdom) and Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) jointly chaired the Team. The ILO and ECE/FAO Geneva acted as secretariat. The members of the Team (see Annex 2), coming from countries in Europe and North America, served in their personal capacity, not as representatives of their countries or institutions.

## **1.2 Mandate of the Team**

### 1.2.1 FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry

7. The Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry was mandated to:<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ clarify the concept of «participation» and develop the conceptual framework for public participation in forestry (involvement of the public), awareness of the forest and use of forest products and services by the public;
  - ❑ draw up proposals for follow-up action;
  - ❑ collect and even initiate case studies;
  - ❑ assist in the preparation of the proposed seminars on "Women in forestry" (Portugal, April 2001), on "Public relations and environmental education in forestry" (Switzerland, October 2001), and on "Partnerships in forestry" (Belgium, 2002).
8. In the time previously available, the Team concentrated on the first element of its mandate, "public participation in forestry". To further its mandate, the Team of Specialists on Public Participation has now undertaken to work on the notion of "awareness" of forests and forestry. In order to clarify the concept and to develop recommendations for action, it joined forces with the Forest Communicators Network.

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<sup>2</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> session of October 1998 of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training (TIM/EFC/WP.1/28, modified in September 1999).

## 1.2.2 FAO-ECE Forest Communicators Network (FCN)

9. In support of the overall goal of creating a positive image of the forest sector (including all phases of forest resource management and forest industry), the FAO-ECE Forest Communicators Network (FCN), formerly called the Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries Sector, was established by the UN-ECE Timber Committee and the UN-FAO European Forestry Commission with a mandate until 2004 to:

- promote networking among member states for capacity building and exchange of information in public relations and communication;
- identify key common concepts and promote their incorporation in forest sector communications and public relations activities in the member countries;
- identify key needs for improvement of forest sector public relations and communication and communicate them to the TC and the EFC;
- assist the TC and the EFC to improve public relations and information related to their work;
- promote the development of national capacity in forest sector public relations and communication, particularly in countries in transition;
- stimulate and promote the sound use of wood and other forest products as environmentally friendly and renewable resources.

At the present time the FCN is – among other activities<sup>3</sup> – working on: a Compendium of Best PR Practices; a Study on Consumer Attitudes towards Forests and Forest-Based Products; strategic approaches for building National PR Capacity.

## 1.3 Scope of the report

10. The Team hopes that this report will help clarify the concept of awareness raising in the context of forests and forestry. The background leading to the necessity of increasingly raising public awareness of forests and forestry is briefly outlined. Objectives, characteristics, forms and limits of awareness raising are looked into.

11. The Team intended to provide a practical guide to all people in forestry wishing to increase and improve their awareness-raising activities. For this reason the report has a large section devoted to the question of how to raise awareness, yet without any ambition of replacing or duplicating the numerous works of reference already existing on methods and techniques of professional communication and public relations (e.g. as prepared by the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network). The report incorporates examples, case studies and references.

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<sup>3</sup> More information on FCN activities at [www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/pr.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/pr.htm).



## 2. WHY RAISE AWARENESS TODAY?

12. Over the past fifteen years, the emergence of environmental issues has drawn attention worldwide to the necessity of promoting social knowledge, awareness and skills as one means to support sustainable development (UNESCO 1977 in Kyburz-Graber 2002). This has led to a growing commitment of the forest community to raise general awareness of forests and forestry. However, there remain disparities between the ambition of the forest sector to raise public awareness and changes in society's attitudes to forests and forestry (SAEFL 2002). How can this discrepancy be interpreted?

### *Changing interests of society in forests and forestry*

13. In most industrialized countries, the end of the 1950s was characterized by a change in social interests in forests. In this period, « society's interest in forests has shown that in many European countries traditional property rights fiercely defended by individuals and strongly related to primary use of wood production have been more and more balanced by moral rights actively propounded by society and related to non-market forest benefits » (Broadhurst in ILO 1997, p.10). This evolution, combined with the growing importance of environmental issues and the declining relative share of wood and wood products in national economies, has led to a profound transformation in the social value of forests and forest uses (ILO 1997 and 2000).

14. Changes and trends in society have an obvious impact on people's attitudes to forests. In a world of increasing urbanization, technology and globalization, « many people have become distanced from an understanding of the natural world and natural processes, unaware of the roles played by forests at every scale » (Broadhurst in ILO 1997, p.62). As a result, the established understanding of traditional forms of forest utilization has been increasingly counterbalanced by new environmental and recreational considerations on forests and forest uses (ILO 1997, Gschwandtl 2002).

### *Lacking interaction between forestry and society*

15. As a response to these broader societal changes, the concept of sustainable forest management has gradually evolved to a system which balances environmental, economic and social considerations in a more equitable way. However, since the UNCED Rio Conference (1992), and more recently the MCPFE Lisbon Conference (1998), the realization has been growing that the social dimension of sustainable forest management and the interaction with society has so far been given far less attention than it really deserves within the forest sector (ILO 1997 and 2000, SAEFL 2002), in spite of the fact that within the changing societal context, forestry is more than ever in need of society's understanding of sustainable forest management.

16. Despite recurring statements of the international community and worldwide commitment to raise general awareness of forests and forestry, « efforts by the forest sector to communicate have not been successful so far and foresters and forest owners are often unable to make themselves understood » (SAEFL 2002, p.14) . The forest sector has been more and more confronted with the paradoxical situation of having to strengthen society's support to sustainable forest management in a context of a decreasing social understanding of forests and forestry issues.

### *Growing need for social support to sustainable forest management*

17. As the Team of Specialists on Social Aspects of Forestry pointed out: « the very concept of sustainable forest management is a product of society and reflects the changes in its values and perceptions » (ILO, 1997, p.27). In its recent history, this concept has gradually evolved from the traditional principle of sustainable yield to an idea that encompasses economic, social and environmental considerations in a more equitable way (ILO, 1997 and 2000).

18. **Today**, the need to strengthen the links between the forest sector and society by increasing « public awareness of the direct and indirect benefits from forests »<sup>4</sup> and « by raising general awareness of the concept of sustainable forest management and the role of forests and forestry in sustainable development »<sup>5</sup>, has become a major issue of forest policy discussions worldwide. As such, **the concept of raising awareness of forests and forestry is now recognized as an integral part of sustainable forest management.**

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<sup>4</sup> Proposals for Action 142a of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forest (1997).

<sup>5</sup> Resolution L1 "People, Forests and Forestry - Enhancement of Socio-Economic Aspects of Sustainable Forest Management" (General guidelines), Third Ministerial Conference, Lisbon 1998.

# 3. WHAT IS AWARENESS RAISING?

## 3.1 Definition and characteristics

19. Since there is no formal definition of what the notion of awareness raising actually means, the Team understood the concept of raising awareness of forests and forestry as (working definition):

« a multi-way communication or interaction process which provides opportunities for dialogue, mutual learning, and trust-building, which empowers people, and strengthens their interest and commitment to sustain forests and their sustainable forest management. As such, enhanced public awareness enables better-informed decision-making and improves opportunities for partnerships between forestry and society to sustain the protection and use of forests over the long term ».

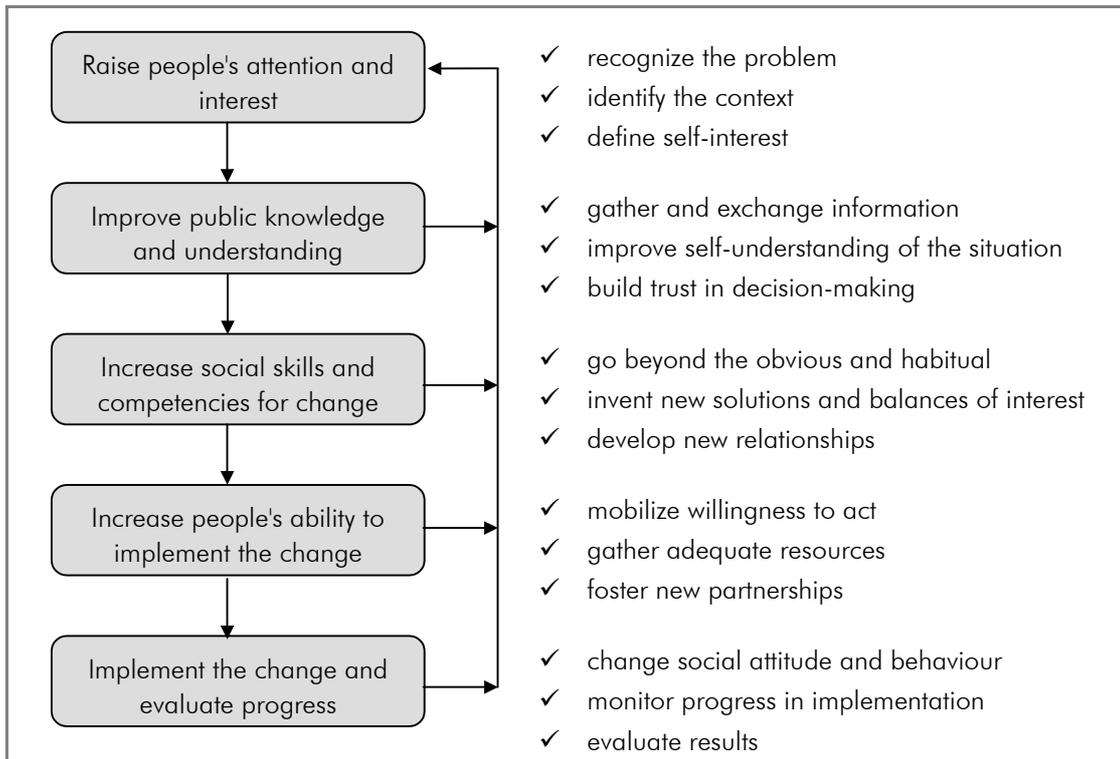
20. Recognizing that there are numerous forms of interaction between the forest sector and the public in general, this working definition makes it clear that the process of awareness raising is different from any one-way flow of information or communication process. Likewise, it excludes commercial forms of communication (e.g. marketing or advertising) and undemocratic forms of information (e.g. propaganda). The main difference between the notion of awareness raising and other neighbouring concepts lies in the nature and goals of the relationship established rather than in the techniques and method used.

21. The Team further identified the process of awareness raising as a permanent and interactive flow in order to establish a social relation – i.e. between forestry and society – which opens opportunities to exchange information in order to improve mutual understanding and develop competencies and skills necessary to enable changes in social attitude and possibly behaviour. Within this process, awareness raising must meet and maintain the mutual needs and interests of the people involved. It must however be remembered that people may opt out of the process at any stage if they are happy with what is going on. The cycle is presented in Figure 1 below.

### ↳ Raise people's attention and interest

Raising people's attention is a prerequisite to establishing a social relation. By matching people's personal interests with an adequate message or idea one may enter into their personal agenda and raise their curiosity or concern for a given matter – e.g. for forests and forestry (see "Forest fire prevention in Spain", Annex 1).

Figure 1 - Raising awareness as a means to enable social changes



Initially developed by the Team and later adapted according to Giordan (1996).

↳ Improve public knowledge and understanding

Having gained a certain public interest, it is then possible to establish a dialogue between forestry and society as a means of improving respective knowledge and understanding. This exchange of information needs to be set in a context of relevance to the interests of the public concerned. Such a mutual learning process enables better-informed decision-making and helps to build trust among potential partners (see "Forest Owner Groups in Flanders", Annex 1).

↳ Increase individual and collective competencies and skills

Competencies define the ability to go beyond the obvious and habitual. Going further than information and dialogue, they express the individual and collective ability to think and conceive changes in attitudes and behaviours as a means to develop new solutions and new balances of interest. Greater interaction between society and the forest sector are likely to improve social skills for forest and forestry issues (see "Forest Forum for Decision Makers in Finland", Annex 1).

↳ Increase social ability to act

An awareness-raising process must aim at increasing commitment and participation beyond enhanced knowledge and skills, and as such it might be described as an empowerment process. It is an attempt to develop new relationships that are likely to generate social action and build new partnerships to support sustainable forest management (see "Raising awareness in the USA", Annex 1).

22. The process ends with the implementation of change and evaluation. A change in social attitudes and behaviour leading to an active commitment and participation is an obvious sign of success in an awareness-raising process. However, the Team also agreed that whereas active commitment is an objective, there is no guarantee that the establishment of a relationship, and thus raised awareness, will lead to an effective commitment. The ability of the public to act does not imply that it will also do so (Kyburz-Graber in SAEFL, 2002, p. 68). The objectives and criteria for the evaluation of an awareness-raising process must be formulated in consideration of this fact.

## 3.2 Forms and Means

23. Awareness-raising activities can take many forms and sizes, each occurring with different goals at different levels and associated with specific results, opportunities, and barriers. Based on the working definition and the experience of the members, the Team identified the following forms of awareness raising<sup>6</sup>:

### □ Creating experience

The forest sector faces the problem that the public is not receptive to their interests, as the public has become somewhat disconnected from nature in general and forests in particular. Current experiences indicate that the best means to reconnect people is to provide them with a personal experience (Kyburz-Graber in SAEFL 2002, p. 67) of forests and forestry. The Team referred to this process as providing the public with a gateway to forests and forestry, thus getting them to take the first step towards more active involvement (see "Mountain biking in Scotland" and "Urban Woods for People", Annex 1). The forest sector can increase the chances that people have good experiences in the forest, by offering adapted and attractive infrastructure and facilities (to attract people to the forest). The positive experiences can then be used to connect and interact with people.

### □ Information exchange and communication

Information exchange and communication with the public is an essential part of awareness-raising activities (see "Bridging the gap in the UK" and "Greener Forests in Sweden", Annex 1). At first, the information exchange may be one-sided (providing the public with information on the forests). The aim is however to change it into balanced communication in all directions (Kolozs ToS-2002). Providing knowledge and understanding is a means of transmitting values: "You can't value what you don't know". Methods and venues for exchanging information also provide opportunities for building awareness about forests (Hoover ToS-2002).

### □ Education and training

Environmental education has been a focal point in awareness raising ever since environmental issues hit the agendas in the 1960s. As Kyburz-Graber pointed out,

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<sup>6</sup> Non-exhaustive classification based on the Team and on Hoover (ToS-2002).

« The main goal of environmental education was and still is promoting environmental knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills in order to enhance readiness for environmentally adequate behaviour » (SAEFL 2002, p. 63). Different forms of education are relevant in the context of awareness raising: formal education in institutions (schools at all levels of education), environmental education in forests conducted by the forest organizations (often in cooperation with institutions)<sup>7</sup>, but also a wide range of informal education, e.g. as performed by parents (see "Awareness Raising in the USA", Annex 1).

Professional training at all levels is equally important for awareness-raising activities within and outside the forest sector. More disciplines are recognized today as relevant to forest management, e.g. social sciences, environmental or wildlife sciences. Exchange programmes such as internships in forestry institutions can help build students' awareness of these disciplines regarding issues and opportunities associated with managing forests (Hoover ToS-2002). Conversely, education and training in the forest sector should include subjects and methods of social sciences relevant for meaningful communication, needs assessment and participation (ILO 1998).

Within this context the importance of training and extension programmes for target groups within the forest sector that are hard to reach, such as forestry contractors or owners of small forest properties, needs to be stressed. Both these groups play an essential role in the sustainable management of forests (ILO 1998) (see "Forestry training in France" and "Greener Forests campaign in Sweden", Annex 1).

□ Participation and involvement

Public participation has been previously defined as various forms of direct public involvement « whereby people, individually or through organized groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of specific forestry issues » (ILO 2000, p.9). Raising awareness can contribute to public involvement in that it helps people formulate their interests, knowledge and understanding as being a precondition for real participation (Wallenius ToS-2002). However, public participation processes are also an important means of raising awareness: the involvement of the public in forest management decision-making is an important way of transmitting knowledge and values. They provide opportunities for dialogue, mutual learning, and trust-building (see "Mountain biking in Scotland" and "Participation in the USA", Annex 1).

24. Figure 2 below give examples of awareness-raising activities classified along the various forms presented above. These examples are not exhaustive or presented in any order of priority. The forms presented here should not be understood as fixed and unrelated. In fact, awareness-raising processes are essentially dynamic and may cover several of the various forms presented here.

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<sup>7</sup> Examples given in the seminar "Forestry Meets the Public", October 2001, Rütihubelbad, Switzerland (SAEFL 2002).

Figure 2 – Forms and means of raising awareness (based on country experiences)

Forms and means	Examples
<b>Forest experience</b>	
Events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– direct experiences of forests and forestry</li> <li>– guided forest walks, visits and activities</li> <li>– forest events for/by local interest groups</li> </ul>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– visitor centres, forest schools, educational nature trails</li> <li>– forest walks, cycling routes, horse riding routes</li> <li>– camping sites, picnic areas, view points</li> </ul>
Forests and parklands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– forest, parks, community woodlands, wildlife, heritage areas</li> </ul>
<b>Information and communication</b>	
Formal procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information within institutional and/or regulatory mandates (e.g. environmental impact assessment, national forest policy, regional planning)</li> <li>– forest-related appeal and litigation, public access to information</li> </ul>
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information campaigns, press releases, press conferences</li> <li>– articles in newspapers, magazines, scientific journals</li> <li>– forest and/or forestry magazines (e.g. Forest What's On)</li> <li>– TV programmes, videos, radio programmes, advertisements</li> <li>– internet, website facilities, newsletters, mailing lists</li> </ul>
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– key reports on various items for interested public (e.g. biodiversity conservation, economic investment and viability of sector, forest as workplace)</li> <li>– information booklets, fact sheets, posters, brochures for wide readership</li> <li>– scientific or technical publications</li> </ul>
Meetings and exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information meetings, workshops, conferences</li> <li>– stands in exhibitions and shows</li> <li>– forest and forestry exhibitions</li> </ul>
Events and happenings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– day of the forest, national tree weeks, sponsored events (e.g. marathon, rally)</li> </ul>
<b>Education and training</b>	
Education programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– education programmes in schools, universities, etc.</li> <li>– learning sessions and modules for schools and classes</li> <li>– training courses for teachers, educational experiences for adults or specific groups</li> </ul>
Educational material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– school books, texts, posters, fact sheets</li> <li>– CD, multimedia, video, TV programmes, displays</li> <li>– tool-box, pedagogic tools, educational material</li> </ul>
Visits and excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– outdoor education activities, forest classroom facilities</li> <li>– guided forest walks, visit and activities</li> <li>– park centres, information centres, etc.</li> </ul>
Practical experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– working experience with forests and forestry (e.g. volunteer work, internship)</li> </ul>
Representatives and symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– marketing symbols (e.g. Smokey the Bear, Okila the forest friend)</li> <li>– famous figureheads, trustees, social network (e.g. Panda diplomats)</li> </ul>
Social sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– research on public opinion and public attitudes toward forests and forestry</li> </ul>
<b>Participation and involvement</b>	
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– institutional or regulatory participatory process (e.g. NFP, regional planning)</li> <li>– consultation on official reports, documents, decisions</li> <li>– advisory committee, forest panel (e.g. forum for decision makers)</li> <li>– co-management of forest resources</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– partnership project between funding bodies and facility beneficiaries</li> <li>– partnership in forest education initiatives</li> </ul>
Active commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– practical work in the forest (e.g. tree planting, trail rehabilitation, volunteers)</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Contribution to sustainable forest management

25. The aim of awareness raising is to enhance opportunities for relationships as a means of developing new understanding and competencies, empowering people and paving the way for individual and collective changes (see definition). From this, *raising general awareness of forests and forestry may:*

➤ Increase people's understanding of forests and forestry

Active awareness raising is a means to increase contact and dialogue with people and to improve society's understanding of sustainable forest management and the role of forests and forestry in sustainable development. This may have an impact on the public's image of the forest sector and raise public interest in forest and forestry issues.

➤ Improve social awareness of the multiple values of forests

Increased interaction with the public contributes to raise social awareness of the multiple benefits of forests and to improve the multiple use of forestry. It opens up new opportunities to better meet social demands on forests and forest resources and therefore to optimize the total benefits of forests.

➤ Create mutual trust and recognition between the public and the forest sector

Mutual trust and recognition are essential to build and maintain relationships. Awareness-raising processes are a means to improve mutual recognition of interests between the forest sector and the public. By respecting principles such as honesty and openness, they are important tools to improve public trust in forestry – and vice versa.

➤ Develop new social partnerships within and beyond the forest sector

By developing new competencies and skills, raising awareness is likely to improve opportunities to develop new partnerships within and beyond the forest sector. This opens up new perspectives for both society and forestry to better value and share costs and benefits of the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources.

➤ Empower people and increase society's ability to support sustainable forest management

By improving public interest, and understanding for forest and forestry issues, awareness raising generates new social competencies that are likely to empower people – individually or through organized groups – to become actors and as such potential partners to support sustainable forest management.

26. Over time, the understanding of sustainable development has evolved to a system based on three pillars – economic, social and environmental – of which the social dimension has so far received less attention than the other two (ILO 1997). In this context, raising awareness of forests and forestry represents an important tool to connect people, forests and forestry, and to enhance society's support to sustainable forest management.

### 3.4 Limits, issues and challenges

27. Despite the expectations associated with raising awareness, these processes also have limits. Some of these are inherent in the issues, some in broader institutional and/or cultural contexts, others in the public in general or the target audience. When tackling these issues, it is less a question of right or wrong than of finding the right balance.

□ Ecological knowledge versus environmental behaviour

Giving the public the opportunity to strengthen its interest and commitment to sustain forests and sustainable forest management does not imply that there will be a change in attitudes or behaviours toward forests and forestry. The linear causality « more ecological knowledge and awareness are guarantees for responsible acting » has been recognized as far too simple in relation to complex environmental issues (Kyburz-Graber in SAEFL 2002, p.63). This must be borne in mind when defining the objectives and the measure of success of forest-related awareness-raising activities.

□ Simple message versus complex issues

An inherent difficulty of awareness-raising processes of forests and forestry is the constant balance that needs to be struck between the complexity of the matter (e.g. convey sustainability) and the need for simple and short messages. Linked to this is the need to focus on a number of issues to avoid confusion. The act of having to make a choice excludes other issues. Many feel that this need for focusing and simplifying does not do justice to the complexity of the situation.

□ Competing interest versus the shaping of public knowledge

A main difficulty is how to build awareness of forests and forestry within globalization and the business orientation of the world, where the forest sector is in competition with other interests. Organizations may choose topics for awareness-raising activities that "sell" better than others, thus maybe excluding other, more important topics. However, using issues that do "sell" can also be used to promote messages that don't.

When engaging in awareness-raising activities one needs to be conscious of the fact that one is participating in a complex cultural process through which environmental meanings are produced. Thus, as part of a social learning process, the contents of awareness raising and the representation of forests and forestry become part of the public knowledge and shape people's attitudes towards forests and forestry.

□ Institutional interests versus social concerns

Social understanding of forests and nature varies according to societal, economic and cultural context. Awareness raising is consequently not a "free-floating" concept: « it is tied to a particular set of social interests, and results from particular sets of institutional concerns. [*It is therefore important*] to be aware of whose social interests are being represented in awareness raising exercises » (Jeanrenaud ToS-2002, p.2). Linked to this is the possibility of manipulating the public by the choice of topic. In this context, fairness and transparency are key elements to awareness raising.

□ Consistent message versus varying groups of actors

Objectives of awareness-raising processes vary with the actors and their perception of problems and opportunities that could be addressed through awareness raising (e.g. indigenous people, public forest agencies, private forest owners, environmental NGOs). Objectives also vary with scope, geographical scale, time horizons, and therefore range from immediate and focused to preventive and general. An important step in an awareness-raising process is therefore defining the actors and focusing the messages for each target group (see Chapter 4.1.1).

This focusing, however, may also lead to problems of consistency in the messages in that the use of different communication methods may lead to different interpretations within the various target groups. The need to focus on a group of actors also automatically implies a certain exclusion of other groups. It is essential to consider how actions aimed at one group of actors could be interpreted by a different public.

□ Constant message versus changing society

Consistency and continuity of the message belong to the main principles of good communication. Due to changes in knowledge and ideas, however, messages may have to change. This is a major difficulty to be tackled in awareness-raising process and must be accorded due importance. Such changes are necessary to keep in line with the principle of honest, open and knowledge-based information (Chapter 4.1.1).

□ Direct costs versus long-terms benefits

Professional awareness raising needs adapted resources – be it in time, finance, capacity, information, organization or structure. Yet it is often difficult to estimate the benefits of the process in relation to the costs that arise. Methods of accountability are still little developed for forestry (see Chapter 4.3.1). Raising awareness should be considered as an investment rather than as an expense, in the long-term perspective of sustainable forest management.

□ Lack of will to share power

As a process, awareness raising belongs to a broader social and institutional context where power relationships, social pressures or fear of losing control or facing uncertainty may hamper the willingness of some to enter into dialogue with others. Such fears must be taken seriously and addressed appropriately in order to manage the change (see Chapter 4.2.2).

28. These aspects constitute tangible limits to effective awareness raising, which need to be clearly recognized and openly discussed. From this point of view, they should be seen more as a challenge to create the best possible conditions for successfully raising awareness of forests and forestry, rather than as an excuse to avoid any commitment in this matter.

# 4. HOW TO RAISE GENERAL AWARENESS?

29. In view of the large amount of literature already available on the subject of public relations – inside and outside the forest sector – this section concentrates on the practical experience of raising awareness accumulated by the Team. Even if most of this expertise refers to relatively large-scale processes the considerations presented here may also be adapted to smaller activities. For step-by-step approaches to awareness raising there are numbers of "toolbox" publications which are not duplicated here.

## 4.1 Framework for raising social awareness

30. As defined above, awareness raising is an interactive process aiming at empowering interest groups and individuals, thus making them into actors and as such partners in sustainable forest management. As part of a multi-way communication flow, awareness-raising activities must meet and maintain mutual needs and interests of the people involved in the process. To do so, they should comply with the following principles.

### 4.1.1 Professional communication<sup>8</sup>

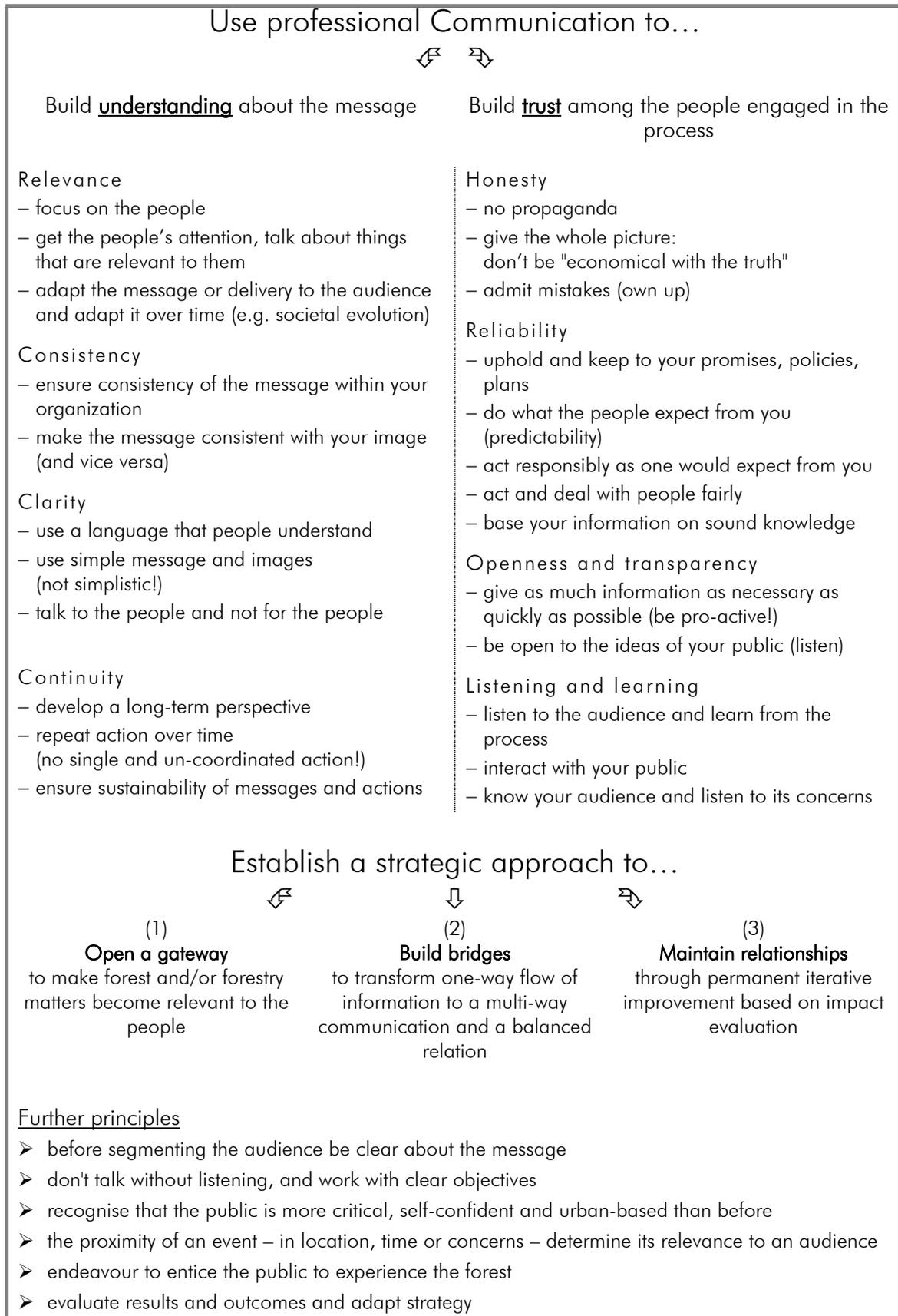
31. Communication needs to be professional. It needs to be a strategically planned and systematically organized process with long-term orientation and multi-way dialogue opportunities. Strategic communication is based on sound knowledge, clearly defined objectives and clearly identified actors. It requires the use of professional skills and tools and must respect specific principles such as honesty and reliability, transparency, fairness, consistency and continuity. Successful communication needs continual improvement based on impact evaluation (Gschwandtl ToS-2002, SAEFL 2002).

32. As part of a communication process, awareness-raising activities must meet the principles of professional communication (see Annex 1). As modern marketing and public relations no longer relate mainly to products or costs but to feelings and emotions (e.g. car manufacturers sell concepts such as freedom rather than cars), forestry needs to be aware of what values the public expects the forest to fulfil: « if the public is our customer what does the customer expect » (Foley ToS-2002). In this context, awareness raising must meet expectations and concerns of both the public and the forest sector. To do so, the Team emphasized the importance of awareness raising as a means to build trust and develop understanding among all the actors of the process (see Figure 4).

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<sup>8</sup> For further expertise on communication strategies and public relation in forestry, please refer to activities of the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network ([www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/pr.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/pr.htm)).

Figure 3 - Professional awareness raising: principles and strategy



## 4.1.2 Strategic approach

33. To improve and strengthen interaction between forestry and society, awareness-raising processes need to consider various phases in the construction of a social relationship. At its best, awareness raising is open, fair, consistent, and long-term oriented. Depending on the scale, the stage and the objectives of the process, these steps may be more or less formally articulated (see Figure 4).

### □ Open a gateway

Obviously, not all people have the same interest, knowledge, value and perception as concerns forests and forestry. As a means to enter into relations with the public, awareness-raising activities must identify and activate existing – or potential – stakes which connect people with the forest. To achieve this, it is essential to find whatever is relevant to a person, whether it is wildlife, birds, sports activities or emotions, feelings and a personal experience of forests. A positive personal experience, linked to each individual's interests and values, may indeed open a gateway to forests and forestry. Some people have already built their personal relationship with forests and forestry. Others however need help to do this. It is an important part of awareness-raising processes to generate the possibilities for such experiences (see Section 4.2.1).

### □ Build bridges and create partnerships

Once forest and/or forestry matters have relevance for people, the process of raising awareness may build upon this initial interaction, resulting in a more sustainable type of relation. Building bridges means not only to enter in contact with the public, but also to establish a real – and long-term – dialogue with the people, to improve common understanding, to define shared interests and to activate possible cooperation and/or partnerships between forestry and society. Bridge-building is an empowerment process, allowing both society and forest actors to better articulate their respective interests and needs, thus strengthening their mutual support to sustainable forest management. At this stage, awareness raising needs to transform one-way flow of information into a multi-way and balanced communication process (Kolosz ToS-2002). As a result, it is also important to build bridges and create partnerships within the forest sector, e.g. between the forest service, forest industries and forest owners.

### □ Maintain and strengthen relationships

In a world of permanent change, building and maintaining a social relationship is a dynamic process requiring ongoing adaptation. Consequently, successful awareness raising needs continual improvement based on impact evaluation. A key factor to sustainable change in social attitudes toward forest and forestry is continuity and adequacy of interactions between society and the forest sector.

34. Like any goal-oriented action, awareness-raising activities are best planned beforehand. Implementing such process cannot be considered a formality. The real challenge is to adapt each action to a particular situation and a specific public – while at the same time considering the defined objectives and long-term perspectives.

### 4.1.3 Multi-level instruments and methods

35. There are many ways of raising general awareness of forests and forestry. Based on the country experiences provided by the Team (see Annex 1), the following instruments and methods were encountered (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Multi-level instruments and methods of raising awareness

Forms Methods	a) Forest experience	b) Information and communication	c) Education and training	d) Participation and involvement
<b>Written, audio, visual and multi media</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information campaign</li> <li>– newspapers, scientific journals, magazines</li> <li>– booklets, fact sheets, posters</li> <li>– official reports, scientific publications</li> <li>– TV, videos, radio, advertisements</li> <li>– internet facilities, website, mailing, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– books, texts, posters, fact sheets, etc.</li> <li>– CD, multimedia, videos, TV, display</li> <li>– toolbox, teaching tools, educational material, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– consultation on official reports, documents, decisions, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Events and happenings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– direct experiences with forests</li> <li>– guided walks, visits and activities in the forest</li> <li>– forest events for/by local interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– day of the forest, national tree weeks, sponsored events, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– outdoor education, classroom facilities</li> <li>– guided forest walks, visits and activities</li> <li>– working experience in the forest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– practical work and activities in the forest</li> </ul>
<b>Meetings and exhibitions</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.</li> <li>– stands in exhibitions</li> <li>– forest exhibitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– training courses and educational experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– institutional or regulatory participatory process</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities and infrastructures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information centres, teaching facilities</li> <li>– leisure facilities and infrastructures</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– park centre, teaching facilities, etc.</li> </ul>	
<b>Programmes and processes</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information within institutional and/or regulatory mandates</li> <li>– forest-related appeal, litigation, public access to information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– education programmes</li> <li>– learning session for schools and classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– committee, forest panel, forums etc.</li> <li>– co-management of forest resources</li> </ul>
<b>Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– forest parks, community woodlands, wildlife, heritage areas, etc.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– marketing symbols</li> <li>– famous figureheads, trustees, etc.</li> <li>– opinion poll and public surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– partnership in projects and forest-related initiatives</li> </ul>

36. Selection of the appropriate tools and methods depends very much on the context and characteristics of the process. Consequently, use should be made of all appropriate means for a given target group and a given message (see also Sections 4.1.1 and 4.2.3). It is important to be creative at this point, using a range of techniques and instruments to diversify the impact. This requires appropriate competencies and skills.

## 4.2 Competencies and skills

### 4.2.1 Capitalize on the forest

37. In a society where people have become more and more disconnected from nature in general and forests in particular (Broadhurst in ILO 1997), forests are one of the sector's most important tools to raise people's awareness of forests and forestry, and thus to reconnect people to them.

#### *Provide people with a personal experience of forests*

38. Current experiences indicate that the best means to reconnect people to their natural and forest environment is to provide people with a personal experience of forests and/or forestry (Kyburz-Graber in SAEFL 2002). The Team referred to this process as providing the public with a "gateway" to forests and forestry, thus opening the way to more active involvement (see Section 4.1.2). This can be done by guided activities or by offering adapted and attractive infrastructure. A good possibility is getting specific groups involved in practical forest-related actions (e.g. mountain bikers help build their trail in the forest, see Annex 1). Creating experience does not necessarily mean large investments. Sometimes small measures will heighten the experience of forests just as effectively. In this context, multiplier effects can substantially increase the impact of initiated activities (e.g. target groups spread their experience, mountain bikers advertise new trail in the forest, etc.).

#### *Capitalize on people's positive feelings about trees and forests*

39. There are a number of very good reasons for using forests as a tool for awareness raising, such as the fact that by getting people into the forest, they are "in your shop", opening up large numbers of possibilities for further contact. Capitalizing on people's positive feelings about trees and forests improves opportunities to bridge public perceptions and values from outside the forest to individual experiences in the forest (see "Urban wood for people", Annex 1). This further opens a gateway to connect social experiences of forests with values and experiences of the forest sector. Depending on the public, forest experiences can be action-oriented or more spiritual (e.g. solitude, well-being), cultural (heritage, archaeology) or sensory (smell, touch).

#### *Maximize strength and opportunities of forest experiences*

40. People need to pass through the gateway to the forest via their own value system. In this context, one must be aware that not all aspects of forests have the same emotional component. Notwithstanding the overall positive image of forests, unfamiliarity with the forest environment, lack of security, archaic fears in dense forest cover, for example, may detract from people's enjoyment of the forest. Awareness-raising activities must therefore be aware of the positive and negative aspects of forest experiences and consequently make sure people have positive experiences!

41. The following figure lists strengths and weaknesses of using the forest for awareness raising, as perceived by the Team. The list is not comprehensive, but may serve as a base for reflection.

Figure 5 – Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of forest experience

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- direct connection to people's emotions (positive feeling about trees and forests)</li> <li>- sensory (smell, touch, sound)</li> <li>- spiritual feeling, feeling of wellbeing, mental health, psychological benefits</li> <li>- action-oriented experiences</li> <li>- cultural heritage, personal history, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unfamiliarity (frightened of getting lost)</li> <li>- lack of security, fear</li> <li>- cultural differences: positive or negative view depends on cultural background</li> <li>- inconvenience (nowhere to park car, distance)</li> <li>- needs skills and investments</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sell and package (wrap up experiences)</li> <li>- forming new partnerships</li> <li>- people are in your "shop", customer base gets larger</li> <li>- escalation of interests</li> <li>- diversify customer base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- negative feeling about forest</li> <li>- criminal activities</li> <li>- adverse publicity (e.g. criminal activities)</li> <li>- conflicts with values of forest owners</li> <li>- conflicting interests (conflicts between users)</li> <li>- not everybody will be reached (e.g. urban dwellers far from accessible forest)</li> </ul>

*Raise mutual respect for each other's limits*

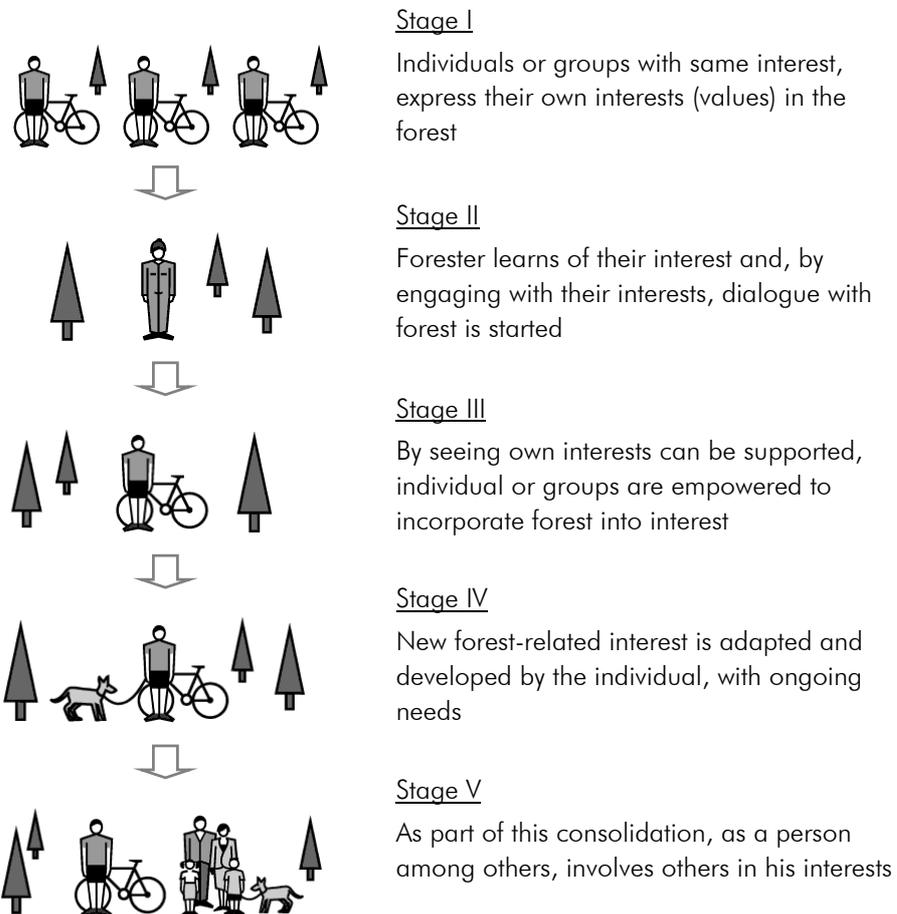
42. Creating a gateway works on the principle that people, through their values and interests, will have the forest experience that is relevant to them. The fact is however that with the rising density of the population and with the large number of new outdoor activities this principle may reach the limits of the forest's capacities. The interests may be in competition with each other (e.g. people looking for silence in the forest versus large numbers of visitors in densely populated areas). When passing a certain level, the values held by some groups may even endanger other objectives of sustainable forest management.

43. The need to respond to society's demands toward forests does not mean that all social uses are acceptable. It is therefore an important part of the processes to draw people's attention to the various social demands addressed to forests and forestry and to define possible means to balance the various interests present. In this sense the Team agreed that forest experiences should not threaten the economic, social and environment values the forest provides (SFM). Raising awareness is then also about creating mutual respect for each other's interests, thus balancing short-term and long-term objectives of forest management and forest conservation (see "Greener forests campaign", Annex 1).

Figure 6 – Example of awareness-raising process

A local Raising Awareness Process based on mountain biking in Scotland is described in Annex 1 (case study). A local forester became aware that a rider was looking for somewhere to ride his bike and suggested a trail in a nearby forest. The rider used this trail regularly, and then started to wear out an area for jump practice (**stage I**). The forester suggested that if a local bike group were formed they could build a proper jump park, provided they also maintained it. A local group was formed and they built the park with materials supplied by the forester (**stage II**). They were joined by other riders, who used and maintained the facility. Some have now started to plant and care for trees in the park area, with the forester's help (**stage III**). The rider's family now comes to watch him ride and has started to walk in the forest. The rider also goes for forest walks (**stage IV**). Even if he stops riding, it seems he will carry on with this. There are many other examples of this kind with many other interests and contexts (**stage V**).

A possible model to describe the process based on these might be:



In the example above "empowerment" makes the individual self-motivated, enables the interest to be self-developing, and helps to create new awareness in others, without further forest input.

Source: M. Wenner (ToS-2002).

## 4.2.2 Capitalize on the people in forestry

44. The experiences presented in this report (see Annex 1) show that raising general awareness of forests and forestry may be organized for many reasons and implemented by many types of forest-related actors (e.g. public authorities, forest agencies, private forest owners, forest associations, forestry schools, NGOs, etc.). To create the best possible conditions for successful awareness raising, a clear understanding of what the aim is, how to go about the process, and what opportunities are being created is essential.

### *Start raising awareness within your organization*

45. A clear, competent and motivated attitude of the forest sector toward raising awareness of forests and forestry is key to successful awareness activities. Experience has shown that, for instance, fear of the changes that the process may bring about (i.e. contact with the public, redistribution of power), lack of understanding of objectives and methods, unclear definition of tasks and responsibilities, lack of resources or insufficient competencies may prejudice the process. Awareness-raising activities need therefore to start with the people implicated in the process to address existing fears and blockages and to develop adequate competencies and skills before addressing the public (see "Bridging the gap in the UK", Annex 1).

### *Develop a strategy and create ownership*

46. Professional awareness raising is based on a strategic approach with a long-term orientation. A first step is therefore to clarify the needs of the organization (defining oneself), leading to the formulation of the objectives of the process. Clear objectives improve understanding and ownership of the process among the people involved (corporate identity). In this context, the Team is convinced that very effective awareness raising can be done with simple means, by making better use of existing instruments and infrastructure (see "Press and publicity toolkit", Annex 1). There are innumerable opportunities in which the forest sector can enter into direct contact with the public (e.g. forest operations near inhabited areas) and can thus contribute to a raised awareness. Public forest organizations in particular need to consider how to make better use of their widespread personnel in the field (see "Forest owner groups in Flanders", Annex 1).

### *Improve communication skills and competencies*

47. Proficiency in awareness raising requires communication skills. Therefore, people working in the field should be given the opportunity to strengthen their competence in communication and public relations. Even if it is not an aim of the process to transform every forester into a skilled communicator, one should at least identify and promote the good "awareness raisers", using them as examples to raise the general level of public relations within the forest sector. In this perspective, the ability to communicate could also be taken into greater consideration in training and education programmes within the forest sector and when recruiting (see "Forestry training in France", Annex 1).

*Use professional help*

48. The increasing complexity of today's communication flow requires more than ever the use of professional communication skills based on sound knowledge and relevant experience (Gschwandtl in SAEFL 2002). This is obviously also true for awareness-raising activities. But while improving internal communication skills and competencies is essential to increase interaction between society and the forest sector, the Team felt that relying on professional help to develop and implement awareness-raising strategies is also a key factor to success. Closer cooperation with professional public relations or communication agencies, and also with specialists of disciplines relevant to the forest sector, such as social sciences, may not only improve quality and efficacy of forest-related communication activities, but may also enhance competencies and expertise of the forest actors in this area (see "Bridging the gap in the UK", Annex 1).

*Build alliances and partnerships<sup>9</sup>*

49. Actors in the forest sector are numerous and diverse (e.g. public and private forest owners, forest agencies, scientists, wood industry, NGOs, etc.). This fragmented structure of the forest sector may be an impediment to awareness-raising activities, as small groups with few resources may have difficulty communicating their interests, particularly if other more powerful organizations are already covering the field. The success of one may limit the other, in the worst case excluding some actors. Conversely, this diversity of actors – and thus of interests and messages – can also be an opportunity to develop concerted awareness-raising activities. If various forest-related actors for example show their contribution to the protection of forests, this results in a raising of public awareness as to the role of forestry for sustainable forest management. In this context, two types of alliances can be defined:

- Partnerships within the forest sector, e.g. forest owners joining forces with forest industry for a given activity or campaign. This is a means to limit the fragmentation of the sector.
- Alliances with sectors outside forestry (e.g. education, environment, health sector, tourism). Advantages here are (among others) profiting from the public attention generally given to these sectors, and profiting from their resources.

50. Notwithstanding the danger of inconsistencies in the messages and the risk of concentration of power, creating alliances and partnerships belongs to a communication strategy as the fact of joining forces with others allows a greater impact. It is also a means to overcome such obstacles as the lack of human, financial and technical resources.

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<sup>9</sup> For more in formation on the subject please refer to the FAO/ECE/ILO Seminar on Partnerships in Forestry, Brussels (Belgium), 3-6 June 2002 (ILO 2002).

### *Manage the change*

51. A number of statements suggest that whereas some actors within the forest sector are already very active in raising general awareness of forests and forestry, others still have to build up their capacities further in the area. Such a transformation process within the forest sector needs to address possible fears that an increased interaction with the public may bring about. Managing the change – at organizational, structural and/or personal level – is a challenging task for the forest sector. However, the Team is convinced that awareness-raising processes may then build on this experience to create an active partnership between forestry and society. Such a partnership will not only change the public, but will also mean changes in the forest sector itself (see "Bridging the gap in the UK ", Annex 1).

### 4.2.3 Capitalize on the public

52. Raising awareness of forests and forestry is a social process aiming at increasing interactions between forestry and society, thus empowering people and interest groups to become partners to support sustainable forest management. To be effective, this process must meet and maintain interests of both the social and the forest actors. Professional awareness raising must therefore be aware of peoples' expectations, interests and concerns about forests and forestry and adapt strategy and message to the various audiences.

### *Know your audience and listen to its concerns*

53. For people to become interested in and thus active in supporting sustainable forest management, they need to have a personal stake. As such, « the proximity of an event – i.e. how near it is in location, time or to the concerns of an audience – will determine its relevance to an audience » (Foley ToS-2002). Knowing the audience and listening to its concerns is therefore a key to successful awareness raising (see "Greener forests campaign in Sweden" and " Urban wood for people", Annex 1).

### *Identify target groups*

54. Obviously the public is not a single entity and may have various concerns and expectations about forests and forestry. An important step in awareness-raising activities is therefore to identify the various target groups and to segment the audience accordingly. This implies a solid knowledge of the social characteristics of the identified target group (e.g. their needs and demands, their perception of the subject or problem at hand, the image they have of the organization, etc.). To this end, social surveys (e.g. opinion polls, telephone enquiries, etc.) and regular contacts (e.g. contact in the field, meetings, public participation processes, etc.) are key instruments.

55. Besides the forest sector itself (see previous chapter), the Team identified a number of target groups meriting special attention in the context of awareness raising:

- Children

The Team generally agreed that awareness raising is especially important in youth, in order to transmit a basic understanding of forests and forestry. Raising awareness in children implies the need to involve teachers and schools, but also the parents (e.g. child asking questions during a walk in the forest).

- Decision-makers and opinion-formers

Decision-makers and opinion-formers are key target groups for awareness-raising activities. Raising their awareness would in this context be to attempt to influence their decisions in favour of the forest sector (see "Forest forum for decision maker in Finland", Annex 1).

- Urban population

It was further suggested that urban dwellers, whose relations with forests have evolved away from traditional forest use, should be a focus of awareness-raising processes (see "Urban wood for people", Annex 1). Among others, ideas to give them the opportunity to have forest experiences were open forest policies or virtual forests (i.e. reaching the modern computer generation).

- Media

Getting the media interested in forests and forestry is a means of spreading the message one wishes to convey. Depending on the aims pursued, the media can be a target group of their own or a means to convey messages to the recipients.

56. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to look at other potential forest user groups that may have special needs (e.g. women, non-organized interest, handicapped, etc.) or to define and segment the audience regarding specific socio-economic criteria (e.g. rural-urban, active-sedentary, young-old, different educational standards, incomes).

### *Be aware of the limits*

57. While making every effort to raise general awareness of forests and forestry, it must be kept in mind that no communication process is expected to reach everybody. Information overload, lack of interest, social pressures, personal priorities, beliefs or values are clear limitations to awareness-raising processes. No matter what the forest sector does, people will only choose to pass the first gateway and thus to enter into a relationship as long as their perceived benefits outweigh the costs of their personal "involvement". As already mentioned (see Section 3.4), these limitations need to be clearly recognized and addressed effectively as a means to create the best possible conditions for effective and efficient awareness raising.

### *Monitor social change*

58. Raising awareness of forests and forestry is a dynamic and constant social process, building on the principle of continual improvement. Therefore, change in public interests, attitudes and perception towards forests and forestry needs to be monitored. Accordingly awareness-raising processes and activities need to be evaluated and communication strategies need to be adapted in consequence (see Section 4.3).

### *Capitalize on the public trust of foresters*

59. Recent enquiries in various European countries (e.g. Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom, etc) have shown that social attitudes toward forests and forestry were positive on the whole (SAEFL 2000). These studies also show that the forest sector very often underestimates its popularity with the general public as well as the public trust in the sector's ability to manage the forest (SAEFL 2000). However the Team recognized that numerous conflicting situations still need to be solved and thus the public image of forestry needs to be improved. It also emphasized the importance of capitalizing where possible on the public trust in the forest sector, and building on this to strengthen the links between forestry and society.

## **4.3 Evaluation and monitoring**

60. A change in attitude, resulting for example in fewer conflicts, and changes in action (e.g. increased sales of wood products) are an obvious sign of a successful awareness-raising process. But does this mean that no visible change in attitude is a sign of failure? Not necessarily.

### 4.3.1 What is the measure of success?

#### *No linear causality between increased awareness and environmental behaviour*

61. As Kyburz-Graber pointed out, experiences in environmental education show that « the linear causality – more ecological knowledge and awareness are guarantees for responsible acting – [has been] recognized as to be much too simple in relation to the complex question how individual and collective human behaviour is shaped » (SAEFL 2002, p. 63). Perhaps, as for participatory processes, the public involved is not interested in the process or disagrees with the issues at hand, with the consequence that there is no tangible result of an awareness-raising process. Yet perhaps other aims may have been achieved that later, in combination with other factors, will lead to a new social change. Unexpected or unintended results may also be produced especially where people get into a face-to-face situation (enabling them to put themselves in the place of the other). Even if results were not intended, this does not obviously mean a failure of the awareness-raising process.

### *Continual improvement based on sound knowledge and impact evaluation*

62. Continual improvement based on sound knowledge and impact evaluation is therefore key to successful and professional awareness raising, not only in order to improve quality and efficiency of the activities implemented, but also as a matter of accountability for the use of resources (e.g. human, financial, infrastructures, invested time). Awareness-raising processes need to demonstrate that investments have been worthwhile and that – material and immaterial – benefits are higher than the expenses. For this, the expected impacts need to be defined, and the benefits of what has been done demonstrated.

63. The Team however noted that in general, accountability (e.g. cost-benefit analyses) in awareness-raising processes still seems to be poorly developed in the forest sector.

### 4.3.2 Principles and tools

64. Like any target-oriented action, awareness-raising need both to monitor progress – *listen to the public* – and to evaluate the success of the process itself – *see if it is working*.

#### *Monitoring of the process*

65. Monitoring can be defined as «the continuous collection and analysis of information. Monitoring is used to provide managers and other stakeholders with continuous feedback on the implementation of activities and resources » (IUCN 2000).

66. When planning awareness-raising activities it is important to develop a monitoring plan at the beginning of the process: continuity and repetition of monitoring activities are essential for long-term results (people change slowly). Different means and methods may be used to monitor different stages of the process. For this public surveys, opinion polls or other social science methods are important tools, requiring skilful use and interpretation. Therefore collaboration with social science professionals is essential (e.g. university, research institute, agencies, etc.).

#### *Monitoring social change*

67. In this context, the Team considers that beyond the monitoring of a specific campaign or process, public attitudes and values associated with forests and forestry should also be regularly monitored. When doing this, it is also important to consider both quantitative and qualitative measures.

#### *Evaluation of the results*

68. Evaluation can be defined as « a periodic assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance of a project in the context of stated objectives. An evaluation may also include an assessment of unintended impacts. Evaluation studies are usually undertaken as an independent examination of the background, objectives, results,

activities and means deployed, with a view to drawing lessons that may guide future work » (IUCN 2000).

69. To enable an evaluation of an awareness-raising process it is important to define the objectives and the measure of success or failure early in the process, and to develop an evaluation strategy (see above). In this context, the set objectives must be realistic and easily measurable. The transparent definition and use of criteria and indicators is therefore essential (define which elements correspond to which kind of measurement).

70. When planning the evaluation – or the monitoring – of an awareness-raising process, one should not forget that a lot can be done with simple means, using existing infrastructure. For example during an open day in the forest, the forester can ask the participants questions (e.g. ask participants where they heard about it). This is already an element of evaluation!

# 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Conclusions

71. The concepts of sustainable development and sustainable forest management are based on the full consideration of economic, social and environmental considerations. In this context, raising awareness of forests and forestry is an important tool to improve interaction between people, forests and forestry, and by so doing to enhance society's support to sustainable forest management.

### *Raising awareness is an opening*

72. In the past years numerous statements have emphasized that the forest sector needs to take the initiative to go out to meet the public, rather than engage in losing battles to sustain the *status quo* (ILO 1997, SAEFL 2002). As a process, awareness raising contributes to such an opening towards the public, as it aims not only at imparting more knowledge, but at creating new dynamic opportunities for exchange and dialogue with the public. It gives forestry, but also the public, a chance to open up, initiate and "embrace change" (ILO, 1997, p. 29).

### *Awareness raising starts within*

73. First steps of an awareness-raising process should start within the forest sector and within each organization. Not only does it mean that skills and competencies may have to be acquired or adapted, but also that the use of resources within the organization may have to be reconsidered. Starting an awareness-raising process also means the challenge of managing any changes. Such a transformation process within the forest sector needs to address possible fears that an increased interaction with the public may bring about.

### *Awareness raising is creative and open-minded*

74. Awareness-raising processes vary with the actors and their perception of problems and opportunities that could be addressed through awareness raising. The objectives also vary with scope, geographical scale and time horizons. This report can give a general framework and indicate different phases, methods and instruments, but it is up to each organization within the forest sector to define its own awareness-raising process, including its objectives, strategies and choice of instruments and criteria of success. In this context, There are very wide opportunities to engage people's activities, interests, and concerns in forests and forestry, and through these to give them the chance to appreciate and take more interest in forests.

### *Raising awareness is a long-term investment*

75. Professional awareness raising needs adequate resources – be it in time, finance, capacity, information, organization or structure. It can be difficult to estimate the benefits of the process in relation to the costs that arise, particularly in the absence of practical experience, focus, and evaluation track record. In the Team's view, awareness raising needs to be undertaken and should therefore be considered an investment rather than an expense, in the long-term perspective of sustainable forest management.

## **5.2 Recommendations for action**

76. With this report, the FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry and the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network have tried to clarify the concept of raising awareness of forests and forestry and to provide recommendations for action in this matter. In this regard, the Team is convinced that awareness raising is an essential part of sustainable forest management.

77. As a general recommendation, the Team would invite the forest sector as a whole to better understand the underlying reasons for awareness raising and adopt the principles for its delivery. In this context, forest actors should consider how they can contribute to raising public awareness of forests and forestry. Larger public forest organizations in particular need to be conscious of their special responsibility for raising awareness. The Team further proposes the following lines of action.

### *Capitalize on the forest*

78. Forest actors need to enable the public to have a positive experience of forests and forestry that is of personal relevance to them. Forests are obviously excellent tools of which adequate use needs to be made. Large public forest organizations should consider how to capitalize on their widespread staff in the field.

79. As already mentioned, people's direct experience of forests, especially when their interests are engaged, can empower them to be more interested in forests. It also opens opportunities for them to raise awareness in others. Where such opportunities are possible, they appear to be virtuous circles which might be specifically focused upon, especially as they are often of low cost. In this context, special attention should be paid to specific target groups as defined previously (children, decision makers, urban population, women, etc.).

### *Analyse current awareness-raising activities*

80. The Team would like to invite all forest sector actors (public forest enterprises, forest owners, NGOs, etc.) at all levels (international, national and regional or local) to analyse their current awareness-raising activities in the light of the present report. Elements of such an analysis may be:

- ⇒ Look for opportunities for building human capacities (communication skills) within the organization. Recognize the places where professional input is needed. Reconsider organizational structure or way of working, and discuss allocation of resources.
- ⇒ Look for possibilities of creating alliances or partnerships with other actors in the forest sector or with partners from outside the sector.
- ⇒ Carry out an audit of their actions and communications against the values and recommendations set out in Chapter 4.1.1 (Professional communication).
- ⇒ Examine the limits, issues and challenges of awareness-raising activities as listed in this report (see Chapter 3.4) and how they can be addressed and overcome?

81. The awareness-raising strategy of each forest actor also needs to be analysed with respect to the target public, by ensuring the use of appropriate methods and techniques to assess people's values and attitudes to forests and forestry.

### *Develop methods of accountability*

82. The Team recognized a number of gaps in knowledge and experience as relating to awareness raising of forests and forestry. Measures of costs and benefits of awareness raising seem to be poorly developed for forestry. Such instruments would facilitate planning, budgeting and evaluation of awareness-raising processes.

### *Emerging contexts deserving special attention*

83. The Team felt that two special contexts deserve special attention and have not been examined sufficiently:

- ⇒ Awareness raising in an urban context poses special and additional challenges: the public is more difficult to reach, as it is particularly disconnected from forests and forestry. Furthermore, urban populations have a very wide variety of cultural backgrounds, meaning a further challenge in respect of the formulation of messages and their effect on the various recipients. These areas contain large audiences with big potential interest in the spiritual, emotional and physical resources forests have to offer, as well as in forests as an essential part of man's environment and well being.
- ⇒ The differences between awareness raising in public and private forest organizations were not looked into in any detail. Whereas the forms and principles are valid independently of any considerations of ownership, there may be differences in the possibilities of implementation and in the effects.

84. Worldwide efforts to improve sustainable development of all types of forests have shown that the human dimension is intrinsic to environmental and forestry issues, and that the social dimension of forestry is an integral part of sustainable management of forest resources. With the concept of "raising awareness of forests and forestry", people *from* the forest sector open the gateway to allow contact and interaction with people to come *into* the forest. The Team is convinced that this concept has a lot to offer to strengthen society's support for sustainable forest management.



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# ANNEXES

## **Annex 1: Case studies and experiences on raising awareness of forests and forestry**

The Team of Specialists gathered 10 case studies and experiences on raising awareness of forests and forestry. These examples reflect various elements, issues and topics presented in this report. Most of these experiences are at an early stage of development. While it appears that not all cases mirror equally the different principles of the definition, they do all encompass key elements of what is meant here by awareness raising at some stage in their process.

### List of the case studies

1. Bridging the gap – A communications strategy for the UK Forestry Commission
2. An approach to interactive communication about forestry in Finland - The Forest Forum for Decision Makers
3. Active participation - Examples from the US Forest Service
4. Creating venues for information exchange - Forest Owner Groups in Flanders
5. Forest Fire Prevention in Spain
6. Knowledge of production and environment in forests - The Swedish "Greener Forests" campaign
7. Communication strategies in forestry and the forest industries sector - The Press and Publicity Toolkit
8. Creating forest experience - Mountain biking in south Scotland
9. Increase recreational benefits from urban woodlands for various user groups - Urban Woods for People
10. Awareness raising to maintain the forestry workforce - Recruiting young forestry trainees in France

## 1. Bridging the gap – A communications strategy for the UK Forestry Commission

A big problem facing the Forestry Commission at the end of the 1990s was that while forestry policy had changed dramatically, public perception had not kept pace. In an information-rich society with so many competing demands on people's time and attention it was increasingly difficult for forestry's story to be told. In response to this challenge the Commission embarked on a major rethink on how it communicated with its stakeholders. To encourage a more radical approach to its thinking the Commission recruited Dragon International, a creative consultancy specializing in management of brand and corporate reputation, to look at the issue from a marketing communications perspective. An initial study involved a great amount of desk research and talking with a wide range of stakeholders, and the Commission's own staff.

The outcome of this work was the "Bridging the Gap" strategy, which made a number of recommendations that have changed the way the Commission communicates, both internally and externally.

Among the changes were:

- The adoption of a set of communications principles or values that would be employed with all stakeholders. These included being: Honest; Open and Accessible; Listening and Responsive; Responsible and Caring;
- A more consistent approach to communications style, with increased clarity, better use of evocative imagery, and a move from using the language and vocabulary of the forester to those which connected with a much wider audience;
- To help get people's interest a shift was made to a more market-led form of communications to make forestry more relevant to a broader public. Non-forestry themes such as health and fitness, leisure, and interest in wildlife have all proved to be effective in promoting the multiple benefits of sustainable forestry.
- Improvement to the Commission's internal communications was seen as a key objective - if people inside the organization did not understand what modern forestry was about, how could they communicate with those outside. Guidance was made available to all staff to help them understand what the communications strategy meant for them and how it could be applied to their own work areas.
- The complement of skilled, professional communicators was increased throughout the organization.
- A fast response telephone and e-mail helpline service was introduced to help make the Forestry Commission more accessible and to help callers find the information they needed quickly and efficiently.
- The importance of the internet as a key communications tool was recognized and additional resources were put into a redesign that was more 'customer orientated'. Site traffic has increased from 20,000 pages per month to half a million pages.

The Commission considers that the initiative has raised appreciation of effective communications as an essential part of sustainable forest management among its staff; has improved public perception of forestry and the benefits it provides; and has helped to gain interest and participation from a much wider audience.

Source: "Bridging the Gap, A strategy to improve our external communication", Forestry Commission.

Contact: Colin Morton, UK Forestry Commission, United-Kingdom.

## 2. An approach to interactive communication about forestry in Finland - The Forest Forum for Decision Makers

The Finnish forest sector long felt the need for cooperation with various sectors of society to discuss and resolve problems related to forests. For this reason the first Forest Forum for Decision-Makers was convened in September 1996.

Since then, 14 Forums have been held. Economic, ecological, and social development strategies related to forests and the forest sector are openly discussed in the Forum. New insights are sought through lectures, discussions and group work which may take place in seminar rooms, industrial plants as well as within the forest itself.

There are 25 to 30 participants in each Forum. They participate on invitation, which means that each Forest Forum is attended by different people. The participants are from administrations and businesses, they are Members of Parliament or work for NGOs or are from the media. Only one-third of the participants represent forestry or the forest industries, two-thirds are from other sectors of society.

Asked about their expectations, the participants stated that they wanted to:

1. Establish personal, cross-sectoral contacts.
2. Have an open dialogue and as a result a broader understanding of forest issues – within and outside the forest sector.
3. Obtain high quality information about the present state of the forest sector.
4. Lay the foundations for cross-sectoral cooperation and forest policy strategies at national and international level.

The high willingness to attend the Forums is a sign that these expectations are being met. At the request of the participants, several additional joint seminars are arranged every year for all people having already participated in a Forest Forum. Joint seminars can be in the form of co-operation field trips, theme seminars, lunches on current issues etc.

The fact that people participate as individuals instead of as representatives reduces social pressure and leads to open discussion. Opening the forest sector to include others has increased the trust in the forest sector and has improved its credibility.

One of the major outputs of the Forest Forum for Decision-Makers has been its active involvement in the Finnish national forest programme during its preparation in 1998.

Source: Finnish Forest Association, [www.smy.fi/pma](http://www.smy.fi/pma).

Contact: Pauli Wallenius, Finnish Forest and Park Service, Finland.

### 3. Active participation - Examples from the US Forest Service

Perhaps one of the most successful ways to build awareness about forests is to give members of the public direct experience with forests and forest managers in ways that enhance learning. Participation in forest management activities and "learning by doing" are opportunities that provide these types of experiences. The following are examples of active participation activities the U.S. Forest Service participates in that help build public awareness about forests.

#### 1/ Passport In Time Program (PIT)

PIT is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program developed by the Forest Service. Its purpose is to preserve the nation's past with the help of the public. It provides opportunities for members of the public to work along side professional archaeologists and historians on research and management projects. Projects may involve all types of archaeological investigations such as excavation, rock art restoration, historic structure restoration, and gathering oral histories.

#### 2/ Family Education Program with a Naturalist (CA)

Individual National Forests have different conservation education programs. At the San Bernardino National Forest in southern California, a number of education programs for families have been developed. One program brings an individual family together with an agency naturalist to explore nature topics of interest to the family. These programs are experiential, taking place outdoors, and provide a lot of opportunities for one-on-one learning about wildlife, orienteering, plants, insects etc.

#### 3/ Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The purpose of this program, administered and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, is to provide part-time opportunities in community service employment for elderly low income people living near National Forests. The goals of the SCSEP are based on the principles of personal responsibility, lifelong learning, and service to the community. Enrollees receive training and may work at a variety of tasks in recreation programs, interpretive services, and facility maintenance.

#### 4/ Youth Conservation Corps Program (YCC)

The YCC is a government-sponsored summer employment program initiated in 1970 that enables teenagers aged 15-18 to work on public land projects. Young people from all segments of society work, learn, and earn together in ways that cultivate in them a better appreciation for the natural environment.

#### 5/ Forest Stewardship Program (FSP)

The FSP is an agency program that provides funding to private landowners to develop plans to manage their lands sustainably. The funding pays for the services of professional foresters, biologists and other experts that help the landowner prepare a land management plan (stewardship plan). The FSP builds awareness because development of stewardship plans helps landowners understand how to best maintain the productivity and health of their forests.

Source: Public Awareness of Forests in the United States (ToS-2002).

Contact: Anne Hoover, USDA Forest Service, USA.

#### 4. Creating venues for information exchange - Forest Owner Groups in Flanders

There is but little forested area in Flanders: It was estimated at around 146,000 ha in 2001. More than 70% of the forests in Flanders are private. Moreover, forest ownership in Flanders is very fragmented. Most properties are smaller than 1 ha. A forest complex can thus belong to a large number of different forest owners, public or private. Forest management is not economically viable on such small areas, often resulting in neglect in forest management and a loss of interest.

In order to make this large group of people more aware of sustainable forest management, the Flemish community launched an initiative in 1994 to promote the creation of forest owner and manager groups.

One of the main objectives of these owner groups is the development and establishment of a general management plan for an entire forest, covering all owners. Joint wood sales and a consequent open forest policy are some of the other objectives of such groups. The grouping of forest owners and managers makes it possible to distribute specific management tasks among the group, thus minimizing the cost per owner. Also, different forest managers may have different ways of managing their part of a greater complex, be it more focused on natural aspects or on economical ones. This way, forest owner groups can offer a solution to the problems small private owners deal with.

Until now, eight such owner groups have been created.

One of the positive side-effects of the initiative is the intense discussion and debate that has been triggered within these groups of forest owners. Ideas and suggestions are exchanged, thus resulting in a higher level of awareness and of mutual understanding. The members of such groups are given a "channel" through which they can get access to information about forest ownership and forest management. In some ways, the fragmentation of ownership in Flanders can be seen as an opportunity: by informing and encouraging such a large number of people, a platform is created for sustainable forest management in Flanders.

Source: Raising Awareness in Forest Policy - Experiences of the Flemish Community (ToS-2002).

Contact: Nico Coppé, Division of Forests and Green Spaces, Ministry of Flanders, Belgium.

## 5. Forest Fire Prevention in Spain

Since the adoption of the Spanish Constitution, the main responsibility for forest fire prevention has lain with the Autonomies. Yet there still exists a Defence against Forest Fires Service within the Ministry of Environment, which mainly has a coordinating function. One of the other important functions of this Service is to **raise awareness** by developing general campaigns on forest fire prevention.

### At administration level:

**Training Courses** are offered every year to Forest Agents, the Civil Guard and the police forces of the Autonomies in order to improve investigations on the causes of forest fires. The result is that the number of forest fires due to unknown causes has decreased since the 1990s.

### At public level:

There are three campaigns every year, addressing different target groups:

1. **Urban people:** The aim is to inform them of the risk of forest fires through TV and radio advertisements, sometimes involving well known people (e.g. singers, actors). These campaigns are more intensive during summer.
2. **Rural People:** It is very common to burn agricultural land after harvest. This is a very important cause of forest fires. All year round, Rural Agents try to make people realize the risks and adapt their methods to avoid burning.
3. **Children:** In every public and private school, children receive information about forest fires and are involved in different activities, for example drawing competitions on the subject. At present there is a web site for children to learn about forests and about how to prevent forest fires: [www.cortafuegos.com](http://www.cortafuegos.com).

### At forestry management level:

The campaign is focused on promoting preventive silvicultural practices and infrastructures. With this aim, there is a **Plan of Priority Actions against Forest Fires (PAPIF)** to act on in high risk areas. One activity is to promote the use of controlled burning which is showing positive results in some regions. There is a video for forest technicians, agents and owners that gives guidance on the use of this technique.

Thanks to all the **preventive work** of the State and the Autonomies, most fires are under control more quickly than before. As a result, although the number of forest fires affecting areas under 1 ha has increased, the number affecting bigger areas is decreasing so the total affected area is smaller than in previous years.

Source: Vélez, R. Head of Defense against Forest Fires Service, Directorate-General of Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environment of Spain, "Las actividades del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente para defensa contra incendios forestales". Revista de Protección Civil. Número 1. Septiembre 1999.

Contact: Ana Belén Noriega , Dirección General de Conservación de la Naturaleza, Spain; or Marta Gómez de los Riscos, TRAGSA - Área de Medio Ambiente, Spain.

## 6. Knowledge of production and environment in forests - The Swedish "Greener Forests" campaign

"Greener Forests" is an extension and information campaign. The campaign was launched in 1999 for a duration of 3 years. It was an important step in the implementation of the Swedish Forest Policy of 1993, which gives equal priority to production goals as to goals of nature conservation, including social benefits and conservation of cultural heritage.

The Swedish Forest Policy is based on the fact that forest owners have the responsibility for their forests. These were the main target group of the campaign, together with people employed in forest industry. Other target groups were the public at large, particularly schools, decision-makers and families with small children.

The objective of the campaign was to raise the overall acceptance of the national goals, in order to transfer them to specific objectives in each holding.

The main activities of the campaign were training courses, comprising indoor study and forest excursions. To this end, a comprehensive textbook was written, which was supplemented by 8 thematic books, e.g. on Wildlife Management in Forestry, Riparian Forestry or Management of Young Stands. Additionally, nearly 200 demonstration areas were prepared throughout the country. Within these areas typical stands and habitats were visited. Management planning was studied and discussed, enabling participants to obtain an overall approach to sustainable forest management in their own region.

Both the quantitative and qualitative goals of the campaign were achieved. A total of 122,000 people participated in the courses, of which 63,000 followed the more ambitious training programme exceeding 20 hours. According to the evaluation, 80% of the sample group agrees with the proposed line of action. Including the other target groups, the campaign reached 350,000 people, who participated for a minimum of 3 hours, of which 10,000 teachers, and several hundred decision-makers.

Success factors of the campaign were: the long and careful preparation phase, the partnerships within the forest sector, including the establishment of a national council with all organizations and stakeholder groups involved, training programmes for all involved staff with a refresher course after the first year, regular reporting and continuous evaluation.

Difficulties were encountered in getting all staff "on board", the conclusion being that comprehensive and repeated information of all people involved is essential. Sufficient capacity needs to be allocated to the implementation of such a campaign, so that staff do not feel they are neglecting their other duties.

The evaluation of the long-term effects of such a campaign is also very difficult, partly because of lacking techniques, but also due to the high costs of such an evaluation.

Source: "Greener Forests" – part of a success story, Swedish National Board of Forestry, [www.svo.se/gronareskog](http://www.svo.se/gronareskog).

Contact: Gunnar Nordanstig, National Board of Forestry, Sweden.

## 7. Communication strategies in forestry and the forest industries sector - The Press and Publicity Toolkit

In order to adapt forestry and the forest industries to the rapid economic, environmental and social developments taking place all over the world, changes in objectives, policies, structures and procedures are required. These changes need to be supported by effective communication and public relations at local, national and international level.

Public relations or forest-related communication cannot replace forest policy or management decisions. They cannot reverse or hide wrong decisions. Public relations is a profession based on specific communication principles, skills and channels and requires adequate resources. It is an evolving concept, which, starting from one-way information, must arrive at multi-way communication processes.

The Forest Communicators Network (formally the FAO/ECE Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries Sector) developed a "toolkit" designed to give guidance to companies and organizations, ministries and associations. It is a brief introduction to the many techniques to improve press relations and publicity planning, and covers the following topics:

- planning a publicity campaign
- press relations
- paid publicity
- targeting

The information given in the toolkit enables communicators in the forest and forest industries sector to prepare a successful publicity programme.

Source: Gschwandtl I., *Professional communication at local, national and international level – an integral part of sustainable forest management*, Forestry Meets the Public, 8-11 October 2001, Rütthubelbad, Switzerland, Seminar and Workshop Proceedings, p. 77. (*Press and publicity toolkit*, [www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/publist/toolkit.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/publist/toolkit.htm)).

Contact: Ingwald Gschwandtl, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria.

## 8. Creating forest experience - Mountain biking in south Scotland

The "7stanes" project is creating seven mountain bike centres in forests across the south of Scotland, within driving distance of large centres such as Manchester, Newcastle and Edinburgh.

When the project is completed in 2004, each 7stanes centre will provide top class mountain biking for riders of different abilities. Each centre will also provide suitable car parking, environmental and interpretation facilities and in some cases play areas for families.

Each 7stanes centre will be easily identifiable by a large "stane" (Scottish variation of stone) which is likely to be placed at the start of the trails.

The funding for the project represents the biggest ever public investment in developing mountain biking in Britain. Based on response elsewhere the trails, once completed, could attract over 500,000 new visitors to the region each year, bringing significant benefits for the rural community.

The 7stanes is a partnership project between the Forest Commission and some 15 public regional and many local organizations, and is part-financed by the European Union.

An important feature of the project is the trailbuilding itself: besides the professional trail builders and designers there are regular trailbuilding sessions with volunteer squads. Already four volunteer trailbuilding groups have started in Innerleithen, Glentress, Mabie and Dalbeattie forests.

The "Glentress trailfairies" for instance meet every fortnight to upgrade existing trails and build new sections. In this manner they have the opportunity to shape and maintain the trails they ride on.

Source: For more information log on to [www.7stanes.gov.uk](http://www.7stanes.gov.uk).

Contact: Miles Wenner, Developing Forestry, United Kingdom.

## 9. Increase recreational benefits from urban woodlands for various user groups - Urban Woods for People

For many people in urban areas, urban woodlands are the only direct contact with nature. For this reason, "Urban Woods for People" concentrates its efforts on the social value of forests, focusing on urban forests as an environment for recreation. A number of organizations from France and Sweden have joined forces under this Life-Environment project, lasting from 2001 to 2005.

The project aims at demonstrating ways to enhance, encourage and improve recreation for the general public in urban woodlands. Handbooks on topics like management and planning, measurement of quantity and quality of recreation and adaptations to meet the needs of disabled persons will be published, along with publications that focus on the different values of the forest. One book will discuss the various aspects of the positive relations between recreation and personal health. Three internet sites will also be created. In both countries systems for public participation will be presented.

Pilot urban forests in both Sweden and France will be used to demonstrate different ways to stimulate forest recreation. In the pilot urban forest of Sénart, south of Paris, an Extension Centre will be developed, where visitors can learn about current research on urban forests and about silvicultural practices, management and planning in urban woodlands. It will also offer young children around Sénart a comprehensive training program to become Junior Foresters.

One focus of the project will be on the private urban forest owners and ways both to increase the recreational value of their forests and to minimize any negative impact by visitors.

### Current activities include:

- *A forest Magna Carta:* The Sénart forest lies south of Paris and covers 3000 ha. Three million people visit it each year. During spring and summer of 2002, the Office National des Forêts (ONF) invited the general public, local associations, politicians, forest managers and others to meetings where the future of the Sénart forest was discussed. Among the topics discussed were the litter problem, the designation of entrances to the forest or the mandate of a users' committee. The meetings met with considerable interest, with people participating several times.
- *A wildlife trail suitable for the disabled:* At Skutan, in the Swedish municipality of Haninge, a wildlife trail has been completed. One of the features of the trail for example is a wetland and bird-watching tower suitable for disabled visitors.
- *Newcomers to Sweden:* Refugees arriving in Sweden may encounter a completely different type of nature than in their country of origin and a different tradition on forest use. "Urban Woods for People" is currently conducting a study to acquire knowledge on what newcomers to Sweden wish to know about Swedish nature and how this information should be provided.

Source: Urban Woods For People, Demonstration of ways to increase recreational benefits from urban woodlands, a Life-Environment project, [www.svo.se/urbanwoods](http://www.svo.se/urbanwoods).

Contact: Gunnar Nordanstig, National Board of Forestry, Sweden.

## 10. Raising awareness to maintain the forestry workforce - Recruiting young forestry trainees in France

France has a number of forestry training centres, one of them being the "Centre Forestier de la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur". The Centre offers formal training at several levels and specialization courses. In particular, the Centre regularly trains apprentices from 150 enterprises. The Centre assesses the training requirements of every candidate. Based on this a training concept and qualification objectives are developed. The actual training then takes place either at the Centre Forestier itself or at the workplace of the trainee.

Recruiting future forest professionals has become a major difficulty facing the forestry training centres in France, particularly during the last 2 years. The situation is most likely due to accumulation of several factors:

- Frequent misconceptions about the forest sector. The forest is perceived as a place for recreation, and not as a place of work. In consequence, people do not consider choosing a forestry career as they do not know enough about the economic function of forests.
- The consequences of the pictures of devastated forests after the storms of December 1999. Nobody considers working in a ravaged environment.
- A number of sectors have introduced the 35-hour week. Young people are faced with the choice of having a physically taxing job and working more than 35 hours a week in forestry, or of working 35 hours in less difficult professions. Forestry professions have for this reason become less attractive.
- The tendency to choose academic rather than technical training (more young people passing the baccalauréat), and the tendency to spend a longer time at school, delaying the decision on training for a profession.

The Centre Forestier must for these reasons keep the public informed about:

- the actual facts of forestry and particularly on forest economy;
- forestry professions;
- the training that leads to these professional qualifications.

The Centre Forestier actively informs young people about its training offers and seeks an active information exchange with its clients to assess their needs. It reaches 15,000 young people every year in schools and vocational guidance centres or at home, through radio, TV, DVD and newspapers. Visits to the Centre are regularly offered. During the yearly "Opération Forêt Avenir" the Centre Forestier offers an individualized information and careers advice service. The objective is to let young people know about the possibilities of a career in forestry and to help potential candidates make the right choice of profession.

Raising the public consciousness of forestry topics can contribute to improving employment opportunities in forestry, but is a long-term investment. The Centre has noticed that efforts to raise public awareness of forests and forestry invariably lead to a motivation of young people to look at forestry professions. Unfortunately, events outside forestry and general economic trends can cause major setbacks, as in the last two years. This means multiplying the efforts.

Source: For more information log on to [www.centre-forestier.org](http://www.centre-forestier.org).

Contact: Christian Salvignol, Centre Forestier de la Région Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur, France.



## Annex 2: List of Team Members

### Chairmen

Miles Wenner (United Kingdom)  
 Developing Forestry  
 2 Moffat Road  
 GB - DUMFRIES DG1 1NP, UK  
 Tel./Fax. +44 1387 257157  
 Mobile +44 775 374 4317  
 mileswenner@developingforestry.freeserve.co.uk

Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria)  
 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry,  
 Environment and Water Management  
 Marxergasse 2  
 A-1030 WIEN  
 Tel. + 431 71 100 73 05  
 Fax. + 431 71 100 73 99  
 Ingwald.gschwandtl@bmlf.gv.at

### Coordinators

Yves Kazemi & Evelyn Coleman (Switzerland)  
 Forest & Society Consulting  
 Rue du Midi 2  
 CH - 1009 PULLY  
 Tel./Fax. +41 21 729 05 84  
 ykazemi@vtx.ch and e.coleman@bluewin.ch

### Secretariat

Peter Poschen (ILO, *1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)  
 International Labour Office  
 4, Route des Morillons  
 CH - 1211 GENEVE 22  
 Tel. +41 22 799 61 88  
 Fax. +41 22 799 79 67  
 poschen@ilo.org

### Belgium

Nico Coppé (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)  
 Administration of Environment,  
 Nature, Land & Water  
 Division of Forests & Green Spaces  
 Koning Albert II-laan 20, Box 8  
 B - 1000 BRUSSELS  
 Tel. +32 2 553 81 21  
 Fax. +32 2 553 81 05  
 nico.coppe@lin.vlaanderen.be

### Finland

Pauli Wallenius (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)  
 Finnish Forest and Park Service  
 PL 94  
 FIN - 01301 VANTAA  
 Tel. +358 205 64 44 75  
 Fax. +358 205 64 45 00  
 pauli.wallenius@metsa.fi

### France

Bernard Chevalier  
 Ministère de l'agriculture et de la pêche, DERF  
 19 Avenue du Maine  
 F-75732 PARIS cedex 15  
 Tel. +33 1 49 55 57 89  
 Fax. +33 1 49 55 51 12  
 Bernard.chevalier@agriculture.gouv.fr

Christian Salvignol (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)  
 Centre Forestier de la Région  
 Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur  
 Pié de Gâche  
 F-84240 LA BASTIDE DES JOURDANS  
 Tel.: + 33 490 77 80 01  
 Fax: + 33 490 77 84 09  
 salvignol@centre-forestier.org

### **Hungary**

László Kolozs (*written contribution*)

State Forest Service

P.O. Box 10, Széchenyi utca 14

H - 1054 BUDAPEST

Tel. +36 1 374 3220

Fax. +36 1 312 6112

kolozs.laszlo@aeszh.hu

### **Ireland**

Noel Foley (*written contribution*)

Irish Forest Service

Dept. of the Marine and Natural Resources

Oliver Plunkett Road

Letterkenny,

IRL - Co. DONEGAL

Tel. +353 74 21 848

Fax. +353 74 22 791

tnoelfoley@eircom.net

Seamus Dunne (*2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop*)

Forest Service

Dept. of the Marine and Natural Resources

Leeson lane

IRL-Dublin 2

Tel. +353 1 6199389

Fax. +353 1 6623180

seamus.dunne@marine.gov.ie

### **Portugal**

João de Sousa Teixeira (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)

Direcção-Geral das Florestas

Av. João Crisóstomo, 26-28

P - 1069-040 LISBOA

Tel. +351 21 312 48 03

Fax. +351 1 312 49 96

joao.teixeira@dgf.min-agricultura.pt

Maria João Pereira (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)

Ministerio de Agricultura,

Direcção-Geral das Florestas

Av. João Crisóstomo, 26-28

P - 1060-049 LISBOA

Tel. +351 1 312 48 00

mariamoura@mail.telepac.pt

### **Spain**

Ana Belén Noriega (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)

Dirección General de

Conservacion de la Naturaleza

Gran Via de San Francisco 4

E - 28005 MADRID

Tel. +34 91 597 55 77

Fax. +34 91 597 55 65

ana.noriega@dgcn.mma.es

Marta Gómez de los Riscos

TRAGSA - Área de Medio Ambiente

Ctra. de Toledo N-401 km. 6,800

E - 28916 Leganés · MADRID

Tel.: + 34 914 282 343

Fax: + 34 914 282 333

Mgomez2@tragsa.es

### **Sweden**

Gunnar Nordanstig

National Board of Forestry

S - 551 83 JÖNKÖPING

Tel.: + 46 36 15 56 63

Fax: + 46 36 16 61 70

gunnar.nordanstig@svo.se

Sven Sjunnesson (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)

Committee on International Forest Issues

Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture &

Forestry

PI 1039 B

S - 28060 BROBY

Tel. +46 44 405 85

Fax. +46 44 405 87

sven.sjunnesson@telia.com

### **United Kingdom**

Colin Morton (*2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop*)

Forestry Commission

231 Costorphine Road

UK – Edinburgh EH14 SNE

Tel. +44 131 314 6249

Fax. +44 131 334 4473

colin.morton@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

**United States of America**

Anne Hoover  
USDA Forest Service  
Research & Development (RVUR)  
201 14<sup>th</sup> St. S.W.  
WASHINGTON DC 20024, USA  
Tel. +1 703 605 5119  
Fax. +1 703 605 5137  
ahoover@fs.fed.us

**CEPF**

Natalie Hufnagl  
Confederation of European Forest Owners  
Rue du Luxembourg 47-51  
B - 1050 BRUSSELS  
Tel. +32 2 219 0231  
Fax. +32 2 219 2191  
hufnagl@cepf-eu.org

**USSE**

Oscar Barreiro (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)  
Union of Foresters of Southern Europe  
Av. da Madariga n°1, 1 Dep 6  
E - 48014 BILBAO  
Tel. + 34 94 420 69 90  
Fax. + 34 94 476 37 15  
usse@usse.es

**WWF/IUCN**

Sally Jeanrenaud (*1<sup>st</sup> Workshop*)  
Chalet le Mazot  
CH - 1261 St. GEORGE  
Tel. +41 22 368 20 72  
s.jeanrenaud@span.ch