



Global Assessment in Progress to Shed Light on Forest Crime Rapid Response to Illegal Timber Trade – Scientists Prepare Synthesis Report

Illegal trade in wildlife has been climbing up the political agenda rapidly over the last few years. Various resolutions and decisions by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the UN Environment Assembly have called for increased collaboration to combat illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products; these also include timber and timber products. In addition, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has established a clear connection between environmental security and sustainable development.

In order to capture this momentum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), comprising of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats, has asked the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) to carry out a global assessment on the topic in the frame of the Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative. In order to inform policy processes and decision-making at the global level as swiftly as possible, the topic of *illegal logging and associated timber trade* has been taken up as a rapid response assessment (GFEP RR).

Following the preparatory work and the selection of the scientists who would be the Lead Authors of the assessment report, a Scoping Meeting of GFEP RR was successfully held back-to-back with the UNEA-2 in Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2016, and kindly hosted by UNEP. The meeting gathered more than 25 experts, including leading scientists on the topic, representatives from indigenous peoples and from expert institutions.



Just a few months after the Scoping Meeting, authors of the report were asked to turn in the draft manuscripts of their chapters. The peer review process of the draft chapters was followed by a Scientific Expert Meeting in September 2016 in Vienna, Austria. During the meeting, hosted by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Lead Authors together with attending contributing authors, invited scientists and experts discussed the draft chapters, analyzed the review comments and agreed on the refinements of the chapters.

The report aims to assess the many facets of illegality affecting forests and people, including the various definitions of illegal forest activities. Based on scientific evidence, the report gives an overview of the main species, markets, players, wood flows and supply chains involved in the illegal timber trade. It will discuss the impacts of illegal logging and related timber trade across various situations of production and consumption, as well as the drivers behind these illegal activities. Related governance frameworks and response options, including the analysis of the latest global initiatives to combat illegal timber trade will be assessed. Lastly, a criminological analysis of organized forest crime with suggestions from timber forensics will be included in the report.

This “*Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP) Rapid Response on Illegal Timber Trade*” will produce a state-of-knowledge report and associated policy brief that will both be formally launched at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-13) in December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico.

More information about the GFEP Rapid Response assessment on Illegal Timber Trade:
<http://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/illegal-timber-trade-rapid-response/>