

PART A: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The use of contractors in forestry is of increasing importance worldwide. The emergence of contracting in forestry brings not only a number of challenges for the whole forestry and wood industry sectors, challenges within the contracting enterprises themselves, but also regarding their competitive behaviour, between themselves and towards workers under contract in forest owners' enterprises.

Contractors in forestry, and in related lines of trade found in rural areas, should develop into economically and socially sustainable and sound businesses. These should be able to fulfil the standards of performance and quality not only required by their clients – forest owners and the timber industry – but also by society in an optimal manner, taking into account all national and international social and labour rules. These businesses should be able to offer and further develop viable employment opportunities for people from and in rural areas. Existing competences of contractors and employees need to be used. The qualifications necessary for future development need to be further improved. The employment situation should allow adequate income as well as socially acceptable conditions. Contractors should develop not only strategies and systems to ensure the health and safety of their employees as well as of the self-employed, but also guarantee the quality of their services. These strategies and systems are needed to ensure the ability of these businesses to survive and develop themselves within the constraints of increasing international competition. Forestry contractors equally help to create and maintain work and employment in rural areas. By this means they are making a valuable contribution to the maintenance and the improvement of the social, economic and ecological structures in rural areas.

Within the past 20 years there have been many attempts to increase understanding for the situation of forestry contractors. Based on this recent work and experience, the idea has evolved to draw up a guide to good practice in contract labour in forestry, which outlines a wide variety of examples of good practice. These are intended to foster the sustainable and viable development of contracting enterprises in forestry for the present and the future. Contract labour will be the most important source for carrying out all those operations in forestry necessary to achieve sustainable forest management and timber utilization.

SCOPE

These guidelines will mainly focus on contract labour in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Europe and North America. However, it is felt that this guide is sufficiently generic to be useful for the establishment of good practices in any country, when it comes to outsourcing of labour from direct employed workforce to contractors, as is the case in most parts of the world. Although the situation and available information differ between the countries, there is a general trend indicating that the involvement of contractors in the management of the world's forests will continue to increase.

ROLE OF PARTNERS (WHO)

These guidelines have been developed by a Team of Specialists working under a mandate of the *FAO/ECE/ILO Network of Experts for the implementation of sustainable forest management*. *Thus this work is part of the Joint FAO European Forestry Commission and ECE Timber Committee* programme of work. The team included a broad expertise, hence its members represent forestry contractors, workforce, science and public authorities, supported by FAO forestry experts.

APPROACH

In many countries and regions good examples exist for the organization and regulation of forestry contractors' operations. This guide forms a compilation of exemplary ways of proceeding – of good practices – for contract labour in forestry. This is therefore a practical guide offering help and advice for the development of decent and socially sound working conditions and fair competition. It can be of use for forestry practice, for forestry contractors, forest owners, timber industry, representatives of workers' unions and also for political decision-makers.

This guide comprises examples of relationships between forestry contractors themselves, between different contractors and mandating forest or timber industry.

DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

This guide is composed of three parts. Following this introduction, Part B will describe the roles and tasks of the various actors associated with contract labour in forestry. It includes instruments that foster good practice in contract labour.

Part C will lead through various dimensions of contracting enterprises, focusing on human resources and working conditions. Additional chapters will deal with quality management, economic viability, competition, cooperation and organization of contractors.

Each issue will be treated in a structured way, giving a description of the issue *what it is*, presenting, *guiding principles* for good practices, followed by the *objectives* of good practice. There will be a brief description of *potential consequences* of inadequate practices. Examples of good practices will be given in highlighted textboxes.