

**Fourth (18th) meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists (ToS) on
“Monitoring of sustainable forest management”**

(Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, 22-24 May 2012)
Vedensky Room, Hotel Vedensky

Meeting report

Item 1: Opening and welcome

1. Mr. Andrey N. Filipchuk, Deputy Director of the All-Russian Research Institute of Silviculture and Forest Mechanization, and the Chairman of the FAO European Forestry Commission opened the meeting, welcomed participants and thanked them for coming to Saint-Petersburg. Welcoming speeches were also given by Mr. Alexander G. Tretyakov, General Director of the FSUE (Federal State Unitary Enterprise) Roslesinforg, Mr. Orjån Jonson, Forest Resources Officer at the FAO Forestry Department and Ms. Myriam Martin, Policy Adviser at FOREST EUROPE.
2. Mr. Roman Michalak, Forestry Officer at the ECE-FAO Forestry and Timber Section and Secretary to this ToS welcomed meeting participants and thanked them for joining the 18th meeting. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Michalak expressed his utmost gratitude to Russian colleagues for their exemplary involvement and extraordinary contribution to the organization of this event. Mr. Michalak recalled the impressive work carried out by the ToS along the years and took the opportunity to thank his predecessor Mr. Alexander Korotkov for having organized the work of the Team 18 years ago, and for his continuous support towards it.
3. Mr. Kari Korhonen, ToS Leader, welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked the organizers for their hospitality in hosting this meeting before introducing the week programme.

Adoption of agenda

4. The agenda of the ToS meeting was adopted as proposed by the secretariat (Annex III). The list of participants is attached to this report (Annex IV).

Item 2: Forest monitoring and assessment related developments since the last meeting of the Team

(a) Cooperation among the Criteria and Indicators for SFM processes

4. Mr. Ichiro Nagame, Senior Policy Analyst for International Affairs, Montreal Process Liaison Unit Japan, presented the results of a workshop co-organised by FAO, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE in the margins of the Montréal Process 22nd Working Group meeting held in Victoria, Canada in October 2011. The outcome of the meeting included the need for pursuing efforts to streamline reporting requirements for the GFRA 2015; improve communication around sustainable forest management; and continue to work with other processes and improve collaboration. In addition, Mr. Nagame briefed participants on the upcoming Jacksonville meeting to be held on 20 August 2012. This meeting is organized by the US Forest Service, together with FAO, Forestry and Timber Section and major Criteria and Indicators processes. Its aim is to help develop international cooperation on collecting, analyzing and disseminating forest related data. On the margins of the workshop, the FAO Advisory Group on Forest Resources Assessment meeting will be organized to conclude on the scope and modalities of the Collaborative Forest Resources Enquiry.
5. Ms. Martin recalled FOREST EUROPE commitments to FRA 2015. She also briefed participants on the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe and the Oslo Ministerial Decision: European Forest 2020 which objective is to further develop SFM and its tools, highlight the multiple roles forest play in global challenges, further improve forest monitoring and reporting and harmonize processes.

(b) Cooperation in the pan-European region

6. Mr. Michalak presented the different reporting systems used in the pan-European region. Several obstacles were identified, including the existing difference in definitions, the use of different formats, as well as timing for data collection. In addition, the lack of communication between national correspondents reporting to different processes was also noted. Recommendations for improvements included dedicating more time to the exchange of information on on-going and planned reporting activities and more active participation in the activities of other organisations (than UNECE, FAO and FOREST EUROPE) involved in reporting work. Mr. Michalak also noted an increase in the representation of national correspondents in the Team would be beneficial, e.g. by organizing joint meetings of the Team and FAO National Correspondents from the region during the 2015 reporting.
7. Mr. Michalak recalled the ToS mandate which already provides a lot of opportunity for institutional cooperation and contribution among various forest monitoring processes. To further develop the cooperation and achieve the target, more exchange should be drawn into planning and on-going activities leading towards FRA 2015 and the next SoEF reporting period. In order to strengthen and further improve exchanges of information, Mr. Michalak proposed the development of a periodic jointly owned bulletin based on existing initiatives among organizations and among countries.
8. Participants welcomed the idea of developing a bulletin as it would serve various purposes including, reducing reporting burden; increasing interaction and communication among institutions and contributing to the harmonization of processes at the international level.
9. Participants also encouraged the organization of a joint meeting(s) with members of the ToS and National Correspondents, coordinated with the FRA and SoEF reporting process.

Item 3: *FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment*

(a) Information about FAO FRA long-term Strategy 2030; presentation of the concept and results of the preparatory process of the FRA 2015

10. Mr. Jonsson provided participants with the long term strategy which was recommended at the last COFO session in 2010. He explained the long-term strategy consists in providing the big picture of state and trends in global forests and forestry. The strategy also integrates remote sensing in national reporting.
11. Mr. Jonsson then presented an overview of the FRA 2015 and the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) initiated to reduce the reporting burdens for countries reporting to FAO and one or more regional bodies. He explained the CFRQ will be a subset of FRA variables.
12. To increase attention on FRA 2015, FAO developed a visual identifier and a banner which Mr. Jonsson encouraged participants to use. Also mentioned was the second edition of “Natural Inquirer the World’s Forests” which has recently been published. This second edition contains 5 inquiries, based on the results from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010.

(b) Further work on the conclusions from the FRA Technical Consultation, Ispra I - reporting process in the UNECE region.

13. The meeting broke into three Working Groups in order to discuss and comment on the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire and the different variables. Each groups covered 2 of 4 topics. Topic A - focused on Growing stock, Topic B - focused on Biodiversity and damages. Topic C - focused on Forest products and topic D - focused on Forest area, expansion and damage. The results of the Working Groups’ discussions (outcome) are presented in the *Annex I*.

Item 4: *FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO report on State of Europe's Forest*

(a) Review of the main outputs, production, dissemination and use of the results of the SoEF 2011

14. Participants were informed on recent developments related to the finalization, dissemination and evaluation of the Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO report, State of Europe's Forests 2011 (SoEF2011). The final report and background material are available on the UNECE/FAO and Forest Europe websites. The results of the reporting process have been presented at various international and national meetings. Numerous topical presentations, videos, press conferences and interviews also contributed to dissemination and outreach activities.
15. Two specific dissemination tools, targeted at different audiences, have been developed: i) Forest Europe and UNECE/FAO interactive database on quantitative indicators that was released in December 2011, including, for the first time, a Russian-language version; ii) online educational kit with two entry points, one of which is for teachers and the other for 11-12 year old students which will be launched at the end of October 2012.
16. The report was found to be a good tool for stimulating communication between forest inventory practitioners, researchers and policy makers. Other tools, such as the educational tool-kit, were seen as a promising means for reaching new audiences and addressing new aspects of Sustainable Forest Management.
17. Ms. Eve Charles presented the results of a survey developed by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and circulated in April 2012 to review and evaluate the preparations and use of the SoEF2011 report. This survey's primary aim was to assess the level of satisfaction of its readers and contributors in order to provide recommendations for the next report. It also allowed comparing some results with those collected through the survey circulated after the release of the SoEF2007. The results of the survey are available at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/other/Item4-a-SoEF_survey-final-ec.pdf

(b) Plans for future developments, in the context of UNECE/FAO and FOREST EUROPE work programmes.

18. In his introduction to activities that are planned on the regional level Mr. Michalak briefed participants about plans for future global reporting, i.e. for the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment. The 2015 reporting for this report will be carried out as a collaborative activity between FAO and other actors, including the Montreal Process, FOREST EUROPE and the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section. Data collection will be organised so as to avoid duplication and multiple requests for data. Inconsistencies in definitions between the global and regional modules will also be avoided. The process of data production, collection and review should be streamlined and "single windows" created both at the national level and the international level for the collection of data.
19. As far as the pan-European level is concerned, a proposal to coordinate data collection on quantitative pan-European indicators with global data collection had been accepted by the FOREST EUROPE Expert Level Meeting on 14-15 February 2012 in Madrid and included in the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme for 2012-2015. FAO, UNECE/FAO and the Liaison Unit Madrid are the leading parties in this activity and already started working on the next reporting. An Advisory Group is being set up while authors and Coordinating Lead Authors will soon be identified. In terms of quantitative reporting, the close to final version of the enquiry should be ready by April 2013.
20. Participants reiterated the value and benefits of coordinated reporting in terms of increased impact and efficiency. It was foreseen that deadline for country responses will be December 2013. Checking, processing data will continue through to June 2014.
21. In terms of logistics, Mr. Michalak announced that with regards to FRA, reporting on the set of variables that are relevant at global scale will start in the first half of 2013; another set of variables that are

relevant at regional level will be reported in the second part of 2013. A joint meeting with National Correspondents, ToS and Authors, for the final review of the data and draft version of the SoEF report will be organized in 2014. In the preliminary phase of reporting, it is recommended, the Advisory Group, relevant experts and authors meet once a year. The frequency of meetings will then improve, but yet again, this will also depend on resources and funding.

Item 5: Improvement of forest monitoring and assessment of SFM in the UNECE region, discussion on concepts, plan of work and ideas for cooperation

(a) SFM assessment

22. Mr. Kit Prins gave a short introduction on SFM assessment work. He updated ToS on recent developments and plans for further work on developing the SFM assessment method. Mr. Prins formulated why SFM should be assessed and why it is very difficult to assess it using the current report as it stands as it is extremely complex and technical. As mentioned in the survey presented under agenda item 5, users preferred the overview chapter, the summary for policy makers, most probably as these parts are less technical. Whatever method we use will have to be reflected in the enquiry.
23. A core group has been set with the objective to propose an agreed method for assessing SFM by the next meeting of the ToS to be held next year.
24. The main conclusions from the meeting encouraged to continue work on assessment for many reasons, including demonstration of sustainability, transparency, orientation of policy, further improving the performance of the forest sector, understanding of trends and differences between regions, increasing impact through simplicity of message, analysis of tradeoffs between major objectives etc.
25. There was a most active discussion on the assessment approach, here are the main messages:

- i. Countries MUST be involved and consulted all through the process, national forest programs should do the assessment in depth with good expertise and must not be overlooked.
 - ii. National objectives and circumstances must be taken into account, although self-evaluations could be found as not credible.
 - iii. Choosing few key parameters which are both meaningful and measurable for assessment of each criterion is probably the way forward. Many of the parameters in SoEF 2011 were either meaningless¹, or presented significant problems of data availability or comparability, including Part B of the qualitative indicators, or overlapped (e.g. growing stock and carbon). The final tables were intimidatingly complex. Limiting the number of parameters increases readability and transparency, and thereby impact, as well as avoiding problems of overlapping indicators. Of course how the limited set is chosen is crucial as it must cover all major aspects, and not be open to charges of “whitewash” (concealing problems).
 - iv. Furthermore, some parameters describe the unchangeable background situation or starting point, rather than the outcome of forest management: forest cover, naturalness, % of GDP. Status for these parameters may be considered “background information”, although trends may be important. When analyzing SFM, there must be a good understanding of the data.
 - v. Hence it is considered that the transparent process started at St. Petersburg; it will be continued on the forum of thematic (core) group (open to all ToS members) and reported back to the ToS plenary.
 - vi. In all cases there must be well-informed comments on the results to put them into context.
26. The meeting broke into three working groups in order to review the set of pan-European indicators, aiming at choosing variables that would be used for the purpose of assessment. Group A discussed “General indicators” and “Forest health and vitality”, Group B focused on “Productive functions” and “Socio-economic indicators” and Group C deliberated on “Protected and Protective functions”. The results of the work groups are presented in the Annex II.

¹ e.g. 1.3, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.11

- (b) Reporting on growing stock, increment and drain; including plans for reporting on IEEAF.
27. Mr. Boris N. Moiseev, Russia, presented the development of SFM indicators in the UNECE/FAO regions. In terms of the area and stock of the forest available for wood supply (FAWS), Mr. Moiseev suggested it was necessary to enter them into future global reporting. He recalled the importance of the total Net Annual Increment (NAI) as a parameter for SFM assessment, and further as it provides a basis for calculating the Net Ecosystem Productivity (NEP) in terms of carbon. Finally he reminded NEP is necessary to count on the Equation 3.2.5 IPCC Guidance method.
28. Mr. Stein Tomter delivered a presentation, prepared jointly with Mr. Andrius Kuliešis, on “Forest balance – what components are required and how can they be assessed?” Mr. Tomter explained complexity of parameters required for reporting on Indicator 3.1. of the SoEF 2011, and presented the differentiated pattern of responses received from countries as well as shortcomings resulting from the current definitions for forest available for wood supply (FAWS), and the way it was applied.
29. A special ToS sub-group has been created for working on this issue, one of the first activities of the sub-group will be approaching correspondents again about the data they provided for Gross Annual Increment (GAI) and NAI and criteria applied for determination of FAWS in their countries. In their work, possibilities for joining efforts and benefiting from COST FT1001 USEWOOD have to be examined.
30. Mr. Michalak presented on behalf of Mr. Csaba Mozes (Eurostat) their proposal of reporting within the framework Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounts for Forests (IEEAF). Results of this reporting, that could be carried out on annual basis, would satisfy internal needs of the European Union systems, furthermore they could be used for the facilitation of EU countries reporting to other regional and global schemes/systems.

31. In the following discussion of this proposal, the ToS members were unanimous in their opinion that they were not comfortable with delegating their reporting responsibilities to Eurostat. Moreover they were not in favour of increasing either scope or frequency of reporting on mandatory basis, also taking into account periodical nature of national forest inventories. The reason (purposes) of collection of such a detailed data was not also clear for the experts.

(c) review and developing the data for social and economic indicators, and on other (difficult) indicators

32. On behalf of Mr. Simon Gillam, Mr. Michalak presented the major issues that affected reporting on socio-economic indicators. Part of them was of general nature and applied to several indicators (e.g. current and real prices, currencies); while the rest of them were specific and linked to individual indicators (some indicators of Criterion 3 and most of indicators of Criterion 6). The future work should result in resolving these issues or proposing considering ceasing of an indicator that may provide meaningless information. The next steps include continuing work with the sub-group of relevant experts who will be able to help us complementing the data.

33. Mr. Prins reiterated the importance of continuing efforts to improving data and not withdrawing some of the areas where there are problems, areas that are often limited due to lack of resources, etc. Mr. Korhonen informed participants that Finland was ready to support the work of the sub-group including hosting of the meeting, later in the second part of the year.

(d) Plans for work on implementation of European Forest Types (EFT).

34. Ms. Annemarie Bastrup-Birk briefed participants on recent developments and results of the pilot reporting and plans for further work on EFT. The next steps in the EFT process include: conclude on pilot application and formulate recommendations through the joint EEA, Forest Europe and UNECE/FAO meeting in Copenhagen in fall 2012. The meeting will provide recommendations to Forest Europe who will decide through the Expert Level Meeting what future

activities on EFT, in particular related their possible application in the 2015 reporting, will take place.

Item 6: Plans for future activities of the ToS. Other matters.

35. Mr. Hubert N. Inhaizer presented a project coordinated by EFI in close cooperation with Forest Europe, UNECE/FAO, METLA and other partners. The project aims to analyse the implementation of C&I for SFM in the 46 signatory states of the Forest Europe process and strengthen the process and the use of C&I. The working definition of the “implementing C&I for SFM” will be developed, assessed and refined. There will be 4 related events to take place in spring 2013. The final report is planned to be released in November 2013, preceded by the plenary conference. There are some countries where the sub-national areas cannot be disregarded and the project hope that these areas will coordinate related activities with the UNECE/FAO national correspondents.
36. Mr. Michalak briefed participants on the next activities that are related to the ToS. The conference on inter Criteria and Indicator processes will take place in Jacksonville at the end of August. The conference aims to strengthen collaborative reporting, communication related to different processes and to C&I at the global level. The secretariat will circulate information related to the meeting in the coming weeks.
37. In terms of 2015 reporting process, it is envisaged that the first draft of the enquiry for reporting on pan-European indicators should be ready by the end of 2012/ beginning of 2013 to be revised and developed at the next meeting of the ToS, which will be organised at that time. Then the close to final version will be presented to national correspondents at the global meeting planned for April next year. The final draft has to be released by the end of July 2013, while the deadline for the submission of the national data/information according to this enquiry will be the end of that year. As discussed during the meeting, the number of preparatory meetings will be organised. The default venue for the next ToS meeting is Geneva. Members of the

Team are encouraged to examine possibilities of hosting the next or subsequent meetings.

38. The GFRA next meeting will be held in Bangkok (22 April 2013).

Item 7: Closure of the ToS meeting

39. The meeting was closed at 17:00 on 24 May 2012.

Other matters

40. Participants took part in a one-day field trip to forests organized by the hosts. Participants were introduced with National Forests Inventory methods currently being implemented in Russia. The exercise was demonstrated on a sample plot. Participants then visited the “Lintula Larch Forest” National Park near Saint Petersburg (oldest in Europe plantation of “European Larch” (*Larix decidua*)). This National Park had been established during the period 1738-1750.

41. The Team of Specialists expressed its sincere gratitude to the Russian hosts, FSUE Roslesinforg and VNIILM for the support extended to the international reporting, and for the outstanding hospitality they received during its stay in Russia. Special thanks were expressed to Professor Andrey N. Filipchuk and to his colleagues for the excellent work done in the preparation and running the ToS meeting, and thus for their important contribution to the international co-operation on FRA and regional reporting.