



INFORMATION NOTE

20 April 2010

1. Introduction

The "Global Forest Expert Panels" initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) was launched in April 2007 as a new mechanism for effectively linking the forests-related information requirements of governments and intergovernmental processes with existing scientific expertise. The Initiative is established within the framework of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and is led and coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

GFEP provides independent scientific assessments and produces reports on issues of high concern that reflect the state-of-the-art understanding of the subject matter and are written in a way that is comprehensible for both policy makers and stakeholders. The assessment reports are prepared by thematic Expert Panels consisting of internationally recognized scientific experts in their field.

2. Background and rationale

The international forest regime involves a complex mix of state and non-state actors, institutions, instruments and discourses that has shifted over time. The regime operates at many different levels and aims to take account of developments in a variety of other sectors where policy decisions have an impact on forests. The complexity of the international forest regime poses numerous challenges, but also allows for cooperative relationships and positive regime interactions that can be nurtured by means of improved coordination, policy learning and structured participation.

An extensive body of knowledge exists in political science about international regimes and global environmental governance. However, a comprehensive scientific assessment of the international forest regime has yet to be carried out. Based on the assignment given by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the GFEP assessment on the International Forest Regime aims to fill this gap.

3. Task and expected products

The Expert Panel on the International Forest Regime operates on basis of Terms of Reference approved by the GFEP Steering Committee in November 2009. Its task is to carry out a comprehensive assessment of available scientific information about the international forest regime. The assessment is based on existing results, information and knowledge. It draws in new thinking from various fields of science and innovative ideas from outside the traditional forest community.

The results of the assessment will be published in a comprehensive, peer-reviewed full scientific report and in a summary for policy makers ('policy brief'). The assessment will provide concrete options and examples of how to capitalize on the complexity of the international forest regime, e.g. by means of improved coordination, policy learning and structured participation. It will also trace the ways in which global forest governance architectures can influence domestic policy making in the direction of sustainability.

More specifically, the assessment addresses the following topics:

- Forests and sustainability – Different interpretations
- Overview of political actors, instruments and institutions, and their forest-related objectives and priorities
- Core components of the international forest regime
- Shifts in discourses, actors and instruments in the international forest regime
- The Challenge of Forest Policy Integration: Living with Complexity
- Examination of the influences of the international forest regime at the domestic level
- Conclusions

4. Mode of operation for preparation of the report

The report is prepared by an Expert Panel consisting of 30 scientists with outstanding scientific expertise on issues related to political science, environmental governance and international forest law. The Panel is chaired by Professor Jeremy Rayner (Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada) who has published widely in the area of forest policy and politics. The Expert Panel members serve as Coordinating Lead Authors or Lead Authors of the assessment report. They have been carefully selected to achieve the best possible coverage and balance in terms of areas of expertise, regions, gender and cultural diversity. The Panel includes both senior and junior scientists. Operational and technical support is provided by the IUFRO Secretariat. The list of current Expert Panel Members is available at <http://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/forest-regime-panel/authors/>

5. Dissemination of assessment results

The assessment will be completed by the end of August 2010. It aims to make a contribution to the International Year of Forests 2011 and to contribute to key international forest-related

processes, including the 20th session of the FAO Committee on Forestry and World Forestry Week (COFO; 4-8 October 2010 in Rome), the tenth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (October 2010), the 16th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (December 2010) and the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (January 2011).

Further information: <http://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/>