



TERMS OF REFERENCE

19 March 2024

1) Background

Given the increasingly rapid, unpredictable, and unprecedented global changes linked to the twin climate change and biodiversity crises, fostering resilience has become a key policy issue. Many international organizations have adopted resilience strategies across various policy areas aiming to enhance societal capacities for ‘bouncing back’ and adapting in the face of shocks and disturbances.

The capacity to persist, adapt, and transform in the face of change is considered a fundamental prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Resilience is an explicit focus of SDG 11, which aims to make cities and communities resilient; Target 5 of SDG 1, which focuses on building the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations; and Target 4 of SDG 2, which aims to ensure resilient agricultural practices. Resilience also plays a key role in international legal instruments, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Regarding forest management and forest landscape restoration, ‘resilience thinking’ has emerged as a new paradigm leading to increased interest in assessment methods aiming at deepening our understanding of the system dynamics and measurement methods quantifying resilience. However, most of the forest sector research continues to apply the narrower concepts of engineering resilience or ecological resilience, instead of adopting a more holistic socio-ecological resilience approach, thus leaving out aspects pertaining to social and economic resilience. The socio-ecological approach links the enhancement of forest resilience to an enhancement of societal resilience, including its economic aspects.

Recent research indicates that social resilience is a dynamic process partly determined by the ability of communities to act collectively and solve common problems. Moreover, several studies have emphasized the important role of forests and trees in contributing to social and economic resilience by, for example, acting as safety nets in times of emergency; as sources of employment and of essential products; as providers of possibilities for income diversification; as protection to settlements by reducing the risk of floods and other extreme weather events; or as spaces for physical and mental health enhancing personal resilience.

Given the multi-dimensional relationships between forests and social and economic resilience, 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 will 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 for Social and Economic Resilience in the framework of the GFEP initiative, taking into account the outcomes of the GFEP Scoping Meeting held virtually on 6-7 March 2024.

2) Task

It shall be the task of the Expert Panel on Forests for Social and Economic Resilience to carry out a comprehensive global assessment of available scientific information about the interactions between forests and social and economic resilience, and to prepare a report to inform relevant international policy processes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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

- Resilience definitions and concepts, positive and negative aspects of resilience
- Resilience as paradigm in forest and wider landscape management
- Different dimensions of the positive and negative relationships between forests and social and economic resilience
- Drivers of vulnerability
- Synergies and trade-offs
- Measurement of resilience
- Institutional resilience and adaptive capacity of forest governance institutions at different scales
- Analysis of the policy context, including governance frameworks, and identification of response options at various levels

The assessment shall be carried out based on 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 and based on 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 Science-Policy 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 IUFRO's Science-Policy Programme Coordinator, acting as GFEP Coordinator, and the Chair in consultation with the Expert Panel Members, bearing in mind financial and in-kind resources available. Operational and technical support will be provided by IUFRO's Science-Policy 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 Science-Policy 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 Science-Policy 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 is terminated by the completion of the launch. The following tentative timetable for the assessment is suggested:

Scoping Meeting (virtual)	6-7 March 2024
Development of Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Expert Panel	March 2024
Approval of ToR by CPF	March 2024
Selecting members of the GFEP Expert Panel	March 2024
1 st meeting of the Expert Panel	1 st week of June 2024
Detailed chapter outlines	End of June 2024
First draft of the chapters	End of September 2024
2 nd meeting of the Expert Panel	Early October 2024
Second drafts of chapters ready for peer review	Mid-November 2024
Peer and expert review of chapters	Mid-December 2024
3 rd meeting of the Expert Panel	January 2025
Final revision of the chapters addressing review comments	End of February 2025
Editing of the assessment report	March 2025
Development of the policy brief	March 2025
Layout of the assessment report and policy brief	April 2025
Printing of the assessment report and policy brief	May 2025
Launch	TBC 2025

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**
 - Rationale and objectives
 - Definitions related to forests and resilience
 - Scope of the assessment
 - Chapter synopsis
- **Framing Chapter**
 - Conceptual issues
 - Theoretical framework
 - Drivers of vulnerability
 - Resilience as paradigm in forest and landscape management
- **Relationships Between Forests and Social and Economic Resilience**
 - Positive and negative relationships between forests and social and economic resilience
 - Synergies and trade-offs
 - External factors impacting resilience and risk management
 - Attributes and assets enhancing resilience
- **Assessing Resilience**
 - General vs. specific resilience
 - Indicators and criteria for resilience
 - Approaches to assessing and quantifying resilience
- **Governance and Institutional Analysis**
 - Attitudes and values in the context of transformative change
 - Institutional resilience and analysis of governance frameworks, adaptive capacity of forest governance institutions
 - Analysis of the policy context, incentives and enforcement of policies, including financing and trade policies
- **Response Options**
 - Synthesis of benefits of forests for social and economic resilience
 - Identification of response options at various levels
- **Conclusions**
 - Key messages
 - Knowledge gaps
- **Appendices to the Report**
 - Glossary of terms and definitions
 - List of panel members, authors, and reviewers

Cross-cutting:

- Issues of scale and feedbacks
- Cross-sectoral aspects
- Equity and gender