

Distr.
GENERAL

TIM/EFC/WP.1/SEM.54/2002/R.4 (Summary)
12 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

**The Society of Irish Foresters: Securing a Voice for the Professional Forester in National
Afforestation and Forest Development**

Basic paper by Mr. Tony Mannion

Summary

As with all forestry activities, afforestation within the context of SFM must be led by the professional forester who is trained and experienced to carry out the task. It is also of critical importance that the forest industry and its stakeholders in general are well served by the vision and leadership of professional foresters, and that those foresters have a clear and united voice in the form of a professional representative body.

In Ireland, that professional body is the Society of Irish Foresters (SIF). Founded in 1942, it represents the forestry profession on the island of Ireland. It has over 700 members and is both a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The mission statement of the SIF is 'To lead and represent the forestry profession, which meets, in a sustainable manner, society's needs from Irish forests, through excellence in forestry practice'. There are a number of underlying values to this mission statement, including:

- leadership for the profession;
- professionalism and excellence in forest management founded on a sound knowledge base and expertise;
- sustainability in forest management and conservation of ecosystems;
- consultation with, and the involvement of, all stakeholders in shaping forestry policy; and
- promoting social cohesion, interaction and unity of purpose among members.

The Society has three types of membership – Technical (including a Consultant Foresters Group), Associate and Student. Its members are employed in all sectors of the forest industry, including public and private forestry, nurseries, forest management, timber utilisation, sawmilling and processing, research and education. SIF place serious emphasis in promoting professional standards in public and private sector forestry, and the regulation of the forestry profession, and to this end members are bound by a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. SIF also influences forestry education in Ireland, with a view to maintaining the highest professional standards. A programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is currently in position on a pilot basis, and is being developed. Plans are advanced to link in CPD with third level education institutions.

The activities of the Society include the following:

- issuing of policy documents and news releases, and promoting an awareness of the forestry profession among the general public;
- holding field days, symposia, study tours (home and overseas) and public talks on topical forestry issues;
- publishing Irish Forestry, a journal containing original scientific and other articles on forestry and reviews of published works;
- publishing The Irish Forester, a quarterly newsletter;
- ongoing dialogue with stakeholders of the forest industry;
- discussions and negotiations with the Irish Forest Service regarding national forest policy and its impact on the overall forest industry; and
- publishing a list of technical members who are available for consultancy, which is made available to the public and to those interested in availing of professional forestry advice.

The Society is also connected to a wider forest network within Ireland and further afield, through membership of the European Union of Foresters (EUF), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Irish Forestry Certification Initiative (IFCI) and the Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC).

This paper is intended to present SIF as an example of achieving a unified voice among professional foresters, in order to ensure that the profession steers national policy and is well positioned to input effectively into initiatives such as afforestation within the context of SFM.
