

FOREST EUROPE

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The MCPFE Newsletter of the Liaison Unit Oslo

Kick-off of the MCPFE External Review

The MCPFE external review has now started. A kick-off meeting with the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo and the review team was arranged in January 2009 to discuss and agree on the process ahead. The review includes a document analysis, a written survey and three group discussions. It will be finalised by a review report in autumn 2009.

Following the commitments by the ministers at the 5th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Warsaw, 2007), the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting held in Oslo in May 2008 decided to conduct an external review of the MCPFE process.

The overall aim of the MCPFE external review is to provide a basis for future decisions on the strategic direction of the MCPFE. The review will mainly focus on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the MCPFE and its work. The findings of the review will be published in a concise report, including a set of recommendations for action.

Together, the results of the review and of the MCPFE working group on exploring the potential added value of and possible options for a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region will facilitate a discussion among the MCPFE participants on the role of the MCPFE, its future work and means of cooperation.

A call for tenders for the external review was posted on the Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) in mid October 2008. The deadline for submission of tenders was 28 November 2008. A consortium of IIASA, EFI and IUFRO was chosen to conduct the review, and the contract with the review team was signed by the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo and IIASA in January 2009.

The results will be presented and discussed at the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting on 24-25 November 2009.

Exploring possibilities for a Legally Binding Agreement on forests in Europe

The Second Meeting of the *MCPFE Working Group on exploring the potential added value of and possible options for a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region* will take place on 19-20 May 2009 in Oslo, Norway. The Working Group will focus on the two main tasks: finalising options for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe (three to maximum five options) as well as on analysing added value and pros and cons of a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.

After the first Working Group meeting (Athens, November 2008) and following its outcome, the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo, the facilitators (Austria, Norway and Greece) and experts have worked together on designing options for a legally binding agreement on forests. According to the Terms of References for the Working Group, the identification and description of possible options will include: objectives, core elements, dynamic components such as update mechanisms and follow-up. The illustrative examples of content for options, as well as examples of commitment levels and possible institutional arrangements will be presented in the background papers for the second meeting of the Working Group.

A consultation on draft options for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe and on the framework for analysis of pros and cons and added value, with the MCPFE national focal points and the members of the WG, will be conducted in early April 2009 through electronic means.

MCPFE working group on “sustainability criteria” for forest biomass production, including bioenergy

The second meeting of the MCPFE open-ended ad-hoc working group on “sustainability criteria” for forest biomass production, including bioenergy was held in Liechtenstein in February 2009. Discussions focused on the applicability of existing MCPFE tools for Sustainable Forest Management in the context of developments and other initiatives addressing sustainability of biomass production. The meeting also addressed the need for refinements or developments of the MCPFE tools for sustainable forest management. To facilitate the discussions, a revised draft gap analysis developed by Sweden was presented. In addition, the European Commission presented the Renewable Energy Directive, its current sustainability scheme and matters related to extending the directive to apply also to biomass used for heat and electricity. WWF presented examples of other initiatives working on sustainable biomass production. Finally, a scientific input was provided on challenges connected to more intensive use of forest resources for energy.

The working group recommended an elaboration of possible refinements of MCPFE policies and tools for sustainable forest management to strengthen focus on carbon issues, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Furthermore, the participants proposed to investigate the pros and cons of incorporating minimum requirements and broader land-use management policies into the MCPFE tools. Related to this, an analysis of the EU Renewable Energy Directive's criteria with a view to a possible extension of the directive to apply also to biomass for heat and electricity was suggested. The analysis will explore problematic issues in the current directive and possibly suggest refinements.

The working group sees communication with the general public as an important task. Increased efforts on feeding the MCPFE understanding of sustainable forest management and its principles into other initiatives working on sustainability were encouraged. The group highlighted websites, brochures and ‘quick guides’ presenting MCPFE tools to target groups to be used in communication nationally and internationally.

The third meeting of the working group will be held in Sweden on 11-12 June 2009.

“Sustainable forest management and influences on water resources
- Coordinating policies on forests and water”

WORKSHOP ON FORESTS AND WATER

12-14 May 2009 in Antalya, Turkey

http://www.mcpfe.org/forests_and_water

<http://www.ogm.gov.tr/forestsandwater/index.htm>

Based on the MCPFE Warsaw Resolution 2: Forests and Water, and work on ecosystem services under the UNECE Water Convention, a workshop will be held in Antalya, Turkey on 12-14 May 2009. The workshop will examine the complex interrelations and mutual influences of forests and water, how countries approach these topics, and how this is and could be reflected in forest and water policies in Europe, the UNECE region and neighbouring states.

The aim is to bring together both forest and water experts and policy makers in order to facilitate cooperation in this field.

The workshop is hosted by the Republic of Turkey and jointly co-organised by Switzerland, Turkey, the MCPFE, the UNECE Water Convention and FAO.

Deadline for registrations is 15 April 2009.

The meeting will be conducted in English, Russian and Turkish.

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