

Terms of Reference

Geneva workshop for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 (FRA 2015)

Geneva, Switzerland, 16 to 17 October 2013

1. Background of the FRA process

FAO has the international mandate to assess the world's forest resources and since it was established in 1945, global and regional assessments have been carried out at five to ten years intervals. The scope and content of the global assessments have evolved over time to respond to changing information needs.

As the complexity of the assessment progressively increased, the reporting burden and the need to produce more accurate, reliable and comprehensive data also increased and has become an issue of major concern.

In this context, to promote a Global Forest Resources Assessment that meets long term global needs, the Committee on Forestry (COFO, 2010) in its 20th session requested FAO to prepare a Long Term Strategy for the FRA program¹, consistent with prospects for sustainable funding. The document of the Strategy was revised during the Expert Consultation on the FRA Long Term Strategy held in Finland (2011), which recognized that increasing data quality is of high importance and also stressed the relevance, among other points, of capacity building and the importance to collaborate with other ongoing initiatives to ensure an efficient process.

In an effort to reduce the reporting burden, the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) has been developed by six² partner organizations. The objective of the CFRQ is to improve consistency, reduce the amount of data entry and reporting and allow international partners to jointly collect and share forest-related data. 103 countries are involved in the CFRQ covering 87% of the world's forest area. The CFRQ was sent together with the FRA 2015 template in early 2013 and is now part of the Forest Resources Information Management System (FRIMS).

The FRA Long Term Strategy has been endorsed by the 21st session of COFO (September 2012). The Committee also emphasized the need for capacity building and encouraged countries and donors to support the critical capacity building efforts needed in 2013-2014 to prepare the FRA 2015, which is the first global assessment in the framework of the FRA Long Term Strategy.

In response to request for capacity building made by the countries and the various recommendations, FRA/FAO will coordinate together with regional partners will organize a series of regional and sub regional capacity building workshops in order to support the

¹ http://foris.fao.org/static/data/fra2010/FRALongTermStrategy_En.pdf

² These are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Forest Europe (FE), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Observatoire des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (OFAC), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Montréal Process Working Group (MPWG).

countries to meet the specifications established for FRA 2015 and thus ensure a high quality of the country reports.

2. Capacity building workshop

The overall goal of the capacity building workshop is to contribute to the improvement of the quality and consistency of the reported data, to ensure that the best possible data and information is provided, in terms of completeness, consistency, methodology and transparency.

The workshop will mainly focus on the contents of the FRA 2015 and CFRQ. National Correspondents that were unable to attend the global workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand will be brought up to date with the reporting process.

The workshop will give the opportunity to National Correspondents to present the status of their country reports, review their draft country reports with reviewers, explain their difficulties (technical, organisational, etc) and benefit from the sharing of experiences with other colleagues from the same sub-region and partner organizations.

The workshop will also provide the opportunity to address country specific reporting problems encountered while compiling the country reports.

3. Workshop objectives and expected outputs

The objectives are:

- Provide technical assistance and guidance to the National Correspondents for the compilation of the country reports and the use of the on-line reporting portal
- Identify and address obstacles that National Correspondents may encounter while compiling the country reports
- Increase integration of remote sensing into country reports
- Provide an effective learning platform for National Correspondents to interact and share experience on forest related reporting
- Establish a work plan for the compilation and submission of the country reports

The expected outputs are:

- Trouble free on-line reporting and improved country reports containing consistent data and sufficient documentation for transparency
- All identified obstacles attended and resolved
- Remotely sensed data is used to a greater extent to provide better estimates for a number of variables, such as; the area of accessible forests, forest area damaged by fire as well as area with reduction in canopy cover
- The communication among National Correspondents as well as the link to reviewers and other key partner organizations is strengthened

- Countries have committed to agreed work plan for finalizing and submission of the country reports

4. Language

The working languages of the workshop will be English, French and Russian.

5. Relevant information to be considered

As a pre-requisite, the National Correspondents will have to submit an advanced draft of the country report prior to attending the workshop. They should bring to the workshop any supporting document needed for further work on the country report. Each National Correspondent will be expected to make a short presentation (3 minutes) on the status of country report and any identified obstacles.

6. Participants

Nominated National Correspondents, resource persons from FRA FAO, UNECE/FAO, other CFRQ partners and other international/regional/ sub regional partner organizations working on forest-environment reporting processes will be invited.