MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

MCPFE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTED AND PROTECTIVE FOREST AND OTHER WOODED LAND IN EUROPE

as adopted by the
MCPFE Expert Level Meeting
7-8 October 2002, Vienna, Austria

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1 INTRODUCTION

The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe are an outcome of the implementation of the joint "Work-Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Diversity in Forest Ecosystems 1997 – 2000" of the MCPFE and "Environment for Europe"[1]. They are based on the analysis of national data on protected and protective forest and other wooded land in the European countries, which has been collected in the frame of a supplementary TBFRA[2] enquiry in 2000. The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines were elaborated in a consultative process in preparatory groups, working groups and workshops, involving the countries and organisations participating in the MCPFE.

The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines aim to give a comprehensive picture of protected and protective forest and other wooded land in Europe, while keeping links to international classification systems used for all kinds of protected areas[3]. As comparability at the international level is a goal of the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines, terms and definitions used are in compliance with the TBFRA terminology.

The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe should thus provide an important tool for further MCPFE work on the conservation of all types of forest and other wooded land.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Protected and protective forest and other wooded land have to comply to the following general principles in order to be assigned according to the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines:

- Existence of legal basis
- Long term commitment (minimum 20 years)
- Explicit designation for the protection of biodiversity, landscapes and specific natural elements or protective functions of forest and other wooded land

  "Explicit designation" in the context of these guidelines comprises both:

  - Designations defining forest and other wooded land within fixed geographical boundaries delineating a specific area
  - Designations defining forest and other wooded land not within fixed geographical boundaries, but as specific forest types or vertical and horizontal zones in the landscape

  Data on forest and other wooded land according to these two designation types should be distinguished in the reporting.

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[1] The pan-European ministerial process of the ministers for the Environment

[2] Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment of UNECE/FAO

[3] There is a clear distinction between protected forests and protective forests, as the first are especially dedicated to the conservation of forest biodiversity, while protective forests are mainly managed for the protection of other natural resources, infrastructure and people.

In addition to the regimes complying to these principles, the MCPFE takes account of protected and protective forest and other wooded land based on voluntary contributions without legal basis. As far as possible these forests and other wooded lands should be assigned to the same classes as used for the legally based regimes. However, data on these forests and other wooded lands should be compiled separately.

3 STRUCTURE

Protected and protective forests and other wooded lands are grouped according to their main management objective. In addition, restrictions to interventions are used as distinguishing factors. As a result, five classes of protected and protective forest and other wooded land in Europe are defined. As far as possible these classes are associated to the respective Protected Area Management Categories of IUCN – The World Conservation Union[4]. In addition, they are linked to the designation types used by EEA[5] in its Data Base on Designated Areas. The intention is to establish proper linkages between the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe and these systems, which are used for all kinds of protected areas. The references are agreed with IUCN and EEA as indicated in the table below.

MCPFE CLASSES		EEA*	IUCN**
1: Main Management Objective "Biodiversity"	1.1: "No Active Intervention"	A	I
	1.2: "Minimum Intervention"	A	II
	1.3: "Conservation Through Active Management"	A	IV
2: Main Management Objective "Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements"		B	III, V, VI
3: Main Management Objective "Protective Functions"		(B)	n.a.

* References as identified in the Standard Data Form of the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks, and used in the same way in the framework of the Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA), managed by the EEA on behalf of two other organisations (Council of Europe and UNEP-WCMC). The groups (A, B or C) are related to designation types and not to individual sites.

** Indicative reference:

- The equivalence of IUCN Categories may vary according to the specific management objective (of the forested part) of each individual protected area. A technical consultation process with IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is underway to ensure full comparability between the MCPFE and IUCN systems.
- IUCN Categories III, V and VI have biodiversity conservation as their primary management objective. However, they fit more easily under MCPFE Class 2 than 1.

[4] World Conservation Union
[5] European Environment Agency

The area of forest and other wooded land assigned to the classes 1 and 2 should not be summed up with the data collected under class 3 to avoid double counting.

4 DEFINITION OF CLASSES

The individual classes of protected and protective forest and other wooded land are defined by the management objective and restrictions to interventions as follows:

Class 1: Main Management Objective "Biodiversity"

Class 1.1: "No Active Intervention"

- The main management objective is biodiversity
- No active, direct human intervention is taking place
- Activities other than limited public access and non-destructive research not detrimental to the management objective are prevented in the protected area

Class 1.2: "Minimum Intervention"

- The main management objective is biodiversity
- Human intervention is limited to a minimum
- Activities other than listed below are prevented in the protected area:
  - Ungulate/game control
  - Control of diseases/insect outbreaks*
  - Public access
  - Fire intervention
  - Non-destructive research not detrimental to the management objective
  - Subsistence resource use**

* In case of expected large diseases/insect outbreaks control measures using biological methods are allowed provided that no other adequate control possibilities in buffer zones are feasible.

** Subsistence resource use to cover the needs of indigenous people and local communities, in so far as it will not adversely affect the objectives of management.

Class 1.3: "Conservation Through Active Management"

- The main management objective is biodiversity
- A management with active interventions directed to achieve the specific conservation goal of the protected area is taking place

- Any resource extraction, harvesting, silvicultural measures detrimental to the management objective as well as other activities negatively affecting the conservation goal are prevented in the protected area

Class 2: Main Management Objective "Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements"

- Interventions are clearly directed to achieve the management goals landscape diversity, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual and historical values, recreation, specific natural elements
- The use of forest resources is restricted
- A clear long-term commitment and an explicit designation as specific protection regime defining a limited area is existing
- Activities negatively affecting characteristics of landscapes or/and specific natural elements mentioned are prevented in the protected area

Class 3: Main Management Objective “Protective Functions”

- The management is clearly directed to protect soil and its properties or water quality and quantity or other forest ecosystem functions, or to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards
- Forests and other wooded lands are explicitly designated to fulfil protective functions in management plans or other legally authorised equivalents
- Any operation negatively affecting soil or water or the ability to protect other ecosystem functions, or the ability to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards is prevented