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European Forestry Commission

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

Thirty-first session
Geneva, 31 March – 1 April 2009
Agenda item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda

GUIDANCE OF WORK AREAS

**Work Area 2: Forest Resources Assessment and Indicators
of Sustainable Forest Management in the Region**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The document presents an overview of the activities in Work Area 2, and highlights the topics and issues to be addressed by the Joint Food and Agriculture (FAO) / United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics:

- (a) Meetings of the UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists on “Monitoring Forest Resources Management for Sustainable Forest Management in the UNECE region” and “Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management”;
- (b) Update on the recent developments of global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2010 preparation; UNECE/FAO contribution to the process and assistance to national reporting for FRA 2010;
- (c) Extension activities for the reporting on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) for the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), planning process and arrangements for the next MCPFE conference;
- (d) Development of the new European Forest Types classification, applicability of the classification in future reporting on forests.

The Working Party is invited to provide guidance for current and future activities in Work Area 2.

1. This document is produced in accordance with the programme of work as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/S/2008/6 (paragraphs 14 through 53) and “to provide guidance on the implementation of work areas 1, 2 and 3 and parts of work area 5” as stated in the terms of reference of the Working Party as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/S/2008/6/Add.1 (paragraph 27).

I. INTRODUCTION

2. The activities in work area 2 for the reporting period (April 2008 – March 2009) were focused on the regional contribution to the FAO global Forest Resources Assessment, finalisation of the reporting process for the Ministerial Conference in November 2007 and initialisation of a new reporting process for the next MCPFE conference. This document provides information about activities in this work area that have taken place since the Working Party’s last session. In addition, we would like to present plans for the future and seek the Working Party’s guidance to any specific issues where it is needed.

II. UNECE/FAO TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS ON “MONITORING FOREST RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE UNECE REGION” AND “MONITORING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT”

3. The final (fourth) meeting of the Team of Specialists on “Monitoring forest resources for sustainable forest management in the UNECE Region” was held in Vienna from 26 to 28 May 2008. The meeting marked the end of four years of collaboration and efforts that contributed to the success of the two leading reports on SFM, which were elaborated in this period - the global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 and the State of Europe’s Forests 2007. The Team of Specialists actions for 2007-2008 are elaborated in the Report of the meeting (<http://www.unece.org/timber/>). The team provided guidance on all parts of work area 2, as reported in the present document.

4. The UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission decided at their Special Session (Geneva, April 2008), to establish the new “Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management” (2008-2010, renewable to 2013). The inaugural meeting of the Team of Specialists on “Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management” will be held on 25-27 February 2009, in Geneva (United Nations European Office Headquarters). The following issues are some of the key items to be discussed:

- (a) regional contribution to the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010;
- (b) current and planned developments in the Criteria and Indicators related regional processes (MCPFE and Montreal Process);
- (c) harmonisation aspects between the regional and global assessments in pan-European Criteria and Indicators reporting;
- (d) possibilities of application of the proposal for the European Forest Types classification in the next pan-European reporting;
- (e) Team of Specialists input to the discussions on aspects related to present challenges relating to interactions between forest and climate change.

As the inaugural meeting of the new Team of Specialists will be held after the release of this background document, the Joint Working Party will be updated during its thirty-first session on the Team of Specialists meeting results that are pertinent for the topics reported in this document.

Question for Delegates

5. The Working Party is invited to review and comment on the general structure, work plan and scope of activities of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (presented in fourth meeting of the Team of Specialists and delivered during the meeting).

II. REPORT ON OUTPUTS AND PLANS 2008-2009

A. Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010

6. In March of 2007, the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) agreed to start work on the global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) for 2010. Like the 2005 edition, FRA 2010 is based on a comprehensive country reporting process, while a global remote sensing survey constitutes a new module. A dozen of special thematic studies linked to FRA 2010 and covering special issues form an integral part of the Assessment, including forest fragmentation and degradation, forest genetic resources, trees outside forests, forest policies and institutions.

7. The main tool for the FRA 2010 implementation is the comprehensive enquiry consisting of reporting tables, specifications and guidelines. The final set of reporting tables was extended by five new (comparing to FRA 2005) tables: forest establishment and regeneration, policy and legal framework, institutional framework, education and research, public revenue collection and expenditure.

8. The UNECE/FAO actively cooperated with the FAO FRA Team on the organisation of the process and contributed to most of the activities that were carried out during reporting period. This included direct involvement of the secretariat on items including, but not limited to: streamlining regional discussions of the national and international experts as well as assisting countries with their efforts related to FRA reporting.

9. The main efforts allocated to global reporting were on preparations for national reporting for the FRA 2010. The Global Workshop for National Correspondents (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/45735/en>), held in Rome from 3 to 7 March 2008, launched the FRA 2010 process. This event was key to providing the National Correspondent with knowledge about the process as well as a common understanding of concepts, terms, definitions and classifications. The UNECE/FAO secretariat co-organised the event and led work of relevant regional groups. The Meeting of the FRA Advisory Group, held on 8 March 2008, concluded the one-week consultation on the FRA 2010.

10. Issues relevant to the global FRA were one of the key subjects covered at the fourth meeting of the Team of Specialists on "Monitoring forest resources for sustainable forest management in the UNECE region". Next to the operational aspects of the process (timetable/schedule, country reporting tables, thematic studies, network of national correspondents), the Team discussed and advised the secretariats on preparation for FRA 2010, including such items as FRA remote sensing

surveys, and FRA studies on forest degradation/fragmentation and area under sustainable forest management.

11. The UNECE/FAO and FAO FRA team worked closely together in assisting countries in the UNECE region with their preparation on national reports to the FRA2010. This included a regional workshop that was dedicated to increasing capacities of Russian speaking countries (Budapest, November 2008). Additionally the UNECE/FAO secretariat provided assistance and direct communication to 28 countries in the area (mainly Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia).

B. State of Europe's Forests 2007

12. The release of report "State of Europe's Forests 2007" did not conclude the Criteria and Indicators reporting process for the MCPFE Warsaw Conference. Two groups of activities have continued: extension of dissemination of report, including related information; and review of the report and the report's elaboration process.

13. The UNECE/FAO has continued the State of Europe's Forest 2007 dissemination process, which included collection, processing and organisation of the electronic versions of the report and supplementary documents. This set of information was made available through the UNECE website as well as in CDs. Additionally, the paper versions of the report and CDs were widely distributed during the meetings organised or attended by the UNECE/FAO, including the European Forest Week.

14. Lessons learned from the last process of the MCPFE Criteria and Indicators data collection and analysis were the subject of the 4th meeting of the Team of Specialists debate. This included, report writing, publication and dissemination; and in particular, collaboration between UNECE/FAO (Geneva), FAO (Rome) and MCPFE. The Team of Specialists structured its recommendations on the basis of the Working Party's specific guidance and proposals on reporting for MCPFE 2007, and the national views collected through the questionnaire.

15. The Team of Specialists participants shared the review respondents' opinion that the general approach for the State of Europe's Forest 2007 preparations was the right one. However, several issues were raised that would need improvement during future reporting cycle(s). First of all the need for further, more effective harmonisation of reporting cycles between the FRA and MCPFE reporting was raised. Detailed information on the Team of Specialists conclusions and recommendations are available in the report from the Team of Specialists meeting.

16. The intermediate results of the State of Europe's Forest 2007 report review, confirmed the usefulness of this exercise and suggested widening the scope of this activity. A decision was made to continue evaluation and review the use and dissemination of the MCPFE report. Throughout the review (planned for the period 2008-2009), it is expected that the UNECE/FAO secretariat will better get to know the actual, as well as potential users, of the report and their needs. The results of the review will be incorporated and evaluated, in preparation of reporting for the next Ministerial Conference. Terms of reference for this review can be found in annex 1 of this document.

17. With regard to the use of the report, the secretariat is expected to monitor the use of major

reports such as State of Europe's Forest 2007, notably by collecting lists of citations. The secretariat invites delegations to provide the secretariat with information on how STATE OF EUROPE'S FOREST 2007 is used in their country, e.g. citations in academic journals, official reports or public debate, translations etc. If they wish, they may send or bring copies of articles to the secretariat.

18. Due to the amount of information collected through the Country reports on State of Europe's Forests 2007, only part of the source data was presented in the published report. Responding to the requests, the UNECE/FAO initiated work on building a web-based, interactive database on pan-European Criteria and Indicators for SFM. Thanks to a collaborative effort between the UNECE Timber Section, FAO and the UNECE Statistical Division, the first version of this database has been completed.

19. The database provides information for 27 quantitative indicators, structured by six criteria for SFM and is available at: <http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/>. The UNECE/FAO used multiple opportunities to raise the international community's interest in taking advantage of this resource. As these data are presented alongside other statistical data from different parts of the UNECE work programme, the visibility of forestry information should increase amongst audiences from outside of forest sector.

C. Reporting for the next MCPFE conference

20. The ELM of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held on 7-8 May 2008 in Oslo, decided on elaboration of the report State of Europe's Forests for the next MCPFE conference. The reporting on SFM in Europe should be performed according to the MCPFE Criteria and Indicators for SFM, endorsed in Vienna in 2003. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators should be taken into account when preparing the report on SFM for the Oslo Conference. The earliest provisional date for the report's release is by mid 2011.

21. The ELM invited the UNECE/FAO and the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo (MCPFE LUO), to conduct the reporting process. Parties agreed that early fund-raising and collection of necessary resources (in kind, funds and logistics) are a precondition for timely provision of the report. The UNECE/FAO and the MCPFE LUO agreed to work closely on mobilization of the resources necessary for elaboration of the report to the expected standard.

22. In order to better organise and facilitate the reporting process on SFM in Europe, UNECE/FAO and LUO have decided to establish an Advisory Group (AG) on the elaboration of the report "State of Europe's Forests". General arrangements for the next pan-European reporting cycle will be a subject of discussions by the AG and at the Team of Specialists meetings. Information on the outcome of these discussions will be orally delivered during the JWP session.

23. The short timeline between the national reporting for the FRA (deadline end of March 2009) and expected deadline for the provision of national data for the next MCPFE reporting (April 2010) has emphasized the importance of the consistency between these two systems. The UNECE/FAO carried out a detailed comparison of these systems, after receiving requests for higher interoperability between the global and pan-European data, and following other recommendations. This comparison showed the existence of significant discrepancies.

24. Diversified nature and reasons for these differences make it impossible to resolve consistency problem exclusively at the regional level. The UNECE/FAO is involved in the global activity (led by the FAO), which is aiming at reaching a solution for this issue. However, the Team of Specialists debates also included harmonisation aspects, in particular related to the technical problems that could be solved at the present stage of reporting process for the next ministerial conference. The JWP will be informed on the outcome of actions taken during the 31st Session.

Question for delegates

25. The Working Party is invited:

- (a) to review the regional UNECE/FAO contribution to the global FRA 2010 process;
- (b) to review the process of dissemination of the MCPFE-2007 reporting and provide comments and suggestions, in particular in relation to the interactive database on SFM indicators.

IV. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF WORK ON EUROPEAN FOREST TYPES CLASSIFICATION

26. In the Vienna Living Forest Summit Declaration, signed at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (2003), the Signatory States and the European Community committed themselves to endorse the use of the “Improved Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management as adopted by the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting, 7-8 October 2002, Vienna, Austria”. Following this set of improved criteria and indicators, the reporting for seven MCPFE indicators (out of 35) require reporting ‘by forest type’:

- (a) 1.1 Forest area;
- (b) 1.2 Growing stock;
- (c) 1.3 Age structure and diameter distribution;
- (d) 2.4 Forest damage;
- (e) 4.1 Tree species composition;
- (f) 4.3 Naturalness;
- (g) 4.5 Deadwood.

27. In this context, the need to improve forest classification beyond the present three categories (predominantly conifers, predominantly broadleaved, mixed), to a new system of forest types which should allow a better assessment of the conditions of the forests across Europe.

28. The European Forest Type classification is the outcome of ten-years of activity, involving a large number of European forest scientists and other experts. This entailed two workshops organised¹ in response to the above commitments within the framework of the MCPFE Work Programmes:

- (a) Workshop on “Pan-European understanding of forest classification” held in Bled,

¹ Leading actors for this process were: European Environment Agency of the European Union, UNECE/FAO, IUFRO, the MCPFE Liaison Units, Accademia Italiana di Scienze Forestali, European Forest Institute Italy, the Joint Research Center of the European Union, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia.

Slovenia, on 13-15 November, 2006;

- (b) Technical workshop “Sharing experiences on pan-European forest classification”, Copenhagen, Denmark, 24-25 November, 2008.

29. The result of this work, a European forest classification comprised of 14 main categories, has been proposed for MCPFE reporting, i.e. ‘The European Forest Types (EFTs)’:

- (a) 1. Boreal forest;
- (b) 2. Hemiboreal forest and nemoral coniferous and mixed broadleaved-coniferous forest;
- (c) 3. Alpine coniferous forest;
- (d) 4. Acidophylous oakwood and oak-birch forest;
- (e) 5. Mesophytic deciduous forest;
- (f) 6. Lowland to submountainous beech forest;
- (g) 7. Mountainous beech forest;
- (h) 8. Thermophilous deciduous forest;
- (i) 9. Broadleaved evergreen forest;
- (j) 10. Coniferous forests of the Mediterranean, Anatolian and Macaronesian regions;
- (k) 11. Mire and swamp forest;
- (l) 12. Floodplain forest;
- (m) 13. Non-riverine alder, birch or aspen forest;
- (n) 14. Plantations and self-sown exotic forest.

For details of the classification and its scientific basis, see the report “European forest types. Categories and types for sustainable forest management reporting and policy” elaborated by a consortium lead by the Italian Academy of Forest Sciences (EEA Technical report No 9/2006). This report is a subject of revision according to the results of the recent commenting process.

30. According to the participants of EFTs classification elaboration process, the main benefits of the proposed classification are:

- (a) The application of the EFTs will allow the reporting of complex data into logical, understandable and ecologically relevant units. Fourteen categories are suitable for the pan-European reporting on the seven MCPFE indicators that require information by forest type;
- (b) The scheme of the 14 EFT categories has potential for better integration of forest data in a wide range of policies (e.g. policies concerning land-use planning, environment, climate, biodiversity, agriculture or water);
- (c) The EFT classification has potential for use in assessing climate change on forest ecosystems, including biodiversity, and to further harmonize European forest monitoring activities;
- (d) The reporting burden is seen as moderate and will shift from three (predominantly conifers, predominantly broadleaved, mixed) to an average of six EFT categories per country.

31. In summary, the experts participating in the technical workshop “Sharing experiences on

pan-European forest classification” endorsed adoption of the European Forest Types but suggested a stepwise approach towards implementation, i.e. the MCPFE reporting on all seven MCPFE indicators by EFT categories. The exchange of experiences with the EFT classification proved to be extremely useful, and this technical cooperation should continue by assisting countries in implementing the European Forest Type categories in the reporting of forest data.

32. National case-studies, as presented in Copenhagen workshop, showed that classifying forest data according to the EFT categories is readily feasible in a number of countries. The classification is thus regarded as largely doable without collecting any more field data, i.e. not needing any extensive input of resources. It was noted that implementing the proposed system may be more straightforward in some countries than in others.

33. The presently proposed classification will be a significant improvement in presenting data on forests across Europe. It was concluded at the meeting that the 14 categories are appropriate, i.e. no new main categories should be added. Although the precision of the classification might be increased – some categories are fairly broad – there is a need to limit the number of categories.

34. Possible application of the EFTs in the future pan-European reporting was deliberated by the Team of Specialists on monitoring SFM. Results from the discussion at the Copenhagen workshop, regarding EFT classification work, served as a basis for deliberations by the Team of Specialists. Countries aired their opinions through the enquiry carried out by the UNECE/FAO. The results of the Team of Specialists discussion will be promulgated orally at the JWP meeting, as these were not available at the time this document was prepared.

35. Below is the planned programme of work for 2008-2013 for work area 2

Work area 2: Forest Resources Assessment	
	Programme elements
2.1	Collecting, validating and disseminating information according to criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management
2.2	Regional contribution to FAO Forest Resource Assessment 2010
2.3	Implementing sustainable forest management through support to developing national systems for forest monitoring (requires funding from extra-budgetary sources)
2.4	Improving information on forest types
2.5	Reporting on and analysis of the state of forests in the UNECE region
2.6	Monitoring and analysing forest ownership and tenure

Question for delegates:

36. The Working Party is invited:

- (a) to take note of the general scope and direction of work on elaboration of European Forest Type classification, and comment on the proposed EFTs classification as well as on potential benefits coming from its application;
- (b) to express opinions regarding the possibility and readiness of European countries to classify their forest according to the new system, how the transition process from “old” to “new” forest types should be organised; which indicators (seven already

defined, less or more?) should be covered by the reporting by forest type?

- (c) to consider providing the MCPFE ELM with a recommendation on the possible endorsement of the new EFTs by the MCPFE;
- (d) to advise the UNECE/FAO on the direction of work for the new EFT classification, in particular in regard to possible extension of work by including other (than European) temperate and boreal countries (Montreal Processes).

Annex

Review of elaboration process, contents, dissemination and use of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe/Food and Agriculture Organization/United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Report on State of Europe's Forests 2007

(Multidimensional evaluation, planned for period 2008-2009)

I. Purpose/Goals

- (a) To improve knowledge on usage of the report "State of Europe's Forests 2007";
- (b) To evaluate the appropriateness of the format and contents of the recent report;
- (c) To improve the content and outreach of the next report, "State of Europe's Forests 2011".

II. Scope

1. It is proposed that the review process includes a number of selected activities, undertaken at different levels and addressing different groups, during the biennium 2008/09:

- (a) Evaluation of different aspects of the whole process of production of the report, from the source data collection, to the production of the final products;
- (b) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal review process of the publication(advisors, reviewers, editors);
- (c) Assessment of the report's content and quality;
- (d) Evaluation of the report dissemination and extension processes;
- (e) Research on the report's impact, including general users, science and policy makers;
- (f) Elaboration of conclusions and recommendations for the next reporting cycle.

III. Background

2. The MCPFE/UNECE/FAO report on the "State of Europe's Forests 2007" (State of Europe's Forest 2007) follows the structure of improved Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forests Management, which includes 35 quantitative and 12 qualitative indicators. The report is based on forest resources assessment data collected from MCPFE and FAO national correspondents and international data providers. Information on some indicators was presented in a form of case studies.

3. The State of Europe's Forest 2007 report continues the series of European forest resources assessments that had been prepared under auspices of UNECE/FAO and/or MCPFE, which is expected to be maintained. In the framework of preparations for the next assessment cycle it is of utmost importance to collect experiences and views from both the report's users and producers.

IV. Issues

4. The review shall assess the effectiveness and usage of the report, mainly by answering the following questions:

- (a) Does the report achieve its stated purpose?
- (b) Which impact did the report achieve?
- (c) Who are the primary users of the report? How many users were reached? Where are they located? Which potential users were not reached?
- (d) In which manner could the production process of the report be improved?
- (e) In which manner could content and the presentation and of outputs be improved?
- (f) How could the report's life be extended?
- (g) Could the promotion of associated outputs (database, national country reports) be improved?

V. Methodology

5. The review shall be conducted via a differentiated set of tools, tailored to the particular tasks. The range of applied methods will vary from the Section's internal assessment on process effectiveness, through evaluation, conclusions and recommendations received from parent bodies (Joint Working Party, Timber Committee, and European Forest Commission), ending at various questionnaire techniques.

6. Applied method will also entail questionnaires addressed directly to national contributors and users as well as research on end-users opinions on the report's quality and appropriateness. In addition to the questionnaires, an analysis of the dissemination process will also be carried out, of both paper copies distributed and downloads of electronic documents. Finally, through citations, the reference of the report in general and scientific publications will be reviewed, in an attempt to assess its usage, and impact.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

7. The following is a suggested timetable for the following segments of the review. The first part of the review will consist of internal review activities, undertaken in 2008:

- (a) Report evaluation by the Timber Section's parent bodies (April - May 2008);
 - (i) UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics & Statistics, March 2008;
 - (ii) Special Session of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, April 2008;
 - (iii) UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on "Monitoring forest resources for Sustainable Forest Management in the UNECE Region", May 2008.
- (b) Questionnaire on the report elaboration process, contents and dissemination – process participants (April - December 2008).
 - (i) Development of questionnaire, determination of addresses (April-May 2008);

- (ii) Conduct of the survey (May - September 2008);
- (iii) Collection and analysis of main Findings (September - December 2008).

8. The second part of the review would address the report's target group and entail the following:

- (a) Questionnaire on the report content, appropriateness and use – report's users (April – September 2009);
- (b) Evaluation of the dissemination of the report (July – October 2009);
 - (i) Evaluation of dissemination of the report (paper and electronic versions);
 - (ii) Evaluation of report citations in the general media and scientific publications.
- (c) Final Elaboration of the review results, formulation of final conclusions and recommendation for the future activities. (November 2009).

VII. Resources

9. The resources will primarily be in the form of staffing, the secretariat supporting and coordinating the review.

VIII. Intended Use

10. Through the review, it can be expected that the Timber Section will better get to know the actual as well as potential users of the report and their needs. Furthermore, the Section would improve its monitoring and continuous evaluation systems, processes and procedures. The results of the review will be incorporated and evaluated, in the preparation of the process of reporting for the next Ministerial Conference. They could also be contribution to the development of the European component to the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment.
