**[Re: Online consultation on the development of a Global Core Set (GCS) of forest-related indicators](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/forestry_indicators" \l "comment-7977)**

Christopher Prins

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Dear [Mr. Houngbo](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/7960),

Thank you for these perceptive and constructive comments.

Here are my comments, set out between yours

1. *I think the indicators 4, 5, 8, and 17 can be deleted and replaced by the “Percentage of forest under sustainable management” (say the usefulness of the forest for the environment and people)*

Indeed, the main objective of many international efforts, notably SDG 15.2.1, is to monitor the area of forests sustainably managed.  The challenge is to define and measure this area, given the wide variety of national conditions.  Certification by itself is not sufficient as while most certified forests are sustainably managed, many sustainably managed forests are not certified.  Also, “legal” is not always the same as “sustainable”.  For SDG 15.2.1, an approach is being developed which combines essentially indicators 2, 3, 9, 10 (biodiversity conservation, biomass stock, long term management plan, area certified).  The UN Statistical Office working group on this is advancing fast.  It is clear that the Global Core Set of forest-related indicators would have to be adapted to be in conformity with the agreed SDG indicators in this respect.

*2. The indicators 14 and 15 are approximately the same. We can just maintain the indicator 15;*

They are indeed similar, but there are still differences. Mostly 14 refers to natural damage (pests, wind, fire, game etc.), while 15 refers to forests which have lost most of their ability to supply forest functions, often through human agency, notably overcutting.  The term “degraded forest” occurs often in the official texts, but no-one has yet devised an agreed objective way of measuring it at a global level.  Hence “more work is needed”, as we cannot ignore the many references to forest degradation in the high level documents.  Do you or any other readers have ideas, to supply a waterproof definition of “degraded forest”?

*3. The indicator 16 is not pertinent and should be difficult to establish;*

I think it is pertinent (Global forest goal 2.1 is “extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated”), but it is extremely hard to implement, for the reasons set out in the task force comments.  Should we give up on measuring poverty among “forest dependent people”?

*4. Instead of defining the indicator 19 like that, I propose to use the “Percentage change in Total Economic Value (TEV)”*

This indicator was meant to focus on the specific issue of payment for ecosystem services, which is seen as a core part of the emerging green economy, and a correction of the exclusive focus on economic value.  However, as the task force says, this aspect is probably “not ready for the GCS of indicators” – which at present is too long, and should contain only indicators which are ready to go in every way.  I would like to collect data on Total economic Value of forests world-wide, but it could be difficult

*5) I think you can add these two indicators:*

*- Forest biodiversity level (the Shannon diversity index can be used for that) to show the richness of the forest;*

It has been a long struggle to monitor biodiversity at the national level in a standard way, and so far only proxies, (e.g. area protected or endangered species) have been used.  The Shannon diversity index seems to have quite rigorous data needs, and to be more adapted to particular forests than to national level monitoring.  Have I misunderstood?

- *Percentage change in species under overexploitation (overuse) in order to indicate the challenge for the forest restoration.*

I agree it would be good to measure change in species diversity.  This has been tried in Europe, but proved surprisingly difficult as national level knowledge of trends by species is not very good.  We should perhaps revisit this.

Best regards.

Thanks again

Kit Prins

Moderator