

Terms of Reference and Roadmap

Working Group on the future direction of FOREST EUROPE

Adopted at the FOREST EUROPE Expert Level Meeting,
11-12 May 2016, Bratislava, Slovakia

1. Background

As stated in the Madrid Ministerial Decision "Future direction of FOREST EUROPE", the process needs to be re-examined to respond to current and new challenges and opportunities in order to maintain and enhance its contribution to sustainable forest management in Europe, and make FOREST EUROPE fit for the future.

To this end, ministers decided to review the FOREST EUROPE process, especially its structure, procedures and work modalities, reflecting on the lessons learnt, in order to make it more effective and inclusive, with the specificities set out in the forthcoming Terms of Reference and Roadmap to be agreed at the first Expert Level Meeting held after the 7th Ministerial Conference on 11-12 May 2016.

2. Objective and scope

The key objective of the review is to further develop the FOREST EUROPE process with a view to adapting to current and new challenges, and to enhancing its contribution to the promotion of sustainable forest management (SFM) in Europe.

More specifically, it will ensure that the process maintains or, if needed, regains efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness. It will also aim to strengthen an agenda-setting role, so that it continues its ability to enhance and promote SFM at pan-European level while adding value to activities of other pan-European actors. The subject of the review is the FOREST EUROPE process, especially its structure, procedures and work modalities, which will be reviewed reflecting on the lessons learnt in order to make it more effective and inclusive.

The mission of FOREST EUROPE, a high-level political process, as set out in the Oslo Ministerial Decision "European Forests 2020", will guide the work of the review. The mission of FOREST EUROPE is to enhance the cooperation on forest policies in Europe under the leadership of ministers, and secure and promote sustainable forest management with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to society.

3. Tasks of Working Group

A Working Group will be constituted and given the following tasks:

- Analyse the achievements and added value of FOREST EUROPE based on the "Review of the MCPFE" (2009), and on the "Assessment of the achievements and added value of the Forest Europe Process" (2015). This should comprise a critical look at possible shortcomings.
- Take stock of signatories and stakeholders' views on the achievements and added value of FOREST EUROPE.
- Analyse the interplay of FOREST EUROPE with other actors in the pan-European forest policy arena.
- Take stock of signatories' views on current structures, procedures and modalities of work of FOREST EUROPE.
- Take into account current and upcoming issues of high political importance and relevance for the further development of SFM to be addressed by FOREST EUROPE.
- Elaborate proposals and recommendations in responding to current and new challenges and opportunities, especially on the structures, procedures and modalities of work of FOREST EUROPE.

4. Participation

The Working Group will be open-ended, with participation from FOREST EUROPE signatories as well as observer organisations and countries.

5. Expected output

The Working Group should produce a report on its findings and recommendations, which will be presented to an Expert Level Meeting to be held at end of 2017, for its consideration and adoption.

6. Process and mode of work

- Two countries, which are signatories and have been appointed by the ELM held on 11-12 May 2016, will co-chair the Working Group.
- The co-chairs will draft a document with guiding questions and points for discussions for the first meeting of the Working Group. They will also draft and finalise the report on the basis of the discussions of the Working Group for discussion and adoption at its last meeting.
- The first meeting of the Working Group will be held in autumn 2016.
- The last meeting of the Working Group will be held in the second half of 2017.
- The Liaison Unit Bratislava will support co-chairs in their work and provide organisational and technical assistance to the Working Group.

7. Timeline

The Working Group will finalise its work no later than the end of 2017.