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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
Timber Committee

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
European Forestry Commission

**JOINT FAO/ECE WORKING PARTY ON FOREST ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS**  
Twenty-sixth session

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

**Guidance of work area 2: Forest Resources Assessment**  
*Organization and Direction of Regional Forest Resources Assessment Work*

The present document contains the overview of the activities in Work Area 2, and highlights issues to be addressed at the current Working Party session.

The topics for the Working Party discussion include:

- contents of the regional UNECE/FAO FRA-related work in the global context;
- global FRA update 2005: preparation, implementation and expected outcome;
- scope and modalities of the regional contribution to the global FRA update 2005;
- questions of the future regional FRA governance, organization and direction.

The Joint Working Party is invited to provide guidance for current and future activities in Work Area 2.

## Introduction

1. The Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) work at the regional level has been carried out in accordance with the planning approved by the Working Party. The Working Party in 2003 recommended to review and to adjust the regional UNECE/FAO work on Forest Resources Assessment in the light of the global FRA approaches aiming to include “information on all aspects of forest resources”. In this context, during the reported year the FRA work was mainly focused on preparing the global FRA update 2005.
2. The global FRA 2005 scope, coverage and methods, as they were endorsed by the COFO session (March 2003), were taken into full consideration at the regional level. The regional FRA Team of Specialists provided practical recommendations to preliminary FRA 2005 documents (guidelines), which were elaborated by the global FRA team in Rome. The regional FRA work was reported to the UNECE Timber Committee (October 2003).
3. The current regional FRA-related work is being defined by the modalities and practice of the global FRA 2005 implementation. The structure and governance of the global forest resources assessment strongly influence the scope and organisation of the regional UNECE/FAO forest resources assessment work, also in the future.
4. The Working Party recommendation concerning “the necessity of maintaining a strong regional activity in forest resource assessment to satisfy specific regional needs and to complement the emerging global FRA” provides a good basis for defining directions, scope and organisation of the regional FRA-related work in the process of the on-going Strategic Review of the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work.

## Regional-Global FRA Work: Developments in 2003-2004

### *Advisory Group to the global FRA, March and November 2003 meetings*

5. The Committee on Forests (COFO, Rome, 10-14 March 2003) underlined that FAO should “continue to give high priority to forest resources assessments”. The necessity of “improving compatibility between national, regional and international assessments” was emphasised in the COFO final report, which also encouraged FAO to “continue collaborating with other organisations” to streamline reporting and build synergies. The COFO session appreciated the “... value of continued close collaboration among FAO, UNECE and UNEP as core partners supporting the Global Forest Resources Assessment”.
6. The global FRA advisory group (AG) meeting was held in March 2003 in conjunction with the COFO session. The advisory group took into full account the COFO directions and recommendations. The meeting emphasised that the global FRA-2005 should be an “update” to FRA-2000. This means that a more comprehensive global report would be scheduled around year 2010.
7. The advisory group discussed and made suggestions for improvements in the list of global FRA reporting components, like e.g. land use (status and change), ownership, forest designation (including protection status), forest characteristics (including management intensity), forest condition and impacts (fire, pests, damages, etc), resource stocks (growing stock, biomass, carbon stock), biodiversity values, wood and NWFP supply, value of production, employment and some others.
8. The advisory group expressed concern about nomination of national correspondents. As of February 2004, 150 correspondents have been nominated, but some countries have not yet nominated national correspondents, including a few in the ECE region.
9. The necessity of maximum possible transparency of the global FRA process, as well as the modalities of maximising synergies between the regional and global levels were addressed by the next advisory group meeting, held in Rome immediately after the training session of the global FRA 2005 national correspondents (November 2003). The later meeting contributed to the revision of technical recommendations from the November training, and made proposals for further finalising the FRA 2005 documentation.

**10. The Working Party is invited:**

- *to take note of the COFO support and governance of the global FRA work, organisational aspects of the preparation for the global FRA update 2005, and the regional UNECE/FAO contribution to the process;*
- *to take note of the procedures of the preparation for the global FRA update 2005.*

*Informal survey on the UNECE / FAO regional FRA work*

11. In July-September 2003 the Timber Branch secretariat run a concise and informal enquiry in order to get advice, which would help to define modalities of the future UNECE/FAO regional Forest Resources Assessment work. The suggestions and proposals from respondents should also help in the co-ordination of the regional FRA-related work with the FAO Global FRA Programme (the enquiry will be available for references at the Working Party session). The results were also presented to the meeting of the regional FRA Team of Specialists (Dresden, Germany, September 2003).

12. The main objective of the survey was to invite the opinion of the ToS members and all participants of the ToS meeting in Dresden. Ultimately, the analysis of the questionnaire results might serve to the objectives of the Strategic Review of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Work Programme.

13. The following key questions, among others, were addressed in this exercise:

- *What should be the main regional FRA outputs over the next 5-10 years? When they should be produced? What should be their scope?*
- *How should data be collected, validated and maintained as to provide the regional outputs and inputs to global FRA activities in the most streamlined and efficient way?*
- *What specific FRA work (activities) should be carried out at the UNECE regional level before a comprehensive Regional FRA 2010 is implemented?*
- *Should the Regional UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists (ToS) on Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) continue working after its current official Mandate is expire in 2004?*

14. The synthesis of replies to the above and other questions reflected different points of views on the matter. Although the positions of respondents were sometime “mutually-exclusive”, they showed clearly that the regional FRA work must be fully coordinated with global FRA in all respects (timing, parameters, methods, definitions etc.) and the regional FRA work should contribute to the success of the global assessment. At the same time respondents also expressed the view that the FRA work must also serve the specific needs of the UNECE region, and be well adapted to its strengths and weaknesses. In practice, some trade-off between these two objectives was considered un-avoidable because of the multiple complexities, which need to be resolved.

15. The results of the survey provided a basis for discussions at the meeting of the ToS and for the current planning of the regional FRA work. The findings helped to define the scope of future regional FRA-related activities in general. They might also contribute to formulate a new (up-dated) mandate and terms of reference of the regional FRA team (if any). In general, the results of this brief and informal survey have confirmed that the significant expansion and improvement in quality and scope of the both regional and global FRA work over the last five years (or so) raises new questions about how the work should be coordinated.

**16. *The Working Party is invited:***

- ***to take into account the outcome of the above internal survey when elaborating recommendations for the organisation and direction of the regional UNECE/FAO work on forest resources assessment, and on the future of the FRA Team of Specialists.***

*UNECE/FAO FRA Team of Specialists, September 2003*

17. The meeting of the regional UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on the Forest Resources Assessment, held in Radebeul (near Dresden, Germany) from 18 to 20 September 2003, focused on practical aspects of the regional FRA work in the light of the preparation for the global FRA update 2005. The report of the meeting is available for reference at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/welcome.htm>.

18. The Team of Specialists paid special attention to the draft documents prepared by FAO for the global FRA update 2005. The set of FRA 2005 national and global reporting tables, specifications and suggested FRA 2005 terms and definitions, raised a lot of questions (and in certain aspects doubts) from the participants of the ToS meeting, especially from some of the eight participants who were FRA National Correspondents.

19. The team noted the necessity of a thorough, wide and transparent discussion of the suggested global FRA 2005 contents and format, and expressed its concern that the remaining time before the launch of the global FRA 2005 round may not be sufficient for some countries in the region to absorb the proposed FRA 2005 methodology, and especially it would not be enough time for countries to accommodate a modified set of reporting variables.

20. The team, in working groups made a detailed technical analysis of the proposed classification schemes, variables, data items, reporting format (units, years, structure), specifications and the suggested terms and definitions. The analyses were done on the basis of technical comparison of proposals for the global FRA-2005, FRA 2000 and the MCPFE criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

21. The ToS came up with a number of practical recommendations for improvements in the global FRA update 2005 draft documentation. The team also expressed its opinion that the regional FRA-related work had to go beyond the contribution to the global FRA 2005, i.e. noted a strong need for specific regional FRA activities. This work has to be done in addition to the global Forest Resource Assessment 2005, and in co-operation with the MCPFE and Montreal processes, EU, EUROSTAT, ENFIN (a new initiative on European National Forest Inventory Network), other current and potential partners in the region, which need comprehensive and reliable FRA data and structures.

22. The participants noted the desirability of a closer involvement of the "Montreal process" countries in the UNECE/FAO regional FRA work. The current ToS activities in this particular area should be intensified, focusing on its contribution to the co-ordination of reporting on C&I for SFM within MCPFE and Montreal processes. Such coordination will be the key issue on the agenda of the next ToS meeting.

**23. *The Working Party is invited:***

- ***to endorse the Team of Specialists work and its contribution to the process of the preparation for global FRA update 2005, including its constructive proposals for improvement of the draft FRA 2005 documentation;***
- ***to support the ToS proposals to focus more on the C&I reporting aspects, including the co-ordination of this work between MCPFE and Montreal process countries;***
- ***to consider the work of the team and to provide guidance for its future activities in the global FRA context; to endorse the new (updated) Terms of Reference and Mandate of the regional UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists (Annex I).***

*Timber Committee guidance to the regional FRA work, October 2003*

24. The Timber Committee at its October 2003 session was informed of the activities and accomplishments under this work area, including the findings of the regional Team of Specialists in the context of the preparation for the global FRA 2005. It took note that the modifications which were introduced in the draft FRA 2005 documentation (in comparison with FRA 2000), had been done in order to contribute to an overall streamlining of forest-related reporting and to improve the relevance of the results.

25. A number of countries expressed their concern about the initially suggested scope and timetable of the global update, as well as the suggested modifications to the FRA 2000 variables. They considered that the approach so far might create an excessive burden to countries for reporting on global FRA, and might generate discrepancies between the global and regional FRA activities, including the reporting on MCPFE criteria and indicators.

26. The participants expressed their hope that “scope, contents and background guidelines, including terms and definitions, in the final version of the global FRA 2005 documents would take account of the realities on the ground and countries’ FRA reporting capacities, and retain comparability with the FRA 2000”. The Committee was informed that the global FRA 2005 terms and definitions were prepared only as a draft, and the final version would take account of comments received.

**27. *The Working Party is invited:***

- ***to take note of the Timber Committee’s comments and guidance concerning the preparation and implementation of the global FRA update 2005.***

**Future Regional FRA-related work: 2004-2008**

*Global-regional co-operation for implementation of FRA 2005*

28. The main focus in the forthcoming 1-2 years will be on the implementation of the global FRA update 2005. The scope of this update have been defined through a consultative process during 2002 and 2003 (see above), outlined more precisely in the process of the global meeting of FRA National Correspondents (17-21 November 2003), and benefited from the contribution of members of the FRA advisory group.

29. The FRA 2005 will be based mainly on voluntary provided country data/ information in response to 15 global / national reporting tables, accompanied by a thematic section, following the common themes of Criteria and Indicator (C&I) processes. At the moment of writing this paper, the guidelines and format of country reports were being finalized by the FAO global FRA team. The request to countries to submit reports should be sent in February 2004, with a tentative deadline for submission of final reviewed country reports by the end-2004. The global FRA 2005 documentation is available for references at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra2005>.

30. An informal agreement on the “Cooperation between UNECE/FAO and FORM on coordination of reporting to FRA 2005 by European countries” has been reached between UNECE/FAO Timber Branch and FAO Forestry Department. The agreement outlines the main work to be done by the Timber Branch to provide regional contribution, and to facilitate the global FRA 2005 implementation.

31. According to this agreement, the Geneva secretariat will coordinate and support European countries in the compilation of their national reports to global FRA 2005. This coordination will include direct communication with countries (e.g. responding to queries), organisation of possible meetings, reviewing and commenting country reports. For this purpose “European region” is defined as the region “Europe” as reported in the global FRA 2000 (40 countries), plus CIS countries listed under Asia (8 countries).

32. The practical and specific components of this work include (a) maintaining close contact with FRA National Correspondents (NCs) from the European region (for those countries where it has been possible to identify an NC) (b) ensuring that the NCs are provided with information and updates on the FRA 2005 process; (c) providing responses to enquiries from NCs related to the country reporting; (d) contributing to the organization of sub-regional meetings/workshops as requested by NCs to support the reporting process (provided that sufficient funds are made available); (e) receiving and reviewing draft country reports, and requesting (if necessary) additional clarifications from the country, etc

33. The Timber Branch should transmit final country reports to the FAO FRA secretariat for further processing (storage in database, publication, and incorporation into global report) by the end-2004. The regional contribution to FRA 2005 will be done in close co-operation with the FAO FRA secretariat on all aspects related to the country reporting and country information management, especially when any additional resource would be needed to achieve the above objectives. This FRA 2005 task will be the main focus of the Work Area 2 during the forthcoming Working Party reporting period.

**34. *The Working Party is invited:***

- *to discuss and provide guidance on the format and modalities of the regional contribution to the Global FRA, taking into account the scope, timetable and approaches in the global FRA 2005.*

*Implication of the training session of global FRA 2005 national correspondents (Rome, November 2003)*

35. The main objective of the meeting/training of FRA national correspondents (Rome, 17-21 November 2003) was to facilitate the countries' reporting in the framework of the global FRA update 2005. The meeting aimed to explain and clarify the most difficult points within the FRA 2005 scope, and to train national correspondents for the preparation of national reports.

36. Among the key technical suggestions and proposals, which were elaborated by national correspondents during the meeting are the following:

- to keep consistent FRA data time series; consider this in case if any reformulations in definitions are needed; to check logical relationships between definitions;
- to keep the FRA 2000 definition of "Forest" and "Other Wooded Land" unchanged;
- to base the "Plantation" definition consistent with the previously adopted;
- to reconsider the reporting format on "Other Land with Tree Cover" (if any);
- to consider use of the notion "Management objectives", instead of "Designation";
- to merge the class "Modified Natural Forest" with "Semi-natural"; provide more explanation on this variable (and distinction with/among neighbouring variables);
- to harmonize the reporting on "Growing Stock", "Biomass" and "Carbon" with the Kyoto protocol requirements, and IPCC process in general (to the extent possible);
- information on "Soil Carbon" would be difficult to provide as it might only be available at local and sub-national levels;
- to report data from actual reference years in national sources instead of forecasting;
- clear indication in the report was needed when interpolation, estimation and forecasting would be done, etc.

37. These and other proposals from the NCs' meeting should be taken into full consideration.

38. The participants strongly emphasized the need for further support to NCs to understand and implement the methods of FRA 2005 reporting. The absence of FRA national correspondents from some CIS countries and Balkan states at this important meeting, as well as non-availability of the global FRA 2005 documentation in Russian, might cause a difficulty to get reliable FRA data from the corresponding sub-regions. The final version of the FRA 2005 guidelines is expected to be available in February 2004.

39. *The Working Party is invited:*

- *to discuss and comment on the concept, contents and methodology of the global FRA update 2005, and provide recommendations on its implementation;*
- *to endorse the regional UNECE/FAO contribution to the global FRA 2005 preparation;*
- *to take note of the outcome and recommendations of the training session of the global FRA national correspondents, and its contribution to the final set of FRA 2005 documentation;*
- *to urge those countries, which have not yet nominated (or confirmed) their FRA national correspondents to do so as soon as possible.*

*Organization and Direction of Future Regional FRA-related Work*

40. In a longer perspective, the regional FRA-related work could focus, in addition to the contribution to the global FRA programme, on providing the background information for political discussions and decision-making within the MCPFE and Montreal processes, and other regional fora.

41. There is no immediate demand for a regional FRA 2005, but the preparatory work for a comprehensive regional FRA reporting to the next Ministerial Conference to be held in Warsaw in 3-4 years should start soon after the global FRA 2005 is launched, in cooperation with the Warsaw Liaison Unit and other partners.

42. The secretariat, following the Working Party recommendation, has launched an "analysis of the scope, coverage and methodological approaches for the regional UNECE/FAO work on Forest Resources Assessment in the global FRA context". This work is expected to be done by the consultant in 2004, and will be followed by the discussion of preliminary findings, firstly at the next ToS meeting (USA, September 2004), and more widely after that meeting.

43. *The Working Party is invited to review and comment on the activities, which are being implemented under Work Area 2, and on the future of regional FRA-related work. In particular the Working Party may wish to address the following issues:*

- *What should be the strategic objectives of Work Area 2 for the next 4 years, and are resources adequate to achieve those objectives?*
- *What are the specific needs for regional UNECE/FAO FRA work in the context of the current global FRA methods and coverage?*
- *What would be the specific importance of the regional FRA work and what "value-added" is expected additionally to the global FRA?*
- *What resources are needed for the FRA work in the Timber Branch on a permanent basis, and during the intensive phase of the implementation cycle?*

- *How can the global and regional FRA processes be further managed and co-ordinated to achieve an optimum balance between global and regional objectives and capacities?*
- *What support and technical guidance from the global FRA are expected for the regional FRA work?*
- *Is it necessary to continue the work of the regional FRA Team of Specialists after its Mandate has expired?*
- *What should be the main focus, and the future Terms and References of the regional FRA ToS (if any)?*

*44. The Working Party is invited to provide recommendations concerning the future of the Work Area 2 of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme, including its planning for the period 2004-2008. This planning and recommendations will contribute to the Strategic Review of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work (Annex II).*

**Annex I**  
**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE & MANDATE**  
**OF THE REGIONAL UNECE/FAO FRA TEAM OF SPECIALISTS**  
*Reference to Programme Work Area 2.*

<b>UNECE/FAO TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>A. TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	
<b>ESTABLISHED BY:</b>	The Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, 19 <sup>th</sup> session, 1993.
<b>References:</b>	TIM/EFC/WP.2/23 , Programme element 2.7
<b>MANDATE:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to advise the UNECE/FAO and FAO secretariats on the implementation of activities in Work Area 2 “<i>Forest Resources Assessment</i>” of the Integrated Programme of Work;</li> <li>▪ to advise on the concept, classifications, definitions and methods of the regional forest resources assessment in the global context, taking into account developments on indicators of sustainable forest management, UNFF, other relevant international processes;</li> <li>▪ to contribute to the coordination of reporting on C&amp;I for SFM by MCPFE and Montreal process countries;</li> <li>▪ to contribute to the institutional cooperation on monitoring of forest (EU, MCPFE, ENFIN, <i>et al</i>);</li> <li>▪ to advise on updating key parameters between the main forest resource assessment 10-year cycles.</li> </ul>
<b>DURATION:</b>	To 2008
<b>MOST RECENT REVIEW:</b>	Joint Working Party, 26th session, March 2004, TIM/EFC/WP.2/2004/8.
<b>REPORTING:</b>	Joint Working Party
<b>EXPECTED OUTPUT IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS:</b> - Contribution to the preparation and implementation of the global FRA-2005 update, contribution to the MCPFE process, contribution to MCPFE and Montreal process co-ordination efforts	
<b>B. INFORMATION SHEET (as of 25 January 2004)</b>	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Past:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Kotka” meetings in 1996 and 2002; meetings of the team, March 1995, April 1996, March 1997 (Switzerland), March 1998 (Italy) March 1999 (Geneva), May 2000 (Finland), June 2001 Victoria B.C. (Canada), May 2002 (Poland), September 2003 (Dresden);</li> <li>▪ Meetings of national TBFRA correspondents for CITs in Gmunden (Austria) 1997 and Geneva 1997; Contribution to Main TBFRA-2000 and Global FRA 2000 Reports;</li> <li>▪ Publication of the Main TBFRA-2000 report, and the TBFRA database (CD-Rom and Internet)</li> <li>▪ Contribution to the MCPFE-2003 reporting: Lisbon 1998, Vienna 2003</li> <li>▪ Publication of the regional FRA-2000 accompanying papers;</li> <li>▪ Contribution to the global FRA 2005 preparation.</li> </ul>

<b>B. INFORMATION SHEET</b> (as of 25 January 2004)	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Ongoing:</b>	Preparation for providing the regional contribution to the global FRA 2005 implementation; Consolidation of experience and lessons learnt from FRA-2000 process; Analysis of the scope, coverage and methodological approaches for the regional UNECE/FAO work on Forest Resources Assessment in the global FRA context
<b>Future:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ participation, as requested, in the implementation of the next round of the global Forest Resources Assessment;</li> <li>▪ support and contribution to the MCPFE and Montreal processes on indicators for sustainable forest management, consideration of how to update key parameters between the main FRA 10-year cycles;</li> <li>▪ consideration of communication of forest resource assessment results to a wider circle of users.</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b>	TIM/EFC/WP.2/2002/6; TIM/EFC/WP.2/2003/8
<b>TEAM LEADER:</b>	Professor Michael Köhl (Germany)
<b>CURRENT PARTICIPANTS:</b>	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw, European Commission, European Forest Institute.

**Annex II**  
**Work Area 2: Planning for 2004 – 2008**

Programme element	Description	Outputs	Duration
<b>Work area 2: FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING</b>			
2.1 Collection, updating and validation of data on forest resources; FRA methodological development, including work on the terms and definitions	Collection of forest resources data of the industrialised countries, mostly through national correspondents. Harmonisation of the relevant terms and definitions, and the development of methods and approaches. Checking, validation, storage, processing and dissemination of data.	Data stored in database, made available on Internet (ECE & FAO web-sites), information supplied on request to parent bodies and major clients; publications on specific FRA-related aspects.	Continuing
2.2 Main regional reports: strategic planning within the Global FRA Programme	Implementation of a comprehensive assessment of the forest resources of the region, and publication of the results, with the dissemination of the information.	Main reports, CD-ROMs, Internet, etc.	Periodic, at 10-year intervals
2.3 Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management: improve concepts, supply data at the international level	Contribution to the work on reporting on the existing sets of Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), mainly within the pan-European process. Contribution to coordinating of the C&I reporting between MCPFE and Montreal processes. Providing data for SFM monitoring at the national level.	Advising, and reporting, to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe as agreed.	To 2008
2.4 Contribution to Global FRA, including the preparation and implementation of the global FRA update 2005.	Participation in the elaboration of the common global framework for the forest resources assessment; global core set of variables, reporting tables and “data items”, and in the development of the assessment methods.	Sets of data on the forest resources of ECE region countries, and interim data sets (FRA 2005 dataset). Guidelines for the assessment(s)	Continuing
2.5 Country profiles of countries in transition	The periodic preparation by national experts and publication, of forestry country profiles, mainly of the central and eastern European and CIS countries. The profiles will provide supplementary to FRA, more specific and detailed information on forestry sectors of these countries.	“ <i>Forest and Forest Products Country Profiles</i> ” published as UNECE/FAO Study/ Discussion Papers	Periodic, depending on demands and resource availability
2.6 Special studies (biodiversity, forest condition, carbon flows etc.)	Accompanying papers on the most interesting FRA-related issues will be prepared and published, following the accomplishment of periodic main FRA reports.	Publications of special studies as UNECE/FAO Study Papers or Discussion Papers.	Periodic, depending on demands and resource availability
2.7 Information network, work area administration	Maintenance and regular up-dating of the network of national correspondents, and the regional FRA Team of Specialists (ToS), so that these structures would support, advise and contribute to the implementation of FRA activities.	Meetings of the ToS according to its mandate, participation in the global FRA Advisory Group and periodic meetings of national correspondents.	Continuing