

Economic Commission for Europe

Timber Committee

**Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on
Forest Statistics, Economics and Management**

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Food and Agriculture Organization

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GUIDANCE OF WORK AREA 5: POLICIES AND CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

AGENDA ITEM 4 (e)

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides information on the main activities in Work Area 5 (WA 5), **Policy and Cross-Sectoral Issues**. It highlights the topics and issues to be addressed by the Working Party, in the different activities under WA 5. The Working Party is invited to offer guidance on how current and future activities in WA5 might be developed.

The programme of work for WA5 comprises the following activities:

- a) Contribution to the global dialogue on forests
- b) Monitoring recent developments in forest sector policies, legislation and institutions, including national forest programmes
- c) Analysing developments in forest sector policies, legislation and institutions, including interactions with other sectors
- d) Implementing sustainable forest management through capacity building for forest policies and institutions
- e) Organizing policy forums on major topical issues
- f) Exchanging information on improving management of wildland fires
- g) Improving sectoral and cross-sectoral exchange and communication

I. Contribution to the global dialogue on forests

1. At the pan-European level, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is an important partner to the Forest Europe process. The main contribution to the process consists in the coordination of the preparation of the State of Europe's Forests report, which was issued in June 2011 on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference in Oslo.
2. Synergies with Forest Europe are critical to maintain coherence of the policy direction and activities at the pan-European level. Recently, UNECE/FAO has been following the development of Forest Europe Programme of Work at its Expert Level Meeting held on 6 and 7 March 2013 in Madrid.
3. Through its contribution to the ThinkForest process, UNECE/FAO is also working to reinforce its cooperation with the European Forest Institute (EFI), in order to join forces on scientific and technical work at the pan-European level and establish stronger synergies with all other relevant partners.
4. At the global level, UNECE/FAO further strengthened its ties with the United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF). UNECE/FAO prepared a report on the contribution of forests to economic development in the UNECE region. It also organized, together with the UNFF Secretariat and Forest Europe, a Country Led Initiative in Ukraine with the support of Switzerland: the Lviv Forum on Forests in a Green Economy (10-14 September 2012, Lviv, Ukraine). More information on the meeting and the publication that was prepared with the results of the meeting are available at: <http://www.unece.org/lviv-forum-2012.html>.
5. In order to address the challenge of the green economy UNECE/FAO developed a draft Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy, which was also used as a basis for the Lviv Forum. The Action Plan is the result of a thorough consultation with main stakeholders in the sector, including members States, the private sector and NGOs. The Plan was presented at a side event to the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 and a side event to the twentieth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry. It was discussed at the last two sessions of the Timber Committee and will be further improved at the Special Session of the Timber Committee scheduled on 17 and 18 June 2013, with a view to submit it for adoption, together with the new UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work (2014-2017) at Metsä2013, the joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO Forestry Commission. More information on the UNECE/FAO work on green economy is available at: <http://www.unece.org/forests/greeneconomy.html>.

II. Monitoring and analysing recent developments in forest sector policies, legislation and institutions

6. Following the national dialogue held in Paris in December 2011, UNECE/FAO organized together with host governments three National Forest Policy Dialogues, in Switzerland (6 November 2012, Bern), Poland (22 November 2012, Warsaw) and the Russian Federation (13-14 December 2012, Arkhangelsk). The aim is a two way exchange to reach out to a large number of national experts (policy makers, forest managers, forest based industry representatives, researchers, etc.) and share with them the outputs of the Section (State of Forests, Forest Product Markets, Joint Wood Energy Enquiry, Forest Sector Outlook Studies), while stakeholders provide the Section with national experience relevant to the international work.
7. Monitoring and analysis of developments in the forest sector's policies, legislation and institutions are part of the State of Europe's Forests process, which is a joint effort with Forest Europe. The second part of the report usually focuses on qualitative indicators for sustainable forest management. The collection of qualitative data includes two groups of indicators: "Overall policies, institutions & instruments" and "Policies, institutions & instruments per policy area". The next round of qualitative data collection for the next pan-European reporting is expected to take place in 2014.

III. Implementing sustainable forest management through capacity building for forest policies and institutions

8. This activity remains limited due to financial constraints and lack of earmarked budgetary resources. A project proposal for capacity building in Central Asia and the Caucasus to reinforce and enhance forest policy in the context of

green economy was approved by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA). The funds provided by UNDA are expected to be matched by other key donors.

9. Thanks to the generous support of the French Ministry of Agriculture, the French Ministry of Sustainable Development and the FAO Forestry Department, over 60 participants from 23 countries and 8 international organizations met in Paris on the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture from 11 to 13 June 2012 at a capacity building workshop on “Improving Wood Energy Data for Better Policy Making”. Participants discussed the reliability of current wood energy data and identified weaknesses and constraints. Countries shared experiences, tools and solutions for improving data. To that end, a growing network of correspondents and experts is being established enabling communication between all stakeholders at both national and international levels.

IV. Organizing policy forums on major topical issues

10. UNECE/FAO organized a “Policy Debate on Wood Energy”, held on 8 May 2012 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Discussions touched upon the economic, environmental and social aspects of the increasing demand of wood for energy purposes. The Policy Debate provided an open and comprehensive dialogue among a wide and varied group of stakeholders. Discussions mainly revolved around the sustainability of the increasing use of wood for energy purposes and the resulting competition with other material uses of wood. A policy brief summarizing the views and recommendations of the various stakeholders that participated in the debate is available here: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/wood_energy/wood-energy-policy-brief-2012.pdf.

11. Organized on 15 October 2012 in Geneva, a workshop, entitled “the Green Life of Wood - Assessing its Environmental Impacts from Cradle to Cradle”, provided an opportunity to listen and interact with experts in the field of wood products, their life cycle analysis, carbon footprint, and environmental impact. Through a participatory exercise, the workshop also allowed participants to share their points of view and ideas, as well as to discuss solutions and develop recommendations for actions and follow-up on how to further implement LCA to promote environmentally sustainable production, influence building material choices, and guide consumer choices in favour of the environment.

V. Exchanging information on improving management of wildland fires

12. Activities of the Team of Specialists (ToS) on Forest Fires enabled an intense exchange of information amongst its members as well as member States. The ToS, in particular through its Chair, has been providing advice to countries experiencing forest fires challenges. Efforts are also under way to coordinate within the UN system the work on forest fires to provide better action and policy response.

13. One major achievement has been the preparation of the project “Safeguarding Sustainable Forest Management in the UNECE Region through International Cooperation in Fire Management” for which funding has been secured and generously provided by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of Germany. The project will result in the production of a “White Paper on the State of Wildfires and Fire Management in Forests and other Vegetation Resources in the UNECE Region”, draft Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) or guidelines for international cooperation in fire management (ground, aerial), a UNECE/FAO Regional Forum on Cross-boundary Fire Management and a resolution of the UNECE/FAO on a proposal for a voluntary or legal protocol on cross-boundary cooperation in fire management. The Forum is scheduled to take place on 27-29 November 2013.

VI. Improving sectoral and cross-sectoral exchange and communication

14. 2012 marked the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All which enabled the Forestry and Timber Section to promote the important contribution wood makes to renewable energy supply. In recognition of the importance of access to energy for sustainable economic development and in support of the Millennium Development Goals, the Forestry and Timber subprogramme has placed stronger emphasis on its wood energy agenda.

15. The findings of the latest round of the UNECE/FAO Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) were published online early 2012 providing a comprehensive online database, including a full set of indicators and country profiles. In 2009, wood energy accounted for 3% of the total primary energy supply (TPES) and 47% of the renewable energy supply

(RES) in the UNECE region, confirming its role as the leading source of renewable energy. The complete datasheets can be downloaded at www.unece.org/jwee2009.html. The next UNECE/FAO Joint Wood Energy Enquiry was issued in autumn 2012, and results will be available in April 2013.

16. Major publications were released in 2012, including the Forest Products Annual Market Review, the North American Forest Sector Outlook Study and the Econometric Modelling and Projections of Wood Products Demand, Supply and Trade in Europe. These publications are key outputs toward strengthening the forest sector and its contribution to sustainable development throughout the UNECE region. Two publications have already been released in 2013, the Study Paper 31 on Forests and Economic Development: a Driver for the Green Economy in the UNECE Region and the Study Paper 32 on Forests in a Green Economy for Countries in Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia: Lviv Forum. All publications are available on our website at: <http://www.unece.org/forests-welcome/publications>.

17. Following the success of the first ever European Forest Week (EFW) which took place on 20-24 October 2008 in Rome, Brussels and all over Europe, the UNECE Timber Committee endorsed the organization of a second European Forest Week in parallel with ‘Metsä2013’¹.

18. To support this second European Forest Week, the Joint Bureaux requested the UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network to develop and lead the implementation of a communication and outreach strategy to raise awareness and understanding about the EFW at local, regional and European levels. A Task Force on preparing the EFW was subsequently established and met in Rovaniemi, Finland on 3-4 December 2012 to share ideas, contribute suggestions and plan events and celebrations for the European Forest Week. They also discussed key messages to highlight the healthy state of Europe’s forests and to attract public attention to how forests, forest products and services contribute to a green economy and to maintaining a healthy society. These messages will soon be available on the UNECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/forests/efw2013.html>. FAO will provide a platform similar to the one developed for the EFW 2008, which will allow people across Europe to register their event online. The platform will also include the EFW logo in different languages. This platform will be available from the FAO website as of April 2013.

19. *The Working Party is requested to take note of the activities above and provide advice on the following:*

- *Priority policy issues to be addressed in 2013, e.g. in the framework of national forest policy dialogues, policy fora, workshops and seminars.*
- *Funding and development of activities, including capacity building, to measure and reinforce the forest sector’s contribution to a transition towards a green economy.*
- *Opportunities for reaching out to other sectors and improving cross-sectoral linkages and interactions, such as the European Forest Week 2013.*

¹ At its last session on 15-19 October 2012, the UNECE Timber Committee endorsed the organization of a second European Forest Week in parallel with ‘Metsä2013’ (9 to 13 December 2013). This was done at the suggestion of the joint ECE/FAO Bureaux of the Committee and the Commission to build upon the successes of the 2008 European Forest Week and the International Year of Forests 2011. The UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network will take the lead in developing and implementing an advocacy communication plan to increase the visibility of the EFW and the contribution of the forest sector to a green economy.