

Explanatory note for Agenda Item 4:

Possibilities for increasing consistency between the regional and global FRA systems in the context of current and planned developments in the C&I related regional processes

Introduction

Despite concerns expressed by secretariats and correspondents, reporting activities at global and European levels have developed in parallel ways. There have been complaints about reporting burden, different definitions at regional and global level, and different figures for what seem to be the same parameter at regional and global level (as well as at national level). How did this arise and how can we minimise its consequences?

The comparison of the two reporting systems (FRA and SoEF) indicate occurrence of significant discrepancies between global and regional reporting processes. Three groups of differences could be distinguished:

- differences in **scope** of assessments; particular areas/variables are represented only in one process,
- differences in applied **terms**, classifications and/or definitions (T/D/C), it means that particular area/variable is represented in both processes but applied T/D/C are different,
- **time** related aspects, it means that in two processes different approaches regarding time reference were applied e.g. average data for period (FRA) vs. one year data (SoEF).

In order to improve the current status, having a better understanding of the background is essential. It seems there are three different reasons for the discrepancies:

- differences resulting from geographic coverage of reporting (global or regional), due to different circumstances on the ground or different data availability
- different political choices at the global and regional level
- ineffective communication and coordination between the processes during their developments

These types will require different approaches.

Occurrence of differences between the global and regional reporting is a natural, even desirable state, giving a sense of existence to these two levels of reporting. Any harmonising activity related to global/regional differences should be preceded by the analysis of nature of concepts applied on global and regional levels (long term activity). Those concepts which are applied globally should be also acceptable at the regional level: some core parameter will be measured in a harmonised way all over the world: the data collected must also be usable at the regional level (if not the regional level will be tempted to duplicate or to parallel the global work).

In case of different political choices, an increase of communication among different political processes is the first step to minimise redundancy of information. Further activities could lead to higher level of complementarity (long term activity).

Differences between technical aspects of reporting, that resulted from insufficient coordination, could be analysed and wherever rational and possible, diminish in the course of operational work (mid and short term activities).

There are two main proposals, aiming at achieving higher consistency in international reporting and reducing the reporting burden on countries. One short term for immediate implementation in the next MCPFE report and a proposal for longer term harmonization efforts:

II. Proposal for adaptations in the next SoEF

A) General proposals

- Reporting years harmonised with FRA 2010 (e.g. 1990, 2000, 2005 and 2010), furthermore whenever reporting for 2010 is requested, SoEF variables should be reported according to the same approach as this applied for the FRA 2010 (e.g. recent available or extrapolated data)
- Five-year averages should be reported for forest damage and other relevant indicators (e.g. the reported figures for the reporting years should be based on averages for five-year periods 1988-1992 for 1990).
- Update comment fields for understanding reported data and for further processing and analysis of data according to FRA 2010 comment fields.
 1. Evaluation of source data quality
 2. Comments related to data, definitions, etc.

3. Comments on reported trend
 4. Other general comments
- Pre-fill MCPFE questionnaire with relevant FRA 2010 data (and MCPFE 2007 data)
 - Proposal to review definitions to ensure consistency between FRA and MCPFE definitions (considering that FRA definitions have evolved since FRA 2005)¹.

B) Table/reporting form specific proposals

RF1: Forest area

Other wooded land available for wood supply is not very relevant – could be deleted, despite consists part of the officially approved name of indicator?

RF2: Growing stock

Indicate that growing stock on “forest available for wood supply” is not necessarily the same as “commercial growing stock” or “growing stock of commercial species”. Same comment on OWL available for wood supply as in RF1 (as above).

RF5: Forest damage

“Damage present in the reporting year” (MCPFE) is confusing and should be changed. The FAO concept (annually affected areas) and threshold for the minimum area of 0.5 ha (FAO) would be better than 1.0 ha (MCPFE), since NFI sample plots are often used for the assessment.

RF6: Increment and fellings

Increment and fellings are reported for FAWS, including total values (at least for Forest) could be considered. Another option for consideration is adding removals to this table.

RF7: Roundwood and RF8: Non-wood Goods

The MCPFE assessment asks for marketed wood and non-wood goods, while FAO indicates total removals. Fellings vs. wood removals vs. marketed roundwood (room for change in classification?)

¹ This activity can be applied in a short term perspective (before the next questionnaire is applied) in case when adjusted definitions do not collide with concepts and classifications endorsed by the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting. Otherwise, increasing of consistency between these two systems should be carried out within frames of a continuous, long term process.

RF12: Regeneration

FAO reforestation would correspond to MCPFE regeneration by planting and/or seeding for even-aged and uneven-aged stands, provided we are considering annual regeneration area as a five-year average.

MCPFE reporting doesn't cover afforestation (included in FRA) and deforestation, should they be included in the next reporting cycle?

RF13: Naturalness

Plantations vs. planted forests (room for change in classification?)

RF20: Forest holdings

The MCPFE enquiry asked for forest and other wooded land under this table, while FAO asks for forest only. Since data on OWL are usually less accurate and less available, it may be an advantage to exclude OWL from the MCPFE reporting. The wording of the MCPFE indicator is also "number of forest holdings, ...".

III. Proposal to organize informal consultations on harmonization between reporting systems of the FAO, ITTO, MCPFE and Montreal Process.

There is a risk that present procedures for maintenance of consistency among reporting systems are insufficient for ensuring the desirable status. Due to the natural dynamics of the reporting, possible *ad hoc* improvement could improve situation only temporarily; therefore solution that will be worked out should also be of a mutual, dynamic, flexible nature, and reaching beyond the next reporting cycle. Thus, there is a proposal to organise an informal consultation on harmonization of reporting systems between the FAO, ITTO, MCPFE and Montreal Process. Consultation would be regularly organised, in order to monitor changes, seeking for opportunities for harmonisation and securing maintenance of necessary consistency. Within these consultations the subsequent topics could be examined:

- Look at ways to increase harmonization in reporting schedules/timing.
- Identify a list of core variables where harmonization efforts should be focused (criteria for selecting core variables?).

- Evaluate needs/usefulness of more frequent/continuous reporting on selected variables.
- Work done to align definitions and develop “data keys” for increased correlation between classifications in different reporting processes.
- Build on the work of and ensure close collaboration with the CPF Task Force on streamlining forest-related reporting.