

**UNECE-FAO
FORESTRY AND TIMBER SECTION**

**Fourth (24th) meeting of the “UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on
monitoring sustainable forest management”**

Zagreb, Croatia 14-16 September 2016

Meeting report – Draft as of 03 February 2017

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Stein TOMTER, Norway, and leader of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (ToS). The agenda of the meeting is included in Annex I of the report. Minutes were noted by the Secretariat. The list of participants is attached in Annex II. 24 experts from 10 countries and partner organizations took part in the meeting. Represented countries were Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. Mr. Stein TOMTER opened the meeting.

Ivan IŠTOK, board member of the “Croatian Forests” Ltd. welcomed the participants to Zagreb. In his opening speech, Mr. IŠTOK explained that the Croatian State Forest Enterprise (Hrvatske šume) manages 78% of the 2.5 million hectares of forests in Croatia. He further highlighted the various forest biomes in Croatia and the fact that all forests managed by Hrvatske šume are FSC certified. He further emphasised that all protected areas in Croatia are all interconnected, creating the largest connected Natura 2000 network in the world.

Danko DIMINIĆ from the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Zagreb welcomed members of the Team on behalf of the Dean of Faculty of Forestry, Vladimir JAMBREKOVIĆ. Mr. DIMINIĆ highlighted the long lasting history of the faculty of forestry with about 250 years of research in the field of forestry. The Faculty was once created as an academy of forestry under the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. With the restructuring of the Universities in the wake of the Bologna agreement (the implementation in Croatia started in the academic year 2005/2006), the University in Zagreb created more specialized studies such as urban forestry.

Mr. Ivica FRANČETIĆ, Assistant Minister Ministry of Agriculture extended a welcome note on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture. Mr. FRANČETIĆ thanked Hrvatske šume and the Faculty of Forestry for their support of the event and expressed its satisfaction that all areas of forest reporting would be covered by the meeting agenda. Mr. FRANČETIĆ highlighted, that Croatia has 260 indigenous tree species and that global climate change is one of the biggest challenges. He insisted that natural regeneration is key for stable and resilient forests in the future. Thanks to this silvicultural practice in the country, all state owned forests in the country are FSC certified. Mr. FRANČETIĆ concluded that Plitvice park, the destination of the field trip was one of the oldest natural parks in Eastern Europe and wished the team a successful and productive meeting.

Mr. Anssi PEKKARIENEN – new team leader of the Forest Resource Assessment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) thanked the organizers for their support and highlighted that the meeting was very timely in the process of preparing for the next round of global reporting on forests.

Mr. Florian STEIERER, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Secretary of the ToS, thanked the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture for hosting the event in Croatia. It is the second ToS meeting within three months, which makes Croatia the most active country in the UNECE region in hosting ToS meetings in 2016 (the meeting of the ToS on Wood Energy was held in Zagreb from 14-16 June 2016). Mr. STEIERER thanked in particular Ms. Ivana PESUT and Mr. Goran VIDEK for preparing and organizing the meeting. He further extended the gratitude of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section to Hrvatske šume and the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Zagreb for their support to the event and welcomed the members of the team to the meeting.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda.

The Agenda (Annex I) was adopted.

Item 2. Short presentation on Croatian forestry

Mr. Goran VIDEK presented a short overview on forestry in Croatia. In his introduction, Mr. VIDEK gave an overview on the geographical, climatic and biological conditions in Croatia. He highlighted that the idea of sustainable forest management was known and applied for the last 220 years in Croatia. Croatia is a highly forested country with a forest area accounting for 48% of the land area. Most of the forest is productive high forest and two third of the forests are owned and managed by the state. Mr. VIDEK provided some detailed information about the structure, productiveness, stocking volume and increment of forests in Croatia.

Croatia is still facing an issue with mines in forests. Most of the mine suspect land other than forests in the country has been cleared. 471 km² are still suspect to mines of which 350 km² are in forests and forest land. In the past ten years, 201 persons were reported to have been killed by mines (of which 18 were children).

Forest in Croatia face challenges by biotic and abiotic disturbances, such as forest fires, storms, floods or bark beetle. Croatia is currently facing a significant challenges arising from outbreaks of bark beetle infestations in the western part of the country. Ice break and floods occurred in 2015 and 16,500 ha of spruce forests were damaged subsequently. The beetle infestation is so important that it has the potential to change the forest composition in Croatia in the long run.

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

Q: *What is the policy on harvesting and management in protected forest areas?*

A: *Interventions are allowed, in form of selective cuttings. Restrictions are in place, but commercial felling are often still possible.*

Q: *What type of inventory is being applied in Croatia – stand level or national inventory?*

A: *Both are used whereas the stand level is more widely used and important for the management on the ground. The national inventory co-exists in parallel and is used for analysis of management in previous years. Remote sensing is also used.*

Q: *Do you clear the mined areas and by when do you expect that the mines will be removed?*

A: Yes, the mined areas are step by step cleared and Croatia aims at 2019 as target year for finalization. However, mines are hard to detect after so many years since they are covered under leaves and organic layers - the stands have not been managed since (>20 years).

Q: Does Croatia expect huge differences between expected felling and actual fellings in the future?

A: Climate change may increase the abiotic disturbances such as draught, floods and similar which in turn may cause increased biotic disturbances by pests and diseases. All of this is likely to lead to decreased utilisation. Often this leads to uneven distribution of stress and removals in the stands and in the country. The current infestations by bark beetles are one issue, but beech trees are also heavily affected by the ice break. Oak forests are also under stress due to draught in past years as well as narrow leaf ash (*faraxinus angustifolia*) in the low lands due to the ash dieback. The vast biodiversity of Croatia has a diversity of issues and challenges.

Item 3. Review and the next steps of the study on forest ownership in the UNECE region

Mr. Gerhard WEISS, Leader of the COST ACTION FACESMAP briefly presented the achievements of the project on analyzing "new forest ownership". After providing the background of the FACESMAP action, he presented the Working Methods and Outputs of the COST Action. Mr. Weiss explained that the information collected used the FRA definitions as basis but asked for much more details. The country reports as they are published provide an overview and did include less of the quantitative information. The country reports can be found on the website: <http://facesmap.boku.ac.at>

Mr. WEISS highlighted that the FRA definitions are not consistently understood and interpreted in different ways by member states. Analysis within the FACESMAP Action indicates that similar owner types are reported under different items in FRA. Mr. Weiss further explained that the FACESMAP analysis did go far beyond the information collected by FRA. The quantitative questions for example ask for more details on which types of ownership exists in member states and how these forest owners use – or not use - their forests. The questionnaire also included a vast range of qualitative – open ended questions – with questions on trends, e.g. re-organisation of forest ownership, and management and policy related questions.

Mr. WEISS explained that the outcomes of the FACESMAP and the joint questionnaire on forest ownership in the UNECE region will be used to compile a publication on forest ownership in the UNECE region. He highlighted at the end of this presentation the structure of the upcoming UNECE/FAO study on forest ownership (detailed outline see Annex III).

Part 0: UNECE Forests – Introduction

Part 1: Forest Ownership pattern in the UNECE region

Part 2: Organization of public and private forest ownership and tenure

Part 3: Applied forest management

Part 4: Public and private forest owners and managers

Mr. WEISS further outlined the current timeline for the study. The detailed timeline can be found in the presentation and contains the following dates that might be important for member states and members of this team of specialists:

- Check dataset and provide feedback (by 31 October 2016);
- Consolidation of outlines in one document and send to authors (by 10 November 2016);
- Final draft of chapter (by 10 March 2017);
- Distribution of advanced copy of the study to member states (by 7 April 2017)
- Discussion of the study during the 39th session of the Joint Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, Geneva, Switzerland (3-5 May 2017);
- Comments by member states (by 19 May 2017);
- Design and printing (8 -10 weeks – appx. August 2017)

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

- Q:** *Will results of the joint questionnaire on forest ownership allow for specific recommendations how to improve results of international reporting in the future?*
- A:** *Clear definitions that are understood and consistently applied are an important issue for the reporting (data quality and completeness). While the definitions as such are clear, it would be good to clarify the understanding of the definitions. Namely Commons and community based forest ownership cause discussion and different interpretation on how to report these forms of ownership in many cases. Statistics is one data source but the attitude by forest owners is often not available.*
- Q:** *How will you coordinate in case of questions regarding the data provided in the questionnaire?*
- A:** *The first round of data checking only included consistency check based on the data provided. The group of authors and co-authors just started looking into the detailed information provided by country correspondents. These experts will collect the questions and the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section will collect the question. The aim is to centralize the questions for contact national correspondents before contacting them in order to minimize the workload for the latter.*
- Q:** *Does the questionnaire ask for the number of private forest owners?*
- A:** *This was asked in the part of quantitative questions and the trend is towards more fragmentation. An additional question in the questionnaire asked countries, what policies are in place to slow down this development.*
- Q:** *No review of the data done?*
- A:** *So far the cross checking is done (e.g. sum and cross reference within the questionnaire). No checking has been done so far to determine whether the data are in line with other sources of information.*
- Q:** *Will you publish the original data on the UNECE/FAO website by the end of the exercise?*
- A:** *The secretariat has the intention to do publish the original replies as well as the database, once the national correspondents agree.*

Item 4. Results and preliminary review on the process and results of the regional reporting

Mr. Rastislav RAŠI presented actions of FOREST EUROPE's Work Programme as it was approved by the Expert Level Meeting (ELM) meeting on 11/12 May 2016. In the introduction, Mr. RAŠI presented the list of Pan-European actions, arrangements, and responsibilities under item 4 (Pan European actions, arrangements and responsibilities) of the Programme of actions. These include further development and updating of policies and tools for sustainable forest management, forest monitoring and reporting, enhancing the role of sustainable forest management in a green economy, incorporating the value of forests ecosystems services in a green economy, protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaption to climate change, enhancing the social dimension of SFM in the context of the benefits of forests to human health and well-being as well as communication and outreach.

In the following Mr. RAŠI highlighted the important role of the expert group on SFM for enhancing tools to promote SFM including methodological support and analysis as well as the report on State of Europe's forests. The Expert Group on SFM tools will be instrumental in collaborative data collection (Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) and joint reporting on quantitative and qualitative indicators of SFM), production of the State of Europe's Forests, conducting pilot studies on the new indicators (2.5, 4.7 and 4.10) as well as reporting on the goals for European forests and the European 2020 targets for forests. Mr. RAŠI highlighted that the cooperation with the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section as well its ToS on Monitoring SFM is considered as key for a successful establishment and work of the Expert Group on SFM tools.

Mr. RAŠI concluded his presentation by providing an overview on the detailed tasks, partners and timetable of the working group on SFM tool, at the end of his presentation and invited experts to contribute to the revision and further definition of C & I Subset.

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

Q: *Have there been any talks on the periodicity of reporting – SDG annual vs. 2020 which would be a 5 year interval?*

A: *Reporting is tied to conference – which determines the schedule for reporting and data collection before the report – the conference is currently expected to be held in 2020. The report is planned to be available by 2020. In agenda 2030 mentions regional reporting – There could be contribution to this derived from FE. It is not clear what is behind this regional reporting on SDG.*

Q: *What are you referring to when highlighting the need for methodological support for reporting, development of new C & I?*

A: *How C & I are developed and defined in detail and whether they need further refinement - As highlighted in the presentation, there are three new Indicators that require clarification what is behind these is indicators – e.g. forest land degradation, which is very broad - Forest Europe needs to decide what is the reasonable scope for the reporting and what is in the interest from policy makers behind of the Indicator.*

Q: *How to assess and monitor the matters. What exactly is being evaluated by the method – and which consequences are derived from the information collected. What do we, or other experts, do after the data collection? This is still missing for the set of*

new indicators. It is always good to improve indicators but bear in mind, that this could have an impact on time series.

A: *Experts need to provide clarification on that – currently the new set of indicators are expression of political will and need to be made operational by experts.*

Q: *Did the expert group start work?*

A: *Not yet, they need to be appointed by member states. It is not clear whether FE could directly invite experts.*

Q: *Reporting for countries? Will it be the same way as last time – on paper?*

A: *It is not 100% clear – also cooperation with FAO?*

Q: *ECE was not mentioned in the last report how will you do the reporting next time?*

A: *The different programmes of work highlight the important role for improved cooperation – The formal agreement is missing and needs to be defined how this cooperation will take place (distribution of tasks and rights). Earlier this week UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and FE LUB met and discussed how to cooperate to improve the situation from last time.*

Q: *How big will be the working group be – will it be a core group or will each country be invited to nominate a national focal point?*

A: *Opportunity for all member states – but experience shows that not all countries will participate based on their priorities. Leading actors have already been identified.*

Mr. Martin MORAVČÍK from Forest Europe presented the “*Preparation of the next report on SoEF (2020) – plans for future development*”. The first part of the presentation focused on the review of the recent edition of report on the State of Europe’s Forests 2015 and provided an overview on the results of the survey on the reporting for the State of Europe’s Forests 2015. The outcomes were based on the analysis of replies of 44 respondents by National correspondents on quantitative indicators, authors or reviewers of chapters and members of the Team of Specialists on monitoring of SFM, respondents by National correspondents on qualitative indicators and indicators covered by IDP. Mr. Martin MORAVČÍK concluded the first part of the presentation by highlighting some suggestions on how to further improve the publication in the future. Most suggestions for improvements focused on resource, procedural, planning and review process.

In the second part of his presentation, M. MORAVČÍK focused on plans for future development of the State of Europe’s Forests (SoEF). The publication is, one of the most important outputs of the FOREST EUROPE process backed by a strong mandate and clearly highlighted in the Programme of Work. Mr. MORAVČÍK clearly highlighted the need for close cooperation with the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and briefly presented for reference the Integrated Programme of Work of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (2014-2017). The SoEF gives a comprehensive overview on the state and trends in European forests and forestry and it is a very significant document for the management and decision-making in forestry and related sectors. The future SoEF will be based on the national data collected within the pan-European forest monitoring and reporting using the updated quantitative and qualitative-descriptive indicators. Forest Europe is aiming at finalizing the report by the end of 2019 (See timeline below).

Detailed activities of the AG in forest monitoring and reporting, date and related actors	2016				2017				2018				2019																	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Analysis of the previous report on SoEF and suggestions how to improve of the next report																														
2 Setting up the FOREST EUROPE/UNECE Advisory Group for the preparation of the report																														
3 Setting up the team of Coordinating and Leading authors of the report (CLA)																														
4 Preparation of the indicative table of content of the report (expected content and structure of the report)																														
5 Development of Background Information for UPEI for SFM and Relevant Definitions used for UPEI for SFM																														
6 Pilot studies on the new indicators; determination if data are available, reliable and if data are feasible for reporting																														
7 Preparation of reporting on national and pan-European achievements on the Goals and 2020 Targets																														
8 Preparation of the enquiry for the reporting on the Updated pan-European Indicators (quantitative) coordinated with the CFRQ																														
9 Preparation of the enquiry for the reporting on the Updated pan-European Indicators (qualitative, descriptive) coordinated with the CFRQ																														
10 Dispatch of the final reporting Enquiries, Reporting tables, Guidelines to countries; both quantitative and qualitative (descriptive)																														
11 National data collection, deadline for Countries replies																														
12 International providers data collection and submission																														
13 Checking, processing, validation and compilation of data; on both quantitative and qualitative (descriptive) indicators																														
14 Decision on and elaboration of SFM Assessment method																														
15 Choice and liaising with authors of chapters of the report																														
16 Analysis of data and preparation of the first draft of chapters of the SoEF																														
17 Joint conference for the National Correspondents, ToS on SFM and FP and authors to discuss the 1st draft of the report on SoEF																														
18 Compilation and design of report, language review, publishing of report																														

At the end of his presentation, Mr. MORAVČÍK highlighted the role of the Advisory Group as an informal body invited to formulate its opinions on all aspects related to the scope and organization of the SoEF process. The objective of the work of AG is: (i) to contribute to the preparation of the report on SoEF, by providing technical and scientific guidance to the Liaison Office Bratislava in their work on data collecting for the quantitative and qualitative indicators, analysing the information, reporting and preparing the report on SoEF and (ii) to review and make recommendations to principally improve existing institutional networks, to make future SoEF increasingly user-oriented and demand-driven and more closely linked with other international processes.

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

Q: Ministerial Conference in 2020? – Is there any date?

A: Not yet clear.

Q: How will the cooperation look like – e.g. regarding methods on SFM estimation?

A: Cooperate with advisory group and expert group and invited experts – e.g. Kit Prins and SEMAFOR – too early to discuss this.

Q: Will Forest Europe use SEMAFOR experiences?

A: Sure – Forest Europe is planning to invite Mr. Prins.

Q: Submitting country level reports in 2018 implies that countries make three year forecast to provide data for 2020 – this could lead to huge differences between data in SOEF and FRA.

A: It is clear that actual data on e.g. forest resources are not averaged data. There should be a disclaimer in the report that will highlight that the data have been collected in 2018.

Q: How about the corrigendum, if countries would like to provide correction to the 2015 SoEF?

A: The survey highlighted the issue also – need to consider in the next round.

Mr. Matěj SCHWARZ completed the set of presentations by Forest Europe by providing an update on *"Pilot studies for new and significantly altered pan-European indicators"*. In his introduction Mr. SCHWARZ explained the need for pilot studies for the three new indicators within the updated pan-European Indicators for SFM (2.5 trends in land degradation, 4.7 Forest fragmentation, 4.10 Occurrence of common breeding bird species related to forest ecosystems). These new indicators require further testing and development together with footnotes. The Advisory Group for updating the pan-European set of Indicators for SFM recommends conducting a pilot project in the next reporting period to check the availability, feasibility and reliability of data. The Pilot studies are also included in the new Forest Europe Work Programme (2016-2020).

Mr. SCHWARZ concluded his presentation with the outline for the time frame. The deadline for the pilot studies is October 2017, since the work on questionnaires should start after that date. Forest Europe invites the members of the Advisory Group to start possible pilot studies' assignment's as soon as possible, but April 2017 at the latest.

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

- Q:** *Reminder that the indicator on land degradation was intended to opt for information on productivity and now it seems that the current development is more towards definition in the context of biodiversity.*
- A:** *It is still possible to take the aspect of productivity into consideration.*
- C:** *PT/TR indicator on desertification was at the beginning. This is becoming an increasing issue in Southern European countries.*
- Q:** *Who are the experts who have to solve the issues and definitions on soil degradation? – No questions about "what for" but more the "how". Had the political decision been taken without information about feasibility? – These monitoring questions cannot be solved. – Soil questions are never easy and beyond the framework of NFI. Monitoring of eroded soils is not possible.*
- A:** *It depends on the definitions. Serious degraded soils are easy, but some more precise thresholds are quite more difficult.*

Item 5. Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) – review of the past and plans for the current reporting cycle.

Mr. Anssi PEKKARINEN and Örjan JONSSON, FAO Rome gave an overview on the status of the preparations for FRA 2020 and discussed with the team on how to learn from the experiences from the past FRA 2015 to further improve the reporting process.

In the first presentation, Mr. PEKKARINEN presented an overview on the main FRA activities until 2020. The discussion on the scope of the next FRA will be conducted by expert consultations which are planned to be taking place from May to July 2017. The preparation for the consultations comprises an evaluation of FRA 2015, internal meetings with FAO Forestry teams, the preparation of draft note on FRA 2020 scope, an Advisory Group meeting and the preparation of the background material for the Expert Consultation. Particular guidance is sought on how to make the future FRA fit for the reporting on SDGs (15.1.1 Forest Area in proportion of land area, 15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management, 15.4 Mountain Green Cover Index).

In the following, Mr. PEKKARINEN gave an overview on the planned country reporting process. The main dates for the reporting are the development of a database for online reporting in 2017 and the launch of the questionnaire in early 2018. The review of country reports, compilation of desktop studies as well as validation of country reports are expected to be finalized in early 2019 and will allow for the beginning of the analytical work. The reports are expected to be finalized by 2020. FAO is planning to use the information to issue also a few special studies on drylands, mountains, water as well as socio-economic variables (employment, NWFP, woodfuel, etc.).

The FRA data collection and validation process will be accompanied by various capacity building events at global and regional level as well as special capacity building events, as required. FAO will maintain regular contact with national correspondents during the reporting process.

FAO is planning to again conduct some analysis based on remote sensing in addition to the data collection process and the FRA report. It is planned to conduct a pilot global assessment of land cover and land use using the collect earth tool (www.openforis.org/tools/collect-earth.html)

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

Q: Could you provide some more details about the timeline for National Correspondents?

A: *Nominations of national correspondents by end of 2017 – Reporting will start in 2019 and the review process will start a few months later. The reporting year will be 2018. NC's need time to dedicate attention to providing. Evaluation workshop is a very good idea.*

Q: How will the validation workshop look like?

A: *Intention is to provide a possibility to sit down with the reviewers and discuss the reply. Such an event could help to improve interpretation of indicators and could help clarifying how to enter national data under FRA reporting.*

Q: How could ownership and tenure issues be included to be improved?

A: *Up until expert consultation in summer 2017 it is possible to improve issues. Tenure is a quite difficult issue. Direct input is possible from experts to Örjan and Anssi. The idea is to keep it open for as many experts as possible at the moment. Definitions will be clarified in the communication to national correspondents.*

Q: are you considering major changes to FRA in the next round?

A: *FRA has a long term strategy aiming at long term series and thus fundamental changes are not likely. FRA is considering how to reply to SDG, how to include data as they become available. It may be necessary to provide some data on a rolling basis. Sweden made it to the top ten of deforestation according to global forest watch (www.globalforestwatch.org) and Finland was close to it. These issues need more communication to the outside – in general remote sensing is one possibility to be used more in the future.*

C: *Rolling data update – keep it at a five year level.*

C: *Make sure that different projects are included*

Mr. Örjan JONSSON continued the presentation by FAO by giving an update on the FRA 2015 evaluation. The results of the evaluation presented in his presentation were based on the outcome of two online surveys and various meetings.

National Correspondents highly appreciated the support provided by FAO for compiling the data and the data collection tool used for collecting the information. The feedback received highlighted in particular the importance of regional/ sub-regional workshops to guide the compilation of the country reports. The Forest Resources Information Management System (FRIMS) was also rated as very useful in compiling country information. The role of the reviewers is recognized as very important and country correspondents expressed their preference if the feedback on the data submitted could be done by one contact per country.

The survey of the users of the FRA indicated that the report and data are mainly used as source data for research or publication, information for policy development, as teaching materials and for news media reports. Country reports, the synthesis document, the FRA website and maps and figures are the most popular products of the FRA process. The strongest advantages of the report are its global nature of the information, the country reports and the consistency of key variables over time. However, the reliability of some data was questioned.

Users suggested some of the following improvements for future FRA:

- Better quality control and consistency in the FRA data and cross-checks of the government data with other independent databases (many mentioned comparison with Global Forest Watch);
- More focus on few variables;
- Database: improve both the interface and the downloadable files (units, more clear metadata, labels and links to definitions);
- Increased frequency of reporting;
- Improve transparency of country reports;
- more information on: certifications, economic and wood and NWFP products, forest restoration, forest health and degradation;
- Return to calculating regional and sub-regional totals;
- More infographics, animations, maps and information to be shared on a visual way for social networks and general public.

The presentations were followed by the group work arranged to seek advice and suggestions from the ToS on what FAO can and should do to improve the reporting process and dissemination of results. Questions and setup are available in the Annex IV.

Item 6. Field trip (see Annex)



Item 7. Overview of the progress of work and developments related to forest inventory and reporting in the UNECE region:

Mr. KULIEŠIS provided an update on the reporting of increment of forest in the European forest resources assessments. In his introduction, Mr. KULIEŠIS reminded members of the team about the gross increment and its components and how to estimate the gross increment by repeated measurements. He explained that the Forest Resource Assessment only requires countries reporting on forest area and growing stock volume. However, information on Gross Annual Increment, Net Annual Increment, Natural losses and Felling is required for other reporting schemes such as Forest Europe. In the following Mr. KULIEŠIS presented the clear trend in member states to use National Forest Inventories with permanent plots to derive the Gross Annual Increment. In the year 2000 only one third of the forest area in Europe was monitored by national forest inventories with permanent plots. The area doubled since then and the method is now applied to more than two third of the forest area in 2015.

This positive development in using permanent plots in member states has a very positive effect on the number of countries that reported various Gross Annual Increment components with higher accuracy and data on natural losses. Mr. KULIEŠIS continued by presenting some of the dynamics of growing stock according to the State of Europe's Forests 2015.

Data compiled base on this method allowed to estimate of mean gross annual increment and its components (using direct methods) on 52% of the European forests in the SoEF-2015; the

possibility to assess increment and its components from permanent plots is expected to further increase in the next 5-10 years, by another 15-16% of European forests. Countries that do not use permanent plots in their NFI require indirect methods of assessment. Assessing natural losses and fellings of natural losses remains the biggest challenge for determining the GAI.

Mr. KULIEŠIS proposed in his concluding remarks to (i) support the efforts of ENFIN in creating and maintaining a register of NFIs, including general data and current status in all European countries and (ii) in future SoEF reports – to present complete data about forest productivity, efficiency of forest management, natural losses, and wood use of living and dead trees

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

Q: *Register of NFI becomes a reality by FAO? – To be maintained and updated in the future*

A: *Could FAO share this with the ToS for review – UNECE to share this for feedback with the ToS?*

Q: *The German NFI allows for determining thinning but final use of loss cannot be determined. This would require some monitoring.*

A: *Estimations are needed – e.g. in an uneven aged forest no division between final and intermediate cuttings.*

C: *Switzerland knows the amount of losses, but does not have this detailed information on the use of wood leaving the inventors. Increment data are available.*

Q: *Slide 14 on the production of the forest is being decreased in group 2?*

A: *It shows not a decrease but rather stabilization.*

Q: *Table 14 the graphs contains different levels of reliability of data. Productivity is a difficult definition – in particular when it comes to age classes.*

A: *Many reasons for variation. Step by step approach needed to form some common understanding.*

Q: *Natural losses – does it include branches?*

A: *The presentation only covered stem volume.*

Mr. Kari KORHONEN updated the team about the latest developments on two EU-funded projects.

The first project “DIABOLO – Distributed, Integrated And Harmonised Forest Information for bioeconomy outlooks” is funded by the Horizon2020 funding of the European Union. The increasing competition for forest resources will necessitate new forest-related policies across different sectors. These policies demand relevant, harmonised, comprehensive, reliable and up-to-date information. As a response to this challenge, the DIABOLO project brings together 33 partners from scientific institutions in 25 European countries, including experts in the fields of policy analysis, forest inventory and forest modelling, who have live linkages to European, and national policy institutions and stakeholder networks. Mr. KORHONEN informed the team about the upcoming stakeholder workshop on “Policy needs for and provision of forest information for policy making and practice in Europe: state of the art and the way forward” (19-20 September 2016 in Vienna, Austria). The event will offer an opportunity to present and discuss experiences with the use and provision of forest information for forest-relevant policy objectives (sustainable forestry, biodiversity conservation, climate change and bioenergy) at

European, EU, (sub-) national levels. Scientists could also present and discuss new research findings from European wide, cross-country analysis of policy needs for and provision of forest information in Europe, and explore actions for bridging possible gaps between policy needs and data provision, and to discuss ways and means for improving forest information exchange in Europe.

The second project presented was the COST Action FP1207 *"ORCHESTRA - Orchestrating forest-related policy analysis in Europe"*. Mr. KORHONEN provided a short overview on SFM-related highlights from the final conference (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, September 5-6 2016). Ms. Professor Tuula PACKALEN was the chair of the project and could provide more information (tuula.packalen@luke.fi).

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

Q: *Who can attend the DIABOLO meetings? - Data providers? All?*

A: *The meetings are kept as small as possible with key actors.*

Item 8. Strategic Review of the IPoW – the ToR and activities of the Team

Mr. STEIERER presented a short overview on the ECE internal evaluation of the relevance of the current Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) as well as the Strategic Review of the IPoW of the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section for the period 2018-2021.

The ECE assessment of the relevance of the IPoW found that the work of COFFI/EFC, the Joint Working Party and the Teams of Specialists (ToS) is indeed relevant to the region's efforts in tackling challenges. Mr. STEIERER underlined that the report found that the ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management stood out as particularly helpful in tackling national challenges. Given that the new SDG targets will require substantial monitoring efforts, the evaluation report suggests searching for synergies between monitoring efforts by various international organizations for different purposes. Harmonizing indicators, where possible, can help avoid duplication and burdens of excessive monitoring.

The internal assessment found that the current challenges at the regional level will remain unchanged during the period 2018-2021. In addition the report identified the following upcoming challenges and needs:

- climate change and forest disturbances;
- forest resources and biomass;
- green economy and sustainability;
- products and other needs and challenges.

While top priorities may shift along with external factors and market forces, it is difficult to identify areas of the current IPoW that are likely to decrease in importance in the next years. The main recommendations from the report were:

- Maintain focus on value chain from forests to forest products/timber and markets
- Continue using meetings for knowledge brokering and experience exchange
- Use joint meetings to convene with stakeholders from the entire northern forest belt
- Foster sectoral themes that do not receive sufficient attention in other for a
- Use the Rovaniemi Action Plan as basis for institutional development in Eastern

Europe and Central Asia

- Coordinate actions with work for other international agreements
- Reflect on private sector integration into the work of ECE/FAO

The full text of the evaluation and the management response will be available on the “Open UNECE” webpages at: www.unece.org/info/open-unece/evaluation , under Forestry and Timber.

Mr. STEIERER continued with the presentation on the Strategic Review of the IPoW and explained that the review consists of two phases. The first phase will be the Review of the Integrated Program of Work 2014-2017 IPoW which will be followed by a second phase with the preparation of the IPoW 2018 – 2021.

Mr. STEIERER explained that the first phase was almost concluded and comprised a discussion on the Strategic Review roadmap, review of a draft questionnaire for the IPoW stakeholders’ survey at the joint COFFI and EFC Bureaux meeting and sharing the information on the Strategic Review of IPoW at the joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (all in March 2016). After the initial steps, the questionnaire was shared with stakeholders in May and returned to the secretariat by the mid June. The secretariat prepared its assessment of work and outputs between July and September 2016 and will present results of the Strategic Review of the IPoW 2014-2017, and plan for the preparatory process of IPoW 2018-2021.

The second phase will comprise the compilation of a first draft discussed at the joint Bureaux meeting and stakeholders’ workshop in November 2016. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section will use the outcomes of these consultations for amending the first draft and issue a second draft for further consultations with the joint Bureaux meeting and member States in January 2017. This draft will be tabled for further discussion at the Joint Working Party and joint Bureaux meeting before submitting the final draft for discussion and approval to the joint session of COFFI and EFC in October 2017.

Item 9. Other activities by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section related to sustainable forest management, including update on SEMAFOR (Secretariat).

Mr. STEIERER informed the team about the developments on the study on the System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests (SEMAFOR) since the last meeting in Engelberg. The Secretariat amended the study based on the comments received by the team members and avoided the wording: “area of concern” by replacing it with “agreed international thresholds”. The secretariat further included three more countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia). In the end 20 countries contributed to the study. The study will have about 160 pages of which 51 pages analytical part in the core text. The Annexes represent the remaining part and include detailed information about the communication with national correspondents. The study will be finalized in the coming months and will be printed and distributed in early 2017. The SEMAFOR study and the general approach will be discussed during the next joint COFFI/EFC meeting in 2017.

The presentation was followed by questions (Q) and answers (A), including comments (C):

C: *Experts from Finland, Norway, Poland and Switzerland expressed their availability to work more in detail on the thresholds under the condition that COFFI 2017 decides/approves to continue that type of analytical work.*

C: *In case of a positive decision by the Committee, thresholds could be a high priority in next meetings.*

C: *SEMAFOR fits very well to national activities in Switzerland (direction, changes, etc.)*

C: *More in depth discussion of the meaning of the thresholds.*

Q: *Was SEMAFOR open only for Forest Europe member countries? If yes this would be very Europe centric and could it be possible to extend the geographical scope of the analysis?*

A: *It is a pilot and for the ease of it only used forest Europe dataset.*

Item 10. Exchange of information on future meetings and activities; other matters.

The team discussed that the next meeting should ideally be tied to the schedule of Forest Europe and FRA. Norway kindly offered to host the next meeting of the team and asked for guidance regarding the dates. FAO stated that background document for the expert consultation is due to be finalized in May and suggested to hold the next meeting in late April 2017. FOREST EUROPE commented that spring of 2017 would be a good date to discuss definitions, data available and provide comments, so that this could be finalized in 2017. End of May would be the preferred date.

Before closing the meeting, the team discussed how to increase the attendance of team meetings, in particular how to attract representatives from Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The team discussed the role of an attractive agenda or by choosing a convenient destination. The secretariat offered to contact representatives from these main countries to find out how to attract their participation. The secretariat also enquired among the team about its opinion to offer future meetings with webcast in order to attract higher participation. The team concluded that there are advantages and disadvantages – e.g. the use of microphone all the time which may have an impact on representative's willingness to speak up in discussions. However, this could be considered for some parts of team meetings in the future.

Item 11. Closure of the meeting.

ANNEX I:

Fourth (24th) meeting of the “UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on monitoring sustainable forest management”

Zagreb, Croatia 14-16 September 2016

Provisional Agenda

Wednesday, 14 September 2016

- Item 1. Opening and welcome by Mr. Ivan ISTOK (member of the board of the Croatian State Forest enterprise Hrvatske šume d.o.o.), Mr. Danko DIMINIC (vice dean of the University Zagreb, Faculty of Forestry), Mr. Ivica FRANČETIĆ (Assistant Minister, Croatian Ministry of Agriculture), Mr. Anssi PEKKARINEN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and Mr. Florian STEIERER (UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section). Adoption of the Agenda.
- Item 2. Short presentation on Croatian forestry.
- Item 3. Presentation, review and the next steps of the study on forest ownership in the UNECE region (Mr. Gerhard WEISS).
- Item 4. Presentation of results and preliminary review on the process and results of the regional reporting (Mr. Rastislav RAŠI and Mr. Martin MORAVČÍK – FOREST EUROPE):
 - a. Information and discussion on FOREST EUROPE’s Work Programme actions and activities related to:
 - i. Next report on State of Europe’s Forests (tentative road map for its preparation);
 - ii. Pan-European indicators for SFM in relation to State of Europe’s Forests (pilot studies on the new pan-European indicators, definitions of substantially altered indicators, reporting on national and pan-European achievements on Goals and 2020 Targets for European forests).
 - b. Review of the recent edition of report on the State of Europe’s Forests 2015 – results of the survey.
 - c. Preparation the data collection for the next edition of report on the State of Europe’s Forests 2020 - joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO reporting on the pan-European indicators.
- Item 5. Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) – review of the past and plans for the current reporting cycle. (Mr. Anssi PEKKARINEN and Örjan JONSSON, FAO Rome).
 - d. Presentation on the status of the preparations for FRA 2020 (20 min + questions).
 - e. Working group seeking inputs/comments on topics related to the FRA 2015 reporting and improvements for the FRA 2020 (1-1.5 hours).
 - f. Groups reporting back summarizing main conclusions and recommendations (40 min + questions and discussion).

Thursday, 15 September 2016

Item 6. Field trip (see Annex)

Friday, 16 September 2016

Item 7. Overview of the progress of work and developments related to forest inventory and reporting in the UNECE region:

- g. "Update on the reporting of increment for European forest resources assessments" (Mr. Andrius KULIEŠIS);
- h. Horizon 2020 project DIABOLO - Distributed, Integrated And Harmonised Forest Information For Bioeconomy Outlooks, 33 partners (incl. ENFIN partners) from 25 European countries (Mr. Kari KORHONEN);
- i. COST Action FP1207 ORCHESTRA - Orchestrating forest-related policy analysis in Europe SFM-related highlights from the final conference in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium on September 5-6, 2016 (Mr. Kari KORHONEN).

Item 8. Strategic Review of the IPoW – the ToR and activities of the Team (Secretariat).

Item 9. Other activities by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section related to sustainable forest management, including update on SEMAFOR (Secretariat).

Item 10. Exchange of information on future meetings and activities; other matters.

Item 11. Closure of the meeting.

Venue:	Conference room "Ban Jelačić", <i>Hotel Dubrovnik, Zagreb, Croatia</i> (http://hotel-dubrovnik.hr).		
Currency:	1 EUR = approx. 7.5 Kuna (Kn)		
Logistics:	<i>Option 1: Bus shuttle + tram</i> The Pleso prijevoz company provides direct line (bus shuttle) from the Airport to the central bus station and back. Shuttle terminal is located in front of the main airport building. One-way ticket costs 30 Kn, and the journey lasts around half hour (see: www.plesoprijevoz.hr/page/home). From the Central bus station, take the tram no. 6 in the direction of Črnomerec. The ride to Ban Jelačić Square is approximately ten minutes. The ticket costs 10 Kn and can be bought at a kiosk or from the tram driver. You must stamp the ticket in a yellow box as soon as you board. <i>Option 2: Taxi</i> Taxi from the Airport to the city centre costs around 150 Kn or you can order Uber ride for 90 Kn.		
Meeting hours:	Wednesday, 14 September 2016	10.00 – 13.00:	Items 1- 4
		14.00 – 17.00:	Item 5
	Thursday, 15 September 2016	07:00 – 19:00:	Item 6 (field trip)
	Friday, 16 September 2016	10.00 – 13.00:	Item 7-11
			<i>Each session with a 30' coffee break</i>
Dinner:	The Croatian Ministry of Agriculture will host the dinner on Wednesday, 14 September 2016 at 7 p.m. at the conference venue.		

Draft itinerary and timetable for the field trip to the Plitvice national park ([UNESCO World Heritage Site](#)) – Details will be presented by the local organizers upon arrival.

- 7:00 a.m. Departure (meeting place in front of hotel Dubrovnik, short walk to the bus)
- 9:30 a.m. Arrival at [Plitvice national park](#)
- Guided visit to the national park
- 1:00 p.m. Departure Plitvice national park
- 2:00 p.m. Forestry in Croatia - [Croatian forests Ltd.](#) will guide us through forest stands in Petrova gora - short discussion about local forest management.
- 3:00 p.m. [Croatian forests Ltd.](#) will host a late lunch in hunting lodge "Muljava" (<http://portal.hrsume.hr/index.php/en/tourism/ourlodges/muljava>).
- 5:00 p.m. Departure Muljava
- 7:00 p.m. Arrival in Zagreb
-

“Good to know” for the field trip:

- Eat & Drink:** Breakfast in the hotel will be served as of 6.30 a.m. leaving just enough time for breakfast before leaving for the field trip.
We will have late lunch during the field trip, the organizers will provide sandwiched on the bus (ham and cheese or vegetarian) plus a small bottle of water 0.5 l for each participant.
- Walk:** It is planned to walk in the Plitvice lake national park and appropriate shoes for forest roads are highly recommended. The route of the visit will depend on the weather conditions.
- Weather:** The weather forecast is currently very good but may change. Please check the forecast and adjust your wear accordingly.

ANNEX II:

List of participants



Twenty-fourth meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on monitoring sustainable forest management

Start Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2016

End Date: Friday, September 16, 2016

Participants: 24

Last Name	First Name	Title	Organization	Country Represented	Phone	Email
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ANNEX III:

Draft outline of the study on forest ownership in the UNECE region

Part 0: UNECE Forests – Introduction

- Background on research effort – Forest ownership in the context of UNECE/FAO forest related studies and general motivations for UNECE/FAO to work in this field.
- UNECE/FAO/COST Action FACESMAP cooperation
- Refer to previous study
- State of forests in the UNECE region
- What are the knowledge gaps in forest ownership?
- Why is it necessary to know more about forest ownership?

Part 1: Forest Ownership pattern in the UNECE region

Part 1.1.: Definitions

Part 1.2.: Representation of forest ownership and tenure in the world and the UNECE region

Part 1.2.1 Global forest ownership tenure pattern

Part 1.2.2 Forest ownership in the UNECE region

Part 1.3.: Changes in forest ownership and tenure

Part 2: Organization of public and private forest ownership and tenure

Part 2.1.: Forest legislation/administration/ governance and forest ownership

Part 2.2.: Organization of public forest ownership

Part 2.2.1: Providing support in representation of interests

Part 2.2.2: Organizing and providing support for forest management

Part 2.3: Organization of private ownership

Part 2.3.1: Providing support in representation of interests

Part 2.3.2: Organizing and providing support for forest management

Part 3: Applied forest management

Part 3.1: Provision of forest ecosystem goods and services and forest ownership

- Which ecosystem goods and services (provide definitions) do forests provide to society?
- How does production (growing stock, net annual increment, annual fellings and wood removals) as well as productivity change regarding the forest ownership type?
- Does the size class of private properties influence production of certain goods and productivity?
- Do certain ownership types focus on the production of NWFP or FES and if yes, is there any explanation for such a trend (e.g. smaller size of properties, ideology and subsidies)?
- What are the revenues form forests in regard to forest ownership type?

Part 3.2: Applying forest management systems by forest ownership

- What are the different forest management systems and what is SFM in particular?
- Do forest ownership types have a typical way on how to manage forests?
- Do certain forest ownership types apply and/or foster certain forest management systems?
- How is Sustainable Forest Management understood and practiced?
- Are forest management systems supported/fostered by external sources?
- How intensive are forests managed by different forest ownership types?

Part 4: Public and private forest owners and managers

Meta-Analysis

Part 4 is supposed to be decoupled from the previous parts of the study.

Here we intend to show the "human" side of forests and give forest owners a face.

ANNEX IV:

Group work seeking inputs/comments on topics related to the FRA 2015 reporting and improvements for the FRA 2020

Objective

The main objective of the group work is to seek advice and suggestions from the ToS on what FAO can and should do to improve the reporting process and dissemination of results.

Organization

The ToS will be divided in 2-3 working groups, depending on the number of participants. Each working group should select a chairperson/facilitator and a note taker responsible for summarizing the main discussions and reporting them back to plenary. Time allocated for this exercise is 1.5 hours.

Questions to be addressed by the working groups

1)

- What is your view on the scope of FRA 2015 and its main publications?
- The Synthesis Assessment –How are the world's forests changing?
- The FRA 2015 Desk reference
- Special issue of Forest Ecology and Management
- Infographics
- Does the group have ideas and suggestions for future improvements on both paper publications and web presence?

2) What is your view on having more frequent reporting on core variables (e.g. annual reporting)?

Which variables should, in your view be considered as core variables?

3) FAO would like to send out a very short questionnaire (survey monkey) to all FRA National Correspondents with the aim to establish a global database on the status of and planned activities for National forest monitoring and assessment in different countries. We would like to have your thoughts on this and suggestions on how the questionnaire could be improved.

4) Many countries face challenges in reporting in a consistent way on some of the FRA variables (Annex 2 contains definitions). Sometimes countries make quite different interpretations of the definitions leading to significant differences between countries in particular for the following variables: Can definitions be "sharpened" to give less room for interpretation?

- "Primary forest": some countries apply a very strict interpretation of the definition whereas others are more forgiving (tolerant or flexible?). A suggestion has been made that FAO should review the reporting on primary forest with the aim of reducing the difficulty of reporting and increasing the consistency of the reported data. Do you have any suggestions on how this can be achieved?
- "Permanent Forest Estate" and "Forest area under Permanent Forest Land Use": countries very often have quite different ideas of what should be included. Is it possible/does it make sense to report on these variables?
- "Forest area designated for production" and "Forest area designated for multiple use": again countries interpret these reporting on these two variables differently common is either assigning as production or multiple use.

- 5) In the next assessment how can FAO improve the use of remote sensing for global and regional status and trend estimates?
- 6) What were the pros and cons with reporting through the new on-line Forest Resources Information Management System (FRIMS)?
Should FAO continue with the on-line reporting and if so, how can it be improved?
- 7) Any other suggestion for improvement?