

2 March 2015

Economic Commission for Europe Food and Agriculture Organization
Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry European Forestry Commission

**Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on
Forest Statistics, Economics and Management
Thirty-sixth session**

Geneva, 18-20 March 2015
Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda

GUIDANCE OF WORK AREA 4: CAPACITY-BUILDING

AGENDA ITEM 4 (d)

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

According to its mandate, the Working Party is expected to provide guidance to Work Area 4: Capacity-building. 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. Capacity building

A. Forest Resources Assessment

1. The UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission at their joint session in Rovaniemi, Finland (December 2013) recognized the importance of the collection, validation and dissemination of statistics on forests resources, products and services, as well as of the analysis and assessment of the state of forests and the sustainability of forest management. Furthermore, the Committee and the Commission mandated the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (Joint Section) to undertake several activities to develop tools and products to strengthen the areas mentioned above, including:
 - *a study on progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests in the UNECE region to be presented at the 11th session of UNFF in May 2015;*
 - *a questionnaire for national reporting on forest ownership in the ECE region which will be issued in the first half of 2015.*
2. Both of the above papers were developed in consultation with member States and international experts. In this regard, a workshop on forest reporting in the ECE region was organized by the Joint Section, from 21 to 23 October 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop was prepared and convened in close cooperation with the ECE-FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management.
3. The workshop was attended by 35 participants, which included experts from 24 countries, six international organizations (including the UNFF secretariat and members of the core group on forest ownership reporting) and authors of the study. Participation from seven countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan) were supported with the financial contribution of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The workshop was supported by five members of the Joint Section.
4. During the workshop, the national and international experts reviewed the first draft of the study on achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests, as well as the advanced draft of the questionnaire on forest ownership in the ECE region. The feedback from the participants was introduced into the final draft of the study and the questionnaire. The workshop also served as a learning platform for national experts to interact with each other, share experiences on forest related reporting and gain knowledge that could be used when developing national information systems and participating in international reporting processes.

B. Market and Statistics

Forest products marketing workshop in South Eastern Europe

5. The capacity-building workshop on forest products markets, which was planned to be held in October 2014 in Podgorica, Montenegro, did not materialize due to lack of resources. The meeting is now planned to be held in the second half of 2015 in Podgorica, Montenegro providing sufficient funds are made available. Some funding has already been secured and the Joint Section, with support from the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products, is actively preparing for the event. Discussions with the local organizers have started and the venue and meeting facilities are secured. The lack of resources mainly concerns the possibility to fund participants from the region to travel to the workshop.
6. The main objective of the workshop is to assess progress made towards overcoming the key challenges of the forest based industries in the region. These challenges were identified during previous UNECE/FAO regional workshops. The Podgorica workshop is intended to take stock and suggest further concrete actions to address these challenges. Speakers will present theoretical, practical and political perspectives. The workshop will also provide an overview of the forest

products market and industry in the region and highlight opportunities for the forest based industries to contribute to a green economy.

7. The Joint Section will also use the workshop to discuss with local experts how to develop a set of future workshops that build upon each other in a logical way. It is hoped that such a comprehensive, long term approach will enable the Joint Section, with the support of the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products, to secure longer term funding (e.g. by member States).

C. Wood Energy

“More heat with less wood” workshop

8. How to provide healthy, affordable and resource efficient wood energy to people in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia? – This was the subject of a workshop initially planned to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in February 2015. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the meeting had to be postponed until mid-2015.
9. Such a workshop is of high interest to several sectors and the Joint Section has reached out to other UNECE Divisions and UN system organizations. Information on work related to wood fuels will be provided by: the Secretariat of the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution; the Section on Housing and Land Management (of the UNECE Division of Forests, Land and Housing); the UNECE Division of Energy; and the World Health Organization.

D. Forest Policy

The United Nations Development Account capacity building project on “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia”

10. This project continues to be implemented in the seven participating countries of Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan (pilot countries); as well as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan (non-pilot countries). All project countries have one national and four local workshops. Pilot countries have an additional coaching programme to develop green economy action plans for the forest sector (with three coaching workshops and an awareness raising campaign).
11. National workshops were organized in June 2014 in Tbilisi, Georgia and Dushanbe, Tajikistan, both followed by coaching workshops to support the development of green economy action plans for their forest sectors. In addition, national workshops in Yerevan, Armenia and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, were organized in September 2014; and a national workshop in Tashkent, Uzbekistan was carried out in October 2014. The national workshop in Azerbaijan was postponed in November 2014 and is foreseen to take place in early April 2015. Each project country has organized four local workshops, in different regions of the country, following the training content of the national workshops (except Azerbaijan).
12. Each pilot country has chosen how to proceed with the action plan development in their own way; for example, Georgia is developing a separate action plan based on the inputs from the local workshops. Once it is finalized, the content will be merged into the national forest programme currently being drafted. The draft national forest programme includes the new set of national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.
13. Kazakhstan decided to incorporate the project into the development of a new national forest programme by including green economy principles in the draft programme. A notable achievement was to include the enhancement of private sector development in the draft. The draft forest programme was distributed to other ministries for comments and approval at the end of 2014 by the forestry committee of Kazakhstan.
14. Tajikistan has developed a new forest sector strategy and related action plan. It was agreed in coordination with GIZ and FAO that the UNDA project’s role was to support private sector development (two local workshops), and participatory review of the strategy (two local workshops). The draft forest sector strategy of Tajikistan was released by the forest agency in February 2015 for comments by different ministries. However, due to internal rearrangements at the forest agency in Tajikistan, the two local workshops dedicated to the review of the strategy

were postponed by the agency from January 2015 to February 2015. It remains to be seen, therefore, if the review will be taken into account at the official level.

15. The action plans will support an enhanced role of the forest sector in a green economy. They will guide actions of national authorities and other stakeholders through a detailed set of targets and activities to ensure that the forest sector will support the transition towards a green economy. This includes activities such as: improved human well-being, social equity, reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.
16. The action plans, as well as the entire project training content, addresses five main themes which are the pillars of the Rovaniemi Action plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy:
 - *Sustainable production and consumption of forest products;*
 - *The low carbon forest sector;*
 - *Decent green jobs in the forest sector;*
 - *Valuation of and payment for forest ecosystem services;*
 - *Monitoring and governance of the forest sector in the green economy.*
17. The project has developed a training package (in English and in Russian), which includes presentation slides and participatory exercises, and is available at the project website. In addition, each country has translated the materials into local languages to be used in the local workshops. These materials will be collected and made available through the website in the spring of 2015.
18. The overall implementation of the project is going smoothly and the feedback received through workshop evaluations has been excellent. At the last Committee meeting, both Armenia and Uzbekistan requested to become pilot countries (they are non-pilot countries in the current project). This is a good indication as to how well the content of the project is responding to the development needs in the region.
19. The second regional workshop for all countries to share results and lessons learned will be organized in April 2015 in Tbilisi, Georgia and the project will be finalized by mid-2015. One day of the regional workshop will be held jointly with the RERAM project (Resource efficiency and raw material use of woodworking industries of Eastern Europe), which will provide the opportunity for the private sector to review and discuss the project outcome.

E. Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector

20. The Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector (Joint ILO/ECE/FAO Expert Network) held its first meeting on 16 June 2014 in Geneva. Christian Salvignol (France) was chosen as team leader; Andreas Bernasconi (Switzerland) and Diarmuid McAree (Ireland) were chosen as deputy leaders. The Team is supporting the organization of a workshop on 17 March 2015 in Geneva “Threats to Sustainability of the Forest Sector Workforce”. The second Team meeting will be held on 24-25 April 2015 in Geneva.

F. Key questions for guidance and discussion

The Working Party is invited to:

- a. *Suggest any capacity building activities, that the Forestry and Timber Section could pursue – upon availability of resources;*
- b. *Give recommendations for possible follow-up on the UNDA project and continuation of the work related to green economy action plan development;*
- c. *Give guidance related to the work on green jobs in the forest sector, based on the workshop on 17 March 2015 (or other experiences at national level).*