



Working Group 1 “Forest and Water”

Strategy Paper (24/Apr/2020)

Working Group 1 was established in 2013 at the twenty-seventh session of the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (WPMMW) to work on interlinkages of forests and water catchments, while addressing current and future forest challenges. The establishment of the WG1 has been part of the implementation of the new WPMMW structure and modus operandi.

This Working Group strategy builds on a previous strategy document from 22 October 2013 and was elaborated at the 32nd Session of the WPMMW on 25 September 2019 in Innsbruck, Austria.

Contacts

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I. Critical themes

WG1 “Forest and Water” mainly dedicates its work on the interrelationship between forests and water at a catchment level. The nexus of hydrology, mountain landscapes and forests is an important field of study and relevant for resource management and governance.

Forests are vital to our water supply, providing approximately 75 percent of the world’s accessible freshwater for agricultural, domestic, industrial and environmental uses. Forests provide numerous ecosystem services that are essential to maintaining resilient systems, communities and ecosystems. Forests offer nature based solutions in water provision and risk reduction.

Within this dimensional focus, critical themes addressed by WG1 include:

- Managing Forest - water relationships and management of headwater forests, including land use and climate change concerns
- Water protective forest ecosystem services
- Role of mountain and protective forests in response to climate change impacts
- Impact of forest management operations and infrastructure on water quantity and water quality
- Forests for soil and water conservation and erosion control
- Hydrological effects of forest restoration
- Promoting participatory landscape approaches through integrated forest water management
- Possible conflicts in future forest management

II. Products and services of the WG1

Building a network of multidisciplinary experts from forestry, hydrology, applied ecology and socio economy (forest research, national forest services and forest management), the WG1 partners prepare and offer the following products and services to the EFC, its member countries and partners:

Products:

- **Baseline publications**, e.g. identification of problems and priorities of EFC member countries related to forest and water in different climatic regions in Europe;
- **Education and training material**, e.g. on forest management in upland watersheds and watershed rehabilitation
- **Effective research teams**, e.g. for identification of new problems and produce material for practical guidelines
- **Information material** on the products and services provided by the WPMMW WG1 to the EFC and member states;

Services:

- **Policy advice** and arrangement of **expert consultations** to the EFC and member countries related to forest and water in upland watersheds (target groups: governments, municipalities, national forest services, NGOs);
- Development of **forest management guidelines and recommendations** together with the EFC and member countries (target groups: governments, municipalities, national forest services, NGOs);

- **Workshops** and **trainings** provided and organized with the EFC and member countries, e.g. on forest management in upland watersheds to facilitate knowledge exchange on expert and practitioner level (target groups include forest services, civil servants, Universities)

III. Leading countries

WPMMW members confirmed *Turkey* and *Albania* to coordinate WG1 activities. The lead may change in coordination with the Secretariat.

IV. Potential partner countries

The WG will be open to all EFC member countries and partners, who can propose own activities for the WG or participate in planned activities.

V. Potential partner organizations

The WG will be open to all EFC member countries and partners, who can propose own activities for the WG or participate in planned activities. Potential collaboration partners on the topic forest and water are:

– Forest Europe	-UNFF	-EU Commission
– Universities	-Research Institutes	-EFI MED
– EFI MOUNTFOR	-IUFRO	-UNECE Water Convention

VI. Work plan

	Activity	Responsible institution/person
A	General activities	
A.1	Approval of WG1 strategy and work plan	32 nd Session WPMMW
A.2	Dissemination and network strategy	FAO Secretariat and WPMMW Chair
A.3	Reporting to the Steering Committee	WG1 lead countries and organising institutions
A.4	Reporting at the Biannual Session of the WPMMW	WG1 lead countries
A.5	Organise initial brainstorming meeting	WG1 lead countries with support of participants
B	Publications / training material	
B.1	Information material for WPMMW and WG1 products and services	
	Reporting on forest-water projects, and dissemination through WPMMW	WG1 members
B.2	Assessment and publication of priorities and problems of EFC countries related to forest and water in the different climatic regions in Europe	
B.3	Training material for forest management in upland watersheds (to be used and disseminated in trainings and workshops)	
	Guidelines on communicating forest-water science to policy	WG1 lead countries with support of members
	Review of hydrological effects of forest restoration	WG1 lead countries with support of members
C	Trainings / workshops / seminars	
C.1	Field visits of good practices in forest management concerning water	
C.2	Organization of trainings, workshops and seminars; dissemination of training material Specifically, for practitioners managing forests	WG1 members
C.2.1	Support to “International expert workshop on Forest and Water”	

VII. Potential resources and funding

- WG activities should be supported under the general commitment of the EFC and EFC-WPMMW member countries. WPMMW representatives and WG1 partners should therefore liaise with the EFC representative
- Lead countries and active partners offer the organisation and facilitation of activities and products.
- Travel and accommodation costs must be covered by delegates and sending institutions.
- Lead partners offer covering publication costs.
- Innovative funding mechanisms and joint funding proposals for activities to third parties is considered.