



ADVISORY GROUP ON THE PREPARATION OF THE REPORT “STATE OF EUROPE’S FORESTS”

21-22 November 2018, Vienna, Austria

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The meeting of FOREST EUROPE Advisory Group on the preparation of the report “State of Europe’s Forests” (hereinafter also only AG) took place at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), on 21 – 22 November 2018, organized back to back with the meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring SFM (22 – 23 November 2018).

1st day, 21 November 2018

1. Opening of the meeting

Vice-chair of the AG, Stein Tomter, opened and chaired the meeting. He expressed special thanks to the representatives of BOKU for support in the meeting preparation and for providing convenient premises for the meeting at the university. He welcomed the AG members and distinguished guests - Gerhard Mannsberger – BOKU vice-rector, Boris Greguška – chief state advisor at the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and member of the FOREST EUROPE General Co-ordinating Committee (GCC), Ľudmila Marušáková – head of Liaison Unit Bratislava.

Gerhard Mannsberger welcomed the meeting participants on behalf of BOKU and provided information on the university, where ecological and economic sustainability is the main topic. As a former director general for forestry at the federal ministry, he identified the State of Europe’s Forests (SoEF) report an important information source for decision making and expressed a personal recommendation for the next edition of the SoEF – to compile a short and focussed report.

Boris Greguška welcomed participants on behalf of GCC and on behalf of Slovak Republic - the leading country of the FOREST EUROPE process.

Ľudmila Marušáková welcomed all participants and expressed thanks to BOKU for providing the venue for the meeting and for the support in the meeting organization. She thanked FAO and UNECE for the overall cooperation and especially for their support in joint data collection and SoEF report preparation. She also thanked the coordinating leading authors for their initiative in outlining the structure of the next SoEF report and their willingness to contribute to the preparation of the report.

The opening was followed by a self-introduction of all participants, the list of the AG members and meeting attendees is provided in Annex I.

2. Introduction

The meeting followed a proposed meeting agenda (Annex II).

Boris Greguška informed on results of communication between GCC, UNECE and FAO regarding SoEF copyright arrangement. The copyright should be shared between FOREST EUROPE and FAO, while UNECE will continue their support in the preparation of the report and the UNECE logo will also appear at the report cover. Details should be further resolved.

Rastislav Raši informed that the SoEF report should be released in advance of the FOREST EUROPE ministerial conference (MC), preliminary planned to be held in Autumn 2020 and following the global FRA 2020 report (planned to be released at COFO 2020 in June or July 2020). He also informed that the UNFF flagship report is planned to be released at UNFF in May 2021, based on the national reporting on the Global Forest Goals (GFGs).

He asked the GCC representative for GCC guidance for the SoEF structure.

Boris Greguška informed that the GCC is ready to provide guidance as a response to the recommendations of experts collected in this AG meeting.

Ludmila Marušáková added that the GCC welcomed information about the cooperation in data collection and progress in activities listed in the Roadmap for the preparation of the SoEF report.

Anssi Pekkarinen thanked for the cooperation. He informed that the FAO plans to release a SOFO report dedicated to biodiversity and Aichi targets and first FRA results related to SDGs early in 2020, followed by the release of a full FRA report at COFO in June-July 2020). The discussions on the UNFF flagship report to be released in May 2021 suggested that this report should be concise, based on the national reports to UNFF complemented by FRA data.

Boris Greguška added that the exact date of the next MC is not decided yet, it is up to the FOREST EUROPE coordinating countries (Slovakia, Germany). Internal considerations indicate Autumn 2020, date to be coordinated with other events.

Stefanie Linser noted that according to their experience with organization of the 4th MC, the venue had to be booked more than a year in advance to secure availability.

3. Update on the progress in the joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO reporting

FOREST EUROPE is benefiting from outstanding cooperation with FAO and UNECE in data collection. The FRA Platform is a high quality tool for editing, communication and review, providing also access to the pan-European questionnaires – the download of the reporting form on quantitative (QN) indicators and the upload of the filled-in form and a link to the qualitative (QL) part of the questionnaire located at the server of the National Forest Centre – the hosting organization of the LUB.

A similar deadline – end of October 2018 – was agreed for the delivery of national reports on both reporting sets – global and regional. The UNECE significantly

contributed to the finalization of the QN questionnaire, the pre-filling and logic checks as well as translation into Russian language. Up to date, 17 European countries submitted their reports to FRA, 15 to the pan-European reporting on QN indicators and 5 on QL indicators. Remaining countries are in diverse stages of completion of reporting forms, 3 countries informed the secretariats that they will not be able to complete forms in 2018, however, they would do so in early 2019. The submitted reports are now in a review process.

Veronika Vyšná asked whether validation rules for national reports are publicly available.

Roman Michalak informed that the review of the national reports is a logic check of consistency between tables over reporting years. The national correspondent (NC) is in charge to provide official data, current data replace data reported previously and current reporting guidelines apply also to data reported on earlier periods.

Anssi Pekkarinen added that provided data is not validated just logically compared with past reportings.

Roman Michalak noted that a strict deadline for data provision/change/update has to be applied to limit time pressure on authors of the report. The coverage of countries is expected to be better than in previous reporting cycles and pan-European data may be complemented by global FRA data.

Rastislav Raši noted that according to feedback received, the Excel format of the questionnaire is sensitive to various issues related to various Excel versions in use by the NCs and reviewers, especially when advanced formulas are implemented (e.g. related to pre-filling). This issue should be considered in the next reporting cycle.

On-line meetings of reviewers are held regularly to monitor progress in reporting and to support reviewers in their work. Reviewers are requested to use personal communication to stimulate completion of reporting forms by NCs.

Stefanie Linser proposed to clearly indicate in the report any data derived from other sources than national inventories or statistics, providing also information on estimates or extrapolations.

Veronika Vyšná noted that EUROSTAT collects data through environmental accounts, however, there is no instrument in place to push countries to provide data.

4. Collection of data from International data providers (IDPs)

To reduce the reporting burden, data on pan-European indicators reported by countries to other centres are requested from these centres. Data have been requested from EFI (EUFORGEN) (on indicator 4.6 – Genetic resources), ICP Forests (on indicators 2.1 – Deposition and concentration of air pollutants, including information on critical loads exceedance, and 2.3 – Defoliation) and JRC (on indicator 2.2 – Soil condition). A positive response was received from these centres concerning the data availability for the next SoEF report. UNECE/FAO Joint Forestry and Timber Section had prefilled the questionnaires with data on indicator 6.9 – Wood energy and

declared on request availability of data on indicators 6.7 – Wood consumption and 6.8 – Trade in wood.

LUB should ask the NCs from those countries not providing data to the above mentioned centres about the availability of the respective data.

Michele Bozzano gave a presentation on the new approach proposed to present data on the conservation of forest genetic resources, characterizing coverage of species diversity conservation within European ecological zones. The original indicator composed of 3 sub-indicators was based on the number of hectares and does not provide a sufficiently informative means for evaluating the status of forest genetic resources in Europe.

In this context, EUFORGEN proposed a set of 4 sub-indicators for indicator 4.6, based on data available since 2007 within the EUFGIS Information System¹.

The revised indicator was well received and the Advisory Group invited EUFORGEN Secretariat to collect and submit the data following the revised indicator and to formulate an analysis according to the new approach.

5. Arrangements for a database for the SoEF 2020 report

The independent databases on quantitative data were developed following the 2015 reporting cycle – FRA database at FAO, and two independent pan-European datasets at UNECE and FOREST EUROPE. Ongoing data collection is organised in close cooperation of FOREST EUROPE, UNECE and FAO and technical means would be shared for common data storage.

Anssi Pekkarinen informed that the idea of full integration of data collection into a common database was considered from the beginning of building FRA Platform in early 2017, however, the additional costs of integration of the pan-European QN questionnaire assessed at 170.000 Euro were not available. Therefore, the simplest variant of integration was implemented. Thanks to technical support from UNECE provided in the form of an SQL script for data extraction from Excel questionnaires, collected pan-European QN data on indicators 1.1 – 1.4 can be compiled into single repository and thanks to financial support received by FAO from Finland for FRA database adaptation, possibilities for further integration of datasets were recently successfully tested for indicators 1.1 – 1.4. Further integration of datasets into the common database at FAO would require additional funding which is at the moment not further specified.

It was noted that the recent stepwise progress represents a short term concept implementation towards a long term vision of full integration in data collection. However, further integration will depend not only on resources available for technical solution but also on political decisions affecting potential coincidence of reporting cycles and the structure of reported data required for decision making process at the regional level.

¹ <http://portal.eufgis.org>

The advisory group members recommended to timely provide the data necessary for the authors of the SoEF report and continue in FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/ FAO cooperation in joint data collection with the aim of reducing reporting burden and efficient use of resources.

7. New indicators for SoEF 2020

The elaboration of pilot studies on new indicators (2.5 Forest land degradation, 4.7 Forest fragmentation, 4.10 Common forest bird species) was postponed to mid 2019 to facilitate incorporation of feedback provided in the country reports.

Thanks to support from EC - JRC Ispra a list of methods has been identified for reporting of forest fragmentation. The expert discussion at the FOREST EUROPE Communication Platform and a technical meeting held in Bratislava lead to conclusions on implementation of this indicator. Corine Land Cover data were identified as the only European nationally produced time series and thus preferred as input for forest fragmentation analysis. Forest Area Density with Fixed Observation Scale was identified as preferred method, setting threshold for Forest Area Density 40% to distinguish between continuous forests and patches at the observation scale at ~500 ha. As a complementary information, reporting on the total areas of forest patches by predefined size categories (100 ha, 1000 ha, 10000 ha, 100 000 ha) was suggested.

The question how to interpret forest fragmentation was raised in the discussion.

Matej Schwarz provided a presentation on the issues related to reporting of Forest land degradation and Common forest bird species.

2nd day, 22 November 2018

6. Structure of SoEF 2020

This agenda item was postponed for the 2nd day of the meeting.

According to the results of the SoEF 2015 review, the structure of the report was in general considered appropriate. However, in some comments, the sub-regional aggregation was found less appropriate and less attractive for readers. The results of the SoEF 2015 review, as well as the integration of reporting on the goals for European forests and European 2020 targets adopted in Oslo (2011) as well as the development of a global core set of indicators for SFM were considered during a first meeting of the LUB and the coordinating lead authors (CLAs) for SoEF 2020. There also a first draft of SoEF 2020 structure was elaborated and provided as a background document for the AG meeting.

The coordinating lead authors Kit Prins and Stefanie Linser proposed an updated structure for the SFM assessment part of the SoEF 2020 report. As forests and forestry in the various countries differ considerably with regard to certain indicators, the coordinating lead authors proposed a country-wise analysis using an indicator-based narrative about the countries' progress towards SFM, covering observed

trends, major policy tools, and countries' own reporting on progress towards the Goals and Targets. National correspondents would be closely involved in reviewing this assessment.

A mockup narrative assessment for a model country was presented to the Advisory Group which gained broad assent and support. The coordinating lead authors proposed to base this exercise on the Global Core Set of indicators which are mostly compatible with the pan-European indicators for SFM, but shorter (21 rather than 46 indicators), making it possible to keep the data set for each country in a one-page table.

These country assessments should be submitted for review to the national correspondents, who would be able to provide necessary background and context. Sufficient time should be allocated for such review, e.g. one month. The distribution of texts for review by NCs is planned for September 2019. If the authors were not able to achieve consensus with the national correspondent, this would be recorded, along with the reasoning behind the disagreement. A similar dialogue with the national correspondents was perceived as very productive when the process was tested for the UNECE SEMAFOR Study.

Nonetheless, the final responsibility for the study as a whole, including these novel country assessments would be with the SOEF 2020 authors, working under the authority of the GCC and under LUB editorial coordination.

The Advisory Group considered that such country-wise assessment would be a significant value added to the wealth of available data and an excellent link from the regional data on trends to the national commitments. It is complementary to the first part of SoEF (structured by indicator) as it will be structured by country. This is necessary as sustainable forest management is a holistic concept and should be monitored by analysing the situation and trends for all aspects in a common framework. This is in fact the fundamental idea underpinning the concept of sustainable forest management and criteria and indicators.

The SoEF 2020 Advisory Group considered the above new proposal as a step towards a SoEF report, which would be much more attractive to stakeholders and decision-makers.

The Advisory Group asked the Coordinating Lead Authors to progress along the lines proposed, consulting the GCC as necessary.

A revised structure for the report is in Annex III, taking account the Advisory Group discussion. In addition, the following recommendations regarding SoEF 2020 were made:

There should be paper versions printed of the full study and distributed at least at the MC. Not only was this useful for users, but it provided valuable visibility.

In addition, a short free standing version of the study, containing the main messages, should be prepared and printed for the decision-makers.

The full version should also contain data tables, as national data (only visible in the annex tables) are of the highest importance to many users. In the interests of

transparency, all data collected and reviewed should be made available online. In the full paper version, there might be some selection of data series, especially for those indicators with many components, or where few responses had been received.

The topic of Europe's contribution to achieving global goals was seen relevant and of interest. However, UNFF is at present setting up a reporting process on progress towards the goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests. Forest Europe should not duplicate this effort. The results of the UNFF process would probably not be available in time for inclusion in SOEF 2020; if they will actually be available in time, SOEF 2020 authors might consider summarising them in a short extra chapter.

8. Structure of authors for SoEF 2020

Stefanie Linser – coordinating lead author for texts on qualitative indicators – introduced her respective team of authors – (Stefanie Linser, Kit Prins, Bernhard Wolfslehner, Gerhard Weiss, Helga Pülzl, Markus Lier, Laura Bouriaud).

The coordinating lead author for the assessment of progress towards SFM – Christopher Prins – introduced his respective authors (Christopher Prins, Bernhard Wolfslehner, Stefanie Linser).

The team of authors for texts on quantitative indicators will be composed of respective authors of texts of SoEF 2015, complemented by experts from international data providers, members of LUB and UNECE/FAO team of specialists on monitoring SFM. Michael Köhl and Rastislav Rasi will prepare a draft list of authors.

Ludmila Marušáková informed that outputs of expert groups established according to the FOREST EUROPE work programme should be also considered in the preparation of texts for SoEF 2020. In this regard the expert group members were recommended to be involved in the preparation of texts.

9. Roadmap for the preparation of SoEF 2020

The Roadmap for the preparation of SoEF 2020 was updated with respect to the situation in national data collection and suggestions from AG discussion regarding the structure and content of SoEF 2020. The updated Roadmap is in Annex IV.

10. Other

The next meeting of AG is tentatively proposed to be held back to back with the next Expert Level Meeting in March 2019, in Košice, Slovakia.

The kick off meeting for authors of SoEF 2020 is tentatively planned to be held on 19 - 20 March in Vienna.

The meeting for reviewing the first draft of SoEF 2020 is tentatively proposed to be held in Autumn (September) 2019.

11. Closure of the meeting

The meeting was closed after discussion of all items of the meeting agenda.

ANNEX I

List of Advisory Group members and meeting attendees

Name	Country/Organisation	Contact	Meeting attendance
Ayanz Jesus San Miguel	Joint Research Centre, EC	jesus.san-miguel@jrc.ec.europa.eu	NO
Biala Katarzyna on behalf of Bastrup-Birk Annemarie	European Environmental Agency, EC	Katarzyna.Biala@eea.europa.eu Annemarie.Bastrup-Birk@eea.europa.eu	YES
Belovarska Maryia	Executive Forest Agency, Bulgaria	belovarska@iag.bg	NO
Bozzano Michele	EFI (EUFORGEN)	michele.bozzano@efi.int	YES
Claesson Svante	Swedish Forest Agency, Sweden	svante.claesson@skogsstyrelsen.se	NO
Hangler Johannes	Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, Austria	johannes.hangler@bmnt.gv.at	YES
Chapelant Etienne	Ministry of Agriculture, France	etienne.chapelant@agriculture.gouv.fr	NO
Korhonen Kari	LUKE, Finland	kari.t.korhonen@luke.fi	YES
Köhl Michael	University of Hamburg, Germany	Michael.Koehl@uni-hamburg.de	YES
Kubišta Jaroslav	Forest Management Institute, Czech Republic	Kubista.Jaroslav@uhul.cz	NO
Lier Markus	LUKE, Finland	markus.lier@luke.fi	YES, 2 nd day
Linser Stefanie	European Forest Institute, CEEC	stefanie.linser@efi.int	YES
Michalak Roman	UNECE/FAO Joint FTS, Geneva	Roman.Michalak@unece.org	YES
Pekkarinen Anssi	FAO FRA	anssi.pekkarinen@fao.org	YES
Prins Christopher	Independent Consultant	kit.prins@gmail.com	YES
Sigurgeirsson Adalsteinn	Iceland Forest Service, Iceland	Adalsteinn@skogur.is	NO
Sokolenko Maria	Federal Forestry Agency, Russian Federation	mashchic@mail.ru	NO
Tomter Stein Michael	Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research, Norway; AG Vice-Chair	stein.tomter@nibio.no	YES
Torres-Quevedo María	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Spain	mtquevedo@mapama.es	NO
Valgepea Mati	Estonian Environment Agency, Estonia	Mati.Valgepea@envir.ee	NO
Vizlenskas Darius	State Forest Service, Lithuania	darius.vizlenskas@amvmt.lt	NO
Vyšná Veronika on behalf of retired Wolf-Crowther Marilise	Eurostat, EC	veronika.vysna@ec.europa.eu, estat-forest@ec.europa.eu	YES
Wolfslehner Bernhard	European Forest Institute, EFICEEC; AG Chair	bernhard.wolfslehner@efi.int	NO
Zafran Janez	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia	janez.zafran@gov.si	NO
FE – GCC:			
Greguška Boris	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Slovak Republic	boris.greguska@land.gov.sk	YES, 1 st day
FE – LUB:			
Marušáková Eudmila	FOREST EUROPE - LUB	ludmila.marusakova@foresteurope.org	YES
Raši Rastislav	FOREST EUROPE – LUB; AG Secretary	rastislav.rasi@foresteurope.org	YES
Schwarz Matej	FOREST EUROPE - LUB	matej.schwarz@foresteurope.org	YES

ANNEX II

FOREST EUROPE Advisory Group on the preparation of the report „State of Europe´s Forests”

**University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria
21-22 November 2018**

Meeting Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Introduction**
(Information from GCC and other meetings in relation to SoEF 2020)
- 3. Update on the progress in the joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO reporting**
(Information on reporting progress to the global FRA/CFRQ and Pan-European questionnaires)
- 4. Collection of data from International data providers (IDPs)**
(Information on the request to IDPs)
- 5. Arrangements for database for SoEF 2020**
(Discussion of the AG members, recommendations)
- 6. Structure of SoEF 2020**
(Information on the proposal from the first meeting of CLAs, discussion, recommendations)
- 7. New indicators for SoEF 2020**
(Progress in Pilot studies and discussion on inclusion of indicators into SoEF 2020)
- 8. Structure of authors for SoEF 2020**
(Discussion of the AG members, recommendations)
- 9. Roadmap for the preparation of SoEF 2020**
(Information on the progress and discussion on planned activities)
- 10. Other**
(Discussion of the AG members)
- 11. Closure of the meeting**

Meeting hours:

Wednesday 21 November 2018: 10:00 – 12:00; Items 1 – 3;
13:30 – 18:00; Items 4, 5, 7;
Thursday 22 November 2018: 08:30 – 12:00; Items 6, 8 – 11

Annex III

A revised structure for the SoEF 2020

Europe's forests 2020: are we achieving our goals and targets?

1. Summary for policy makers
2. Introduction
3. The state of Europe's forests in 2020, and trends since 2000, based on data on quantitative and qualitative indicators provided by countries
 - a. Forest policy and governance
 - b. Forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles
 - c. Forest ecosystem health and vitality
 - d. Productive functions of forests
 - e. Biological diversity in forest ecosystems
 - f. Protective functions of forests
 - g. Other socio-economic functions and conditions
4. Progress towards sustainable forest management, at the national level and assessment of progress towards the Oslo Goals for European forests and the European 2020 Targets, based on responses by countries to the enquiry
 - a. Methodology
 - b. Country wise SFM profiles incl. progress towards Oslo Goals & Targets
 - c. Summary for European Union (EU 27 or 28)
 - d. Summary for pan-Europe (46 MS)
5. Conclusions

This outline applies to the main study itself which might be about 150 pages long. To satisfy the objective of providing references, and of transparency, the full study might be accompanied by:

- Detailed tables with country data on quantitative and qualitative indicators,
- (summarised?) Tables of national responses on progress towards goals and targets
- One page overview table with figures for each country based on Global Core Set of Indicators.

Annex IV

Roadmap for the preparation of SoEF 2020 – version 22.11.2018

The activities, date of their realization and involved partners within the preparation of the report on State of Europe's Forests 2020:

Activity	Date	Involved partners
1. Analysis of the previous report on SoEF and suggestions how to improve of the next report	VIII – XII 2016	All interested groups, users
2. Setting up the FOREST EUROPE/UNECE Advisory Group for the preparation of the report	VII 2017	FE, UNECE/FAO
3. Setting up the team of Coordinating and Leading authors of the report (CLA)	VIII 2017	FE, UNECE/FAO, AG
4. Preparation of the indicative table of content of the report (expected content and structure of the report)	VIII – XII 2017	Team of CLA, AG
5. Development of Background Information for substantially altered UPEI for SFM and Relevant Definitions used for UPEI for SFM	I 2017 – X 2019	FE, UNECE/FAO, CLA, ToS MSFM, ToS FP, EG-IUPEI
6. Pilot studies on the new indicators; determination if data are available, reliable and if data are feasible for reporting	I 2017 - XII 2018 Postponed until VII 2019	FE, EG-IUPEI, ToS MSFM, invited experts (EFI, JRC, EEA)
7. Preparation of reporting on national and pan-European achievements on the Goals and 2020 Targets	I – X 2017	FE, EG-IUPEI, EFI, invited experts
8. Preparation of the questionnaire for the reporting on the Updated pan-European Indicators (quantitative and qualitative) coordinated with the CFRQ	I – XII 2017	FE, UNECE/FAO, CLA, ToS on MSFM, EG-IUPEI
9. Implementation of the enquiries into FAO FRA Platform	IX – XII 2017 Postponed until III 2018	FE, UNECE/FAO, CLA, ToS FP, EG-IUPEI
10. Dispatch of the final reporting questionnaires, Reporting tables, Guidelines to countries; both questionnaires quantitative and qualitative (descriptive)	I 2018 Postponed until III 2018	FE, UNECE/FAO
11. Workshop for national correspondents	IV 2018	NC, UNECE/FAO, FE
12. National data collections, deadline for Countries replies	I – VI 2018 Postponed until XII 2018	NC
13. International data providers data collection and submission	IX 2018 Postponed until XII 2018	EUROSTAT, ICP, JRC, EEA

14. Checking, processing, validation and compilation of data; on both quantitative and qualitative (descriptive) indicators	VI – XI 2018 (database complete XII 2018) Postponed until II 2019	FE, UNECE/FAO, invited experts
15. Decision on and elaboration of SFM Assessment method	I – XII 2018	AG, CLA, EG-IUPEI, invited experts
16. Selection of and liaising with authors of chapters of the report	XI 2018 – I 2019	FE, CLA, AG
17. Analysis of data and preparation of the first draft of chapters of the SoEF 2020	I – IV 2019	FE, CLA, authors
18. A) The kick-off meeting for the authors B) Joint conference for the National Correspondent, ToS´ s on SFM and FP and authors to discuss the 1 st draft of the report on SoEF 2020 C) Review of SFM assessment texts by respective country National Correspondents	III 2019 IX 2019 IX – X 2019	CLA, authors FE, UNECE/FAO, NC, ToS on MSFM, ToS on FP, authors NC
19. Compilation and design of report	I – XII 2019	FE, CLA, authors
20. Language review and proofreading	V – IX 2019 Postponed until XI 2019	UNECE/FAO, FE
21. Printing of the report in English	IX – XII 2019	FE
22. Translation and printing in other languages (RU)	XII 2019	UNECE/FAO, FE
23. Implementation of Dissemination plan	I – XII 2020	FE, UNECE/FAO