



CPF
Collaborative Partnership
on Forests

CPF GLOBAL FOREST EXPERT PANELS

GFEP CONCEPT NOTE

4 December 2011

This concept note describes the background and rationale, mission and principles, and main institutional arrangements of the joint initiative “Global Forest Expert Panels” (GFEP) of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. It takes into account the outcomes of CPF retreat in Orvieto, Italy, in June 2011.

Background and rationale

GFEP was established in the year 2006 within the framework of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and is led and coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). It builds on the political recognition provided by the United Nations Forum on Forests (ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Decision IX/16).

The intergovernmental processes and institutions related to forests and trees have a significant need for scientific information. Through the timely preparation of focused reports on issues of high concern, GFEP links information needs of these intergovernmental processes and institutions with existing scientific expertise. In this way, it supports more informed decision making and contributes to the achievement of international forest-related commitments and internationally agreed development goals. The initiative also helps to strengthen individual and institutional capacity by drawing on the work of experts from all regions of the world.

Mission and principles

The mission of GFEP is to support UNFF and other forest-related intergovernmental processes by assessing available scientific information in a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, objective, open and transparent way and by producing reports on forest-related issues of high concern, including emerging issues.



The initiative draws on the work of experts from all regions of the world. It does not carry out new research, but assesses and critically analyzes information available primarily from peer-reviewed scientific literature. All reports prepared by the initiative undergo rigorous peer review by experts.

The initiative produces reports that reflect the state-of-the-art understanding of the subject matter and are written so that they are comprehensible to policy makers and stakeholders. The number and frequency of reports is determined by the information needs arising from forest-related intergovernmental processes. Different types of publications may be prepared for diverse target groups and with different time horizons. The aim is to widely distribute the outcomes of the initiative through information means accessible to all relevant audiences.

Institutional arrangements

GFEP is organized as follows:

Collaborative Partnership on Forests:

The joint initiative is established within the framework of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The CPF approves themes for the assessments in general. Detailed working modalities for the assessments are specified in Terms of Reference for each thematic Expert Panel. The CPF also receives GFEP reports and summaries for policy makers before they are published. Individual CPF Members may wish to withdraw their support for individual publications. In that case, the CPF logo shall not be used, but the logos of all those CPF Members which support these publications will be used.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee consists of those CPF members that have agreed to join the initiative, and is chaired by IUFRO. The Steering Committee Members are (in alphabetical order): CBD Secretariat, CIFOR, FAO, ICRAF, IUFRO, and UNFF Secretariat. The Steering Committee approves the Terms of Reference for thematic Expert Panels as well as Chairs of Expert Panels. It also verifies the compliance of the assessment's outcomes with the Terms of Reference and approves the summary for policy makers.

Expert Panels

Thematic Expert Panels are established by the Steering Committee to assess existing, peer-reviewed scientific information on selected topics and to prepare reports on these topics. Expert Panels operate on the basis of Terms of Reference approved by the Steering Committee and are established on a temporary basis. They consist of scientists with recognized expertise in specific subject fields of the reports. The scientific work of the Expert Panels is overseen by a Panel Chair. Members of the Expert Panel may include IUFRO officeholders and participating scientists, scientists from CIFOR and ICRAF as well as scientists working for other research organizations and networks. Members of the Expert Panel are selected in a way that they reflect required scientific expertise, diversity, balance between North/South, natural and social sciences, and gender. All reports prepared by Expert Panels will undergo rigorous peer review.



Experts Panel members participate in their personal capacity and do not represent any institution or organization.

Coordination and facilitation

IUFRO leads the initiative and provides overall coordination through the GFEP Coordinator. The IUFRO Executive Director chairs the GFEP Steering Committee. IUFRO also leads and coordinates efforts for funding the initiative and administers respective funds. GFEP builds on the financial and in-kind contributions of interested governments and CPF members. Additional support may be sought from other donors.

Reference language

English will be used as reference language for the initiative. Depending on available funds, reports of the initiative will be translated in full or in part (e.g. summaries for policy makers only) in other official UN languages.

Financial Principles:

The initiative functions to the extent possible through 'in-kind' contributions of the time of participating experts and institutions. Accordingly, the initiative does not provide 'honoraria' for the contributions of experts and the preparation of papers. However, travel costs of members of an Expert Panel arising from the attendance of Expert Panel meetings are covered by the initiative. A financial compensation may be provided to the Chair of the Expert Panel.

Travel costs of members of the Steering Committee are covered by their respective institutions and are considered as in-kind contributions to the initiative. Meetings of the Steering Committee and Expert Panels shall be hosted by a member institution of the Steering Committee or by a host government, so as to avoid or minimize costs for conference services and local logistics. Furthermore, meetings of the Steering Committee shall preferably be held back-to-back with major international conferences attended by members of the Steering Committee.