

Pilot study for chapter 3 and 4 of SOEF 2020: Streamlined mockup narrative and table for Austria/Ukraine, using data available from earlier SOEF and other sources

Progress towards sustainable forest management in Austria/Ukraine along the Global Core Set of Indicators, the Goals for European Forests and the European 2020 Targets for Forests

SFM profile of Austria

Austria is a mountainous country in Central Europe with 47% forest cover. Forest area has not changed significantly in recent years.

Austrian forest land is a greenhouse gas (GHG) sink, although the amount of GHG removed from the atmosphere dropped quite sharply in the first years of the twenty first century.

About 17% of forest is protected for conservation of biodiversity, in accordance with Aichi target 10.

There are no primary forests in Austria, although research has shown that quite significant areas display many of the characteristics of primary forests.

About 2% of forest is damaged, by insects, and abiotic factors, including storms and avalanches. There is no information on degraded forest in Austria, but this does not appear to be a significant issue there.

There are about 80 tons of above ground biomass on each hectare of forest, and this ratio has been stable over time.

About 18 million m³ of wood are removed from Austrian forests every year, and this has been rising. Austria has strong forest industries which consume the industrial and energy wood removed from the forest, as well as imported wood raw material.

Wood based energy plays an important role in Austria, and accounts for over 15% of total primary energy supply in the country.

Over 700 000 ha of forest are designated as having protective functions (notably in mountain areas).

Nearly 13 000 people are employed in the forest sector in Austria, which is about 3 people for 1000 ha of forest.

There is no information on extreme poverty of forest dependent people in Austria, but extreme poverty does not appear to be a significant problem in Austria.

As regards the contribution of forests to food security, forests protect agricultural land in mountain areas from avalanches and in the lowlands from flooding and soil erosion, and provide seasonal additional income for farmers. Food security based on non-wood forest products is not a major issue for Austria or for forest dependent people in Austria, but nevertheless non-wood forest products are getting increased attraction in combination with farm holidays, recreation in forests etc, but berries and mushrooms are not economically important.

Information is not available on financial resources for sustainable forest management, but it is known that most forest enterprises have positive net revenue, and the state forest enterprise (ÖBW AG) is a net contributor to the central budget, so financial resources appear adequate.

Austria has strong and stable institutions to promote sustainable forest management, and a national forest strategy as well as programme based on an intense “forest dialogue” with all related stakeholders.

Forest policy debate is based on a regular sample based national forest inventory with sufficient resources and adequate sampling intensity, supplemented by ad hoc enquiries on certain aspects as necessary. There is a report on SFM assessment based on 68 indicators, related to goals of the Austrian Forest Program and the Austrian Forest Strategy 2020+ containing also agreed targets and thresholds.

There is no official obligation to have a long term forest management plan, but it is assumed that most of the larger forest enterprises have some sort of management plan, for the majority of the small privately owned forests such management plans do not exist.

Nearly 75% of Austrian forests are independently certified as being under sustainable forest management, and tracing systems (Chain-of-custody certificates) are also in place.

Progress towards the Oslo Goals and Targets in Ukraine

Ukraine has reported the following main actions and measures taken to achieve the Oslo Goals and Targets. Most of them contribute to achieving more than one goal or target, so they are not sorted by goal/target. The main actions/measures taken are as follows:

- Introduction of a timber tracking system for 73% of the country's forests;
- The export of processed timber is not allowed without certificate of timber origin
- Increase in the area of FSC certified forest.
- Most forest industries supply their energy needs from wood
- Identification of priorities for adaptation to climate change
- Creation of a road map to move towards close-to-nature forestry, and the limitation of clear cuts
- Increase in number and area of protected forests
- Inventory of virgin forest in the Carpathians
- Application to GEF for a project aiming to restore degraded forest in the Steppe area
- New legal framework for identification and protection of virgin forests
- GEF project which includes an element supporting system of field forest protection strip (against desertification)
- Creation of new forests on lands with low productivity and at risk of erosion
- In many rural areas, forest enterprises are the biggest employer as well as the biggest contributor to local budgets.
- Forest enterprises work to improve and strengthen the recreational potential of Ukrainian forests.
- Target oriented state program "Forest of Ukraine" ordered by the president (2015)
- Most regions have their own regional target oriented programmes on forest development.
- Complex Program for Improving and Strengthening Forest Research.
- Guidance for forest related education of pupils
- The principles of forest pedagogics have been introduced to Ukraine.
- Information related to forest felling as well as forest related cartography is open to the public
- Special program for use of biofuel in forestry.
- The system of timber sales has been improved. Electronic auctions have been introduced
- Research has been carried out on evaluation of forest ecosystem services
- The value of forest ecosystem services is considered in all drafts of strategic documents on forest related issues.
- The national adaptation plan for climate change includes a provision on forestry
- Priorities for adaptation of forest to climate change have been identified.
- The national plan on combating desertification and soil degradation recognises the role of forests and forest related measures.
- Forest related issues are included in strategies of rural development
- A new law on increasing liability for illegal logging has been introduced.

The remaining challenges were identified as follows:

- Inadequate financing: there is a strict limitation on continuation or elaboration of new programs with an implication on state budget
- Excessively restrictive rules on disposal of beetle killed timber
- Extend the tracking system to all users and owners
- Improve the system of controlling wood processing facilities
- Balance supply and demand on local markets
- React more effectively to the bark beetle problem.
- Address reduced vitality due to climate change,

- Address the issue of excessive taxes limiting investment possibilities
- Address the sanitary condition of forests, which is getting worse
- Address the illegal collecting of amber in Polissie region, which leads in most cases to degradation of forest stands.
- Due to military conflict in the Eastern part of Ukraine and occupied Crimea (around 500,000 ha of forest stands), Ukrainian foresters are unable to conduct SFM, or protect and mind the forests in that area.
- Insufficient state financial support for afforestation and difficult procedure to obtain lands which should be afforested
- Improve the situation with regard to salaries in forestry which in some regions is lower than average, especially in regions where forests perform mainly protection functions
- Address the fact that excessive taxes limit the potential of forest enterprises to make proper investments in forest research as well as innovation, and that financial support to forest research is not sufficient, which made it impossible to renovate laboratories and the technical basis for research
- Address the fact that too many ecological limitations prevent a substantial increase of timber use
- The inventory of virgin and mature forests requires resources and time, and it is necessary to elaborate guidance on evaluation of environmental value of protected area including procedure of returning area to traditional forest management if necessary.

Overall, the national correspondent estimated progress towards the European 2020 Targets for Forests as follows:

	Short title	Fully achieved	On track	Progress	No progress
I	National Forest Programme		X		
II	Improving forest knowledge		X		
III	Sustainable wood supply			X	
IV	Value of forest ecosystem services			X	
V	Planning for climate change			X	
VI	Biodiversity, fragmentation, degradation			X	
VII	Desertification			X	
VIII	Socio-economic and cultural benefits			X	
IX	Illegal logging and associated trade			X	

Annex: Profile of Austria, using the Global Core Set of forest related indicators

	Indicator	Unit	2000	2010	2015	2020	Comments	
1	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	%	47	47	46.9			
2	Forest area annual net change rate	%		-0.02	0.03			
3	Net GHG emissions (source)/removals (sink) of forests,	ktCO ₂ e/year	-15974	-4441	-4301		Minus = sink	
4	Proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas	%	26.6	17.1	17.0		Note reduction after 2000 is due to change in protection rules in Styria	
5	Change in area of primary forests	1000 ha	0	0	0			
6	Proportion of forest area disturbed	% of forest area	2.1	2.3	1.9		Invented data, as Austria does not report on disturbance	
7	Area of degraded forest	1000 ha	0	0	0		Also invented	
8	Above-ground biomass stock in forest	Tonnes/ha	81.29	80.83	80.64			
9	Volume of wood removals	1000 m ³	13941	18614	17549			
10	Wood based energy share of total final energy consumption	%	8.6	14.7	17		2015 invented	
11	Forest area with a designated management objective to maintain and enhance its protective functions	1000 ha	679	713	713			
12	Employment related to the forest sector	1000 FTE	6.7	12.26	13		2015 invented	
13	Number of forest dependent people in extreme poverty	1000	0	0	0		Invented	
14	Contribution of forests to food security	NA	Forests protect agricultural land in mountain areas and provide seasonal employment for farmers. However, food security is not a major issue for forest dependent people in Austria					Invented
15	Financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM	1000\$					No idea!	
16	Existence of national or subnational policies, strategies, legislations, regulations and institutions which explicitly encourage SFM	References	Long standing forest law and institutions, including independent, but 100% state owned forest service. NFP, based on in-depth national "forest dialogue". Mostly profitable silviculture and strong forest industries. Well funded research institutions.					
17	Existence of national or sub-national forest assessment process	References	Regular sample based national forest inventory with sufficient resources and adequate sampling intensity, supplemented by ad hoc enquiries on certain aspects as necessary					
18	Existence of national or sub-national stakeholder platform for participation in forest policy development	References	Yes. Intensive and lively forest dialogue. Also at level of federal states.					
19	Proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan	%	51	51	51		Note: no obligation for management plan. 51% is an expert estimate in FRA 2015	
20	Forest area under an independently verified forest management certification scheme	1000 ha	550	1961	2700		2015 invented	
21	Existence of traceability system(s) for wood products	References	No	Yes	Yes		Invented	