



## Annex 3: Recommendations from the CI-SFM regional workshops

### Zagreb, Croatia 26-27 March 2013

The background and objective of the workshop (WS) was to define and understand the various aspects of the implementation of criteria and indicators (C&I) at the national level; to share experiences and identify regional issues for the Western Balkans; and to propose recommendations on C&I implementation in the region. The WS was structured across 3 Working Groups (WG) according to applications listed in the working definition<sup>1</sup>, developed under the Implementing Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in Europe (CI-SFM) project.

- Working Group 1 focused on policy (application 1 and 4);
- Working Group 2 focused on monitoring and reporting (application 2 and 3);
- Working Group 3 focused on the environment (application 5).

Results<sup>2</sup> from the WS confirm that there are only limited and/or indirect applications of C&I throughout most of the Western Balkans region (excluding the case of Slovenia that was brought forward as a positive example). It also demonstrates a general lack of awareness as regards the implementation of C&I at the national level. Noted examples of C&I applications were certification (e.g. FSC) or international and national reporting (e.g. FAO, UNECE or by relevant ministries or through forest management plans).

From the discussions in the WS (both in the initial WGs and from the final discussion) some major issues were raised. Given the lack of C&I applications and considering the specific needs of the Western Balkans region, these are primarily related to the institutional and governance-related problems and/or barriers concerning the various applications of C&I, and not the C&I set directly. These are as follows:

- The most commonly noted issue throughout all WGs **was a lack of interest** for C&I amongst policy-makers, interlinked with a **lack of awareness and/or knowledge** at all governance levels (from the general public to stakeholders and policy-makers). This highlights the need for **raising interest and to make C&I attractive**, from the top to bottom. It was noted that if the current negotiations for an LBA were to be successful this might remedy the lack of interest for C&I implementation amongst policy-makers. Also pressure from the EU-level may help to address this issue (e.g. drive for accession).
- Connected to the previous issue is the need for **capacity building**. This is again a problem at all governance levels, ranging from a **lack of human capacities** amongst relevant national institutions (e.g. Ministries in charge of C&I implementation) to stakeholders (e.g. NGOs and research institutes). One suggestion (as a bottom-up approach) was to disseminate relevant information (adjusted to the target audience), including clear and positive case examples that demonstrate the benefits of C&I applications. Future WS's organised by FOREST EUROPE could in part facilitate this process, namely, by incorporating more **capacity-building elements** into their workshops (e.g. provide training and to utilise WS participants networks to distribute information). Another, top-down, suggestion was to lobby so that international organisations (such as FAO) exerts more pressure on policy-makers to develop capacities in relevant institutions.
- The lack of a clear institutional setup and a pervasive lack of capacities is the main problem facing C&I implementation in the Western Balkans region. This is however a complex issue that cannot be resolved through improved interest and capacities alone, but it requires improved **horizontal and vertical coordination and communications** (e.g. cross-sectoral communication), resolving **legislative issues and jurisdiction** (e.g. address who collects and have

<sup>1</sup> The CI-SFM working definition is available online.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings are published on the workshop's website.



access to data), **stakeholder involvement** (e.g. tackling different perceptions of C&I and improving the understanding of indicators), **complementarity of C&I sets** (e.g. reduce reporting overload, harmonise definitions and data collection to ensure the involvement and data demand of other sectors), and **financing mechanisms** (e.g. establishing Forest Information Systems), etc.

All the above-noted issues provide a generic regional overview as regards the difficulties in implementing C&I. The absence of clear C&I applications in the Western Balkans region makes it difficult to provide concrete recommendations for how to improve the implementation of C&I. The integrated recommendations are thus rather generic and focused on how C&I implementation may be fostered throughout this region.

### Budapest, Hungary 23-24 April 2013

The background and objective of the Budapest workshop (WS) was to define and understand the various aspects of the implementation of criteria and indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) at the national level; to share experiences and identify regional issues across the Central, Eastern and part of Northern Europe; as well as to propose recommendations on C&I implementation in these regions. The WS was structured across 2 Working Groups (WG) according to applications listed in the working definition<sup>3</sup> of implementing the pan-European set of C&I of SFM.

- Working Group 1 focused on policy (application 1 and 4),
- Working Group 2 focused on monitoring and reporting (application 2 and 3).

Both groups were also requested to address application 5. Results<sup>4</sup> from the Budapest WS demonstrate that there is a significantly varied application of C&I throughout the countries represented in the WS, ranging from the Northern (Finland) to the Eastern (Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus) and Central (Austria, Slovenia and Hungary) parts of Europe. The major reasons for the variation in

implementing C&I set comes primarily from the different national socio-economic conditions, as well as, legal, policy and institutional frameworks and a varying level of awareness, human capacities and resources available. During both the separate WG sessions and from the final round table discussion (including all participants), the following issues were raised:

WG1 on policy noted that C&I applications ranged from being not applied at all to being utilised as a tool for SFM. The main challenges identified for not applying C&I were recognized as a lack of awareness from the top (policy-makers and ministries) to the bottom (stakeholders and NGOs). Furthermore, the difficulties in finding a common interpretation for C&I as regards to definitions and targets have been strongly emphasised and linked to barriers concerning the legislative adoption of the C&I. Other challenges discussed were complimentary in reporting (at the institutional level and by forest owners), such as the overburdening in reporting duties, and the lack of cross-sectoral communication. These aspects were also connected to emerging issues, such as, support for a common definition of SFM at the national level, finding support for National Forest Inventories (NFIs), stakeholder involvement (with reference to forest owner duties and the democratisation process in Eastern Europe) and financing. To address these challenges and emerging issues it was recommended to address the following areas:

- **Legislation** – in terms of developing policy documents on the implementation of C&I and SFM. This was notably related to complementarity issues and the importance to streamline methods for data collection at the national level (dependent on national priorities) and to address institutional gaps.
- **Communication** – with regard to finding a common interpretation of C&I and SFM as well as the importance to engage in science-policy-stakeholder interactions (both horizontally and vertically).
- **Financing** – which was principally linked to the importance of raising interest (from top to bottom). This would presumably result in increased resources available for implementing C&I.

All these three issues were seen as being inter-linked and dependent on each other. It is for exam-

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<sup>4</sup> Proceedings are published on the workshop's website.



ple difficult to raise interest amongst policy makers unless there is pressure to change the legislative framework as regards C&I applications at the national level.

WG2 on monitoring and reporting discussed two main issues. The first issue was on monitoring and reporting on the state of the forest and concerned the **assessment towards SFM** and identifying emerging issues. It was noted that the main challenge is that not all indicators are suitable for assessment of SFM. To address these challenges it was recommended to address the following areas:

- **Develop** indicators that **address future challenges**, such as, effects of climate change on forests, increased and/or decreased demand for wood, and effects of forest management on water systems.
- **Leave some indicators out** (ind. 2.3, 3.5, 4.7), because the pan-European level data supply of
  - **Defoliation** (ind. 2.3) has been reduced by ICP Forest and does not allow any longer statistically sound national derivations.
  - **Forests under management plans** (ind. 3.5), focuses on forests with management plans and equivalents and therefore almost all countries have reported 100%. However there is no information on the quality of the plans.
  - **Landscape pattern** (ind. 4.7), which has not yet an agreed methodology and so far only one country (Austria) has made suggestions on how to measure landscape pattern on a national level. On a pan-European scale data is available by the JRC.

To insure timeline assessments, the rest of the C&I set should be kept without methodological changes.

- It should be ensured that data collected by **international organisations or national projects** (e.g. ICP FOREST (Ind. 2.3), JRC (Ind. 4.7) and BIOVERSITY (Ind. 4.6), etc) is also integrated and collected in the future.
- **Clarify definitions**, as **some** indicators are too difficult to interpret and/or understand.
- For an assessment of SFM it is **necessary to define targets and thresholds** for the national- and/or sub-national-level, complementing the current pan-European C&I set at the national- and/or sub-national level reflecting the local conditions and stakeholder demands.

The second issue concerned the provision of information **outside the forest sector**. The challenge considered was difficulties (or lack thereof) as regards the communication between sectors. For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has its own set of C&I and in some countries the CBD does not request data from the forest section but rather from the environmental sector. To address this challenge it was recommended that:

- Develop **new tools for communication** on C&I. Examples provided were a scenario approach with selected sets of indicators to demonstrate the possible results and consequences of different kind of treatments on medium and long term (e.g. the balance of demand for wood and nature conservation); to demonstrate the complexity of forest ecosystems; or to develop new analytical tools. The ulterior aim would be to present results to specific target and stakeholder groups.

The noted challenges and recommendations provide an overview of the main difficulties in implementing C&I in the Northern, Eastern and Central European regions, including possible solutions in the form of recommendations. However, given that the participating countries represent such a big geographical area (stretching from Finland to Hungary), it is difficult to provide region-specific recommendations, especially because the national conditions for implementing C&I differ so much. The recommendations should therefore be taken as more general suggestions for how the implementation of the C&I set could be improved.

### Estoril (Lisbon), Portugal 20-21 May 2013

The background and objective of the Estoril workshop (WS) was to define and understand the various aspects of the implementation of criteria and indicators (C&I) at the national level; to share experiences and identify regional issues across Southern and Northern Europe; as well as to propose recommendations on C&I implementation in these regions. The WS was structured across 2 Working Groups (WG) according to applications listed in the working definition<sup>5</sup> of implementing

<sup>5</sup> The CI-SFM working definition is available online



the pan-European set of C&I of SFM. WG1 focused on policy (application 1 and 4) while WG2 focused on monitoring and reporting (application 2 and 3). Both groups were also requested to address application 5. The participants were also presented with the results of the first two workshops, organised in Zagreb and Budapest.

Participants presented<sup>6</sup> their national experience of implementing criteria and indicators (in Finland, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and United Kingdom) and the project team reported on the pilot studies on sub-national implementation of C&I in Germany and Italy. These presentations demonstrate that there is a significantly varied application of C&I throughout the countries represented in the WS, ranging from the Northern to Southern Europe. From the discussions in the Estoril WS, both in the separate WG discussions and from the final round table discussion (including all participants), some major issues were raised. These are as follows:

WG1 on policy initially noted that C&I were, first and foremost, used as a **framework for communication and dialogue** on SFM. Also its **supportive function in policy-making** was brought forward in the discussion. For C&I application, it was stressed as mostly implicitly applied to **organise thoughts, finding a common language** and as a **common data set**. This was linked to the formal commitment in plans and strategies at all levels concerning SFM and the role C&I have in steering this process (e.g. C&I define the boundaries for SFM). The main issues and/or problems were identified as: the **cost benefit ratio** of applying C&I, **relevance of C&I** to policy makers, horizontal and vertical **communication** (within and between sectors affecting forests), the **mismatch between indicators and policy makers priorities, different interpretation of indicators** and the **level of details** for some indicators is too high. This makes it costly and time-consuming to collect all the information related to these indicators. To address these issues and problems it was recommended to tackle two areas:

- The first recommendation concerned the development of **clear objectives** of what C&I are for. The purpose of this would be to revise the indi-

cator set (not criteria) in light of these defined objectives (based on existing experience) and to link regional, national and international levels of C&I.

- The second recommendation focused on the need to capitalize on the **opportunities that may come out of the legally binding agreement (LBA)** negotiations. The main point being that the LBA provide a good opportunity to increase the potential impact of C&I, for example, to re-address objectives and to increase visibility. This also touched on the need to have a dialogue with other sectors on what they really need from C&I focusing on the forest sector.

Additional remarks addressed the need to maintain a stable set of C&I to ensure that indicators can be monitored and assessed over a longer time period. Also the link between analysis and policy-making (e.g. policy relevance) as well as the cost effectiveness of the C&I application were discussed.

WG2 on monitoring and reporting initiated the discussion by noting that some **definitions for C&I should be made clearer for international reporting** (e.g. additional guidelines should be given on how to apply monitor/report). It was also noted that **changes between reporting cycles** should be avoided if possible. The main elements as regards to monitoring and reporting concerned: **forest resources** (e.g. problematic aspect of accounting for carbon in soil; difficulties to report on forest age classes), **health and vitality** (e.g. difficult to report on forest damage in terms of area, and the need to separate pests and diseases based on origin), **productive functions** (e.g. problems to classify services using international classifications and difficulties associated with measuring the production of non-wood products), **biodiversity** (e.g. focused on the definition of regeneration and difficulties in defining between natural, artificial and coppice, also aspect connected to threatened species and landscape patterns), **socio-economic functions** (e.g. expenditures for services, forest holdings in terms of fragmented ownership, and the health and safety of workforce). To address these issues and problems it was recommended to tackle three areas:

- The first recommendation concerned the need to **review the current set of indicators**. More specifically, take into account availability of data,

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings are published on the workshop's website



quality and possible interpretations, to take care to avoid losing data comparability over time (if the set is modified) and to integrate national specificities in the review process.

- The second recommendation focused on **discrepancies in monitoring and assessment**, namely, on the difficulties to read and interpret data coming from different countries. Targets and thresholds may be defined at national/sub-national levels and assessment, which should be based on relevant national/sub-national goals and circumstances. It was also emphasised that national correspondents should be involved in reviewing these issues.
- The third recommendation was on **forms of reporting and communication**. It is important that different types of outputs are produced (e.g. European reports, brochures, leaflets and databases). Also the Internet should be used as much as possible to disseminate information. It was further recommended that mixed tools/approaches should be applied when communi-

cating (e.g. combined indicators or shortened sub-sets of indicators) and that simple messages should be applied when trying to convey results. For example, reported numbers should be assisted by relevant explanations and/or interpretations.

The noted problems and recommendations provide an overview of the main difficulties in implementing C&I in the Northern and Southern European regions, including possible solutions in the form of recommendations. The main issues that should be addressed concerns the clarification and definition of objectives of the pan European set of C&I; revising the pan-European indicators of sustainable forest management, on the basis of agreed objectives; using C&I to improve governance of the forest sector and enhance forest policy; improving the meaningfulness, readability and applicability of the indicator set; address the indirect use of C&I through certification systems; smart use of C&I and capacity building.