



## **CPF GLOBAL FOREST EXPERT PANELS SCOPING MEETING**

### **GFEP ASSESSMENT ON FORESTS AND POVERTY (ROME, ITALY 23-24 MAY, 2019)**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

*04 June 2019*

The Scoping Meeting of the Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) assessment on Forests and Poverty took place from 23-24 May, 2019 in Rome, Italy at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Nineteen participants, including scientists, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and invited experts, attended the meeting. The meeting was moderated by GFEP Coordinator Christoph Wildburger.

### **1) Opening of the Meeting**

*Document: Draft Agenda of the Scoping Meeting*

On behalf of IUFRO as the lead agency of the GFEP initiative in the CPF, and in his capacity as Coordinator of the GFEP initiative, Mr Wildburger opened the Scoping Meeting, welcomed the participants and thanked FAO for kindly hosting the meeting.

Mr Hiroto Mitsugi, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department at FAO, welcomed participants on behalf of FAO as host and in his role as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). He stressed the importance of forests in alleviating poverty and noted that the GFEP assessment can greatly support the international dialogues and decision-making processes related to the topic. He highlighted the complex nature of forests and poverty, but was assured of the ability of the GFEP panel to embrace this complexity in its scientific assessment. He looked forward to seeing the final product.

Mr Wildburger explained the Draft Agenda of the Scoping Meeting as well as the organization of work. He then introduced the GFEP team, including Mr Andre Purret as the GFEP Project Manager and Ms Stephanie Mansourian as the GFEP editor, who were both present at the meeting.

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

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

### **3) Setting the Scene**

*Document: GFEP on Forests and Poverty – Background Document*

Mr Wildburger explained the GFEP process in general. He noted that the Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative had been 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. 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.

Mr Wildburger then introduced the GFEP assessment on Forests and Poverty. He pointed out that more than 780 million people live below the international poverty line. The majority of these poor people inhabit rural areas, in many cases regions of high forest cover. Evidence suggests that poor and vulnerable populations tend to concentrate in environmentally fragile areas and rely disproportionately on natural resources and ecosystem services to support their livelihoods. Forests can support rural livelihoods, have a buffer function in maintaining livelihoods and represent a natural insurance.

He mentioned that poverty alleviation policies tend to focus on infrastructure and agriculture, and to neglect the roles of forests – this approach is likely to conflict with the restoration, sustainable management and conservation of forests. Thus, a cross-sectoral, aligned and synergistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to take into account the roles of forests and trees. Reliable and synthesized scientific information as a basis to achieve optimal trade-offs for poverty reduction as well as for restoration, sustainable management and conservation of forest is needed. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) strengthens the momentum for addressing this pressing challenge.

Mr Purret then explained the goals of the assessment, noting that the ultimate goal is to carry out a comprehensive assessment of scientific knowledge regarding the relationship between forests and poverty and produce a comprehensive peer-reviewed scientific report and associated policy brief on the topic in the second half of 2020. The assessment will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by highlighting the nexus between SDG 1 on ending poverty and SDG 15 on life on land, as well as relevant links to SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities. Furthermore, the assessment will provide input to the 2020 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2020) and the 75th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 75). The outcomes will be of particular relevance also for the 15th and 16th sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests (in May 2020 and 2021), FAO COFO-25 (summer 2020) and possibly for other forest-related forums, such as CBD COP-15 and UNFCCC COP-26 in autumn 2020.

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

- Discuss the goals of the assessment, including policy questions to be answered;
- Define the scope and detailed thematic elements of the assessment;
- Draft a first thematic outline of the assessment; and
- Discuss the timetable of the assessment.

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

Mr Wildburger asked the participants for any comments on the objectives and goals of the assessment. Participants discussed the timeline as well as the target audiences of the assessment and the related publications.

#### **5) Discussion on Thematic Components and Main Questions to be Addressed**

Mr Wildburger showed the following list of main thematic elements that may be included in the assessment:

- The different dimensions of the relationship between forests, trees and poverty, as well as the roles of forests and trees in poverty reduction;
- Synergies between restoration, sustainable management and conservation of forests as well as trees in other land-uses (agroforestry, agriculture) and poverty alleviation;
- Trade-offs between development for poverty reduction and forest landscape restoration, sustainable forest management and forest conservation;
- Analysis of the policy context, including governance frameworks, and identification of response options at various levels.

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. In an active discussion meeting participants analysed the different aspects of the thematic elements. This analysis then led to the drafting of an outline of the assessment.

#### **6) Defining the Scope of the Assessment**

##### Drafting thematic outline of the assessment report

Based on the analysis of the main thematic elements, participants discussed all aspects in detail, resulting in a draft thematic outline of the assessment report (Annex I).

Mr Wildburger explained that the outline developed at the Scoping Meeting would form part of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Global Forest Expert Panel on Forests and Poverty 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

Mr Wildburger explained the roles and tasks of the Expert Panel members, including the requirements for contributions as well as time availability. He emphasized that all the invited Expert Panel members participate in the assessment in their personal capacity and do not represent any institution or organization. He 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 scientific expertise, regional and gender balance as well as cultural diversity.

Based on the developed outline, participants were asked to suggest in writing scientific experts that could cover key areas and disciplines in the assessment. Mr Wildburger explained that IUFRO as the lead agency of GFEP would 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 - GFEP Forests and Poverty	23 – 24 May 2019
Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel	End of May 2019
Selecting members of the GFEP Expert Panel	May/June 2019
1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the Expert Panel (Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA)	27 – 29 August 2019
Detailed chapter outlines	September 2019
First draft manuscripts of chapters	Autumn 2019
2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Expert Panel (location tbc)	Dec. 2019/ Jan. 2020
Final draft of chapters for peer review	February 2020
Peer review process of chapters	February/March 2020
3 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Expert Panel (location tbc)	March/April 2020
Final revision of the chapters	End of April 2020
Editing of the Assessment Report	May - June 2020
Development and editing of Policy Brief	May - June 2020
Layout of the Assessment Report and Policy Brief	July 2020
Printing the Assessment Report and Policy Brief	August 2020
Launch – 75 <sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 75)	15-30 September 2020

## 8) Closing remarks

On behalf of IUFRO and GFEP, 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**
- **FRAMING CHAPTER:** Analysis of the multidimensions of poverty related to forests and tree-based landscapes (*incl. for urban areas*)
  - Definitions of poverty and wellbeing, including self-perception of poverty and wellbeing, equality index, land, health etc. (e.g. multidimensional poverty index - FAO-OPHI)
  - Review of dimensions of poverty (material and non-material, socially and spatially differentiated)
  - Scales of forest dependency/reliance (socially and spatially differentiated)
  - Interlinkages with SDGs
  - Defining trade-offs and synergies (implications)
  - **Guiding question:** *How can the dimensions of poverty related to forests and tree-based landscapes be framed for the report?*
- **FOREST-POVERTY LINKS: CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE**
  - Role of forests and trees in poverty and wellbeing (material and non-material; socially and spatially differentiated)
  - **Guiding question:** *What do we currently know about how forests and trees contribute to poverty alleviation and wellbeing of the poor?*
- **LEVERS OF CHANGE**
  - Institutional, economic, political and social poverty-forest levers (rights, markets and value chains, investments, tenure, technology, finance, knowledge, infrastructure, policy, norms and power relations, including gender etc.)
  - Potential framework:
    - Factors --> forests and trees --> poverty
    - Factors --> poverty --> forests and trees
  - **Guiding question:** *What kinds of policies/mechanisms lead to impacts on the poverty-forests link?*
- **PROXIMATE CAUSES AND UNDERLYING CONDITIONS**
  - Proximate causes enabling/constraining the achievement of goals related to poverty alleviation and improved forest outcomes, such as land-use change, natural resource conflicts etc.
  - Underlying conditions enabling/constraining the achievement of goals related to poverty alleviation and forests, such as asymmetries of power, corruption, lack of political will, marginalization etc.
  - Potential future challenges and opportunities related to predicted trends (e.g. climate change, demographic change etc.)
  - **Guiding question:** *What factors, processes and conditions constrain/enable levers of change on the poverty-forests link, and how might they evolve?*

- **RESPONSE OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- Response options [*could become a separate chapter based on the discussions at the 1<sup>st</sup> Expert Panel Meeting*]
- Key messages
- Knowledge gaps
- **Guiding question (1):** *What spaces are there to address constraining conditions and maximize enabling conditions (for both poverty alleviation and forests)?*
- **Guiding question (2):** *What are the key messages and knowledge gaps?*

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