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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

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SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX

Executive Summary

- The concept of the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Toolbox was presented to the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in September 2012. The Committee “requested FAO to further develop the content of the sustainable forest management (SFM) toolbox, including educational materials, voluntary guidelines and communication platforms, to support countries, where requested, in their efforts to implement SFM, while avoiding overlap and duplication and taking into consideration national and regional needs, approaches and processes” (COFO 2012/REP para 19). The FAO Management Response to the Strategic Evaluation of FAO’s work in Forestry (2012) also stressed the need for the SFM Toolbox.
- The aim of this note is to inform about the progress made on the development of the SFM Toolbox.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The SFM Toolbox is a comprehensive technical package of knowledge tools, best practices, and examples of their application to facilitate the implementation of SFM under varied contexts. Its target audience is primarily (public and private) forest and land managers, and those who support them including extension services, civil-society organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as private sector associations.
2. The Toolbox has the following objectives: (i) increase capacities to effectively implement SFM by providing practical knowledge, tools and experiences at local and landscape levels; (ii) support forest managers and other stakeholders in progressing towards SFM with a more comprehensive approach; (iii) connect the different areas of FAO expertise related to SFM to facilitate its integration in a landscape approach to natural resources management; and (iv) identify and address knowledge and tool gaps, as well as possible incoherencies and conflicts.
3. The Toolbox is a web-based platform that is user-friendly, interactive and responsive to user’s interests and needs. It includes:

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- modules on SFM thematic areas, comprising (i) an overview of basic knowledge; (ii) more in-depth information; (iii) links to related tools; and (iv) links to SFM cases/examples and further references;
- a database of SFM tools and cases/examples that have been collated and arranged in an easy-to-access format; and
- a discussion forum.

4. The Toolbox uses knowledge references, tools and cases produced by FAO, Collaborative partnership on Forests (CPF) members, other partners and member countries. The scope of the Toolbox is global (for all types of forests) however it will be an evolving set that will also include regional and national resources.

5. The development of the SFM Toolbox aligns with FAO's mandate and role as a knowledge organization. FAO, in collaboration with its many partners, creates, compiles and shares critical information about SFM, and facilitates a dialogue between those who possess the knowledge and those who need it, aiming at "turning knowledge into action". The Toolbox is included in the Organization's Strategic Objective 2: "Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner". During 2013 the Toolbox has been presented at the Regional Forestry Commissions. Comments and recommendations received from member countries in these regional meetings included:

LACFC (Georgetown - Guyana, 9-13 Sep 2013)

- "Delegates offered their support to the development of the toolbox, suggesting the establishment of a mechanism to facilitate their contributions."
- "The Commission requested FAO to distribute the sustainable forest management toolbox as widely as possible when it is ready, so that it can be widely used."

AFWC (Windhoek – Namibia, 30 Sep – 4 Oct 2013)

- "The Commission recommended the continuation of the design and development of the SFM toolbox, and the subsequent translation of the approved methodology."
- "The Commission requested FAO to establish a mechanism for reviewing contributions from countries, regional and international parties and to firmly manage the quality control processing the further design and development of the tool box. Efforts should also be made to have the sustainable forest management (SFM) toolbox accessible and usable by remotely located stakeholders who may not have access to large bandwidth internet connection. Additionally, a module on sustainable wildlife management should be introduced in the toolbox."

APFC (Rotorua - New Zealand, 5-8 Nov 2013)

- "Delegates encouraged FAO to collaborate with other forest-related organizations, in particular ITTO and CIFOR, in the further development of the Toolbox and to focus on identified gaps and to avoid duplication of efforts."
- "The Commission urged FAO to ensure that the Toolbox covers all aspects of sustainable forest management for all types of forests and trees outside forests and that it meets the diverse needs of the target audience."
- "Delegates welcomed the proposed usability test and suggested it be implemented early in the process. The Commission requested FAO to provide training on the use of the Toolbox when completed."

6. These comments and suggestions have been considered in the development of the Toolbox, and will help shape the planned testing and validation.

II. CURRENT STATUS AND MAIN ISSUES

7. The content of the Toolbox has been developed by FAO-Forestry core experts (Headquarters and Decentralized Offices) and with the collaboration of key external experts in specific topics. In this phase, priority has been given to the development of the most relevant technical modules, while the full content of the Toolbox will continue to be developed in the second half of 2014.

8. An external Peer-Review Committee, including CPF partners and regional organizations, has been set up. The Peer-Review Committee will provide technical advice on the development and implementation of the Toolbox.

9. The SFM Toolbox website has been designed, with the intention of allowing best interaction with users. It is available at <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/>. In order to widen the accessibility especially where internet connections are less reliable, the Toolbox will be published on DVD annually.

III. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

10. **The Committee may wish to invite countries to:**

- Actively participate in the testing, further development, finalization and use of the Toolbox.
- Discuss how the Toolbox can contribute to SFM implementation considering the diverse country contexts and situations.

11. **The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to:**

- Finalize the Toolbox and make it available for pilot testing in countries.
- Facilitate the use of the Toolbox by countries and institutions working on SFM
- Utilize the Toolbox in its own work to promote a comprehensive approach to SFM.
- Consider the opportunity of developing a set of voluntary guidelines for multipurpose forest management planning, taking into account the requirements of the SFM principles.