

Distr.
GENERAL

TIM/EFC/WP.1/SEM.54/2002/R.23 (Summary)
23 July 2002

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
Timber Committee

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
European Forestry Commission

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION



JOINT FAO/ECE/ILO COMMITTEE ON FOREST TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

Seminar on
AFFORESTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

in conjunction with the 24th session of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on
Forest Technology, Management and Training

Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland, 15-19 September 2002

Coillte Farm Partnership Scheme – A Joint Venture in Commercial Afforestation in Ireland

Basic paper by Mr. Jim Dillon

Summary

Until recent decades almost all of the afforestation activity in Ireland was undertaken by the state, but from the early 1980s farmer forestry has continued to increase its share of the new planting market with the support of EU funding. Coillte, The Irish Forestry Board, was established in 1989 to manage the state-owned forests on a commercial basis. In 1992, against a background of increasing competition and rising prices for forestry land, Coillte recognised an opportunity to continue its forestry development programme through a leasing and joint venture arrangement with farmers.

The Coillte Farm Partnership Scheme is an afforestation product unique to Coillte and available to farmers and other landowners. Under the Farm Partnership scheme Coillte leases the land from the farmer for the period of the rotation, usually 40 years. The farmer retains ownership of the land and receives a tax-free annual income for the life of the crop, including an advance payment at the start of the venture. In addition, Coillte provides a professional management service over the full rotation including all establishment, maintenance, marketing and harvesting activities.

The financial incentives in the form of a planting grant and annual premiums are funded under an EU Common Agricultural Policy reform measure and, in the case of a farmer, the premium is received for a period of 20 years after planting. Payments after year 20 are funded by profits from thinnings and at maturity the farmer receives the larger share of the clearfell profits. The Coillte Farm Partnership Scheme also protects the farmer's succession rights in that the next of kin may continue with the agreement.

To date, Coillte is managing over 500 Farm Partnership agreements amounting to over 10,000 ha of high-yielding commercial plantations. Recent customer surveys have indicated very high levels of satisfaction among Coillte Farm Partners. Most Partners have opted for the Farm Partnership arrangement because of the availability of Coillte's management expertise over the full rotation and direct access to the company's marketing network. There is also an added benefit in that plantations managed by Coillte under the Partnership scheme have full Forest Stewardship Council certification status in line with the company-owned estate.
