

FOREST EUROPE

Issue 2/2016, November 2016

The Newsletter of the Liaison Unit Bratislava

Tools for Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Monitoring and Reporting

The FOREST EUROPE Work Programme (WP), adopted at the Expert Level Meeting (ELM) in Bratislava, in May 2016, provides guidance for the collective work of FOREST EUROPE structural bodies, signatories and observers, including collaboration with other partners. First two Actions of the WP have been designed in **continuity of long term development of tools for SFM** (Action 4.1) and **forest monitoring and reporting** (Action 4.2). These Actions ensure the continued reporting on the State of Europe's forests (SoEF) and the progress of implementing Goals for European Forests and the European 2020 Targets for Forests (G&T2020).

This article provides an overview of the current work and next steps in these two Actions. The Expert Group on implementation of the updated pan-European indicators for SFM is set to explore considerations on tools to promote and assess SFM through methodological support and better incorporation of the updated set of indicators and other relevant new knowledge. The EG will, inter alia, monitor and analyse how Criteria and Indicators (C&I) are developed and implemented, including possible uses of the pan-European C&I subsets and reporting on national and pan-European achievements of G&T2020. The work of the EG will also build on achievements of the Advisory Group on the Updating of the pan-European Indicators for SFM, the Expert Group to Propose Improvements in Tools for SFM, a project of the European Forest Institute on implementing C&I for SFM in Europe, and other relevant studies. The outputs will be developed through an online consultation and reported to ELMs. Recently, the Liaison Unit Bratislava (LUB) contacted FOREST EUROPE focal points in this context, requesting nomination of experts. The analysis of possible uses of the pan-European C&I subsets will be carried out by the EG, considering global,

regional and local levels of possible subsets use. As discussed at the 3rd Informal Inter-Agency Meeting on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SFM Indicators held in Rome, on 20 July 2016 (during World Forest Week), specific sets of indicators were already proposed for reporting. In addition, regional inputs can provide additional perspectives on the contribution to SDGs. The Secretariats of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) jointly organized Expert Meeting on Enhancing Regional and Sub-Regional Involvement in the Work of the International Arrangement on Forests and invited regional C&I processes and organizations to closer cooperation (see page 2). The UNFF reports to High Level Political Forum (HLPF) should include coordinated input

New movie about European Forests



This summer, Liaison Unit Bratislava produced a new movie about European forests. On the background of images from nature, the infographics from the State of Europe's Forests 2015 are used in the video to highlight economic, environmental and social effects of forests.

from regional and sub-regional organizations and processes in future. Such input to the HLPF should be seen as an opportunity to communicate the cross-sectoral contributions of forests to all 17 SDGs.

In Europe, regional inputs could be developed in close cooperation between FOREST EUROPE and UNECE/FAO. As the implementation of indicators for SDGs is still discussed, the Collaborative Partnership on Forest (CPF) is convening an Organization-Led Initiative (OLI) on "Global Forest Indicators to Support Implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the IAF Strategic Plan", to be held from 28 to 30 November 2016 at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

SoEF 2020 report will be prepared in close cooperation with UNECE/FAO. In this context, a survey of opinions of authors and users of the SoEF 2015 was already conducted and its results used as a background for preparation of tentative roadmap for SoEF 2020. Common data for the global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and SoEF will be collected through CFRQ, the Cooperative Forest Resources Questionnaire. Data not covered by the CFRQ and needed for elaboration of SoEF 2020 will be collected through the Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO questionnaires on quantitative and qualitative indicators of SFM. The possibility to collect all data through FAO online platform (FRIMS) will be further discussed with UNECE and FAO. The Advisory Group for preparation of SoEF 2020, as an informal body, will be initiated to provide views on all aspects related to the scope and organization of the SoEF 2020 process.

The pan-European set of C&I was updated in 2015, and pilot studies on data availability, reliability and feasibility for three newly defined indicators "forest fragmentation", "common forest bird species" and "forest land degradation" will be carried out. Reporting on the achievements of G&T2020 will also be a significant component of the two Actions. The EG will be involved in selection of appropriate indicators and mid-term G&T2020 evaluation will be considered. All the above mentioned WP activities were presented to the 24th Meeting of UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists (ToS) on Monitoring of SFM, held in Zagreb, 14 to 16 September 2016. The ToS can provide valuable inputs to all outputs, as well as to the activities of the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) process led by FAO. More specifically, CFRQ is the common and uniting tool to reduce countries reporting burden. In fact, reporting activities of FOREST EUROPE and FAO will be synchronized accordingly. Collaborative data collection has received broad support from stakeholders including at the World Forest Week held by FAO in Rome, in July 2016. Along these lines,

FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020 implementation - ACTIVITY MAP

Expert/Advisory Groups/Workshops	Tentative time schedule and meetings
Expert Group on Implementation of the Updated pan-European Indicators for SFM (activity 4.1.2, 4.2.1 - 4.2.4.)	EG meetings: • Jan 2017 • June 2019 Online consultations: • 2016 - 2019
State of Europe's Forest Advisory Group (activity 4.2.1, 4.2.2.)	Yearly EG meetings: • 2017-2020 • 1 st AG meeting – April 2017
Expert Group on Green jobs, education and training systems (activities 4.3.1 and 4.3.2)	EG meetings: • Jan 2017 • May 2017 (back-to-back with workshop) • Autumn 2017 • 2018 Online consultations: • 2017-2018
Workshop on green jobs (activity 4.3.1)	• May 2017
Workshop on a long term competitiveness of the forest sector in a green economy (activity 4.3.3)	• Autumn 2017
Expert Group on Valuation of and Payments for FES (activity 4.4.1)	Online consultations: • 2017-2018 EG meetings: • September 2017 • Autumn 2018
Expert Group on adaptation to climate change through SFM (activity 4.5.1)	Online consultations: • 2017-2019 EG meetings: • September 2017 • Autumn 2018 (back-to-back with workshop 4.5.3)
Workshop on protection of forests against hazards and threats (activity 4.5.2)	• 2018
Workshop on agroforestry strategies (activity 4.5.3)	• 2018
Social aspects of SFM – benefits of forests on human health and well-being (activity 4.6.1.)	Online consultations: • 2016-2019
Workshop on social aspects of SFM (activity 4.6.2)	• 2018

*Full version of Activity map table is available [here](#).

recommendations of the FRA Advisory Group meeting, held in Rome, in October 2016, supported collaboration with regional C&I processes and data collection through the CFRQ.

Enhancing Regional Involvement in the International Arrangement on Forests

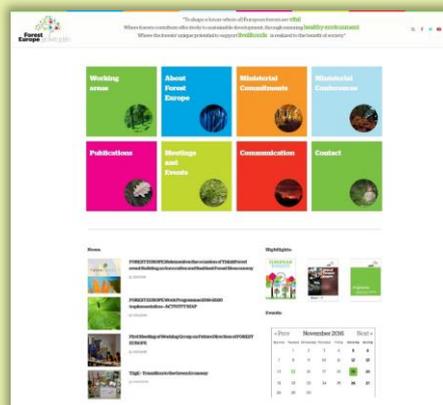
The UN International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) provides a framework for the global forest policy dialogue in the post-2015 period. Enhancing sustainable management of the world's forests and strengthening their contribution to sustainable development are key objectives of the IAF. It comprises the UN Forum on Forests and its 197 Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests with key global forest related organizations involved, and financing mechanisms. A strategic plan for forests 2017 - 2030 has recently been prepared to enhance the coherence and guide and help focus the work of the IAF - and more widely the UN system-wide work on sustainable forest management. IAF recognizes the significance of engagement and dialogue with regional and sub-regional entities in the work in general, and in liaising with the Forum in particular.

With this background, the Secretariats of the UNFF and ECO jointly organized a three-day meeting with representatives of regional and sub-regional entities, aimed at exploring ways and means to enhance involvement and contribution of regional and sub-regional organizations and processes to the IAF. The expert meeting was held on 26 to 28 September 2016 at the premises of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Tehran, Iran. Participants from various organizations and processes from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America attended. ECO hosts the secretariat of the Tehran process for low forest cover countries, which also participated in the meeting.



FOREST EUROPE has a history of interaction and linkages with the Forum. As FOREST EUROPE represents the pan-European voluntary political process aimed at promoting sustain-able forest management, it provides an important regional platform for forest policy dialogue and cooperation. The latest, 7th Ministerial Conference in

New FOREST EUROPE web-page



At the beginning of November, the new FOREST EUROPE webpage has been launched. New, modern design responsive to all-devices, easy orientation and a new event management system are some of the new webpage features. On the website can be easily found all ministerial commitments through an interactive figure, innovative “tag” searching tool as well as a feedback and comments section under each topic. The webpage is new, but address remains www.foresteurope.org.

2015 made an explicit commitment to continue providing regional inputs to the work of the IAF.

The discussions at the meeting touched upon specific suggestions for inclusion in the IAF strategic plan 2017 - 2030, and ways to advance implementation of the UNFI and the forest-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development at the regional and sub-regional levels. Possible ways and means to enhance cooperation with UNFF were also discussed, including modalities for submitting inputs through UNFF, and utilization of available financial mechanisms for overall promotion of sustainable forest management.

Recognizing the different mandates, scope and nature of the entities represented in the meeting, it was felt that regional and sub-regional involvement in the work of the IAF could be strengthened, and that communication, coordination and capacity building are key to enable closer linkages. Thirteen actions for enhancing involvement of regional and sub-regional organizations and processes were identified. The expert meeting was the first such inter-agency event on sustainable forest management co-organized by the Forum with participation of regional and sub-regional entities. FOREST EUROPE on its part, besides supporting the efforts to streamline and harmonize reporting on

forests, also emphasizes coherence in addressing forest policy issues between global and regional levels. The deliberations will continue at the forthcoming meetings of the Ad hoc Expert Group and the UNFF Twelfth Session to be held in 2017. More information at www.un.org/esa/forests.

First Meeting of Working Group on Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE

At the 7th Ministerial Conference held in Madrid in October 2015, the FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers had decided on a review of the process, especially its structures, procedures and work modalities with a view to adapting to current and future challenges.

The review was launched at the Expert Level Meeting in May 2016 (see [link](#)) by adopting the Terms of Reference with Roadmap, and by appointing two co-chair countries, France and Ukraine, to lead the Working Group on Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE (WG).



The first meeting of the WG took place on 12 - 13 October 2016, in Bratislava. Participants from 21 signatory countries and the European Union as well as seven international observer organizations attended the event, which indicates a keen interest in the momentum generated by the review. The format of the meeting was a discussion forum to enable brainstorming about issues that require attention and will need to be addressed. Its outcomes provide a key input to the comprehensive, web-based questionnaire survey of opinions of all signatories and observers to be developed before end of 2016, and conducted in the beginning of 2017.

The meeting started with introductory presentations on the history and milestones of FOREST EUROPE, and key outcomes of the previous two assessments (carried out in 2009 and 2015). In accordance with the Terms of Reference and Roadmap, the discussion was then structured into three main blocks of the review: (A) Achievements and added value, (B) Structures,

procedures and work modalities, and (C) Interplay with other regional and international actors. Each block started with a brief description of the current situation and broad questions formulated by the Co-Chairs. The participants agreed that key, widely recognized achievements include the definition of Sustainable Forest Management, tools and guidelines, as well as the political commitments and the Ministerial Conferences themselves. They emphasized the need to preserve the flexibility, openness and inclusiveness that have characterized the process since its inception in the 1990s. The idea of a rapid response mechanism on emerging issues of high political relevance was raised, which would enable FOREST EUROPE to influence relevant debates and other processes, for instance climate change policy negotiations. Strong support was given to enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation as well as the interplay with global forest policy fora including in the area of criteria & indicators. To promote implementation of the Work Programme, the participants expressed support for innovative regional approaches and regional/bilateral partnerships.

Role, tasks and adequacy of the negotiation structures (Ministerial Conference, Expert Level Meeting, Roundtable Meeting, Working Groups, expert/advisory groups and workshops) and supportive structures (General Coordinating Committee and Liaison Unit) were discussed at length. The factors influencing efficiency and effectiveness of meetings include frequency, format, nomination and engagement of participants, role of observers, languages. With regard to the Liaison Unit serving as the secretariat, the participants put forward advantages and disadvantages of the current, rotating arrangement. Possibilities for combining features of a rotating and a permanent secretariat will be assessed. The views expressed have provided very valuable guidance for elaborating the survey.



Voluntary and in-kind contributions are strongly encouraged and should receive proper visibility. Novel ways of raising funds from the private sector were also suggested by some signatories.

In conclusion, the first meeting of the WG was very successful in that it identified main issues and areas that are broadly supported by the FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers - and those issues that need to be further addressed in the review. There was an ample discussion on the multiple factors that influence efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of the process. According to the roadmap discussed at the meeting, the actual survey will be conducted in January - February 2017 and the second WG meeting to evaluate its results and produce a draft report will take place by June 2017. The final report with recommendations will then be presented to the Expert Level Meeting in autumn 2017.

Seventy-fourth Session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

The 74th Session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) was held on 18-20 October 2016, in Geneva, Switzerland. More than 130 participants representing UNECE member States, European Commission, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organisations and processes, as well as non-governmental organisations attended the Session.



Participants of the meeting reviewed, discussed and provided guidance on activities in data collection and analysis, policy support, capacity building and communication. A significant part of the Session was traditionally devoted to forest products market discussion and topics relevant to forest-based industries. Additional topics of the meeting included review of the results of the work on forest ownership and green jobs in the region. The Committee was also invited to discuss the results of the Strategic Review of the Integrated Programme of Work 2014-2017 and provided recommendations for the future Programme (2018-2021).

Within the section on forest sector workforce and future green jobs in the region, representative of the Liaison Unit

Bratislava briefed the participants on the FOREST EUROPE planned work on green jobs. Activities includes establishment of an Expert Group with the aim to identify and specify new skills required for forest workers, forest managers and forest owners in the context of green economy as well as other requirements for green jobs in the forest sector. Outcomes of the Expert Group will be subsequently discussed at a workshop and will lead to preparation of pan-European Guidelines for promotion of green jobs in the forest sector. This action will be done jointly with the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section.



During the discussion on the global and regional policy context, head of the Liaison Unit Bratislava updated the Committee on the planned implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme with emphasis on key topics to be addressed during the following period 2016 - 2020 and possible synergies in the region. Read more about the Session at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42383>.

Workshop “Measuring the Value of Forests in a Green Economy”

On 21 October, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section organised one-day workshop with the aim to analyse the complementarity of present forest sector valuation systems with approaches developed by the other sectors in the context of a green economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The intention was to examine how the forest sector is taken into account in these methodologies and their compatibility with assessment systems using criteria and indicators developed by the forest sector. This step has a big potential to contribute to the increase of synergies among the different assessment methodologies and provide better information for policy makers. It also emphasizes the contribution of the forest sector to a green economy and raises needs for policy measures necessary to enhance this contribution.

The workshop was a step forward to the implementation of the Rovaniemi Action Plan, Pillar E – Policy

development and monitoring of the forest sector in relation to a green economy. Besides the overview of Assessment Systems & Criteria and Indicators developed by the forest sector, key actors from outside the forest sector, such as Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nation Environmental Programme (UNEP), Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES), Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP), The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), also presented their perspectives. Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests were presented by Mr. Guy Robertson representing Montreal Process and the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management were delivered by Ms. Ľudmila Marušáková, head of the Liaison Unit Bratislava representing FOREST EUROPE process.



It was highlighted that FOREST EUROPE was one of the first regional policy processes to develop and endorse C&I, as the first set of indicators was developed in 1998. The forest sector has been working on the methods of measurement of sustainability for decades. Politically endorsed, the Pan-European C&I set is now a basic tool for monitoring, assessing, implementing and promoting sustainable forest management. It is a framework for dialogue and cooperation by providing support for communication within the forest sector. In fact, it also offers a basis for cross-sectoral forest-related data collection and a “bridge” to the other sectors, NGOs and broad public at large. However, in many cases, forest sector data could not be considered relevant by non-forest processes as the underlying rationale embedded in the set is difficult to understand for non-forestry stakeholders.

Methodologies applied in the forest sector have been built through long-term experiences in monitoring and reporting within the sector. Building a system measuring contributions of the forest sector to a green economy would need to take into account these methodologies to avoid additional reporting burden. It was stated at the workshop that adding either new indicators or improving the existing ones is disputable. This is because such an improvement would affect the existing C&I set, which would in turn require a political decision, or a new separate set would have to be created. As for complementarity of methodologies, thorough consultations are now necessary, and the FOREST EUROPE process is open in this sense. A closer cooperation between forestry C&I processes, organisations reporting on green economy is highly desirable for strengthening the synergies and for appropriate understanding and strengthening of the role of the forest sector in a green economy. For more information about the event visit <http://www.unece.org/forests/valueofforestsgreeneconomy.html#/>.

About this newsletter:

This Newsletter provides an update on relevant forest policy developments in Europe. It is edited and published by the Liaison Unit Bratislava, which acts as the secretariat for FOREST EUROPE, a high-level forest policy process established in the 1990s. FOREST EUROPE enhances the cooperation on forest policies in Europe under the leadership of ministers, and secures and promotes Sustainable Forest Management with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to the society.

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