

Draft Terms of reference

Working Group on the future direction of FOREST EUROPE

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, specially 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 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 the view to adapting to current and new challenges, and to enhancing its contribution to the promotion of sustainable forest management in Europe.

More specifically, it will ensure that the process maintains or, if needed, regains efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness. It will also aim at strengthening an agenda-setting role, so that it continues its ability to enhance and promote sustainable forest management 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 as a high-level political process, as set out in the Oslo Ministerial Decision European Forests 2020, will guide the work of the process. 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 with 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’ views on current structures, procedures and modalities of work of FOREST EUROPE.

- Elaborate proposals and recommendations on responding changes in the structures, procedures and modalities of work of FOREST EUROPE. The Working Group will elaborate proposals on, *inter alia*, the following possible structures:
 - a. Secretariat, coordinating/steering body and working modalities.
 - b. Financial basis for the process.
 - c. Role, objectives, format and conduct of the formal meetings, especially the ministerial meetings.

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 the year 2017, for its consideration.

6. Process and mode of work

- Two countries, which are signatories, will co-chair the Working Group. The ELM to be held on 11-12 May 2016 will appoint those two co-chairs.
- The co-chairs will draft a document with guiding questions and points for discussions for the first meeting of the Working Group to be held in autumn 2016. They will also draft and finalize the report on the basis of the discussions of the Working Group for discussion and adoption at its last meeting, which will be held in the second half of the year 2017.
- The Working Group will meet at least two times during the period of 2016-2017, after the ELM held on 11-12 May 2016. The Working Group may work before and between meetings electronically or another way it sees fit.
- Liaison Unit Bratislava will support co-chairs to their work and provide organisational and technical assistance to the Working Group.

7. Timeline

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