



TERMS OF REFERENCE

25 November 2009

1. Background and rationale

The international forest regime is characterized by a large number of actors, policy instruments and institutions. Increasingly, forests are being dealt with outside the traditional forest sector and by non-state actors (as exemplified by forest certification). Furthermore, a comprehensive body of knowledge exists in political science about international regimes and global environmental governance. However, no comprehensive scientific assessment has yet been carried out about the international forest regime.

The goal of the assessment is *“to contribute to building high-level political support to enhance the contribution of forests to human well-being by addressing forest-related issues of global concern”*.

More specifically, the assessment aims to contribute to

- the international forest deliberations and international forest-related processes such as the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (January 2011), the tenth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (October 2010), and the discussion on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD);
- the improvement of coordination among political actors, policy instruments and institutions;
- the International Year of Forests 2011 by raising awareness about the role of international instruments and institutions affecting forests.

2. Task

Taking into consideration the outcomes of the scoping meeting held on 28-29 September 2009 in New York, USA, the Steering Committee agreed to establish an Expert Panel on the International Forest Regime. It shall be the task of the Expert Panel to carry out a

comprehensive assessment of available scientific information about the international forest regime and to prepare a report for use by the UNFF at its ninth session, and also by the CBD and other forest-related international processes.

More specifically, the assessment to be carried out by the Panel shall cover the following main thematic components:

- Overview of political actors, policy instruments and institutions, and their forest-related goals and activities ('mapping');
- Overview of the shifts in actors, instruments, institutions and discourses related to forests since UNCED 1992;
- Identification of different interpretations of sustainability with regard to forests, such as SFM, and their influence on the choice of instruments;
- Identification of the core components of the international forest regime and of the key instruments ('meta-regime'), including the comparative roles of legally and non-legally binding instruments;
- Scientific assessment of the contribution of existing international policy instruments within the core components to meeting global forest-related goals; synergies and conflicts among them; potentials and gaps; and impediments;
- Examination of the influences of the international forest regime at the domestic level – lessons learned (including identification of different pathways such as certification);
- Options for improving outcomes and impacts of the international forest regime.

The forest regime has global, regional and sub-regional dimensions, and there are many instruments (both legally-binding and legally non-binding), institutions and processes that operate at these three geographical scales that are relevant to national policies and programmes. Hence, also these different geographical dimensions should be addressed in the assessment.

The assessment shall be based on existing results, information and knowledge. It shall take account of the cross-sectoral nature of forest issues, including gender and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. It shall draw in new thinking from various fields of science and innovative ideas from outside the traditional forest community. Based on its assessment, the Expert Panel may also identify priorities for further research.

The assessment report shall be composed of (a) a comprehensive, peer-reviewed full report and (b) a summary for policy makers ('policy brief').

3. Composition

The Expert Panel consists of up to 30 scientists with recognized expertise on matters related to the mechanisms and content of the international forest regime. The exact size of the

Expert Panel will depend mainly on the specific topics to be covered in the assessment report. Experts Panel members participate in their own personal capacity.

The Expert Panel Members are selected by the Panel Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee. The following general criteria shall be applied when selecting Expert Panel Members: necessary areas of specialization to be covered; regional balance; cultural diversity; and gender balance.

4. Modalities of work

The panel shall operate on basis of these Terms of Reference. The Steering Committee provides general guidance to the Expert Panel and ensures that the assessment process and report of the Expert Panel conform to these Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference may be revised by the Steering Committee if necessary.

The work of the Expert Panel is overseen by a Chair. The Panel Chair is responsible for coordinating the work of the Panel in carrying out the thematic assessment and preparing the assessment report, and for ensuring that all activities of the Panel as well as the expert review and the preparation of the summary for policy makers occur in an effective and timely manner. The Chair makes sure that the Coordinating Lead Authors and the Lead Authors communicate closely with each other and periodically share drafted sections so that a coherent and consistent assessment report will be prepared. It is essential that the work programme of the Expert Panel allows enough time in its schedule for a full review by experts.

The Expert Panel members serve as Coordinating Lead Authors or Lead Authors of the assessment report. Depending on the draft outline of the report and their area of specialization, Coordinating Lead Authors are responsible for coordinating broader sections (main thematic areas) of the assessment report. Lead Authors prepare specific sections (sub-areas) of the assessment report. The Panel may enlist other experts as Contributing Authors to assist with their work. Contributing Authors are not members of the Expert Panel, but their authorship is clearly acknowledged in the assessment report.

The Expert Panel carries out its work by holding physically meetings and by using electronic communication. The proposed main activities and the related time schedule is described under item 8 below. The exact dates and mode of panel meetings shall be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Expert Panel Members, bearing in mind financial and in-kind resources available from governments and Steering Committee members for purposes of the assessment.

Operational and technical support will be provided by the IUFRO Secretariat as well as, to the extent possible, by the Steering Committee Members.

5. Thematic frame, sources of information and validation

The Expert Panel shall consider the following sources of information: (i) published, peer-reviewed scientific literature; (ii) other sources of information, where appropriately documented, including sources of traditional knowledge.

The Expert Panel shall refer to the original literature whenever possible rather than to assessment reports, summary documents or similar. Furthermore, the Expert Panel shall make best use of CPF Members as sources of information.

6. Expert Review

The assessment report shall be subject to expert review. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the assessment report presents a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the area covered by the report.

Expert Reviewers shall be selected by the Chair, in consultation with the Steering Committee, in accordance with the selection criteria that also apply to Expert Panel Members. Furthermore, Expert Reviewers shall not be involved in the preparation of that particular section or chapter of the assessment report which they review.

Review comments shall be collected and evaluated by the Chair of the Expert Panel. The expert review period shall be decided by the Expert Panel, but shall not be less than four weeks. All review comments shall be provided to the Chair in writing.

7 Acceptance of summary for policy makers

The summary for policy makers shall be prepared by communication experts and accepted by the Steering Committee before publication. "Acceptance" signifies the view of the Steering Committee that the purpose of providing a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the area covered has been achieved.

8 Duration of work, main activities and suggested time schedule

The Expert Panel is established on a temporary basis. Its work should be initiated as soon as possible and completed on time for consideration of the UNFF at its ninth session in January 2011. The results of the assessment, however, should be available already before the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (Nagoya, Japan, 18-29 October 2010). Keeping in mind these events, the following tentative time table for assessment is suggested:

- 1st Expert Panel Meeting (with participation of CLAs and LAs): December 2009
- First drafts of manuscripts ready by: mid February 2010

- Meeting of Coordinating Lead Authors only: end of February 2010
- Manuscripts ready for review: mid May 2010
- Four week peer review from mid May to mid June 2010
- 2nd Expert Panel meeting (with participation of CLAs and LAs): end of June 2010
- Manuscripts ready for layout: 31 August 2010

9. Compensation

In accordance with the Concept Note, travel costs and daily subsistence allowance shall be paid to Panel members attending an Expert Panel Meeting in accordance with UN rules and regulations. A financial compensation may be provided to the Chair of the Expert Panel.