



**Timber Committee**  
**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**



**European Forestry Commission**  
**Food and Agricultural Organization**

UNECE / FAO Team of Specialists on  
“Monitoring forest resources for SFM in the UNECE Region”

**REPORT**  
**of the forth meeting of the Team of Specialists**  
*BOKU University, Vienna, Austria, 26-28 May 2008*  
*(as approved by participants of the meeting)*

**Introduction**

1. The Team of Specialists (ToS) on “*Monitoring forest resources for sustainable forest management in the UNECE Region*” was established by the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) and FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) at their joint session in October 2004. The parent bodies endorsed the ToS objectives, mandate and terms of references. The ToS held the first inaugural meeting in April 2005 (Geneva), the second meeting in May 2006 (Hamburg, Germany), and the third in Edinburgh (Scotland, UK) in May 2007. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in premises of the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences - BOKU (*Gregor Mendel Str. 33 – “Festsaal”*). Background information on the ToS scope and the latest meeting’s working documents are available on the Timber Section website <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/WorkArea2.html>.

2. The meeting marked the end of 4 years of successful collaboration and efforts. The current Team was built on the experience of the previous ToS on “*Temperate and Boreal Forest Resources Assessment – TBFRA*” (1994-2004), and took the best features of the predecessor. The efficient work of the “second ToS edition” (2004-2008) had prepared ground for establishing the new “*Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management*” (2008-2010, renewable to 2013). The UNECE/FAO parent bodies decided at their Special Session (Geneva, April 2008), that the new ToS is to be established by the end-2008 on the basis of the Strategic Review of the Integrated Programme of Work, and following proposals of the Joint UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics.

3. The forth meeting of the Team was organised in Vienna following invitations from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria (Dr. Johannes Hangler) and Vienna University for Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner). The meeting was held at the BOKU University from 26 to 28 May 2008. The Austrian Federal Ministry together with BOKU University sponsored the meeting by providing the conference room, logistical, financial and secretarial support. The Leader of the Team of Specialists Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner and his colleagues assured all necessary arrangements were made in an exemplary manner.

4. 24 experts from 19 countries and partner organizations took part in the ToS meeting. The represented countries were Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America. The representatives from FAO, UNECE/FAO, European Commission – DG Environment, DG-Joint Research Centre (*Ispra*) and EUROSTAT (*Luxemburg*) participated in the meeting. The list of participants is attached (Annex 1).

5. The agenda of the meeting included the overview of “*FRA- and C&I- related developments in 2007-2008*” and the main issues related to the UNECE/FAO, FAO and MCPFE joint collaboration on elaborating the Report on “*State of Europe’s Forests 2007*” (lessons learned). The agenda also contained issues of the regional contribution to the preparation of the FAO “*Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010*” as well as information concerning the cooperation with the Montreal Process, the EC institutions and structures (EC-JRC, EUROSTAT, EU COST Action E-43), and proposals for planning the new ToS work for 2008-2009.

6. The opening, welcoming and introductory remarks were delivered by the ToS Leader Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner (*Austria*), Dr. Johannes Hangler (*Austria*), Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie (*FAO, Rome*), Mr. Alexander Korotkov and Mr. Roman Michalak (*UNECE/FAO, Geneva*). The speakers highlighted the main issues to be addressed, as well as the expected outcome from the two-day discussion. All participants were thanked by the UNECE and FAO Secretariats for their efficient work, impressive representation at the meeting, and for the collegial atmosphere of discussion.

7. Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner, the ToS Leader, chaired the meeting. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie (*FAO*) moderated the discussion of issues related to the FRA 2010. The ToS participants were asked to comment on the report from the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the ToS (Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom, 21-22 May 2007) prepared by the Secretariat. There were no any inconsistencies or errors indicated, and the report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ToS meeting was approved. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting’s provisional agenda and timetable were adopted with minor changes in the order of presentations (Annex 2).

### **FRA- and C&I -relating developments in 2007 – 2008** (Item 3)

8. The Team of Specialists was informed about the most important events, which had occurred at regional and global levels since the last ToS meeting in May 2007 and which are closely related to their area of work. Activities mentioned included the UNECE and FAO contribution to the elaboration, presentation and dissemination of the MCPFE Report “*State of Europe’s Forests 2007*”, and the global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2010). These key activities were presented and discussed in line with the guidance provided by the Joint UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics & Statistics (March 2008).

9. The Team of Specialists was informed on other significant FRA- and C&I- related projects which had been implemented during the period 2007-2008, and which had important implications onto the UNECE/FAO current and future work in this area. The information about the most important events set the background for the following discussions.

*a) Special Session of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, April 2008*

10. Mr. Alexander Korotkov (UNECE/FAO) informed ToS members of the main results of the UNECE Timber Committee Special Session on the Strategic Review and Plan, which was held in Geneva from 28 to 30 April 2008. The Session considered the Strategic Plan 2008-13, based on the proposals provided by the Secretariat. It agreed to present the Strategic Plan ([http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/strategic\\_review/2007-2008/ECE\\_TIM\\_S\\_2008\\_6\\_Add1\\_Strategic%20Plan.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/strategic_review/2007-2008/ECE_TIM_S_2008_6_Add1_Strategic%20Plan.pdf)) for endorsement to the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission during its joint session at the European Forest Week, to be held in Rome on 23 October 2008.

11. Based on the contributions from member countries and stakeholders through the Strategic Review process and through the Secretariat's proposals, the Session agreed on the main priorities and needs for the forest sector. These priorities should serve as a basis for the next five-year period of work. The topic on "*Sustainable forest management: indicators, technical norms and economic viability*" has been included in the work plan, next to projects related to climate change, bioenergy and wood mobilization.

12. Mr. Korotkov provided ToS members with additional information on specific areas of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan (as discussed by the Special Session), which are relevant to the ToS activities (Work Area 2 "*Forest Resources Assessment*"). Among others the session agreed that the scope of the area should be broadened to include "improving information on forest types" and "monitoring and analyzing forest ownership and tenure."

13. The Session agreed that the mandate of the new ToS be broadened to cover monitoring and analysis of forest sector policies and institutions and the team responsible for guiding Work Area 2 should cooperate accordingly with the teams responsible for forest sector outlook and for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions.

14. The Session approved the relevant programme elements proposed in the draft Strategic Plan (source) and the revised terms of reference on the "*Teams of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management*", as endorsed by the Joint UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Products Economics and Statistics. The main tasks and responsibilities of the future ToS were presented to the ToS members (Annex 3).

*b) UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics & Statistics, March 2008*

15. Mr. Alexander Korotkov then provided the ToS members with the outcome of the thirtieth session of the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics (WP), held in Geneva on 2-3 April 2008.

16. The Working Party reviewed the preparatory process of the Report on "*State of Europe's Forests 2007*" (SoEF 2007), which was issued in November 2007 under the responsibility of UNECE/FAO and the Liaison Unit Warsaw for the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and co-funded by the European Commission. The process, which had been overseen by the Working Party, had lasted approximately four years and involved hundreds of experts. The Working Party considered the report as being very useful and as being an advance on its predecessors.

17. JWP delegations made many detailed and constructive comments and suggestions, including the following:

- (a) A heavy burden had been laid on national correspondents by the close proximity of SoEF 2007 and the Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) 2005, with possibly different status for the same reference year 2005.
- (b) Data supplied by International Data Providers (IDPs) had been submitted to national correspondents for review rather late, giving insufficient time to consult other sources and improve the data analysis.
- (c) The validation process for the quantitative indicators, although long and resource intensive had been very beneficial, resulting in improved data quality and better understanding of the issues. Some of the consistency checks incorporated in the enquiry had been unnecessarily burdensome (rounding issues).
- (d) A few countries had not supplied data, even though some data existed, partly because of misunderstandings and failure of communication.
- (e) The “traffic lights” analysis of sustainable forest management (different colours for positive, negative or stable developments) was an easily understandable tool for presenting the overview.
- (f) The delay in provision of an online database was a hindrance to researchers and prevented the dissemination of the explanatory matter behind each observation. Ideally the database should make it possible to extract all the data for a single country, including the information provided by international data providers.
- (g) The data on socio economic indicators, including value added, workforce, and occupational safety had been hard to gather and still had many gaps.
- (h) The enquiry on qualitative indicators had been a good start in new area, and provided satisfactory results, although some of the data requests had been repetitive.

18. The Working Party made the following recommendations for future work on the state of Europe’s forests:

- (a) An on-line database with the SoEF 2007 data (including metadata) should be set up as soon as possible.
- (b) Efforts should be undertaken to communicate on the SoEF 2007 results, to the technical and general media. Working Party delegates would be put in contact with the member for their country of the Forest Communicators Network. Any citations, comments, translations etc. about the SoEF 2007 should be sent to the UNECE/FAO secretariat.
- (c) Planning should start this year for the report to the Oslo ministerial conference. International data providers and expert authors should be involved from the early stages.
- (d) Maximum use should be made of the FRA 2010 data to avoid unnecessary adjustments, in view of the fact that forest inventories rarely provide annual data.
- (e) Data provided by IDPs should be sent to national correspondents for validation at the same time as they are passed to the study organizers, to avoid delays and last minute revisions.
- (f) The “traffic lights” method of showing progress towards sustainable forest management should be continued and refined.
- (g) There should be a formal request to each country to nominate officially a national correspondent for the next MCPFE report. Often, these correspondents would be the same as those for FRA 2010.

- (h) IDPs should be contacted at an early stage, to establish a shared understanding of the indicator requirements and available data, and to reach firm agreement on what will be provided and when.

19. The Working Party was informed of the activities under this work area in 2007-08 and plans for 2008-09. This included the draft version of the study on private forest ownership in Europe, which the WP welcomed, as a major step forward in an area, which had been little known at the European level before. It asked the Secretariat to issue the study after revision in the light of comments received before 10 May 2008. It considered the study should be repeated but at intervals of 5-10 years. The timing should be synchronized with other data collection activities.

20. The Working Party invited the ToS to review the options for collecting information on indicators of sustainable forest management “by forest type” (eight MCPFE indicators with fourteen proposed forest types) in view of the considerable difficulties expected by national correspondents in supplying this information. This should also be included in proposals addressed to the Working Party, whose role as interface between policy and technical levels, should agree on a course of action. Given the complexity of collecting this information, it would be necessary to make firm arrangements well before the enquiry for the report to the Oslo Ministerial Conference is circulated, so that countries could prepare the appropriate data sets.

21. It welcomed the progress in preparing FRA 2010 and encouraged the Secretariat to continue to play a leading role in the FRA process.

22. The Working Party reviewed the proposals for activities under Work Area 2 for the period 2008-2013 which was later (*April 2008*) presented to the Special Session. It endorsed these proposals, including the list of programme elements, the revised terms of reference and the new ToS name: the “*UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management*”. The new terms of reference includes the monitoring of policies and institutions as well as the forest resource itself. The Working Party noted that it would be necessary to involve additional specialists on policies in order to fulfil this mandate.

c) *MCPFE-2007 Conference and post-conference; overview of developments*

23. Mr. Roman Michalak (*UNECE/FAO*), informed the ToS about the main outcome of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, which was held under the motto “*Forests for quality of life*” in Warsaw (Poland) on 5-7 November 2007. The key documents adopted at the MCPFE-2007, were:

- Warsaw Declaration
- Warsaw Resolution 1 “*Forests, Wood and Energy*”
- Warsaw Resolution 2 “*Forests and Water*”
- Ministerial Statements

24. Warsaw Ministerial Declaration presents a long-term vision of the future of forests in Europe, their significant role in improvement of the quality of life and the opportunities to mitigate climate change, energy supplies and protection of water resources in relation to the current social and political issues. The Declaration not only marks the position of and the opportunity to regional contribution in other international forests initiatives, but also shows how the MCPFE commitments could be implemented in an effective manner.

25. The reason for the Warsaw Resolution 1 “*Forests, Wood and Energy*” was underpinned by progressing climate change and its effects on management of forests and an increase in demand of energy from renewable resources. Commitments undertaken within frames of the resolution were aimed to enhance the role of the forest sector in energy production and promote mobilisation of wood resources from forests managed in sustainable way.

26. Climate change and its consequences also influenced the content of the Warsaw Resolution 2. It stressed that the danger of drinking water scarcity and quality, as well as flood, avalanche and drought disasters in Europe were the reasons for increasing the role of forest management in the protection of water quality, management of water resources, mitigation of floods alleviation, soil protection and combating desertification.

27. Two Ministerial Statements were endorsed at the Warsaw Conference. The first one addressed the situation in the countries of Southern Europe who suffered from forest fires. In the second one, the Ministers described the Pan-European Forest Week 2008 as being an encouraging common initiative which should help increase the visibility of forests and the forest sector, and raise the awareness of essential contribution of forests into environmental protection and economic and social development in Europe. Full texts of the MCPFE 2007 Conference documents, accompanied by the additional information can be found at <http://5th.mcpfe.org/>.

28. Dr. Michalak informed the participants that the MCPFE Liaison Unit in Warsaw concluded its activity at the end of 2007. Since 2008, the role of the MCPFE Secretariat has been played by the Liaison Unit Oslo.

29. Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner (*ToS Leader*) provided participants with the results of the last MCPFE Expert Level Meeting (7-8 May 2008, Oslo, Norway). He explained that the meeting focused on the elaboration of the MCPFE Work Programme 2008-2011. The Programme (<http://mcpfe.org/documents/meetings/2008/elm1>) envisages actions related to the implementation of the MCPFE Resolutions and concentrates on issues related to climate change, wood mobilisation and sound use of wood as well as multiple forest ecosystem services (including forests and water). Parts of the Programme contain activities, which try to facilitate discussions on the role of the MCPFE, its action plan and means of cooperation. These activities are supposed to draw the strategic directions of the MCPFE.

30. Under Work Programme element: “*Cross-Cutting Activities*”, activities related to “*Monitoring and reporting, including C&F*” were scheduled. It is expected that the next report “*State of Europe’s Forests*” will be prepared for the forthcoming Ministerial Conference. Other activities related to this work area are also planned to encourage further efforts with regards to the refinement of forest types.

31. Dr. Rametsteiner also informed the ToS members on plans for a workshop to be convened in Bordeaux, France, in 2009, on cooperation between the MCPFE and Montreal processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Further information may be expected in a due time.

*d) FAO global FRA programme: general overview of developments*

32. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie (FAO) informed the ToS about the global FRA Programme activities since the last ToS meeting and acknowledged the progress of the current round of Global Forest Resources Assessment - 2010. The FRA 2010 Assessment has been requested by the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007. It will be based on a comprehensive country reporting process complemented by a global remote sensing survey. A number of special thematic studies linked to FRA 2010 and covering special issues constitute an integral part of the Assessment.

33. The main tool for the FRA 2010 implementation is the comprehensive Enquiry consisting of Reporting Tables, Specifications and Guidelines. The final set of Reporting Tables, in comparison to the one done for FRA 2005 was extended by five new tables: forest establishment and regeneration, policy and legal framework, institutional framework, education and research, public revenue collection and expenditure. Pre-filled reporting templates with the use of FRA 2005 data were delivered to the National Correspondents.

34. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie updated the ToS on the progress made as part of the FRA 2010 preparations. Most of the countries (175) have already nominated new National Correspondents (and their alternates). The Global Workshop for National Correspondents (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/45735/en>), which was held in Rome from 3 to 7 March 2008, launched the FRA 2010 process. In parallel to the Global Workshop, the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Task Force for the FRA 2010 "Remote Sensing Survey" was held in Rome on 4-5 March 2008 to initialise works on a global Remote Sensing Survey. The Meeting of the FRA Advisory Group concluded the one-week intensive consultation on the FRA 2010.

35. The ToS members were informed on wide scope of activities undertaken within the frame of FRA preparatory process, which *inter alia* entailed resource mobilisation, staff development, regional meeting organisation, logistics and software development, and organisation of cooperation with other organisations and institutions. Team of Specialists member were also briefed with the scope of special studies that are supposed to supplement the main report.

36. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie also provided information on FAO activities linked to the enhancement of the FRA 2010 and its capacity as source of information for international conventions and processes. Possibilities were discussed to use FRA 2010 to cover information needs with regards to the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Forum on Forests. The results from this work were reflected in the last set of Reporting tables. Further information and documentation of FAO work on global forest resources assessment are available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra/en>.

*e) Montreal Process C&I- related developments*

37. The brief introduction to current developments in the C&I country reporting within Montreal Process and outcome of the recent scientific/technical workshop (Forest Criteria and Indicators Analytical Framework and Report Workshop 18–21 May 2008, Joensuu, Finland) were provided to the participants of the ToS meeting. Workshop's outcome and the Montreal Process developments were further discussed under agenda item 6.

f) *EU forest monitoring related developments*

38. The ToS members were briefed on the *EU COST Action E 43 “Harmonisation of National Forest Inventories in Europe”* developments. The final 10<sup>th</sup> Joint Working Group and Management Committee Meeting would be held in Lisbon (Portugal) on 5-7 June 2008. Final publications that conclude over 4 years of work are expected to be delivered by the end of October. More detailed information on the COST Action E 43 and its WGs activities is available at <<http://www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e43>>.

39. Mr. Ernst Schulte (*EC DG Environment*) provided the ToS members with information on the latest developments of the LIFE+, a new financial instrument for the environment, which entered into force with the publication of the LIFE+ Regulation 614/2007 in the Official Journal L149 dated 9 June 2007. With a budget of €40 million (for the period 2007-2013), to be shortened to €16 million (for the period 2009/2010) a forest monitoring project is planned to be implemented and co-financed within the frames “Environment Policy & Governance” component. They are expected to provide a concise and comprehensive basis for relevant policy information on forests in relation to climate change, biodiversity, forest fires, forest conditions and the protective functions of forests as well as contributing to the protection of forests against fires. Further information is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus.htm#First>.

40. Mr. Csaba Mozes (*EC DG Eurostat*) updated participants with the Eurostat plans for the forthcoming period. The main activities will continue to cover the collection of data for the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire. Future activities will be more linked with the implementation of the EU Forest Action Plan. It is assumed that the coordination of data collection with partner organisation (FAO, forest industry organisations) will be further developed. In the expected scope of collected statistics the increase of presence of environmental data, taking into consideration the new forest types, the integrated economic accounts for forestry, and better addressing cross-sectoral aspects, including of statistics on energy are envisaged.

41. Dr. Jesus San Miguel Ayanz (*EC DG JRC*) provided comprehensive information on past and ongoing work led by the JRC in relation to forests (<http://forest.jrc.it>). Despite the fact that the Forest Focus Regulation has expired since the end of 2006, the JRC continues work on the Forest Focus studies e.g. forest soil survey database and BioSoil demonstration project (2006-2009). The JRC continues works to enhance the European Forest Fire Information System. Alongside the EU Forest Fire database maintenance, work on fire danger forecast methodology and forest damage evaluation is carried on.

42. Dr. San Miguel Ayanz informed ToS participants also on current and planned projects related to the remote survey and forest mapping. This work includes the completion of the series of Forest Maps of Europe (1990, 2000, and 2006) assessing the state of forest resources in Europe and modelling of future status according to climate change scenarios as well as the analysis of forest spatial pattern in European forests. Important part of work within this area will be cooperation of the JRC and European countries within the framework of the FRA 2010 Global Remote Sensing Survey.

Dr. San Miguel Ayanz provided the ToS members with basic information on the European Forest Information and Communication Platform (EFICP). EFICP is a follow-up of the European Council Regulation No. 1615/89 concerning the creation of a European Forestry



Information and Communication System (EFICS). EFICP provides access to EU systems and data on forest resources (currently the NFI virtual system and EFDAC), forest fires (EFFIS), and forest condition (Forest Focus database). In all cases, the spatial data available through EFICP is aggregated data derived from the EU databases. No point or plot data are or will be available from EFICP. The Preparatory Action for the development of EFICP ([www.eficp.eu](http://www.eficp.eu)) was completed at the end of 2007.

43. Dr. Jesus San Miguel Ayanz presented the results of the work and proposed follow-up activities aiming at building of the European Forest Data Centre (EFDAC). EFDAC is expected to be the central point for forest information at European level in support to relevant EU policies, and as the basis of the European Forest Monitoring System proposed in the EU Forest Action Plan. It will be built on the basis of the information systems currently existing; in particular, the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), the Forest Focus Data Platform, and the European Forest Information and Communication Platform (EFICP). The full establishment of the European Forest Data Centre is expected in 2009.

44. Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner concluded this item of the agenda by notifying, on behalf of the European Environment Agency, the ToS participants about a publication prepared by European Environment Agency “*European forests - ecosystem condition and sustainable use*” ([http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea\\_report\\_2008\\_3/en](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea_report_2008_3/en)). A major part of analysis behind this report was carried out with the use of data and information collected through the MCPFE/UNECE/FAO reporting process.

#### **ToS review of the MCPFE Report “State of Forests and Sustainable Forest Management in Europe 2007” (Item 4)**

##### ***MCPFE 2007 Report; Warsaw MCPFE 2007 Conference, report dissemination*** (Item 4a)

45. Mr. Roman Michalak (UNECE/FAO) gave a brief overview of the subject. Two key documents were prepared for the conference: the MCPFE Report “*State of Europe’s Forests 2007*” and the Report on Implementation of the MCPFE Commitments. At the 5<sup>th</sup> MCPFE Conference (November 2007, Warsaw), the Report “*State of Europe’s Forests 2007*” was presented by Prof. Dr. Michael Koehl and Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner (the main editors of the Report) within the frames of the special thematic session “*Europe’s Forests - state of art and challenges ahead*”.

46. At the MCPFE conference the contents and conclusions of the Report were addressed by the sessions’ key speakers, Ms. Mariann Fischer Boel, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Marek Belka, Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of UNECE and Mr. Jan Heino, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, FAO.

47. The special thematic session at the Conference was followed by the Poster Session “*State of Sustainable Forest Management in Europe*”, at which member and observer countries and other organizations had an opportunity to present their experiences and perspectives on SFM application.

48. All Conference participants were provided with copies of the Report, and the report’s main findings (available in four languages: English, French, Russian, and Polish). Copies of

the Report were also distributed amongst MCPFE focal points (countries and organizations). A press conference and a press release (Annex 4) were carried out, which revealed some of the report's main topics. Both were widely disseminated through general press agencies networks.

49. Hardcopies of the report can be obtained from the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo ([www.mcpfe.org](http://www.mcpfe.org)). Electronic versions and other relevant documents are available on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/fra/outputs.htm>).

***Review of the MCPFE 2007 Report “State of Europe’s Forests” – lessons learned from the C&I data collection and analysis process, report writing, publication and dissemination***  
(Item 4b)

50. The Team of Specialists built its recommendations on the basis of the Joint UNECE/FAO Working Party specific guidance and proposals with regard to the MCPFE 2007 reporting. Detailed information on the Working Party conclusions and recommendations are presented under points 15- 22 of this report. The questionnaire (Annex 5), which was prepared for the ToS review of the Report elaboration process, its contents and dissemination was analysed on the question by question basis, responses received so far set a background for the discussion. Questionnaire’ results along with ToS recommendations (below) will serve as the basis for the next MCPFE report planning.

***Part I – Report elaboration process***

51. ***Question 1 (general approach)***. The ToS participants shared the review respondents’ opinion that the general approach for the SoEF 2007 preparations was the right one. However, several issues were raised that would need improvement during future reporting cycle(s). First of all the need for further, more effective harmonisation of reporting cycles between the FRA and MCPFE reporting was raised. In some specific areas, reporting formats (data quality) and specifications (e.g. for reporting on biodiversity indicators) need further work. In addition, recommendations were made that relevant existing data from previous reports should be taken into consideration (i.e. to consider pre-filling data cells). The ToS agreed with the above proposals however they recommended additional resources should be made available to ensure required organisational procedures.

52. ***Question 2 (general organization of work)***. The ToS found that the organization of work was generally appropriate. The ToS underlined the importance and need for a body or group e.g. an Advisory Group (AG) on MCPFE report elaboration to co-ordinate work. It was suggested that this body or group (a new AG) should be established shortly after commencing preparations of the next “State of Europe’s Forest” Report. Evaluation of the MCPFE 2007 Report preparation, use and implication, and follow-up of recommendations of the Working Party as well as the recommendations of this ToS should be one of its first tasks.

53. Furthermore the Team recommended dedicating special attention to establish early and intensive collaboration with International Data Providers, and to start work early to improve reporting on indicators which have been found to be difficult to report data on (e.g. non-wood goods and services, marketed services, expenditure for services, some socio-economic indicators). Early studies on these indicators should be undertaken to allow timely decision making and the establishment of a suitable format for these indicators to be included

in the report, i.e. should these indicators be part of regular reporting or should they require a special thematic study.

54. The ToS members commented on the recruitment process for authors to the report. Team members suggested better representation of different regions in the author's team composition in the different chapters. The main objective for the next reporting is to select adequate candidates (authors) early, who would be involved early in the data collection, analysis and report production process.

55. **Question 3 (time schedule).** While the time schedule was generally seen as appropriate and realistic, the Team members raised their concerns about time limitation during the report's elaboration, particularly the lack of time during the final stages (e.g. report writing, key findings revision) of report elaboration. This should be avoided in the next period of work. Another concern was raised about the timeframe for the next reporting. The short period of time between FRA and MCPFE reporting might entail additional complications.

56. The ToS members commented on the unavailability (so far) of the SoEF 2007 national reports for external uses, and expressed the need to have these reports (qualitative and quantitative indicators) available as soon as possible. Thus, dissemination was seen as an important area of improvement, to be properly planned, organized and considered in the time schedule.

57. **Question 4 (data collection/validation from National Correspondents – quantitative indicators, incl. structure of questionnaire, secretariat support).** While a large majority of participants found this issue to have been well organized & carried out, ToS members also signalled possible improvements in reporting tables for selected indicators (forest regeneration, forest damage). The need for further facilitation of applied definitions (reformulation, explanation) was addressed (more user friendly comments boxes) as well. Better harmonisation with the FRA formats and incorporation of the results of EU COST Action E43 were also suggested. Revision of specifications for definitions should be addressed by the new ToS next meeting.

58. Meeting participants expressed their views on the character of the new network of National Correspondents. ToS members were in favour of designating one national correspondent from each country who would be responsible for organization and providing national data on both qualitative and quantitative indicators. The MCPFE national correspondent should preferably also be the person who provides data for the Global Forest Resources Assessment.

59. **Question 5 (validation of data provided by International Data Providers).** Various aspects related to data collection through International Data Providers (IDP) were addressed by ToS members. Experts underlined that IDP data validation is time consuming, and often, the final result slightly differs from the original data. Time available for data validation was insufficient especially in terms of the report's official release date. For the MCPFE SoEF 2011 (provisional name) Report, the collaboration with IDPs and reporting process should be undertaken earlier. Meeting participants recommended earlier identification of experts specialised in "IDP" indicators' areas would facilitate data collection and validation process.

60. **Question 6 (data collection/validation on qualitative indicators).** In general ToS members stipulated further improvement (including simplification) of the reporting format for

qualitative indicators. More discussion on policies, institutions and financing was carried out under agenda item 9.

61. **Question 7 (opportunities for participation in report elaboration).** Generally, the opportunities provided responded to needs and expectations of ToS members. However, experts reiterated the need for better communication and cooperation, especially in regards to the final phases of report elaboration. National experts should be given the opportunity to review the first draft of the report in order to be able to identify and thus avoid misinterpretation of data provided.

62. Since time limitation during the report's elaboration created many difficulties, it was suggested that a better timeframe should be assigned for data collection and report writing. ToS members should be in better contact with the report's authors, keeping in mind however, that an increase in the amount of collaborators often delays the preparatory phase for publications.

63. **Question 8 (overall improvements in future SoEF report preparation process).** In addition to the proposals already included in the answers to the review enquiry and recommendations provided so far, the ToS members stressed the importance of early communication, including Secretariat's intentions and plans regarding the next reporting cycle. Better monitoring of data collection provided by other organizations would also be useful for pan-European reporting.

64. Finally the possibility and relevance for pre-filing MCPFE 2011 report's enquiry was examined as well. While the team did not reach a common opinion, pre-filing was seen as a concrete option for the next reporting cycle, particularly also because the next round of the MCPFE reporting will most likely be based on the same set of criteria and indicators as those applied for the 2007 report. This means that almost all the data reported for the last MCPFE conference (for 1990, 2000 and 2005 years), if not otherwise decided by the NC, will be valid for the 2011 reporting.

## Part II – Report contents and dissemination

65. **Question 1 (are needs and expectations met by the report?).** In general, the Team shared questionnaire respondents' opinion that the SoEF 2007 report was satisfying and clearly met expectations. The report was described as well balanced with consistent style and contents. The concluding parts of the report were also found appropriate. It was found however that the coherence between data from the report and its respective annexes could be further improved. In addition, information provided at national level should be more clearly distinguished from independent data interpretation.

66. Meeting participants suggested extending work on reporting and data collection, through carrying out additional analysis, e.g. on quality and completeness of collected data and deepened analysis of particular topics.

67. **Question 2 (appropriateness of overall structure).** The general perception of the ToS was that the report structure was appropriate. With regard to the country grouping applied in the MCPFE 2007 report the ToS members discussed ways to improve the Eastern European countries grouping. Due to the exceptional position of forest resources of the Russian

Federation, considering this country as a separate entity would increase clarity and secure visibility of other countries of that sub-region.

68. **Question 3 (evaluation of individual chapters).** ToS members were acquainted with the results of evaluation of particular chapters, in which most of the sections were evaluated as “very good” (i.e. 4 in 1-5 scale) in terms of structure and contents, with good evaluations for completeness and accuracy of chapters. Meeting participants raised several areas of possible improvements, e.g. the possibility to verify texts directly related to particular countries (boxes) by national correspondents.

69. ToS members also discussed problems related to the possibilities of application of the SoEF 2007 report for national purposes. It was strongly suggested that the main report should be accompanied by the countries’ original information in the form of national reports. This information could be accessible online or given in the form of CD. This would allow the dissemination of data that has not been included in the output tables.

70. **Question 4 (graphic design).** The review showed that graphs were seen as appropriate, with some possibilities for improvement, including e.g. graphic readability and maps through better communication between the graphic designers and the authors. The inclusion of photographs could be considered to improve the attractiveness of the report, and highlight the report’s conclusions.

71. Separate comment was made on evaluation of trends on SFM implementation through application of “traffic lights” concept, which was generally seen as a useful way for evaluating and communicating trends in individual indicators over time. It was suggested to work further to improve this approach.

72. **Question 5 (dissemination).** The team then discussed the report’s dissemination process which to their opinion was inadequate. The ToS suggested wider distribution of hard copies to all National Correspondents, including a set the national reports.

73. All data collected during the report elaboration process should be made available to the public through website based data browser. Experts addressed the need for more user friendly online services that would enable easy access to the report and other relevant data. Some of the ToS members suggested the use of Wikipedia as another way to disseminate the report.

74. Experts have found that differences in the FRA and MCPFE reporting format (i.e. 2005 data in FRA report are extrapolations while SoEF reports field data for this year, at least partly) could lead to data misinterpretation for the same years. This data inconsistency can have serious implications in terms of reporting to national statistical yearbooks.

75. Finally, the meeting participants encouraged the Secretariat to continue work on the following activities: Report’s review, monitoring of the dissemination process (downloads, hardcopies distribution, citations), use and implication, and users’ response.

### **Regional contribution to the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment** (Item 5)

76. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie presented and moderated the discussion on global and regional FRA activities. The discussion covered the following themes: preparation for FRA 2010 (timetable/schedule, country reporting tables, thematic studies, NC network), FRA Remote Sensing Survey, and FRA studies underway – forest degradation/fragmentation and area under sustainable forest management.

77. Mr. Örjan Jonsson (*FAO*) provided the ToS participants with additional points to those raised by Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie including information on the situation of FRA processes in Europe. Mr. Jonsson informed participants of future regional workshops including one workshop for Russian speaking countries scheduled for October 2008 in Budapest. Additional sub-regional workshop for southern-eastern European countries was suggested by the Team (if resources allow) He also provided information on national data review for the European region. Örjan Jonsson (*FAO*) and Roman Michalak (*UNECE*) will act as facilitators for these reports in the region.

78. Mr. Jonsson gave the provisional schedule for national report submissions to the participants and underlined the importance of possible, even distribution of national report's delivery, which would allow for optimal utilisation of the secretariats' resources. Finally, the ToS members were updated on the National Correspondents' recruitment process.

79. It has been suggested that one of the new ToS meetings should be merged with regional workshop for FRA national correspondents. The ToS members agreed with the idea and proposed potential meeting dates. FAO and UNECE Secretariats were asked to review possible dates for organising such a meeting.

80. Participants suggested further harmonisation and consultation were needed with regards to the FRA and pan-European reporting process to avoid duplication of reporting. Team from both Secretariats ensured that efforts were invested in the process to avoid such problems.

81. The ToS was briefed on the progress on complementary remote sensing assessment, which should provide another important component of FRA 2010. The Remote Sensing Survey's (RSS) role is to obtain better information about forest change and forest trends at global, regional and biome levels. A series of meetings had been held with the remote sensing experts to discuss the methodological aspects of the RS Survey, including an inaugural workshop for Remote Sensing Task Force.

82. The coordinating role for the European region will be played by the Join Research Centre. The meeting participants were informed on the progress of work, collection and processing of reference material and the schedule for forthcoming activities. The NC will be asked to help the coordinating bodies identify the national centres that would be involved in the images interpretations at the national level. The main work in this respect is expected to be completed in 2009.

83. Other discussions questioned the reference forest's definition. In the case of RSS, the FAO definition will be the one to follow. It was underlined that due to the applied methodology, the RSS results will not be calculated or presented for individual countries.

84. A number of special (thematic) studies will complement the global FRA 2010 and cover special issues, especially those not covered by the National Reporting Tables. Two out of a dozen planned thematic studies were thoroughly discussed by the Team of Specialists, i.e. forest degradation and fragmentation and the possibility of reporting of area under sustainable forest management.

85. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie underlined that the issue of “forest degradation” is of high importance in the current climate change negotiations agenda and the outcome of the FRA work is expected to serve as a substantial contribution to the UNFCCC COP/MOP meeting in Copenhagen in 2009. Several opinions and national experiences were shared among the group; general suggestion was to strive to utilise existing indicators for the assessment of degraded forest area instead of exploring of a new, proxy ones.

86. Regarding the reporting of forest area under the SFM, the ITTO criteria were presented as an initial concept, serving as a basis for subsequent work. The ToS participants noted the complexity and difficulty of the issue, several ideas were highlighted and discussed (certification, public procurement, quality of management, managed area through forest management plan), including their potential and constraints. No clear conclusion was reached, but the ToS members were asked to analyse the issue and provide the FRA team with ideas at the next ToS.

87. Mrs. Mette Løyche Wilkie reiterated the most important deadlines of the FAO’s roadmap for FRA 2010 elaboration. She informed the meeting participants on other, future intentions and directions of work. One of them being forest potential in relation to energy production (global fibre production study); while another potential area of work referred to the multidimensional relation between forest and climate change. Participants agreed that this new topic should be discussed at the next year Team’s inaugural meeting.

88. Open discussion on the regional ToS contribution to the FAO global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 gave additional input at the subsequent stage of the preparation of the Assessment. The opinion of the ToS experts, many of whom are the FRA National Correspondents, was taken by the FAO FRA team members, and will be utilised at the subsequent stages of the FRA 2010 implementation.

### **Current development in the C&I country reporting of Montreal Process; update** (Item 6)

89. Mr. Patrick Miles (*USA*) provided a brief general overview of the work within the Montreal Process (MP), specifically on the status of the revision of MP indicators for SFM. The revision of the core C&I had not yet been completed – work on “*Criterion 7 - Legal, institutional and economic framework for forest conservation and sustainable management*” is continued, and the subsequent decision was expected during this fall at the meeting to be held at the 19<sup>th</sup> Montreal Process Working Group in October 2008, Russia ([http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/mpci/meetings/18\\_e.html](http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/mpci/meetings/18_e.html)).

90. Mr. Aljosha Requardt (*Germany*) and Mr. Örjan Jonsson (*FAO*) briefed the ToS about the workshop on “*Forest Criteria and Indicators Analytical Framework and Report*” recently held in Joensuu, Finland (18–21 May 2008), which gathered C&I experts from MP, ITTO and MCPFE countries. The workshop focused on the means of C&I reports’ dissemination among the wide public and on aspects related to the modelling of multi-dimensional character of the

SFM. Workshop materials, that refer to technical aspect of using C&I application, are available at <http://www.metla.fi/tapahtumat/2008/criteria-indicators/index.htm>.

### **The MCPFE Forest Types classification: further steps on the way to the country reporting** (Item 7)

91. Professor Marco Marchetti (*Italian Academy of Forest Sciences*) presented the latest version of the new EEA/MCPFE Forest type classification, that was developed on the basis of experiences gained through pilot studies (2006-2008) of application of the previous version of classification presented in the study “*European forest types: Categories and types for sustainable forest management reporting and policy*” (EEA Technical report, No 9/2006, [http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical\\_report\\_2006\\_9/en](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical_report_2006_9/en)). The ToS members embraced Prof. Marchetti’s information on past and ongoing activities, in which the provisional classification has been applied or tested.

92. The Team of Specialists was briefed on information regarding the next steps towards the developing the new forest type classification. There will first be the EEA workshop (October 2008) which will aim at analyzing results and defining the needs in order to improve classification for this region. This will lead to the elaboration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the European Forest Type report. The ToS participants were reassured by Prof. Marchetti that current works would not lead to the modification of the present structure of the categories, expected changes would only affect a few forest types.

93. Mr. Roman Michalak (*UNECE/FAO*) informed the ToS members that according to the current MCPFE Work Program, there will be further progress with regards to the new classification development and its application. A draft questionnaire on feasibility of reporting according to the new classification was presented to the ToS members for evaluation and discussion.

94. Collected comments and proposals by the ToS meeting participants were incorporated to the improved version of the questionnaire (Annex 6), which is attached for the ToS members’ final review and approval. The enquiry will be carried out at the earliest practical convenience, bearing in mind the need of the results presentation and its discussion at the planned workshop. In further perspective, they are supposed to serve as a building block for optimal shaping of the MCPFE SoEF 2011 questionnaire, during the subsequent ToS meeting(s).

### **Private Forest Ownership database, further step to deepen knowledge** (Item 8)

95. Mr. Alexander Korotkov (*UNECE/FAO*) updated the ToS members on the progress of the Private Forest Ownership (PFO) Enquiry and Discussion Paper carried out within the frames of the project, initiated by UNECE/FAO in cooperation with MCPFE and CEPF. The source information, which was collected on PFO in Europe, is available on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/fra/PFO.htm>). The ToS members were acquainted with the preliminary results provided in the draft discussion paper, and were requested to provide comments and advice on specific issues related to future work on reporting.



96. The ToS meeting participants welcomed the result of the UNECE work and underlined the need to ensure the complementary character of the study in relation to the SoEF reporting. The general problems regarding relevant data availability, which seriously limited countries' ability to provide demanded information, were reiterated as well. Further comments from the ToS are welcomed after finalisation of work on Discussion Paper.

**Future activities and work planning for 2008-2009 (in the light of the Strategic Review of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Work Programme and decisions of the Special Session) (Item 9)**

97. In the 2008-2009 period ToS work should mainly focus on regional contribution to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 and the preparation, launching, and facilitation of the next round of C&I reporting to the pan-European Ministerial Conference. This work period should also help strengthening cooperation among the MCPFE and MP countries. The list of ToS (Secretariat and/or ToS member) activities and contributions, responding to the Team's objectives and taking into account its future role, are the following:

- Contribute to the implementation of FRA 2010 by supporting and facilitating the country reporting process at the regional level (country reporting table, specifications, terms and definitions, thematic studies), also at the regional/ sub-regional workshop(s);
- Contribute to the further dissemination and use of the MCPFE Report' results ("*State of Europe's Forests 2007*");
- Complete a "user survey" questionnaire and consider launching a "use and implication survey" in due time;
- Develop and maintain the electronic database of the MCPFE quantitative indicators, in cooperation with the FAO FRA Team, and thus providing contribution to the MCPFE 2007 Report on SFM follow-up (October 2008);
- Start planning the concept and practical aspects of the elaboration of the next MCPFE Report "*State of Europe's Forests*" as soon as possible, and no later than the end - 2008 (Road Map);
- Assist in the recruitment (nomination) process for the new ToS on "*Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management*", raise countries' awareness on the tasks and scope of the team's work; draw special attention on identification of leading experts for areas indicated in the new mandate, particularly in the area of forest policies (Fall 2008);
- Include in the Provisional Agenda of the first, inaugural meeting of the new ToS, among key issues, additionally to the implementation of FRA 2010 and elaboration of the next MCPFE Report on "*State of Europe's Forests*" the item on practical aspects and modalities of country reporting according to the new Forest Type Classification, complete the enquiry on the application of the new classification (September 2008);
- Participate and contribute to meetings of the National Forest Inventory experts to be organised within ENFIN;

98. Until the new ToS is established, the above activities will be coordinated by the current ToS Leader and Deputy Leaders, the UNECE/FAO Secretariat, the FRA FAO team and in communication with the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo and Liaison Office of the Montreal Process. The timetable and resources for the implementation of the above activities should be the subject of specific consideration and decisions of the ToS parent and governing bodies.

### **Next meeting of the Team of Specialists**

99. The ToS suggested that the first meeting of the new ToS on “*Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management*” should be scheduled in February 2009 (tentatively, that fits to FRA 2010 process), with the participation of the “core group” of the current team, representatives of the MCPFE (LU Oslo), and new experts whose expertise would respond to the broader objectives of the new ToS (to be established). The provisional agenda of the first/inaugural meeting should take into account proposals and recommendations of the current ToS. Dates and venue will be discussed by the Secretariat and announced in due time.

### **Other matters and closing the 4<sup>th</sup> ToS meeting** (Items 10 & 11)

100. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria offered the ToS members a unique opportunity to discover some of the most interesting spots of Vienna city. The evening “round the city” tour was completed by an official dinner hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry.

101. The field excursion to the Forest Enterprise “*Winerwald*”, and the visit to the Austrian Federal Forests headquarters (*Österreichische Bundesforste AG*), both arranged by the organisers on 28<sup>th</sup> May, were highly appreciated by the participants and helped understand the important protective, social and cultural role of this unique central European massif.

102. The participants expressed their utmost gratitude to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria and the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences for supporting the UNECE/FAO regional FRA and C&I activities, and thus providing important contributions to the international co-operation on Sustainable Forest Management in the region. All the facilities provided by the BOKU University for the ToS meeting, including the conference room, logistical, financial and secretariat support were of highest quality and greatly appreciated by all. The ToS members warmly thanked the hosting institutions, particularly the exceptional hospitality they received during their stay in Vienna. Particular gratefulness was addressed to Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner, Dr. Johannes Hangler and their colleagues from the Ministry and University for their exemplary preparatory work, impressive organisation and inspiring performance during the event.

---