

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MC 10/2024 Doc 3.1

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This report summarises key activities by IUFRO Headquarters (HQ) and main developments since the last IUFRO Management Committee and Enlarged Board Meetings held in June 2024 in Stockholm, Sweden, in a hybrid format. This report aims to complement other reports for the Management Committee (MC) Meeting.

1. Human resources

In July 2024, IUFRO announced the vacancy of a Project Manager in the Science-Policy Programme with the main responsibilities of supporting the development of regional science-policy activities of the Programme with particular focus on the European and African region, supporting the newly established Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and mentorship activities; and providing administrative assistance to the IUFRO President. Ms. Mirjana Volarev was selected as the successful candidate from among a pool of 103 applications. Mirjana is a citizen of Serbia. She holds a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Belgrade and a master's degree in environmental science and policy from the Central European University based in Austria. She has worked as an Advisor for the Center for the Promotion of Science in Belgrade and as an Assistant Editor for MDPI. Mirjana will take up the position in mid-November.

IUFRO's HQ is periodically supported in its activities by student trainees. HQ currently hosts a student trainee from Mexico, Ms. Fernanda Gonzalez, for two months of September and October 2024 as part of the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA).

2. Membership and activity

IUFRO currently has 634 Member Organizations and 389 Associate Members^[1]. While 6 new Member Organizations joined IUFRO, 2 Member Organizations have left IUFRO since 15 May 2024. Furthermore, IUFRO has accepted 3 new Associate Members, while 4 Associate Members have left the organization. A background analysis of IUFRO's membership fees can be found in background document "Background analysis of membership fees" (Doc. 12.2)

3. Networking services

Units and Officeholders

After the IUFRO Congress in June 2024 in Stockholm, IUFRO HQ communicated closely with Division Co-Coordinator and Deputy Coordinators supporting their efforts to finalize the list of continuing and incoming officeholders, as well as changes in the Divisional structure (Research Groups or Working Parties to be closed or added, changes in unit titles). Based on the information provided by the Divisions, IUFRO HQ is updating its database and the webpage in a stepwise process. Once the list of officeholders has been (largely) finalized, IUFRO HQ will contact all officeholders with the request to

^[1] Status: 03 October 2024

complete and sign a consent form authorizing it to store and process their personal information. This is a requirement of the EU General Data Protection Regulation.

International Council – Call for nominations

The International Council is IUFRO's highest-level governing body. For each new five-year term, the members of the International Council are chosen by the Member Organizations of IUFRO in each country where IUFRO has any member. IUFRO HQ sent out a call for nominations of one member and one alternate in September 2024. Through the same letter, all Member Organizations were asked to check if the list of IUFRO Member Organizations includes updated information about their respective organization (name/Head/Director/location etc). By 14 October 2024, 7 countries had nominated their representatives. A reminder was sent out in the second week of October.

IUFRO Committees

In September 2024, Donald Hodges, Co-Coordinator of Division 4, kindly accepted the invitation by the IUFRO President to chair the Honours and Awards Committee in the new term. IUFRO HQ provided Don with relevant information for the work of the Committee. Eva-Maria Schimpf who had been the IUFRO HQ focal point for the Honours and Awards Committee in the last Board term will continue to support the Committee in the current term.

Upon the invitation by Woodam Chung, IUFRO Vice-President for Divisions and Chair of the proposed new committee in Diversity, Equity Inclusion, Carola Egger joined the committee as a representative of IUFRO HQ. Mirjana Volarev will serve as IUFRO HQ focal point for the Committee and assist the committee in its work.

Following the establishment of the IUFRO Strategy Committee by the Board in June 2024 in Uppsala, the IUFRO President and representative of IUFRO HQ met virtually with Monica Gabay (Co-Coordinator, Division 9), who kindly agreed to chair the Strategy Committee. Members of the committee have been identified and the draft Terms of Reference are currently under the development.

4. Collaboration with partners

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML) provides core funding to IUFRO on the basis of a contract established between the Government of Austria and IUFRO. Moreover, IUFRO currently manages two specific-purpose projects funded by the Austrian Forest Fund, i.e. Wood for Globe and European Wood Policy Platform (woodPoP). While the Wood for Globe project will complete its activities in September 2024, woodPoP will continue until 2026¹. Based on the outcomes of a high-level dialogue organized with IUFRO and FAO in connection with the FAO Committee on Forestry in July, BML has recently initiated discussions with other countries and organizations, including IUFRO, about a potential Country&Organisation-Led Initiative (COLI) on Sustainable forest-based Bioeconomy in the framework of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Following consultation with the IUFRO President, IUFRO expressed its readiness to discuss IUFRO's participation in this initiative as part of the Steering Committee for the COLI.

The United States Forest Service supports IUFRO activities through a multi-year Federal Financial Assistance Award. An application for a new funding cycle for the period 2025 to 2029 submitted in February 2024 was approved by the United States Forest Service in June 2024. It includes three

¹ More detailed information about Wood for Globe and woodPoP can be found in background document "Compilation of reports by coordinators of Special Programmes, Projects and IUFRO-led Initiatives"(Doc. 6.1)

components, i.e. science-policy interactions (Science-Policy Programme), capacity development (SPDC), and information management and dissemination.

The National Institute of Forest Sciences (NiFoS), Republic of Korea, informed IUFRO in July 2024 about its contribution to IUFRO for the current year, focused mainly on supporting IUFRO's Special Programme for Development of Capacities (IUFRO-SPDC). The funds were received in the same month.

In September 2024, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland accepted IUFRO's proposed submission for activities in the year 2024. Moreover, it informed IUFRO of its decision to allocate the same funding amount also for 2025. The disbursement of funds for 2025 will depend on acceptance of a progress report for activities implemented in the first year, and of a project submission for the second year.

Funding was also received from the Swedish Government Research Council for Sustainable Development (Formas), through the Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences (SLU), in support of the participation of forest scientists from economically disadvantaged regions in the 26th IUFRO World Congress, held in Stockholm, Sweden in June 2024. The allocation has been substantial and allowed for financing 52% of all delegates approved under the SPDC Congress Scientist Assistance Programme. With the submission of the final report to SLU, this project has been completed by end of September 2024.

IUFRO successfully mobilized funding from philanthropic foundations. Based on the initiative by the President-elect at the time, Daniela Kleinschmit, IUFRO submitted a funding application to Eva Mayr-Stihl Foundation, Germany, with the project title "Fit for the Future: Supporting network reforms and promoting science collaboration for the future". The project covers the period 2025-2029 and aims to support the further strategic development and resilience of IUFRO. The application was approved in June 2024, and the first payment was received in October 2024.

Following the successful completion of the previous project, IUFRO-SPDC submitted a new project proposal to the Swiss-based Fondation Audemars-Watkins on "Upscaling Forest Landscape Restoration through field-based Capacity Development" in four countries (Malawi/Africa, Sri Lanka/Asia, Guatemala/Central America, Paraguay/South America) in the period 2024-2026. The project proposal was accepted, with funding granted for Malawi and Sri Lanka component only, by the Foundation in April 2024. The first instalment of funds was received in June 2024.

IUFRO-SPDC also submitted a project concept note on "Upscaling forest landscape restoration through field-based demonstration and capacity development" to the Novo Nordisk Foundation of Denmark. The proposed project aims to establish and expand operational-scale field sites in Latin America (Guatemala and Paraguay). If accepted, the project will complement FLR initiatives implemented by IUFRO with financial support over the next 2 years from other donors.

The IUFRO-Mondi Partnership TEAMING UP 4 FORESTS successfully completed its first phase in August 2024. Based on the positive results achieved in the first period, the Mondi Executive Committee decided in July 2024 to continue the partnership with IUFRO for another three years until 2027. Efforts are currently underway to involve additional private sector entities as platform and funding partners.

While IUFRO HQ succeeded in securing funding for future activities from the above donors, it did unfortunately not receive the same positive news from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), a current donor of SciPol. In response to a letter from the IUFRO President, the State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development sent a letter to the BMZ recognising that the partnership between BMZ and IUFRO would continue to be of great relevance in the future, and suggested exploring further options for collaboration. Despite this letter, the successful conclusion of a new agreement before the end of December 2024, when the current five-year partnership expires, is unlikely. Nevertheless, discussions between IUFRO HQ and BMZ are ongoing to explore future funding possibilities. Given that BMZ has been a major donor for IUFRO's Science-Policy Programme, there is a need to mobilize funding from alternative sources in order to uphold the level of activities of previous years.