



CPF GLOBAL FOREST EXPERT PANELS

GFEP ASSESSMENT ON FORESTS AND HUMAN HEALTH

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 September 2021

1) Background

According to the United Nations' estimations, less than half of the global population is covered by essential health services. Adding to this low rate of coverage, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created further healthcare disruptions that could reverse decades of improvements, including the interruption of immunization programmes in approximately 70 countries. Moreover, in recent years, there has been a surge in zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19, SARS, MERS, Ebola, Malaria, and the avian flu, and illness and deaths from such diseases are expected to spike in the future (e.g. malaria deaths are expected to increase by 100% in sub-Saharan Africa).

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can strengthen the momentum for combatting these pressing challenges. The third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3) aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Linkages of human health and forests can be found in several SDG targets, for example, target 3.3 *“end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases”*, target 3.4 *“reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being”*, and target 3.9 *“substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination”*, as well as target 11.7 *“universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities”*.

In this context, reliable and synthesized scientific information is crucial to efficiently utilize the synergies and achieve optimal trade-offs between human health benefits and forest landscape restoration, sustainable forest management, and forest conservation. Given the multi-dimensional relationships between forests and human health and the cross-sectoral nature of the topic, a thorough scientific assessment of these relationships is needed. Such an assessment will provide a solid contribution to current and upcoming global discussions and platforms and support integrated, holistic, and effective policy responses.

Based on these considerations, IUFRO, on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) establishes an Expert Panel on Forests and Human Health in the framework of the GFEP initiative, taking into account the outcome of the GFEP Scoping Meeting held virtually on 25-26 August 2021.

2) Task

It shall be the task of the Expert Panel on Forests and Human Health to carry out a comprehensive global assessment of available scientific information about the interactions between forests and human health and to prepare a report to inform relevant international policy processes and the discussions on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

More specifically, the assessment shall address the following main thematic elements:

- The different dimensions of the positive and negative relationships between forests and human health, including benefits and challenges;
- Synergies and trade-offs between human health, and the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forest ecosystems, their biodiversity (including wildlife), as well as trees in other land-uses; and
- Response options relevant to policy context, including governance frameworks, in economic, health, socio-cultural, and environmental domains at various levels (sub-national, national, regional, and international).

The assessment shall be carried out on the basis of the draft thematic outline in Annex I, developed at the GFEP Scoping Meeting. It shall build on existing scientific literature, information, and knowledge, and shall draw from various fields of science. Based on its assessment, the Expert Panel may also identify priorities for further research.

3) Composition

The Expert Panel consists of up to 30 scientists from various disciplines with recognized expertise in the topics of the assessment, as reflected by the annexed outline. Expert Panel Members participate in the Panel in their personal capacity and do not represent any institution or organization.

The Expert Panel Members will be selected by IUFRO as the lead agency of GFEP. The following general criteria shall be applied when selecting Expert Panel Members: areas of scientific expertise; regional balance; cultural diversity; and gender balance.

4) Modalities of work

The Expert Panel shall conduct its work independently on the basis of these Terms of Reference. The scientific work of the Expert Panel is overseen by the Panel Chair, who is responsible for coordinating the thematic work of the Panel in carrying out the assessment and preparing the assessment report in an effective and timely manner. The Chair ensures that the Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) communicate closely with each other and periodically share drafted sections so that the report will be coherent, consistent, and of the highest possible scientific quality.

The Expert Panel members serve as CLAs or Lead Authors (LAs) of the assessment report. Depending on their area of specialization and the report's structure, Coordinating Lead Authors are responsible for coordinating individual chapters of the assessment report and ensuring coherence, quality, and timely delivery of their chapter(s). Lead Authors

prepare specific chapter sections of the assessment report in collaboration with the CLAs and other chapter authors. The Panel may enlist other experts as Contributing Authors (CAs) to assist with their work. Contributing Authors are not members of the Expert Panel, but their authorship shall be clearly acknowledged in the assessment report.

The summary for policymakers shall be prepared by IUFRO's GFEP Programme in consultation with the Panel Chair and with the assistance of communication experts.

The Expert Panel carries out its work through virtual and physical meetings and electronic communication. The proposed main activities and the associated schedule are described under item 8 below. The exact dates and mode of panel meetings shall be determined by the GFEP Coordinator and the Chair in consultation with the Expert Panel Members, bearing in mind financial and in-kind resources available from governments and CPF members for purpose of the assessment.

Operational and technical support will be provided by the IUFRO's GFEP Programme as well as, to the extent possible, by CPF Members.

5) Sources of information and validation

The Expert Panel shall utilize the following sources of information in the assessment: (i) published, peer-reviewed scientific literature; (ii) other relevant 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 syntheses, summary documents, or similar. Furthermore, the Expert Panel shall make the best use of CPF Members as sources of information.

6) Peer and expert review

The assessment report shall be subject to a double-blind peer and expert review prior to its completion. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the assessment report and its various chapters present a comprehensive, objective and balanced scientific view of the topics and issues covered by the report.

Peer reviewers shall be selected by IUFRO's GFEP Programme, taking into account the selection criteria that also apply to Expert Panel Members. Reviewers shall not be involved in the writing of the assessment report.

Review comments shall be collected by the GFEP Programme and evaluated by the Expert Panel members. The review period shall not be less than four weeks. All review comments shall be provided to the Chair and the Coordinating Lead Authors in writing. The review comments will be shared with the Lead Authors and serve as a basis for revision of the assessment report prior to its publication.

7) Outcome and publications

The assessment report shall be composed of (a) a comprehensive, peer-reviewed full report and (b) a summary for policymakers ('policy brief'). The rules of the CPF for decision making and the use of the CPF logo in publications shall apply.

8) Duration of work, main activities and suggested schedule

The Expert Panel is established for a limited time period. The work of the panel should be initiated as soon as possible and completed on time for launch on the International Day of Forests (21 March 2023). The following tentative timetable for the assessment is suggested:

Scoping Meeting - GFEP Forests and Human Health	25-26 August 2021
Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Expert Panel	Early September 2021
Selecting members of the GFEP Expert Panel	September 2021
1 st meeting of the Expert Panel (virtual)	November 2021
Detailed chapter outlines	December 2021
First draft manuscripts of chapters	March 2022
2 nd meeting of the Expert Panel	Early April 2022
Final draft of chapters for peer review	End of May 2022
Peer review of chapters	June - July 2022
3 rd meeting of the Expert Panel	September 2022
Final revision of the chapters	November 2022
Editing of the Assessment Report	December 2022 - January 2023
Development and editing of Policy Brief	January 2023
Layout of the Assessment Report and Policy Brief	February 2023
Printing of the Assessment Report and Policy Brief	March 2023
Launch – International Day of Forests	21 March 2023

9) Compensation

Participation costs, as well as travel costs and daily subsistence allowances in accordance with UN rules and regulations, shall be paid to Expert Panel Members attending Expert Panel Meetings.

ANNEX I: DRAFT THEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Preface

Acknowledgements

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

• INTRODUCTION

- Rational and objectives
- Concepts and terms related to forests and human health
- Drivers of health (negative and positive, regional differences)
- Key human health challenges
- Synopsis of chapters

• FRAMING CHAPTER

- Concepts of health and existing frameworks (including OneHealth and Planetary Health)
- Framing the health effects of forests

• KEY HEALTH CHALLENGES AND FOREST-BASED OPPORTUNITIES

- Non-communicable diseases
- Infectious diseases
- Nutrition and well-being
- Environmental factors, including climate change and pollution
- Healthcare in crisis

Cross cutting issues

- Inequality
- Differences between urban and rural areas
- Differences between global North and global South
- Valuation of health impacts

• SYNERGIES AND TRADEOFFS BETWEEN HEALTH-RELATED FOREST USAGES AND WITH OTHER FOREST USAGES

- Between health benefits of forest usage (including risks)
- Climate change
- Water
- Biodiversity conservation
- Protective functions
- Energy
- Timber production
- NWFP including medicinal and nutritional resources
- Cultural ecosystem services

Cross cutting issue

- Valuation of impacts

- **RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR KEY HEALTH CHALLENGES AND RELATED TRADE-OFFS FROM A GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE**
 - Response options based on the spatial dimension of forests (location, size, and scale)
 - Response options based on design and quality of forests (including e.g. species composition, stand structure)
 - Response options based on the management of access to forests (carrying capacity)

- **CONCLUSIONS**
 - Key messages
 - Knowledge gaps

Appendices to the report

- Glossary of terms and definitions
- List of panel members, authors, and reviewers