

**Memorandum of Understanding between the
European National Forest Inventory Network (ENFIN)**

and the

<name of institution>

Noting that:

- 1.0 The purpose of ENFIN is to promote development of forest information collection and co-operation between national forest inventory organisations in Europe. ENFIN is represented by the chairperson of the Steering Group.
- 2.0 The <name of institution>, responsible for <name of task>, is represented by <head of institution> and by <contact person> as the contact person.

ENFIN and <name of institution> have agreed to build partnership to support the activities of ENFIN endorsing the objectives and the organisational structure of the network as expressed in the appendix.

This MoU shall enter into force upon signatures for an indefinite period. The provisions of this MoU may be amended at any time by mutual consent by writing between all ENFIN members. The signatories may terminate the MoU by giving written notice one month in advance.

Vienna,

ENFIN Steering Group

Dr. Klemens Schadauer

<place>, <date>

<name of institution>

<head of institution>

Objectives, Activities and Structure of ENFIN

Background

Over the last few decades, the role of forestry and forest management in Europe has shifted from a wood-production orientation to one of sustainable ecosystem management. Therefore the scope of the national forest inventories (NFIs) has broadened and new variables for assessments have been introduced to meet the new information requirements. This concerns both the national needs and the needs for common reporting at the international level.

Traditionally, forest information has been collected through user-driven NFIs. The NFIs have gathered different types of information in some countries already since the 19th century. Systematic assessments based on sampling started in the 1920s.

The needs for new variables emerge from international conventions and policy processes, such as the Kyoto Protocol which addresses global climate change. In the framework of the Ministerial Conference for Protection of Forests of Europe (MCPFE), the European countries and the EU have agreed on quantitative indicators describing the sustainability of forest management. Many of these indicators originate from NFIs.

The FRA (2000) report indicated severe problems in the harmonisation of some variables, such as definitions for natural forests or other wooded land, forest available for wood supply or forest area by protection categories.

Another monitoring scheme has been performed at the European level by the EU and the International Co-operative Programme on assessment and monitoring of air pollution effects on forests (ICP-Forests). The purpose of this monitoring has been to assess the effects of air pollution on forest ecosystems. In some countries this work has been carried out in cooperation with the NFIs. Synergies between European level monitoring schemes and the NFIs are aimed at for ensuring coordinated and cost-effective acquisition of forest information.

In order to be able to respond to the needs of harmonised information at the European level, representatives of the European NFIs have established a network called ENFIN – European National Forest Inventory Network.

Being aware of activities related to assessments, reporting and analysis by international institutes and bodies with focus on Europe, such as the MCPFE, UNECE/FAO, JRC, EFI, etc., which can benefit and be complementary to the ENFIN efforts, ENFIN network will also be open to such relevant bodies.

ENFIN Objectives

The overall objective of ENFIN is to promote NFIs as comprehensive monitoring systems by collecting harmonised information of the forest ecosystem and thus serving a broad spectrum of forest related policies. Therefore ENFIN aims at enhancing co-operation between national forest inventory organisations in Europe, especially to

- strengthen the capacities of national forest resource inventories in Europe, in order to meet both national requirements for forest information and needs for harmonised and timely forest information at European and International level.
- provide a clearly visible platform for the provision of harmonised forest inventory information on European forests
- promote knowledge-sharing and new ideas, thereby ensuring continuous improvement of methods, data collection and data analysis within the national forests inventories (NFIs)
- maximise the synergy between NFIs and other European level data collection systems, monitoring and reporting activities
- ensure openness to new requirements on forest data for emerging policy needs

Activities

In order to support the ENFIN objectives the following activities are foreseen:

- Establish and maintain a network to support all policy fields requiring information about forest ecosystems and their sustainable use.
- Work actively with harmonisation issues in order to provide a core set of harmonised forest variables for reporting at regular intervals
- Propose and launch projects in line with the objectives under the umbrella of ENFIN
- Establish and maintain a forum for sharing experiences and new ideas among the NFIs
- Conduct an active and open dialogue with key organisations
- Suggest and prioritise core variables addressing emerging policy needs
- Disseminate information on ENFIN to outside world
- Promote the role of ENFIN partners

Organisational structure

Key features of the organisational structure of ENFIN are:

- ENFIN is a network of national forest inventory organisations. National and international organisations involved in forest resource assessments and reporting in European countries are also eligible for membership.
- A steering group is elected at the annual meeting. The maximum term for each member is 5 years. A chairperson and a deputy chairperson are elected by the members of the group. The steering group decides on applications for membership. The Steering Group acts as a contact node to ENFIN between meetings and as a centre for initiatives to achieve the objectives of the network. Decisions about ENFIN objectives and organisation can only be made at the annual meeting.
- Each organisation is free to decide in what parts of the ENFIN work it participates and what ENFIN decisions to consider.
- ENFIN has no continuous financing but will work for ensuring funding for networking activities and for development projects in line with the overall ambitions. Due to funding requirements, it is likely that new project based structures will be needed in parallel to the organisation suggested here. Such structures will be established on a case basis.
- Thematic or regional groups may be formed for the conduction of specific projects.