Economic and Social Council

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management

Food and Agriculture Organization

European Forestry Commission

Forty-third session
Geneva, 1-3 June 2022
Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda
Guidance on Work Areas

Work Area 4: Capacity-building

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its mandate, the Joint Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) / Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (Joint Working Party) is expected to provide guidance on Work Area 4: Capacity-building. This document provides information about activities in this Work Area since the Working Party's last scheduled session in March 2021, as well as plans for 2022, drawing the Working Party's attention to any specific issues where guidance is needed.

An initial list of activities in Work Area 4 for the year 2023 will be made available in document ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2022/Inf.3 and discussed under Agenda Item 6.

This document is submitted in accordance with ECE/TIM/2021/2−FO:EFC/2021/2, annex II, section III.

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I. Forest Monitoring in the Caucasus and Central Asia

1.   The Joint Section implemented the capacity-building project on "Accountability Systems for Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia" between 2016 and 2021. The project was funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA), under its 10th tranche. Within the scope of the project, five countries (Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan) developed their sets of national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

2.   The Joint Section will publish the project's experiences in "National Monitoring of Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia". This publication will provide an overview of the results of the capacity-building project and presents the complete sets of national criteria and indicators which are the result of this process, and highlights the related experience, challenges, and achievements. The publication will also include an overview of the global development of criteria and indicators as well as four thematic policy briefs addressing their roles in different areas of application: inventory, decision making, information systems and communication.

II. Forest Products

1. Forest products production and trade

3.   The analytical work of the Joint Section relies heavily on sound data. The core tool for annual data collection on production and trade of forest product is the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ). In May 2021, the section organized a well-attended question-and-answer session on the JFSQ. The aim of the session was to improve the quality of replies and the completeness of data collected.

2. Wood energy production and consumption

4.   The Joint Section is also planning the next Joint Wood Energy Enquiry to collect data on wood energy supply and use in ECE member States for the reference year 2020. Prior to the launch of the questionnaire, which is scheduled in November 2022, the secretariat will organize a capacity-building workshop for national experts from the forestry and energy sectors to improve the response rate. The rate has declined for the last two rounds of the enquiry. In both 2012 (Budapest) and 2016 (Paris) the secretariat had organized similar capacity-building workshops. Those workshops brought significantly greater response rates and better quality replies, compared to previous rounds of data collection.

III. Forest Landscape Restoration

5.   The ECE and FAO jointly support the efforts of member States to restore degraded forests and landscapes. ECE/FAO encouragement includes translation of e-learning and other training materials into Russian, organization of regular webinars on financing and monitoring, and promotion of the development of national policy frameworks in several pilot countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia (more information is available in document ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2022/4) as well as the development of a Forest Landscape Restoration Knowledge Platform.

6.   This Platform will support countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia in strengthening their forest landscape restoration efforts and consolidating regional cooperation. The Platform is expected to serve as a sub-regional hub of solid information on forest landscape restoration relevant to the region, to:

        (a)   share experience on forest landscape restoration activities;

        (b)   offer a forum for discussing and exchange ideas among national and international experts, stakeholders, and donors;

        (c)   serve as a comprehensive compilation of resources, including methodologies, training materials, and best practices to facilitate forest landscape restoration.

7.   The Platform will be made available in English and Russian language versions and is expected to be a "living tool", open for expansion depending on the needs of users and the availability of funds.

8.   The Joint Section is developing a feasibility study on the production of regeneration material in the Republic of Moldova. The study will analyse the current situation, challenges, plans and approaches to reforestation, afforestation, and forest landscape restoration in Moldova, and will give recommendations for related developments.

IV.   Urban Forestry

9.   The workshop "Scaling Up Urban Greening and Forests in Cities" was jointly organized by the State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, ECE and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on 18-19 March 2022, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The workshop addressed challenges, highlighted opportunities and shared best practice and mechanisms, putting emphasis on sustainable tree and forest management in urban environments, planning, as well as monitoring for evidence-based decisions in an agreed governance framework.

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

10.   In 2021, the Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector continued its work, initiated in 2020, on the identification of good practices illustrating the implementation of the ECE/FAO/Forest Europe Guidelines on the Promotion of Green Jobs in Forestry. Team members identified criteria for determining what would be considered a good practice. Furthermore, the Team prepared a template to collect relevant information for documenting the good practices.

11.   Team members contacted experts and identified around 30 examples of existing best practices which would illustrate the recommendations included in the Guidelines.

12.   The Team held its annual meeting online on 11 November 2021.

13.   During Foresta2021, the joint 79th session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and 41st session of the FAO European Forestry Commission, held on 22 - 25 November 2021 in Rome, Italy, member States decided to discontinue the mandate of the Team.

14.   ECE and FAO will continue the work on employment questions in the forest sector with ILO and Forest Europe.

VI.   Key points on capacity building for guidance and discussion

15.   The Working Party is invited to:

        (a)   Comment on the work on improving capacities in member states on data collection;

        (b)   Provide feedback on the proposed capacity-building workshop on wood energy data collection;

        (c)   Consider hosting a capacity-building event on wood energy data collection;

        (d)   Provide feedback on the secretariats work on capacity building in general.

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