



**RESOLUTION L2**  
**Pan-European Criteria, Indicators and Operational Level Guidelines  
for Sustainable Forest Management**

*The Signatory States and the European Community,*

- A. Recalling the resolutions adopted at the Helsinki Ministerial Conference, namely in Resolution H1 "General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe" and Resolution H2 "General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European Forests", and noting that pan-European criteria, indicators and operational level guidelines for sustainable forest management are based on Resolutions H1 and H2,
- B. Acknowledging the co-operative work between the European countries and organisations in the formulation of criteria, describing the different aspects of sustainable forest management in Europe; through quantitative and descriptive indicators the development of a coherent set of tools to assess and assist further progress in sustainable forest management, at the international and national levels; and, guidelines for practical use on a voluntary basis at operational level,
- C. Noting that criteria and indicators are potentially useful tools in promoting sustainable forest management by providing relevant information for forest policy development and evaluation, national forest policies, plans and programmes and as a basis for cross-sectoral forest related data collection,
- D. Noting that the pan-European operational level guidelines, despite their voluntary nature, can contribute to improved communication, awareness building and implementation of appropriate action at the practical level for sustainable forest management when adapted to the specific conditions of the implementation level,
- E. Aware of the need to refine and improve these pan-European tools as the concept of sustainable forest management evolves, technical and scientific knowledge improves and relevant international agreements are developed,

- F. Recognising the effort made and progress achieved by European and other countries and international organisations to expand the development and use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management,
- G. Acknowledging the contacts and co-operation with other international and regional processes and initiatives, as well as international organisations, for the development and implementation of criteria and indicators, and emphasising the importance to continue the co-operation to promote comparability among the various sets of criteria and indicators,
- H. Acknowledging the collaboration with UN/ECE<sup>1</sup> and FAO<sup>2</sup>, and particularly the support given in data collection by inclusion of most of the existing pan-European quantitative indicators in the temperate and boreal component of the Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) Programme.

*have decided to:*

1. Adopt the six criteria for sustainable forest management from the “Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management” (Annex 1) and endorse the associated indicators as a basis for international reporting and for development of national indicators;
2. Proceed to implement, continuously review and further improve the associated indicators;
3. Endorse the “Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management” (Annex 2) as a framework of recommendations for sustainable forest management for practical use on a voluntary basis.

*and commit themselves to:*

1. Promote the development and implementation of national criteria and indicators using the Pan-European criteria and indicators as a reference framework, and taking into account specific country conditions and integrate them into national forest programmes or other relevant policy frameworks.
2. Improve the quality and promote the necessary adaptations of national data collection systems, to fulfil the needs of information for national and international reporting on sustainable forest management recognising the need for continuity of terms and definitions.
3. Use to the extent possible the criteria and indicators in international reporting on the status and conditions of European forests. Also call upon the UN/ECE, FAO and other

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<sup>1</sup> UN/ECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

<sup>2</sup> FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

relevant organisations to consider whether their regular international reporting, particularly the Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) Programme, could take into account the most updated criteria and indicators.

4. Encourage national and international research institutes to evaluate the consistency, relevance and cost effectiveness of indicators in assessing sustainable forest management, as well as availability of national data. Together with governments and organisations, identify needs, promote and support necessary co-operative research to improve and better assess the multiple functions and uses of forests which are considered as being insufficiently covered by the existing set of criteria and indicators.
5. Evaluate, at a national level, the development over time in measurable indicators with respect to the agreed developed objectives in order to assess progress made in sustainable forest management.
6. Engage efforts with other international and regional processes and initiatives, FAO, UNEP<sup>3</sup> and other relevant international organisations as well as conventions, to further elaborate common definition of key terms and concepts, as well as methodologies for data collection, storage and dissemination in order to enhance comparability of the different sets of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.
7. Encourage the adaptation of the “Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management” to the specific national, sub-national and local economic, ecological, social and cultural conditions, with participation of the interested parties.
8. Disseminate the “Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management” or equivalent existing national standards in line with the guidelines, to the forest owners, forest managers, forest organisations, general public, and other interested parties, and encourage their voluntary use.

Annexes:

- (1) Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management
- (2) Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management

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<sup>3</sup> UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme