



Concept note

Promotion of Green Jobs in the Forest Sector: Challenges and Opportunities

Joint FOREST EUROPE, UNECE and FAO Workshop

Background

The forest sector has a great potential to generate jobs and income, support livelihoods and contribute to rural development by supplying goods and maintaining forest ecosystem services. The forest sector is expected to play an important role in the emerging green economy in the pan-European region. The transition to a greener economy offers opportunities for economic prosperity, environmental protection and social inclusion, and can contribute to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In recent years, the green economy and green jobs have been core topics of the FOREST EUROPE process. In April 2014, a workshop on green economy and social aspects of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) was held in Santander, Spain. This preparatory work resulted in the adoption of the **Madrid Ministerial Resolution 1 'Forest sector in the center of Green Economy'**. In the area of social aspects of sustainable forest management and green jobs, Ministers responsible for forests decided to:

- Develop guidelines on the promotion of green jobs in the forest sector in the region;
- Exchange knowledge and experience in education and training systems and, in particular, requirements for new skills for forest workers, forest managers and forest owners, in collaboration with the relevant institutions, with a view to identifying possible pan-European recommendations;
- Explore possibilities for applying gender mainstreaming to pan-European activities.

Following the outcomes of the Seventh Ministerial Conference in Madrid in 2015 and in accordance with the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020, an **Expert Group on green jobs, education and training systems** was established. It provides the platform for dialogue with the aim to implement the ministerial commitment at the regional level. The Expert Group consists of experts nominated by signatory countries and observer organisations, who provide policy and expert advice to the Expert Level Meeting and guidance to the Liaison Unit Bratislava in their work related to employment in the forest sector, green jobs, forestry education and skills development. It collaborates closely with the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (FTS) and the UNECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector (ToS).

FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020

4.3: Enhancing the role of Sustainable Forest Management in a green economy

4.3.1. New skills and Green jobs

- Establishment of the Expert Group on green jobs, education and training systems identifying and specifying requirements for green jobs including skills development
- Organisation of the workshop on new skills and green jobs (covering aspects such as health and safety, gender issues, migrant workers, long-term unemployment and other social issues as well as policy coherence and cross-sectoral communication)
- Preparation of pan-European Guidelines for promotion of green jobs in the forest sector by the Expert Group

The **UNECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector** (ToS), a subsidiary body of the UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), works on defining, describing and promoting green jobs and has contributed to reinforcing cooperation between forestry centers. The Team of Specialists advises and supports the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section on the implementation of the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work on issues related to employment in the forest sector such as: jobs, needed competencies, education and training for the forest sector in the context of a green economy.

The **Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy (RAP)**, a blueprint for the green economy in the forests sector in the UNECE region was adopted in Rovaniemi, Finland at the Joint Session of COFFI and EFC in 2013. It promotes the development and implementation of policies and communicates the potential of the region's forest sector to policy makers, the general public and decisions-makers in other sectors. The plan contains 5 pillars for action; pillar C addresses green jobs in the forest sector.

Rovaniemi Action Plan – Pillar C. Decent green jobs in the forest sector

Goal: The workforce is able to implement sustainable forest management, and the forest sector contributes to achieving the social goals of the green economy by providing decent jobs

Objective C. 0. to develop and communicate ambitious and realistic strategies for decent green jobs in the forest sector

Objective C.1: To ensure that the workforce has the necessary skills at all levels to carry out the increasingly complex tasks associated with sustainable forest management

Objective C.2: To reduce the level of illness and injury experienced at present by the forestry workforce, taking into account the changes in technology and their implications for occupational health and safety due to the transition to a green economy

Objective C.3: To review the work methods used for harvesting and silviculture, determine whether they need to be improved and to ensure the best practice is applied everywhere

Objective C.4: To promote the use of tools to assess the socio-economic impacts of green economy policies on the forest sector

Objective C.5: To improve the situation of forestry education and identify present and future requirements for forestry professionals in the region, in order to get well prepared for future emerging challenges for the sector.

Purpose

The **main purpose of the Workshop** is to share lessons learned and stimulate discussions among relevant partners within and outside the forest sector on the ***promotion of green jobs and the development of new skills for the European forest sector***, while supporting sustainable development and the transition to a green economy.

Objectives

1. Review and discuss at policy level the main threats to sustainability of the workforce, and possible countermeasures. The review should also include gender aspects.

2. To share lessons learned and stimulate discussion and exchange knowledge and experience in:

(i) The promotion and development of green jobs in the forest sector, including policies, policy tools and mechanisms to strengthen environmentally sustainable and decent employment (including rural entrepreneurship) in the transition towards a green economy;

(i) Education and development of new skills needed for supporting sustainable development and the transition to a green economy;

(ii) Promoting cross-sectoral approaches, innovative ideas covering all aspects of forestry, and mechanisms to promote new skills.

3. To formulate recommendations for the promotion of green jobs in the forest sector including new skills development (upon which to build pan-European guidelines);

4. Explore the potential of the concept of green jobs for communicating forestry issues to other sectors and the contribution of the sector to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant international commitments as well as for raising awareness on the diversification of employment opportunities in rural areas.

Outputs

Discussions at the workshop will provide an important contribution to identification and promotion of state-of-the-art approaches to green jobs and new skills development in the European forest sector. Proceedings of the meeting will include:

- recommendations on topics requiring further cooperation amongst relevant partners and recommendations to relevant intergovernmental processes;
- recommendations and preliminary guidance to be used for the development of pan-European guidelines on the promotion of green jobs in the forest sector, as mandated by the Madrid Resolution and carried out by the FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on green jobs, education and training systems;

The outputs of the workshop will provide input to the work of FORESR EUROPE, as well as the UNECE COFFI and FAO EFC, as appropriate.

Workshop dates and venue

The Workshop will be held on **27—28 June 2017** in Bratislava, Slovakia (Hotel tbd).

Workshop participation and arrangements

Main arrangements for the workshop were discussed during the kick-off meeting of the FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on Green Jobs, Education and Training Systems involving representatives of UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the UNECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector.

- The workshop will be organized and its proceedings produced jointly by FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit Bratislava and UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section.
- The workshop is open to all signatories and observers of FOREST EUROPE as well as member States and observers of UNECE and FAO, including the private sector. Members of the Expert Group and the Team of Specialists will be actively engaged in the preparation and conduct of the workshop.
- Participation of experts (technical level) is encouraged from: government agencies including social/employment and statistical offices, research and academia, forest management organizations, civil society and the private sector. A balanced mix of stakeholders will be sought. Representatives from other sectors will be invited to share broader views and experience with the promotion of green jobs.
- The workshop agenda will be prepared by LUB and FTS in close consultation with the Expert Group and the Team of Specialists.
- Around 60 – 80 participants are expected to attend.
- Invited speakers will be identified with to reflect the different conditions in the region, impelling different priorities, challenges and opportunities.

- International organizations (i.e. UNECE, ILO, UNEP, the European Commission) and other relevant actors will also be invited to present cross-sectoral practice.
- Background documents and links to available literature sources will be uploaded on the FOREST EUROPE and UNECE/FAO websites prior to the Workshop.
- The first part of the workshop will consist of introductory presentations and selected examples of green job practices. The main part of the Workshop will be organized in the form of parallel working groups, engaging participants in a dialogue resulting in recommendations for the consideration of relevant intergovernmental processes.
- The workshop will be conducted in English.

Contact information

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