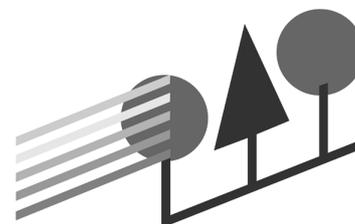


MCPFE WORKSHOP ON PROTECTED FOREST AREAS

28 – 30 November 2001, Køge, Denmark



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The MCPFE Workshop on Protected Forest Areas took place in Køge, Denmark on 28-30 November 2001. The workshop was attended by 36 participants representing 29 signatory states, the European Commission, two international organisations and the Liaison Unit Vienna. It was chaired by Mr. Peter Mayer, head of the Liaison Unit Vienna.

1. Opening of the meeting and introduction

Ms. Agnete Thomson (Danish Forest and Nature Agency) welcomed the workshop participants to Denmark and expressed her best wishes for a successful meeting. In her introductory comments, Ms. Thomson informed on recent policy developments on biodiversity in Denmark and pointed to the importance of MCPFE work on forest biodiversity and protected forest areas.

Mr. Peter Mayer (Liaison Unit Vienna) also welcomed the participants and expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Government of Denmark, and in particular to the Danish Forest and Nature Agency, for kindly hosting the workshop and for organising the excursion. Mr. Mayer briefly recalled MCPFE work on biodiversity and forest conservation so far and highlighted the significance of the workshop with a view to the 4th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (28-30 April 2003, Vienna, Austria). As a result of the discussion, recommendations should be elaborated for the next MCPFE Expert Level Meeting (10-11 June 2002 in Vienna, Austria).

2. Session I: MCPFE Classification of Protected and Protective Forest Areas in Europe¹

Mr. Christoph Wildburger presented the work of the MCPFE on the draft classification of protected forest areas in Europe so far and outlined the objective of the discussion in Session I, namely to discuss to results of the preliminary assignment of national data to this

¹ The discussion at the workshop was based on a background paper which had been prepared by the Liaison Unit Vienna and which had been distributed to the MCPFE contact persons and the participants of the workshop in advance.

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draft classification, to clarify up-coming issues related to the assignment, and to address the overall status of the classification with a view to the 4th Ministerial Conference in 2003.

In addition, Mr. Stein Tomter (Norwegian Institute of Land Inventory) gave an overview of the results of the preliminary assignment of national data to the draft MCPFE classification. He also pointed to several assignment problems and concluded that additional close communication with TBFRA correspondents will be required. The TBFRA correspondents should review the results of the assignment and supplement information reported previously or provide information in case countries did not respond to the initial questionnaire.

In a subsequent initial discussion, the close co-operation between the MCPFE, UNECE/FAO and the European Environment Agency (EEA) in the collection of data was re-emphasised. Also the involvement of The World Conservation Union (IUCN) was pointed out. It was recalled that the MCPFE Preparatory Group on Classification of Protected Forest Areas² succeeded in defining the linkages between the MCPFE classification and the IUCN Categories for Protected Areas as well as the “Common Database on Designated Areas” (CDDA) maintained by EEA. The intention to pursue these co-operative efforts also in the future was emphasised.

Mr. Josef Hackl (Federal Environment Agency, Austria) presented the national experience in assessing protected forest areas in Austria according to the draft MCPFE classification. This assessment was carried out in the frame of an on-going project the results of which are expected to be presented in spring 2002. In his presentation Mr. Hackl gave various examples of existing protection regimes in Austria and their assignment to the MCPFE categories. He concluded that the experience gained in the project so far would confirm the usefulness of the MCPFE classification in practice, but would also indicate a need for considerable national “homework”. In addition, Mr. Hackl stressed the importance of clarifying the relation of the Natura 2000 network to the MCPFE classification.

Following Mr. Hackl’s presentation, various issues raised in the presentation were discussed in more detail. Particular emphasis was given to the assignment of protected forest areas based on voluntary contributions without legal basis. Furthermore, the need to describe the relation of sites designated under the Natura 2000 network to the MCPFE classification in the future was confirmed in the discussion. It was recommended to assign the Natura 2000 sites to the MCPFE categories according to the national designation of these sites.

In a brief presentation, Mr. Mark Roekaerts (European Environment Agency) provided information on the “Common Database on Designated Areas” (CDDA) which has been developed by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in a joint effort with the World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) and the Council of Europe. Mr. Roekaerts pointed to EEA’s objective to also include forest information into the CDDA and invited to continue the fruitful co-operative efforts in the future.

² The meeting of the MCPFE Preparatory Group on Classification of Protected Forest Areas took place on 10 April 2001 in Vienna/Austria with participation of IUCN.

Refinement of draft classification

Following these presentations, the participants of the workshop were invited to discuss in more detail the results of the preliminary assignment and to refine the draft classification by building on the consensus achieved by the *ad hoc* working group on "Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Related Issues" as well as of the MCPFE Preparatory Group on Classification of Protected Forest Areas. It was also recalled in the discussion that the draft classification has been formulated in a way which ensures that protected forest areas assigned to the MCPFE classification are in accordance with the IUCN definition of protected areas.

The following refinements were agreed as a result the discussion (the full text of the revised classification can be found in the Annex):

Title of the classification

The participants of the workshop were in agreement that – in accordance with the terms and definitions used in the UNECE/FAO Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment (TBFRA) – the title of the classification should be modified to "MCPFE Classification of Protected and Protective Forests and Other Wooded Lands in Europe".

Introduction

It was agreed to state in the introduction that in order to ensure comparability of the data assigned to the classification at the international level, terms and definitions used are in compliance with the terminology of the TBFRA. Furthermore, an explicit notion has been included that protected forests and protected other wooded land (OWL) with management objective biodiversity assigned to the classification are in accordance with the IUCN definition of protected areas.

General Principles

Related to the general principle of the existence of a legal basis, several participants of the workshop remarked that more emphasis should be given to the assignment of protected forest areas based on voluntary contributions without legal basis. In order to give more weight to the subject, it was agreed to present the text of footnote¹ of the classification as regular text under heading "general principles".

The discussion at the workshop also indicated the need to specify the general principle of long-term commitment. Consensus was achieved among the participants that long-term commitment would comprise a minimum period of 20 years³.

An "explicit designation for the protection of biodiversity, landscapes and specific natural elements or protective functions of forests and other wooded land" was decided as a modified third general principle for classification according to the MCPFE system.

³ The expert of the Netherlands expressed his reservation concerning this 20-year period.

Finally, the discussion also pointed to the fact that some protected or protective forests and OWL, such as specific forest types or vertical and horizontal zones in the landscape, are designated through regulations in principle, but not within specific geographical boundaries delineating a limited area. There was consensus that also these forests and OWL fulfil the general principles of the classification and should therefore be assigned to it. However, it was agreed that data on these forests should be distinguishable in the reporting. Preliminary wording was added in chapter “general principles”, whereas the Liaison Unit was asked to look for possibilities to improve this wording.

Classification:

Following a proposal made by EEA a reference was added to the table in chapter “classification” concerning the linkages between the MCPFE categories and the designation types used in the framework of the Common Database on Designated Areas, managed by the EEA on behalf of two other organisations (Council of Europe and UNEP-WCMC).

Defined categories

- Category 1.1:

The discussion on Category 1.1 (Management Objective Biodiversity “No Active Intervention”) focused on limited research as an intervention allowed in forests and OWL assigned to this category. While the importance of science and research was underlined in principle, there was consensus that interventions in this strict category should be limited to “non destructive research not detrimental to the management objective”.

- Category 1.2:

The management of wildlife and the control of diseases constituted important aspects in the discussion on possible refinements of Category 1.2 (Management Objective Biodiversity “Minimum Intervention”). As a result, it was agreed to extend “ungulate control” to also include “game control” and to add “control of diseases/insect outbreaks” as another activity allowed in Category 1.2. The latter, however, was restricted to control measures in cases of expected large diseases/insect outbreaks and to the use of biological methods under the provision that no other adequate control possibilities in buffer zones are feasible. Furthermore, research was limited to “non destructive research not detrimental to the management objective” also in Category 1.2. Finally, a proposal was accepted by the workshop participants to extend subsistence resource use to “local communities”.

- Category 1.3:

No refinements were made to Category 1.3 (Management Objective Biodiversity “Conservation through Active Management”).

- Category 2:

There was a common understanding that “spiritual and historical values” should be added to the main characteristics described for Category 2 (Management Objective “Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements”).

- Category 3:

It was recalled in the discussion that the protection of soil, water and natural hazards should be seen as non-exhaustive examples for protective functions included in Category 3 (Management Objective: Protective Functions (“Soil, Water, Natural Hazards”)). Therefore, it was agreed to delete the content of the bracket in the title of the classification and to refer to Category 3 as “Management Objective: Protective Functions”.

In addition, Mr. Wildburger presented to the workshop participants detailed proposals for supplement of Category 3, brought forward by the 2nd MCPFE Workshop on the Improvement of Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (24-25 September 2001, Copenhagen/Denmark). According to these proposals, Category 3 covers forests protecting soil, water, forest ecosystem functions or protecting infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards. These proposals for refinement were considered and accepted by the participants of the workshop.

Role of classification with a view to 4th Ministerial Conference

The participants of the workshop also considered the role of the MCPFE Classification of Protected and Protective Forests and Other Wooded Lands in Europe with a view to the 4th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (April 2003 in Vienna, Austria). The experts shared the view that the classification should be presented at the next Ministerial Conference. It was stated that a strong political signal should be given by the ministers, underlining their commitment to the conservation of biodiversity as an integral part of sustainable forest management (SFM). The importance of the classification as an essential component of this commitment and as a “communication tool” was underlined. In addition, there was a common understanding that data on protected and protective forests and OWL assigned to the classification should be presented at the Ministerial Conference, if sufficiently available⁴.

⁴ For this purpose, the TBFRA contact persons should be contacted and asked to complement and/or revise data on protected and protective forests and OWL which had been reported to the MCPFE for purposes of the preliminary assignment.

However, it was acknowledged by the workshop participants that the classification could be further developed in the future. The potential contribution of research activities, notably COST Action “PROFOR”, was underlined in this context.

In the discussion on the role of the classification also linkages and potential contributions to the global level, notably the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as to the ministerial process “Environment for Europe” and PEBLDS were emphasised.

3. Session II: Further work of the MCPFE on protected forest areas and forest biodiversity – issues to be discussed

In a brief presentation, Mr. Christoph Wildburger introduced the topics of Session II of the workshop, comprising selection criteria for protected forest areas (PFAs), networks of PFAs as well as possible other aspects considered relevant by the workshop participants with a view to the 4th Ministerial Conference.

Selection criteria for PFAs

Concerning selection criteria for PFAs, the participants of the workshop shared the view that the criteria applied for the selection of sites in existing networks of protected areas would be sufficient for the MCPFE for the time being⁵. It was pointed out that substantial efforts have already been undertaken within existing networks in the definition of selection criteria. However, it was also acknowledged that a systematic compilation of the selection criteria used in different systems would be very useful. COST Action “PROFOR” could give valuable input to this compilation. In this context, reference was also made to on-going efforts within PEBLDS to analyse selection criteria used in different programmes.

Networks of PFAs

Also with regard to a network of PFAs as laid down in Helsinki Resolution H2, the workshop participants expressed the common view that existing networks would meet the requirements of the MCPFE so far. It was remarked that existing systems of PFAs would still be in an early stage of implementation. Thus, a gap analysis evaluating the outcomes of the existing networks should be carried out at a later stage. It was stated that in this context also buffer zones and corridors should be considered.

⁵ These selection criteria complement the criteria for an overall assessment of PFAs agreed upon by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, i.e. adequacy, connectivity and effectiveness, which had already been accepted as basic principles for the selection of PFAs by the MCPFE.

Related to the discussion on selection criteria and networks of PFAs, the delegates highlighted the importance of achieving a common understanding on forest types in Europe and advocated further efforts of the MCPFE in this regard. Reference was made in this context to efforts made in the project BEAR as well as to EEA's work on habitat classification.

Other aspects related to biodiversity and PFAs with a view to next Ministerial Conference 2003 in Vienna

In general, the participants of the workshop emphasised the importance of the linkages and potential contribution of MCPFE work on the conservation of biodiversity to the global level, in particular the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Reference was made in the discussion to the draft revised programme of work on forest biological diversity of the CBD, as discussed at the recent meeting of CBD SBSSTA 7⁶. Furthermore, the continued co-operation with the ministerial process "Environment for Europe" and PEBLDS was considered to be very important by the experts.

As regards further aspects related to biodiversity and PFAs, it was stated that the MCPFE should also address "restoration" and discuss possible co-operative efforts at the pan-European level. However, it was also acknowledged that restoration still needs to be defined more clearly and that this aspect could possibly be better addressed in the overall discussion on the conservation of biodiversity in forests outside PFAs.

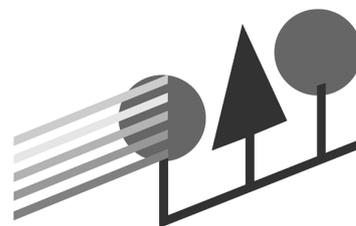
In this context, it was re-emphasised that PFAs and the conservation of biodiversity constitute an integral part of sustainable forest management (SFM). Consequently, the participants of the workshop recommended that when presenting the MCPFE classification at the next Ministerial Conference, the ministers should recognise in their commitment the importance of the conservation of biodiversity in the sustainable management of forests, as reflected in earlier MCPFE commitments.

4. Closure of the meeting

Mr. Mayer expressed his thanks to the delegates of the workshop for their active participation and comments made in the discussions and closed the meeting.

⁶ The seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD SBSSTA 7) took place on 12-16 November 2001 in Montreal, Canada.

ANNEX



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

**MCPFE CLASSIFICATION OF
PROTECTED AND PROTECTIVE FORESTS
AND OTHER WOODED LAND
IN EUROPE**

according to recommendations of the
MCPFE Workshop on Protected Forest Areas
28 – 30 November 2001, Køge, Denmark

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1 Introduction

The MCPFE Classification of Protected and Protective Forests and Other Wooded Land in Europe is an outcome of the implementation of the joint “Work-Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Diversity in Forest Ecosystems 1997 – 2000” of the MCPFE and “Environment for Europe”⁷. It is based on the analysis of national data on protected and protective forests and other wooded land in the European countries, collected in the frame of a supplementary TBFRA⁸ enquiry in 2000. The aim is to give a comprehensive picture of protected and protective forests and other wooded land in Europe, while keeping links to other international classification systems used for all kinds of protected areas. As comparability at the international level is a goal of this classification, terms and definitions used are in compliance with the TBFRA terminology. In addition, protected forests and protected other wooded land assigned to the classification are in accordance with the IUCN definition of protected areas. The MCPFE Classification of Protected and Protective Forests and Other Wooded Land in Europe should thus provide an important tool for further MCPFE work on the conservation of all types of forests.

2 General Principles

Protected and protective forests and other wooded land have to comply to the following general principles in order to be classified according to the MCPFE system:

- Existence of legal basis
- Long term commitment (minimum 20 years)
- Explicit designation for the protection of biodiversity, landscapes and specific natural elements or protective functions of forests and other wooded land

“Explicit designation” in the context of this classification comprises both:

- Designations defining forests and other wooded land within specific geographical boundaries delineating a limited area;
- Designations defining forests and other wooded land not within specific geographical boundaries, but as specific forest types or vertical and horizontal zones in the landscape.

Data on forest and other wooded land according to these two designation types should be distinguished in the reporting.

In addition to the regimes classified in this system, the MCPFE takes account of protected and protective forests and other wooded land based on voluntary contributions without legal basis. As far as possible these forests and other wooded land should be assigned to the same categories as used for the legally based regimes. However, data on these forests and other wooded land should be compiled separately.

⁷ The pan-European ministerial process of the ministers for the Environment

⁸ Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment of UN-ECE/FAO

3 Classification

Protected and protective forests and other wooded land are classified according to the main management objective. In addition, restrictions to interventions are used as distinguishing factor. As a result, five categories for classifying protected and protective forests and other wooded land in Europe are defined. As far as possible these categories are associated to the respective Protected Area Management Categories of IUCN⁹. In addition, they are linked to the designation types used by EEA¹⁰ in its Data Base on Designated Areas. The intention is to establish proper linkages between the MCPFE Classification of Protected and Protective Forests and Other Wooded Land in Europe and these systems, which are used for all kinds of protected areas. The references are agreed with IUCN and EEA as indicated in the table below.

MCPFE CATEGORY		EEA*	IUCN**
1: Management Objective "Biodiversity"	1.1: "No Active Intervention"	A	I
	1.2: "Minimum Intervention"	A	II, (IV)
	1.3: "Conservation Through Active Management"	A	IV, (V)
2: Management Objective "Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements"		B	III, (V, VI)
3: Management Objective "Protective Functions"		(B)	n.a.

* References as identified in the Standard Data Form of the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks, and used in the same way in the framework of the Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA), managed by the EEA on behalf of two other organisations (Council of Europe and UNEP-WCMC). Groups (A, B or C) are related to designation types and not to individual sites.

** Indicative reference:

- The equivalence of IUCN Categories V and VI may vary according to the specific management objective (of the forested part) of each individual protected area.
- IUCN Category III has biodiversity conservation as its primary management objective. However, it fits more easily under MCPFE category 2 than 1.

4 Definition of Categories

The main characteristics and restrictions to interventions define the five categories identified. Each of these requirements has to be fulfilled in order to assign areas of a specific protection regime to the categories.

⁹ IUCN – The World Conservation Union

¹⁰ European Environment Agency

Category 1.1: Management Objective Biodiversity “No Active Intervention”

Main characteristics:

- No active, direct human intervention
- Activities other than mentioned below are to be prevented

Activities allowed
Limited public access
Non-destructive research not detrimental to the management objective

Category 1.2: Management Objective Biodiversity “Minimum Intervention”

Main characteristics:

- Human intervention limited to minimum
- Activities other than mentioned below are to be prevented in the protected area

Activities allowed
Ungulate/game control
Control of diseases/insect outbreaks*
Public access
Fire intervention
Non-destructive research not detrimental to the management objective
Subsistence resource use**

* In case of expected large diseases/insect outbreaks control measures using biological methods are allowed provided that no other adequate control possibilities in buffer zones are feasible.

**Subsistence resource use to cover the needs of indigenous people and local communities, in so far as it will not adversely affect the objectives of management

Category 1.3: Management Objective Biodiversity “Conservation Through Active Management”

Main characteristics:

- Management with active interventions directed to achieve the specific conservation objective of the protected forest area
- Activities mentioned below are to be prevented

Activities not allowed
Resource extraction, harvesting and other silvicultural activities detrimental to management objective

Category 2: Management Objective "Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements"

Main characteristics:

- Interventions clearly directed to achieve management objectives landscape diversity, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual and historical values, recreation, specific natural elements
- Restricted use of forest resources
- Clear long-term commitment
- Explicit designation as specific protection regime defining a limited area with special status
- Activities mentioned below are to be prevented

Activities not allowed
Activities negatively affecting characteristics of landscapes or/and specific natural elements

Category 3: Management Objective "Protective Functions"

Main characteristics:

- Management clearly directed to protect soil and its properties or water quality and quantity or other forest ecosystem functions, or to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards
- Forests explicitly designated in management plan to fulfil protective functions
- Activities mentioned below are to be prevented

Activities not allowed
Any operation negatively affecting soil or water or the ability to protect other ecosystem functions, or the ability to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards