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 Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry European Forestry Commission

**Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on
 Forest Statistics, Economics and Management
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 Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

GUIDANCE OF WORK AREA 1: DATA, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

AGENDA ITEM 4 (a)

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

According to its mandate, the Working Party is expected to provide guidance to Work Area 1: Data, Monitoring and Assessment. This document provides information about activities in this work area since the Working Party's last session and plans for the future, drawing the Working Party's attention to any specific issues where guidance is needed.

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I. Forest Resources

A. Data collection

Forest Resource Assessment/ Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire

1. The data collection system for the 2015 reporting cycle of the global Forests Resources Assessment (FRA) was developed through a collaborative, preparatory process, which included consultations with stakeholders and countries. Advice was received through meetings of the FAO Advisory Group on FRA and consultations with a “consortium of the willing” – a group of organizations that are involved in forest data collection, leading to the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ). In addition to FAO, the "consortium" consists of: the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); Forest Europe; the Montréal Process; the Observatoire des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale (OFAC) and the UNECE. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (Joint Section) contributed to the work of both the FAO Advisory Group and in the “consortium of the willing” of CFRQ.
2. The global reporting 2015 was organised around 21 major questions, aiming to gather information about the major global forest related variables and oriented to assessing the progress towards Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). The new questionnaire focused on several other issues and -in addition to the information about the extent, changes to values and trends of forest resources- included questions about gross deforestation and degradation of forests. Other improvements included the introduction of a definition of growing stock. Compared to the previous cycles, the amount of requested information was reduced.
3. The Section, working closely with the FAO FRA Team, led work on data collection and the review process for the 54 countries of the ECE region. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Joint Section supported the data collection process by establishing a group of regional reviewers and organising a regional workshop held in Geneva in October 2013.
4. The overall process of data collection and review was completed in August 2014. Forty-one countries (including the United States and Canada) provided their national reports. For the non-reporting countries, FAO produced “desk studies” - reports based on available data to cover the 15 countries that were not able to provide national reports.

Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO reporting on sustainable forest management

5. For the first time the data on pan-European indicators on SFM was collected in parallel with the global reporting. The main tool for this process was the “Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO Questionnaire on Pan-European Indicators for SFM”. The questionnaire was developed by the Joint Section, supported by the ECE/FAO ToS on Monitoring SFM and the FAO FRA Team. Given the overlap with the global reporting, the questionnaire ensures consistency of classifications and definitions of these two processes wherever possible.
6. The joint pan-European reporting on the quantitative indicators was launched in November 2013. In the case of six of the indicators, reporting forms were prefilled with data provided by EUROSTAT and the Joint Section. In addition to a Word version, an Excel version was produced to facilitate the reporting process, data management and to improve the quality of the reports.
7. The Joint Section was responsible for the collection, review and compilation of national data. Countries were assisted by the same reviewers who were involved in the global data collection process. As of the date of release of this document, 35 countries provided their national reports. For those 10 countries that did not provide their reports, the Joint Section produced reports based on available data.
8. The final compilation of data collected is planned for the end of March 2015. Due to the joint character of the reporting the collected data can be used by both the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and Forest Europe. The Section shared the national reports and desk studies with the Forest Europe Liaison Unit-Madrid. Similar to previous cycles, all information collected will be made available through the interactive FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO database with the UN Statistical Division interface.

9. The pilot implementation of the “System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests” (SEMAFOR) has begun after the completion of the pan-European reporting with the use of the method reviewed at the 35th session of the ECE-FAO Joint Working Party. Implementation is carried out with the participation of national experts. The results of the pilot implementation are expected by autumn 2015.

Questionnaire on forest ownership in the UNECE region

10. The Joint Section’s work on forest ownership reporting has been carried out in close communication with stakeholders and in cooperation with relevant partner organizations and processes. For this purpose, an informal core group of experts was established including experts from the Confederation of European Private Forest Owners (CEPF), the European Forest Institute (EFI), the European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), and the Federation of European Communal Forest Owners (FECOF) and the COST Action project, Forest Land Ownership Changes in Europe - Significance for Management and Policy (FACESMAP).
11. Most data on forest ownership in the ECE region will be collected through the joint UNECE/FAO/FACESMAP questionnaire, which was developed by experts from UNECE/FAO and FACESMAP, working in close cooperation with the core group. The preparatory phase included a multi-stage process of consultation with member States and stakeholders. The compilation of national reports will be undertaken jointly by both UNECE/FAO national experts and the FACESMAP national focal points.
12. Work related to forest ownership reporting, including the questionnaire, was discussed at the 36th session of the FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management. Furthermore this topic was subject of a Round Table Discussion organized during the Joint Working Party session. The questionnaire was further reviewed and refined at the following meetings:
- COST Action meeting in Freiburg, Germany in September 2014
 - ToS on Monitoring SFM meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2014
 - Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry meeting in Kazan, Russian Federation in November 2014
13. The final draft of the questionnaire was released in March 2015 and data collection will follow in 2015. The analysis of the collected data and the preparation of the report are expected to commence in the autumn of 2015.
14. The questionnaire includes two parts (qualitative and quantitative) to be distributed to the COST Action FACESMAP focal points and UNECE/FAO correspondents. If the quantitative data is unavailable, a question could be answered in a descriptive way which offers countries the possibility still to provide relevant information. Furthermore, the nature of the information (official data vs. expert opinion) should be made visible.
15. Due to generally scarce and scattered data, support from all relevant stakeholders should be sought. In particular, support from organizations of forest owners, both public and private, would be essential for the successful completion of the data collection process at the national level.

B. Assessment and Reporting

Forest Resource Assessment/ Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire

16. Data collected from countries will be made available in the form of national reports, country profiles, user-specified reports and an on-line database via the Forest Resources Information System (FRIMS). The data from countries of the ECE region will be also shared with and disseminated by the Joint Section. In addition to this, there are plans to produce:
- An FRA Desk Reference containing summaries, graphics and tabular outputs;
 - An FAO Forestry Paper for a general audience (in cooperation with the CFRQ partners);
 - A special volume of a scientific journal (Forest Ecology and Management) with a set of peer-reviewed papers, covering specific topics in more detail.

17. The Joint Section contributed to the review of the first drafts of these three documents at the meeting of the FRA Advisory Group in Salt Lake City, United States, in October 2014. Release of original data and analytical products is planned for the XIV World Forestry Congress, which will be held on 7-11 September 2015 in Durban, South Africa.

Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO reporting on sustainable forest management

18. The Joint Section provided data for the next edition of the State of Europe's Forest (SoEF) report. The Section organized and convened the process of data collection according to the quantitative indicators and the Section provided the Forest Europe Liaison Unit-Madrid (LUM) with the data on wood removals, energy and trade as well as on the consumption of wood products. Furthermore, the Section contributed to the direct work on the report by providing advice to the LUM and contributing to the work of the Advisory Group on the preparation of the next SoEF, including the participation in its 3rd meeting held in Madrid in February 2015.
19. The participants in the Forest Europe Expert Level Meeting held in January 2015 decided to review the set of pan-European indicators for SFM. An Advisory Group was formed to lead this process and its first meeting was convened in February 2015. As the set of quantitative indicators shapes the structure of the Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO reporting, it was important for the Joint Section to take part in this review. The Leader of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring SFM also participates in the work of the Group.
20. The review process will include consultations with the countries and other interested parties on the draft developed by the Advisory Group. The second draft will be reviewed at the workshop for national correspondents, scheduled for the end of April 2015. It is expected that the final proposal will be provided to the Expert Level Meeting for adoption in July 2015.

UNECE/FAO Study on progress towards achievement of the global objectives on forests and Sustainable Forest Management

21. At their joint session in Rovaniemi in December 2013, the Committee and the Commission mandated the Joint Section "to develop the study on progress towards the achievement of the global objectives on forests and SFM, and on challenges for forests and the forest sector in the ECE region and to submit the draft of the study for comments to member States during 2014, in order to issue the final study in time for it to be presented at the 11th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) in mid-2015". (ECE/TIM/2013/2 para. 62).
22. The study has been prepared by a team of experts in close cooperation with the Joint Section, using the best available international data. Countries have been consulted as regards the data; the study itself was discussed in draft form at a workshop organized by the joint ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring SFM (21-22 October 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland) and at the 72nd session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) held in Kazan, Russian Federation (18-21 November 2014). The final draft was circulated to countries for comment in December 2014 and those comments have been taken into account when preparing the final version.
23. As a regional input, the study focused on the ECE Region and will contribute to the UNFF by:
- Outlining progress towards the global objectives in the region, on the basis of the best available data and analysis;
 - On this basis, identifying challenges and opportunities for the region, especially for policy makers;
 - Pioneering a regional approach to the global objectives;
 - Communicating the results to a wider public in plain language.
24. The study will be released on 20 March 2015, during the celebrations of the International Day of Forests, so that UNFF delegates will be able to review its content well before the 11th session of the UNFF. The presentation of the study and release of the printed version will be carried out at the 11th session to be held in New York in May 2015.

C. Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management

25. One meeting of the ECE-FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management has been organized since the 36th session of the Working Party. The meeting focused on two items: the review of the first draft of the UNFF report by the Team, the national correspondents and authors of the study; and the review and further development of the draft of the questionnaire on forest ownership in the UNECE region.
26. At least one meeting is foreseen for 2015, mainly for the review of the results of the 2015 reporting processes. The Team will assess the results of the pilot implementation of the SEMAFOR as well as the production of the study for UNFF11. It is planned that the meeting will be held during the European Forest Week – Silva 2015, in Interlaken, Switzerland in November 2015.

D. Key questions for guidance and discussion

27. The Working Party is invited to:
 - a. Comment and advise on activities related to the global and pan-European reporting;*
 - b. Comment on the current process and plans for developments in the area of monitoring SFM in the UNECE region;*

II. Forest Products' production, trade and consumption

A. Data and assessment

Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ)

28. The Joint Section received 42 replies to the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire for the region. This compares with 37 in 2012 and 37 in 2013. This increase can be attributed to the Workshop for CIS correspondents held in Turkey in May 2014.
29. Data collected in the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ) provided input to the data tables of the Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2013-2014 (FPAMR). All forest products data was uploaded to the FAOSTAT interactive database, the primary distribution site for forest products data, in July and December 2014.
30. The data and statistics page is the leading page viewed on the section's web site. Of the 5 most-viewed files three of them relate to forest products statistics. More detailed web statistics are in document 4c, annex C.

Forecasts

31. The Joint Section received forecasts from 32 countries in 2013, an increase over the 30 replies received in the last several years. This could be attributed to the increased time available to reply due to the later date of the Committee meeting.
32. In 2014 the Joint Section produced the Forecast tables for the years 2014-2015 for the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI). The forecast tables were based on the forecasts supplied by countries prior to the meeting, as well as the preliminary JFSQ data and served as background information for the COFFI Market Discussions.

Data quality

33. The Joint Section received increased total number of replies to the JFSQ and the Timber Forecast Questionnaire (TFQ). The average number of data points provided declined for the JFSQ and increased for the TFQ. The decline in the average data points per JFSQ provided by member states could be attributed to the increased number of replies from countries with a weak reporting capacity on forest products, since they fill out a lower number of cells. For a detailed listing of data availability please see section A of the annex.
34. In terms of the "indicators of achievement" used by the UN to evaluate performance, the table in the annex shows the results for the last 20 years. The "% satisfactory" is the number of countries with at least 80% official data for JQ1 and JQ2 divided by the total number of countries in the ECE region. There has been a sharp upward revision for the last two years. The target approved by the UN General Assembly for 2013-2014 is 68%.

International issues

35. Cooperation between the four organizations (International Tropical Timber Organization, Eurostat, FAO and UNECE) that collect data through the JFSQ is conducted through the Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics (IWG). The IWG met in January 2015 in Yokohama, Japan (information on IWG meetings can be found at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=23657>). The main issues covered at the meeting were a review of activities in 2014, with an emphasis on clarifying problems in data exchange and preparations for the JFSQ 2014. A number of changes were made to clarify the cross-reference system in light of results of workshops with national correspondents
36. The work at the World Customs Organization for the 2017 Harmonised System revision is nearly complete. FAO has continued to watch over this process and will brief participants about the current status of the proposal at the Working Party meeting following the mid-March meeting of the WCO's HS committee.

B. Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics

37. The team held its first meeting in June 2014. The second meeting will be held 17 March 2015, just prior to the Working Party. The agenda of the meeting is available at www.unece.org/index.php?id=38501 and members of the Team are encouraged to identify the issues of interest to them and propose additional topics. The issues of greatest interest will be discussed at the meeting and an oral report provided to the Working Party.

C. Forest products market assessment

The Forest Products Annual Market Review

38. The Joint Section used data from the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire for assessing the latest market developments. The analysis was published as the UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2013-2014. The English version of the document was on the Joint Section's website in August 2014, and it was available in print and distributed to delegates of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry meeting four weeks ahead of the market discussions held COFFI (November 2014 in Kazan, Russian Federation). The Russian language version is currently with the printing section and should be posted on the UNECE/FAO website shortly. The French version is being translated.
39. The 2014 FPAMR was possible thanks to the funding from the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland, significant in-kind contributions from many authors and assistance from two Finnish Interns from the University of Helsinki. Led by a production team within the Joint Section, the FPAMR had many people working directly on the publication, as well as over 100 statistical correspondents and contributors.
40. Many authors and reviewers for the publication are members of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products. The Team leader provided substantial support to the review and proofreading of the final version.

Market Statements

41. The Joint Section asked member States to prepare country market statements as background for the annual meeting of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry. The Joint Section received 20 country market statements prior to the meeting and posted them on the UNECE/FAO website (<http://www.unece.org/forests/market-statements-2014.html>). The country market statements address the following subjects:
- *Green economy and other economic stimulus policies and forest products markets;*
 - *Wood products in green building;*
 - *Trade policy issues affecting forest products markets;*
 - *Impacts on wood products and industries of a future transatlantic free trade agreement and other important trade issues;*
 - *Due diligence/due care and legal wood supply;*
 - *Renewable energy policies and their impacts on forest products markets;*
 - *Research and development policies for forest products.*
42. Information from the country market statements also fed into the Market Discussions during the COFFI meeting in November 2014 in Kazan. Presentations covered the subregions of the ECE region. Jarno Seppälä, Head of Forest Industry Consulting and Bio-solutions at INDUFOR, Helsinki, Finland presented the "European forest products market overview", Nikolai Ivanov, Vice President of the Union of Timber Manufacturers and Exporters of Russia, presented the "Russian Federation forest products market overview," Bruce Glass, Forest Economist for The Campbell Global, LLC presented the "North American forest products market overview".
43. The forecast tables, the country market statements and the input from the Market Discussions all were summarized in the COFFI Market Statement, which was approved by the Committee. The approved text can be found in the annex of the report of the session (ECE/TIM/2014/2), which is available at: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/meetings/20141118/ECE_TIM_2014_2_Report_FINAL.pdf

D. Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products

44. The Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products has not met formally since the last Working Party meeting; however, it has been actively organizing a Workshop on improving forest products markets. The workshop initially was planned to take place in October 2014 but was postponed due to lack of funding. The event is planned to take place in Podgorica, Montenegro in early summer 2015. Additionally the team was active with the preparation and review of the Forest Products Annual Market Review in 2014. The Team will contribute to the ongoing project on forest products conversion factors and will meet in Engelberg, Switzerland in the margins of the 2015 joint COFFI/EFC (Silva2015) meeting.

E. Key questions on data assessment for guidance and discussion

45. The Working Party is invited to:
- a. Comment on the structure of the FPAMR and suggest further modifications if needed.*
 - b. Provide guidance on how to encourage more active participation from the private sector during Market Discussions.*
 - c. Ask questions and provide guidance regarding the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products.*

III. Wood Energy

A. Data collection

46. The UNECE/FAO Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) is conducted every two years. The results of the last round of data collection (JWEE 2011) were presented at the Joint Working party meeting in 2013 (Item 4a.3 “Review and Plans: Wood Energy / Outcome of JWEE 2011”). The Joint Section launched the next data collection round (for 2013 data) in January 2015. The enquiry is set up largely the same as in the last round.
47. The timeline envisaged by the Joint Section for the JWEE2013 is:
- *Send out the enquiry in January 2015 to member States and to the IEA (with the request to forward the enquiry to their national focal points);*
 - *Deadline for data submission: 2 March 2015;*
 - *Present initial JWEE outcomes and process during the Joint Working Party meeting 2015;*
 - *Data validation and assessment: March 2015 – end of May 2015;*
 - *Prepare final results and press release – summer 2015;*
 - *Use the data as basic input to a Study Paper on Wood Energy in the ECE region.*

B. Data assessment

48. The Joint Section would suggest that the results of the next JWEE are used for preparing an extensive assessment via a publication on wood energy in the ECE region, based upon available resources. This is also being discussed within the ECE/FAO team of specialists on wood energy.

C. Team of Specialists on Wood Energy

49. Since the last Working Party meeting in June 2014 the team has elected its leaders: Mr. Kasimir Nemestothy from Austria as Team Leader and Mr. Dinko Vusić from Croatia as Deputy Leader. The Joint Section, in consultation with the team leaders, also invited a number of independent experts in the area of renewable energy and biomass across the ECE region to join the team. Thirteen new members, representing academia, national and local administration, European organisations and associations, joined the team.
50. Based on the outcomes of the team’s first meeting, the initial plan of work, including advice on JWEE and conversion factors and a possible wood energy publication for the ECE region, has been drafted. The work plan is going to be discussed in detail during the second team meeting to be held 11 – 13 March 2015 in Vienna, Austria, at the invitation of Mr. Nemestothy. Information about the outcomes of the meeting will be shared in a presentation during the 37th Session of the Working Party. The third meeting of the team is planned in Croatia, at the invitation of Mr. Dinko Vusić, in autumn/winter 2015.

D. Key questions on data assessment for guidance and discussion;

51. Delegates are invited to:
- a. *Comment on the JWEE process (periodicity, structure, prefilling, timeline);*
 - b. *Provide feedback on the current assessment and presentation of JWEE data;*
 - c. *Consider how their country can contribute to the wood energy data collection process (national expert for the reporting, technical/ financial support to the UNECE/FAO secretariat for assessment);*
 - d. *Provide feedback on a possible wood energy publication (interest, guidance, support, national expertise, etc.);*
 - e. *Provide guidance regarding the ToS on Wood Energy (based partly on the results of the 11-12 March Team meeting).*

IV. Annex

A. Replies to the Questionnaires

Questionnaire		Year Questionnaire Sent			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
JFSQ	JQ1 (production) - replies	41	37	12+25	16+26
	% of cells filled (of 66/70)*	69.2	73.8	60	52.7
	JQ2 (trade) – replies	43	39	12+25	16+26
	% of cells filled (of 216/232)*	90.0	87.9	84	70.9
	JQ3 (sec. prod. trade) - replies	13+28	10+28	11+23	15+23
	% of cells filled (of 48/40)*	81.3	83.5	85	66.0
	EU/ECE (species trade) – replies	11+24	10+21	11+21	11+21
	% of cells filled (of 88/84)*	64.9	84.9	64.5	82.8
TFQ	TC1 (roundwood forecast) - replies (of 56)	30	30	30	32
	% of cells filled (of 21)	86.0	85.6	89.6	90.0
	TC2 (product forecast) – replies	30	29	30	30
	% of cells filled (of 45)	89.5	92.0	92.1	93.1

There are a total of 56 member countries. For the JFSQ, “% of cells filled” applies only to non-EU/EFTA replies.

* Change in number of cells filled starts in 2013.

B. Indicators of Achievement

Data for Year	% Satisfactory
1992	62.2
1993	60.8
1994	61.5
1995	59.6
1996	55.8
1997	55.8
1998	51.9
1999	59.6
2000	63.5
2001	69.2
2002	71.2
2003	65.4
2004	69.2
2005	69.2
2006	73.6
2007	79.2
2008	73.6
2009	67.9
2010	67.9
2011	64.2
2012	77.4
2013	73.6

See paragraph 34 for explanation of calculation.