

ILO/UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists (ToS) on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector

18 May 2016, Room S-436, Palais des Nations, Geneva, at 9:00-12:00

Summary Report

Present :

Andreas Bernasconi, Switzerland, ToS Deputy Leader;

Josef Herkendell, Germany;

Diarmuid McAree, Ireland, ToS Deputy Leader;

Elina Warsta, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, ToS Secretary;

Roman Michalak, Acting Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section;

Ekren Yazici, Deputy Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section.

The Team introduced the importance of the topic and the history behind the team of specialists dating back to 1954 under the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training. They also summarised the work accomplished to date and the progress achieved by the team under its current mandate.

Roman Michalak introduced the current work programme and the organisation within the Section and informed the ToS Members about the discussions on the possible cooperation between the UNECE/FAO and FOREST EUROPE that had taken place before and at the FOREST EUROPE expert level meeting on 11-12 May 2016 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The reference framework for this cooperation is the FOREST EUROPE work programme, which includes activities related to the forest sector workforce that could be combined with the work of the ToS on Green Jobs (to be discussed in detail with the Liaison Unit Bratislava). In addition, the FOREST EUROPE work programme contains activities related to forests and health that could be possibly merged with the workshop planned by the ToS.

Diarmuid McAree informed the group about the status of the preparations for a possible workshop in Ireland on forests and health. There has been recent changes in the Irish government and new ministers have been appointed with responsibility for forestry and jobs. Thus, the discussions for hosting a workshop can start in the following weeks and a realistic target for the workshop could be spring 2017 (not autumn 2016 as originally planned). Diarmuid will inform the team on the developments in Ireland.

Andreas Bernasconi will participate in the International conference for forestry training centres on 27-29 June 2016 in Solsona, Spain, and will present the work of the ToS there. He will take the opportunity at the Solsona meeting to test a set of questions that will be prepared to gather information for the forest sector workforce study on green jobs and training. These questions will be sent to the Solsona participants (expected number 50-60) before the meeting.

The study paper on forest sector workforce PART 1 is under preparation with Finnish project funding, and the first draft will be finalised by the end of June 2016. This part of the study will provide input for an official document that will be translated to French and Russian for the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) meeting, which will take place on 18-20 October 2016 in Geneva (presentation of the work on green forest jobs is planned for 20 October,

morning session). At the COFFI meeting the Member States will have a possibility to discuss and exchange experiences on the topic. The ToS on Green Forest Jobs can support the preparation for the COFFI session on the Forest Sector Workforce by providing ideas and suggestions for the programme and potential speakers related to the forest sector workforce. It was agreed that the detailed content and plans for the study paper on forest sector workforce PART 2 that will focus on training, education and policies to support job creation (supported by Switzerland) will be specified soon after PART 1 is finished by the end of June 2016. The ToS on Green Forest Jobs will provide support for reviewing PART 1 and planning PART 2.

The EFI study "Towards a sustainable European forest based bioeconomy..." and a contribution to chapter "The implications of the bioeconomy for jobs and rural development" was briefly discussed by the group and it was agreed to share information on this topic with EFI.

Elina Warsta will organise a conference call in July 2016 (Skype group call) for interested ToS participants to discuss the next steps of the study on the forest sector workforce (especially PART 2). A team meeting (ToS Green Jobs) focussed on the study on forest sector workforce as well as preparations for the COFFI meeting will be organised in Geneva in September 2016 during week 37 (one day meeting, to be confirmed soon).

The group discussed the serious problems for funding which is shared by all the eight teams of specialists, and limits their participation and contribution at ToS meetings. The main input from a team of specialists is voluntary-based support from Member States to provide experts to support the work in different fields of activity as a form of in-kind support. One option to limit the financial burden of travelling costs would be to organise the team meeting once a year in different locations (i.e. not in Geneva), hosted by one team member at a time. The minimum requirement to host a meeting is to provide a meeting room free of charge for the team. This would offer the possibility for the team members to learn from expert work in different countries at the same time. Additional support to the team's work could be gained from merging efforts with FOREST EUROPE and benefiting from their resources and expertise.