



International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Union Internationale des
Instituts de Recherches
Forestières

Unión Internacional
de Organizaciones de
Investigación Forestal

Internationaler
Verband Forstlicher
Forschungsanstalten

4.04.03 Terminology of forest management planning

If, in former times, it was important for forest scientists to agree on *unambiguity* of their research, it is necessary nowadays that forest scientists communicate their research results in an *unambiguous* language to interested laypersons.

In the present period, IUFRO Working Party 4.04.03 “Terminology of forest management planning” will most likely terminate its work and thus, it will be in a position to concentrate on the subject of forestry terminology in a more *general* way.

Maarten Nieuwenhuis (Dublin) has accepted to coordinate the Working Party and to lead the group in its new tasks. Good luck, Maarten!

With the following text, I would like to present a few general ideas related to the creation of the Working Party in 1974 and its development; then, I will attempt to evaluate the Unit’s work in the context of the original and present mandate of IUFRO.

About 125 years have passed since the forest research institutes of Germany, Austria and Switzerland discussed the idea to place the evaluation of experiments on an exchangeable and comparable basis, and thereby avoid misunderstandings caused by diverging experimental design, measurement systems or measurement locations. A clear and unambiguous procedure for Central Europe was the basic idea which led to the creation of the International Union of Forest(ry) Research Organizations, with German and French as official working languages.

This happened exactly at the right time, as more and more forest institutions from many countries joined the Union. This trend was only interrupted by the two World Wars and has continued to date. IUFRO is now represented in all parts of the world. Therefore, at the beginning of the 20th century, English and about 60 years later, Spanish were included as working languages. However, more languages may mean more misunderstanding, because some technical terms do not convey the same contents in all languages.

In this context, Unit S 4.04.00 “Forest management and business economy”, at the time coordinated by Popescu-Seletin, proposed in 1974 to establish a dictionary of forest management. In line with this proposal, the “Dictionary of forest management” in six languages was presented and sold at the World Congress in Montreal in 1995. In addition to the official IUFRO languages, it also contained Italian and Russian. The fact that the Dictionary was sold out quickly confirmed the need for such a publication.

Unfortunately, some mistakes were spotted already before publishing, which had happened due to literal translation and could not be changed for procedural reasons. As Coordinator of Unit S4.04.00 I proposed the following solution, i.e. to define the technical terms in the respective languages, and to find the equivalent terms in the other languages by comparison of the definitions. In 1996, I took over as Coordinator the newly created Working Party “Terminology of forest management planning” (since 2010 as Deputy Coordinator). In this period, we selected collaborators, determined technical terms to be defined, decided upon working procedures and combined data management with the IUFRO terminology project (Renate Prüller). In total, the project dealt with the following languages:

Overview of the state of work

Language	Technical term	Definitions	Computer file	Book
Chinese	x	x	x	x
German	x	x	x	x
English*	x	x	x	x
French	x	x	x	x
Italian	x	x	x	x
Japanese	x	x	x	x
Polish	x	x	x	
Portuguese	x		x	
Welsh	x	x		x
Romanian	x	x	x	x**
Spanish	x	x	x	x
Czech	x		x	
Turkish	x	x	x	x
Hungarian	x	x	x	

X Work finalized * second edition **on demand

For each language, the technical term is presented with a definition and its equivalents in other languages which allows for quick reference. The results are available for free at www.iufro.org/science/special/silvavoc/silvaterm-database.

The evaluation of this work is possible by looking at both the sales figures of the printed versions and the access statistics of the respective electronic files. The sale of the official IUFRO languages was good – the English version was sold out so that a second (revised) edition was published. The access figures to the database are higher than expected. Besides the respective forest institutions, the main public for the terminologies were libraries and translators.

The importance of creating a clearly defined and generally compatible technical language is obvious from the current policy: Potential IUFRO members are not only forest research organizations but also decisions makers, public interest representatives, non-governmental organizations etc. Therefore, we need a clearly defined technical language, in order to avoid misinterpretations and even legal incompliances.

At the beginning of IUFRO there was the necessity to present research results in an unambiguous and generally clear way. This has been done. Today, it has become necessary to present research results not only to colleagues around the world but also to communicate them to lay people in a clear and understandable way. The founding idea of IUFRO is more relevant than ever.

The IUFRO World Congress 2014 could have triggered intensified work on a “terminology of forestry” in the IUFRO working languages.

Finally, I would like to express my cordial thanks to all colleagues who collaborated on the “Terminology of forest management”, for contributing their time and expertise for free in this project.

Othmar Griess