

Summary Report

Global Core Set Task Force

Monday 13 March,
Rome, Italy

Participants	
Ms Eva MULLER, , FAO	Ms Valerie KAPOS, UNEP-WCMC
Mr Peter CSOKA, FAO	Mr Martin MORAVCIK, FOREST EUROPE
Mr Anssi PEKKARINEN, FAO	Mr Tomasz JUSZCZAK, UNFF
Mr Lars Gunnar MARKLUND, FAO	Mr Roman MICHALAK, UNECE
Mr Örjan JONSSON, FAO	Mr Steven JOHNSON, ITTO
Ms Thais LINHARES-JUVENAL, FAO	Ms Catalina SANTAMARIA, CBD
Mr Ilias ANIMON, FAO	Mr Chris BUSS, IUCN
Mr David HENDERSON, FAO Consultant	

Opening session

The meeting focused on the Global Core Set (GCS) of indicators that was recommended by the meeting of the Organization Lead Initiative (OLI) in November 2016.

Ms Eva Muller welcomed everybody recalling the whole process leading to this meeting. Since the OLI meeting, the UN Strategic Plan on Forest has been approved and some discussions on the plans for the next FRA have been carried out. In this context, she said, the identification of the GCS of indicators aimed at reducing the reporting burden on countries, as those indicators would be incorporated as much as possible into the existing reporting processes. As an outcome of the OLI meeting, a draft list of indicators was prepared, where the indicators were marked in green, yellow or red, according to the level of acceptance of their inclusion. She asked the participants to review the list of indicators with an emphasis on those in yellow color where no consensus was reached during the OLI meeting.

Setting the scene

Anssi Pekkarinen (FAO)

Mr Pekkarinen commented that one recommendation from the OLI meeting was to reduce the number of indicators from 21 to between 10 and 15. The GCS proposal will go through a consultation process and eventually be put forward for discussion at the FRA Expert Consultation in Joensuu, Finland, in particular to identify which indicators should be covered by FRA and which by other reporting processes, hoping that most of them would be covered by FRA.

Peter Csoka (FAO)

Mr Csoka gave some background of previous work that has led to the work on the GCS. Previous to the OLI meeting, an informal working group with participation of several organizations was working on a voluntary basis on common indicators to measure progress towards SFM. The CPF initiatives on streamlining forest reporting and harmonizing forest definitions, were active some years ago. These processes generated a lot of results appreciated by the countries, i.e. an increased use of common terms and definitions. Based on this positive experience, and considering the new SDG reporting framework and the new UNFF strategic plan, the establishment of the GCS of indicators was considered as a way to help countries to address increased reporting requirements.

Global Forest Goal indicators (Tomasz Juszczak, UNFF)

In January 2017, the Special Session of UNFF adopted the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, which includes 6 Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets. The UNFF Secretariat was requested to develop a framework for reporting to the UNFF. In February 2017, the UNFF Secretariat organized an Expert Group meeting on reporting to the Forum, where a draft reporting template, containing preliminary list of potential indicators was presented. So far the reporting to the Forum has been more focused on qualitative information from countries, and has not been collecting quantitative data, as these have been collected by FAO. The agreement was to continue with this narrative style, which could be complemented by some quantitative data on the indicators. The format was developed further, taking into account comments received during the Expert Meeting and during online consultation. The proposed format for reporting, along with the preliminary list of potential indicators will be discussed at the 12th UNFF session in May 2017, where Member States will decide on the reporting format and reporting cycle.

SDGs (Thais Linhares-Juvenal, FAO)

Ms. Juvenal gave an update on the work with the forest-related SDG indicators. In 2016, FAO submitted a proposal to the Interagency Expert Group (IAEG) proposing a promotion of indicator 15.2.1 to Tier 1. The IEAG meeting in November 2016 approved its upgrade to Tier 2, but also voiced some concerns, in particular that the sub-indicator on forest area net change rate overlapped with the 15.1.1 indicator, and also the weak data coverage of the sub-indicator on forest certification. There were also concerns of the methodology trying to combine the sub-indicators into an index or dashboard. The IAEG therefore requested FAO to submit a modified proposal to be considered in the IAEG meeting in March 2017. This proposal has now been submitted suggesting to upgrade the indicator to Tier 1, and we are now waiting for the results from the IAEG meeting.

In the current proposal, the indicator on forest certification is still included, as it does not have coverage limitations and there was no consensus among countries participating in the OLI meeting about its maintenance or exclusion. The dashboard approach has been discarded and replaced by an individual reporting of each of the sub-indicators which gives more flexibility in the interpretation.

All the forest-related SDG indicators under FAO custodianship are now being reported: the 15.1.1 is Tier 1 and has already been reported on twice, while 15.2.1 (Tier 2) will be reported for the first time. Indicator 15.4.2 (Mountain Green Cover Index) is also a Tier 2 indicator, for which information has been collected by FAO using a sampling-based approach and visual interpretation of high resolution satellite images.

Ms. Juvenal also informed that FAO is currently developing e-learning courses for capacity building on the reporting of the SDG indicators. The idea is to use these e-learning courses as part of the FRA capacity building.

FRA update (Anssi Pekkarinen, FAO)

FRA has started the process of nomination of National Correspondents (NC), some 120 nominations have been received so far, and there are already nominations from some new countries (previously without NC). The FRA team is working on the terms and definitions and scope of next FRA, trying to reduce the reporting burden by removing some variables. The FRA 2020 scope will be discussed at the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists meeting in May in Norway and then at the Joensuu FRA Expert Consultation in June. The designing of the new online FRA platform, which will be used for the reporting, with improved review, analysis and dissemination functionality has been initiated. There are also plans to incorporate a geospatial module in the online platform. The intent is that the platform will facilitate reporting, increase the transparency of reported data and improve the interaction between the NCs and the reviewers. The intention is to report national data and let the subsequent conversion of national data to FRA categories and definitions be done within the platform. This would be an important change that would also allow the countries to use the portal for their own purposes, which could be of great benefit in particular for many developing countries. The UNECE Timber Section in Geneva and FOREST EUROPE are partaking in this work. The idea is that the platform itself will provide the possibilities to integrate other reporting processes. Testing of the platform will commence in September and a platform with core functionalities will be officially launched at the Global Meeting in 2018 likely in Mexico (venue not yet confirmed).

ITTO, Steve Johnson.

ITTO is actively involved in the FRA process and believes that FRA is the best mechanism to develop the CFRQ. ITTO wishes to continue to be part of the further development of the CFRQ as their analysis on the reporting needs shows that it can result in a lot of synergy. In 2016, ITTO published an updated set of Criteria and Indicators for SFM that can be downloaded from

http://www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics_pdf_download/topics_id=4872&no=1&disp=inline

UNEP-WCMC, Valerie Kapos

There is now available a geospatial dataset on protected areas, which is being updated monthly. During a recent visit by FAO, it was discussed how this dataset could be incorporated in the FRA online platform.

FOREST EUROPE, Martin Moravcik

FOREST EUROPE is cooperating with FRA and UNECE for the data collection for the next State of Europe's forests report. A plan for an updated questionnaire will be discussed in the FAO/UNECE Team of Specialist meeting in May this year. Harmonizing the GCS Indicators with the FOREST EUROPE reporting is important. The next State of Europe's forests report will be published in 2020.

CBD, Catalina Santamaria

CBD has been involved in the work on indicators and reporting, but did not participate in the OLI and UNFF meetings. CBD is also part of the FRA Advisory Group.

Relevant outcomes from the CBD COP13 in Mexico (December 2016) were:

Decision XIII/27 which requested the Executive Secretary:

- To make the guidelines, including the reporting templates, for the sixth national report available to Parties
- To further develop the voluntary online reporting tool
- To finalize the resource manual for the sixth national report

Decision XIII/28 that establishes the indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity targets.

CBD is interested in exploring potential alignments with the FRA, for instance through the new platform which is being developed.

UNECE, Roman Michalak

UNECE assists FAO in FRA reporting and cooperates with FOREST EUROPE and FAO in the European reporting, and through the CFRQ questionnaire and supports the joint reporting on variables common to these two processes. UNECE also participates in the annual reporting to the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ). Today’s meeting is interesting also because the core set of variables might be used for outlook studies.

Working session - refinement of the GCS of indicators

Each of the GCS indicators was discussed, its consistency with existing reporting processes was checked and the wording adjusted as needed. Between two potential indicators proposed (as in the case of indicators 5, 13 and 20, an appropriate option was chosen, after discussion.

Each indicator was color-coded, according to the legend below. The indicators, that the Task Force felt are ready to be implemented, were classified as green. Those indicators which were already green, but were slightly modified by the Task Force were marked with light green. Indicators that were not yet ready for reporting, but represented work in progress, were kept as yellow. Finally, those indicators that would require substantial reworking or were not conceptually clear and therefore could be removed from the GCS of indicators were marked as red.

LEGEND
OLI core indicator
OLI core indicator slightly modified by task force
Further work needed
Remove from the core set

GCS Indicator

#	Indicator	Issues raised at OLI	Task force indicator suggestion	Task force comments	Data source	Definitions
1	Forest area net change rate (%/per year)	None	Forest area as proportion of total land area	Modified from "Forest area net change rate (%/year) as the net change rate can be computed using forest area as proportion of land area (land area reference year 2015). The proposed indicator name corresponds to the SDG 15.1 wording. No factual change.	FRA/ SDG	
2	Proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas (%)	Other protection than "legally" should be considered, perhaps referring to the IUCN Protected Area categories	Forest area within protected areas	Modified. The term "legally established" dropped to avoid confusion and the indicator changed from proportion to total area. The protected areas should follow the definition of IUCN/CBD. If possible, the reporting should be broken down by IUCN categories. The proportion of forest area located within protected areas can be calculated. Efforts be made to	FRA/ SDG	IUCN: "clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values" CBD: "a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives"

				maintain consistency with SDG indicator terminology.		
3	Forest health and vitality: % of forest area disturbed	Difficult to combine data on different types of disturbance Define list of types of disturbance Exclude harvesting Differentiate from 12 on degraded forest	Further work needed	Further work needed. TF proposes using Use "damaged" instead of "disturbed" and defining list of disturbance/or damage categories. Fairly good data on fire and possibly large areas hit by storms. Suggest dropping of vitality as it is difficult to measure.	No source identified	Note: it was mentioned at the TF meeting that "damage" needs a clear definition (e.g., reduced production >20%, unwanted or unnatural fire, damage from invasive insects), especially to distinguish it from 'degradation'. So this indicator would monitor natural disturbances and other kind of degradation would be reported using indicator 12.
4	Above-ground biomass stock in forest (tonnes/ha)	Overharvesting/degradation/damage will result in reduced biomass/ha, so this is a powerful sustainability indicator In some cases higher biomass/ha may be negative (increased fuel load for fires)	Above-ground biomass stock in forest	Modified. Suggest reporting in tonnes instead of tonnes/ha as the latter can be derived.	FRA/ SDG	
5	Protective functions of forest resources	Only indicator addressing protective functions of forests (thematic element)	Protective functions of forest	This is not an indicator, but rather a thematic element/area.	not applicable	
	a. Mountain Green Cover Index (forest component)	MGCI does not address protective functions of forests outside mountain areas	Option b (below) was preferred	Further work needed. Tier 2 SDG indicator. Development work in progress. Not ready to be included in the core set but progress with this needs to be	SDG 15.4.2	

			assessed and inclusion to be considered in the future. Changed to red.		
	or				
	b. Forest area designated and managed for protection of soil and water	Multiple functions make it hard to identify forests "designated and managed" for protection	Forest area designated and managed for protection of soil and water	Preferred option as already reported to FRA. Changed to green.	FRA
6	Number of forest related jobs per 1000 ha of forest	Should be at least one socioeconomic indicator on jobs Significance of changes in this indicator not clear (productivity or job creation) Denominator (ha of forest) not appropriate Explore ideas of parity, revenue, fatalities	Employment in forestry and logging	Modified. Change proposed from "Number of forest related jobs per 1000 ha of forest" to employment in forestry and logging. Employment per 1000 ha of forests can be derived). Changed to green.	FRA
7	Existence of policies supporting SFM, including formal protection of existing forest, or definition of a permanent forest estate in countries where this is necessary, with the institutions and resources necessary to implement these policies	Governance indicator Concepts already used in FRA 2015 Rerword for increased clarity and concision	Existence of policies supporting SFM	Modified. "...including formal protection of existing forest, or definition of a permanent forest estate in countries where this is necessary, with the institutions and resources necessary to implement these policies" was deleted from the indicator name as those are only examples of such policies. They can	FRA?

				be added to the explanatory note.		
8	Existence of a recent, scientifically sound, national forest inventory	Governance indicator Concept already used in FRA 2015	Existence of scientifically sound national forest assessment process	Modified. Deleted the word 'recent' and added the word 'process' in the original indicator to reflect the need for continuous information flow. Suggest adding "includes NFI and related information and monitoring systems" in the explanatory note. This indicator should be #9	FRA?	A challenge with this is that you can have a process but no data, perhaps adding inventory before process is needed.
9	Existence of a national multi-stakeholder policy platform, with active participation of civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector	Governance indicator Concept already used in FRA 2015	Existence of a national mechanism to secure multi-stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of forest-related policies	Modified the original wording to avoid ambiguity. This indicator should be #8	FRA 2015	After national, may need to add sub-national.
10	Proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan	Governance indicator Concept already used in FRA 2015	Forest area under a long-term forest management plan	Modified from "proportion of forest area" to "Forest area" to align with SDG 15.2.1 proposal	FRA	Period for " long -term" is 5 or more years; or is the period much more open
11	Forest area under an independently verified forest management	Concept already used in FRA 2015 Concern in IAEG that certification is not an official policy instrument Not all sustainably managed forest are certified – indicator could lead to misunderstanding	Forest area under an independently verified forest management	Changed to green. Explanatory note should refer to	FSC/PEFC	

	certification scheme (ha)		certification scheme	different types of certification schemes. The TF discussed the problem of double accounting but did not find a solution to that because countries seem not to have that information. Deleted "ha"	
12	Percentage change in area of degraded forest	Included in GOFs Problems defining and measuring forest degradation Differentiate from 3 on disturbance	Further work needed	<p>Further work needed. Link to GOFs lost during their revision. Measurement of forest and land restoration was seen as a better option and it was noted that the intention seems to be include forest degradation as part of 15.3.1 (Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area) which has (status to be checked) three sub-indicators which are land cover and land cover change, land productivity, and carbon stocks above and below ground. It was also noted that forest</p>	<p>FAO/UNCCD SDG 15.3.1?</p> <p>CPF has a definition on forest degradation. What there isn't, is a global dataset.</p> <p>For discussion: https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol18/iss2/art20/</p> <p>FRA WORKING PAPERS on Degradation: http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2479e/i2479e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k8596e/k8596e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k8595e/k8595e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k8594e/k8594e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k8593e/k8593e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k8592e/k8592e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/al041e/al041e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7611e/k7611e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7610e/k7610e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7609e/k7609e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7608e/k7608e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7612e/k7612e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7180e/k7180e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7179e/k7179e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7178e/k7178e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7177e/k7177e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k7176e/k7176e00.pdf http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/k6869e/k6869e00.pdf ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/k6217e/k6217e00.pdf</p>

				degradation is ambiguous as no global definition for it exists.		
13	a. Percentage change in the number of forest dependent people	Included in GOFs Problems in defining/measuring “forest dependent” people, “livelihoods” Significance for sustainability of the indicator?	Further work needed	Further work needed. The indicator is vague as the term ‘forest-dependent people’ lacks a globally accepted definition. It is not clear whether a positive change in the value of the indicator reflects positive development. The TF proposes using “ Number of people living in extreme poverty whose livelihoods are dependent on forest and trees ” instead. However, the indicator requires further work and alignment with the Global Forest Goals.	No source identified	
	or					
	b. Livelihoods of forest dependent people		Further work needed	see above	No source identified	This is not clear as an indicator.
14	Percentage change in official development assistance for sustainable forest management	Included in GOFs Data available	Official development assistance for SFM	Modified. “Percentage change in...” was removed from the original wording of the	OECD	

				indicator The use of absolute value allows calculation of share of SFM funding of total ODA		
15	Financial resources from all sources (except ODA) for the implementation of sustainable forest management (\$/ha of forest)	Included in GOFs Need to define "all sources" (include revenue from forest management, private investment, public budgets etc.)	Further work needed	Further work needed. Although it is important to track all financing sources it would be easier to limit the indicator to public expenditure on SFM (as was done in the past FRAs). Potential danger of double accounting (private sector, academia, etc). Possible alignment with CBD?	No source identified	
16	Volume of wood harvested per 1000 forest workers (m3/1000 workers)	Addresses efficiency in use of factors of production (green economy) Significance (workers more productive in developed countries, because of capital)? Informal workers?	Volume of wood removals	Modified. Suggest replacing "wood harvested per 1000 forest workers" with "wood removals" and consider as new indicator, using JFSQ data.	JFSQ	
17	Share of wood based energy in total primary energy consumption, of which in modern clean systems (%)	Significance not fully clear (traditional wood energy v. clean wood-based renewable energy)	Further work needed	Further work needed. The Task Force questioned this indicator's role in the GCS of indicator and proposes using removal statistics (woodfuel vs total removals) instead.	JFSQ	

18	Recovery rates for paper and solid wood products (volume recovered for re-use as % of volume consumed)	Considered outside scope of SFM, as not subject to SFM policy instruments	none		No source identified	
19	Carbon stocks and carbon stock changes in forest land: net forest GHG sink/source of forests, forest carbon stock, carbon storage in harvested wood products (Tons C)	Too many elements in indicator. Needs better focus to clarify significance	none	Dropped. Changes in ABG biomass stock already captured by indicator #4. Using UNFCCC data could cause confusion as it often disagrees with the figures reported to FRA (forest definition, etc.)	No source identified	
20	a. Proportion of traded/consumed forest products derived from illegal logging or trade (%)	Topic important, necessary to monitor success of new policy instruments.	none	Dropped. Reliable data on illegal logging and trade is difficult to obtain. Therefore, the Task Force preferred proposed option b	No source identified	
	or					
	Existence of a robust system to track sustainably produced forest products	Measurement of illegal activity clearly challenging	b. Existence of a traceability system for wood products	Modified. The meeting suggested a rewording to “ Existence of a verified tracing system to track sustainably produced forest products ”. After the meeting a further consultation with FAO subject	No source identified	

				specialists suggested "Existence of a traceability system for wood products". FAO has modified the name accordingly. Changed to green.		
21	Value of payments for ecosystem services (PES) related to forests (value of payments, as ratio to total forest area or area of forest covered by such PES)	Concepts not yet defined Measurement problems, especially for small PES schemes Better to use value rather than number of schemes.	Further work needed	Further work needed. Not ready for the GCS of indicators. Data on payments (from where?) What is the SFM connection?	No source identified	

Proposed GCS of Indicators by thematic areas

THEMATIC AREAS	#	ORIGINAL INDICATOR AS OF THE OLI MEETING	INDICATOR AS PROPOSED BY THE TASK FORCE MEETING
EXTENT OF FOREST RESOURCES	1	Forest area net change rate (%/per year)	Forest area as proportion of total land area
	4	Above-ground biomass stock in forest (tonnes/ha)	Above-ground biomass stock in forest
	19	Carbon stocks and carbon stock changes in forest land: net forest GHG sink/source of forests, forest carbon stock, carbon storage in harvested wood products (Tons C)	REMOVED
FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY	2	Proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas (%)	Forest area within protected areas
FOREST HEALTH AND VITALITY	3	Forest health and vitality: % of forest area disturbed	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
	12	Percentage change in area of degraded forest	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
PRODUCTIVE FUNCTIONS OF FOREST RESOURCES	16	Volume of wood harvested per 1000 forest workers (m3/1000 workers)	Volume of wood removals
	17	Share of wood based energy in total primary energy consumption, of which in modern clean systems (%)	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
	18	Recovery rates for paper and solid wood products (volume recovered for re-use as % of volume consumed)	REMOVED
PROTECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF FOREST RESOURCES	5	a. Mountain Green Cover Index (forest component)	REMOVED, option b preferred
		or b. Forest area designated and managed for protection of soil and water	Forest area designated and managed for protection of soil and water
SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF FORESTS	6	Number of forest related jobs per 1000 ha of forest	Employment in forestry and logging
	13	a. Percentage change in the number of forest dependent people	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
		or b. Livelihoods of forest dependent people	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
	14	Percentage change in official development assistance for sustainable forest management	Official development assistance for SFM
	15	Financial resources from all sources (except ODA) for the implementation of sustainable forest management (\$/ha of forest)	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
LEGAL, POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK	7	Existence of policies supporting SFM, including formal protection of existing forest, or definition of a permanent forest estate in countries where this is necessary, with the institutions and resources necessary to implement these policies	Existence of policies supporting SFM
	8	Existence of a recent, scientifically sound, national forest inventory	Existence of scientifically sound national forest assessment process
	9	Existence of a national multi-stakeholder policy platform, with active participation of civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector	Existence of a national mechanism to secure multi-stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of forest-related policies
	10	Proportion of forest area under a long term forest management plan	Forest area under a long-term forest management plan
	11	Forest area under an independently verified forest management certification scheme (ha)	Forest area under an independently verified forest management certification scheme
	20	a. Proportion of traded/consumed forest products derived from illegal logging or trade (%)	REMOVED, option b preferred
		or b. Existence of a robust system to track sustainable produced forest products	Existence of a traceability system for wood products
	21	Value of payments for ecosystem services (PES) related to forests (value of payments, as ratio to total forest area or area of forest covered by such PES)	FURTHER WORK NEEDED

Next steps (Work plan and online consultation)

Anssi Pekkarinen thanked everybody for the excellent work of the Task Force and summarized the results of the work. Four indicators were proposed for removal or replacement with more appropriate and existing indicators. The wording of several green indicators was slightly modified to match with the existing SDG/FRA indicators and variables. The indicators classified as green after the review are considered appropriate and with data available, while those colored in orange would need further review, either because they are under development or data are not readily available and further work are needed on definitions and data collection.

Anssi Pekkarinen informed about the next steps. A Summary Document representing the view of the Task Force will be completed in collaboration with the participants who took part in the meeting. This document, and especially the GCS list, will be taken to an online consultation process and eventually to the FRA Expert Consultation.