



## International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Union Internationale des  
Instituts de Recherches  
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### CPF GLOBAL FOREST EXPERT PANELS SCOPING MEETING

### GFEP ASSESSMENT ON FORESTS AND WATER (ROME, ITALY 16-17 MARCH 2017)

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

23 March 2017

The Scoping Meeting of the Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) assessment on Forests and Water took place from 16 to 17 March, 2017 in Rome, Italy at the headquarters of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Eighteen participants, including scientists, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and invited international experts attended the Scoping Meeting. The meeting was moderated by GFEP Coordinator Christoph Wildburger. A full list of participants is annexed to the minutes.

### 1) Opening of the Meeting

*Document: Draft Agenda of the Scoping Meeting*

Mr Christoph Wildburger opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and thanked FAO for kindly hosting the Scoping Meeting.

Mr Peter Csoka, Senior Forestry Officer and Secretary of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) at FAO, welcomed participants on behalf of FAO as host of the meeting and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). He showed a short video on FAO's Forests and Water Agenda and stressed the importance to use easy-to-understand language in communicating complex issues to the broader public. Mr Csoka noted that currently there is a lack of arguments to show how forests are connected to the different Sustainable Development Goals. He highlighted the importance of cross-sectoral dialogue and stressed the need to look at the expectations that other sectors have towards forestry. In concluding he pointed out that GFEP assessment on forests and water will support international dialogues on the topic as well as decision-making based on sound scientific evidence.

Mr John Parrotta, IUFRO Vice President, welcomed the participants on behalf of IUFRO as the lead agency of the GFEP initiative in the CPF. He explained the importance of the topic of forests and water for IUFRO and stressed that in the current IUFRO Strategy for 2015-2019, which guides the science collaboration within IUFRO's global network in the next years, the topic is listed as one of the 5 key research themes. He thanked participants for attending the meeting and looked forward to fruitful discussions over the next days.

Mr Wildburger explained the Draft Agenda of the Scoping Meeting as well as the organization of work during the meeting and introduced Mr Andre Purret as the GFEP Project Manager.

## **2) Brief Introduction of Participants**

All participants briefly introduced themselves in a tour de table. Mr Andre Purret communicated regrets from invited experts and representatives of donor organizations, who had to cancel their participation in the meeting. A full list of participants can be found in Annex II of the current minutes.

## **3) Setting the Scene**

*Document: Concept Note - GFEP on Forests and Water*

Mr Andre Purret, GFEP Project Manager, explained the GFEP process in general. He noted that the Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative was launched by the CPF in April 2007 as a mechanism to effectively link the information requirements of intergovernmental processes related to forests and trees with existing scientific expertise. GFEP produces objective and independent scientific assessments on key issues of high concern and provides its reports to international fora (e.g. UNFF, CBD, UNFCCC, UN-SDGs) to support informed decision-making at the global level. Vice versa, the international policy processes feed into the GFEP process by identifying key policy questions that could be answered by the assessments. Thematic assessment reports produced by GFEP consolidate available existing scientific information and expertise. They are prepared by panels of internationally recognized scientific experts and undergo rigorous peer review. The initiative is led and coordinated in the CPF by IUFRO.

He then noted that all scientific experts participate in the assessment in their personal capacity and do not represent any organization or institution. No new research will be carried out, instead the scientists assess and synthesize existing scientific literature and information. Outcomes of the assessments serve as briefing documents for negotiators, guidance for strategic policy development, information for communicators and as teaching materials. Mr Purret made reference to the previous GFEP assessments and noted that 5 assessments have been carried out so far. The resulting reports and policy briefs were influential in informing relevant policy processes and also received significant media coverage.

Mr Purret then introduced the concept note of the GFEP assessment on Forests and Water. He pointed out that there are a large number of influencing factors affecting the interactions between forests and water and that social and economic perspectives of forest-water interactions are becoming increasingly important. In means of forest and water management, there is a need for integrated management and holistic policy responses. Mr Purret explained that there has been a high level of political attention to the problem in recent years. In the light of the recently agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the defined Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the topic “forests and water” has gained even more prominence on the political agenda. Therefore, the CPF asked IUFRO to initiate and coordinate a global scientific assessment on forests and water within the framework of the GFEP initiative.

The goal of the GFEP assessment on Forests and Water is to produce a comprehensive peer-reviewed scientific report and associated policy brief on the topic by mid-2018. The assessment aims to feed into 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by connecting SDG 6 on water and SDG 15 on forests, thus illustrating the cross-sectoral contributions of forests to the various SDGs. The study will provide input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and its session in 2018, where, among others, SDGs 6 and 15 will be reviewed. The outcomes will be of particular relevance also for the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 13) in 2018.

Following this thematic introduction, Mr Wildburger explained the organization of work during the meeting and the following objectives of the Scoping Meeting:

- To discuss the goals and objectives of the assessment, including policy questions that could be answered;
- To define the scope and thematic elements of the assessment;
- To draft the first thematic outline of the assessment;
- To identify areas of expertise and recommend experts that could be involved; and
- To discuss the timetable, future meetings, milestones and deliverables

#### **4) Discussion of the Goals and Objectives of the Assessment**

Mr Wildburger asked the participants for any comments to the objectives and goals of the assessment. Participants discussed the timeline as well as the target audiences of the assessment and the related publications. Participants noted that there is a need to get the report and the key messages also to the general public, in addition to policy- and decision-makers and stakeholders.

#### **5) Discussion of the Thematic Components and Main Questions**

Mr Wildburger showed a list of thematic areas that may be included in the assessment, prepared by the GFEP team during the background research on the topic. He then invited participants to comment on the main thematic elements. In particular, the participants were asked to point out specific policy questions that should be addressed by the scientists in the report. Ideas and suggestions of invited agencies, which could not attend the meeting were also communicated to the meeting participants by the GFEP coordination team. Following the active discussions that took place for the rest of the day, participants agreed on the following main thematic aspects that should be addressed in the assessment:

- Conceptual background and overview of the topic;
- Factors influencing eco-hydrological processes at regional, landscape and watershed levels;
- Services related to forests and water, including monetary and non-monetary values;
- Management of forests with a water perspective;
- Direct and indirect drivers of change, impacts and trends; and
- Policy context, including governance frameworks, and response options at various levels.

## **6) Defining the scope of the assessment**

### Drafting thematic outline of the assessment report

Based on the main thematic elements agreed earlier, participants discussed all aspects in detail. As a result, a draft thematic outline of the assessment report was developed (Annex I of the current minutes).

Mr Wildburger explained that the outline developed at the Scoping Meeting would form part of the Terms of Reference of the Global Forest Expert Panel on Forests and Water and would be the basis for further thematic discussions by the Panel Members. It would guide the work of the Expert Panel, but would not be the limiting factor. The Expert Panel may still refine the structure and add aspects to the analysis.

### Identification of areas of expertise to be covered and recommendations for the involvement of experts

Based on the outline, participants identified the scientific key areas and disciplines to be covered in the assessment.

Mr Wildburger explained the roles and tasks of the Expert Panel members, including the requirements for contributions as well as time availability. He re-emphasized that all the invited Expert Panel members participate in the assessment in their personal capacity and do not represent any institution or organization. The moderator also explained the process of selecting Expert Panel members and the respective criteria. The Expert Panel consists of up to 30 scientists from various disciplines with recognized expertise in the topics of the assessment. The selection process for the Panel will take into account regional and gender balance as well as cultural diversity.

Participants were then asked to suggest names of internationally renowned scientists that could cover the relevant scientific aspects and disciplines, and possibly be invited to participate in the assessment as members of the Expert Panel on Forests and Water. Mr Wildburger explained that based on the recommendations of the Scoping Meeting, IUFRO as the lead agency of GFEP will select the members of the Expert Panel following the Scoping Meeting.

## 7) Organization of work

Mr Wildburger showed the following tentative timeline of the assessment and provided information about the key milestones in the assessment process:

Scoping Meeting of GFEP on Forests and Water (Rome, Italy)	16-17 March 2017
Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel	March 2017
Selecting members of the GFEP Expert Panels on Forests and Water	March/April 2017
1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the Expert Panel (location TBC)	June 2017
Final detailed chapter outlines	July 2017
First draft manuscripts of chapters	September 2017
2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Expert Panel (location TBC)	October 2017
Final draft of chapters for peer review	15 Nov. 2017
Peer review process of chapters	End of Nov. – early January 2017
3 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Expert Panel (location TBC)	January 2018
Final revision of the chapters	Deadline: end of February 2018
Editing of the Assessment Report and Policy Brief	March/April 2018
Layout of the Assessment Report and Policy Brief	May 2018
UNFF 13 (New York) – <i>presentation of key findings</i>	May 2018
Printing and shipping of the Report and Policy Brief	June 2018
UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF 2018) on Sustainable Development 2018 (New York), review of SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15. - <i>Launch of the report and presentation of results</i>	End of June - July 2018 (TBC)

Following the Scoping Meeting and the selection of Expert Panel Members, the first panel meeting is expected to take place in late June 2017 (location and date to be confirmed). The purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup> Panel Meeting is to i) introduce the Terms of Reference to the Panel members; ii) to allocate authors to chapters; iii) to further develop and refine the chapter outlines and iv) to agree on individual tasks and next steps in developing draft manuscripts.

Following the next milestone – the development of 1<sup>st</sup> draft manuscripts of chapters in September 2017, the second meeting of the Expert Panel is scheduled to take place in October 2017. The purpose of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panel Meeting is to i) discuss the draft manuscripts; ii) clarify overlaps between chapters and identify gaps; iii) discuss further developments and alignments of chapters and iv) agree on further steps in developing the final drafts of chapters.

Consequently, the final chapter drafts for peer review will be submitted in November 2017. Following the peer review, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Panel meeting is planned for January 2018 and will discuss the final refinement of the report based on the peer review comments.

The final revision of chapters is expected to be carried out during February 2018. The editing and layout process of the assessment report and associated policy brief will take place from March – May 2018, with the ultimate goal to launch the outcomes of the assessment during the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF 2018) on Sustainable Development in New York.

## **8) Closing Remarks**

On behalf of IUFRO, Mr John Parrotta thanked the participants for their commitment and the efficient discussions over the two meeting days.

In closing the meeting, Mr Christoph Wildburger as GFEP Coordinator and moderator of the meeting reiterated thanks to FAO for hosting the session, and to all participants for their excellent contributions.

## **ANNEX I: Draft Thematic Outline of the Assessment Report**

- **INTRODUCTION**
  - Statement on the topic: Why are forest and water interactions important?
  - Rationale and objectives of the report
  - Thematic scope and structure of the report
  
- **CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC**
  - Diversity of forests and trees in current and future landscapes (including definitions)
  - Typologies of forest-water systems based on a) structure, b) functions
  - Overview of the forest and water interactions
    - Dimensions (water for forests, forests for water, water/forests for people, people for forests/water)
    - Main (eco)-hydrological and forest-related hydrological concepts (including hydrological regimes)
  - Scientific consensus, popular narratives and paradigms of forest-water interactions
  - Conceptual framework and definitions (including temporal and spatial scales)
  
- **FACTORS INFLUENCING ECO-HYDROLOGICAL PROCESSES (At regional, landscape and watershed scales)**
  - Watershed size/area/type
  - Geomorphology
  - Climatic zones and different eco-regions
  - Soil type and condition
  - Forest types and landscape configuration
  - Disturbances (natural and anthropogenic), succession and management-induced vegetation changes
  - Climatic seasonality and variabilities
  
- **SERVICES RELATED TO FORESTS AND WATER, INCLUDING MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY VALUES**
  - Water quantity including temporal considerations
  - Water quality
  - Climate and its regulation
  - Protective roles of forests, e.g. erosion
  - Biological diversity
  - Cultural services (including recreation)
  
- **MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS WITH A WATER PERSPECTIVE**
  - Different objectives for management
    - Managing for provisional reasons (water supply, nexus with energy, food and timber/fiber)
    - Managing forest for their regulative, protective and conservation reasons (quality, protection against natural hazards, protection of infrastructure)

- Approaches and considerations for forest and water management
  - o Scales (spatial)
  - o Forest-related ecosystems and their landscape interlinkages
  - o Institutional, governance and management levels
  - o Different dimensions and perspectives for management: eco-hydrological; social, socio-ecological and cultural (including knowledge, capacity and innovation, public awareness); economic
- Trade-offs and synergies
  
- **DIRECT AND INDIRECT DRIVERS OF CHANGE, IMPACTS AND TRENDS**  
Social, technological, economic, environmental and political drivers, including:
  - Climate change
  - Land-use change
    - o Restoration, deforestation, afforestation, reforestation, degradation
    - o Development of infrastructure
    - o Economic development
  - Technological change
  - Commodity markets and demands (energy, food, fiber, water)
  - Demographic changes and migration
  - Changes in governance frameworks
  - Conflicts
  - Pollution, pests and diseases
  - Societal awareness, values and demands (including knowledge and co-production; data availability; information and media)
  
- **POLICY CONTEXT, INCLUDING GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS, AND RESPONSE OPTIONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS**
  - Institutional, legislative and policy frameworks, including
    - o Multi-level governance (international, including international waters; transboundary cooperation; national; local),
    - o Cross-sectoral cooperation
  - Actors and their interactions at different levels (including human rights and equity aspects)
  - Political discourses
  - Policy instruments and approaches, equity aspects and effectiveness, including:
    - o Law enforcement
    - o Financial instruments including market-based mechanisms
    - o Participatory approaches
  
- **CONCLUSIONS**



## **ANNEX II: List of participants**

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