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Timber Committee

European Forestry Commission

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

Thirtieth session
Geneva, 2-3 April 2008
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**GUIDANCE OF WORK AREA 2: FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT
AND INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

This document presents recent activities in work area 2 and invites the Working Party to review them and provide guidance. It also outlines proposals for the activities under work area 2 under the proposed Strategic Plan 2008-2013, suggests some modifications and invites the Working Party to agree on proposals which will be submitted to the Special Session in April 2008, covering both a revised set of programme elements and a revised terms of reference (ToR) for the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management.

1. This document is produced in accordance with the programme of work as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/2007/9 and “to provide guidance on the implementation of work areas 1, 2 and 3” as stated in the terms of reference of the Working Party as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/2006/8.

I. Introduction

2. According to its mandate, the Working Party is expected to provide guidance to work area 2: Forest Resource Assessment and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management. This document provides information about activities in this work area since the Working Party’s last session and plans for the future, drawing the Working Party’s attention to any specific issues where guidance is needed.

3. Alex Korotkov, who was responsible for this work area, retired at the end of December 2007. Recruitment of his successor is well advanced, but the post is vacant at present. For that reason this document is less detailed than in previous years. The secretariat apologises for this and hopes the Working Party’s deliberations will not be significantly affected.

4. *The Working Party is invited to review activities under work area 2, and provide guidance to the secretariat.*

II. Activities in 2007/8 in work area 2

5. Indicators of sustainable forest management in the region. The secretariat in close cooperation with the MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw elaborated and circulated the UNECE/FAO Enquiry for Data Collection and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in the Region which is the main information source for the MCPFE/UNECE/FAO Report: “State of Europe’s Forests 2007” (SOEF 2007). After completion of the data validation phase, the secretariat played a leading role in completing the study, including analysis of progress towards sustainable forest management in Europe and took responsibility for the final output with the Liaison Unit Warsaw. The lessons to be learnt from this major exercise are being discussed under item 4 of the provisional agenda.

6. Regional contribution to the Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA). The secretariat has participated actively, alongside experts and national correspondents, in the process of preparing the Global FRA 2010, including the participation and contribution to the Global FRA Expert Consultation “Kotka-V” and the Global FRA Advisory Group. Support to development of national systems for forest monitoring is one of the activities of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Forest Resources for Sustainable Forest Management in UNECE Region, and is carried out in cooperation with partners such as the EU COST Actions E 43 and E 27. FRA 2010 data for Europe will be collected and validated by UNECE/FAO in close cooperation with the FRA 2010 team in Rome. The Working Party will be briefed orally on progress and plans for FRA 2010.

7. A study on “Private Forest Ownership in Europe” has been completed and is being prepared for publication. The 23 national country reports and a database are available on the UNECE/FAO website at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/fra/PFO.htm>. A draft of the study will be presented to the Working Party for comment.

8. The Team of Specialists on monitoring forest resources for sustainable forest management in the region not only guides regional FRA work but acts as an important forum for discussion of emerging technical and policy issues, such as monitoring climate change, biodiversity, or the system of forest types. It met in Edinburgh in May 2007 and will meet in Vienna in May 2008. The Team's meeting report may be found at:

<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/fratos/meetings/EdinburghMay2007/meetMay2007.htm>.

III. Expected activities and outputs in work area 2 in 2008/9

9. The following activities are currently (as of February 2008) planned for 2008/9:
- Publication on private forest ownership in Europe;
 - Database of the pan-European quantitative indicators of SFM (presentation and dissemination of the basic data for the SOEF 2007 report);
 - Data gathering and validation for FRA 2010.

IV. Issues for discussion

10. The following questions relating to work area 2 are proposed for discussion:
- What lessons should be learnt from the process and results of the SOEF 2007 report? To be discussed under agenda item 4.
 - Should there be follow-up to the study on private forest ownership? If so, what should be repeated and what should be changed? Follow-up activities could include, but are not limited to, an expansion of the PFO database, with the commitment of national correspondents (also from countries which have not reported), and continued exchange with the FAO work in other regions on forest tenure. When should the study be repeated, taking account of the fact that FRA2010 also addresses this issue?
 - Many of the MCPFE indicators call for data "by forest type", and a new forest type classification has been drawn up in Europe. Yet many national correspondents have expressed concern about their ability to provide satisfactory information according to the new classification. It is too early at present to agree on definitive solutions to this dilemma, which will also be discussed by the Team of Specialists, but the Working Party may wish to exchange opinions on how to approach the issue.
 - Changes in the period 2008-13 (see below)
11. The integrated ECE/FAO programme for the period to 2008 has the following programme elements under work area 2:

Work area 2 Forest resource assessment and indicators of sustainable forest management in the region	
2.1	Indicators of sustainable forest management in the region
2.2	Regional contribution to global Forest Resource Assessment
2.3	Support to development of national systems for forest monitoring
2.4	Team of Specialists on Forest Resource Assessment and C&I for SFM

12. The Strategic Review and Plan 2008-13 of the Joint Integrated Programme on Timber and

Forestry of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission is under way (see background document for agenda item 5). During the Strategic Review and Plan, a new programme will be drawn up for the period 2008-13 and approved at the Special Session 28-30 April 2008. The Working Party is invited to consider, under this agenda item, whether any changes should be introduced to the programme elements for work area 2 in the new programme. Possible modifications would include:

- (a) Specific mention, at the programme element level, of leading the work on reporting to the Ministerial Conference (Reports on the State of Europe's Forests). At present, this major activity is included under "Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in the Region". There could be two separate programme elements, one on defining and agreeing indicators and a separate one on reporting.
- (b) Specific mention of the work on "forest types", which are mentioned in the indicators, but so far, for data collection, only applied at the level "coniferous/broadleaved/mixed, which is not really satisfactory. The national correspondents however have pointed out many obstacles to applying the forest type classification drawn up by the scientific community. The MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo proposed that the UNECE/FAO secretariat, based on its comparative advantage and network of national correspondents, as an intergovernmental body able to balance technical and policy considerations, take a leading role in implementing the definition. It is proposed that the Working Party take an oversight role on this issue, ensuring that there is a constructive dialogue between all concerned, probably led by the Team of Specialists and ensuring satisfactory solutions are found and implemented for the next report to the ministerial conference.
- (c) Modification of the name of the Team of Specialists to "Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management," as proposed by the Team Leader in the context of the Strategic Review. This change of name would recognise the coverage also of qualitative indicators (information on policies and institutions) which are also important indicators, and were collected, under the team's auspices, for the Warsaw report. In this case, the team would address issues under work area 5 as well as work area 2.
- (d) Specific mention of work on forest ownership and tenure, if follow-up and continuation is judged desirable.

13. As part of the strategic plan 2008-13, the secretariat proposes including the following programme elements under Work Area 2, for consideration of the Working Party and the Special Session:

Work Area 2 - Forest resources and indicators of sustainable forest management in the region	
	Programme elements
2.1	Collecting and dissemination of information according to quantitative criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management in the region
2.2	Regional contribution to global Forest Resource Assessment 2010
2.3	Support to development of national systems for forest monitoring
2.4	Improving information on forest types
2.5	Analysing and reporting on the state of Europe's forests
2.6	Monitoring and analysing information on forest ownership and tenure

Work Area 2 - Forest resources and indicators of sustainable forest management in the region	
2.7	Team of Specialists on Monitoring sustainable forest management

14. The Working Party is invited to suggest whether these programme elements should be modified, and if so which should be deleted, modified or added. The Working Party is also invited to review the enclosed ToR of the Team of Specialists with modifications proposed by the secretariat.

ANNEX

**UNECE/FAO TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON
MONITORING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT**
Reference to Integrated Work Programme: Work Area 2, Work Area 5
Programme elements 2.1-2.7, Programme elements 5.2, 5.3

A. OBJECTIVES

- Advise the UNECE/FAO and FAO secretariats on the implementation of activities in Work Areas 2 “Forest Resources Assessment and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in the Region” and 5 “Forest Policies and Institutions”, with regard to data collection, validation and dissemination
- Contribute to the coordination of reporting on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management by MCPFE and Montreal process countries;
- Support the regional contribution to the global FRA
- Strengthen the strategic discussion of on the monitoring of sustainable forest management, including the global agenda of C&I process development
- Improve countries’ reporting capacities; Support development of national systems of forest monitoring
- Provide advice on the implementation of the framework on forest types
- Contribute to the institutional cooperation on monitoring of forests (EU, EUROSTAT, MCPFE, ENFIN, et al).
- Maintain and expand the international network and forums for discussion on forest resources and the monitoring of sustainable forest management

EXPECTED MAJOR OUTPUT:

- Regional contribution to Global FRA 2010
- Review of the process and results of the MCPFE/UNECE/FAO Report on the State of Forests in Europe 2007
- Assistance in the preparation and review of the next report on the State of Forests in Europe: revised enquiries for country reporting on the pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, both quantitative and qualitative (policies, institutions and instruments)
- Improved reporting capacity of countries weak in reporting on C&I for the State of Europe’s Forests Report 2007
- Guidance on the implementation of the forest type classification

B. BACKGROUND

ESTABLISHED / APPROVED BY	Joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission, Geneva, 24 October 2008
DURATION	From 2008 to 2013
METHODS OF WORK	Annual meetings of the Team of Specialists. Communication among ToS members between the annual meetings, communication with country focal points.

REPORTING	To the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics.
TEAM LEADER	To be nominated during the 1 st meeting of the Team
RESPONSIBLE SECRETARIAT MEMBER	Successor to Alexander V. Korotkov
